

# THE Freethinker

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*Great issues and great questions should be either handled with courage or not at all. Handled with hesitation or weakly, they lose part of their significance.*

## Views and Opinions.

### IN TIME OF WAR, PREPARE FOR PEACE.

Last week I dwelt upon the value—or lack of value—of the counsel, "In time of peace, prepare for war." What, now, about the opposite of that maxim—"In time of war, prepare for peace"? For there is certainly *some* truth in the belief that the world after the War will not be quite the same world that we were living in prior to August, 1914. For some time, at least, it will be a poorer, a harder, and a sadder world. The coming of peace will not mean the emergence of *new* problems—all the problems that will confront us then were with us before the War started—but it will mean the positing of many of these problems in a sharper and clearer manner than that in which they have hitherto confronted us. The fictitious prosperity that so many thousands are now enjoying, and which enables them for the first time in their lives to know what it is to have plenty of good food and good clothing, will certainly cease with the end of the War, and that alone bids fair to raise the Labour problem in a most acute form. The disorganization of our higher intellectual life during the War will provide the Churches with an opportunity of strengthening their defences against the rationalistic attack, and that will give a more acute form to the old struggle between reason and superstition. And, finally, the comparative failure of our educational system to operate as a factor for peace will give increased vitality to a whole series of problems in that direction.

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### HOW WAR WILL END.

With the cry of this being a War against war, or a War to end war, or the "Never again" cry, repeated by all sorts of people, from the Prime Minister downward, I have not the slightest sympathy. They are nothing but elaborate stupidities. I do not read history to the end of believing that war ever ends war; rather does each one sow the seeds of future conflicts. To believe that an organ dwindles by use, or that a function becomes obsolete by activity, is entirely contrary to all we know of the laws of life. Organs and functions die by disuse. Either an organ becomes atrophied, or its function is expressed in a different and more desirable manner. Religions do not end by the multiplication of religions, but by the growth of a spirit among peoples alien to their rule. Monarchy does not end by the multiplication of kings, but by the idea of a republic becoming so congenial to a people that the monarchical idea loses its force and becomes obsolete. And this is equally true of war. If that idea is to be killed, it must be killed during times of peace. It is in times of peace that the organ of war—which is public opinion and public sentiment—must be so modified that it will function in a more humane, a more civilized, and a more socially effective manner. The task before those who really wish to end war is, then, to modify public

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opinion to that end. Is it too early to think of doing this? I do not think it is. It is certain it will be too late if we leave our thinking about the subject until peace is declared, and we have again entered upon that armed peace which is only less disastrous than war itself. Real statesmanship, as distinguished from political opportunism, looks ahead, and it will be well for us to take long views in this matter—the longer the better.

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### EDUCATION AND THE WAR.

In what direction can we turn in order to effect this desirable modification of opinion and sentiment? Well, there is one question that is really fundamental. That is the question of education. At the Annual Conference of Educational Associations, the other day, Sir Oliver Lodge roundly accused us of being an uneducated people. And in the deeper sense we must confess to there being considerable truth in the indictment. Of the power of education for good, we have but a poor appreciation; and, lacking this appreciation, we allow it to become a ready and powerful instrument for harm. At one of the meetings of the Conference at which Sir Oliver Lodge's charge was formulated, Canon Masterman, referring to the German people, said:—

We were to-day confronted with the results of the deliberate corruption of a noble people by the misuse of the machinery of education. It was surely one of the supreme tragedies of history that the Germans, a docile people, eager for knowledge, capable of close application to intellectual interests, should have been moulded by the ruthless ambition of an unscrupulous oligarchy into an instrument of evil to the world.

And in answer to the question, "How could education be made to serve the cause of peace, as it had served the cause of war?" he replied that the first lesson was: education "must never be allowed to become a mere instrument of the State. The work of the teacher must never be primarily political, but ethical." At a time when resolutions are passed by meetings of headmasters in favour of military drill in schools, and prominence is being given to lessons on our naval and military history, and to the greatness—which usually means the *extent*—of the British Empire, thus emphasizing by contrast the littleness of other nations, such a protest was needed. For we are by these means making a teacher primarily political. And we are fixing upon the growing youthful intelligence a sense of the value of those phases of national life which makes a recurrence of war inevitable.

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### THE BETTER FUNCTION OF EDUCATION.

From a meeting of the American Education Association comes a summary of what should be the function of education in the future, which I quote with the more pleasure because it is re-echoing what I have said time after time in these columns:—

Entirely new values and standards for judging need to be created among the different peoples. In particular, the school histories need to be rewritten, and the teaching in history and geography in the schools needs to be entirely re-directed. The emphasis now placed on the deeds of the soldier should be shifted to those who have created the best of our civilization and rendered the most lasting benefits to mankind. The emphasis now placed on wars should be shifted to the

gains to civilization made in the intervals between wars, and war should be shown in its true light as a destroyer of what civilization creates. The biologic, economic, and human waste of war should be emphasized, and the fact that war is the breakdown of law and order and civilized society should be made clear to the young. Upon those who teach, but especially upon those who organize and administer education, rests the responsibility of creating a new national life in all countries—a national life which shall prize the fruits of civilization, which shall honour those who advance the larger interests of mankind, and which believes in international justice and goodwill and looks to friendly arbitration rather than to brute force to settle the difficulties which may arise between nations.

This is a plain and profitable way in which to work, if we really desire to create a public sentiment against war. And our politicians and diplomatists will be less ready to so act as to make war a likely possibility once they are alive to the prevalence of such a sentiment amongst the people. If we can use the War as a means of creating this sentiment, it will be something to the good. If we cannot or do not, we shall find little about it that we can count to the good.

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#### NATIONALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM.

From the same address I cannot forebear quoting one other sentence:—

In most nations to-day the schools are deliberately used by those in authority to instil into the minds of the young an exaggerated nationalism, which can be touched off into international hatred at such moment as the governing authorities may desire.

Internationalism has, I know, fallen upon evil days, and the degree of genuine enlightenment current may be gauged by the scorn poured upon it by public men during the past year. It is also a measure of the degree of reaction set up by the War. Because the conception of a common human life, involving common needs and aspirations, has not been strong enough to prevent war, and because in the conduct of the War an appeal has been made to a nationalism which is easily transformed into international hatred; therefore, we are told, internationalism is useless, and we must proceed as hitherto along lines of nationalism. Nor can it be denied that the sentiment of nationality—even in its lower forms—is sufficiently strong to play a powerful part in the world's history for some time to come. But it is not a question of how strong this feeling is, the question for educators is how far is it desirable, how far does it represent an ideal end? And the real lesson is, surely, not less internationalism, but more. A more strenuous endeavour to create a feeling of community of life and interest that will make wars all but impossible.

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#### IS NATIONALISM THE END?

Now, I for one have no hesitation in saying that a nationalism which does not lead in the direction of internationalism fails in its educative function and promises ultimate disaster. What, taking all the statements made about Germany at their face value, is the cause of this War? Is it not an intense nationalism which has fostered the stupid notion that German life and thought is the only one of real and permanent value to the world? It is this, we have been told by thousands of British writers and speakers, which is at the root of all the trouble. And if that is true, what is the value of that kind of nationalism to the world? The truth is that nationalism is no more than a stage in the evolution of humanity. It is as much a passing phase as is tribalism. The true line of growth is expansion from the horde to the tribe, from the tribe to the nation, from the nation to a phase of life which treats national boundaries as no more than lines of political demarcation. That we are in the penultimate stage does not affect the general truth. The truest national life is that which educates a people to the point of outgrowing it, just as the best teacher is the one who teaches his pupil to walk alone. Nationalism itself, sanely and profitably

viewed, is a highroad to internationalism. How far each nation has actually advanced along that road is a question of detail. The general truth remains unaffected thereby. \* \* \*

#### THE OPPORTUNITY OF THE TEACHER.

I do not mean by anything I have said that nationality in the sense of attachment to local scenery and forms of life and culture will not continue, or that it is undesirable they should. A man must always be more interested in the people with whom he is living than with those a thousand miles away. And both taste and habit will bind a man more firmly to some localities than to others. A Scotsman still thinks more of Scotland than of England, even though the national feeling against England has died out—or almost so. All that needs be remembered is that every boundary between peoples furnishes an occasion for hostilities. If Scotland and England were to-day distinct nationalities, as are France and Germany, there would be the same opportunities for trouble on the border now as there were five hundred years ago. That trouble has been averted by the breaking down of certain barriers and the creation of a common life, and the growth of easy communications between the two peoples. And that certainly points the way to the growth of more peaceful and civilized feelings between the peoples of Europe. The United States of Europe has long been a dream of reformers. It still remains a dream, and yet such dreams have a way of getting themselves translated into facts. And one of the essential conditions of realizing an ideal is to conceive that ideal as possible and desirable. Here, at any rate, is a line along which our educationalists would do well to work. Let us have a generation or two of children, not only here, but in other countries, who have been taught that nations are not great in virtue of extent of territory, but in greatness of life; that national benefactors are not those who have killed the greatest number of foreigners, but those who have laboured in art, science, literature, and invention. Instead of their being impressed with our *rights* as a nation, let them be impressed with our obligations to our fellows in the common task of subduing nature in the interests of the race. If we do that for a generation or two, we shall have gone some distance towards preparing for the peace of the world.

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There are other implications of special interest to Freethinkers, and to these I hope to return on another occasion.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

#### Heredity and Environment.

THE Rev. Dr. J. H. Jowett, of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York, is a famous framer of elegant, smooth-sounding phrases. Like Oscar Wilde, though on a smaller scale, he is a lord of words, the skilful creator of eminently rhythmic and brilliant sentences, a stylist of a high order. It is this lordship over words which enables him to bring out their magic and music with such pleasing effect, in conjunction with a perfect speaking voice, that accounts for his enormous popularity. It is not so much what he says as the way he says it that draws the people to hear him. An article from his pen, which appeared in the *Christian World* for January 6, is a notable case in point; its very title, "The Gift of Capacity," being ominously suggestive of its "graceful and ornate rhetoric." The moment we begin to examine the contents of this article, however, we realize how absolutely misleading and deceptive its superficial eloquence is, and, at the same time, how very easy it is for such a preacher to exercise a dominating influence over deeply religious, but unthinking, people. To begin with, capacity is not a gift, except from sire to son. Capacity is inborn, an endowment of heredity, capable of being developed and improved, but in no sense whatever a gift of an external origin.

Yet Dr. Jowett treats it as a special gift of Jesus Christ to lost and ruined sinners. He regards the miracles reported in the Gospels as historical events. When Jesus met a cripple he did not hand him a coin, but gave him power to leap as a hart. He made the tongue of the dumb to sing. In short, "he came into the world to restore lost capacity, and when he himself wished to declare the kind and quality of his ministry to one who was held in withering doubt, he did it in words like these: 'The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, and the dead are raised.'" Taking those alleged miracles literally, Dr. Jowett proceeds thus:—

In all this I have a vision of the proposed work of the Lord Jesus among the children of men to-day. His primary work to-day, with folk who are lame and broken, is the restoration of capacity, the endowment of power, the filling up of the gulf of incompleteness with the gift of his own bountiful life.

Let us now consider some of the alleged instances of the restoration of lost capacity described by this popular preacher. Nothing is more incontestable now than the fact that heredity holds us all in a vice-like grip. No one can sever himself from the past. We are all its offspring, and its stamp upon us is ineradicable. But Dr. Jowett teaches that by faith in Christ it is possible to cut the connection between the present and the past, and make an entirely new start. He contends that Christ "strengthens the soul to resist and overcome the antagonisms of heredity." He mentions several unfortunate temperaments with which many people are afflicted, but which, according to him, can be completely transformed by the Redeemer's indwelling grace. Is this teaching true to life as we know it? We are profoundly convinced that it is a falsification of the facts. It is as true as that the sun rose this morning, that there are people whom heredity has doomed to inevitable destruction. Absolutely nothing can save them. They may pray night and day, with the utmost sincerity, for strength to conquer their bad inheritance; but "strength is not won by miracle or rape," and never comes in answer to prayer. Surely, Dr. Jowett has known cases of unredeemable degradation. Indeed, it is a common complaint of clergymen that there are people whom they are incapable of reaching because of their hopeless depravity. "Mother of Reason! can we cheat the Fates"? There has always been a criminal class which Christianity has never touched. Dr. Jowett merely plays with this momentous theme. Of the decadent and unfit members of the race, who lie by the wayside silently appealing for help, and desponding in their impotence, he says all they have to do is to put their trust in the Lord:—

He will not give them stimulants. He will not give them sedatives. He will not offer them some temporary emollient for their wounds, some narcotic for the soothing of their stricken nerves, some bright "pick-me-up" for the relief of their immediate distress. He will not give them doses of high-faluting philosophy, or the flitting inspiration of some poetic draught. No; he will not offer lame souls a vain charity, but he will offer them a solid capacity, the power to antagonise the bequests of heredity, the hostile forces of their own family heritage, and to endow them with such a gift as will make heredity no longer the master, but a servant in the house.

Words, words, nothing but words, and lying words, at that! It is perfectly true that some are naturally endowed with enough power to successfully counteract a corrupt heredity. Such cases are to be found both in the Church and in the world. In the Church the conquest is spoken of as a miracle of grace, but in the world it is treated as being due to the exercise of inherent strength.

Another thing that Jesus does, Dr. Jowett tells us, is to give "power to the soul to meet and conquer the maiming hostility of circumstances."

It is as true of a man's circumstances as it is of his heredity, that they may hold him in an oppressive and crushing servitude. Circumstances may clutch a man like a vice and lame his soul in the grasp.....Well, what is the Lord's way with men who are so oppressed?.....

He does not offer them a temporary relief, a sort of hut-shelter from the oppressive blast, but he gives a permanent addition to their strength. He does not alter the nature of the road, but he changes the condition of the pilgrim. He does not modify the circumstances, but he imparts a strength that makes the soul immune, whether it be journeying through the sultry days of midsummer, or through the shivering days of darkness and frost.

By a man's circumstances is to be understood his environment, and the curious thing about that extract is that Christ is represented as leaving the environment alone, however bad it may be. The believer is rendered immune from both heredity and environment, because he has been inoculated with "the bright lymph that heaven itself lets fall," called faith. As a matter of fact, the weak enjoy no immunity, whether they are Christians or Free-thinkers. It all depends upon the degree of the weakness whether the man or the woman goes to the wall or not. Many a genuine Christian, who believed and prayed with great fervour, has been defeated in life's battles, and gone down to a drunkard's, thief's, or murderer's grave, the Lord Jesus having neglected or been unable to come to the rescue.

Dr. Jowett declares that Christ's mission in the world is to give immunity to all who accept him as their Saviour. If a believer is not immune, it is because he is a believer only in name, or because his prayers do not ascend to heaven on the wings of faith. That is always the explanation when disaster of any kind overtakes a Christian. Now, the amazing fact is that, though it is said to be Christ's mission to provide moral immunity for his people, he cannot do so except through the Church, whose head he is. The Holy Ghost, the sanctifier and comforter, is to be found nowhere save in his temple, which is the Church. It is through her alone that the Redeemer imparts capacity and power to men and women. This is how Dr. Jowett, one of her ministers, speaks of her:—

She is to be the herald and minister of a unique and altogether unshared service. Her blessed work in Christ Jesus, is to make the lame man leap, and to make the dumb man sing, and to make the wounded spirit whole, and to make all moral cripples like unto angels which excel in strength.

If that glowing picture of the Church were true, what a delightful place to live in this world would have been long ere now; but it is an utterly false picture. It is a delineation of an institution that never was on land or sea. The Church is to regenerate the world, but she has not even begun to do it yet. Does Christendom at the present moment look like a letter of commendation which the Church can proudly hold up and read to an astonished Universe, saying, "This is the work which I have done, this is the success which I have achieved"? On the contrary, Europe can be called up as an unanswerable witness to the colossal impotence and failure of the Christian religion. No doubt the Church has done good to individuals. She has thrown the arms of her sympathy and service around many a person who was in danger of becoming a physical and moral wreck, but she has done so simply as a collection of men and women, not as an instrument of a Divine Being. It is true that the work she *pretends* to do is not shared by any other institution under the sun; but the work she pretends to do is not the work she does. Dr. Jowett practically admits this when he says that "she is often more concerned to alter an organisation than to change the organism," and that "she often gives her strength to rearrangement of circumstances instead of to the transformation of life." In reality the Church is the quintessence of hypocrisy, pretending to be what in her heart of hearts she must know she neither is nor can be. If she stepped down from the giddy height of her pride and pretensions, and concentrated her attention and energies upon the subjects of heredity and environment, and the best means of improving both for future generations, she might yet justify her existence, and become a useful factor in the progress of the world.

J. T. LLOYD.

### "Kynde Kit Marlowe."

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

—JAMES THOMSON.

THE only instance in which Shakespeare has publicly recognized the genius of an Elizabethan writer is in *As You Like It*, where he quotes with approval a line from Kit Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*. The tribute was deserved, for Marlowe was the greatest of Shakespeare's immediate predecessors.

The son of a shoemaker, and born at Canterbury, in 1564, his abilities gained him friends, who sent him to Cambridge University. He was intended for the Church, but religion had no attractions for him. The study of theology only made him a determined opponent of Christianity. Indeed, he was one of the proudest and fiercest of intellectual aristocrats. Scepticism in him naturally took the form of contempt rather than of negation. Always fearless, his Freethought opinions attracted attention from the time he wrote of the Atheist, Tamburlaine, the great sensation-work of his time, in which Greene perceived Marlowe's attempt at "daring God out of heaven." A few days before his death, Richard Bame, an informer, sent in a note to the authorities concerning Marlowe's "damnable opinions and judgment of religion and scorn of God's word." Only the poet's death in a tavern quarrel prevented a trial for blasphemy, which would, in all probability, have meant his execution, as in the case of the unfortunate Francis Kett, a Fellow of Marlowe's college, who was burnt at Norwich for heresy. As it was, pious pamphleteers did not scruple to see in Marlowe's death an awful example of God's judgment.

Kit Marlowe had real and unmistakable genius. Rare Ben Jonson celebrated his "mighty line." Michael Drayton describes his raptures as "all fire and air," and George Chapman, with a yet clearer perception of Marlowe's self-committal to the Muses, said that—

He stood  
Up to the chin in the Pierian flood.

An anonymous critic adds a personal touch when he describes him as "Kynde Kit Marlowe."

At twenty-three years of age Marlowe had made a name, and had written the first play in blank verse for the popular stage. *Tamburlaine* had no precedent, and is the effort of genius, diadaining to creep along well-trodden paths, and opening a road for itself. It is a strange compound of inspiration and desperation, but power is displayed in its absurdities and its sublimities. The poetry redeems the rhetoric into which it occasionally drops, as in the celebrated scene in which Tamburlaine is represented in a chariot drawn by captive kings, and rating them for their slowness.

Hallo! ye pampered jades of Asia!  
What, can ye draw but twenty miles a day?  
The horses that guide the golden eye of heaven,  
And blow the morning from their nostrils,  
Making their fiery gait above the clouds,  
Are not so honoured in the governor  
As you, ye slaves, in mighty Tamburlaine.

Blank verse was not only invented by Marlowe, but was also carried to some degree of perfection by him. Listen to the speech in the fine play, *Edward the Second*, in which the indignant King first gives way to anger and then to misery:—

Mortimer! who talks of Mortimer,  
Who wounds me with the name of Mortimer,  
That bloody man? Good father, on thy lap  
Lay I this head with mickle care;  
O, might I never ope these eyes again,  
Never again lift up this drooping head,  
O never more lift up this dying heart.

What dignity there is in the following lines:—

Our souls, whose faculties can comprehend  
The wondrous architecture of the world,  
And measure every wandering planet's course,  
Still climbing after knowledge infinite,  
And always moving as the restless spheres,  
Will us to wear ourselves, and never rest  
Until we reach the ripest fruit of all.

Marlowe's *Faustus* is the quintessence of his genius. The subject seems to have taken hold of him, as it afterwards did that of the great Goethe. Here is an example of Marlowe's full-voiced harmony:—

Have I not made blind Homer sing to me  
Of Alexander's love and Ænon's death?  
And hath not he, who built the walls of Troy,  
With ravishing sound of his melodious harp  
Made music with my Mephistopheles?

In fact, the soliloquy in which the doomed Faustus watches his last moments ebb away might be quoted as a perfect instance of variety and sustained effect in a situation which could only be redeemed from monotony by consummate art. Recall the memorable lines beginning:—

Was this the face that launched a thousand ships,  
And burnt the topmost towers of Ilium?

and concluding with:—

All is dross that is not Helena.

Marlowe could introduce melody into the most unpromising materials. Take the lines from *The Jew of Malta*:—

Bags of fiery opals, sapphires, amethysts,  
Jacinths, hard topaz, grass-green emeralds,  
Beauteous rubies, sparkling diamonds,  
And sold seen costly stones at so great price,  
As one of them, indifferently rated,  
May serve, in peril of calamity,  
To ransom great kings from captivity.

Short and reckless as his life was, Marlowe was fertile in work. Besides his plays, his translation from Ovid and his poems would give him a place among the poets. Buried in an unknown spot, his life ended prematurely. Alsatian adventurer and Arcadian singer, his sudden death seemed to threaten the Elizabethan drama with irreparable loss. But he was succeeded by William Shakespeare, the greatest author that ever made literature his medium of communication with the world. Greater than Homer, more imaginative than Dante, the full blaze of the sun of his glory was heralded by the bright morning star of Kit Marlowe.

MIMNERMUS.

### Religion, Science, and the War.—III.

(Concluded from p. 38.)

At the period, then, with which we are to deal, the Roman Empire included the countries now known as Holland, Belgium, France, Spain, and Portugal, Italy, the southern half of the Austrian Empire, Greece, Turkey, Asia Minor, Syria and Palestine, Egypt, Tripoli and Tunis, Algeria, Morocco, and also the southern two-thirds of England. Within these borders there prevailed that greatest blessing of the Roman rule, the *Pax Romana*, or "Roman Peace." Whatever defects may be found in the Roman administration, on whatever abstract grounds the existence of such an empire may be impugned, it cannot be questioned that for at least two centuries the whole of this vast region enjoyed a general reign of peace and security such as it never knew before and has never known since. That peace meant also social and industrial prosperity and development. It meant an immense increase in settled population and in manufactures, and an immense advance—particularly in the West—in civilised manners and intellectual interests.—PROFESSOR TUCKER, *Life in the Roman World of Nero and St. Paul*, pp. 5-9.

The [Roman] Empire gave the world, weary unto exhaustion, almost two centuries of practically continuous peace, and to the provinces, which had been plundered to the utmost, a more equal distribution of burdens and, at least, a tolerable rule. Order and security were restored; traffic "in the largest free trade realm that ever existed" grew apace; and wealth and prosperity flourished as never before.—LUDWIG FRIEDLANDER, *Roman Life and Manners*, vol. ii., p. 232.

A PALACE of Peace has been erected at the Hague, nineteen hundred years after the appearance of the "Prince of Peace"—but not, be it noted, through his influence. It was the crushing and yearly increasing burdens imposed upon the European nations, in order to keep up and increase their enormous armaments, that led to the agitation in which the Palace of Peace resulted. It was not brought about by the labours of the Pope, or the Archbishop of Canterbury, or the leaders of the Nonconformist Churches; neither was it built with money collected among Christian congregations. But no doubt when

war is abolished—whenever that may be—the Christians, with their usual effrontery, will claim all the credit, as they do for the abolition of slavery, the elevation of woman, and many other improvements carried out in face of their determined opposition.

Moreover, the building of a Palace of Peace was not a new idea at all. Long before the establishment of Christianity, the Pagan Emperor Vespasian, says the learned historian Dean Merivale, "inaugurated an era of peace, and the tranquillity of the State was as dear to him as his own." He built a temple to Peace, says Merivale,—

"a bold personification of the aspirations of the age unknown to the Grecian Olympus. This temple, which seems to have been of unusual size and splendour, was embellished with the spoils of the Jewish war and works of art from other countries of the East. The design was completed with a basilica, in which the learned of all professions were invited to meet, and conduct their tranquil discussions.\*

And all this from purely humanitarian motives.

Another historian observes that if we omit the year A.D. 69, during which four emperors were made and deposed—an altogether exceptional year—"Take out that year," says Professor Tucker, "from the imperial history; count a hundred years before and more than a hundred years after, and it would be impossible to find in the history of the world any period at which peace, and probably contentment, was so widely and continuously spread."†

To bring this home to the imagination, the same writer tells us to think of the countries governed by the Romans—given in the heading of this article—then imagine "they have all been free from war ever since the year 1700" (p. 11). Why, it would take columns to merely give the titles of the wars that have taken place in these countries during the last two hundred years.

And the majestic Roman Empire kept the peace of the world with a military force, says Professor Tucker, which "can scarcely have amounted to more than 320,000 men." And it should be remembered, adds the Professor, "that among the Romans it was soldiers who served as police, whether at Rome or in the provinces" (p. 11).

What need was there at this period for the descent of a new evangel announcing a reign of "peace and goodwill"? Instead of inaugurating a reign of goodwill, Christianity, as we shall see, seems to have been a veritable Pandora's box, from which, when opened, every ill escaped to afflict mankind. Christianity did not bring peace on earth; it already found it in possession.

Church historians agree with secular historians as to this fact. Mosheim, the Protestant historian, in his *Ecclesiastical History*, says "it is certain that the period in which our Saviour descended upon earth may be justly styled the Pacific Age, if we compare it with the preceding times"‡—and still more, we may add, if we compare it with the times following the establishment of Christianity. Cave, the Church of England divine, declares that Providence chose this time for the advent of Christ because—

the Roman Empire being now in the highest pitch of its grandeur, all its parts united under a Monarchical Government, and a universal peace spread over all the provinces of the Empire that had opened a way to a free and uninterrupted commerce with all nations, a smoother and speedier passage was hereby prepared for publishing the doctrine of the Gospel.§

Duchesne, the Roman Catholic historian, remarks: "At the moment when Christianity came into the world, the Roman Empire was established in peace throughout all the countries bordering on the Mediterranean," and "Under this rule, the world prospered, and the civilization of Greece and Rome rapidly gained ground in lands where different

customs or actual barbarism had prevailed."\*

It is a very different picture to that drawn by the average preacher of the state of the world before, and at, the time of the birth of Christ.

Christianity has been claimed by its adherents to be the religion of peace, but its history has been a history of bloodshed. There has probably been more bloodshed caused by Christianity than by any other religion whatever.

It is true that when Christians were in a small minority, they preached peace and toleration—but only toleration for their own religion; for none other—just as the first missionaries to the South Seas appeared wearing the sheepskin of humility, and when they had the power, through the influence of the chiefs, ended by establishing a perfectly intolerable tyranny.

The Christian religion was established as the State religion of the Roman Empire in the fourth century, by the Emperor Constantine, and by the fifth century, says the learned and judicious historian, Dean Milman,—

Anathema instead of benediction had almost become the general language of the Church. Religious wars, at least rare in the Pagan order of society, seemed now a new and perpetual source of human misery—a cause and a sign of the weakness and decay, and so of the inevitable dissolution, of the Roman Empire.†

The clergy themselves took part in the fighting. Says the same historian: "In the fifth century we find bishops in arms, and at the head of fighting men," though at first protests were made, and it was condemned by decrees of Councils, yet at a later date, says Milman, "at length we arrive at the prince bishop, or the feudal abbot, alternately with the helmet and the mitre on his head, the crozier and the lance in his hand, now in the field in the front of his armed vassals, now on his throne in the church, in the midst of his chanting choir" (vol. i., p. 369).

The historian Lecky, in his *History of European Morals*, attributes the change "to the terrors and to the example of Mohammedanism." "The spirit of Mohammedanism slowly passed into Christianity, and transformed it into its image. The spectacle of an essentially military nation fascinated men who were at once very warlike and very superstitious." The panic which palsied Europe was followed by fierce resentment, "and for about two centuries every pulpit in Christendom proclaimed the duty of war with the unbeliever, and represented the battlefield as the sure path to heaven."‡

Westermarck, the famous Finnish sociologist, deals with this argument of Lecky's, and observes:—

But this view is hardly consistent with facts. Christianity had entered on the war-path already before it came into contact with Mohammedanism. Wars against Arian peoples had been represented as holy wars, for which the combatants would be rewarded by Heaven. The war which Chlodwig made upon the Visigoths was not only undertaken with the approval of the clergy, but it was, as Mr. Greenwood remarks, "properly their war, and Chlodwig undertook it in the capacity of a religious champion in all things but the disinterestedness which ought to distinguish that character" (Greenwood, *First Book of the History of the Germans*, p. 518). In the Church itself there were germs out of which a military spirit would naturally develop itself. The famous dictum, "Nulla salus extra ecclesiam" (No safety outside the Church), was promulgated as early as the days of Cyprian. The general view of mediæval orthodoxy was, that those beyond the pale of the Church, heathen and heretic alike, were unalterably doomed to hell, whereas those who would acknowledge her authority, confess their sins, receive the sacrament of baptism, partake of the eucharist, and obey the priest, would be infallibly saved. If war was allowed by God, could there be a more proper object for it than the salvation of souls otherwise lost? And for those who refused to accept the gift of grace offered to them, could there be a juster punishment than death? More-

\* Dean Merivale, *History of the Romans Under the Empire*, pp. 275-276.

† Professor T. G. Tucker, *Life in the Roman World of Nero and St. Paul* (1910), p. 11.

‡ Mosheim, *Ecclesiastical History* (Maclaine's edition, 1838).

§ Cave, *Lives of the Primitive Fathers*, p. 11.

\* Duchesne, *Early History of the Christian Church* (1909), pp. 1-5.

† Dean Milman, *History of Latin Christianity*, vol. i., p. 325.

‡ Lecky, *History of European Morals*, vol. ii., pp. 251-2-3.

over, had not the Israelites fought great battles "for the laws and the sanctuary"? Had not the Lord Himself commissioned them to attack, subdue, and destroy his enemies? Had he not commanded them to root out the natives of Canaan, who, because of their abominations, had fallen under God's judgment, and to kill man and beast in the Israelitish cities which had given themselves to idolatry, and to burn all the spoils, with the city itself, as a whole offering to Jehovah? (Deut. xiii. 15). There was no need, then, for the Christians to go to the Mohammedans in order to learn the art of religious war. The Old Testament, the revelation of God, gave better lessons in it than the Koran, and was constantly cited in justification of any cruelty committed in the name of religion. It was thus in perfect consistency with the general teachings of the Church that she regarded an exploit achieved against the infidels as a merit which might obliterate the guilt of the most atrocious crimes. Even a slight shade of difference from the liturgy of Rome became at last a legitimate cause of war.\*

Moreover, continues Westermarcke, although there were a very few, more enlightened, and less bigoted people, who protested against war,—

the majority of juriconsults, as well as canonists [that is, the framers of, or authorities upon, the civil and ecclesiastical laws] were in favour of the orthodox view that unbelief is a legitimate reason for going to war. And this principle was professedly acted upon to an extent which made the history of Christianity for many centuries a perpetual crusade, and transformed the Christian Church into a military power even more formidable than Rome under Cæsar and Augustus (vol. i., p. 352).

(To be continued) W. MANN.

### The Rights of Freethinkers.

FOR many months past I have been thinking over the legal and moral rights of Freethinkers in this country. So many events have happened of late to call in question the stability of some of our legal rights as to give us cause for grave anxiety. Only a couple of months ago a respectable Freethinker was grossly insulted by an Old Bailey lawyer, who said that a man "without religious belief" was not a fit person to try a serious case. As an affirming witness I have been anxiously waiting for some Christian bigot to try the same kind of insulting tactics upon me, because even under the Oaths Act an affirming witness has to say that he is "without religious belief" before he is allowed to affirm. The Christian and the Nothingarian are under no such obligation. They merely repeat the words of the Oath, and nobody can question their belief.

I am well aware that when Mr. Bradlaugh was struggling to get his Oaths Bill through the House of Commons, he had to accept the amendment of the then Solicitor-General (Sir Edward Clarke) making it obligatory on the Freethinker to say that he was "without religious belief," or lose the Bill. That it went against the grain of Mr. Bradlaugh to accept this compromise, goes without saying. Everybody knows it is often very prejudicial, even at this time of day, for a public man to make this declaration; and only a man with a strong determination to uphold the principles in which he believes at all costs, could be found to go through the ordeal.

I noticed the other day that a doctor, in giving his evidence before a jury, asked to affirm, and the judge told him that he could not affirm unless he was prepared to say that he was "without religious belief." "Have you no religious belief?" said the judge to the witness; to which the Doctor replied, "None whatever." Now that was a very courageous statement for a public man like a doctor to make, and one that deserves our sincere approbation.

When we come to examine the matter closely, what does this declaration "without religious belief" mean? Is it not a phrase coined by a Christian lawyer to prejudice a Freethinker in giving his evidence before a court composed of persons who are

mostly nominal Christians? Would it not be enough for a witness to say, "I am not a Christian, and I wish to affirm"? Obviously, that would not suit the Christian lawyer who designed this artful amendment. Thousands would be prepared to say they were not Christians. The Freethinker must say that he is without any religious belief whatever. Now, thousands of Freethinkers would have no hesitation in saying that to a friend in confidential conversation, but to proclaim it in a public court, in the presence of persons who were in a position to injure him in business or to destroy his reputation in the circle in which he moved, would require more courage. Consequently, I am in favour of a further amendment to the Oaths Act, which would permit any man to affirm without saying anything about his belief or disbelief in the Christian or any other religion, on the distinct understanding that he would be liable to be charged with perjury if the evidence he gave was false. Better than all, why not abolish the Oath altogether and let everybody affirm without saying anything about their belief or disbelief? A court of law is a Secular institution, and it is time that the religious Oath was abolished. But even as the law stands, with the liability of being insulted by lawyer, magistrate, or judge, Freethinkers should claim their right to affirm on every occasion; and if they did it frequently enough, magistrates and judges would soon understand that Freethinkers are not an insignificant or ignorant set of persons, but that they number among them some of the most distinguished and respected citizens in every community.

Some of my Freethought friends affect to despise the question of getting Members of Parliament to bring about such radical reforms as the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws, or other questions relating to liberty of thought, but if Great Britain returned as many avowed Freethinkers as it does Labour Members, we should witness changes in the direction indicated in a very short space of time. People have very often said to me "why do you waste so much of your valuable time by serving as a member of a Borough Council?" I answer that I do it to help "the best of all causes." There are many ways in which I can help the cause of Freethought without interfering with my usefulness as a member of such a body. While I have been a member of Camberwell Borough Council, for instance, I have succeeded in getting all kinds of Freethought literature in all our libraries. I have defeated a motion to open the proceedings of the Council with prayer, and on three separate occasions during the present year I have brought before the Council the important question of having a Temple erected in our Cemetery—which is the property of the the ratepayers—for non-Christians, that is, Freethinkers, Positivists, Unitarians, Jews, and even Nothingarians, in which a Burial Service might be read over the dead without going straight to the graveside, no matter what the weather, as the case is at present. Let us claim our rights as citizens to be treated on an equality with Christians on all occasions.

All the local papers gave good reports of the speeches. Rather an amusing account was given in one of the most important journals, the *South London Press*, which made it out that I argued in favour of a "Temple for Nothingarians." What I really said was, that Nothingarians would probably choose to have the Secular Burial Service over their dead, if they once heard it, in preference to the out-of-date ceremony of the Christian Churches.

I make it a rule never to correct the errors of reporters. I was a reporter for a local paper myself in my youth, and I know that if anybody has the presumption to correct them, they never report the speeches of such a person again—if they can help it. But when I come to reflect upon the whole situation, I cannot help admitting that Freethinkers have, during the last half century, brought about some real reforms by their persistent action.

When Charles Bradlaugh was a young man, you could not sue for a debt if you were known to be a Freethinker.

\* Westermarcke, *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*, vol. i., pp. 349-350.

For many years we had to go through the degrading practice of taking an Oath in which we did not believe in order to get simple justice before the law. Charles Bradlaugh made it possible for us to affirm.

Bequests after bequests left to Freethought societies were confiscated by the State; in other words, by the Christians. Our late leader, G. W. Foote, made it possible, through the Secular Society, Ltd., to have legacies secured legally to our own associations.

And by-and-bye we shall have Temples erected in public cemeteries in which our beautiful Secular Service may be read over the remains of our dead.

These are real reforms. But if we want further reforms we must agitate and fight, for by such action alone shall we accomplish our desires. Let us see to it, then, that in this new year, 1916, each of us do our best to bring about these reforms to make life brighter and better for the rising generation of Freethinkers.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

### Acid Drops.

There was a very lively scene at a meeting of the West Ham Guardians the other day. It arose in connection with the Salvation Army. The superintendent relieving officer reported the admission to the workhouse of a child who had been placed with a woman at Leyton by the Salvation Army and had ceased paying for its maintenance after one week. The child had then been sent to the workhouse. One of the guardians, Mr. Ward, said this was not the first time a child had been brought into the district by the Salvation Army. Mr. Ward added—we quote from the *Stratford Express* :—

The officer of the Salvation Army herself instructed the woman to leave this child at the workhouse gates, and when that sort of thing went on under the guise of religion, the Guardians wanted to know where they stood. When the public read the glowing reports of the work of the Salvation Army they ought also to know that case after case occurred in which children were brought to the workhouse and left to become a drag on the rates.

Mr. Hamlett: The Salvation Army take all the credit, but refuse to accept the responsibility.

In reply to Mr. Paul, Mr. Ward stated that the Salvation Army boarded this child out, and then told the foster mother that the way to get rid of it was to leave it at the workhouse gate. The committee felt that it was quite time some definite notice should be taken of this matter, because it was not fair to the ratepayers. They took these children from one place in London and put them into another, and, unfortunately, West Ham Union seemed to be a favourite spot into which to bring them.

Mr. Paul suggested that the Board might institute proceedings against the Salvation Army as a test case. It would, at any rate, ventilate the scandal which had existed for as many years as he had been on the Board. He moved that proceedings be taken against the Salvation Army with a view to testing the legality of their action.

Mr. Hamlett seconded.

Mr. Paul said he knew the Clerk was against the proposal, but in any case it would ventilate the matter. It was nothing short of a scandal, although the Salvation Army took the credit for philanthropic work.

If a non-religious body were guilty of this behaviour, there would be some pretty plain speaking in connection therewith. But in England almost anything is permissible if done in the name of religion.

Principal Whyte, of Edinburgh, has declared that the War is traceable to the fact that the German Emperor has sold himself to the Devil. Therefore, it is the Devil's war. The Bishop of London, however, assures us, in his "New Year's message," that "it is God's war," and is making for "the consolidation and final triumph of the kingdom of God." What unmitigated nonsense these heavenly ambassadors do talk, to be sure!

Mr. G. W. Pepper, who is a successful American lawyer, has had the courage to deliver the Lyman Beecher lectures on preaching for last year, and the published volume is entitled *A Voice from the Crowd*. Mr. Pepper has the merit of being severely logical. On the subject of education he is original as well. He says :—

Upon the Christian theory, to know God is the end and aim of existence. The process of attaining to this knowledge is education. Subtract God, and you get—not secular education, but no education at all.

Let the members of the Secular Education League take this

seriously to heart. How wickedly they have been wasting their time.

We are naturally pleased to see what we have so often written about was endorsed by an officer at the Front, writing to the *Venturer*. He calls it "a child's game, played by those who had pretended to be grown up." He is referring to its ineffectiveness in settling anything of value, and he says :—

War I think morally futile, because I do not believe at all in the romantic view of it, *i.e.*, in the good qualities which it is supposed to breed. It is true that it tests men, like plague, shipwreck, famine, or any other adversities, but in doing so it does not *make* the good qualities that come to light, it merely makes them apparent. No man in his senses would advocate the occasional sinking of a liner, or the inoculation of a disease, in order to promote heroism and self-sacrifice, yet justification of war on such a ground is equally indefensible.

As to the foolish talk of the War ending war, the same officer says :—

I haven't much faith in any such happy prospect. Those who have fought and survived will come home slightly brutalised; but otherwise just as they were, and they and people in general will soon forget the waste and black murder aspect of this foul thing, whereas the newspapers and literary glorification which always accompanies a war will have sounded a note which will go on ringing for generations.

This officer might be a regular reader of the *Freethinker*, he follows so closely upon what we have so frequently said. We do not think he is, however, as he writes to a religious journal. We can only take it as an unconscious compliment to our own analysis of the situation.

The *Daily News* says "it will be news to many readers that of the 201,000,000 Mohammedans, 90,500,000 are under British rule." This is not exactly a compliment to its readers.

Sir Oliver Lodge, Principal of Birmingham University, says he doubts if the right kind of education, as a preparation for life, is given, especially in country schools. Yet the country schools are those most under clerical influence.

So many clergymen are saying, or rather shouting, that the European War is benefiting religion, that it is remarkable the contrary view should be expressed in clerical circles. Prebendary Webb-Peploe, speaking at a United Intercession meeting, stated that "the worship of God seemed to be passing away."

Mr. Ben Tillett, who has just returned from a visit to the fighting lines, says "even the clergy are beginning to discover the glorious possibilities of Christianity the nearer they get to the Front, and the nearer they get to death." Tut, Tut! A very small number of the 50,000 clergymen are at the Front, and they are non-combatants.

The late H.R.H. Princess Clemence Bonaparte left estate of the value of £994. This is a small sum for a royal personage, but the princess's relations may take comfort when they remember that the "King of Kings" left a smaller amount.

A soldier, writing from the fighting lines, says in a letter, "The cigarette-case you sent me saved my life, as it stopped a bullet." Had it been a pocket Testament, there would have been a touching moral to this story.

The Roman Catholic Church has a Vigilance Committee; but Dr. O'Sullivan considers that it is needful to have a Catholic news agency to combat the false reports regarding Catholic happenings which appear in the press. The trifling mistakes made concerning Catholicism are as nothing to the gross ignorance and prejudice concerning Rationalism and its doings.

Day by day there appears in some newspaper a specimen of what is called German blasphemy. The said blasphemy consists in German preachers asserting that in the War Germany has God on her side, and that she is an instrument in the hands of God. The following is a characteristic specimen, from a Professor of Theology in Berlin University :—

We do not hate our enemies. We obey the command of God, who tells us to love them. But we believe that in killing them, in putting them to suffering, in burning their houses, in invading their territories, we simply perform a work of charity.

Divine love is seen everywhere in the world, but men have to suffer for their salvation. Human parents love their children, yet they chastise them. Germany loves other nations, and when she punishes them it is for their good.

Now, if this kind of thing were condemned on the ground of its absurdity, we should cordially endorse it. It is pious, therefore it is stupid. It is stupid, therefore it is pious. But when that is said, what substantial difference is there between these utterances and the pious jargon that one hears in England? How many hundreds of our own clergymen have dwelt upon *our* being an instrument of the Divine plan? *We* have a mission. This is God's war, and God is upon *our* side. True, we do not talk so brutally as the German Professor about killing in the name of God, but so far as claiming to be instruments in the hands of God, it is no more than a contest between national religious stupidities. And we do not feel called upon to decide whether the English or German clergy deserve first place in that competition.

The depressing thing is that people in *any* country should voice this kind of rubbish, and that other people should be found who are unreflective enough to believe it. One of the hardest things in the world is to properly appreciate this type of intellect. Perhaps the most correct diagnosis is that, for the most part, it is pure unreflectiveness finding a comfortable cloak for the play of passion by mere verbal formulæ. But the existence of a genuine belief that world movements—wars, the expansion of peoples, the conflict of races, and of different forms of culture—are all so many moves of an overruling and directing intelligence is so bizarre that an adequate realization of all it implies should be enough to kill it. In all likelihood the sole condition of its being held is that its implications never are adequately realized.

Of course, it is not at all difficult to realize how such a belief came into being. It belongs to a period when the childlike assumption of big personalities ruling natural forces appeared as the only conceivable explanation of events. To-day the naturalness of such an explanation no longer obtains. It exists only as a survival. And therein lies the danger. For the prevalence of such a survival means that we have at large in our midst a class of mind so far immune to a rational estimate of things, that they may generally be counted as allies on the side of reaction. They become the slaves of words and phrases, they live upon an altogether lower intellectual plane than is possible, and in every fight for freedom or progress they are at best a load round the neck of the reformer, and at worst a positive and active enemy in his path.

Dr. F. A. Sibly considers that a university degree should be a necessity for entrance to a profession. If such degrees were of real value, the clergy would be far better equipped intellectually. Cephalization is not civilization.

Our facetious contemporary, *London Opinion*, has a comic almanack for 1916 which contains some amusing remarks about well known clergymen. Here is one: "The Rev. R. J. Campbell decides to join the Lucretia-borgias, and is presented with a Ford motor-hearse." Another entry is as follows: "Peace dug-out sails from Borneo, bearing two native chiefs, the Rev. C. F. Naked, and cargo of peace bananas."

A correspondent who wandered into Westminster Hall to hear an address from the Rev. Dinsdale T. Young sends us the following gems from the address:—

Has Religion gained by the War?

Yes, decidedly so, and for many reasons.

Thank God for the splendid moral tone of the British Press this War-time.

There has never been so much Bible-reading and so many Bible Christians in our land for many a year.

Christ is drawing all men unto him as a result of this War.

Religion has gained immensely, both morally and ethically, as the result of this War.

Truth has never been more clearly revealed than it has this War-time.

As a specimen of the clerical mind these sentences are imitable. That there is no truth in the great increase of religion only adds to their illuminating power. Preachers who can talk in this way are worthy of the congregations that can listen to them with appreciation. For our own part, we have no hesitation in saying that the prevalence of such a type of mind is about as grave a social evil as can exist.

The question of the enlistment of the clergy in war-time was settled in a very summary fashion in former times. John

Wesley's open-air services were often disturbed by press-gangs, and once the great preacher was seized himself, although he was then over forty years of age. Whilst at Stockton, the women came to the rescue of a pressed man, and broke the press-gang officer's head, and Wesley adds, "so stoned him and his men that they ran away."

The St. James' (Walthamstow) Parish Magazine contains the following:—

One of our young soldiers in camp writes thus to the vicar: "My fellow soldiers cannot imagine that anything they do is wrong. I have heard them talk openly of committing the most dreadful sins, and yet in church they will go through the entire service with great earnestness. They forget it ten minutes afterwards. Some who have been to the Front seem to be the most careless of all. They say that profanity and other sins are worse out there than at home." We must not, from this account, look forward to any great revival of religion in England after the War.

The truth will out, sooner or later, and it is interesting to contrast the letters of men—the above is only one out of many that have been published—with the highly imaginative tales of the Bishop of London and others.

In his presidential address to the annual meeting of the Association of Public School Science Masters, Sir William Osler said, "For fifteen years the sprightly race of boys should dwell in a Garden of Eden." Surely, the apple-tree should be transplanted first.

England has two languages, one as it was written and the other as it was spoken, says Professor Gilbert Murray. An open-air preacher reading from the Bible, and making comments would provide a touching example.

"The religion of the men in the Trenches," says the *Christian World*, "is mainly the religion they were taught in Sunday-school." Most probably this is true, and, if so, it is only another way of saying that if it had not been forced upon them before they were old enough to understand, they would not now have any religion at all. As it is, a great many are without it. But the *Christian World* also points out that the number of Sunday-school scholars is steadily decreasing. And this, it says, is a "bad omen." Of course it is. When the churches cease to breed believers, it will have come very near the end.

A movement has been initiated for bringing about co-operation between humanitarian and religious organizations, says the *Daily Chronicle*. "Humanitarian and religious organizations"! We observe the distinction with some amount of gratification.

We are not afraid of defeat, says Dr. Horton, "for we grasp the thought of God for our country." We must "understand God's purpose for us, and so fulfil our mission." Quite so; this is exactly what the German preachers are saying, and therein lies their "blasphemy." As we have said, it is a competition of rival stupidities.

A Catholic publication bears the title, *The Shadow of Peter*. The title is not meant to be ironic, for the volume has an introduction by Cardinal Gasquet; but St. Peter is getting shadowy by this time.

A recent publication bears the title, *The Log of the Ark*. It contains some humorous remarks, such as "to-day is the 500th anniversary of my marriage. That's quite a while to live with one woman." Another entry is equally facetious: "Camels took a drink to-day. First time since the tenth. I'd hate to be a camel." The newspapers speak of the laughter-making qualities of the book. If the jests had appeared in the *Freethinker*, they would have said something else.

A daily paper declares that one of the results of the War was the renouncing of "the mania for collecting." Surely, this is a mistake. Pious folk still pass the hat round with all the old eagerness.

From the Rev. Charles Brown. "I express my own profound conviction that unless it were organized, the Christian religion would die out of the lives of men and nations." This we quite believe, and it quite proves what we have said times out of number. Religion in a civilized community is an artificial thing. It springs from no real need, and corresponds to no vital fact. If it did, it would keep itself alive. And to say that it cannot be kept alive without organization is to say that it requires constant stimulation.



**To Correspondents.**

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

H. MANN.—We are glad to hear that on affirming, to the attesting, the Authorities were very courteous. This is as it should be.

H. T. D.—Your letter is the sort of cheery document that it does one good to read. We hope we shall be as bright and cheerful at "three score and ten." At any rate, you are a living proof of what a depressing doctrine Freethought is.

G. E. DOCBAB.—Thanks for help.

J. E. WILLIS (Birmingham).—We are flattered to know you are of opinion that if Mr. Foote "could only see the splendid manner in which his paper is being conducted, and the sympathetic response on behalf of Mrs. Foote, he would be more than gratified." Thanks for the new subscribers you have secured.

P. G. TAUBI.—It is the aim of the *Freethinker* to take a sane and balanced view of affairs, and we are gratified to learn that you think this is being done. We note your suggestion *re* pushing our circulation. We are having some small slips printed advertising the paper, and other things will be attempted soon.

F. H. C.—Your comments on Conscription arrived too late to be dealt with in this week's issue.

"KEPLER."—Your help in increasing our circulation is of the most practical and welcome kind. More next week.

ALFRED WEARE.—Pleased you think Mr. Cohen's notes on Conscription the best you have seen. Cheque has been handed to Business Manager, who will distribute copies of last week's issue as directed.

C. E. RATCLIFFE.—Received, and will appear as early as possible.

J. BREEZE.—Not the least fear of failure. Glad you like "Views and Opinions."

A. DOWDING would be glad if "C. R. P." would give him the edition and publishers of the volume from which the verses by Omar were quoted in his article in our issue for January 9.

A. ALEXANDER.—We are obliged to both yourself and the doctor for the steps you are taking to improve the circulation of this journal. With a few more like yourselves we look like having as good a circulation in South Wales as in any part of the country. We intend getting out new advertising matter shortly.

A NUMBER of answers to correspondents are unavoidably held over.

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."—Seventh List.**

Previously acknowledged, £306 19s. 6d.—Mary Rogerson 10s.; A. W. M., £1 1s.; H. C. D. S., 10s.; H. Irving, 5s.; F. J. Shotton, £2 2s.; Ada Slack, 5s.; Mrs. Turnbull, 5s.; W. Turnbull, 5s.; Mr. and Mrs. J. Turnbull, 5s.; Mr. and Mrs. R. Turnbull, 5s.; T. Turnbull, 5s.; S. Edmonds, 5s.; West Ham Branch N. S. S., 10s.; Col. Reilly (2nd sub.), £1 1s.; H. L. F., 10s. 6d.; Three R. P. A. Members, 5s.; Jno. Morton, 5s.; A. W. Laing, £5 5s.; H. C. White, 10s.; H. Shaw, 10s.; J. T. Thurlow, 3s.; J. R. Williams, 1s.; J. E. Cockcroft, 2s. 6d.; J. Taylor, 2s. 6d.; S. Hudson, £1; W. Dodd, £1; George Taylor, £1 1s.; E. A. Hammond, 10s.; Col. Stuart Graham, 9s. 6d.; Tom W. Love, 5s.; Pte. W. A. Williams, 2s. 6d.

*Per Miss Vance:* Robert Miller, 4s.; R. B. Harrison, 3s.; P. C. Harding, 2s. 6d.

**Sugar Plums.**

To-day (January 23) Mr. Cohen lectures at the Victoria Assembly Hall, Fowler Street, South Shields. The lecture will commence at 6.30 p.m., and the subject is "Christianity and the European War." The clergy of this country have been busy with the theory that this War is the outcome of our neglect of religion, and it would be a good chance of introducing Christians to hear something of the relation of Christianity to the present conflict.

Mr. Cohen had arranged to visit Liverpool on February 13, and a hall for the meeting had been provisionally engaged. At the last moment the proprietor refuses to let the hall, and it appears that "official" pressure has been brought to bear upon him to that end. We do not know what the authorities were afraid of, although it is not the first time this game has been played at Liverpool. However, it is hoped to secure another hall in the city, and the incident may have the effect of proving to Liverpool Freethinkers that if they wish to retain their rights as citizens, it will be well for them to be both vigilant and active.

We are pleased to note that a number of our friends are taking our request for a thousand new readers—as we intended it should be taken—seriously. And we are certain that the thousand can be obtained if only a sufficient proportion of our readers interest themselves in the matter. Once this new number of subscribers is obtained, we shall feel ourselves quite safe from loss, and we promise not to ask for any more readers for—well, for at least a fortnight.

One very successful plan, already tried in several towns, is for someone with sufficient time and interest, to make themselves a kind of local agent for the paper. This soon leads to sales. Those who feel they can help in this way should communicate with us without delay.

At the last Board Meeting of the Secular Society, Limited, on the motion of Mr. Cohen, Mr. J. T. Lloyd was elected Chairman of the Secular Society, Limited, for the ensuing twelve months. We congratulate Mr. Lloyd on his election, and the Board of Directors on its Chairman. We have every confidence in his ability, judgment, and straightforwardness, and these are all qualities necessary to such a post. We regret to say that Mr. Lloyd's health has not of late been all that is desirable, and, like Mr. Foote, he has to fight the demon of insomnia. We hope that a return to perfect health will be rapid and permanent.

Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, as Chairman of the Rationalist Peace Society, writes:—

DEAR SIR,—I am instructed by the Committee of the R. P. S. to inform you that at their meeting last night they passed a resolution expressing their deep regret at the death of their late colleague, Mr. G. W. Foote, and their profound sympathy with Mrs. Foote and her family in their bereavement.

I may add that this meeting was the first held by the Committee since Mr. Foote's death.—Yours truly,

H. BRADLAUGH BONNER, *Chairman.*

During the past few months we have published a number of communications on the question of exemption from

religious services. Some have managed to get it, others have failed, and those who have obtained it usually complain that certain duties are imposed upon them as a kind of punishment. From a correspondent in the West of England we get the following:—

One difficulty I have experienced here is that of getting exemption from religious service. Immediately after I enlisted I wrote a letter to the commanding officer asking him if he would grant me exemption, but the letter was totally ignored. I got permission to be exempt from Church Service from the N.C.O., but I was told that I should have to parade for the service and then dismiss. I had so much difficulty every week in getting away that I have given up the idea.

It is quite evident that there is little or no room in our Army for freedom of conscience, if freedom of conscience leads one away from all religious service. Men are practically compelled to attend whether they will or no. And it is also evident that the only reason why this freedom is not allowed is, because if it were, very few would attend church service at any time.

Another correspondent, dealing with a similar topic, writes:—

The letter from Arthur G. Neville, in your issue of 9th Jan., giving his experience when attesting, hits off exactly what actually takes place. When I enlisted, eight months ago, I was ushered, along with six others, before a Major, seated at a table. A sergeant came along with Bibles, and he requested us to take one in our right hands. When he came to me, I said, "No, thanks." He hardly understood, as I was again asked to hold Bible. I again refused. The sergeant was nonplussed, so he turned to the Major, who asked me, "What is the trouble?" I told him I desired to affirm, being a Freethinker. He asked me to wait a minute. The rest were then sworn in. The Major then turned to me, and said he hardly knew how to proceed. I told him I thought it was in the Regulations. He rang for the sergeant, and instructed him to find the King's Regulations, and see what the position was.

After a quarter of an hour, the sergeant returned, looking worried, and informed the Major he could not find it. The Major then had a try, but after ten minutes or so he gave it up, muttering, "This is a puzzle." Then he decided to ring up the local headquarters. After another wait, a real live Colonel appeared on the scene. "Now," I thought, "we will get to business." But alas! I was requested to retire. After patiently waiting a good while, the door opened, and I was requested to go in. The Major began: "Hum! I think that we can now fix you up. We understand that you don't want any religion with the oath?" I replied that that was so. He then proceeded to administer the oath, which went off all right until the end, when, from habit, he said, "So help me God." "Oh, my God!" he said, "that won't do." The three of us here burst out laughing.

He then struck out the offending words, and, turning to me, said, "I am very sorry indeed to have kept you waiting, but you are the first case I have had of this sort." The minute I was requested to wait at the beginning extended to an hour and a half. I am glad to say that, on application to my O.C., I am excused all church parades.

TOM W. LOVE.

Evidently here, as in other directions, much depends upon the person in authority. One with a sense of justice naturally acts as the officer acted in the above communication. But a bigot remains a bigot to the end of the chapter. We hope that all Freethinkers will act as did Mr. Love.

Some of our readers may remember that on the occasion of an Alhambra Notice on "Russia's Day," a performance was announced of Epreinof's one-act play, "The Theatre of the Soul." As Epreinof is one of the leading figures in the new school of Russian dramatists, the selection was a very appropriate one. At the last moment the play was withdrawn, and it was whispered because of some alleged impropriety in the play, which made it quite unsuitable to the highly "respectable" company expected to be present. Messrs. Henderson & Co., of Charing Cross Road, have now issued the play, price One Shilling, so that the general public is now in a position to form an opinion on the matter. Of one thing we are certain. Those who purchase the play with the idea that they are buying something "improper," will be disappointed. Others will discover they have an example of the Russian fondness for psychological analysis that is not free from morbidity and cynicism. The play really provides scope for an essay. We have only space to say that it offers a clever, perhaps weird, and certainly original picture of the conflict between emotion, reason, and the underlying—or resultant—psychical unity that makes up the individual. One sometimes gets the impression that the author is writing with his tongue in his cheek, but the originality and cleverness of the play is unmistakable. And one is left wondering why the Alhambra management declined its representation.

## Letters to my Daughter.—IV.

MY DEAR JOAN,—

I might have known that it was bound to come. Cinderella with its magic charm has held you spellbound, and the house has had evidence that your young mind is receptive of impressions. You took a lace curtain, then you found a lace collar, then the silver paper and silver thread were fastened to the lace; with much ceremony you proudly announced yourself to be no other than she who once sat among the cinders. This proves to your father that the black-coated men are cunning, and so long as I have breath in my body I will stand between them and yourself until you are able to stand between them and someone else. Perhaps you may say that I am very severe. But if only they could agree among themselves, they might claim the right to impress you as Cinderella has done. I say might even then we should want to know many things before we permitted ourselves to be saddled with a story about a wooden cross and the only Christian that ever lived. He, too, loved little children, and the grown-ups who, as usual, hadn't the sense of little children, were very cruel to him. I dare not read the story to you, as I am sure you would cry, and your father knows that already there are too many tears about in the eyes of other little children whose fathers have gone on a long journey and will never come back. I think the reason is something to do with a man or his mother, but I am sure that neither of them said nor meant anything that those horrid black-coated men would make you believe. We must be fair in our thoughts about a certain woman and her son, or we are no different than those who call your father an infidel because he will not believe *their* story about it.

It is a delightful game that you and your little friends Jessie and Gracie play. The poetry must have come out of the Garden of Trust. You say:—

Shut your eyes  
And open your mouth,  
And see what I will bring you.

Then you put in the open mouth an orange, a chocolate, or a biscuit, or something *good*. I wonder if you could imagine all mankind playing at this game! Along come the black-coated men. They put something bitter in the mouth and spoil the game. I am very tired of talking about them this morning, but I think mankind will not play with them again. They have been found out. And some people called naughty Freethinkers are going to give mankind something to make for joy, for gladness, for happiness.

In those two books with the funny pictures there is a picture of a "walloping" baby, held up by *six* women. People with funny faces are standing round him, and they are all laughing. The name of the baby is Gargantua; when you are older we will change his name and call him Mankind. I wanted to tell you something about the *colour* of his clothes. Suppose I let the quaint old man called the author tell you:—

Gargantua's colours were white and blew, as I have showed you before, by which his father would give us to understand, that his sonne to him was a heavenly joy, for the white did signifie gladnesse, pleasure, delight, and rejoicing, and the blew, celestial things..... Mean while, in a word I will tell you, that blew doth certainly signifie Heaven and heavenly things, by the same very tokens and symbols, that white signifieth joy and pleasure.

I have never known any little children who did not like colours—blue dresses, white frocks, coloured pieces of paper and paints—in your land black is no colour. Perhaps you will ask me where is this place called Heaven? I will tell you. It is anywhere. It is not where the black-coated men are. It is in a glass of beer to the thirsty—if they like it. It is in a field of ripe corn to the farmer. It is in a pretty hat to a woman. It is on the railway platform when a soldier returns to his loved ones. It is in fine weather to a sailor, and in wet weather to a man who sells umbrellas. To you now it is in a Japanese

doll that squeaks. Of one place where it is not I am sure, that is above the bright blue skies; if anyone living up there looked down on earth at present they would be most unhappy, and that could never be in heaven. So let us come back to our colours. We cannot live without colours. Your mother has put up blue curtains to the window. As one of your numerous uncles said, she has brought the sky in the room! One day we will "s'prise" her as you call it. What do you say if we get some glittering stars and a moon and fasten them on?—Your loving father,

TRISTRAM.

### More About G. W. Foote.

As the *Freethinker* has reprinted my remarks on Mr. Foote's services to the humanitarian cause, it may perhaps be of some interest to its readers if I add a few reminiscences of a more personal kind. Apart from the work of the Humanitarian League, which was established in 1891, the two subjects which brought me into friendly touch with Mr. Foote were my *Life of James Thomson* and the meetings of the Shelley Society, both of an earlier date than the League. I remember writing for Mr. Foote's magazine, *Progress*, when it was edited for him, during his imprisonment, by Edward Aveling; but I think my first meeting with him was in 1888, when he gave me a great deal of valuable information about James Thomson which is incorporated in the *Life*.

In 1890, the Committee of the Shelley Society invited Mr. Foote, at my suggestion, to lecture for them on Shelley's Religion; and the meeting was one of the largest and most successful that the Society held. Dr. Farnivall was present, and Bernard Shaw, but the "respectable" members of this Committee made themselves ridiculous by staying away, presumably because they secretly resented the appearance, on a Shelleyan platform, of one who had been imprisoned for blasphemy! I think Mr. W. M. Rossetti, the Chairman of the Society, was abroad at the time; he certainly would have given no countenance to such narrow-mindedness.

On the occasion of the Shelley Centenary (Aug. 4, 1892) there was a memorial meeting at the Hall of Science in the evening, which contrasted strongly with the comical gathering held at Horsham in the afternoon, when local squires, and literary gentlemen from London, had united in the attempt to whitewash Shelley's character, "so little specked with mire," as Mr. Edmund Gosse pleaded. Mr. Foote took the chair, in his admirable fashion, and Mr. Shaw made the audience rook with laughter by his description of the Horsham apologetics.

Of Mr. Foote's occasional, and always interesting, references to Shelley in the *Freethinker*, I need not speak. In letters to me, some seven or eight years ago, he more than once expressed the wish that a new, a real life of Shelley should be written. "I agree with you," he wrote, "that the facts are now fairly established, but they are not presented properly, and the biographers are too apologetic, often impertinently so. Dowden himself preaches and drivels over the Harriet matter. He makes me sick when I turn to those pages. It is a very different thing from my remarking that Shelley's age, at nineteen, rendered his opinions on some matters (marriage, for instance) rather unimportant. I mean, of course, as his opinions." In another letter, referring to the need of a new *Life*, he remarked, "If no other competent person [referring to someone whose name had been suggested] does it, I almost feel like having a go at it myself before I die."

I remember that in the Shelley Society days there was a pious proposal that a volume of selections from Shelley's works should be prepared and edited by G. W. Foote, Bernard Shaw, and myself. I believe that I got so far as to draw up a rough list of the selections; but as neither of the great men had the industry to proceed with it, the scheme never materialized. "I do remember," wrote Mr. Foote in

1908, "that old idea of the three of us co-operating on a Shelley volume. Many worse things have been done since."

I stated in the *Humanitarian* that Mr. Foote possessed great gifts of heart as well as of brain. Many instances of this have been given by his friends; but perhaps the following quotation from one of his letters (April 8, 1907) may not be superfluous:—

Your reference to J. M. Wheeler touches me deeply. I am inexpressibly glad that you "often think of him with affection." His was a heart of gold, and his mind was of no mean order. But it is the heart—is it not?—that speaks the last word in memory. I miss him now as I did the day after he died, and shall miss him until (perhaps) I too am missed myself.

That G. W. Foote will long be deeply missed, who can doubt? On several occasions proof came to me, quite accidentally, of the high regard in which he was held, even in quarters wholly unknown to him. Once, when I was reading the *Freethinker* in an A. B. C. shop, a waitress, to my great surprise, informed me, after a careful glance to see that she was not overheard by the manageress, that she too was a Freethinker, and spoke of Mr. Foote in terms of warmest admiration. He seemed pleased when I told him of this little incident.

The fact that a leader of thought such as Mr. Foote was not mentioned in *Who's Who* always seemed to me an absurdity; and I once wrote a letter to the editor of that periodical, commenting on the omission, and expressing my confidence that it was not due to any religious prejudice. This sarcasm, however, turned out to be undeserved; for I discovered that Mr. Foote had more than once been invited to supply material for a notice of himself, but had neglected to act on the suggestion. Why he thus held back, I do not know; but it was certainly a proof that he did not court publicity.

The last time I saw Mr. Foote was at a Peace Conference a few years ago. As we were walking away after the meeting, an unknown youth, presumably one of the audience, ran after Mr. Foote in the street, and asked if he might shake hands with him; which request having been granted, he as quickly disappeared. Hero-worship is a strange thing; but I felt at the time that the young man's enthusiasm was at least not misdirected. For all social reformers, whether they acknowledge it or not, owe a great debt to iconoclasts like Bradlaugh and Foote, who made free speech possible where it was not possible before.

But the old religious intolerance is scotched, not killed; and it is a great error to suppose that the Secularism of to-day is a barren and needless survival from the old time of persecution. I have often heard it said, by persons who were themselves free from religious belief, that Mr. Foote was merely "slaying the slain." On the contrary, he carried on a much-needed work, quite as important as that of Socialism or any other modern movement; and for that very reason his keen intellect and strong judgment will be greatly missed in the fight that has yet to come.

HENRY S. SALT.

### The Gospel of Mark.—II.

(Continued from p. 43.)

AS we have already seen, our clerical critics who admit that Matthew and Luke copied from Mark's Gospel all agree in maintaining that Mark accompanied Peter in his missionary journeys, and that he afterwards committed to writing all he remembered of that apostle's teaching—the result being the present Gospel of Mark. This brings us to Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, who (about the year A.D. 140) records being informed by the Presbyter John that—

Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately whatsoever he remembered. It was not, however, in exact order that he related the sayings

or deeds of Christ. For he neither heard the Lord, nor accompanied him. But afterwards he accompanied Peter.....Wherefore Mark made no mistake in thus writing some things as he remembered them. For of one thing he took especial care, not to omit anything he had heard, and not to put anything fictitious into his account.

The statement that Mark was "the interpreter of Peter" is repeated by Irenæus (A.D. 185), by Tertullian (A.D. 206), and by Eusebius (A.D. 380) on the authority of Papias—whose book survived to the year A.D. 1218. There is much difference of opinion as to whether Papias's statement refers to the Gospel of Mark in its present form, or to a more primitive version of that evangel. It certainly shows that something in the nature of a Gospel was then in existence, though not that Papias had seen or read it. Christian apologists, as we know, contend that the Second Gospel was in use among the churches from A.D. 65, and that, of course, this second century bishop was well acquainted with it; the only question being that he did not know who Mark was or the source of his narratives until informed by the Presbyter John. And here I may notice that a contributor to this journal, Mr. Robert Arch, has in this and some other matters taken his stand with the apologists—except as regards the early date. That contributor says, for instance:—

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

Why, certainly! And why not? Some people appear to be able to believe anything; but for myself, I never could believe a story which I saw was manifestly absurd, or which appeared on the face of it to be untrue—as in the present case. Now, assuming for the sake of argument that the statement of Papias was true, the fact would be known in the first century in all the Christian churches throughout the Roman Empire; but, as a matter of fact, it was news to the Bishop of Hierapolis a decade before the middle of the second century, and he considered it worth making a note of in his book. Also, if we believe the story of the gift of "tongues" in the Acts of the Apostles, Peter did not need the services of an "interpreter": but, rejecting the latter, the statement of Papias is not in harmony with fact.

In the first place, Peter was a Jew and preached only to the Jews (see Gal. ii. 7—9). We also find from the latter Epistle that Peter would have nothing to do with Paul and his Gentile converts. Now, if Peter preached only to Jews he would have no need of an interpreter; for the language of Palestine (Aramaic) was that in which he had been brought up. Nor is it at all likely that Peter, who would have no dealings with the Pauline Christians, would go to Rome to preach to Gentiles.

In the second place, the idea of Peter going about relating little stories, parables, and sayings, like those in the Gospel of Mark is perfectly absurd. That apostle only heard those parables or sayings *uttered once*, if at all: it would, then, be simply impossible for him to call to mind anything more than a few brief sentences, if any. Of course, if Jesus had repeated the same sayings every week for six months, as the Litany and other prayers are repeated in churches, even an illiterate fisherman like Peter might have been able to commit to memory *some* of them: but as the case stands, Peter could know nothing whatever of the sayings, discourses, or parables, which he had heard uttered but once—save perhaps a sentence here and there. The difficulty is not that Mark should remember sayings or discourses which Peter kept daily repeating for months at a stretch, but that Peter himself should remember them, many years later, when he had only heard them spoken once.

But the idea of Peter, or any other apostle, going about reciting all the little incidents and discourses in Mark's Gospel is nothing less than childish. Such a course would do very well in a meeting-house where Christians were assembled, and would help to fill up the time. In preaching to orthodox Jews, Peter could

only gain converts by proving to them that Jesus was the Messiah predicted in certain unfulfilled prophecies in the Hebrew scriptures: that is to say, real predictions, not imaginary ones like those in the Gospels. Peter's preaching in the Book of the Acts (chap. ii.) is drawn on these lines; but the prophecies quoted have no reference to Jesus, and the account is unhistorical. This chapter of model preaching contains no Gospel narratives and no sayings—which would be there out of place—but it endeavours to prove, after a fashion, that Jesus was the predicted "anointed one."

We will now see what two later writers have to say of Mark and Peter.

Irenæus (A.D. 185) says:—

Matthew also issued a written Gospel among the Hebrews.....while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome, and laying the foundation of the Church there. After their martyrdom Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, delivered to us in writing what had been preached by Peter.

Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 195) says:—

The occasion of writing the Gospel of Mark was this: Peter, having publicly preached the word at Rome, and *having spoken the Gospel by the Spirit*, many present exhorted Mark to write the things which had been spoken, since he had long accompanied Peter, and remembered what he said; and that when he had composed the Gospel, he delivered it to them who had asked for it. Which when Peter knew, he neither forbade nor encouraged it (Eusebius, Eccl. Hist. vi. 14).

Here we are told by two Christian "fathers," who each claimed to know, that Mark wrote his Gospel from Peter's preaching, the first placing its composition after Paul's death, and the second during Peter's lifetime. Believers can, of course, take their choice or may believe both. But Clement in his statement makes a most amazing assumption. Being himself a writer, he knew that even the best memory would be powerless to recall sayings and discourses that had only been spoken once: so he credits Peter with repeating the whole unwritten Gospel of Mark by the instrumentality of "the Spirit," in accordance with John xiv. 26. Clement had, of course, read the statement of Papias, and had perceived the weak place in it—which he hastened to strengthen by "inspiration." But when we bear in mind the many fraudulent "prophecies" in the Gospels, and the miracles ascribed to Jesus which were never performed, as well as the large number of lying apocryphal writings that were in circulation in that age, the co-operation of "the Spirit" cannot be admitted. If, then, Peter could not call to mind the sayings and discourses in Mark's Gospel after having heard them uttered once, thirty years before, there cannot be the smallest shadow of a doubt that Mark did *not* write his Gospel from Peter's preaching, but took his accounts from some earlier document.

Again, that Mark's Gospel was not derived from the preaching of Peter is further evident from the fact that the prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem (chap. xiii.) was not composed, nor even thought of, until after A.D. 70. Mark could not therefore have heard Peter repeat that chapter in the reign of Nero (A.D. 54—68) before his alleged martyrdom.

The statement of Irenæus respecting Peter and Paul founding a church at Rome was purely legendary. There was an apocryphal writing in circulation before his time in which those two apostles were represented as travelling together and sailing to Rome in company—on the lines of the "we" narratives in the Acts. But from the statements in the Epistle to the Galatians, it is quite certain that after the affair at Antioch, Peter would never have gone to Rome in the companionship of Paul—nor Paul in that of Peter. Neither, again, is it probable that Peter ever preached to Gentiles. The Christians who laid the foundation of the church at Rome are unknown.

In the apologetic work from which I have already quoted, our critical scholar, Canon Scott, says of the last six chapters of the Gospel of Mark:—

In this part of the Gospel there are indications that St. Mark made use of a written record of our Lord's discourses.

Here it is admitted that in at least one-third of that Gospel, Peter's teaching was *not* the source whence Mark drew his materials; neither can it be shown that that apostle was the authority for a single sentence in the Second Gospel. Upon this subject Dr. Carpenter says:—

The author of *Mark* gathered materials from more than one source, and the Gospel, as we have it, contains much more than Peter's recollections. This is obvious, for example, in its opening; where the brief report of the Baptist's preaching seems derived from the fuller narratives employed in both *Matthew* and *Luke*. Compare Mark i. 7, 8 with Matt. iii. 11, 12 and Luke iii. 16, 17. It is plain, again, from the discourse in Mark xiii., which bears emphatic marks of being dependent on an earlier written document. It is probable, once more, that the series of parables in Mark iv. with the exposition of the various issues of the Sower's toil, is really due to some collection of the Teacher's words.

Here we have two critical scholars connected with the Christian Church, who both find that there must have been written records behind the Gospel of Mark. Yet our contributor, Mr. Arch, tells us that "*Mark* is the original Gospel from which the other two Synoptists drew," and that "this appears more likely than that *Mark* should also have been based on an older document; firstly, because there is no evidence that such an older document existed;" and secondly, for some other reason. This matter—whether *Mark* is an original Gospel or is merely a revised copy of an earlier one—is now the most important question in connection with the Gospels, more especially since *Matthew* and *Luke* are admitted to be *not* original documents. But I must leave it for the present.

In the first example adduced by Dr. Carpenter, *Matthew* records six verses as uttered by John the Baptist (Matt. iii. 7—12), which verses are also recorded by *Luke*. Now these six verses would appear to have been in the earlier document from which all three Synoptists drew the common portion of their narratives. Mark no doubt saw them, but he only selected one verse (Matt. iii. 11): apparently he did not set much value on sayings of the Baptist. When we read *Matthew's* six verses, it is at once perceived that verse 11 is in its proper place with the other five, and that all six must have been present in the original document. It was Mark's purpose, it would seem, to draw up only a short Gospel; and he did so by making what he considered a sufficient number of selections from what he considered the most essential portions. *Matthew* and *Luke* made farther additions from the same source—as, for instance, the Temptation of Jesus by the Devil (Matt. iv.; *Luke* iv.), or the Reply of Jesus to the Baptist (Matt. xi.; *Luke* vii.), etc.—matters which Mark probably did not consider of any importance. In the case of the Temptation, Mark did not think it necessary to give the account in detail; so he simply said:—

And straightway the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness. And he was in the wilderness forty days; tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him (Mark i. 12, 13).

The words in italics appear to have been an addition made by Mark himself. They are not found in *Matthew* or *Luke*, though a long and detailed account is given in each Gospel. Only the narratives recorded by two of the three Synoptists may be regarded as drawn from the common source document: matters narrated by one Synoptist only were derived most probably from later or apocryphal writings.

(To be continued.) ABRACADABRA.

January, 1916.

Of these am I Coila\* my name.—BURNS, *The Vision*.

I AM sitting, this first day of the year, by the slowly kindling fire, in the slowly dawning light of the grey morning. The south wind is wild but mild, and the meadow is sheeted with shining pools of rain-water. The brook is overflowing, the clouds are dark and

\* The River Coyle, Ayrshire.

low, and the fitful gusty shower lashes the passive-staring window pane. I sit over the fire and deliberately indulge in the most delightful reverie. As the wind darts upon the placid pool, ruffling its surface in the swift and gloomy paths of its invisible might, so my thought is tinged with the sinister of the present deplorable circumstance. But there is memory, and there is anticipation; there is hope; there is joy even, if merely individual. Reverie is refreshing in these times—it is a necessity. And so, involuntarily, we think of pleasant things; we cherish the brief illusion of a happy dream. And here it is: a crumbling river's brink, with alder roots entwined like mighty arms. An opposite pine wood, dim and grand, swaying in the breeze; the snow-drops in the cleft of the giant root, and gleaming here and there on the outer mould; and beyond these the yellow daffodils nodding in the wind, the fresh green spears contrasting with the whitened wind-swept sere; and, adding volume richness strength to the scene, the swift brown turgid river, full and flecked with foam, swelling along its sounding shore, past many a beauteous scene, joining the "hermit Ayr," reaching the mighty sea, which, on the last night of the dead year, grander in the gloom, rolled in hoary majesty upon the quiet coast. The latter to me, on all similar occasions, is eloquent of the constant, permanent, and fundamental things, the august vibrations of the eternal pendulum, and beside which the idiot rage of little bedizened men is still more funny and contemptible.

There is rapture on the lonely shore—and a revelation. Man conquers the sea; the sea triumphs over man, and rolls unconcernedly over him evermore. Man dares death itself; but death and mutability trump every card. And so the sea awes and ennobles the mind. Each to its medicine. The savage witch doctor wears a necklace of skulls; the modern medicine man a bib and a gown. I, more modern still, perhaps, clothe my mind with dreams and memories of reality, and hopes, but only now and then—and am always the better for it—and I am, at the very least, as happy as they.

In this Northland of ours, at this season of the year, there is a spirit of kindness about, and that apart from the merely bibulous and convivial sentiment. Earth feels the faint and distant tremors of the spring. What impulse stirs in man? Is he kind because he is expected to be kind; does his kindness beget kindness, as civility civility? It is the ideal. Ideals are good and bad. Some day the world may choose the best, when there will follow the best of all possible worlds.

Talking of the greatest things reminds me, by contrast, of the least. The little bourgeois tradesman, who has pounds for my pence, tries to cheat me of threepence; but though mild and gentle, one is not necessarily "soft." The "mistake" was pointed out. Bang goes sixpence, certainly; but not in that way. Here, also, was an ideal; and hidden away in the folds of a pompous and perfectly orthodox brain.

Till February, or farther, adieu; and to all a happy new year—with its qualifications. COILA.

Here is an amusing child story. A little girl asked her mother if all good people went to heaven. The mother replied "Yes!" The child continued, "Will Charlie Chaplin go there too, mamma?" "Yes, my child, I hope so." "Then," said the child triumphantly, "won't he make God laugh!"

A poetical journalist, describing food conditions in Germany and Austria, wrote, "Potatoes are golden, and fat like diamonds." It reads like a description of the New Jerusalem.

A patriotic publican has substituted a fresh sign in the place of the title, "The King of Prussia," which formerly adorned his premises. This sensitiveness may spread, and we may yet see such theological titles as "The Noah's Ark," "The Adam and Eve," replaced by "The Red Cow" or "The Golden Lion."

**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. Shaller and Saphin; 3.15, Messrs. Kells and Dales, "The Atonement"; 6.30, Messrs. Beale, Saphin, and Dales.

**COUNTRY.****INDOOR.**

SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Hall, Fowler Street, near Monument Buildings): 6.30, C. Cohen, "Christianity and the European War."

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