

THE Freethinker

Founded 1881 by G. W. FOOTE.

Edited by CHAPMAN COHEN.

VOL. XXXVI.—No. 8

SUNDAY, JANUARY 16, 1916

PRICE TWOPENCE

No personal habit more surely degrades the conscience and the intellect than blind and unhesitating obedience to unlimited authority.—T. H. HUXLEY.

Views and Opinions.

CONSCRIPTION.

The introduction of the Military Service Bill into the House of Commons marks one more step along the road of social demoralization which, as was pointed out last week, invariably accompanies war. If we are to trust the protestations of leaders, writers, speakers, and politicians, everyone of the huge Army that Britain has built up during the past sixteen months has enlisted to safeguard our freedom, and to keep British institutions free from the taint of "Prussianism." Nor is there any need to question that this is substantially true of at least the vast majority of recruits. Multitudes have enlisted hating militarism and all its works. They are there to crush the enemy at our gates; they are also there to kill the possibility of militarism corroding our lives as it has corroded the lives of others. Over a battle-front of nearly 1,500 miles these men—in conjunction with our Allies—are fighting to beat back the German Armies. But still more are they fighting to kill the idea which gives those armies being. And it is, surely, one of the ironies of life that while our soldiers are fighting, we should be establishing at home the very principle against which they believe they are struggling.

* * *

THE ESSENCE OF PRUSSIANISM.

With the tactics of politicians, notoriously shifty at best, I am not now concerned; nor is this the place in which to raise that issue. The *Freethinker* has no politics, and if the question of Conscription was a mere party issue it might be passed by in silence. But it is far more than this. It is alien to our traditions and institutions. It strikes at the root of individual freedom; it is the sign manual of that "Prussianism" which it is our avowed intention to destroy. Like the War itself, it touches life at all points, and must profoundly affect our course of development in the future. A nation which, possessing a landed and hereditary aristocracy, yields to Conscription, has mortgaged its future freedom of speech and action. It is without the check of effective popular control such as would exist in a genuine democracy. And it is not without significance that the way to Conscription has been prepared by a war extending over sixteen months, by a limitation of freedom of speech, a curtailing of the liberty of the press, and a shackling of the working man. It is psychologically interesting to note that Conscription has not led to these things; on the contrary, they have prepared the way for Conscription. And

1,800

the true significance of "Prussianism" is not that it connotes something which exists in Prussia. It is that of the forcible regimentation of a people at the command of a governing class. That this principle receives its most vicious expression in Prussia is a fact of really secondary significance.

* * *

OUR LEADERS HAVE TOLD US.

The trustworthiness of militant philosophy is easily tested. "In time of peace prepare for war." That is the maxim we have had thrown at our heads for years—as though all wars are not prepared for in times of peace. And if one wishes to prepare for war the maxim is sound enough. But those who popularized this maxim went further, and assured the world that it was the only way to prevent war, and this, instead of sound advice, was as vicious a counsel as one could conceive. There is no road to peace by way of preparation for war. The past year and a half has proved that beyond dispute. Preparation for war is a challenge to war. It means war sooner or later, the only question being when and where it shall begin. For the only justification for the preparation is that it will one day be needed. No individual, and no nation could continue preparations for something that it is convinced will never occur. We prepared for war by building a navy, the supremacy of which was uncontested and incontestable. Germany prepared for war by strengthening and perfecting its army, and by an elaborate espionage in all countries. All the nations of Europe have acted on the principle that the way to secure peace is to prepare for war. And the result is now before the world.

* * *

THE MILITARIST FALLACY.

Clear thinking—never a marked quality of the militarist mind—would have prevented the circulation of this fallacy. For the making of war, as with other far-reaching social phenomenon, is primarily a question of psychology. From the age of the cave-man, and even earlier, conduct is determined by feeling, under the impulsion of certain dominant ideas. In an atmosphere of fear, no great deeds are attempted. With superstitious ideas dominant, rational conduct is at a discount. So, also, with the topic under discussion. Men's minds must become familiarized with the conception of international jealousies, hatreds, hostilities, and with that of war as always imminent and justifiable, to make war possible. Our own militarists prove this, for they have never tired of telling us, since this War started, of the way the German mind has become demoralized by years of teaching concerning the "mailed fist" and the morality of armed might. All this preparation for war, which means constant talk of war and the clothing of war in an idealistic dress, means familiarizing the public mind with the morality of war and its inevitability at some no very distant date. It means the creation of a psychological atmosphere

in the absence of which war would become impossible. To prepare for war under the conviction that it will not come would be a stupidity too great for even the average militant. And have we not had our numerous little border wars defended on the ground that they kept our soldiers in a state of fitness?

* * *

WAAT WE MIGHT DO.

There is one way in which we might prepare against war, and which would make war at least less probable. And this we might, indeed, do in times of peace. Instead of employing or encouraging writers to paint war as it is not, I would have them paint war as it is. I would eliminate all the fanciful, artificial, and false descriptions which give rise to ideas of the greatness and grandeur and nobility of warfare. Instead of these, it should be seen in its true colours: the ruined homes, the blasted lives, the maimed bodies, the brutality of millions of men who are individually strangers facing each other with the sole desire of destruction animating them. I would have writers dwell upon the crudities and the barbarities that are of the very essence of warfare: the torn bodies of men and animals, the stench of the putrefying dead, the inevitable mental and moral demoralization that overtakes men who turn their backs upon the refining influences of social life. In doing this we should be really preparing, not *for*, but *against*, war; for we should be destroying the ideas which make war acceptable to nations.

* * *

THE REAL TASK.

In sober truth, this War is a war of ideas. That we have been told over and over again by thousands of speakers, writers, and pulpiteers. And it is so true that it cannot be too often emphasized. If we are fighting now—to use the cant phrase—to end war, then we must recognize that our real fight is not the mere business of the fighting line. There is something greater and more important than that. It is not the mere business of beating the German armies in the field, or of the Allies riding as victors through the length and breadth of German territory. Both of these things may be accomplished without the world being freed from the incubus of militarism. Our real business is not the destruction of German bodies, but the getting of better and saner ideas into German heads. And not merely into German heads, but into the heads of other people as well. Guns may annihilate men, but they leave ideas untouched. The men that die, fall only to make room for others. And the same tale of destruction goes on. Our real and most profitable task is to kill certain ideas, and to get others established in their place. If we do this work in times of peace, then, indeed, we are preparing in the only possible way against the recurrence of war. We are creating a mental environment in which war theories and war feelings find it difficult to live, and in consequence a society in which war itself is less likely to transpire.

* * *

And that seems to me the final argument against the principle of Conscription, as it is against the military training which so many are working to introduce into our schools. It establishes the soldier, not as a hateful, a deplorable necessity, but as an indispensable part of our normal life. Instead of young men growing up with the idea of militarism as something foreign to their life, it becomes an essential part of it. It puts the soldier in the place of the teacher, and so establishes a wrong scale of

values, a scale for the adoption of which we rightly blame the German ruling class. It is an assertion that human society rests on force, and that is psychologically false and socially disastrous. War may be a recurrent fact for some considerable time in the world's civilization. But let us at least have the strength of mind to see militarism for what it is, and, in seeing it for what it is, divest it of its fictitious glories, and so rob it of a large part of its power for evil.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

George Meredith on Prayer.

PROFESSOR JAMES MOFFATT claims George Meredith as a firm advocate of the habit of prayer. In an article entitled "Mr. Meredith on Religion," he says:—

Both as an aid in the discharge of our duties towards one another, and as a genuine food for our personal needs, Meredith turns briskly round to press on men the habit of prayer. His eagerness in this counsel is quite notable. Let us add, it is not unreasonable from his point of view. Prayer, to him, is a genuine expression of a man's belief in the living spirit of the universe. It is the logical outcome of his ethical idealism, this overflow of the soul, this lift of heart and conscience, this supreme resignation of the heart.

Dr. Moffatt admits that Meredith's language is neither clear nor full upon the personality of God, and Mr. Edward Clodd, an intimate friend of the poet for twenty-five years, assures us that he did not believe in a personal Deity; but the Professor maintains that, in spite of this, he recognizes and enforces prayer "as communion with the Divine Spirit in us and over us, as the surge of human thought and feeling which throws itself out upon some higher purpose in the universe, and as the exercise of an intense aspiration for the good that lies beyond the senses, and yet within the limits of our power." Then he quotes passages from three of the novels in which some of the characters strongly recommend prayer as the best means of overcoming trouble or difficulty. Dr. Moffatt forgets that fictitious characters do not necessarily express the views of their creators. Neither Mrs. Berry in *Richard Feverel* nor Dr. Shrapnel in *Beauchamp's Career* must be taken as a representative of the novelist. It is quite possible, of course, that in 1859, 1865, and 1876, the dates on which *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*, *Rhoda Fleming*, and *Beauchamp's Career* respectively appeared, Meredith may still have been a believer in a personal God and the efficacy of prayer, and that Mrs. Berry and Dr. Shrapnel do express the opinion the author then held. And yet even Dr. Shrapnel does not teach the Christian doctrine of prayer. He tells us that "prayer for an object is the cajoling of an idol, the resource of superstition." "Prayer," he says, "is the recognition of laws." From a Christian point of view this is rank heresy. Speaking in his own person in *The Empty Purse*, Meredith puts it thus:—

If courage should falter, 'tis wholesome to kneel.
Remember that well, for the secret with some,
Who pray for no gift, but have cleansing in prayer,
And free from impurities tower-like stand.

In the Christian sense, prayer is addressed to a supernatural Person, and usually contains a number of requests or petitions. It is a door of escape from the visible to the invisible, from the natural to the supernatural, and there is in it a yearning for deliverance from the dominion of the material. But Meredith, in his mature years, did not believe in the existence of a supernatural Person. He recognized the existence of nothing beyond Nature and her laws. In the beautiful ode, entitled *France: December, 1870*, he tells us that strength is—

The gift of sire to son, thro' those firm laws
Which we name Gods; which are the righteous cause,
The cause of man, and manhood's ministers.

Whenever, therefore, Meredith uses the term God or Gods, all he means by it is the sum total of Nature's

immutable laws, which is a roundabout way of spelling Atheism. The truth is that Nature holds us all in a grip from which absolutely nothing can release us. This is true of believers and unbelievers alike. Nature feeds us at her breast, but she is utterly incapable of accommodating herself to us in the slightest degree; the accommodation, if any, must be on our side alone. In the great poem, *Earth and Man*, Meredith, personifying Earth or Nature, says:—

On her great venture, Man,
Earth gazes while fingers dint the breast
Which is his well of strength, his home of rest,
And fair to scan.

She is our mother, but she is by no means an ideal mother. Her treatment of us is not a commendation of her mother's heart. She can neither pity nor forgive. As he contemplates her man is mystified:—

And ever the old task
Of reading what he is and whence he came,
Whither to go, finds wilder letters flame
Across her mask.

Failing to understand her, or to read in her light what he is, he invents an invisible realm, which he fills with all sorts of imaginary beings, and to these he appeals for emancipation from his bondage to her. The poet represents her as watching him in his desperate attempts to get released from her dominion:—

She hears his wailful prayer,
When now to the Invisible he raves
To rend him from her.

He does not like the law of the survival of the fittest, or, as the poet aptly calls it, Earth's "cherishing of her best endowed," and so he turns to the supernatural, praying—

Sever me from the hollowness of Earth!
Me take, dear Lord.

The "dear Lord," around whom innumerable legends have been woven, makes no response, takes no notice whatever. And yet man has thus vainly prayed in all ages, and is doing it still. He has taken the "Fables of the Above" for living facts. As Meredith puts it:—

He drank of fictions till celestial aid
Might seem accorded when he fawned and prayed
Sagely the generous Giver circumspect,
To choose for grants the egregious, his elect;
And ever that imagined succour slow
The soul of brotherhood whence Reverence drew.

In reality celestial aid has never been accorded, and Meredith boldly says:—

If he aloft for aid
Imploring storms, her essence is the spur.
His cry to heaven is a cry to her
He would evade.

To pray in our poet's sense is to get close to Nature's heart, to commune with the beauty and power which she displays; or, in other words, to make the most and best of life. Meredith loved Nature and revelled in her fellowship. Whenever trouble overtook him he sought strength to deal with it in the woodlands of Box Hill. His love of the fields and woods was boundless. As was the case with Richard Jefferies, his soul-life came in its fulness only when he was in company with Nature. "A very ecstacy of exquisite enjoyment" seized him when he entered the woodland on a quiet summer's evening, just as night was coming on:—

Sweet as Eden is the air,
And Eden-sweet the ray.
No paradise is lost for them
Who foot by branching root and stem,
And lightly with the woodland share
The change of night and day.

And this woodland saith:
I know not hope or fear;
I take what'er may come;
I raise my head to aspects fair,
From foul I turn away.

Sweet as Eden is the air,
And Eden-sweet the ray.

The conclusion is, of course, that prayer, in the Christian acceptation of the word, is a pure waste of time and energy. From the beginning until now no celestial aid has ever been received by man. He

has always had to help himself or perish. "Trust thyself," says Emerson; "every heart vibrates to that iron string." Again he says, "As men's prayers are a disease of the will, so are their creeds a disease of the intellect." All the prayer-meetings and intercessory services held since the War began have produced no change whatever. At times, indeed, Nature seems to take delight in torturing "her great venture, Man":—

Once worshipped Prime of Power,
She still was the Implacable: as a beast
She struck him down and dragged him from the feast
She crowned with flowers.

He may entreat, aspire,
He may despair, and she has never heed.

J. T. LLOYD.

A Genius Cheated of Childhood.

The genius that can stand alone
As the minority of one,
Or with the faithful few be found
Working and waiting till the rest come round.
—GERALD MASSEY.

It is not enough to possess a truth; it is essential that the truth should possess us.—MAETERLINCK.

GERALD MASSEY died eight years ago, and, probably, the great body of readers have but a slight acquaintance with his work. Yet he was one of the most striking personalities of his time, and a remarkable singer. This has arisen, doubtless, from his sensitiveness, which made him shy of self-advertisement. It is the old, old story:—

Seven cities now contend for Homer dead
Through which the living Homer begged his bread.

His was a very interesting career. To use Browning's phrase, he was "ever a fighter." He fought every day of his long life, and his sword was in his good, right hand until the day of his death. Gerald Massey's early life is the grimmest of comments on the "good, old days." The son of a bargeman, he was born in the grip of poverty. At an age when more fortunate children were at school, he was working in a mill for eleven hours daily at the weekly wage of one shilling. This was not the worst. He became a straw-plaiter, and for three years lived in the black shadow of starvation, often prostrated by illness. Writing of that awful early life of his, he said, "I had no childhood." Think of it! The author of those tender and beautiful poems, "Babe Christabel," and "The Mother's Idol Broken," "had no childhood." It is a tragedy "too deep for tears."

In spite of it all, he learned to read and write, and became familiar with *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *Robinson Crusoe*. Bunyan and Defoe are not bad schoolmasters, for they wrote their books in two languages; in literature and in life.

At fifteen young Massey came to London and became an errand boy. Here, in the heart of the metropolis, books were procurable, and his literary appetite was voracious. He read everything he could lay his hands upon, "going without meals to buy books, and without sleep to read them." It was during that period that he laid the foundation of that encyclopædic knowledge which made him one of the noted critics and scholars of his time.

The revolutionary movements of 1848 greatly impressed Massey, and many of his verses are the direct outcome of this period of struggle. Republicanism was in the air, and he became a Republican.

At twenty-one he was editing the *Spirit of Freedom*, a revolutionary publication mainly written by himself. Then he contributed to Thomas Cooper's *Journal*, and other democratic papers. He became known, and numbered among his friends the warm-hearted Charles Kingsley and F. D. Maurice, a Christian minister who is remembered for his eloquent denunciations of one of the chief dogmas of the religion he professed.

Massey's first book of verse was issued when he was but nineteen. Later came his *Voices of Freedom*.

Hepworth Dixon was greatly attracted by the fiery and impassioned *Song of a Red Republican*, and recognized it as the work of a man who had something to say and could say it well. Among the admirers which Massey's early poems won for him were Ruskin, Tennyson, and Lytton. A still greater honour awaited him, for "George Eliot" made him her model for the hero of *Felix Holt*.

It was "Babe Christabel" which made Massey famous. With this, he stormed the bastions of success at one leap. Landor praised it, and the author was hailed as a rising star. The following lines give some idea of the poem:—

Babe Christabel was royally born!
For when the earth was flushed with flowers,
And drenched with beauty in sun showers,
She came through golden gates of morn.

The tenderness and grace of this poem are in direct contrast with the music of his political songs, which recalls the effect of sonorous metal blowing martial sounds. The Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny thoroughly roused the poet, and he never sang so finely as in his *War Waits*, a volume which is well worth reprinting. He was never so near being a great poet. He knew his own limitations. With a rare modesty, he wrote in a Preface to an edition of his works, "Some of my critics have called me a poet. I know what a poet is too well to fancy that I am one yet."

Despite his limitations, Massey was a real singer, and his verses came straight from his heart, and are charged with passion. There is the true lyrical note, and he sang to a richer music in a clearer tongue than many of his contemporaries. There is no false rhetoric or brazen bravado in his "England Goes to Battle":—

Who would not fight for England?
Who would not fling a life
I' the ring to meet a tyrant's gage,
And glory in the strife?
Her stem is thorny, but doth burst
A glorious rose atop!
And shall our proud rose wither? First
We'll drain life's dearest drop!
Who would not fight for England?
Who would not fling a life
I' the ring, to meet a tyrant's gage,
And glory in the strife?

Another fine war-poem is "Scarlett's Three Hundred," recalling a deed of splendid heroism:—

One cheer for the living! One cheer for the dead!
One cheer for the deed on that hill-side red!
The glory is gathered for England's proud head!
Dear England for Ever, Hurrah!

Massey might almost have been writing at the present time, as in "A War Winter's Night in England":—

And long shall we sing of their deeds divine,
In songs that warm the heart like wine,
As we sit by the household fire,
On a winter's night in England.
And the tale is told of this night of war,
When we, beacon-like, held our hearts up higher,
For those who were fighting afar.

In the maturity of his powers, Gerald Massey deliberately put aside the laurel wreath, and devoted himself to the nobler work of the emancipation of his fellows. This alone entitles him to our gratitude:—

Behold a poet that could even forego
The joy peculiar to the singer's soul,
His pleasant dream of fame, his proffered seat
Upon the heights to which his spirit soared,
To dive for treasures where but few could breathe,
And dredge the old sea bottoms of the past,
Lover of beauty who gave up all for Truth.

At his death the newspapers glibly admitted that Massey devoted the later years of his life to Egyptology, Orientalism, and Shakespearean criticism, but concealed the fact that the scholar-poet was a Freethinker. One specially "Liberal" paper proudly claimed him as a "Christian Socialist." The truth is, that Massey spent half of a lengthy life in showing the mythical nature of the Christian superstition. He also lectured widely on Freethought subjects, such as "The Historical Jesus and the Mythical Christ," and "Why Don't God Kill the Devil?"

With voice and pen Massey worked hard for Liberty. And he did wisely. His poetry largely belongs to the past, but his scholarly and philosophic criticism of Christianity has helped, and will help, materially to hasten the dawn of freedom. His career was a noble one. Few men fought better and against such odds. He did not ask for a laurel-wreath, but on this brave veteran's grave we reverently place the poet's bays and the sword of a soldier in the Liberation War of Humanity.

MIMNERMUS.

Religion, Science, and the War.—II.

(Continued from p. 28.)

We think here that militarism—the accursed thing—is highly distasteful to the majority of Germans, who are merely waiting for the first opportunity to throw the fell thing off. That is not so. Militarism to the vast majority of the German peoples, including the Austrians, the Bavarians, and the Hungarians, is not only a policy—it is a religion. But there is the military idiosyncrasy of the German, which is his chief boast and glory. This note is curiously reflected in Wagner's operas. Always the God with a sword—Lohengrin, Siegfried, Wotan, Tristram, always some Godlike stature, the hero of many battles; in short, the German ideal. All this is defined in the German Philosophy of Valour, which means neither more nor less than that the Germans have persuaded themselves that they are the fighting people of the modern world, and so destined, with God's help, to conquer the world.—AUSTIN HARRISON, *Sunday Chronicle*, June 20, 1915.

It is by no means conceded or established that the fighting nations have ceased to be predominantly Christian.....Most assuredly no prelate of either country would admit that his nation has ceased to be Christian or surrendered its life to non-Christian impulses; the plausible theory of non-Christian responsibility is even more severely shaken, when we reflect that war is not an innovation of this unbelieving age, but a legacy from the earlier and more thoroughly Christian period. Had mankind departed from some admirable practice of submitting its international quarrels to a religious arbitrator, and in our own time devised this horrible arbitrament of the sword, we should be more disposed to seek the cause in a contemporary enfeeblement of moral standards. This is notoriously not the case. Men have warred, and priests have blessed the banners which were to wave over fields of blood, from the very beginning of Christian influence, not to speak of earlier religious epochs.—JOSEPH McCABE, *The War and the Churches*, pp. viii.-ix.

SPEAKING to the sailors on board the *Hohenzollern*, off Heligoland, on July 29, 1910, the Kaiser declared: "Yes, God liveth as of old. Our great Ally still reigneth, the Holy God who cannot suffer sin and iniquity to triumph." And again, on November 16, 1897, at the administration of the oath of allegiance to the recruits of the Potsdam Garrison, he addressed them as follows:—

He who is no good Christian is no good man, and also no Prussian soldier in the Prussian Army. Your duty is not light. It demands of you self-discipline and self-denial, the two highest qualities of the Christian, also absolute obedience and submission to the will of your superiors.

Just as Gibbon, the great historian of the Roman Empire, observed that the Roman Emperor Constantine, in the fourth century, made Christianity the State religion of the Empire because he felt that "the throne of the emperors would be established on a fixed and permanent basis if all their subjects embracing the Christian doctrine should learn to suffer and obey."

Nor was this piety something new, introduced to the Germans by the present Kaiser. During the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1, the ascribing of all their victories to the favour of God had already become a habit—so much so that *Punch* parodied one of the old King William's (grandfather of the present Kaiser) telegraphic messages to his wife, as follows:—

By grace divine, my dear Augusta,
We've had another awful buster!
Ten thousand Frenchmen sent below;
Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

And to-day the Archbishop of Cologne declares that "it is unthinkable that the all-good God should permit atheistic, freethinking France and the violent Orthodox Church of Russia to trample under foot

the fresh, joyous, religious life of Germany."* The belt of the German soldier is inscribed with the words, *Gott mit uns* (God with us), and the New York correspondent of the *Sunday Chronicle* reports:—

Since Germany has not been able to justify her invasion of Belgium and the slaughter of innocent people to the satisfaction of any single nation on earth, resort has been made to Holy Scripture in order to justify the foul deed to her own soldiers. A copy of a tract which was distributed to every soldier in the field has arrived here by mail from Berlin. It reads:—

NUMBERS XXI.

21 And Israel sent messengers unto Sihon king of the Amorites, saying,

22 Let me pass into thy land: we will not pass into thy fields, or into the vineyards: we will not drink of the well: but we will go along by the king's highway, until we be past thy borders.

23 And Sihon would not suffer Israel to pass through his border; but Sihon gathered all his people together, and went out against Israel, and fought against Israel.

24 And Israel smote him with the edge of his sword, and possessed his land from Arnon unto Jabbock, even unto the children of Ammon: for the border of the children of Ammon was strong.†

Just as the American clergy, before the Civil War, quoted the same book in defence of slavery, and John Wesley defended witchcraft by quoting the Bible text, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live."

As Mr. McCabe has justly remarked:—

The Churches of Germany have complacently watched for twenty-three years the tendency which William II. gave to their schools; they have passed no censure on the fifteen years of Imperialist propaganda which have steadily prepared the nation for aggressive war; and they have raised no voice against the appalling decision that, in order to attain Germany's purposes, every rule of morals and humanity should be set aside.‡

And "How comes it," asks the same writer,—

that such a system [of militarism] has survived fifteen hundred years of profound Christian influence? Whatever we may think of the clergy of to-day, with the more powerful clergy of yesterday, we have a grave reckoning. The Rationalist is a new thing in Europe. The very name is little more than a century old, and until a few decades ago only a few thousand would accept it. Not from such a new struggling movement do we ask why this military system has dominated Europe for ages, and has only in recent times been seriously challenged. During those ages the Churches suffered none but themselves to pretend to a moral influence over the life of the nations, nor were there many bold and independent enough to make the claim. It is of the Churches we ask why this appalling system has taken such deep root in the life of Europe that it resists the most devoted efforts to eradicate it. It is not *this* War, but war, that accuses the Churches (p. 24).

Christianity lives by the falsification of history. If we listen to the apologists of that faith, we shall learn that the Pagan world, before the advent of Christ, was sunk in wickedness and violence; also that it was only the coming of Christ, announcing a new era of "peace and goodwill," that saved the civilized portion of the world from relapsing into barbarism. What are the facts?

Take Gibbon's magnificent history of the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, the greatest historical work ever written. The splendid opening chapter gives a picture of peace and prosperity under the Pagan emperors, before the establishment of Christianity as the ruling faith, unequalled by any period under Christian rule. Of the two Roman Emperors, Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, who ruled the Roman world consecutively for forty-two years, Gibbon remarks: "Their united reigns are possibly the only period of history in which the hap-

piness of a great people was the sole object of government." And further:—

If a man were called to fix the period in the history of the world, during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous, he would, without hesitation, name that which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus. The vast extent of the Roman Empire was governed by absolute power, under the guidance of virtue and wisdom.

The armies were restrained by the firm but gentle hand of four successive emperors, whose characters and authority commanded involuntary respect. The forms of civil administration were carefully preserved by Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and the Antonines, who delighted in the image of liberty, and were pleased with considering themselves as the accountable ministers of the laws.*

The same historian also observes that—

the reigns of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius offer the fair prospect of universal peace. The Roman name was revered among the most remote nations of the earth. The fiercest barbarians frequently submitted their differences to the arbitration of the emperor; and we are informed by a contemporary historian that he had seen ambassadors who were refused the honour which they came to solicit, of being admitted into the rank of subjects (p. 4).

This was the splendid *Pax Romanum*, the "Roman Peace," which brooded over the world before Christianity became the ruling power.

Nor is Gibbon alone in his view of the matter. The historian Lecky, in his *History of European Morals*, declares:—

The period from the accession of Nerva to the death of Marcus Aurelius, comprising no less than eighty-four years, exhibits a uniformity of good government which no other despotic monarch has equalled.

Each of the five emperors who then reigned deserves to be placed among the best rulers who have ever lived. Trajan and Hadrian, whose personal characters were most defective, were men of great and conspicuous genius; Antoninus and Marcus Aurelius, though less distinguished as politicians, were among the most perfectly virtuous men who have ever sat on a throne. During forty years of this period, perfect, unbroken peace reigned over the entire civilized globe. The barbarian encroachments had not yet begun. The distinct nationalities that comprised the Empire, gratified by perfect municipal freedom, had lost all care for political liberty, and little more than three hundred thousand soldiers guarded a territory which is now protected by more than three millions.‡

Those three millions have considerably increased since Lecky wrote, and to-day, on a war footing, more than twenty millions are engaged in a War of extermination. And this over nineteen hundred years after the birth of the "Prince of Peace," and fifteen hundred years after the religion of "peace and goodwill" became the established religion of the Empire.

For the Romans to abolish militarism altogether, and disband the armed legions, was impossible, although some of the less practical humanitarians advocated this. As Mr. McCabe has pointed out:—

The Empire was completely surrounded by barbarians, who would rush in and trample on its civilization the moment the fence of spears was removed..... With those outlying barbarians no treaty was possible or sacred; no legal tribunal would have protected those frontiers from the men who looked covetously on the fertile fields and comfortable cities of the Roman provinces. From the first to the fourth century Rome fought, not for its expansion, but for its preservation against these increasing enemies; and it was the final intensification of the pressure in the Danube region by the arrival of enormous hordes of barbarians from Asia which precipitated the final catastrophe. Paganism had never the slightest opportunity to abandon the military system, and only those who are totally unacquainted with Roman history can wonder why it did not make the attempt. It would have been a crime to abandon the civilized provinces to barbarians.‡

Another heathen nation, China, had long before the time of Christ recognized the wickedness of this bar-

* Cited in *Daily Chronicle*, February 11, 1915.

† *Sunday Chronicle*, January 10, 1915. This tract also quotes several verses from Deuteronomy ii., dealing with the same event; verse 30 declaring "the Lord thy God hardened his [Sihon's] spirit, and made his heart obstinate, that he might deliver him into thy hand as appeareth this day." The New York correspondent concludes with the remark: "Religion is the last refuge of a scoundrel."

‡ McCabe, *The War and the Churches*, p. 13.

* Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1830), ch. iii., sec. ii., p. 31.

† Lecky, *European Morals*, vol. i., p. 293.

‡ McCabe, *The War and the Churches*, p. 27.

barous manner of settling disputes, although they also were obliged to keep an armed force to deal with the incursions of the wild tribes on the frontiers. As Mr. George Lynch—who went out with the Allied Forces to the relief of the Legations in Peking—remarks, after ages of Christian teaching:—

The nations of Europe found that the greater part of the male population, and the greater part of the revenue of their respective Governments, were being absorbed by their respective enemies. And the Hague Conference was an effort in the direction of leaving these contests to be settled by resorting to the higher tribunal of reason and arbitration. It is not surprising that the Chinese civilization, so much older than ours, arrived at this Hague Conference hundreds, if not thousands, of years ago, and that civilization relegated the occupation of the fighting man to that position in the scale of things which he should naturally occupy.*

The traveller in China would seek in vain in the temples for the tombs of warriors and the battle-flags which decorate many of our national places of worship, notably St. Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey. In fact, among the Chinese, the profession of a soldier is not regarded as respectable. Mrs. De Burgh Daly, in her recently published book, *An Irishwoman in China*, tells us that when she was introduced as the sister of a British officer, a Chinese lady asked, "Is, then, this lady's family not a respectable one?" The Rev. E. J. Hardy, who for three-and-a-half years acted as Chaplain to our Forces at Hong Kong, tells us that "A Chinese saying with regard to the military profession is, 'You don't use good iron to make a nail, or a decent man to make a soldier.'"[†] It was Christian nations who forced Japan, in self-defence, to adopt cannon, rifles, and other weapons of destruction. The same Christian nations have been endeavouring to force China into the same path. If ever they do, let them look out; they will have aroused a sleeping giant, to their own destruction. To quote Mr. McCabe again:—

Christendom is in a state of war to which Paganism can offer no parallel. They [the preachers] think of the lands beyond the sea to which they have been sending the Christian message of peace and brotherhood. They fancy they see China and Japan smiling their faint but distressing smile at the situation in Christian Europe. They have assured all these distant peoples that their faith has built up a shining civilization in Europe, and now there flash and quiver through the nerves of the world the daily message of horror, of fierce hatred, of appalling carnage, of the wanton destruction by Christians of Christian temples. The Gospel has, somehow, broken down in Europe, they regretfully admit.‡

Let us next consider the effect of Christianity on the war-spirit after the establishment of Christianity.

(To be continued) W. MANN.

Letters to my Daughter.—III.

MY DEAR JOAN,—

In your playroom there is a picture called "The Fire Worshippers." Two little girls are warming their unclothed forms before a glowing fire. They are both happy and contented. I promised in my last letter to tell you about a brave man who stole fire so that you could roast chestnuts, and as I don't know of anything worse than *breaking* a promise to you, here is the story.

A long, long time ago, a man who loved everybody, was sorry for people who had no fire to warm them when Jack Frost came along. You know Jack Frost; he is the man who comes out at night, paints the roofs and trees white, and hangs icicles from the waterspouts. Well, as this man did not like to see Jack Frost making so many people cold, he went on a journey to a place called Olympus. Here he took

some fire from a spiteful old man named Zeus, and brought it back so that little children could sit round it on wintry days, roast chestnuts, and tell stories. For doing this good action Zeus punished him. The hero was taken to the top of a mountain and chained to a rock. If he would say that he was sorry, Zeus would let him go; but he would not, as he felt sure that mankind was benefited by his action. Now, how can we get plum cake if we have no fire to bake it? I have seen your eyes sparkle at the sight of it, and you must remember that journey to Olympus.

Olympus is a beautiful place. Many travellers have been there; you have been there also—every-time you "pretend" you go there. In simple words, it is the Land of Imagination, and I think that is the reason why you are always happy. One traveller who went there said:—

There is sweet music here that softer falls
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
Or night-dews on still waters between walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass.

He was a good man, too; and, of course, he loved little children. When you grow up you must peep inside that book with the name of Tennyson on it. Perhaps you may find between the pages a crushed carnation; that is a sign that your father has also been to Olympus, and a reminder that heaven is nearer than we are told by those people with the fat "tum-tums," as you call them.

I wonder why you little people laugh at so-called solemn matters. Only the other day you were taken inside a cathedral to hear the music and see the pretty lights. So far, so good. But when those people walked round and "bobbed," as you call it, you shouldn't have laughed. The grown-ups didn't. I suppose your mind isn't developed yet to understand the performance. Or were you laughing at the complex? That, I think, is the true answer, for childhood is the opposite of the complex. And many bad deeds have been done in the name of something the most complex of all. But there, I am almost forgetting that you are only in your fourth year.

Well, good-bye; you are off to the pantomime to see Cinderella. If you don't believe the fairy story about the girl and the glass slipper, no one will want to call you infidel. For you, it was either the black-coated men or fairies; and for good or evil, your father chose the latter. Bound to a rock will I suffer for my choice; I have not forgotten that I was a little boy once and crammed full of nonsense about a person, and I was very unhappy. And that reminds me; you have already asked your mother if she knew you when she was a little girl. You are very young to go to Olympus. I intended to write something about sticky doorknobs and sin; but although I haven't done so, don't forget what I told you about fire and plum cake.—Your loving father,

TRISTRAM.

"Peace on Earth and Good Will to Men."

THERE is a Providence they say
That proves a power divine;
An Architect's almighty skill
In order and design.

When earth's best manhood fall and die,
We say thy will be done;
The eye that notes the sparrow's fall,
Directs the maxim gun.

When hissing shells are in the air,
Still pleasing, proving God!
The shamble of the nations bare
Upon the senseless sod.

All are acceptable to thee;
The stricken widow's moans;
The orphans wail, and over the sea,
The soldier's whitening bones.

PAX.

* Lynch, *The War of the Civilizations*, p. 221.

† Hardy, *John Chinaman at Home* (1905), p. 249.

‡ McCabe, *The War and the Churches*, p. 50.

It was one of life's little ironies that the headlines on a newspaper page were so arranged that they stood out, "General Booth's New Year Message"—"Racing Restarts."

Acid Drops.

Miss Beatrice Harraden told a meeting of the Conference of Educational Associations what it was our soldiers liked to read. As joint librarian with Miss Elizabeth Robins of a soldiers' hospital, she said they made it a rule to give the men what they wanted to read, and not what she wanted them to read. Then followed a list of the books asked for. The magazines were in great demand. Then came novels, mostly of the sensational order, but the most popular being the sporting novels of Nat Gould. We hardly like to question the report of a lady like Miss Harraden, but there must be a mistake somewhere. For we observe that Miss Harraden does not say that the soldiers asked for the Bible or the New Testament, or the Bishop of London's sermons, or religious literature of any kind. And we have it on the highest (theological) authority that our soldiers are brimming over with religion, and we have read columns in the religious press concerning the insistent and insatiable demand for copies of the New Testament. That is why we say Miss Harraden must be mistaken, or she has omitted something from her report. For the only alternative to questioning Miss Harraden's statement is to assume that the Bishop of London and other members of the "dignified clergy" are not stating that which is true. And that is so improbable we decline to discuss it.

The Vicar of Maindee is a nice, pleasant sort of gentleman, but he appears to be living several hundred years too late. On January 1—just before the Day of Intercession—he issued a solemn call to his parishioners to attend service on the Sunday. The "call" took the form of a letter to the press, in the course of which he said:—

I appeal, in God's Holy Name, to all the people of my parish, young and old, not to neglect the opportunities which they will have to-morrow of adding the weight of their personal presence, and assent to the petitions which will be offered up to the Most High, Who ruleth in the kingdom of men.

I bid you remember that your absence from God's House to-morrow, except from unavoidable cause, will be a public avowal that you attach no importance to prayer, and do not think it worth while to invoke His blessing and protection for the men who are fighting for you.

Once upon a time Mr. Llewellyn Jones would probably have marked those who were not present, and have seen that they were punished in some way. And one would have thought that an omniscient Deity would have known quite well enough what the nation needed without people spending the day in church, telling him all about it.

The Vicar of St. James, Hereford, is puzzled. He is "told" that, while "some few members" only attend "our service of Intercession," "The people in Germany attend their places of worship in such numbers that many cannot obtain admittance." We expect someone has been pulling the worthy vicar's leg with reference to the crowded German churches. We believe that they are no more crowded than are ours; but we also believe that, when it comes to profession of piety, there is little to choose between the Britishers and the Germans.

It appears that in the Church of England theological colleges there are at present only 346 students in residence, against 1,258 in the year before the War. We hope after the War to see the number still further reduced.

The Rev. R. J. Campbell has soon left his Nonconformity behind him. In a recent issue of the *Sunday Herald* he reminds the readers that "the communion of saints still continues after the shock of death," and adds, "it is a pity that Protestants" neglect such a solace. This is only one side of the medal. What about the communion of sinners in the red-hot-poker department?

One of the Freemen of the City of London, who died recently at the age of 95, visited the West Indies and Brazil when 85. The newspaper men do not write paragraphs about Adam gardening at 800 years of age, or of Methuselah in his declining centuries.

A witness in a case at Lambeth recently, asked if he had been married, said, "Yes, this is my fifth wife." When that man reaches heaven there should be trouble.

Providence counts the hairs of our heads and watches the fall of sparrows, but it did not prevent ninety-six lives being lost in fires in London during the past year.

No man who edits the *Freethinker* can escape the slings and arrows of Christian charity. In a recent magazine article on the Bishop of London, a story is told that the bishop left a church dignitary to rush off and shake hands with a man "who looked like a disappointed safe-cracker." When asked who his acquaintance was, the bishop replied, "Oh, that's one of the cleverest of my infidel opponents in Victoria Park." It is appropriate that the tale is told in a publication issued in the United States, the land of tall buildings and tall statements.

It is a notorious fact that when young people, who have been brought up under religious influences, leave their native land, they generally neglect to take their religion with them. Religion is so foreign to man's nature that he avails himself of every opportunity to disentangle himself from its meshes. Attention has recently been called to this by writers in the *Record* of the United Free Church of Scotland. The Presbyterian minister of Bulawayo asks, "What is Scottish Christianity worth when the sons of the Church throw it off so completely when they come out here?" One clergyman is of opinion that "probably it will be found impossible to Christianize the native races of South Africa in face of an unchristian white community." The same thing is true of Australia, where the majority of the white settlers are utterly irreligious. This is frankly admitted by the United Free Church of Scotland, and it shows that the hold of religion on most people is of the slightest character possible.

The Incorporated Association of Headmasters, at its Annual Meeting last week, passed a resolution in favour of military training in secondary schools under the direction of the War Office. The resolution may be taken as a comment upon the futility of the "never again" and "the war to end war" talk to which the public have been so liberally treated. Let the *physical* training be as perfect as we can make it; but why military training? The only justification for it is that we expect war and must be prepared for it, and if we expect war so must other nations, and thus we have the old vicious international contest for the largest army and the most complete military preparation over again. And if this War has not shown that competition in military preparations does nothing to prevent war, and everything to precipitate it, then it has not shown anything. And to bring up the youth of each generation in an atmosphere of militarism, to establish the drill sergeant in the public schools, is not to kill Prussianism, but to adopt it. It is a step towards making Prussianism as powerful here as it is at Potsdam.

After the War! So many things are to happen after the War, and most of the prophets appear to be consulting their own wishes rather than the probable course of events. Mr. H. W. Hill, Secretary of the English Church Union, thinks that—after the War—"many of the ideals which have been fostered during the last two or three generations will be found to be delusions"—education without religion, for instance, and by religion I mean dogmatic religion, for religion cannot be taught without dogma. The experience of the recruiting officer who found that he got better results from places, otherwise fairly equal in condition, where dogmatic religion had been taught, goes to prove that the boy who has been taught his duty to God and to his neighbour knows that there is something more in life than mere "getting on." We have no doubt that the Church Union will use its best endeavours to get a larger dose of dogmatic religion taught at the public expense than is at present the case, with what success time alone must decide. But we should like to know who was the officer who found the teaching of dogmatic religion such an aid to recruiting? It is quite an illuminating statement, and bears eloquent witness to the peaceful influence of Christianity.

The newspapers are wobbling on the subject of the supernatural visitants to the European battlefields. Recently the pious *Daily Mail* had a half column headed "A Real Angel of Mons," but the accompanying letterpress referred only to one of the English nurses who had succoured the wounded soldiers.

It is said that the ambition of the late Dan Leno was to play Hamlet; but he never did it. Mr. Harold Begbie is not so modest, for he will persist in writing on scientific subjects. In a recent article with the alluring title, "Male and Female: Science Thinks Again," he says that the phrase "the struggle for existence" converted "happy religion into troubled theology." After this, who shall deny that Mr. Begbie is one of the seven champions of Christendom.

Professor David Smith is a gigantic believer. Among innumerable other things he believes in the miracle of

the confusion of tongues at the Tower of Babel, and in that of the gift of tongues on the Day of Pentecost. These two miracles are closely related. The confusion of tongues was a punishment for the sin of ambition, while the gift of tongues prophesied the removal of the sin and its penalty. What was the gift of tongues? The Professor is not quite sure. The natural interpretation is that the apostles were inspired to speak the languages of the fifteen nationalities represented on that memorable occasion; but, according to another theory, the miracle was wrought, not on the apostles enabling them to speak fifteen different languages, but on their audience, making the apostles, who spoke in their own tongue, intelligible to them all. The curious thing is that Dr. Smith takes both miracles seriously, treating them as if they had actually taken place. Tens of thousands of Sunday-school children will be told what incredible things people can do when filled with the Holy Ghost.

The discussion as to whether the clergy ought or ought not to enlist is still proceeding, without the essential issues being raised. Much is being said about the younger men owing obedience to their bishops, but it appears to be conveniently ignored that if they really desire to enlist and do so, the bishops have no power to prevent them. Of course, they might lose their "jobs," but even that is doubtful, and when the clergy are so loudly calling upon people to make sacrifices, this should not deter them. We can quite understand the bishops not wishing to lose their men, that would mean that the public for which they cater would get out of leading strings. The others appear to be hiding themselves behind their ecclesiastical millinery.

In the Government Bill, the clergy are exempt from compulsory service, and we do not suppose any of them complain. But what we have just said applies again. The clergy may enlist if they feel so inclined. In both Italy and France the clergy are subject to conscription with the rest of the nation. Germany releases its clergy from military service; so that in this matter we are falling into line with the country against which we are warring.

The two essential issues raised by this question are—(1) the claim that the clergy as a body perform functions that cannot be discharged by others, and (2) that as an order their first obedience is due, not to the State, but to the heads of their ecclesiastical organizations. Of the first of these, one can only say that, so far as any verifiably useful services are concerned, it is not true. There is nothing that a clergyman performs that is of value to the community that cannot be performed as well, or even better, by others. Even as teachers of morals, they are the least effective of any body of educated teachers. And the second claim is one that lands us back in the theocratic sociology of the Dark Ages. It is a revival of the claim that the Church is independent of, and superior to, the secular power. A good proportion of the trouble in European history is due to the clashing of these claims, and sooner or later every State in Europe has had to—or will have to—grapple with the issue. In France, that issue has been raised, and settled. Religion has been disestablished. The State does not recognize priests, only citizens. One day we may have wit enough to follow our Ally's example. It is the way of reason and justice, and that is always the better and safer way in the end.

The wind in the recent gale blew down a stone cross from a pinnacle on St. Mary's Catholic Church at Bradford (Yorks), and it fell on a boy in a cinema theatre adjoining the holy building and killed him, and injured a woman and another boy. This sacrilegious, not to say murderous, action on the part of Providence at home, must be disconcerting to those religionists who would have us believe that so great is the Divine care for these sacred symbols in Belgium and France that the whole might of German artillery cannot shift a crucifix, though it can blast down the church or cathedral in which it stands.

During the past twelve months no fewer than three out of four residentiary canons attached to Salisbury Cathedral have gone out of office; one by death, unfortunately, and two by resignation. But then one would naturally expect canons to go off during a war!

It is proverbially hard to please some people, and specially so to please all. The *Church Times* raises a protest against the selection of the opening of the New Year for a Day of Intercession. It complains of the suggestion that "the beginning of the civil year was really of more importance than any prescription of the Church's Kalender." From this we gather that the number of people who "intercessed," was

not so numerous as it was hoped they would have been. In other words, the Day of Intercession, from a spectacular and advertising point of view, was a failure. From any other point of view it was certain to be so.

In a New Year's Message, the Archbishop of Canterbury writes, "We are false to the lessons of Bethlehem and of Golgotha if we are failing, any one of us, to bear our part daily, in such way as we can, in the ready offering of ourselves for the service of our fellow men and for the maintenance of what we whole-heartedly believe to be right." Meanwhile, His Grace takes up his cross and follows Christ on a salary of £15,000 a year.

The Young Women's Christian Association is trying to emulate the male organization, and has provided a number of hostels for girls, but the newspaper reports add pathetically, "the canteens never quite pay," and subscriptions may be forwarded to a nobleman with a high-sounding title. The male Christians have a real princess presiding over the cash-box, so the girls have some cause to be jealous.

Baron von Bissing, Governor-General of Belgium, has received the degree of Doctor of Theology from the University of Munster. Presumably he will be able to get new "tips" concerning "frightfulness" from the pages of the Old Testament, and he will be better able to exchange theological jokes with the Kaiser.

The Rev. R. J. Campbell, writing in the *Sunday Herald*, says, "Would to God the world were poor and simple and clean." What simplicity! Fully 60 per cent. of the people live from hand to mouth, most of them are Christians, and are, therefore, simple. As for cleanliness, it is proverbial that it is next to godliness.

We are always pleased to quote sensible things from the religious press, if only as a set-off against the many nonsensical things we so frequently cite. Thus, the following from the *Christian Commonwealth* :—

Let us not forget that Germany was within an ace of defeating the Allies, not because she prayed more fervently, but because she prepared more guns, more shells, more high explosives than they did. Let us not forget that, if the tide is turning, and victory is in sight, it is not because Frenchmen and Englishmen are more moral and God-fearing than they were a year ago (though this may well be true), and Germans less so, but because we are meeting the enemy upon his own ground—gun for gun, shell for shell, poison for poison.

It is something to have this much recognized amid the deluge of cant which religious writers are pouring over the nation. Prayer and religion could not prevent the war; neither will it end it. It can only add cant and hypocrisy to an already horrible business.

Dr. Rhys Davids, whom we suppose knows as much about Buddhism as any living European, says he is "quite convinced that the moral tone of the Western people would be greatly raised as they became influenced by the calm wisdom and profoundly ethical teaching which comes to us from India." Of course, Dr. Davids had in mind the Buddhist philosophy, which is essentially an Atheistic system. The remarkable thing is the impertinent piety of the British evangelist who carries his gospel of Christianity out to these, quite convinced that he, and it, is their moral and mental superior. Whereat, of course, the "heathen" smiles, and the average missionary returns home as ignorant as when he went out.

That valiant Christian soldier, the Bishop of London, has screwed his courage to the sticking place, and will visit the troops in France in April. So the newspapers inform us. This is what profane players call the "puff preliminary."

We know, or ought to know, after what took place at Mons, that the day of supernatural intervention is not yet over. Here are later instances, taken from the *Western Gazette* of December 31, 1915 :—

A CHRISTMAS COMEDY.—While a choir soloist at the Congregational Church, Victoria-road, Newport, was singing "The people that sat in darkness," the electric light failed. A little later on, as "Thou shalt break them" was being sung, the bellows of the organ broke, and took more than an hour to repair.

Whatever will Mr. Harold Begbie say?

"Kaiser as Prophet" is a headline in the newspapers. Let us hope the pious Wilhelm is as incorrect as most of the Biblical prophets.

To Correspondents.

MR. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—January 23, South Shields; February 6, Abertillery; February, 13, Liverpool; February 27, Leicester; March 5, Portsmouth.

H. R.—You put your case well, but we do not agree with it. In our opinion, the statement that the State must be preserved at all costs is a contingent truth only. It depends upon the kind of State it proposed to preserve. Suppose the State rested on chattel slavery. What then? The ultimate justification of the State is the welfare of those who compose it. It must be remembered, also, that it is precisely this doctrine that the first duty is to preserve the State, and that all other considerations must give way to this one, was put forward by Germany as its ultimate justification for all it did, and was vigorously denounced by English politicians and writers. And a principle cannot be wrong on one side the North Sea and right on the other side. It does not affect us that politicians are now altering their tone. We are not in politics, and may be allowed to exercise some little appreciation of consistency and devotion to principle.

ROBERT ARCH.—Received with thanks. We hope to publish in a week or two.

M. L. R.—Shall be pleased to help you in any we can. We are acquainted with the matter to which you refer. We presume you wish us to reply in this manner.

S. AYRES.—We intend making the "Views and Opinions" on current events a fairly constant feature. Pleased that you found last week's "Views" "interesting and stimulating."

G. A. FIELD (Montreal).—Very pleased to get your letter describing the work you are doing and contemplating. Our Business Manager is sending you on some publications, but we are afraid we have nothing that deals specifically with the points raised. You will, however, find them treated from week to week in this journal.

E. BROOKS.—You are fortunate in your parents and family, and the united esteem and support of you all is something of which any man may well feel proud.

H. ALLEN.—No apology is needed for the size of one's subscription to the Memorial Fund. The spirit of the contribution counts for everything.

S. CLOWES.—Pleased to hear that the *Freethinker* has been of so much assistance to you. Thanks for good wishes for the success of the Fund.

H. J. THORPE.—Sorry cannot at present find room for verses.

A. M.—Of course, one may say a man is "naturally an Atheist," but "the bearing of the remark lies in the application thereof." A person is born without the idea of God, as he is born without ideas of any kind. And if he is left free from all religious teaching, in a civilized community, he will in all probability grow up an Atheist. But in the absence of adequate instruction, he will with equal probability develop religious ideas. That is, in fact, the way in which religion has developed. We should prefer to put it that, in the absence of an adequate culture, man "naturally" becomes religious; that his religiousness represents the contact of inadequately instructed intelligence with the natural phenomena, and that Atheism results from the growth of a more complete knowledge and of a more scientific frame of mind. The formula, "Man is born an Atheist," is really valueless as an induction, and misleading in its application.

W. R.—We join with you in congratulating Mr. Mann upon his articles. And we know that a large number of our readers find them extremely useful. We refrain from saying more now, as Mr. Mann is an extremely modest person, and if we said all we and our readers think, we are afraid we should make him quite uncomfortable.

G. L.—Pleased that you think the *Freethinker* is "more varied and altogether stronger than ever." We have other improvements in mind, but we must proceed with caution. And we are awaiting the advent of that thousand new readers.

J. DANN.—There is no objection to holding up the hand on making affirmation. Your notion is quite correct.

C. B. W.—Received.

A NUMBER of letters are held over until next week owing to want of space.

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.

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.

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

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

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.

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.

G. W. Foote Memorial Fund.

(To take the form of a Presentation to Mrs. Foote.)

THIS Memorial Fund is intended as an expression of respect and admiration towards the dead, and as a discharge of a duty towards the living. No man has deserved better of Freethinkers than our late leader, G. W. Foote, and in no way can the gratitude of Freethinkers be better expressed than in making provision for his widow and unmarried daughter. When the Fund is completed it will be either invested, or arranged in the form of a Trust, for the benefit of Mrs. Foote. The ultimate form it may take will be made public in due course, and the accounts properly audited by an incorporated accountant.

It is hoped to close the Fund at as early a date as is possible.

Cheques should be made payable to the "G. W. Foote Memorial Fund," and crossed "London City and Midland Bank, Clerkenwell Branch." All communications should be addressed to "Editor," *Freethinker*, 61 Farringdon-street, London, E.C.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

"The Roll of Honour."—Sixth List.

Previously acknowledged, £287 10s.—H. V. Phelps, 10s. 6d.; W. and J. Fothergill, 2s. 6d.; P. G. Feabody, £2; C. Jortan, 2s.; E. Kirton, 5s.; Mr. and Mrs. Fitzpatrick, 5s.; Mrs. Laschelles, 5s.; Mrs. D. Black and Family, 10s.; M. L. R., £3; E. Brooks, £1 1s.; M. J. Charter, £1; A. B., 10s.; G. Smith, £1 1s.; H. C. B., £1 1s.; D. Watt, 2s. 6d.; R. J. Binns, 9s. 6d.; C. F. Simpson, £1 1s.; G. E. Webb, 10s. 6d.; T. Stringer, 2s. 6d.; S. Clowes, 5s.; W. J. Paul, 6d.; H. and D. Allin, 5s.; R. Miller, 10s.; H. S. Salt, £1 1s.; J. A. Morris, 5s.; H. T. Dartnall, 2s. 6d.; "A Positivist," 10s.; Isabella Roberts, 5s.; R. V., £1; F. F., 2s. 6d.; D. Mapp, 2s. 6d.; J. E. Willis, 7s. 6d.; Father and Son, 4s.; G. Smith (Bolton), 10s.

Sugar Plums.

Next Sunday (January 23) Mr. Cohen lectures in the Victoria Assembly Hall, Fowler-street, South Shields. There will only be one meeting, which is timed for 6.30 in the evening. We hope there will be a good gathering of local Freethinkers. Propagandist work on Tyneside has been laggard of late years, and it is time that the same activity that once existed should again obtain. Perhaps it may be possible—it is certainly advisable—to organize something in the nature of the old North-Eastern Secular Federation. A Business Meeting in connection with Mr. Cohen's visit is to be held at 34 James Mather Terrace, to-day (Jan. 16) at 6.30 p.m.

If any of our readers have back numbers of the *Freethinker* for disposal and would send them to Sergeant G. Combe, 48 Gray's Hill, Bangor, Co. Down, Ireland, he will be glad to receive them for despatch to friends at the Front.

Our occasional, but always welcome, contributor, "Keridon," lectures at the Tillery Institute, Abertillery, Mon., to-day (Jan. 16) at 6 o'clock. We hope that he will have a good audience. The audience is certain to have a good lecture.

A Business Meeting of the Kingsland Branch, N. S. S., will be held at 56 Richmond-road, Barnsbury, on Sunday evening, January 16, at 7 o'clock. All members are earnestly invited to be present for the transaction of very important business.

We are pleased to hear from Montreal that a "Rationalist Society" has been formed in that city, and that it is preparing for an energetic campaign. The Society meets weekly in Mountain-street, at what is described as a "nice hall," and we hope to hear of its continued success. There must be room for an energetic Society in Montreal, and we wish the new venture every success.

The Gospel of Mark.

SOME ten years ago a discussion was started in the columns of the *Daily Mail* on the question, "Should clergymen criticize the Bible"? In the correspondence which followed, nothing respecting the character of any of the books was discussed: the writers simply assumed the traditional view to be correct. Of the many dogmatic statements made in the course of that "discussion," the most noteworthy, perhaps, were those delivered by Dr. Wilberforce, Archdeacon of Westminster. One paragraph, of which I made a note, ran as follows:—

The four Gospels have been severely tested in the crucible of scientific criticism, and have been proved to be documents of the first century, of a high order of historical accuracy. No one now dare commit himself to the statement that they are worthless forgeries of a late date. The authorship of the Gospel of St. Mark, A.D. 65, compiled from the reminiscences of St. Peter, is absolutely undisputed; etc. (italics mine).

The foregoing statement was, of course, mere assertion. As a matter of fact, it had not, prior to that time, "been proved" that the four Gospels were "documents of the first century," or that they are "of a high order of historical accuracy," or that the Gospel of Mark was written in A.D. 65, or that the authorship of that evangel "is absolutely undisputed."

While this correspondence was going on in the *Daily Mail*, another Church dignitary, Canon Wilson, undertook to demonstrate to the good people of Rochdale the correctness of the traditional view of the four Gospels. According to the report in a local paper, the Canon stated that since the publication of the theory of Baur (about 1860) many English clerical scholars had expended much time in the re-examination of the evidence for the Gospels, which forty-five years of labour resulted in "a complete vindication of tradition." In the course of the lecture the Canon, amongst other matters, said:—

The result of modern research showed that the Gospels were written somewhere between the years 60 and 95. St. Mark's Gospel was usually assigned now to about the year 65; St. Matthew's and St. Luke's Gospels to some time between 65 and 80; and St. John's to about the year 90, or at the latest 95.

The discovery of "ancient books" due to "modern research" the Canon further said, included the following: the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, the Apology of Aristides, part of the Second Epistle of Clement, the Oxyrhynchus papyri, and the Diatessaron of Tatian, the latter being "a harmony of the four Gospels, compiled between A.D. 150 and 170." In addition to these discoveries, said the Canon, "there were the exploration and discovery of inscriptions in Asia Minor, Egypt, and Greece," the result of which was "to vindicate St. Luke as an historian."

After reading this formidable array of newly discovered evidence, what rational critic would have the temerity to deny that Mark's Gospel was written as early as A.D. 65? Anyone, however, who summoned courage to examine all the so-called evidence would find only the following result:—

- (1). That in not one of the first four "ancient books" mentioned by Canon Wilson is there any reference to the four Gospels—not one of which is even named.
- (2). That the *Diatessaron of Tatian* is a purely mythical document, the re-covered Harmony having no connection with the second century Tatian at all.
- (3). That the inscriptions which "vindicate St. Luke as an historian" have reference chiefly to names of places and titles of Roman governors mentioned in the Book of the Acts, and do not affect the dates assigned to the Gospels or the Acts.

Shortly after the lecture of Canon Wilson another reverend gentleman, Canon Scott, delivered six lectures in Manchester Cathedral, which were after-

wards published in book form. One of the objects of these lectures was to make known to the Christian world "the results of Biblical criticism, so far as they are accepted by our best English scholars." I pass over the Canon's arguments for placing the composition of the four Gospels in the first century—the *Diatessaron of Tatian* and the alleged early existence of the Old Latin Version being amongst them—and come to the actual dates given. Canon Scott says:—

The volume of the Gospels must have come into existence about A.D. 100, or at any rate not much later.....I suggest to you A.D. 63 or thereabouts for St. Mark, and A.D. 70 for St. Matthew and St. Luke, and A.D. 96 for St. John.....It is now absolutely certain that all the four Gospels were written within the possible lifetime of the men whose names they bear.

The last statement is perfectly true. At whatever time each of the Synoptical Gospels was composed, whether in the first or second century, the name of the writer was known: the Gospel was spoken of as "according to" that writer, and having been received in the Church as such, the name of the author or compiler could not be altered—not even after his death. But for this fact all four Gospels, a generation or two later, would have been ascribed to apostles: but this being impossible, Mark and Luke were said to have each been the companion of an apostle, and to have written their Gospels from what they remembered of that particular apostle's preaching. As a case in point, we know from the Maratorian Fragment that the book called "the Shepherd" was written by Hermas about the year 140 or 150: yet a generation later his writing was called "scripture," and was said to have been written by the Hermas named in Rom. xvi. 14.

Coming now to the matter of criticism, Canon Scott in his third lecture says:—

Scholars are now of the opinion that the likeness between the Synoptical Gospels is due to the fact that St. Matthew and St. Luke wrote with St. Mark's Gospel before them, and embodied in their Gospels such portions of St. Mark's Gospel as they deemed suitable for their purpose.

As a matter of fact, Matthew embodied about 96 per cent. of the Second Gospel, and Luke about 80 per cent. Yet a few years before the foregoing statement we were told that the first three Gospels were independent histories: that Matthew, an apostle, drew up a narrative of what he had seen and heard when following Jesus; that Mark, a companion of Peter, committed to writing all he remembered of that apostle's preaching; and that Luke, a colleague of Paul, wrote down what had been narrated by the Apostle of the Gentiles. This absurd theory is now quietly dropped: it is at length openly admitted that only one of the three Synoptics is an original composition—the evangel "according to" Mark. After this admission it, of course, becomes more than ever necessary for Christian apologists to maintain the authenticity and credibility of the Gospel of Mark: and this is everywhere done. Canon Scott says:—

Tradition tells us that St. Mark was St. Peter's interpreter at Rome, and that he was the author of a Gospel which contained the substance of Peter's preaching..... When all is taken account of, it seems tolerably certain that St. Peter is the authority for the main part of St. Mark's Gospel.

Here should be noted the three words I have italicized. Now, several years before Canon Scott's lectures, when I first commenced the study of Bible subjects, I discovered in comparing the narratives common to the three Synoptics that these were not independent accounts, but merely slightly varied copies of the same set of earlier narratives. And such I stated to be the fact in the first series of articles which appeared in the *Freethinker*. Our clerical critics and apologists, however, seem determined not to give up *Mark*. If the first three Gospels be admitted to be anonymous, and the fourth a forgery, what becomes of their alleged authenticity and credibility? Clearly, then, there must be at least one original Gospel.

Dean Robinson tells us in his *Study of the Gospels* that he held at first that all three Synoptists made use of a common document; but afterwards he dismissed that hypothesis as "cumbersome and unnecessary," and adopted the view that the First and Third evangelists had copied from *Mark*. Upon this subject the more rational critic, Dr. Carpenter, Principal of Manchester College, Oxford, says in his work entitled *The First Three Gospels* :—

Either the Gospel which was produced first was employed by the authors of the other two, or all three Gospels were based upon some common Greek sources. *This latter view seems best to meet the conditions of the case.*

After a careful examination of the Synoptic Gospels, Dr. Carpenter arrives at the conclusion that *Mark* was the earliest of the three, and was probably written about the year A.D. 70. As to the other two, he assigns *Luke* to between A.D. 80 and 90, and *Matthew*, after passing through several intermediate stages, to a decade or so later than *Luke*.

With regard to the source of the narratives found only in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, Canon Scott, in common with other critics, says: "Generally it is believed that St. Matthew and St. Luke made use of a Gospel or fragment of a Gospel that is now lost." Just so: and this lost Gospel, from which *Mark* has apparently taken nothing, is usually called the non-Marcian document, but by German critics Q—that is, *Quelle* or Source. This is as far as English criticism of the Gospels has advanced: but even this very obvious admission seems to be unknown to the clergy at large; for nearly all still hold the old traditional view.

But why is it that our clerical critics are almost unanimous in assigning the year 65 as the date of the composition of *Mark*? The reason is very simple. The statement of the Presbyterian John to Papias is assumed to be true: then the following later statement is called to mind :—

Eusebius (A.D. 330): The emperor Nero.....was led in his fury to slaughter the apostles. Paul is said to have been beheaded at Rome, and Peter to have been crucified, by him.

According to tradition, these two apostles were put to death towards the close of the reign of Nero (A.D. 54—68); whence we obtain the year 65 or thereabouts. There is also another reason which we shall come to presently.

Now, that neither the Gospel of Mark, nor any other Gospel, was written as early as A.D. 65 is beyond the shadow of a doubt. This is proved by statements in the Gospels themselves in the so-called prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple (Matt. xxiv., Mark xiii., Luke xxi.). In the account given by Mark, Jesus says of the temple: "There shall not be left here one stone upon another, which shall not be thrown down" (xiii. 2). He also says of the horrors of the siege :—

For in those days shall be tribulation, such as there hath not been the like from the beginning of the creation which God created *until now*, and never shall be (xiii. 9).

This thirteenth chapter of Mark was not composed until after the fall of the holy city in the year A.D. 70. Though drawn up in the form of a prediction, the writer had an *actual knowledge* of the siege and of the terrible afflictions which came upon the besieged Jews both before and after the fall: he was *absolutely certain* of the occurrence of the event. Now, no one living in the time of Jesus could have had any idea of what was about to happen, not even the Gospel Jesus who is represented as uttering the prediction. This is certain: for that Saviour, in the same chapter, is stated to have said that "in those days, after that tribulation," they should see him "coming in the clouds" with his angels to judge the world. This second coming was not to be centuries later, but "in those days" and before that generation had passed away (xiii. 30). This—the only real prediction in the Gospels—time has proved to be false: the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple was an event of the past at the time the earliest Gospel was written. And here we come to the second reason why Christian

apologists assign the Gospel of Mark to the year A.D. 65. This is, that the Jewish war with the Romans commenced in the year 66: consequently the prediction, to be genuine, should be actually written before that date; for it would be easy to foresee that the Roman power must ultimately prevail.

(To be continued.) ABRACADABRA.

Science and Religious Belief.

SOME time ago Professor Schuster, President of the British Association, remarked that, of his own knowledge, there was no necessary connection between science and the religion of scientific men. They believe "not because they are scientists, but because they are, naturally, religious men." This is a repetition of what Freethinkers have said times out of number, and our own present purpose is to show how it comes about that a scientific man may be, at the same time, a religious man, using the word religious in the only sense in which it can properly be used, namely, relating to a dependence on, and reverence for, a divine person endowed with supernatural power.

In the mind of man there are three groups of faculties, they being placed under the categories of intellect, sentiments, and propensities.

In the first group the reasoning powers, that is to say, the intellect proper and the perceptive faculties are found; in the second, the higher and the lower sentiments such as conscientiousness, reverence, benevolence, hope, ideality, marvellousness, parental love, amateness, approbateness, firmness, and self-esteem; and in the third, acquisitiveness, secretiveness, combativeness, the self-preservative instinct, and others. Upon the comparative development of all the faculties in these three groups, together with the state of health, education, and environment, depends the infinite variety in the capacity and character of men and women throughout the world.

The general religious belief is that mind, although possessing an independent and separate existence, requires an instrument, the brain, in order to manifest its various faculties. No evidence has ever been produced in support of this belief. There is nothing against the hypothesis that thought is a function of the cells of the brain, which vary greatly both as to size and shape, and, in all probability, their functions vary correspondingly.

As to the sentiments and propensities of man, they are in themselves blind. We may love things that are good or bad; a half-witted person may be very proud; and we may fear things that are harmful or innocent.

Our kindness and charity are often abused; and our hope leads us along many a tangled path. The sentiments and propensities require to be enlightened and guided by the intellectual faculties; that is why, if left to themselves, they occasion so many disorders.

It will no doubt be said that it is the will that controls the appetites and curbs the impetuous desires; but the will, however, is not a separate entity; for if it were, how could it act at one time in one direction, and at another in an entirely opposite direction? Why is it, then, that in one person it will seek selfish gratification, and in another the welfare and happiness of others? A fundamental power could never have opposite tendencies. Will, of necessity, connotes action; a person may arrive at a decision, but unless he translates it into action he has not exhibited will. Will, therefore, is acting in accordance with the decision produced by all those mental powers, be they few or many, that function in combination at any one time.

Man does not, however, always deliberate before he acts; for in numerous instances he is impelled to immediate action in order to satisfy his desires.

In the manifestation of true will, by which is meant the mental operation that estimates the value of desires, and that selects what seems the highest

and best of them, intelligence is an essential condition. There cannot be moral will without intelligence, and the law recognizes this; for it does not consider insane persons to be responsible for their actions. To constitute true will the higher sentiments and the intellect are necessary; and it should be noted that the direction of the will and the degree of its strength, depends entirely upon the comparative development and activity of the predominant desires and intellect, allowing, of course, for education, the state of health, and environment.

To illustrate what we have said, let us suppose, for example, that a person possesses large and active faculties of veneration, marvellousness, hope, and acquisitiveness, with but small conscientiousness, benevolence, and parental love. Suppose, too, that he has been brought up in the orthodox way, and that he has had a good home. This person would be, without doubt, religious; but he could not be relied upon always to act from worthy motives. The object of his desires would often be unworthy and immoral. He would be eager to possess wealth; and, owing to his lack of conscientiousness and sympathy, he would be unscrupulous in his methods; unless, of course, circumstances were favourable; for who would *go out of his way* to commit a dishonest act. He would naturally prefer to remain ostensibly respectable; and, again, fear of the law would restrain him to a large extent. His religion! That would cause him to act uprightly, we shall be told. Would it? Well, it cannot be denied that it *might* exercise some influence for good; but it depends upon the religion. The Christian religion would not have that influence; for, according to its teaching, salvation is by faith. Only believe that your sins were atoned for and forgiven by the death of the only begotten Son of God, and you are saved.

As Luther said, "Nothing damns but unbelief." The fact is, that such a person would be lacking in justice and sympathy; and no amount or kind of religion would endow him with these qualities.

Think, just think for a moment, of the offences committed and of the unspeakable horrors perpetrated by the authority of the Church dignitaries in the days of the Inquisition, and in the days of witchcraft in England.

The religion of these men simply overwhelmed their sentiments of justice and benevolence. They worked, and schemed, and contrived with all the resources of their intelligence and inferior sentiments and propensities to enforce their beliefs on the minds of the people. Some religious persons might acknowledge all this, and yet try to explain it by stating that the standard of intelligence in those days rendered severely repressive measures necessary. Their argument, however, is wholly illogical, for what they refuse avowedly to admit is directly implied in their assertions. They cannot escape the conclusion that Christianity, instead of reforming men, makes them worse.

The more the religious sentiments of a person act with passion, in other words, the more fanatical a person is, the greater is his service to Christianity; but the greater is his disservice to the State. There is as much lying, hypocrisy, and deceit in the Church as ever there was; certainly there are not the horrors perpetrated that there were in the earlier days; but we have man's intelligence to thank for that; the general level of education is much higher than it was.

It is often said that the universality of religion proves its necessity; but, apart from any other considerations, it is not true that religion is universal. What about the millions of Buddhists, who are certainly not religious according to the correct definition of the term religion?

And, too, what about the many thousands of persons in every civilized country who do not profess any kind of religious belief whatever? Do they not count? Are they not human beings? If, therefore, tens of thousands of persons, all of whom have been brought up in an atmosphere of religion, can

dispense with it, can it be said to be a necessity? Why, no; a thousand times no.

What is really implied in the argument is that we are endowed with the sentiments specially concerned with religion in order that we may know God. To assert this is completely to misconceive the purpose for which these faculties exist in the mind.

The four faculties most concerned in religion, namely, veneration, marvellousness, hope, and fear, are not primarily concerned with ideas of God at all, but with mundane things. A person certainly adores God and venerates saints with the faculty of veneration, but its true object is man. It produces deference and respect towards parents and superiors in general. It is the sentiment of reverence, or respect in general, without determining the object to be revered or respected; nor the manner of bestowing it. Neither are we endowed with the faculty of marvellousness in order that we may admire the magnificent, the sublimity of an anthropomorphic deity; but that we may admire and appreciate grandeur of scenery and the noble and wonderful works of man. Nor are we endowed with hope that we may long for and experience joy from the thought of immortality, but that it may sustain us in our difficulties; that it may induce a belief in the possibility of what our other faculties desire, the contemplation of which produces in us a feeling of happiness and satisfaction; it does not, however, produce conviction; for this results only from reflection.

Nor do we possess fear in order that we may the more readily serve God. Fear, or rather caution, which signifies a normal state, is required in order that we can the better protect ourselves, to cause us to avoid or shrink from danger; to take measures for the future, and to fear consequences in general.

When too active, this faculty causes such abuses as irresolution, anxiety, melancholy, despair, especially when there is but small hope; hence in a religious person the terrors of hell are ever present, making his life a perfect misery, causing him in the end to take his life by his own hand, perhaps.

In the light of present knowledge, the belief in an act of special creation is absolutely untenable.

We are justified in asserting that our faculties have evolved and developed through æons and æons. Step by step, from the purely reflex action in the lowliest organism, through the self-preservative instincts, propensities, and affective sentiments of the lower animals, to the moral and intellectual faculties of civilized man. Unless a creature can adapt itself to changing conditions, it will become extinct. This is a proven fact. And to say that a creature adapts itself to changed conditions, is no more than to say that the faculties that it possesses are developed in the right direction; or that new ones are evolved; or that both changes take place.

We are inevitably led to the conclusion, then, that amongst the lower orders of mankind supernaturalism is due to ignorance and to the comparatively large development of the sentiments of reverence, marvellousness, hope, and fear—especially of fear—which is the one most easily affected.

It may be said that, as religion is due to a considerable extent to ignorance, there ought to be but few eminent persons who are religious. We ought not to overlook this fact, however, namely, that sound and true reasoning require two things: first, sound reflective faculties; and second, exact notions and just feelings—in other words, sound premises.

Again, the fact that all eminent persons are not exact reasoners ought not to be overlooked. Many men of science, for instance, are only accurate observers, indicating that they have well-developed perceptive powers, and retentive memories of individual things and events.

These powers, together with average reasoning ability, will enable a person to accomplish a great deal if he has good health and the necessary training. This is not to be interpreted as implying that the majority of scientific men are religious. The case is exactly the opposite, for most scientific men are logical reasoners.

It must be noted that, in any person, the intellectual organs comprise but a small region of the brain as compared with that of the sentiments and propensities together; and if any of the latter are abnormally developed, the intellect will be employed largely for the purpose of satisfying their desires.

When we consider, too, that religion has been systematically taught in wellnigh every home in Christendom for centuries and centuries, can we be blind to the fact that this teaching must have had a tremendous influence? It has influenced every one of us some time during his or her life; but the fact that numbers of well-balanced minds live happy and moral lives without it, proves that it is unnecessary.

Again, when we reflect upon the persecution and horrors that have been carried out and done in its name, we are no longer content merely to state that we do not require it; but we are actuated, even compelled, to denounce it, and to pronounce it an accursed thing.

FILOSOFO.

Darwin Undone.

So the dragon of Natural Selection is dead at last. It was grudgingly admitted to be a healthy beast, even by those who had suffered most from its depredations; but now—God be praised!—it has received a knock-out blow. Harold Begbie has spoken.

The monster has waged war on True Religion. Freethinkers know that well enough, though up-to-date Christians affect to welcome it as an essential part of their faith. But it has done more. Can you guess, gentle reader? Well, I will let you into the secret at once. It has caused the War. Mr. Begbie says "that dismal expression, 'the struggle for existence,' has gloomed the atmosphere of Europe, converted happy religion into troubled theology, inspired the melancholy and dejected poetry, the sad and wistful fiction.....and produced this calamitous war" (the italics are mine).

So now we know. It was not the Kaiser, after all, or Lord Northcliffe, or the Radicals—it was that dismal expression, "the struggle for existence." How flourishing is the growth of lunacy in a state of war! And how often do we meet that crankiest of all cranks, the man who is busy tracing the War to all sorts of fantastic origins! Yet, amid a wealth of foolishness, what could be more foolish than this?

So it caused the War. It is a great relief to find that it did so "as a last expiring kick"; for it follows that, the cause of such things being removed, no more calamitous wars need be looked for. And further, no more troubled theology or sad and wistful fiction or melancholy and dejected poetry will trouble us again. The awkward part of it is, we are not told the cause of previous calamitous wars. For every student of history knows that there has never been a period when some considerable portion of the creatures of God have not been engaged in calamitous wars. What, in the name of reason, caused the Holy Wars of the Christians and Saracens? Was it "that dismal expression, 'the struggle for existence' "? As for glooming the atmosphere of Europe, well, one wonders if Mr. Begbie has ever heard of the Dark Ages, or is acquainted with the cheerful tenets of the Calvinists and Puritans, whose teachings acted as a great wet blanket on the joy of life for centuries. And pessimistic literature is, like the poor, always with us. There was plenty of it before anybody thought of theorizing on the struggle for existence. But there are worse things than sadness in literature. There is, for instance, that mockery of happiness—the affectation that misery does not exist if we choose to shut our eyes to it.

The only thing adduced by Mr. Begbie by way of argument is a theory propounded by Mr. Reinheimer, who sets out to prove that the general tendency of things is towards co-operation, and that sex had its origin in co-operative habits of organisms and parasites. Supposing all this to be true, one is still at a loss to see how a "shrewd blow" is struck at the

theory of Natural Selection. Mr. Reinheimer's theory of Parasites and the Origin of Sex would, if accepted, serve as an interesting amplification of Darwin's Theories—certainly not as a refutation.

The article closes with two comical paragraphs, one proving that man is the only being capable of progress and the other contemplating the millions of years during which life has been developing from humble origins. Mr. Begbie heads his precious screed, "Male and Female: Science Thinks Again." We respectfully suggest that he should take a scientific tip, and "think again." For the best comment on it all is suggested by his final staggerer, "Whence comes this movement, and whither does it go?" I ask in all humility, "Whence comes this piffle, Mr. Begbie, and whither does it go?"

HERBERT W. THURLOW.

Correspondence.

THE LOVE OF TRUTH.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Your footnote to Mr. Cecil Chesterton's letter in your issue of January 9 is correct so far as it goes, but it seems to me you let him off too lightly.

Mr. Chesterton is an educated man, well read in history as well as in theological controversy, and he knows perfectly well the difference between the late Mr. Foote's methods of combating what he believed to be error and those resorted to by the mediæval Church, of which St. Bernard was an ornament. The latter method was based on the assumption that intellectual error in matters of faith constituted a deadly sin, involving the eternal misery of those who fell into it. This assumption explains the "bitter and implacable" enmity with which men like Bernard pursued men like Abelard. Mr. Chesterton is, further, perfectly well aware that in thousands of cases men and women, for such intellectual "sins," were condemned, by or at the instigation of the Church to which he belongs, to the most awful death that the devilry of man ever devised.

If Mr. Chesterton will furnish evidence that Mr. Foote, or any other Freethinker in the last three centuries, ever advocated the live cremation of those who disagreed with their conclusions, I shall be prepared to regard seriously his question as to the relative commendability of Catholic and Free-thought methods; but not otherwise.

ROBERT ARCH.

Death and G. W. Foote.

Soft! Who goes there?
Who comes, with steady tread and stately mien?
And whose this soothing hand upon my brow?
Methinks I feel the end approaching now—
All is so still, the evening air is keen—
Upon the long, dark journey I must fare:
Soft! Who goes there?

Soft! Who goes there?
What bold intruder thus disturbs my rest?
And what the meaning of this midnight call?
My eyes grow dim: I see the curtain fall.
And so, farewell! of causes all the best,
Henceforth thy banner other arms shall bear:
Soft! Who goes there?

Give me thy hand, but have no fear,
O faithful chief.
Lean on my arm, for night is here;
In silent grief
They stand, whom thou so nobly led,
About thy bed,
O Captain, dead.

Give me thy hand, the chilly breath
Of night descends,
And covers all; the touch of death
Enchantment londs
To this thy long, last slumber deep;
Whilst thousands weep,
Dear Captain, sleep! A. ALDWICKLE.

"Great changes have taken place in London in education during the past quarter of a century," says a Sunday paper. How true. Yet children are still taught that the fairy tales of the Bible are sober history.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.**OUTDOOR.**

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Messrs. Saphin and Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Kells and Dales, "Example"; 6.30, Messrs. Beale, Kells, and Saphin.

COUNTRY.**INDOOR.**

ABERTILLY (New Era Union, Tillery Institute): 6.30, J. C. Thomas ("Keridon"), "The Gospel of Peace and Goodwill."

SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH N. S. S. (34 James Mather Terrace): 6.30, Arrangements for Mr. Cohen's Lecture, "Christianity and the European War."

LIFE-LIKE PORTRAIT

OF

G. W. FOOTE.

Art Mounted, 10 by 7. With Autograph.

SUITABLE FOR FRAMING.

Price ONE SHILLING (Postage 3d.)

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGTON-STREET E.C.

**RUSKIN HOUSE SCHOOL,
SOUTHEND-ON-SEA.**

CONDUCTED ON RATIONALISTIC LINES.

*Established 1903.**Recommended by Prominent Freethinkers.*

Write:

W. H. THRESH, Principal,

FOR PROSPECTUS.

America's Freethought Newspaper.**THE TRUTH SEEKER.**

FOUNDED BY D. M. BENNETT, 1873.

CONTINUED BY E. M. MACDONALD, 1883-1909.

G. E. MACDONALD EDITOR.
L. K. WASHBURN EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTOR.**SUBSCRIPTION RATES.**

Single subscription in advance	...	3.00
Two new subscribers	...	5.00
One subscription two years in advance	...	5.00

To all foreign countries, except Mexico, 50 cents per annum extra. Subscriptions for any length of time under a year, at the rate of 25 cents per month, may be begun at any time.

Freethinkers everywhere are invited to send for specimen copies, which are free.

THE TRUTH SEEKER COMPANY,

Publishers, Dealers in Freethought Books,

62 Vesey Street, New York, U.S.A.

Determinism or Free Will?By **C. COHEN.***Issued by the Secular Society, Ltd.***CONTENTS.**

I. The Question Stated.—II. "Freedom" and "Will."—III. Consciousness, Deliberation, and Choice.—IV. Some Alleged Consequences of Determinism.—V. Professor James on "The Dilemma of Determinism."—VI. The Nature and Implications of Responsibility.—VII. Determinism and Character.—VIII. A Problem in Determinism.—IX. Environment.

PRICE ONE SHILLING NET.

(POSTAGE 2d.)

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

AN OUTLINE OF EVOLUTIONARY ETHICS. Published at 6d., price 3d., postage 1d.

SOCIALISM, ATHEISM, AND CHRISTIANITY. Price 1d., postage ½d.

CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIAL ETHICS. Price 1d., postage ½d.

PAIN AND PROVIDENCE. Price 1d., postage ½d.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGTON-STREET, LONDON, E.C.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY

(LIMITED)

*Company Limited by Guarantee.**Registered Office—62 FARRINGTON STREET, LONDON, E.C.**Secretary—Miss E. M. VANCE.*

This Society was formed in 1898 to afford legal security to the acquisition and application of funds for Secular purposes.

The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of inquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularisation of the State, etc., etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

The liability of members is limited to £1, in case the Society should ever be wound up and the assets were insufficient to cover liabilities—a most unlikely contingency.

Members pay an entrance fee of ten shillings, and a subsequent yearly subscription of five shillings.

The Society has a considerable number of members, but a much larger number is desirable, and it is hoped that some will be gained amongst those who read this announcement. All who join it participate in the control of its business and the trusteeship of its resources. It is expressly provided in the Articles of Association that no member, as such, shall derive any sort of profit from the Society, either by way of dividend, bonus, or interest, or in any way whatever.

The Society's affairs are managed by an elected Board of Directors, consisting of not less than five and not more than twelve members, one-third of whom retire (by ballot) each year,

but are capable of re-election. An Annual General Meeting of members must be held in London, to receive the Report, elect new Directors, and transact any other business that may arise.

Being a duly registered body, the Secular Society, Limited, can receive donations and bequests with absolute security. Those who are in a position to do so are invited to make donations, or to insert a bequest in the Society's favor in their wills. On this point there need not be the slightest apprehension. It is quite impossible to set aside such bequests. The executors have no option but to pay them over in the ordinary course of administration. No objection of any kind has been raised in connection with any of the wills by which the Society has already been benefited.

A Form of Bequest.—The following is a sufficient form of bequest for insertion in the wills of testators:—"I give and bequeath to the Secular Society, Limited, the sum of £— free from Legacy Duty, and I direct that a receipt signed by two members of the Board of the said Society and the Secretary thereof shall be a good discharge to my Executors for the said Legacy."

Friends of the Society who have remembered it in their wills, or who intend to do so, should formally notify the Secretary of the fact, or send a private intimation to the Chairman, who will (if desired) treat it as strictly confidential. This is not necessary, but it is advisable, as wills sometimes get lost or mislaid, and their contents have to be established by competent testimony.

Books Every Freethinker Should Possess.

History of Sacerdotal Celibacy, by H. C. Lea.

In Two Handsome Volumes, Large 8vo., Published at 21s. net.

Price **SEVEN SHILLINGS**. Postage 7d.

This is the Third and Revised Edition, 1907, of the Standard and Authoritative Work on Sacerdotal Celibacy. Since its issue in 1867 it has held the first place in the literature of the subject, nor is it likely to lose that position.

The Idea of The Soul, by A. E. Crawley.

Published at 6s. net.

Price 2s. 9d., postage 5d.

Mr. Crawley's reputation as an Anthropologist stands high, and the above is an important contribution to the anthropological aspect of the belief in a soul.

History of the Taxes on Knowledge, by C. D. Collet.

With an Introduction by George Jacob Holyoake.

Two Vols. Published at 7s.

Price 2s. 6d., postage 5d.

Mr. Collet was very closely associated for very many years with the movement for abolishing the tax on newspapers, and writes with an intimate knowledge that few others possessed. Mr. Collet traces the history of the subject from the earliest times to the repeal of the tax after the Bradlaugh Struggle.

The Theories of Evolution, by Yves Delage.

1912 Edition. Published at 7s. 6d. net. Price 3s., postage 5d.

A Popular, but Thorough, Exposition of the various Theories of Evolution from Darwin onward.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGDON STREET, LONDON, E.C.

A Selection of Pamphlets by G. W. FOOTE.

THEISM OR ATHEISM:

Which is the More Reasonable?

Price 6d., post 1½d.

ROME OR ATHEISM:

The Great Alternative. Price 1d., post ½d.

THE ATHEIST SHOEMAKER.

A Study in Lying. Price 1d., post ½d.

CHRISTIANITY OR SECULARISM:

Which is True? Price 4d., post 1½d.

DARWIN ON GOD.

Price 2d., post 1d.

MY RESURRECTION.

A Missing Chapter from the Gospel of Matthew. Price 1d., post ½d.

MRS. BESANT'S THEOSOPHY.

A Candid Criticism. Price 1d., post ½d.

WHAT IS AGNOSTICISM?

Also a Defence of Atheism. Price 1d., post ½d.

LETTERS TO THE CLERGY.

A Discussion of Prayer, Miracles, etc. Price 8d., post 1½d.

INGERSOLLISM

Defended Against Archdeacon Farrar.

Price 1d., post ½d.

BIBLE AND BEER.

Price 1d., post ½d.

HALL OF SCIENCE LIBEL CASE.

A Full and True Account of "The Leeds Orgies." Price 8d., post 1d.

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS.

A Candid Criticism of Mr. Wilson Barrett's Play. Price 8d., post 1½d.

THE NEW CAGLIOSTRO.

An Open Letter to Madame Blavatsky. Price 1d., post ½d.

THE PASSING OF JESUS.

The Last Adventures of the First Messiah. Price 2d., post ½d.

THE IMPOSSIBLE CREED.

An Open Letter to the Bishop of Peterborough. Price 1d., post ½d.

PHILOSOPHY OF SECULARISM.

Price 1d., post ½d.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGDON STREET, LONDON, E.C.

FLOWERS OF FREETHOUGHT.

By G. W. FOOTE.

FIRST SERIES.

Fifty-One Articles and Essays on a Variety of Freethought Topics.
213 pp., Cloth, 2s. 6d., postage 4d.

SECOND SERIES.

Fifty-Eight Essays and Articles on a further variety of Freethought topics.
302 pp., Cloth, 2s. 6d., postage 4d.

These two volumes contain much of the Author's best and raciest writings.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGDON STREET, LONDON, E.C.

R. P. A., LTD.

WONDERFUL VALUE.

PAMPHLETS FOR THE MILLION.

Each with Coloured Cover and Portrait.

1. Why I Left the Church. By JOSEPH McCABE. 48 pp.; 1d.
2. Why am I an Agnostic? By R. G. INGERSOLL. 24 pp.; ½d.
3. Christianity's Debt to Earlier Religions. By P. VIVIAN. 64 pp.; 1d.
4. How to Reform Mankind. By R. G. INGERSOLL. 24 pp.; ½d.
5. Myth or History in the Old Testament? By S. LAING. 48 pp.; 1d.
6. Liberty of Man, Woman, and Child. By R. G. INGERSOLL. 48 pp.; 1d.
7. THE AGE OF REASON. (Parts I and II only.) By THOMAS PAINE. 124 pp.; 2d.
8. Last Words on Evolution. By Professor ERNST HAECKEL. 64 pp.; 1d.
9. Science and the Purpose of Life. By FRIDTJOF NANSEN (the well-known explorer). 16 pp.; ½d.
10. The Ghosts. By R. G. INGERSOLL. 32 pp.; 1d.
11. The Passing of Historical Christianity. By the Rev. R. ROBERTS. 16 pp.; ½d.

The Set of eleven Pamphlets post paid for 1s. 3d.
Special terms for quantities.

LONDON: WATTS & CO., JOHNSON'S COURT, FLEET STREET, E.C.

A REMARKABLE ISSUE.

96 large pp.; cloth, 1s. net, by post 1s. 4d.; paper cover, 6d. net, by post 8d.

R. P. A. ANNUAL FOR 1916.

List of Contributors:—

Religion in War Time. By the Rt. Hon. J. M. ROBERTSON, M.P.
Cleopatra's Nose. By Professor J. B. BURY.
Was it Worth It, Germany? By Mrs. W. K. CLIFFORD.
The Religion of the Still Opener Misd. By WILLIAM ARCHER.
A Note on John Ford. By EDEN PHILLPOTTS.
Common Sense in Ireland. By JANE BARLOW.
The Land of Villon. By H. DE VERE STACPOOLE.
On the Side of the Angels. By ADAM GOWANS WHYTE.
Has Rationalism Corrupted Germany? By JOSEPH McCABE.
Lucretius on Life and Death. By CHARLES CALLAWAY, D.Sc.
Evangelism and the Business of Religion. By S. K. RATCLIFFE.

THE INQUIRER'S LIBRARY.

Each 160 pp.; cloth, 9d. net, by post 1s. 1d.; the five 4s. 3d. post free.

"The Inquirer's Library" is intended to fill an acknowledged gap in advanced literature. There is no such thing in English as a series of handy and easily purchasable volumes dealing with the fundamental issues of religious controversy. The new "Library" will deal concisely with various leading issues (Theism, Immortality, the Bible, Morality, etc.), and form a brief cyclopædia of research on these most important subjects.

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD. By JOSEPH McCABE.
THE BELIEF IN PERSONAL IMMORTALITY. By E. S. P. HAYNES.
CHRISTIANITY AND CIVILIZATION. By CHARLES T. GORHAM.
THE OLD TESTAMENT. By CHILPERIC EDWARDS.
THE NEW TESTAMENT. By F. J. GOULD.