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It has always been impossible for men to become indulgent in act while they remained fanatical in belief.

JOHN MORLEY.

A Note of Warning.

THIS is not the place in which to discuss the political aspects of the War. Nor is it the place in which to dwell upon the utterances of politicians, except so far as they show some connection with the main purpose for which the *Freethinker* exists. But the present European conflict is so vast, so overshadowing, and is affecting life at so many points, that it cannot be without its influence on advanced movements of all descriptions, and I am afraid that its influence will be for ill.

It is not alone that a period of reaction, in consequence of which vested interests find themselves more firmly entrenched, and reforms become more difficult to secure, follows all wars. Reaction does not merely follow a war, it most often precedes it. In the present instance this is certainly the case. For years the forces of reaction have been steadily gathering strength all over Europe. It is not that they have become absolutely stronger than they were, but they have become better organised, and more conscious of the danger that threatens them. It was bound to happen. The very progress of Freethought, and of advanced ideas generally, involved this. The greater the progress made the more certain it became that the threatened interests would become better organised, and would make a last desperate effort to defeat their enemies. The instinct of self-preservation made this inevitable. The danger to advanced ideas is never so great as when they are within sight of victory. They provoke resistance at the moment that they hold out the strongest inducements to support. It is not, therefore, that reaction will follow the War merely, the War itself is evidence of the strength of European retrogressive forces. That is a truth that every reformer should take well to heart.

Let me take one or two illustrations of what has been said, and as an indication of what may lie ahead. In a recent debate in the House of Lords, Viscount Milner said: "The position of independent speakers and writers in the immediate future is likely to be a difficult one." Viscount Milner had in view only the difficulties that surround the politician during the continuance of the War, but I believe his words apply over a wider and more important area. We may put on one side all fear of a revival of religion in the sense that there will be an increase in the number of religious people or conversions of Freethinkers. The danger lies in the fact that the number of liberated intellects represents, at best, but a small minority, and that there exists at any time a mass of superstition, more or less disguised, which offers to the reactionist a peculiarly tempting and fruitful field of operation. And in the general set-back to advanced ideas, consequent on the War, this may well serve as the nucleus of a movement against freedom of thought and speech. The nation has passed through no such crisis as

the present one since the Napoleonic Wars, and although those wars were waged, as is this one, in the name of freedom, it is well to bear in mind that Waterloo was succeeded by reaction in all directions.

Nor must it be overlooked that the Blasphemy Laws are still unrepealed. And so long as they remain unrepealed they offer an ever present possibility of danger. It is true that the present interpretation of these laws—particularly the decisions in the Bowman case—do not admit of their striking at individuals through a society; but this does not prevent their striking at a movement through individuals. Individual Freethinkers are still open to prosecution. True, it must be shown that they have attacked religion in an unbecoming manner, but as what is unbecoming must be decided by a judge and a jury—all of whom are likely to be Christians, it is evident that the decision as to what constitutes blasphemy will always depend upon the temper of the times. And one may therefore amplify Viscount Milner's statement by saying that "the position of independent speakers and writers on religion in the immediate future is likely to be a difficult one." That, I believe, represents no more than the truth, and it is well that we should bear the possibility in mind.

Again, a period of war is one in which people become of necessity habituated to the exercise of force, and to the suspension of more rational methods. Newspapers are seized, and publications are suppressed. I am not arguing whether these seizures are right or wrong. That is not the point. I am only concerned with their effect upon the public mind and the public temper. And the fact is that every suppression of free speech or of freedom of publication, rendered necessary because the nation is in a state of war, makes it easier to carry on the same policy when military exigences no longer demand that method. That is why I regard every such suppression as fraught with menace for the future. It is habituating the public mind to methods of coercion; establishing a precedent that may be applied in ways that are undesirable and dangerous.

One more illustration. On the same day that Viscount Milner uttered the sentence cited, Lord Courtney said:—

"What did they see in the course of the War but mere retrogression? During the last fifty years successful efforts have been made to raise the condition of the people. They had been able to get rid of boy labor, to withdraw women labor from the mines, and in large measure from the field. They had been able to limit the hours of men's labor, to give a large amount of leisure, and to provide means for a higher culture. All those things had suffered. Education had been maimed and limited. The demand for boy labor was overcoming the restrictions. Men outside the mere work for munitions were strained to the utmost, and their freedom of action had been put into fetters, which in the ordinary process were left unobserved, but which were most real."

Again, I must point out that I am not dealing with the advisability of these things, all I am concerned with is the influence they are almost certain to have in the future. Take the question of education. The English people, as a whole, have never taken the question of education quite so seriously as one would have wished. Education Acts have always been treated more as a concession to fad-

dists than an expression of a national need. And in spite of the need for practising economy in the public service, it is disquieting to observe the readiness with which the Government department and local authorities agree to cut down expenditure on education. Almost at the first opportunity the word goes forth that we are to economise with the children. The outlay on the tools necessary to their education is to be severely restricted. Classes are to be made larger just when educational reformers were congratulating themselves on having made advance in the opposite direction. Secondary schools are to suffer along with elementary ones. And so long as this continues we are turning out a less educated, and, therefore, a less efficient generation to carry the national burden in the immediate future. We begin to economise first in the direction to which we should turn only under the stress of the direst need. And the readiness with which this has been proposed warrants the assumption that there is more in it than the mere financial needs of the moment. It represents the gathering strength of reactionary forces.

We are fighting educated Germany; and it is generally admitted that the educational system of Germany is in advance of our own. The use that this educational efficiency has been put to by an unscrupulous military class ought not to cause us to think lightly of education—although that inference has been drawn by many people in this country. The power of education is for either good or ill—it is entirely a question of direction. It is also certain that the cure for a misdirected education, is not less education, but more. And how are we preparing for that more desirable and more permanent international competition that will remain when the struggle of brute force has run its course? Are we to successfully meet other nations, or even Germany, with a generation that has had its education starved and stunted in the name of economy? Are we to hope for wisdom in the political field or sane opinions in the intellectual field from a democracy that is only half educated? The thing is impossible. We are aiding the forces of reaction by such methods; giving hostages to the enemies of real progress.

"The hands of the social clock," said the *Daily Telegraph* in a recent leading article, "are being put back by the irresistible pressure of events." That is a summary of the present situation. This War will leave the world poorer financially, socially, and intellectually. The War has already been used as a justification—perhaps a genuine justification—for putting off reforms that a little more than a year ago seemed imminent. That one might have expected and could have borne without complaint. But after the War? There's the rub! There will not be, relatively, fewer reformers in the world; but for a time, at least, these will have to face an opposition that will have gained strength from the period through which we are now passing. The War will have offered the enemies of progress opportunities of which they will not be slow to take advantage.

But while it is well to face the future without delusion as to what it holds in store, it would be folly to see in this reason for despair, or for even a slackening of effort. The true moral is that of greater determination, more effective organisation, more strenuous effort. This War, with all its consequences, may serve a useful purpose so far as it shows to those who may have regarded the fight as practically over, the nature and strength of the forces we have to overcome. It means harder work, perhaps greater danger, certainly a more trying time. Our propaganda must be the more thorough and the more persistent to meet the new danger. We are the trustees of a great principle, the advocates of a great idea, and the Freethought Party as a whole is not likely to prove unworthy of the trust. But more than ever will it be true in the near future that the price of liberty is eternal vigilance; and to eternal vigilance we may add combined and ceaseless effort.

C. COHEN.

Religion and the War.

IT is a well-established fact that religion, in the accepted sense of the term, is an exotic in the soil of human nature, and that, unless cultivated with exceptional care, it inevitably dies. It is the stupendous difficulty of planting religion in the infant's mind, and causing it to germinate and grow therein, that accounts for the constant religious training conducted in the home and in all the schools; and it is an incontrovertible fact that, in spite of all the religious instruction so assiduously imparted, a large number of children do not develop into religious men and women. Even a clergyman of Dr. Orchard's high standing has just admitted that though "man has instincts, he seems to have no instinct for God." He declared that "to-day no one in Europe had any time to think of God, let alone to pray." Naturally, Dr. Orchard deplors the decay of religion, and charges men and women with the sin of abandoning it "for the most trivial reasons"; but the only thing that matters just now is that, on the reverend gentleman's own showing, it is generally being renounced everywhere. Such an admission is severely criticised in the *Christian Commonwealth* for November 3, but no fact is brought forward in confutation of it. Many British clergymen have been boasting for months that France is undergoing a marvellous revival of religion; but Dr. Paul Sabatier, an eminent French divine, denies that the Churches count at all in the present crisis, and affirms that the only thing that has revived is the spirit of patriotism. In the last issue of this journal "A Soldier Atheist" bore the same testimony concerning the state of things in the Trenches, giving the direct lie to the assertion of the parsons that "the War and its hardships have brought out the religion of the soldiers." It would be wise on the part of the cloth to bear in mind that the *Freethinker* has numerous devoted readers in the Firing-line, and that several of them have given their word of honor that "love of country and high devotion to her interests are not virtues found only in the Christian's breast." By all reliable information at our disposal, we are irresistibly led to the conclusion that Dr. Orchard was perfectly right when he stated that "everyone knew the hopeless condition of the Church of Christ," which hopeless condition resulted in the War.

We now come to discuss one of the most remarkably extravagant addresses ever delivered from a Christian pulpit. We refer to Dr. Horton's Monthly Lecture, which may be read in the *Christian World Pulpit* for October 13, and which is entitled "Is the War Promoting Religion or Destroying it?" This gentleman is notorious for his use of wild, unrestrained language. Many remember his ferocious attacks upon the Catholic Church, which he had the effrontery to publish. If a great scientist is an unbeliever, Dr. Horton calls him "a rude, ill-mannered, ignorant child," "an atrophied soul," "an utterly unsatisfactory and essentially ignorant guide," "an unthinking mind," addicted to "childish credulity." It was once his custom to characterise organised Christianity as a lamentable failure. He said that Atheists were a great host and rapidly multiplying, and that the drift of things, or the spirit of the age, was hostile to the Churches. In the present discourse he assures us, on the authority of a chaplain, that religion is flourishing amazingly among our fighting men at the Front and in the Navy. He says:—

"The effect on our men is one that never could have been anticipated. I venture to say there is not a Christian, however earnest and enthusiastic, who ever could have dreamed of what has actually happened and what is happening in the great forces of our beloved country by land and by sea.....Our men, brought into the heat of battle, learn to pray. The remark is constantly made there: 'There is no Infidel in the Trenches. If you meet an Atheist in England, send him out here; he will soon be convinced.'"

That is unmitigated nonsense. There are scores of

Atheists among our fighting men, and what they witness from day to day only confirms them in their unbelief. The following words in "A Soldier Atheist's" letter deserve to be profoundly pondered by Dr. Horton and his like:—

"I know of many Atheists, just as far advanced as myself, serving in the Trenches. I know of many who have 'gone down' in blood and pain. Two of my brothers have lately been killed—Atheists, both of them, and bold, splendid soldiers. Two finer fellows never lived. They were perfect husbands, fine fathers, and good citizens. Their Freethought never wavered. The 'dark beyond' contained no terrors for their clear minds and well-balanced imaginations."

Dr. Horton knows nothing of trench life except by hearsay, and the reports upon which he relies are clearly untrustworthy. For example, he tells us that the men who were either indifferent or antagonistic to religion before they left this country are now "literally truly converted to God," and delight in listening to the services, "and the chaplains have the most wonderful times." "A Soldier-Atheist" has a very different story to tell. Does not Dr. Horton know that attendance at Divine Service is compulsory in the Army? Now, in the brigade to which "A Soldier-Atheist" belongs, "owing to the ground accommodation being limited, an order appeared making the Church Service Parade a voluntary one," with the result that there was "no attendance." We have heard of another voluntary Church Service where the men turned their backs to the chaplain, an act for which they were reprimanded by the officer in charge. We know that Professor Gilbert Murray's view of the effect of the War on religion is fundamentally different from Dr. Horton's, but the latter has the audacity to say of the former that he is not a competent judge. It is quite true that Professor Murray is a student, but he is by no means a recluse, "looking at things from the standpoint of an Oxford study, instead of from the actual standpoint of things as they are." We are strongly convinced that Dr. Horton is wholly incompetent to sit in judgment on the Professor, who is a keen critic of things as they are, and a social reformer of no mean order. The minister of Lyndhurst-road Congregational Church is hopelessly biased against everybody who does not share his theological opinions.

Let us examine his position more carefully. Professor Murray seems to think that the War may promote a coarse type of religion, that subscribes strong dogmas, believes in violent excitements, and sees God in the terrors and the judgments which are falling upon men, which is, of course, a type of religion we should abhor; but Dr. Horton maintains that the War is producing the opposite effect. He says:—

"What the War is doing is not to strengthen the coarser type of religion and to destroy the finer, but rather it is discrediting the coarser type of religion, making it intolerable to the world, and it is strengthening and creating that finer type of religion, that spiritual and personal religion, the faith in Christ as the cleansing and strengthening of the soul, and the transformation of the man into a new creature. That is what is going on as a result, unexpected, absolutely unpredictable, of the present War, and in face of these facts we cannot doubt that there is to be an issue from the War which may sweep through the world as a great spiritual revival, a coming, as it were, of Christ into the world again."

There are hundreds at the Front who are prepared to swear that the above picture is entirely false. Dr. Horton himself is under the impression that there is something faulty with it when he admits that the result claimed could never have been expected or predicted. It is a wholly unnatural result, the War, with its indescribable horrors, barbarities, and cruelties, being calculated to drive men away from the thought that a God of love occupies the throne of the Universe. Even to think of the bloodiest conflict on record, in which practically the whole Western world is engaged, is to perceive the utter irrationality of the belief in the Divine government of mankind. And yet Dr. Horton does not hesitate to

call this War "the dawn of a new day, in which the world will see at last the one thing that matters." There is nothing easier than to indulge in wild predictions; but it is a notorious fact that Christian prophecies have never been fulfilled. They are always falsified by the events. That the world will be considerably modified in many respects by the catastrophe of this War is absolutely certain; but nobody can tell what form the modification will take. It is undeniable that already multitudes of Atheists have been created by the War both at home and on the battlefields, and it is highly probable that many more will be made before it terminates. Meantime, we prefer to accept the testimony of Dr. Orchard as to the religious condition of Europe, our fighting men in particular being far too busy to think of God and engage much in prayer. Furthermore, the Rev. Mr. Waldron, who has spent some time in the Trenches, assured an interviewer that if the clergy knew how the men there speak about them and their religion, they would be startled out of their wits.

In a word, the War is the negation of the Sermon on the Mount, and some clergymen have declared that the Sermon on the Mount should not be mentioned just now. The Prince of Peace is a Christian myth. The Christ of the Churches never existed at all except in the imagination of those who call themselves his servants.

J. T. LLOYD.

A Searchlight on Swinburne.

"Master who crowned our immelodious days
With flowers of perfect speech."—WILLIAM WATSON.

"The peerless poet cometh to you with words set in
delightful proportion."—SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

THE announcement that Mr. Edmund Gosse's *Life of Swinburne* will see the light shortly is very welcome, for a well-written biography of the great poet is much needed. We are also promised, under Mr. Gosse's editorship, a volume of Swinburne's prose and poetry, both of which will contain much unpublished material.

Swinburne was ever a foremost figure in the literary arena during his lifetime, and his vogue was extraordinary. Some idea of the poet's influence may be gathered from Canon Scott Holland's recently published *A Bundle of Memories*, in which it is stated that upon the first publication of the poems, young men "sang them, shouted them, flung them about to the skies and the winds. It was like becoming possessed of a new sense." Then the reverend gentleman quotes:—

"Dream that the lips once breathless
Can quicken if they would;
Say that the soul is deathless;
Dream that the gods are good.
Say March may wed September,
And time divorce regret;
But not that you remember,
And not that I forget."

The Canon adds, characteristically, that the Bible was the quarry from which Swinburne had dug, and that Biblical England was "troubled at this bold spoiling of the Hebrews by the Egyptians, as it saw its finest jewels prostituted to the service of the goddesses of mud and slime." This is not literary criticism, but professional malice. Swinburne had no deities in his pantheon, and he dug his jewels from many quarries. Indeed, there has been no such metrical inventor in the English language. He enlarged the frontiers of poetry and enriched the language, although men of genius had ransacked verse for centuries before he himself wrote a line. Compared to Swinburne, Keats and Coleridge are poor of resource, limited in range, timid in execution. This is not to say that Swinburne has excelled them in ideas or melody, only that he was a master in the use of a far wider choice of instruments. From the simplest measures Swinburne ranges through the most elaborate. He can charm you with a lyric such as *The Ballad of Dreamland*; and he can thrill and inspire with the great war-song in *Erectheus*,

where the turmoil of battle is rendered in unforgettable language. Above all English poets he is the singer of the sea. His love of ocean is not merely sensuous. That delight he has rendered wonderfully in his *Tristram*; but his finest sea-pieces are born of imaginative sympathy and insight. None has so vividly rendered the magic of the dawn breaking over the fields of the deep, or the terrors of the trumpets of the night and the lightnings of the foam. Among the cruellest abstractions of the cosmos he exults; he drinks the ether of space as men drink wine. He was also a rare critic and an accomplished scholar. Observe his masterly essays on Shakespeare and the Elizabethans, and his beautiful renderings of Victor Hugo, Baudelaire, and Villon. Swinburne could write a lively Northern song, with the perfume of the heather clinging to it; and he could lower his high cadences to the ear of little children without loss of the omnipresent beauty of his incomparable style.

From the first his genius was unmistakable. In *Atalanta in Calydon* the strain of clear, soaring song proclaimed a real poet. The appearance of *Poems and Ballads* fluttered the doves of respectability, and aroused as much excitement as Byron's *Don Juan* had in a previous generation. Robert Buchanan attacked the poet in a pamphlet entitled *The Fleshly School of Literature*, and complained that *Poems and Ballads* were unfit reading for young ladies. Swinburne retorted, "I do not write for school-girls, I leave that to the Buchanans." The accusation of fleshliness was unfounded, but it served to advertise the book, which was a masterpiece. There are pieces which for distinction of melody, even their author has never surpassed. *Itylus*, *Laus Veneris*, *A Match*, the *Hymn to Proserpine*, and, above all, *Hesperia*, that lovely lyric where the gloriously-moulded lines recall the magnificent rolling of the full-flashed waves.

Later came *Songs Before Sunrise*, which roused men like a trumpet-blast. Throughout this volume resounds the cry of liberty, the utter abhorrence of tyranny of every kind and in every shape. To compare *Songs Before Sunrise* with *Poems and Ballads* is to see how far the poet had advanced in the interval. In melody, it is true, progress was hardly possible, but, music apart, the change is indubitable.

The advance is from the pining of youth to the passion of man. The verse sings and glows with love of freedom. It echoes the thunder of the surges and the clarions of the storm. No poet since Shelley sings more loftily, or with more fiery passion, or with finer thought than Swinburne when he is arraigning Priestcraft at the bar of Humanity. His most heretical poems will be found in the *Songs Before Sunrise*. The *Hymn to Man*, for instance, is frankly, even triumphantly, Atheistic. In the prelude he writes:—

"Because man's soul is man's god still,
What wind soever waft his will.
Save his own soul's light overhead,
None leads him, and none ever shall."

In another passage he treats the priests with fearful derision. He represents them calling on their deity, and he says, "Cry aloud, for the people blaspheme," and he concludes:—

"Thou art smitten, thou God; thou art smitten; thy
death is upon thee, O Lord:
And the love-song of Earth as thou diest resounds
through the wind of her wings—
Glory to man in the highest, for man is the master
of things."

In his lines apostrophising Christ on the Cross, he says with Voltairean bitterness:—

"Thy blood the priests make poison of,
And in gold shekels coin thy love."

The poet's terrible scorn draws no distinction between the priests and their deity. The lines addressed to Jesus are the quintessence of satire:—

"Thou bad'st let children come to thee:
What children now but curses come?
What manhood in that god can be
Who sees their worship and is dumb?
No soul that lived, loved, wrought, and died,
Is this their carrion crucified?"

Swinburne regarded prayer as folly, and he vents his scorn in music:—

"Behold, here is no grief like this;
The barren blossom of thy prayer,
Thou shalt find out how sweet it is
O fools, and blind, what seek ye there,
High up in the air?
Ye must have gods, the friends of men,
Merciful gods, compassionate;
And these shall answer you again,
Will ye beat always at the gate,
Ye fools of fate?"

In the *Hymn to Proserpine*, he sings:—

"O ghastly glories of saints, dead limbs of gibbeted
gods!
Though all men abase them before you in spirit,
and all knees bend;
I kneel not, neither adore you, but standing, look
to the end."

One quality of Swinburne's writing leaps to the eye of the dullest reader. It is his enthusiasm for right causes. The warmth of his praise is an endless delight. Such tributes as he has paid to the great apostles and champions of freedom have a generosity and enthusiasm unequalled even in poetry. How he has sung the praises of Cromwell and Milton, of Shelley and Landor, and of Victor Hugo, is well known. More enduring than the marble of the Genoese monument are those lovely songs of which Mazzini and the cause to which he dedicated his life were the inspiration. The love of Liberty has been a common possession of our greatest poets, and hardly one of them has failed to give splendid expression to the feeling. But Swinburne has surpassed them all in the ardor of his devotion, and in the rapture of his praise:—

"The very thought in us how much we love thee
Makes the throat sob with love, and blinds the eyes."

Swinburne was an avowed Freethinker and Republican. In his writings we find the most magnificent expression of the claims of the indomitable human spirit, of the soul that stands erect in the presence of all adverse fortune, and bids defiance to all malign fates. There is no finer ethical inspiration in all English poetry than breathes through the unforgettable lines of his inspired utterance. It was a most animating message that the finer spirits of the French Revolution bequeathed as a legacy to the nineteenth century. Equally inspiring is the message which the really great poet at the close of the nineteenth century brought to the twentieth as a gift. It is of splendid augury for the future that Liberty in our day should have received such a crown of song as had never before been laid at her august feet.

MIMNERMUS.

The Plant Life of the Sea.

THE distribution of organisms in the ocean has been carefully studied by the exploring expeditions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Although nearly every part of the earth's surface is the habitat of living things, and the lower layers of the atmosphere possess their special organic forms, yet living matter is not found at any considerable height in the air, nor does it exist to any great depth in the crust of the globe. Far different, however, are the conditions which prevail throughout the great ocean masses. In the seas, animal and vegetable organisms flourish at all depths. From the torrid regions to the poles, and from the sea surfaces right down to the ocean bed at a depth of six miles, life of some kind or other is everywhere present.

The light of the sun penetrates the waters of the ocean to a distance of over 3,000 feet, and even the invisible actinic or chemical rays do not reach beyond 5,000 feet. This shallow stratum of sea water which is influenced by the direct action of the solar rays is termed the Photic Zone, and every part of it is populated with plant life, frequently in rich abundance, particularly in the character of immense "floating meadows of unicellular algæ." These aquatic plants

provide food for innumerable herbivorous sea animals, and these herbivorous organisms in their turn supply the stomachs of other creatures which subsist on a flesh diet. Thus that pitiless striving for existence which is so notorious on land is seen to be in ceaseless operation in the waters of the deep.

At all depths below the Photic Zone, vegetable life is absent. But the dead fragments of the plants which dwell in the Photic Zone, as these fall through the water, serve to furnish nutriment to animals living in the ocean's intermediate layers, as well as for other organisms which only stand and wait in the ocean bottom, or crawl in search of food among the mud and clay at the bed of the sea. These organisms, again, become the victims of hungry carnivores. Thus all aquatic animals are seen to depend either directly or indirectly upon the ocean vegetation for their food. In addition to the marine algae, there is, of course, the nutritive substance swept into the sea by the earth's running waters.

Sir John Murray, of *Challenger* fame, formed the view that when we consider the enormous depth of the ocean, and "that plants may function at a depth of 3,000 or 4,000 feet, and that animals exist throughout the entire ocean, we may conclude that the total quantity of living matter in the ocean greatly exceeds that on the land surfaces of the globe."*

The terrestrial climates of the the world vary within very considerable limits, and so do those of the sea. Salt water freezes at a much lower temperature than fresh water, and living organisms become adapted in the Arctic and Antarctic regions to a permanent water temperature lower than the point at which ordinary water is transformed into solid ice, while species closely allied to these are able to flourish in the tropical seas at the very high temperature of 80° F.

In the hot equatorial waters, organisms develop and multiply at a rapid rate, while these phenomena of growth and reproduction are considerably retarded in the icy waters of the polar seas. Moreover, where the waters are shallow, aquatic organisms are compelled to accommodate themselves to strong marine or atmospheric currents, to the profuse sunlight, to sudden changes in the temperature, and in the salinity of the waters, as well as to maintain themselves against a host of competitors and enemies. But in the deep waters perpetual darkness reigns, and their dreary monotony remains unrelieved save for the light occasionally shed by phosphorescent animals. With a practically uniform and low temperature, and with no swiftly running currents to disturb their silence, the gloomy conditions of these dark deeps remain unchanged from year to year. In the intermediate areas which lie between the ocean surfaces and its abysses, strange adaptations which enable organisms to dwell in constant twilight have been discovered. Other modifications have been met with, all of which have been evolved for the purpose of enabling living creatures to so comport themselves that they may survive in the conflict of life.

The floral and faunal regions of the sea have been classified in a very interesting and instructive manner, and the first of these—the Photic Zone—may now be described. As already stated, the Photic Zone is the superficial area of the ocean which is penetrated by the light of the sun. The solar body illumines the ocean more fully in the open sea and in tropical latitudes than in the higher latitudes, or in areas adjoining land. This Zone is subdivided into the oceanic and neritic areas. The useful term "neritic" was coined by Haeckel, and relates to entities appertaining to coastal waters and bays, in opposition to the term "oceanic," which relates to those existences confined to the open sea. The neritic region, then, environs all land surfaces, whether island or continental, and embraces those waters whose depth from surface to bottom lies within the limits of the 100 fathom line. The neritic liquid masses are considerably agitated by the

action of winds, waves, and water currents, and they differ greatly in composition, in saltness, and in temperature. The adult inhabitants of this area belong to both the animal and the vegetable kingdoms, together with a fair proportion of the larval forms of organisms whose home is on the continental shelf.

The continental shelf is that section of the ocean floor situated between the shore line and the 100 fathom (600 feet) line. Its descent is in most cases very gradual, with higher areas known as coast banks. The floor of the neritic region is extremely variable, as it may be made up of sands, boulders, rocks, muds, or marls. The oceanic division of the Photic Zone, lying less under the direct influence of the dry land and of the ocean bed, in consequence possesses a pronounced uniformity when compared with the region just reviewed. The temperature, salinity, and viscosity all fluctuate with latitude, and the organisms of this open sea area are more widely dispersed than in the neritic region.

In each of the subdivisions of the Photic Zone plant life is richly represented, and carnivorous and herbivorous animals both abound. The meaning of the term "viscosity" employed in the preceding paragraph may not be familiar to all. It is thus defined:—

"The viscosity of liquids is the internal friction; the resistance to the motion of the molecules of the fluid body among themselves. It arises from the mutual attraction of the molecules, and diminishes as the temperature is raised and the molecules move further apart."

This viscosity, or internal friction, bears an important relation to the floating capacity of aquatic organisms. The viscosity of salt water declines with a rising temperature. As a matter of fact, sea water at a temperature of 77° F. is about half as viscous as at the freezing point of fresh water (32° F.). In consequence of this, the same substance would sink twice as quickly in water at 77° F. than at a temperature of 32° F. This striking phenomenon has played its part in the evolution of those suspension-organs so essential to floating forms of life.

The Deep Sea Zone is scientifically known as the Aphotic. This region comprises all the ocean, from the lowermost layers of the Photic Zone to the furthest depths ever sounded by the plummet. The Deep Sea Zone is a realm of eternal darkness, though some amends have been made through the evolution of the phosphorescent light cast by some abyssal creatures, and which appears to render important services to the inhabitants of these lightless regions. Save in a few enclosed seas, the temperature of this cimmerian dwelling-place is extremely low. The pressure is enormous, but the population of these deeps suffer small inconvenience, as they have succeeded in establishing equilibrium by adapting their internal organs to the surface strains and stresses of their remarkable aquatic surroundings. No vegetable life appears to exist in these dark and deep seas; the carnivorous animals devour those milder creatures that pick up a precarious living as mud-feeders, or as snatchers of those organic particles which fall from the upper ocean layers.

In the tropical waters, the differences between the Photic and Aphotic Zones are more clearly distinguished than in more northerly or southerly latitudes. At the Equator, the sun's rays penetrate further than elsewhere, and the ocean surface temperature attains its maximum. Waves and currents exercise little influence below the superficial sea layers, and the organisms that live on or near the ocean floor display remarkable adaptations in their colors, organs of vision, phosphorescent powers, and tactual appendages.

Another thickly populated region is that of the mid-ocean, as the food particles which sink from the surface find their fall retarded by the greatly intensified viscosity of the water, and this area is therefore well supplied with esculent matter, upon which its inhabitants flourish.

* *The Ocean*, p. 134; 1914.

Those highest forms of plant life, the Phanerogams, are represented in the seas. Eel-grass (*Zostera marina*) is quite abundant near the Atlantic shores, in sheltered spots provided with a soft earthy floor. This floral growth serves as a refuge-ground for several species of animals which are seldom, if ever, found far apart from their plant protector. By far the greater number of plants, however, are members of the lowly algæ. The vertical direction of tropical sunshine, and its consequent deeper penetration, enable the algæ to live at a greater depth in the Equatorial oceans than elsewhere in the seas. Terrestrial vegetation procures its nourishment from the soil and air, whereas the aquatic algæ assimilate their food from substances dissolved in the sea water which everywhere environs them. They are thus enabled to absorb nutritious matters at all parts of their surfaces. All the ocean algæ possess green chlorophyll—"that magician which, conjuring with the sunbeams, is able to build up organic compounds from inorganic constituents." This green coloring matter, however, is frequently disguised by other pigments of various shades of red, blue, brown, and yellow.

The sea algæ are very conveniently classified into two leading groups. Those that dwell on the sea bed are termed Benthos, a name bestowed on those organisms which are attached to, or move over, the ocean floor. The second group consists of those algæ that spend their lives in floating on the surface of the sea. These plants are termed Phytoplankton. This formidable-looking word merely means "plant plankton." Plankton is a term introduced into biology by Hensen, and is now employed as a name for all aquatic organisms which passively drift with the currents. Plankton is sometimes confounded with Nekton, a word coined by Haeckel to designate all sea organisms found on the surface waters of the open ocean which possess the power to swim against the currents.

Recent research shows that the green and blue-green algæ dwell in shallower water than the russet varieties. Blue algæ, which have descended into the deeper seas, change to red, while the red algæ assume a green, yellow, or purple appearance, according to the amount of sunlight to which they are exposed.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be concluded.)

A Swiss Tribute to Mr. Foote's Memory.

THE following brief notice of the death of Mr. G. W. Foote appeared in the issue of our esteemed Lausanne contemporary, *La Libre Pensée Internationale*, under date November 6, 1915:—

"We have just learned by accident that the director of the London *Freethinker*, the remarkable writer and thinker, G. W. Foote, died on the 17th October. This is an irreparable loss for English Freethought, of which he was, as it were, the very soul.

During the whole of his long life he was the unconquerable defender of Rationalism by means of his sword-like pen and of his great talents as an orator.

Unfortunately, ever since the English Post Office stopped the transmission of newspapers that are not covered by a wrapper bearing the name of the newspaper publishers, we no longer receive the *Freethinker*, and have only seen it once during more than two months past. We are unable, therefore, to give any details concerning the last moments of our confrère. If we are able to procure his portrait and necessary information, we will publish a biography of G. W. Foote, who was imprisoned on behalf of our cause. We beg to tender our condolence to the staff of the *Freethinker*, and hope very soon to receive tidings that the death of the director and proprietor will not prevent the continuance of the excellent *Freethinker*.—The Editorial Staff of the *L. P. I.*"

We beg to thank our Swiss contemporary for these generous words in memory of our departed Chief. Care will be taken to ensure the prompt and regular dispatch of the *Freethinker* to its fellow-in-arms, *La*

Libre Pensée Internationale. Our ever-welcome and interesting contemporary may feel assured that the *Freethinker* will not die. It is indeed our aim to do service to the memory of its late Founder by giving it an even fuller measure of life and utility. And an essential part of our work will consist in renewing and invigorating the bonds of sympathetic feeling which unite English Freethought with the world-wide movement of rebellion against all religions in general and Christianity in particular. With that object in view we are sending to our Lausanne contemporary Mr. Foote's latest photograph and other necessary particulars for the issue of a biography of our late Chief.

George William Foote—Freethinker.

If it be conceded that, apart from their utility or correctness, it is possible for act or words to have value, by reason of the motives which prompt them, then every right-thinking person must regret the death of George William Foote. Whether the path taken be found, by the ultimate test, to be the correct one or not, if the path be chosen with a sincere belief that it is one which leads to human liberty and happiness, if the person whose life is reviewed sacrificed pecuniary advantage and personal popularity to carry out the mission his ideals imposed upon him, then the world is made poorer by his passing. Such is our predicament by the loss of the late leader of British Atheism.

There will be many who will utter words of appreciation of the life's work of Mr. Foote, and their appreciation will be based on different grounds. He will be remembered as one who was a prisoner for blasphemy. He will be remembered as a writer and orator. Some seem to think his greatest work was the establishment of a legally unassailable association of Secularists, and that his greatest triumph was the recent judgment in the Bowman case, which placed the Secular Society, Limited, on a more sound footing in the eyes of the law than the Roman Catholic Church, in spite of the Blasphemy Laws. True, each of these is testimony to his courage, ability, or astuteness, but they are not the points which make me personally feel poorer by his death. Nor does his friendship with Charles Bradlaugh, nor his correspondence with George Meredith, nor his knowledge of Shakespeare, nor his late secretaryship of the Republican League, all of which one or other of the papers comment upon, seem to me the real basis of his claim to live, though dead.

However magnificent be the spectacle of a conquest by momentary brilliance, the victory is naught compared with a life of consistent effort and purpose towards the striver's goal, even if the strife be seemingly in vain, and if death intervene whilst the combat still rages.

Ever active, ever vigilant, never daunted, in the most bitter of all fights, strove G. W. Foote. By its nature theological controversy is the most bitter of all struggles. The fearless inquirer meets not only the arguments of the "believers," but their hatred, spleen, and malice. Perhaps they believe that since the *Freethinker* would take away from them something they treasure as a personal property, he is akin to a thief, and as such is an outlaw. From almost youth to his sixty-sixth year, G. W. Foote was the flag-bearer of his army of light, in the dark and cob-webbed crypts of Christianity, and he persisted to the end.

If only he had sold himself and placed a hiring fee upon his pen, what a price could have been his! He did not, he cared not for wealth, he merely strove for that which he believed to be right. For this we mourn his loss.

At the graveside could he well uttered the words of Ernest Jones, the Chartist—"The foundation stones of liberty are the graves of the just; the lives of the departed are the landmarks of the living; the memories of the past are the beacons of the future."—JESSIE COCKERLINE, *Bradford Pioneer*.

The Bishop of London's clergy in the East End report an orgy of drinking among women. Do the clergy's parochial duties lead them into public-houses?

The Puritans are happy concerning the drink restrictions in the Metropolis, but everyone is not so delighted. A tale is told of a coster who said, "If I treats the missus I am fined £5; if I ill-treats her—five bob."

It was one of life's little ironies that caused a cinema advertisement to read. "The Faith of a Child." "The Vengeance of Allah."

Acid Drops.

Birmingham has been having a week of prayer, and Canon Adderley preached the opening sermon in the cathedral. He sees the hand of God in the War, since just when the nation was on the brink of civil war and industrial war there was brought about a wonderful unity of the people. So that, if Canon Adderley is correct, God plunged the whole of Europe into war in order to prevent industrial and civil troubles. We should not have thought that the internal state of this country was of such tremendous importance to the heavenly powers; but Canon Adderley ought to know. Still, it is evident that if these industrial and civil troubles are to be permanently avoided, the War must last for ever. For it is tolerably plain that these industrial and civil questions are only postponed, not abandoned. Home Rule is not abandoned, nor do workmen and employers love each other more now than before war commenced. And the consideration shown for the people by colliery owners and others, as evidenced in the rise of prices and the determination of wringing the last farthing out of the people's necessities, will not lay up a very great store of love upon which we can draw in the future.

And what, after all, is "the miracle of unity" which has happened to this Christian country? Let us take it for granted that if Christians left off quarrelling with each other—for a time—what is its significance? The only significance that we can see is that the "unity" achieved is of a lower kind, and a smaller value, than the disunity that preceded the War. If people were divided before the War, it was a division upon the important question of social reforms and of political progress; and that was a symptom of health. The unity that followed the War is the product of sheer self-defence against external attack, with a strong dash of the barbaric feeling of hatred towards outsiders. And that involves an expenditure of human energy upon a lower and altogether less profitable plane. And it is an apt commentary upon the declining power of Christianity, upon the converting quality of human love, that the only thing that could produce unity in a Christian nation is hatred of some other Christian nation.

Canon Adderley complains, however, that we are not religious enough. In Russia and France, and even in Germany, there has been a great national wave of prayer, but not in England. If the Canon will reflect that these great revivals often take place where the observer is not, he may be on the right road to solve the problem. They are something like miracles, which always occur somewhere else. As a sample of the trustworthiness of the reports, spread by men like the Bishop of London and Dr. Horton, he gives the following illustrations from letters received by him:—

"I had a letter from the Trenches a few days ago, in which my friend wrote: 'There is not much evidence of religion, in spite of the rosy accounts given by some Bishops.' Here is another extract from a soldier's letter: 'A certain Bishop spent a half-holiday here and then went home and told his congregation that the troops were very God-fearing and a splendid example to the people at home. Our chaplain said what a pity it was these men had all been killed before he came out, as he would so like to have seen them.'"

This chaplain reminds us of Swift's saying that all the Bishops in Ireland in his day were disguised highwaymen. He explained what he meant. The English Government always had good, pious, wise men as Bishops. But they never reached Ireland. So Swift propounded the theory that on their way to Ireland these good men were murdered by highwaymen, who donned their clothes and drew their salaries.

It is very easy for descriptive epithets, when applied to teachers of unpopular truths, to pass current as established history. Thus, in the *Jewish Chronicle* for November 5, Dr. Israel Abrahams writes: "G. W. Foote, who has just died, was prosecuted in the 'eighties for blasphemy; the offence for which he suffered was that he attacked the established religion with execrable taste, whereas his real crime was his inadequate scholarship. He was arraigned for vulgarity when his sin was ignorance." We do not know what Dr. Abrahams' claims are to scholarship, but a passage like the one cited offers quite unimpeachable evidence of the writer's own vulgarity and ignorance. For if there is one thing inexcusably vulgar, in the worst sense of the word, it is to take one's estimate of a man like G. W. Foote from mere religious rumor, and we charitably assume that this is the extent of Dr. Abrahams' knowledge of the man about whom he writes. In such a case one can only escape the charge of vulgar ignorance by incurring that of deliberate misrepresentation. And certainly no one with a native bias

towards justice and fairness would ever take his estimate of a leading Freethinker from the advocates of the religion he attacked. But with many, where religion is concerned, to expect fairness is to anticipate a return of the days of the miraculous.

There seems a good deal of human nature about the Vicar of St. John's, Bath—also about his parishioners. A deputation of these waited on the vicar the other day to ask him to preach shorter sermons on Sunday mornings. The vicar agreed, and added, "Better an underdone sermon than an overdone Sunday dinner."

The Rev. M. P. Davies, Congregational minister at Oldham, was fined £3 for refusing to enter full particulars on his registration form. It was stated that he had a conscientious objection to war. Curiously, one of the newspapers headed the paragraph "The Crank."

An article on the forthcoming Merry Birthday of the Man of Sorrows, in the *Evening News*, says "by all means let us conceal the gravity of the situation from the children; we are no flaming angels to shut out little Adam and little Eve from Paradise." And, naturally, some apples should be found to make Eden complete.

We are indebted to the *Observer* for the following extract from a report of the Commissioners in Lunacy after a visit to Brookwood Asylum:—

"We learn that there was during the year a good average attendance at the Sunday services in the chapel, but a poor attendance at the weekly entertainments."

This predilection of the insane for religious services reminds one of a Bishop of Exeter who some years back defended his action in confirming 38 idiots on the ground that "it was well known the weak-minded had a natural tendency towards religion."

We are glad to see *Reynolds'* administering a sharp rap over the knuckles to Prebendary Webb-Peploe on account of his description of Sunday entertainments to wounded soldiers as "disgraceful in the eyes of God." But *Reynolds'* surely wide of the mark when it tells Mr. Webb-Peploe 'you forget yourself.' That seems to us precisely what the ever-remembering gentleman remembers. For the protest against Sunday amusements is very largely based on professional interest. Sunday entertainments mean a poorer church attendance; and when one has said that all has been said.

The Bishop of London has been at it again. His latest discovery is that God will be certain to answer our prayers because we are a kingdom of priests. If the bishop is not more careful in the charges he brings against the English people many will suspect him of being an emissary of the Kaiser, in spite of his dare-devil exploits in khaki.

The Vicar of Ellacombe writes in the November issue of the Parish Magazine:—

"If it is true, as we can hardly help confessing, that the great majority of English folk are little more than nominally Christians, and that the War so far has brought no widespread spiritual revival in our country, must it not be to some extent at least our fault? I believe that one of the lessons which God wants Christian people to learn through the War is the bankruptcy of mere civilisation, mere education, mere intellectual culture, in the face of the great fundamental problems of sin."

In plain English, give up everything else and come to church. The point of the vicar's appeal seems self-evident.

Dr. Yarrow, an American missionary, says that the Armenian people have experienced every conceivable form of torture at the hands of the Turks, while the injuries inflicted upon women and children are indescribable. He adds that the Turks have declared a "holy war" upon the Armenians, and have vowed to exterminate them. It is curious that whenever a people wish to do something more than usually brutal, they should utilise religion as an inspiration.

There is more joy in heaven over one sinner saved, etc., etc. And the editor of the *Nuneaton Observer* duly rejoices. The great revival of religion, dismissed by some at the beginning of the War "as a passing phase," is a fact. It has become "the most striking fact in modern history." "The reality of the movement can no longer be doubted." After this—and much more of the same kind—one is prepared for columns of conversions, and rows of figures extending half over the paper. But all this "pother" turns

out to rest on the fact of "Mr. Bottomley's confession of Faith"—on which we really could not resist a smile; and if Mr. Bottomley reads the article, we should not be surprised if he smiled likewise. Of course, religious revivals have commenced with one man before now, but we really cannot picture Mr. Bottomley going down the ages as a second Wesley or Whitefield.

The editor of the *Observer* is solemnly funny, or amusingly solemn—either way will fit. He points out that Mr. Bottomley used to print in *John Bull* the shortcomings of professors of religion, but this only makes the value of the convert the greater. And the editor explains this. His previous attitude towards religion "may be accounted for by the fact of his early association with the late G. W. Foote." Evidently G. W. Foote—to paraphrase Falstaff—was not only non-religious himself, but the cause of non-religion in others. And the picture of the simple and guileless Mr. Bottomley being led astray by the malevolent influence of G. W. Foote is quite touching. No wonder the *Observer* grows eloquent in its praise of Mr. Bottomley as a man who "is fully cognisant of the trend of modern and scientific thought." We can hardly restrain our own emotion while writing.

"Are we growing stingy?" asks the enraged editor of an Essex parish magazine. This looks as if there were more brace-buttons than usual in the collection bags.

The Turk has often been referred to as "unspeakable." Is this because he doesn't claim the Lord as an ally in his fighting?

Lord Derby has forwarded a letter to General Booth, informing him that the same reason for the clergy refraining from enlisting applies also to Salvation Army officers. This was in response to a letter of inquiry from the "General" on the point. Evidently, whether it is the head of a non-descript body like the Salvation Army, or the head of the Established Church, when it touches sectarian interests, everything else must go by the board. And in both cases the dislike to the clergy and the "officers" enlisting is the same. The fear is that the people will slip from their hold. They must continue their ministrations or folk would find out how well they can get on without them.

Still another Day of Intercession! This one is fixed for the first Sunday in January. We have had so many since the War began, and they have yielded so little, that we should have thought that many religious people would by now have recognised their futility. Still, we suppose the clergy must do something to justify their existence.

Mr. Austin Harrison says there is no "real religion" in Germany, which invites the question, What is real religion? The expression is a piece of mere journalistic clap-trap. There is no such thing as real religion in the sense of there being something which admits of verification. A religion can only be "real" to the one who accepts it as such; and its reality varies not only with time and place, but with the same individual at different times. A religion that is "real" to a Mohammedan is not "real" to a Christian, and the religion of both would be false to a follower of Brahma. A religion that is real while a man remains a Roman Catholic becomes false when he is converted to Protestantism. Mr. Harrison seems to be trying to prove the truth of Heine's *mot*, that the most intelligent Englishman will say something stupid if you talk to him about religion.

Curiously enough, Mr. Harrison's remark is made in the course of an article in which he shows that there is a deal of "real" religion in Germany. The Germans, it appears, were religious; but when the Kaiser—who is "a religious mystic"—came to the throne, he found Germany without a religion. The Kaiser "journeyed up and down the empire and found no churches," and as he found "Germany on the one hand frankly Catholic, and on the other frankly Free-thinkers," it is evident that the Catholics must have had their services in barns or cellars. And we were really under the impression that there were plenty of Protestant churches in Germany. So the Kaiser built churches and cathedrals, and gave the people "a good dose of doctrinal religion." But still—most remarkable of phenomena—they were without "real" religion. And the Kaiser "always 'talked Scripture.' Among his people he was spoken of as having been sent to the Germans to lead them 'from on high.' No emperor ever took the name of God so much in vain before." And still they were without "real" religion—so much so, that in nine years Mr. Harrison "never met a religious man."

More remarkable still is Mr. Harrison's description of what followed all this building of churches:—

"That side by side with the imperial manifestation of piety and religious belief and the public's acceptance of the phenomenon, there grew and flourished what one can only call a saturnalia of debauchery, sexual perversities, and general laxity of moral standards—this mattered little to the Kaiser, who, indeed, encouraged it.

'My Berlin,' he said, 'shall outdo Paris and become the first world-city in Europe.' He did not mean first in piety; he meant first in vice, in show, in wealth, in display, in *demi-mondaineism*; and his exhortation did not fall on deaf ears."

It almost takes one's breath away. A religious maniac the Kaiser may be. Drunk with dreams of world-conquest the ruling military class of Germany may be. Deceived and fooled the German public may be. Brutal and barbarous large numbers of the German soldiery may be. But does anyone really believe that the Kaiser deliberately encouraged all that Mr. Harrison depicts? If journalists cannot set laymen an example of balanced judgment and cool reasoning, it would be better for them to turn to some less harmful employment. And the British case against Germany is certainly strong enough to be independent of writings of this character, which weaken where they are intended to strengthen.

A number of people were recently convinced that some bright lights seen in the sky were kite-balloons on the look-out for Zeppelins. The *Polytechnic Magazine*, in recording the fact, says, "If ordinary matter-of-fact individuals, without anguish or desire to exaggerate appearances, can in London mistake stars for kite-balloons, is it surprising that under the terrific strain of the struggle in France, men in the Trenches should see visions?" Not at all. And the writer of the note might have added, that had these lights been in some way connected with the established religion, the same kind of "evidence" would have been produced for their reality as for the Mons angels. There would have been plenty of anonymous witnesses, and Mr. Harold Begbie would doubtless have written a volume "on the side of the kite-balloons."

Those who believe that Germany developed the war mania because of its neglect of Christianity, would do well to read an article by Rear-Admiral Fiske, of the U.S. Navy, in the current issue of the *North American Review*. Rear-Admiral Fiske writes as a Christian, but he appears to believe that Christianity can only affect individuals, and can have no influence on the relations between nations. He says:—

"But let us look the facts solemnly in the face that the Christian religion has now been in effect for nearly two thousand years; that the nations now warring are Christian nations, in the very foremost rank of Christendom; that never in history has there been so much bloodshed in such widespread areas and so much hate, and that we see no signs that Christianity is employing any influence that she has not been employing for nearly two thousand years.....Christianity is invoked in every warring nation now, to stimulate the patriotic spirit of the nation, and intensify the hate of the crowd against the enemy; and even if we think that such invoking is a perversion of religious influence to unrighteous ends, we must admit the fact that the Christian religion itself is at this moment being made to exert a powerful influence—not towards peace, but towards war! And this should not amaze us, for where does the Bible say or intimate that love among the nations will ever be brought about? The Savior said: 'I bring not peace but a sword.' So what reasonable hope does even Christianity give us that war between nations will cease?"

As a statement of fact, Rear-Admiral Fiske's utterance is unimpeachable. The cessation of war may come by the growth of intelligence and by the steady evolution of humanity. It can never come by an infusion of Christianity.

More evidence of the extent to which Germany has rejected religion in order to go to war. Every Catholic soldier in the German Armies has been presented with a little book entitled *Father, I Call Thee*. Prayers are drawn up for use on special occasions, and the book is distributed with the approbation of the military authorities. There is also in the Preface the following passage:—

"For a long time our enemies have looked on us with covert envy, and it is their disfavor which has forced this War on us. They alone have to bear the heavy responsibility. We Germans can reckon on God's help who—at least, we hope so—will crown the righteous cause with final victory. Therefore go forward in the full confidence that Heaven will shield you from the enemy. God helps the brave!"

A clear proof of what some of our clergy call the *Atheism* and *Materialism* of Modern Germany.

The perfect Christian is yet to be found, but an excellent candidate for the proud position has been found in President Wilson, who "never uses slang, never drinks, and never swears." And, it should be added, he never fights.

To Correspondents.

MR. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—November 28, Birmingham Town Hall; December 5, Queen's Hall (London); 12, Leicester; 19, Portsmouth.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND.—R. Murison, 9s. 6d. (This Fund is now closed.)

"DAVID AND JONATHAN."—Something of the kind you suggest has been attempted, but without success. Thanks for good wishes.

S. H.—The names of great men have always proved irresistible attractions to myth-makers. The story concerning Mr. Foote, about which you inquire, is an illustration of this. We need hardly say that it is pure fiction. Fortunately, warned by what has occurred in the case of other leading Freethinkers, we have taken every precaution to effectively dissipate any legends that may be circulated concerning Mr. Foote's illness. We shall be obliged if readers will inform us of any they may come across.

W. DODD.—Thanks for good wishes. Mr. Cohen will be pleased to see you at Birmingham on the 28th.

M. R.—Sorry, but we are unable to use your communication.

T. C. PUZEY (Beira).—Thanks. Very useful.

H. T. BURGESS (S. Africa).—We are glad to know that your *Freethinker* is now reaching you regularly. Delays with the postal authorities are, we suppose, to be expected under prevailing conditions.

A SAPPER of some years' experience writes endorsing what has been said in these columns concerning the religion—or rather the lack of it—in the majority of soldiers. He says that even when soldiers attend in such cases where Church Service is optional, they are there to see friends, for the pleasure of the walk, or to avoid the more disagreeable fatigue duty. He has never met the "Tommy" who expressed any desire for "spiritual comfort."

H. PASELY.—Received, and handed to business manager.

E. NORWOOD.—See reply to "David and Jonathan." The other matter referred to was decided by Mr. Foote.

W. H. HAWK.—Please introduce yourself at Birmingham. We believe that tea is usually provided between the afternoon and evening meetings.

R. T. (Wavertree).—If the school teachers ignore the request that your child should not receive any religious instruction, you should lodge a complaint with the local authorities. If redress is not then obtained, communicate direct with the Education Department. You are well within your statutory rights in withdrawing your child, and the school may be penalised for not attending to your wishes.

A. W. HUTTY.—You are carrying on a brave fight under the most trying circumstances. Please accept our compliments and congratulations.

W. E. JARMAINE writes that, having induced his newsagent to display the *Freethinker*, and guaranteeing the sale of six copies per week, after four weeks' trial, not only have the whole six been sold, but more have had to be ordered. Thanks.

T. J. DAVIES.—No space in this issue. Will deal with the matter next week.

"IS IT FAIR?"—Certainly it is not fair; but you must bear in mind that the clergy occupy a privileged position in this country. Hence what is excusable with them, becomes a grave offence with others.

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.

Concerning the "Freethinker."

It would take up too much space to publish all the kind things that have been said in response to last week's "Special" on "The Future of the *Freethinker*." And to make a selection would be very difficult. All I can do is to use this method of thanking those who have written, and to assure them that I will do my best not to forfeit the good opinions expressed. I can, however, say this. Judging from the letters received, which have been numerous, helpful in tone, and some of them from quite unexpected quarters, I

need no longer say that I believe I have the support of all friends of the *Freethinker*. I now know it. Contributors have promised their most cordial support, and if the paper does not forge ahead, it will not be their fault. Many readers have also favored me with suggestions, all of which have been carefully read, and some of which will be put into operation as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, the pressing need is for an increase in circulation. As I have already said, the *Freethinker* has held its own in the matter of circulation, in spite of the War, and that is a circumstance which augurs well for the future. On the other hand, the cost of production has increased, and the only way to meet this is by increased sales, for I have no intention of following the example of many other papers, by reducing either the number of pages or the quality of paper on which the *Freethinker* is printed. I have just had notice of a still further increase in the cost of paper, and this, with other things, makes an addition to the cost of production of about £2 per week; and this increase must be met somehow or other.

I suggest, therefore, to all *Freethinker* readers the desirability of making a strenuous effort to secure new subscribers. This is the best, and only permanent, means of helping any journal. Many readers are, I know, already doing what they can; what is wanted is help in this direction from a larger number. Newsagents may be induced to display copies of the paper—which invariably leads to sales—or new subscribers may be gained by personal introduction. The readers we get, we usually keep; all we want is the first introduction. Advertising, on a scale that would be effective, is at present out of the question, and we are therefore thrown back upon personal effort—which is, after all, the usual method by which propagandist journals are kept alive. If addresses at which specimen copies of the *Freethinker* would be acceptable are given to the business manager of the Pioneer Press, he will see that they are duly sent.

But on the whole we can go ahead with cheerfulness and in confidence. The *Freethinker* has been fighting against difficulties from the hour of its birth, over thirty-five years ago, and the present ones are no more disheartening than previous ones have been. It is only one form of the struggle of unpopular ideas against hostile forces, and those who enter on that fight would be foolish to expect their path to be one of roses. Freethought is, after all, something that is worth fighting for, and if the fight involves hardships, it also brings compensations that convert difficulties into a healthy tonic for sturdy minds. C. COHEN.

Sugar Plums.

Progress is being made with the arrangements for the G. W. Foote Memorial Meeting at the Queen's Hall on December 5. Mr. Halley Stewart, Mr. Herbert Burrows, Mr. S. H. Swinny, and the Rev. Stewart Headlam, are among those who have promised to be present, so that the meeting will be of a thoroughly representative character. Some slips announcing the meeting are being printed, and will be ready for distribution by the end of the week. We should be glad if those who can undertake their distribution will apply to the N. S. S. Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, at 62 Farringdon-street, E.C., or at the offices of the Pioneer Press.

Our business manager informs us that the orders are coming in well for Mr. Foote's portrait, but that as getting portraits finished is not like printing copies of a paper, he is not yet able to despatch all that have been ordered. Those who do not receive the portrait at once will understand—and pardon—the delay.

The *Truthseeker* (New York) opens its issue for October 30 with a notice of our late editor, occupying four and a half columns, with a portrait—we know it is a portrait of Mr. Foote because the name is underneath it. The article is made up, for the most part, of quotations from Mr. Foote's writings, giving his philosophy of life and death. There is a further appreciation in another part of the *Truthseeker* which we intend reprinting next week.

Mr. J. T. Lloyd lectures this evening (Nov. 21) at the Secular School, Failsworth, at 6.30. The subject is "Nietzsche," and it is one that ought to attract a good audience. So many people have written of late concerning Nietzsche without understanding him—and often, apparently, without reading him—that it will be a change to listen to one who has both read and understands one of the great seminal thinkers of our time.

There is likely—from all we hear—to be big gatherings at Mr. Cohen's meetings in the Birmingham Town Hall next week (November 28). Still, the place will take a deal of filling, and we trust that the "saints" in Birmingham and the surrounding district will do their best to be present, and bring some Christian friends.

Mr. A. T. Williams, of the Scottish Society for the Prevention of Vivisection, writes:—

"I see my old friend Mr. G. W. Foote has passed over to the great majority. He was much misunderstood by the blind public. My acquaintance with Mr. Foote began when, as a very young man, I organised some meetings for him at Bristol in connection with the then existing Branch of the N. S. S. We presented him with an illuminated address on his coming out of prison, for the gallant fight he made for freedom. I shall always prize the graceful terms in which he accepted our little presentation. We occasionally met afterwards, and though he was a born fighter, keen as a razor intellectually, yet there was no opponent at all decent with him but what received the treatment of a gentleman. I remember telling him with very great trembling that I did not agree with some of the pictures he published. To my complete astonishment, he quite politely said, 'Oh, that is only saying that two minds look at the matter from different points of view.' Such a tolerant reply was a sure sign of greatness. The *Freethinker* was always a better publication than its reputation. It deserved to be read for its high literary purity, as well as its grave discussion of the vast issues of human thought. Mr. Foote's other sympathies, such as his eloquent denunciation of the horrors of vivisection, proved him to be a man of deep feeling, and his wide humanism will be his passport into the history of the saints of thought, who have nobly battled with their own ready-made instruments for betterment of our poor old world."

We have answered several inquiries lately—some through our correspondence column, others by post—concerning the Oaths Amendment Act. A leaflet was prepared by Mr. Bradlaugh, giving full instructions to those wishing to affirm, and also containing the text of the Act. This leaflet is still in print, and copies can be obtained on sending a stamped and addressed envelope to Miss Vance, General Secretary N. S. S., 62 Farrington-street, London, E.C.

Mr. W. Heaford writes us as follows:—"May I be permitted a few words concerning *La Libre Pensée Internationale*? Now that *La Pensée*, of Brussels is dead, crushed under the bloody heel of the German hordes, *La L. P. I.* is the sole representative on the Continent of International Freethought. Every week it publishes eight bright, witty, and learned pages. Its writers are some of the best critics and clearest thinkers and writers of France and Switzerland. The paper has suffered heavily by the War, but survives with unimpaired efficiency amidst the ghastly welter of blood now going on throughout Europe. A large number of its old supporters are already slaughtered in battle or are fighting at the Front or languishing in hospital, and their withdrawal represents loss on the financial side. Despite this fact, a certain number of copies are regularly sent every week to the men at the Front for propaganda purposes and to comfort and enhearten old friends of the cause. Many of our English and American readers who love French literature and French Freethought may, in the circumstances, like to help *La L. P. I.* by becoming subscribers. When they have perused their copies they can judiciously distribute them amongst the French and Belgian refugees in this country, many of whom are Freethinkers to whom a Freethought paper in the French language would, metaphorically speaking, come as a 'Godsend.' To those who are well inclined to take this hint, let me say that the annual subscription is 7 francs 25c, and that the journal is published at 4 Louve, Lausanne, Switzerland. I owe a letter to the Editor, my friend, Ernest Peytrequin, and a long series of articles besides, but I have not yet been able to find strength to write either the one or the other on account of my long continued illness. But I hope that they will soon be on their way."

The Failsworth Secular Sunday-school sends a resolution expressing its sense of the loss to British Freethought by the death of G. W. Foote, and adds a message of sympathy with his wife and family.

Will readers who are ordering books, pamphlets, etc., from the Pioneer Press, kindly address their communications to the Business Manager. This will avoid delay in attending to them.

The Memorial Number of the *Freethinker* is still on sale, and our business manager reports that it is still going well. As we announced, the first issue of the *Freethinker* for that week ran quite out of print, but fortunately, quickly enough to permit our going ahead with a second impression. Many of our readers find this an excellent number to send to friends, and when one bears in mind the number of well known writers—some quite unconnected with the Freethought movement—who write therein, we believe everyone will agree with them.

The following is sent us by a correspondent, after it had been refused insertion in the *Labor Leader*:—

"To the Editor of the *Labor Leader*.

"SIR,—In these days, when prosecutions take place against freedom of speech and the freedom of the press, I was rather surprised to find no mention in the *Labor Leader* of the death of a man who has suffered imprisonment at the hands of the opponents of freedom of thought. I refer to the passing of Mr. G. W. Foote. Whilst the *Labor Leader* is not concerned with theological discussion as such, yet, at a time when we have found it necessary to raise a free speech and free press defence fund, surely it was the least the *Leader* could have done by recording the death of a man who was a fighter for free speech. Even the *New Statesman* could make mention of the death of Mr. Foote. Whilst Mr. Foote was not a Socialist (I wish he had been), yet I believe there are not a few members of the I. L. P. who would, when it was a question of liberty, prefer the Radical Mr. Foote to Labor men of the Henderson, Crooks, and Roberts type—the holy trinity.—Yours fraternally, EWART HOPPER."

The *Humanitarian* continues to make its appearance as a bi-monthly, and, we presume, will continue to do so until after the War. The world could well have spared a less frequent issue of many a better known journal; but we suppose this is the best that could be done in the circumstances. The issue before us contains a summary of a recent lecture by Mr. Edward Carpenter on "War and Peace," in addition to other interesting matter. Mr. Salt promises his readers some notes on Mr. Foote's services to the humanitarian cause in the next issue, which will, we suppose, be in January.

The Ethics of War.

(1) *The German War Book*, trans. by Professor J. H. Morgan. (London: John Murray.) 1915. Pp. 152; 2s. 6d.

(2) *La Guerra Moderna según el Estado Mayor Alemán*. (Barcelona: Escuela Moderna.) 1915. Pp. 256; 2 pesetas.

THE text of these books is translated from the *Kriegsbrauch im Landkriege*, which forms a sort of Bible issued by the German General Staff for the instruction of German officers in the gentle art of killing. It consists of a species of catechism on the method of conducting war. This appalling volume, which in every land and in every language deserves to be carefully and seriously pondered, constitutes an educational system for the purpose of infusing into the mind of the German officer the essential principles for imparting to the practice of war its highest efficacy—that is to say, to win victory. As the Spanish editor (my excellent friend Lorenzo Portet) points out in the Preface to the handsome edition issued by the Escuela Moderna, by means of this work the Great General Staff of the German Army has erected a monument to the negation of international law, in glorification of systematic cruelty, and of war without quarter. Whilst philosophers, jurists, sociologists, and all the fervid apostles of pacifism were elaborating in Peace Conferences and at Hague Conferences a series of conventions for furthering the progress of international law, the Great General Staff of the German Army was busy indoctrinating its officers in the principles of warfare as enthroned in this venerated but infamous text-book. These principles were intended to secure the triumph of brute force without humane attenuations of any sort, and so far have marvellously succeeded in converting men into tigers and establishing the reign of hell upon earth.

The attentive reader of the German War Book can learn more about the barbaric psychology of the German soldier, as displayed in innumerable instances during the present War, than from endless miles of ordinary journalistic gush. The beauty of this book is that it is such a bland and unobtrusive self-revelation of the inner consciousness of the self-ordained German apostles of culture. Here we can see the soul of the "blonde beast" revelling in all its lusty nakedness; and behold it is a soul which long-continued triumph and an insolent sense of impunity expose to us as not only naked but unashamed at the commission of crimes which might bring a blush on the face of Hell.

The principles of unbridled ferocity championed in the War Book are too well known to need recapitulation. They are principles of quintessential barbarism, which are rendered all the more odious inasmuch as they are advocated before an affrighted world in the resounding names of culture, God, religion, patriotism, and Christianity. An army that could strike and terrorise according to the doctrines contained in this compendium of calculated wickedness would thereby convert itself into a mob of bandits and assassins. No less is it true that a race that could knowingly approve or command the waging of warfare upon the nefarious principles of the War Book might be pitied for its short-sighted stupidity, but should not on that account be allowed to escape just retribution as the enemy of the human race. There would be no need to preach a noisy doctrine of reprisals against such a blood-intoxicated people, and no need to formulate pains and penalties against their arch criminals. They need only be judged and punished according to their own code of military ethics, in punctilious conformity with the doctrines of national retribution set forth for the "strafing" of all mankind in the short, crisp, but drastic chapters of the awe-inspiring German War Book. There is, luckily, no need to return evil for evil, even in war time, when a more excellent way is already indicated by means of a polite conformity with the usages and practices of war as systematised for your guidance in the War Book. If your defeated foe has to be made to smart and suffer at the end of a long series of his intolerable crimes, let him, at least, feel that the measure of his pains and penalties is not more than what is prescribed and justified by an all-perfect code which he himself had compiled.

The English reader will find Professor Morgan's edition full of guidance and information concerning this almost incredible revelation of militarist turpitude. The five chapters of introduction with which he has enriched the volume, and the notes and elucidations of the text itself, are indispensable to a due understanding of the militarist type of mind in modern Germany which was generated by the statecraft of Bismarck and by the megalomaniacal philosophy of Treitschke, Sybel, and Bernhardt—men, by the way, who were steeped in Christianity, and from whom piety oozed at every pore. The enunciation of such a code is a grim satire upon the civilisation and Christianity of the German race. It deserves to be bound up with the Bible and translated into all languages and dialects, and distributed by the million for the edification of the unconverted heathen, and as a warning to them to keep the missionary and his paralysing creed at arm's length.

The Spanish edition, issued quite recently by the publishing house at Barcelona of the Escuela Moderna, is one of the many well-printed, smartly bound volumes which Senor Portet, Ferrer's successor, is busily engaged in issuing to the Spanish reading world. Ferrer, who hated war and the war-makers, would have published this book himself if the Spanish war-makers and religionists had not murdered him. Portet's edition is prefaced with a splendid "Introduction" (of eighty-three pages), the philosophic character of which form an admirable pendant to the more severely historical Introduction with which the English edition is heralded. If ever a race has been victimised and demoralised by mili-

tarism, that race is found in Germany. Voltaire used to say that the national industry of Prussia was war. He might have added that the object of Prussian warfare is pillage. In illustration of this fact, the Spanish "Introduction" shows how, during forty years, Prussia lived, and plotted, and plundered in preparation for the present War, with the result that Germany, the home of the Reformation, the nation that stood out and protested against the corruptions of Rome during the Renaissance, the nation that appeared destined to join its force of criticism and inquiry with the impetus and ideals of French philosophy in the eighteenth century and of the Revolution of 1789, lapsed from its high estate and degenerated into a brutal automatism which placed itself at the service of destruction and death. The movement began philosophically with Hegel, with his mystic theory of the State as the all-absorbing centre of all the elements of social life. The State, in his conception, became a sort of new Jehovah, vested with powers of life and death over all the citizens. The rights of man were swallowed up by the higher interests of the State. The political development of this ideal into the arrogant pretension of *Deutschland über Alles* grew out of an overweening sense of national sanctity, itself the mystic corollary of the ubiquitous and iniquitous manifestations of national might on the battlefield and in the tortuous mazes of international diplomacy. The latest symptom of racial arrogance, as seen in the proud consciousness of its heaven-born *Kultur*, enables the German race to look down upon the rest of mankind with the lofty disdain with which Joshua and his band of out-throats regarded the Canaanites of old. To the modern German as to the ancient Jew, war is the ultimate reason and bedrock foundation of national life and national independence, without which life is more foetid than the corruption of death. War thus becomes necessary, salutary, holy. This was the reasoning of Torquemada when he racked heretics or roasted them in the flames. Torquemada's frenzy for religion, and its promulgation at all costs, was but a mild anticipation of the turpitudes of our modern apostles of *Kultur*. It must, however, be conceded in favor of Torquemada that, whilst he lived in an age weltering in crass ignorance, and shared its superstitions to the full, the cultured apostles of that evangel of villainy, the German War Book, are abreast of the highest light of modern science, and wilfully prostitute that light to the basest ends of national degradation and international wrong.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

The Historical Value of the Gospels.

THE untangling of the historical element from the Gospels cannot be undertaken without some prior consideration of the time and circumstances of their composition. It is proposed here, in the first place, to state briefly the views most probably correct as to the time and manner of composition of the three first, or "Synoptic," Gospels; in the second place, to inquire how much historical fact may be fairly concluded to underlie their narratives. The Fourth Gospel will be ignored, as in the writer's opinion it is clearly established that that work is a forgery, written with an obvious purpose.

The Synoptic Gospels cannot be termed forgeries, as they make no claim to any particular authorship. This is irrespective of the question whether they are actually the work of the persons whose names were subsequently affixed to them. The time and circumstances in which they were written must be determined in the light of the internal and external evidence.

The internal evidence leads most modern critics to the conclusion that the earliest of the three Synoptics is that which bears the name of Mark. Examination shows that there is a substantial block of narrative, and a certain amount of discourse,

which is common to the three, to a great extent even the language being the same. Either this common element represents a primitive Gospel on which all three narratives are founded, or it means that two of the three writers have borrowed this matter from the third. Again, if we look at the additions made to the common element in each of the three Gospels, we find that we have a large amount of matter, consisting mainly of discourses, which is common to "Matthew" and "Luke," but is absent from "Mark," and a smaller quantity of material, consisting mainly of incident, which is found in "Matthew" and "Mark," but is absent from "Luke." Further, we find that in the matter common to "Matthew" and "Mark," the version in "Matthew" often shows signs of having been boiled down and compressed from the version in "Mark." Not infrequently the details given in "Mark," but omitted by "Matthew," are such as might very intelligibly have been omitted by a compiler who wished to write for edification. *E.g.*, Mark vi. 5, in connection with the visit of Jesus to Nazareth, says:—

"And he *could* there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. *And he marvelled because of their unbelief.*"

Matt. xiii. 58 gives:—

"And he *did not* many mighty works there because of their unbelief."

Again, Mark x. 18 reads:—

"And Jesus said unto him, Why *callest thou me good? None is good save one, even God.*"

Whereas Matt. xix. 17 reads:—

"And he said unto him, Why *askest thou me concerning that which is good? One there is who is good,*" etc.

Passages such as this make it evident that "Mark" is the earlier, and "Matthew" the later Gospel. No Christian writer, in these cases, would have the remotest reason for altering "Matthew's" version to "Mark's." There is every motive, on the other hand, for the reverse operation. "Mark's" passages are obviously incompatible with the doctrine that Jesus was identical with God. They attribute to him, in explicit terms, *inability* to perform miracles in certain cases, *surprise* at unbelief, and a repudiation of the epithet "good" as applied to himself. Clearly, "Mark" was not what we should call nowadays an orthodox Christian. The motive of "Matthew" in toning down these passages is obvious.

When we come to "Luke," we find that he has made an even freer use of his materials than "Matthew." In many instances he abandons altogether the versions of events given by "Matthew" and "Mark," and substitutes something totally different. Thus the visit to Nazareth above referred to is put much earlier in the narrative (Luke iv. 16, etc), and a quite new version is given of it. This free handling is particularly evident in the closing chapters of "Luke." We have a different account of the trial and crucifixion. One point of divergence is significant. "Mark" gives as the last words of Jesus on the cross: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" "Matthew," in spite of his tendency to tone down "Mark's" material, lets this stand. But "Luke" has suppressed the utterance altogether, and inserted instead the words: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." The motive of the substitution is obvious. By the date "Luke" wrote, it had become somewhat shocking to Christian ideas to read that the Son of God had been forsaken by his Father.

One other instance of the judicious editing of his materials by "Luke" must be given, out of many more which might be cited. All three Synoptics put into the mouth of Jesus, shortly before his death, a long prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans (A.D. 70) and the end of the world. In "Mark," the two events are regarded as closely connected. The Roman invasion is foretold in Mark xiii. 14-23, after which we read (verse 24):—

"But *in those days*, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light,

and the stars shall be falling from heaven, and the powers that are in the heavens shall be shaken. *And then* shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory."

In "Matthew," where the version of this prophecy is almost verbally copied from the foregoing, we read:—

"But *immediately, after the tribulation of those days*, the sun" [etc., down to] "powers of the heavens shall be shaken: *and then* shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds" etc. (Matt. xxiv. 29, 30).

"Luke," however, evidently wrote so long after the destruction of Jerusalem that he felt bound to alter this manifestly false prediction. His version is as follows:—

"And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, *until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled*. And there shall be signs in sun and moon and stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, in perplexity for the roaring of the sea and the billows; men fainting for fear, and for expectation of the things which are coming on the world: for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. *And then* shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."

We are led to the conclusion, then, that "Mark" was the earliest, and "Luke" the latest of the Synoptic Gospels, "Matthew" being intermediate. The material common to the three may be accounted for, either on the assumption that "Matthew" and "Luke" both borrowed from "Mark," or that all three borrowed from an older document still. In the opinion of the present writer, "Mark" is the original from whom the other two drew. This appears more likely than that "Mark" should also have been based on an older document; firstly, because there is no evidence that such an older document existed; and, secondly, because the touches added by "Mark" to such an older document, if it did exist, are difficult to account for. As we have seen, these peculiarities of "Mark" are frequently of a sort that later writers would wish to cut down and prune with a view to avoiding scandal to believers. "Mark," it is clear from his Gospel (if we exclude the spurious conclusion, chapter xvi. 9-20), though he regarded Jesus as, in a vague sense, "the Son of God," certainly did not regard him as himself God, or as omnipotent or omniscient. Now the crude touches in "Mark," which exemplify this fact, are hardly likely to have been *new* features added by him to a primitive Gospel. They are more likely to be themselves features of that primitive Gospel, which later writers endeavored to tone down when working up that Gospel into their own narratives.

Taking "Mark," therefore, as the primitive Gospel, we may proceed to date it by its internal evidence. It would appear from this to have been written not very long after the fall of Jerusalem, *i.e.*, some time well within the last thirty years of the first century A.D. The allusion to Alexander and Rufus, the sons of Simon of Cyrene, in chapter xvi. 21, must indicate that they were known to "Mark's" readers, as otherwise there is no point in the mention of them. This, again, places "Mark" in the second generation of Christians. The Gospel seems to have been written for Gentile converts, and the writer, from the Latinisms in his Greek, seems to have been a Roman Christian, but certainly not a follower of Paul. Probably, therefore, "Mark" wrote at Rome about 70-85 A.D.

External evidence, so far as it goes, bears out this conclusion. Papias quotes a statement of John the Presbyter (the probable concoctor of the Fourth Gospel) to the effect that Mark was the interpreter of Peter, and based his Gospel on that apostle's teaching. The evidence of John the Presbyter is, of course, not as a rule to be relied on. In this case, however, it would not have been in his interest to invest Mark's Gospel with any undue prestige. We know, in fact, that he professed to regard it as a slovenly composition, and perhaps he ran it down to Papias and others in order to pave the way for his own forgery, the Fourth Gospel. When,

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therefore, John the Presbyter says that Mark was Peter's interpreter, and wrote according to Peter's teaching, the probability is that it was so.

The earliest written biography of Jesus, we thus see, was written at least forty years, perhaps even sixty, but hardly more, after the crucifixion. "Matthew" and "Luke" are, as we have seen, later. When we examine these two Gospels, we find that they contain as elements, *first*, a backbone of narrative, adapted by them from Mark; *secondly*, a considerable number of sayings and discourses, not found in Mark, but taken from some common source by both "Matthew" and "Luke"; and *thirdly*, a great deal of matter peculiar to each of them. The last category includes the stories of the "Virgin Birth" and the detailed accounts of the "resurrection," both of which are entirely different in "Matthew" and "Luke." The common element in the discourses points clearly to another primitive source, besides Mark, used by the two later Synoptics, and consisting apparently of loose strings of sayings attributed to Jesus, without any connecting narrative, known to modern critics as "Q."

External evidence points to the existence of this collection of sayings well before the end of the first century A.D. A further saying of John the Presbyter, quoted by Papias, was to the effect that Matthew the apostle wrote a collection of sayings of Jesus in the Hebrew (*i.e.*, Aramaic) language, of which various more or less imperfect Greek translations were extant in his (John the Presbyter's) time. Now John the Presbyter flourished in the early years of the second century, being an elder contemporary of Papias. By that time, therefore, in addition to Mark's Gospel, there were in circulation several collections of sayings of Jesus, purporting to be Greek translations of the Aramaic of Matthew the apostle. One or more of these was doubtless the source which the compilers of our "Matthew" and "Luke" drew upon to supplement Mark. The evidence of Papias, so far as it goes, is against the existence in his time of our canonical "Matthew" and "Luke." Our "Matthew," however, was at any rate well on in the course of growth by that time. The probability seems to be that the collections of sayings above referred to formed the foundation of our "Matthew"; that, at an early stage, the substance of Mark's Gospel was worked into their structure by a compiler, in order to give the sayings a narrative setting; and that, much later on, the final touch was put to this Gospel by the addition of the infancy narrative, the genealogy, the resurrection details, and other late matter, towards the middle of the second century.

About the same time as, or a little later than, the final production of "Matthew," occurred the composition of "Luke." If the Theophilus to whom the Third Gospel is dedicated is identical, as has been suggested, with the bishop of Antioch of that name, the composition of "Luke" may be placed about 150-160 A.D. Theophilus is supposed to have become bishop in 168, and as the tone of Luke i. 1-4 is that of an older man instructing a younger, the Gospel can hardly have been written after the latter date. The identification, however, is really too doubtful to be built upon.

ROBERT ARCH.

(To be continued.)

Correspondence.

THE RIGHTS OF FREETHINKERS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—From Lord Derby's circular to the "bosses" of the various religious denominations (including even the Salvation Army), it appears that the clergy are to be exempt from his recruiting schemes on the grounds that they are "doing so much for the spiritual life of the community." As a Freethinker, I protest against this favoritism, unless, of course, Lord Derby is prepared to include other people who may rightly claim to be "doing so much for the spiritual life of the community," such as the writers and lecturers of the Secularist and Ethical movements. And then, again, are

there not others, who may claim to the contributing of "spiritual" benefits upon the community? May not they be favored with exemption? I am a professional musician, and I am firmly convinced that my art confers more "spiritual" benefits upon humanity than all the gospels and philosophies of the world put together. Of course, Lord Derby may want proof of these "spiritual" benefits which I claim for the ministers of musical art, and I promise to adduce as much proof as his *protégés*, the ministers of the Church, can.

The truth is, we Freethinkers are being sold. The State (by the mouth of Lord Derby) is telling us that we must recognise our obligation to it, and come forward when it needs us. I may acknowledge this duty to the State, but it must also recognise its duty towards me, and give me my right to religious as well as civil equality. Freethinkers are hurrying to the Colors as valiantly as Christians, but most, if not all of them, are having their consciences violated, and compelled to join as Christians. It is high time that every Freethinker who joins the Army demanded that his religious opinions are respected. As I have pointed out several times in this journal, every Freethinker has the right, at his attestation, on making *affirmation* instead of taking the customary oath. This is provided for by the Oaths Act of 1888, which distinctly lays down the law that *affirmation* is allowed for every person and in all places. Furthermore, it is backed up by the Army Act (sec. 190, para. 28), which says: "The expression 'oath' and 'swear,' and other expressions relating thereto, include affirmation or declaration."

H. GEORGE FARMER.

Obituary.

London Freethinkers will learn with much regret of the death of Lance-Corporal W. J. Livingstone Anderson, 5th Battalion, Lincolnshire Regiment. He was killed in the great charge for the Hohenzollern Redoubt on October 13. His son Willie, aged 19, also took part in this charge, and is reported "missing." Livingstone Anderson constantly corresponded with the undersigned in acknowledgment of his weekly copy of the *Freethinker*. He had five of the most marvellous escapes, some of which have been recorded in this paper, but without his name, as Anderson was a modest man. He was born in Plymouth, was in his 49th year, and had been a convinced and militant Atheist for upwards of thirty years. He frequently contributed articles to the *Freethinker*, and personally sold many thousand copies in the London parks, and delighted in distributing copies gratuitously at his own expense. He also contributed to the *Agnostic Journal*, and greatly assisted "Saladin," the editor, for a number of years. A great admirer of G. W. Foote, frequenters of the Queen's Hall meetings will remember vividly the little family procession of his three small sons in Scotch kilts—the eldest, alas! the boy now reported "missing." His interest in Freethought propaganda never flagged. His humorous descriptions of the estimate in which Divine Service at the Front was held, would have startled the Bishop of London.

Almost the last letter received from him reported the death of a brother Secularist and the mockery of a Christian Burial Service being read over him. He was as confident of the ultimate triumph of the British Arms as he was of that of the Freethought principles in which he lived and so heroically died.

In the name of his Freethought associates we tender deepest sympathy to his sorrowing wife and sons.

E. M. VANCE,

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.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

FALLSWORTH (Secular School, Pole-lane): 6.30, J. T. Lloyd,
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