

# The FREETHINKER

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*Nature does all things of herself and without the aid of the gods.*—LUCRETIVS.

## Views and Opinions.

### A Criticism.

In "Views and Opinions" for February 20, I referred to what I conceived to be a fallacy often raised in connection with the evolution of man. It was then stated, "When it is said that man has evolved from lower animals, we are only stating a truth so long as we are dealing with the species. Man as an animal does not so evolve. Neither does man as an individual continue evolving." I did not argue this point at any length, and the statement has brought me a sharp challenge from a Liverpool reader, who argues that we only know the species through the individual, and that if there is no change (evolution) in the individual, there can be none in the race. The question thus raised is of considerable importance in religious, scientific, and sociological discussions, and worthy of a little attention.

### The Individual and the Species.

It is true that we only know the species Man through man the individual. But when we have said that, we have only paved the way for the further proposition that we only know the individual man through, and because of his relation to, the species. Let anyone try to eliminate in thought all that the individual man receives from the species, and then try and realize what would be left. As a mere individual, a person born would possess a number of more or less animal characteristics, but all that is characteristic of him as a *human* individual would be wanting. For it is from the aggregate social life that man derives his language, his specialized human mental and moral qualities; in a word, his character. Break this link, and the individual we know as man disappears. It is, indeed, only by a trick of thought that we separate the individual from the group. And it is as true to say that we only know the individual through the species as it is to say we only know the species through the individual. The sounder position is that the terms represent two sides of a single indivisible fact.

### Religion and Progress.

What has been said will serve as a fitting introduction to the second question. My assertion here was that continuous progress is achieved by the race, and by a trick of the imagination is credited to the individual. When I wrote the words to which my critic raises objection, I had specially in mind the use made of the idea of progress by religious apologists. And it will be as well to note what that use is. To the Atheistic attack on the alleged moral government of the world, the reply is that the evil seen is the material of a greater and ultimate good, and this is shown by the continuous development of man. This argument would have some

force if it was the *individual* who went on developing; but that is obviously not the case. It is not the individual who suffers and who experiences that reaps the benefit. The lasting benefits that results are for others. The individual is born, passes through a certain range of development, and dies. The race reaps the benefits of his experience, and a new individual is born to a richer heritage. In this way the racial inheritance grows greater and broader, and man—the individual man—wiser, and is capable of more because of this. Progress is thus achieved by the race, and expressed through the individual. The religious apology breaks down because the justification of Deity requires the continuous development of man, and that certainly does not transpire.

### Man, Past and Present.

Now for the same question from the point of view of men of science and sociology. If man, as an individual, progresses, we should expect to find him superior, as such, to the individual of two or three thousand years ago. Is this the case? For my own part, I see not a shadow of evidence in favour of an affirmative answer. Can we say that the people of Europe, particularly the inhabitants of Greece or Italy or France, are better as individuals than they were 2,000 years ago? Suppose, by some process, a number of infants of these countries had had their growth arrested 2,000 years ago, and were now revived and brought up under modern conditions, is there any phase of our civilization they would be incapable of absorbing? There are none, so far as I can see. Is there a philosophical problem to-day that Plato or Socrates could not have handled were they to suddenly return to life? Have we any scientific problem beyond the mental range of Eratosthenes or Pythagoras or Archimedes? Is the sailor who serves in our Fleet to-day a better man than the one who sailed from Phœnicea to Britain over 2,000 years ago? To all these and similar questions there seems but one rational answer. Considered as a mere individual, the man of to-day is no better than the man of 2,000 years ago. He has not a better body; there is no evidence that he has a better mind. And yet, I affirm, progress is a fact. Men are able to do more than they did 2,000 years ago. They know more. They are wiser, and I believe that, on the whole, they are better. How can we explain the apparent paradox?

### Tools and the Man.

Man has been defined as a tool-using animal, and in that definition lies the key to the problem. Divest the individual of his tools, and he becomes a savage. Give him tools, let him know and understand their uses, and he becomes—if one may use the language of mythology—a god. But we must be quite clear as to what is meant by tools. These include, not merely the spade of the navvy, but also the telescope of the astronomer. And not merely material things that may be used to carve or dig, but non-material things likewise. The principles of mathematics are tools. The generalizations



of science are tools. So, also, are all human institutions; all human ideas, all human beliefs, are, in the widest and truest sense of the word, tools. They become so many instruments by the aid of which one generation reacts on another generation, and perpetuates the fabric which we call civilization. Without the creation and subsequent inheritance of these tools in an ever-increasing mass, and of an improved quality, civilization would be an impossibility. If each generation had to commence anew, the story of progress would be no more than that achieved by a single generation. It is because this is not so, because the social heritage grows larger with each generation, that we do more and see further than our predecessors. We profit by their experience. We inherit the tools their wisdom has helped to fashion.

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#### Progress as a Racial Quality.

Due appreciation of what has been said will help to an understanding of the truth that, while increased power accrues to the individual, progressive evolution is a racial—or social—product. Given our tools in the shape of biological knowledge, and there is nothing in modern biology that Aristotle could not have mastered. Given our tools in the shape of astronomical knowledge, and Aristarchus or Pythagoras would have been the equal of the greatest modern astronomer. The same amount of training that the modern soldier or sailor receives would have made the ancient soldier and sailor their equal. There is here no question whatever of individual superiority or inferiority; it is entirely a question of available tools. It is a matter of social heritage. If some cataclysm could rob society of the inherited knowledge of the past 2,000 years, taking at the same time the institutions and machinery that knowledge has produced, the present-day individual would be not a whit better than the individual of old Rome or ancient Greece. Improvements are, of course, effected by individuals, but it is only as these become part of the heritable social stock that they serve as aids to progress. The pigmy is not taller than the giant because he can see farther when standing on the giant's shoulders. And in the story of human progress it is the species that takes the place of the giant.

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#### The Conditions of Progress.

I have dealt with this question in terms of sociology rather than of biology, because I think it puts the issue in a clearer manner. But the same might be illustrated at any length from biology. And my critic should remember that the development of a species by the preservation of favourable variable variations does not, even in the biological world, imply the progressive evolution of the individual—rather the contrary. But in sociology the truth seems to me quite clear. And it is this truth that marks off human from animal societies. In animal life we have the organism, we have heredity, and we have the external environment. The distinguishing character of human society is that to these three factors it adds a fourth. This is the social medium—to use an expression of George Henry Lewes. The experience of the animal dies with it, or leaves behind a negligible residue. The experience of the human being lives after him. It is preserved by language—oral and written, by institutions which represent his ideas in a concrete form. The ideas, the beliefs, the institutions of preceding generations form an environment into which the individual is born, to which he must perforce adapt himself, and from which he derives his greatest strength. Individually he is no better born than the child of two thousand years ago. But his inheritance is greater, more varied, more powerful. The child leaves school with more knowledge than many an

ancient philosopher possessed. The ignorant sailor may throw a ton of explosives a score of miles. The ordinary engineer may manipulate forces that would have astonished the builders of the pyramids. And all this, I repeat, is not a question of individual superiority. It is not he who is bigger, stronger, or possesses greater capacity. He has inherited more, and therefore he can spend more. *His* greatness, *his* strength, *his* knowledge, is born of the race. His individual contribution will in turn go to increase the heritage of those who succeed him. He sharpens and improves the tools for future generations to handle.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

### Christianity Weighed in the Balance and found Wanting.

PREACHING at the City Temple, the other Sunday evening, the Rev. Dr. Charles Brown, of Ferme Park Baptist Church, made several highly questionable, and one or two absolutely false, statements. He declared that the War "had its origin in something absolutely anti-Christian, a philosophy that repudiates the teaching of Jesus Christ," and that "the country that forced this War upon the world is the home of Rationalism and Materialism, whose philosophers called into question nearly every article of the Christian creed." If he does not know that that statement is wholly untrue, Dr. Brown must have kept his eyes and ears closed for the last eighteen months. Had he read nothing but Professor Dawes Hicks's article, entitled "German Philosophy and the Present Crisis," in the *Hibbert Journal* for October, 1914, it would have been impossible for him to be guilty of such a gross misrepresentation of the facts. However severely we may condemn Prussian militarism, or Bismarckism as Professor Hicks calls it, we cannot deny its Christian character. The Kaiser is as orthodox a Christian as Dr. Brown himself, as his published sermons abundantly prove. War is not anti-Christian, the majority of wars having been waged in the name of God and for the furtherance of the popular religion. Another false assertion indulged in by Dr. Brown was as follows: "What about this awful War between Christian nations? I beg your pardon, there is no Christian nation on earth." If that statement were true, what a sorrowful confession of the total failure of Christianity and of the utter powerlessness of the Divine Saviour it would be; but it is not true. The majority of the nations engaged in this bloody conflict are distinctly Christian nations, and this fact is the main reason why they are at war. Jesus is reported to have spoken thus: "Think not that I came to send peace on the earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword" (Matt. x. 34). Truer words were never uttered, as Dr. Brown knows well. The so-called Prince of Peace has been the most terribly war-like figure in history. His gift to the world has been, not peace, but division. He prophesied: "There shall be from henceforth five in one house divided, three against two and two against three" (Luke xii. 52).

Christianity is pre-eminently a war-like religion. Even Dr. Brown is a born fighter. Belonging to the narrowest and most bigoted sect of Puritans, he cannot tolerate those who differ from him. We have not forgotten his bitter, venomous attack on the Sunday League made some years ago; and in his City Temple sermon he said: "You may listen to some intellectual juggler, some Bernard Shaw or other, trying to prove there is no such thing as absolute wrong, but you know better; again and again a shudder is better than an argument." He who differs from Dr. Brown is set down as a deceiver,



a cheat, a trickster, who has no right to live. Does the reverend gentleman really believe that there is such a thing as absolute wrong? Are not right and wrong purely relative terms? Nothing is right or wrong in itself, but merely in its relation to something else. A shudder may be better than an argument; but, surely, a shudder affords no evidence whatever that the thing shuddered at is wrong in itself. The truth is that Christians habitually regard and treat intellectual opponents as abandoned characters, as enemies of God and man. Bernard Shaw is a wicked juggler simply because he does not hold Dr. Brown's religious views. Christianity makes war against all who cannot pronounce its absurd Shibboleths. If we ask what right Christianity has to assume its own perfection, the answer is that it is a right involved in the divinity of its origin and nature. Christianity is God's loving message to mankind, God's infallible remedy for the world's maladies. Such is the claim advanced in its behalf; but even so earnest and eloquent a champion of it as Dr. Brown is irresistibly driven to the admission that history completely discredits that claim, and shows conclusively that the evils of the world are still as rampant as ever. We heartily invite the reverend gentleman to tell us what Christianity has done for the human race, or to show us wherein a Christian country, like Great Britain or Russia, is morally superior to a heathen country, like China or Japan. If he is an honest man he will not shrink from such a task.

We are often pointed to the wonderful miracles of reform which Christianity has performed in various parts of the world. It is well known that several of the islands in the Pacific Ocean have been converted to the Christian faith, and the missionaries inform us what serene happiness reigns there now. Jack London, the Californian novelist, knows those islands intimately, and he has not a good word to say of the missionary and his work. In *The House of Pride*, a very powerful story is entitled "Koolau the Leper." Koolau objects to being removed to the leper settlement, and blames the white men for the existence of such a prison, as well as for the prevalence of leprosy on the island. "And who are these white men?" he asks, and answers thus:—

We know. We have it from our fathers and our fathers' fathers. They came like lambs, speaking softly. Well might they speak softly, for we were many and strong, and all the islands were ours. As I say, they spoke softly. They were of two kinds. The one kind asked our permission, our gracious permission, to preach to us the word of God. The other kind asked our permission, our gracious permission, to trade with us. That was the beginning. To-day all the islands are theirs, all the land, all the cattle—everything is theirs. They that preached the word of God and they that preached the word of Rum foregathered, and became great chiefs. They live like kings in houses of many rooms, with multitudes of servants to care for them. They who had nothing have everything, and if you or I, or any Kanaka be hungry, they sneer and say, "Well, why don't you work? There are the plantations" (pp. 62, 63).

Then follows a heart-breaking description of the awful sufferings and disfiguration of the lepers, "creatures who once had been men and women, but who were men and women no longer." Koolau continues thus:—

Brothers, is it not strange? Ours was the land, and behold the land is not ours. What did these preachers of the word of God and the word of Rum give us for the land? Have you received one dollar, as much as one dollar, any one of you, for the land? Yet it is theirs, and in return they tell us we can go to work on

the land, their land, and that what we produce by our toil shall be theirs. Yet in the old days we did not have to work. Also, when we are sick they take away our freedom (pp. 67, 68).

It is well known that the Hawaiian islands were annexed by the United States in 1900, and that now the natives are obliged to work for the white man. They are regarded and treated as menials. But the fate of the Hawaiian islands has been shared by many other lands invaded by missionaries and traders. The word of God is preached first, then comes the word of Rum in the plenitude of its might, and soon the converted savages find themselves in the painful and humiliating state of vassalage. And in many of these annexed lands the natives are systematically kept in a subordinate position. However gifted a black young man may be, he cannot become a lawyer, a doctor, a member of Parliament—not even a clerk. It is ordained of God that he should be confined for life to manual labour.

Perhaps Dr. Brown has never visited native locations a mile or two outside towns inhabited by white people. Such locations exist for the purpose of serving the towns. The men work at the docks, in stores and shops, and the women act as domestic servants; but neither the men nor the women are ever permitted to rise above the status of manual labourers. In the churches the doctrine is taught that in Christ all are one, all distinctions of race and colour and position being cancelled for ever; but that doctrine has never been put into practice in any country under the sun. After all, Dr. Brown was right when he asserted that there is no Christian nation on earth. In the Sermon on the Mount sense, the world has never seen a single Christian yet, while it must be admitted that most of those who call themselves Christians are not necessarily the best people in their respective communities. Judging Christianity by its fruits, therefore, we are bound to pronounce it a colossal failure. Fortunately, it is a dying religion. We learn from an article, entitled "The State of Religion," which appeared in the *Church Times* for February 25, that the new armies at home are practically without any religion at all. The men even despise religion, and characterize "church-going and parsons as all rot." There seems to be a consensus of opinion "that religion, as presented by the Church of England anyway, is of no practical good, and founded on a Bible of doubtful veracity." There is also "an absolute and even violent unanimity of opinion on the mischievous futility of parade services." Instead of reviving the religious sense of the people, as many predicted it would do, the War has rather tended to emphasize its absence. But in proportion as religion decays, humanism gains ground, commending itself to all by its sweet reasonableness and reliance upon common sense.

J. T. LLOYD.

### Carlyle's Creed.

The stormy sophist with his mouth of thunder,  
Clothed with loud words, and mantled in the might  
Of darkness and magnificence of night.—*Swinburne*.

God does nothing.—*Thomas Carlyle*.

Rugged, mountainous, volcanic, he was himself more a  
French revolution than any of his volumes.—*Walt Whitman*.

THOMAS CARLYLE had Calvinism in his blood. The reader who would understand his life-work must keep in mind this pregnant fact. The practice of the literary art in intellectual society, influences which soften the prejudices of most men, never affected in any appreciable degree Carlyle's philosophy of life. Loathing Christian theology, he remained a Calvinist moralist to the end. That morality marks every serious utter-



ance on life that ever fell from his pen. A man is never a Puritan upon one point alone, and Carlyle's Puritanism coloured his whole view. Except as a great literary personality, Carlyle has almost ceased to exist as a mental force. His Theism, his repeated insistence on the "great man" dogma, were belated when he preached them. Even the central position of Carlyle's creed was abandoned by the sage himself; not publicly, it is true, but in privately spoken words which leave no doubt of their sincerity. When his friend, Froude, spoke of what God might do if he willed, Carlyle cut him short with the caustic answer, "God does nothing"—an utterance which saps the foundation of Carlyle's life-work. Moreover, Carlyle got worse as he got older, degenerating, as Lowell said, "from a prophet to a bad-tempered old gentleman, who called for God's lightning every time he couldn't find his match-box."

All his life Carlyle was a Theist, but his creed was never vulgar. He spoke of the Immensities, the Eternities, and the Veracities, instead of using the popular theological terms. Indeed, his conception of deity was that of an irate drill-sergeant with an ornate vocabulary. Although Carlyle himself rejected the claims of Christianity, his prejudices were always those of a Puritan. He uniformly treated Freethinkers with disrespect. He considered Shelley's life "a ghastly failure," and Heine, to him, was but "a blackguard." He jibed at Buckle, and belittled his monumental *History of Civilization*. To Burns, indeed, he is surprisingly fair; but the author of *Holy Willie's Prayer* was a brother Scot. Of Harriet Martineau, though she did him substantial service, he always speaks with derision.

Yet his own Freethought was never in question. In his *Life of Sterling*, in which he lays bare so much of his Rationalism, he says:—

One angry glance I remember in him, and it was but a glance, and gone in a moment. "Flat Pantheism!" urged he once, as if triumphantly, of something or other, in the fire of a debate, in my hearing. "And suppose it were Pottheism," cried the other, "if the thing is true."

The language shows that the other was Carlyle himself. On another occasion he breaks out:—

Pantheism, Potheism, Mydoxy, Thydoxy, are nothing at all to me; a weariness the whole jargon, which I avoid speaking of, decline listening to.

Again, he says:—

A man's religion consists, not of the many things he is in doubt of and tries to believe, but of the few he is assured of and has no need of effort for believing.

On the subject of immortality he was certainly heterodox. His most explicit declaration is in a letter to a lady when he admitted that the question was "insoluble to human creatures." He disbelieved in eternal torment. Professor Tyndall records that when he said, "It is something to have abolished hell-fire." "Yes!" he replied, "that is a distinct and enormous gain." Moncure Conway records that he was present when someone asked, "Mr. Carlyle, can you believe that all these ignorant and brutal millions of people are destined to live for ever." "Let us hope *Not*," was the emphatic reply. One Christmas he wrote in his diary:—

On looking out of the window this morning I noticed my neighbours were drunker than usual, and I remembered that it was the birthday of their Redeemer.

Once he was persuaded to enter a Nonconformist chapel. "The preacher's prayer," he said, filled me with consternation. "O Lord, thou hast plenty of treacle up there, send a stream of it down to us. That was about the amount of it. He did not seem in the least to know that what such as he needed was rather

a stream of brimstone." Of another religious service, a Methodist one, he said the prayer was, "Lord, save us from hell," and I went away musing, sick at heart, saying to myself, "My good fellows, why all this bother and noise? If it be God's will, why not go and be damned in quiet, and say never a word about it? And I, for one, would think far better of you."

With orthodoxy, which he dubbed "Hebrew Old Clothes," he had no patience. So in *Sartor Resartus* he bursts out:—

Art thou a grown baby, then to fancy that the miracle lies in miles of distance, or in pounds of avoirdupois; and not to see that the true, inexplicable, God-revealing miracle lies in this, that I can stretch forth my hand at all; that I have free force to clutch aught therewith?

Tyndall says, "The miracles of orthodoxy" were to him, as to his friend Emerson, "monsters." To both of them the blowing clover and the falling rain were the "true miracles." His antagonism to the Church is shown in many a gibe at Ritualism:—

The Church of England stood long on her tithes and her decencies, but now she takes to shouting in the market-place, "My tithes are nothing, my decencies are nothing; I am either miraculous, celestial, or else nothing." It is to me the fatalest symptom of speedy change she ever exhibited. What an alternative? Men will soon see whether you are miraculous, celestial, or not. Were a pair of breeches ever known to beget a son?

Carlyle's masterpiece, *The French Revolution*, shows the strength and also the weakness of its author. Magnificent as are the epithets with which he has filled the book, and for which reason Robespierre will ever be "sea-green, incorruptible," and Mirabeau "swart, burly-headed," this very trait has given him an opportunity for painting the characters of those he likes, and adding glory to those he admires. It is a great book, and the work of a potent imagination, but how much greater would it have been if the scores of pages given up to sentimental vapouring and inverted Calvinism had been devoted to sincere inquiry or real thought. To those who would know the history of the Great Revolution, Carlyle's book will be insufficient; but to those who would see that awful upheaval, Carlyle's word-pictures will ever fascinate.

This inverted Calvinism blinded his judgment. Witness his treatment of Voltaire. In dealing with the great Frenchman he is frigidity itself. To him, Voltaire, "the saviour of Calas," was not earnest enough. He was merely "one of the adroitest of all literary men." This, be it remembered, was written of one who was a volcano of energy in the cause of Liberty and Humanity. And, impertinent as Carlyle would have thought it, it is with this man he is best contrasted. Their comparative methods are not unlike those of a steamer and a sea-bird. The one big and heavy, glowing with glare of furnace, and throbbing with the labour of engines, smoking, steaming, cleaving its way through shock and roll, churning the water in its wake; while above soars the bird, white-winged, a marvel of lightness and swiftness, with supreme grace, master of the medium through which it moves.

Carlyle took for his text, "All is Vanity," and he acted up to it and wrote upon it all his life. "Man is a great owl," he once wrote, and he called the public "a gigantic jackass." His countrymen, to him, were "mostly fools." He was never happier than when wielding the rod. With all his limitations, he was a great man. He stood over his generation like a Colossus peering into the dark night, and he saw all events hurrying past, he knew not whither.

MIMNERMUS.



## Religion in America.

### II.

(Concluded from p. 157.)

THE Freemasons now admit women into their order, having dropped the frock coat and top hat that was their uniform five or six years ago, dressing themselves in a kind of admiral's uniform with a singularly hideous variation of the cocked hat, trimmed with feathers along the rim from back to front. They carry swords which are genuine, and, moreover, good rapiers. Another section of them dress in what is supposed to be an Arab costume. Both sections have dropped the old aprons, sashes, gauntlets, and the open Bible in their parades. The Irish clubs started this uniforming themselves. In Roman Catholic processions these men walk dressed as *real*, practical soldiers, carrying real rifles or swords. They all have blessed small-swords, which are not worn by men without uniforms, but are kept secret. Everything demonstrates a high conspiracy for a new St. Bartholomew.

The insidious effect of these reversions to mediævalism is to be observed generally throughout the life of the population. In this city, all the employees of the municipality are numbered like convicts and wear their number on a metal tablet, not exactly around their necks like the Saxon thralls, but around their hats, with the inscription over their foreheads. The licensed carriers have to wear similar badges.

There is no age at which a man becomes a responsible citizen. In England it is fixed at fourteen; here, it is never! The parent always has parental power over the offspring. There are special juvenile courts here, and in them one will see adults, who are unmarried, arraigned for the exercise of ordinary liberty by cantankerous parents. A man of fifty-four was punished in one of them as a "stubborn" child by his father. "Stubborn" being a kind of sacred "Mesopotamia" here; it has no real meaning but the parents utter unfitness for paternity. It is worked as a *lettre-de-cachet*, however, for running despotism throughout the country. I saw a mother bring her daughter, a woman of twenty, to a Police Court, her offence was that she had formed acquaintance with other girls. The mother gave these girls bad characters. She herself was a hag, with every vice stamped on her face. She could have played the old villainess in the "Two Orphans" without make-up. Yet the judge did not see it. The case should have been reversed; the girl should have prosecuted the woman; yet this preposterous man delivered the girl over to the old witch with most terrible threats of imprisonment if the girl did not obey her.

The sentiment of slavery which was exploded by the Civil War is now being revived by the Eastern Europeans and Jews with whom the country is now swamped. The vast number of immigrants aids this. If they are educated at home, they find themselves, by their ignorance of the language and institutions, altogether unclassed; they are at the mercy of sharks of their own race; they have to attempt any vocation at haphazard; their growth as thinking men is broken; their education comes to a sudden end, and their minds are dazed and fogged. Consequently, many fall into actual slavery, while others fall into a servile imbecility in the factories that is no better than this. I saw an actual demonstration of this in this city. When Billy Sunday was here, there was a procession one night creeping along the high street of about a thousand men. Such a wretched, dejected, brainless, re-visitized aggregation of human beings I never saw. They were formed into sections, and were carrying lighted lanthorns having the inscrip-

tion, "The men of the something or other Co. factory," and the poor wretches were being forced to waste their time listening to a jumping monkey-on-a-stick dancing dervish!

That tradition of ownership which survives in England with employers and instigates them to rule the private lives of those associated with them in the production of commodities, is far stronger in this "free" land of Liberty than in England. This sounds surprising, but a moment's consideration shows it is natural, seeing there are a thousand persons here who, in their youth, were sold by public auction as chattels. This, of course, under the pretext of religious morality, leads to every oppression of slavery. Only a year or two ago Mayor Fitzgerald, of Boston, announced that in future, in selecting employees of the city, he should give the preference to married men. He raised the salaries of married men, called on one of the officials by name to marry, and utterly crushed a political opponent by telling him to get married and raise a family. This virtuous and pious man represented the Roman Church, but his frauds being discovered, the Archbishop saw fit to insult him publicly and turn his back on him. Whereon the Roman Catholics re-elected him by a vastly overwhelming majority, after which the Archbishop and he were photographed together in the most fraternal unity.

But this new desire that clerks should be married requires consideration. In England, at least, it was not long since clerks were discharged upon marriage, and marriage was regarded generally as the greatest obstacle to getting on. But here, the workman's custom of neglecting his own affairs and putting himself in the position of a paid slave to his wife in his own household goes through all society; consequently, a bachelor subordinate controlling his own finances with a five-dollar bill unspent in his pocket, however deferential, is a far more difficult person to deal with than the married man who has a shilling given him by his wife every morning at breakfast for his dinner, no matter what bombastic and blatant airs he may give himself. He may swear and protest, but he is in no danger of saying "do it yourself"!

The Roman Church is gradually forcing itself into the position of an establishment here. There are priests in all the prisons, although it is in flagrant defiance of the constitution. They act as if their purpose there was the capture of outsiders to be buz-fuzzed into members of the Vatican sect. The President attends official masses, and such masses are performed in Government establishments. The Government deals with a legate whom the Pope keeps here, designated the Papal Delegate. This is as illegal as it is in England. In actual legal fact, this Republic stands towards the Pope of Rome precisely as England does.

But treason is a two-edged sword. The Papal State, in its encroachments on this Government, has to drop its supreme pretensions altogether. Roman Catholics get up processions of hundreds of thousands of men, but they do not carry anything which is of an actually religious character. A few years ago nothing was to be seen but the American State flag. Now a few banners are borne, but they are the flags of societies, which are probably financial organizations as well as religious. The Knights of Columbus, the greatest of the Catholic societies, is an insurance company, for example. The cause of this is, there is a law here that no flag or standard shall be carried publicly without its being preceded by the Stars and Stripes. Consequently, the cross is never brought into the streets; and, of course, this entirely prohibits to the Catholics any processions of the host, and the papal tiara and cross-keys as a Sectarian symbol. The American Catholic is a queer



product of this Republic. He has only one trait in common with European Romanists; a maniacal fanaticism against Freethought. For the rest he probably is at bottom an absolute Atheist.

GEORGE TREBELLS.

## Wait Till You Die.

PASCAL remarked that, whether Christianity were true or false, the Christian was on the safe side; and Diderot replied that the priests and apologists of Mohammedanism, or any other creed, could say the very same thing with equal force. The argument, if it be an argument, implies the possibility of error, and what applies to one religion applies to all. The votaries of every creed may be mistaken if there is no absolute certitude; or, if there should be one true religion among the multitude, and but one, only the devotees of that single faith can be on the safe side. But as no one knows *which* is the only true religion, it follows, according to the law of probabilities, that the odds are greatly against any particular religion being the right one. The Christian therefore would have one chance of being right, and nine hundred and ninety-nine chances of being wrong. He has thus one chance in a thousand above the Atheist.

But on the other hand, if all religions but one are certainly wrong, what is the chance of a single one being certainly right? Does not the Christian's slight percentage of safety fade into something quite inappreciable in the light of this question? And is what is left—if *anything* is left—an adequate price for the abnegation of manhood? Would it tempt an honest man, with a sense of human dignity, to play fast and loose with his intellect, and accept a creed because it appeals to his selfish hopes and fears? Could such a slender chance of profit in the next life compensate for slavery in this life?

If belief is the safe side, the proper course is to believe *everything*. And it is useless to cry that this is impossible. Faith enables men to believe against reason, and one act of credulity is little easier than a thousand. He whose creed is determined by his fears should give free scope to such emotions. If they are his guides, let him follow them. Why should he argue when argument may mislead? Why should he stumble at trifles when he has surmounted the first great obstacle to credulity? Let him believe all the religions of the world at once. He can do this as easily as he can believe in the Trinity. And having embraced all, he may rest satisfied that if there be a true religion he undoubtedly possesses it.

We do not suppose, however, that this reasoning will have any effect on Christians, Buddhists, Brahmins, Mohammedans, or Jews. But that very fact shows the hollow character of the argument from which we started. When the Christian talks about the safe side he is only displaying the weakness of his faith, and appealing to timidity when he has no further appeal to reason.

The argument of "the safe side" would have no pertinency, even with the imbecile, if man were immortal. It seeks advantage from the fact that every man must die. It tries to paralyse reason with the clutch of fear.

How frequent is the superstitionist's remark "Wait till you come to die!" He does not always use these very words, but this is the meaning of all his verbiage. He forgets, or does not know, that philosophy destroys the terror of death. A rational man is aware of the truth expressed by Mill, that death is but one incident in life, and often the least important. He recognizes with Bacon that we die daily. He knows that every

hour is a step towards death. He does not play, like an ostrich, with the universal law of immortality; nor, on the other hand, does he allow the tomb to cast its chill obscurity over the business and pleasure of life. He lives without hypocrisy, and when the time comes he will die without fear. As Hamlet says, "the readiness is all." Another word also comes from the wisest of men—"Cowards do often taste of death; the valiant die but once."

A belief that will do for life will do for death. The religionists prove this themselves. Whatever a man is confident of is sustaining. The Christian dies a Christian, and the Mohammedan a Mohammedan. The one has dying visions of angels—or may be of devils; the other sees heaven burst open, and the black-eyed hours of paradise beckon him with rosy fingers. What they leaned on in life supports them in death. Its truth or falsity makes no difference at that moment.

Freethinkers are sustained by *convictions*. Intellect and emotion concur in their case. They have no visions of angels or devils, but dear loved faces are better than phantoms, and he who has done a little good in the world, however humbly and obscurely, may dream of the happier and nobler days to come, when true words and good deeds will have brought forth the glorious fruit of happiness for the children of men.

We do not mean to assert that no Freethinker, at any time, ever relapsed on his death-bed. Such cases have apparently occurred during life, and while one particular religion is in the ascendant it is not difficult to understand them. These relapses are always to the creed a man finds about him, or to the creed of his childhood. They simply prove the power of environment and early training, and that a man needs all his strength to stand against big majorities. At best they are cases of mental pathology.

Great historic Freethinkers have always died true to their convictions. They were used to standing alone. For ample proof of this the reader is referred to *Infidel Death-Beds*. And when smaller Freethinkers are numerous enough, they avoid the greatest dangers of physical weakness. It is easy for Christian relatives or friends to pester a dying Freethinker; it is easy even in the worst moments of weakness, to put words in his mouth. But if Freethought friends visit him, he feels strengthened and relieved. Allies may well be needed, sometimes, in such a battle with bigotry.

After all, "Wait till you die!" is an argument of folly and cowardice. What can we conjecture of any other life except from our experience of this? On this earth reason is the safe side, honesty is the safe side, humanity is the safe side; and what is the safe side here is likely to be the safe side elsewhere.

—Reprinted.

G. W. FOOTE.

## Correspondence.

SHELLEY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I should not have thought of encroaching upon the columns of your valuable paper if it were not for the unfair, and sometimes irrelevant, criticism which your correspondents have thought fit to level against me. I therefore crave your indulgence that I may reply to them and thus terminate my share in this controversy.

By criticizing me personally I do not think "Mimnermus" will convince me that I am wrong in my estimation of Shelley. My knowledge of science, be it ever so rudimentary or advanced, can have no influence on the strength of my arguments in this discussion. I do not see how the force of truth of my contentions would be altered by the fact of my



being a learned biologist or a clever engineer. I did not assume the pseudonym to enhance the weight of my reasoning. I did it simply because I happen to be a student of a certain branch of science in one of our universities.

Then, I did not, as "Mimnermus" wrongly asserts, "give posthumous advice to Shelley" (I don't know how to do this) or air my opinions on marriage or irregular unions. At my present age I am not so absorbingly interested in these as to feel impelled to write to the press about them, while to mention the laws of civilized society is surely not so grossly impertinent.

I thought I made it quite clear in my original communication to you that I agree with "V. H." that intellectual capacity and moral excellence need not of necessity be co-existent. In reading Lombroso's *Man of Genius*, and Nordau's *Degeneration*, one can see how faint, at times, the borderland between the physiology and pathology of the mind becomes. If one is to forgive everything on the score of genius, then nothing more need be said of Shelley's faults. But Shelley's supporters, not content with claiming this indulgence, seek to justify the most unjustifiable of Shelley's deeds on moral grounds. They cannot have it both ways without usurping the privilege of the theologian, who wants recognition for the good that is in religion and also tries to turn to advantage what is obviously pernicious. And, besides, there were men of greater genius than Shelley—Goethe, for example—whose psychology was far less anomalous. Shelley, if one may express it so, took more licence than his genius warranted. At the same time, it is well to observe that mediocrity and good morals go perfectly well together. In virtue of this, one may safely expect ordinary critics to be able to discriminate between right and wrong, and not seek to confuse the two by means of such extraordinarily well-sustained sophistry. Even the most charitable will not forgive "Mimnermus" for citing Napoleon as a genius and then stating that we ought to be thankful to have them at all. I wonder whether he would actually welcome another Napoleon?

If, as "V. H." claims for him, Shelley had "steadfast" principles, he must be held responsible for all his misdeeds. He gave out that he believed in Free Love, yet he went through the marriage ceremony—in a church, too—coming to realize how unjustly the operation of his fanciful ideas would affect the other party. In doing this he recanted his opinions in a practical manner and forfeited that measure of consideration which would have been his had he stood firmly by his original theories. He cannot claim the privileges of society and refuse to share the responsibilities. When "V. H." says that I do not allow Shelley, as a Freethinker, the freedom of his actions, I reply that Freethought, as such, is no defence for the irregularity which he excuses. Neither he nor myself would like a daughter or a sister to be treated with impunity by a Freethinker in the manner Shelley treated Harriet Westbrook.

Your correspondent's reference to Jeaffreson's biography is timely. Even according to so keen an admirer as Mr. Rossetti, this hostile book contains some "solid information."

My main contention, that in their zeal to do him justice, Shelley's admirers have stopped short of nothing, has not been refuted. They for a long time consistently acted on the principle that the end justifies the means. Their zeal at times has even outrun their discretion; for Shelley, on his own confession, was smartly pricked by his conscience in later years, as, for instance, when he describes himself "a prey to the reproaches of memory."

"SCIENCE STUDENT."

#### CLERICAL ADVERTISING IMPUDENCE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—At the morning business meeting of the Anti-Vaccination Society a clergyman, as the clock was pointing to the hour of twelve, got up and said that it had been arranged at most places of worship that at that hour special prayers should be offered on behalf of our soldiers in the trenches, and asked the delegates assembled to rise in their places whilst he went through the performance. Someone protested and called out we are anti-vaccinists, not Christians, but with about six exceptions all arose and joined in with the reverend gentleman.

Now this sort of trick puts Freethinkers in a very awkward position, which the reverend gentleman was probably aware of. Those who did not rise laid themselves open to the idea they were slighting the efforts of our gallant fellows in the field, when they were only showing their contempt for an individual who was getting a trade advertisement on the cheap. It led to newspaper comments calculated to do the anti-vaccinist cause much harm. I am not sure of the gentleman's name, or I would have given it, but I will take care he doesn't repeat the trick at our meetings.

A. J. MARRIOTT.

#### Acid Drops.

Some of the colloquies that are going on at the exemption tribunals are distinctly interesting to Freethinkers. One Christian objects to service as the Bible says "Thou shalt not kill," and straightway some member of the tribunal quotes "I come not to bring peace but a sword." Others have based their objection to the teaching that Jesus suffered aggression uncomplainingly, and have been promptly assured that one mustn't imitate him in that nowadays. At West Ham, an applicant said he considered God quite able to protect women and children under any circumstances if we were prepared to trust him. The Mayor, who was presiding, countered this with the undeniable truth that God has *not* protected the wives and children. And so the game goes on. In peace-time the Christian Judges would be siding with the view of the objectors, and the Freethinker who said then what the members of the tribunals are saying now would be called foolish or blasphemous.

It is reported that the Government intends issuing new instructions to the Tribunals established under the Military Service Act. Perhaps the following New Testament precepts will find a place:—

Resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

Blessed are the poor in spirit.

Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself.

Lord Beaconsfield had a very neat plan of acknowledging books from their authors. He wrote at once thanking the sender and saying that he *hoped* to read the book with pleasure and profit. We are reminded by this of the manner in which Lord Kitchener acknowledged a prospectus of the *Service Messenger*—a magazine for soldiers projected by Rev. F. B. Meyer. Lord Kitchener says that "suitable literature, wisely distributed" will contribute to the maintenance of the soldiers' spirits and efficiency. It looks almost as though there was a vein of humour in Lord Kitchener's composition. The literature must be suitable, and it must be wisely distributed. As Mr. F. B. Meyer is responsible, we expect that wisdom and suitability will be conspicuous by their absence.

Compulsion is not confined to military matters alone. A society paper says that the employees at the royal palaces must go to church at least once every Sunday. Is this a practical application of the text, "Compel them to come in"?

To release her brother for military service, Miss Estelle Stead has become editor of the *Review of Reviews*, founded by the late Mr. W. T. Stead, the famous journalist and spiritualist. "I have been in communication with my father," Miss Stead says, "and I know he is glad that I am to edit the review rather than have it pass into the hands of an utter stranger." If the dead can speak and communicate with the living, it is a pity that Mr. Stead cannot himself edit the paper.

We have received a cranky sort of a pamphlet called *The Prophecies of James*, the purpose of which seems to be to foretell the terrible things that will happen unless the Welsh Church Bill is abandoned. There is no name of author on the title-



page, but we should imagine he is someone who is on holiday from an asylum and has taken advantage of his vacation to rush into print. Accompanying the pamphlet is a leaflet threatening things against certain classes of people, amongst others, "The writers of articles against my Prophet, who abuse my Prophet in the Press, and *they shall die.*" A footnote to this states, "Since this decree one has died." We fancy this refers to G. W. Foote, and now we are going about our work in fear and trembling.

The *Daily News* quotes the following from a speech in the Prussian Diet, by Herr Strolial, a Socialist deputy:—

After this War nobody will dare to assert that war is a steel bath to improve the morale of nations. Whoever has lived through the horrors of this War—we have not all lived through them, but we heard sufficient about them—knows that this War is not being conducted in a chivalrous manner, but that it has become an insensate demon, a monster child of filth and fire, a war of rats and lice, a war in which men are obliged to move about for months in mud and filth, and which is bound to have a blunting effect, intellectually and morally. It is natural then that we should desire nothing so passionately as the end of this War, and that the word which our spokesman proclaimed at the beginning may be realized. We hope that it may prove the last war, and as we express this hope, so we must take care that the spirit of hate should not take hold of men more than can be helped.

And on this side of the North Sea we take the following from a sermon by the Rev. Bernard J. Snell:—

As boys we were told that war brings out heroic qualities. A pretty fallacy! As well apologise for smallpox on the ground that doctors and nurses are, in tending its victims, made so self-denying. Moreover, the heroism which is brought out by fire, shipwreck, and mine explosions, is a heroism which will match that of any battlefield that ever was. While as to the chivalry of war, I make bold to say that war is the very opposite of chivalry; it is the art of crafty murder, wherein all rules and decencies and humanities are set at naught. A prize-fight has more chivalry. Let us dishonour the name of war; let us show it to be the abominable, monstrous, and unholy thing that it is.

Evidently there are good men in Sodom, and sensible men even in the pulpit.

The newspapers have announced the death of Jabez Balfour, who was convicted of the famous Liberator frauds many years ago. There is a flavour of smugness about his Christian name, which is a Biblical one; but, curiously, the Jewish Jabez was said to be "righteous above his fellows."

Father Bernard Vaughan appears to be greatly enraptured with his advice to keep on killing Germans, and furnishes readers of the *Sunday Chronicle* with what he calls "a very simple syllogism." Thus:—

Warfare means killing the troops fighting against you.

But the troops fighting against us are Germans.

Therefore the war for us means killing Germans.

Sounds all right, but is it? In our opinion, the major premiss is quite faulty. Warfare involves killing the troops opposed to you, but it means more than that. The complete form should be, Warfare means establishing a superiority over the enemy, and compelling him to come to peace. And this may be done, and is done, otherwise than by killing. If the Allies could surround the German armies and compel a surrender, would that not end the War? If we established a strict blockade, and could compel a surrender, what becomes of the killing? Does Father Vaughan mean that the Allies must then sail in and kill the Germans? Father Vaughan is as pompously absurd as only a clergyman can be. A war may be won with very little killing, or it may be accompanied with much slaughter. The task of the soldier is to overcome.

Father Vaughan's apology for God in permitting the War is that "he permits evil because out of it he can and does draw good." So that God "permitted" the sinking of the *Lusitania* and the *Arabic*, and the devastation of Belgium, and all the other horrors of the War so that good may come. But in that case, why rail at Germany? God "permits" Germany to do these things so that good may result. Germany has God's permission, and who are we

that we should fling stones at a nation that holds a divine permit? And the same God that permits Germany to accomplish these outrages "permits" the Allies to stop her at her work. Really it seems that there could be no other situation, even though God had nothing to do with it. By blending the facts with Father Vaughan's apology, the logical conclusion that emerges is that God will allow them all to do as they darn well please, so long as we continue praising him for a display of wisdom that would get a civil servant the "sack," and an exhibition of kindness that would get an earthly parent a term of imprisonment.

At Southport there is a fight to induce the Town Council not to grant a seven days' licence to picture theatres. For our part, we do not quite understand on what ground a Town Council takes it on itself to interfere in the matter. Sunday opening, where a charge is made for admission, is, so far as we are aware, distinctly illegal, and if that is so, no Council has the power to override the law. Cinema proprietors are at liberty to set the law at defiance, as other people do, with these stupid Sabbatarian Acts. The Councils are taking to themselves a power they do not possess. Of course, they may refuse to grant a six days' license unless the proprietor promises not to open on Sundays; but that is sheer tyranny, and the owners of picture palaces are surely strong enough, and ought to have courage enough, to fight that.

The Secretary of the local Free Church Council is, of course, busy in the matter; but, as usual, is protesting on behalf of Labour. But he regretfully admits that no local representative of Labour has joined in the protest against these Sunday entertainments. This ought to suggest to the Secretary that "Labour" welcomes these things rather than feels them to be oppressive. And, he adds, "the soldiers from the front were really amazed by our levity at home." Judging from the number of soldiers who attend picture palaces on Sundays as well as on weekdays, they appear to bear up very well. But perhaps they are there only to afterwards bear witness against them. Like the good Christian who in more normal times returns from Paris with a long record of the vice he has discovered during his sojourn in that wicked city.

Dealing with the alleged increase of religion among our soldiers at the Front, "Lieutenant" writes in the *Church Times* for March 3:—

I have been at the Front very nearly six months, during which time I have had opportunity of seeing the British soldier in open battle, in the trenches, and in rest billets; I have also had occasion to censor a large number of his letters. Speaking generally, I do not think his attitude towards religion has in any way changed; he does not seem anxious to go to services and he dislikes Church Parade. Perhaps it would not be too much to say that he is more irreligious than before. I know that in my own case Christianity seems less of a reality than it did before I came to France. Whether it is due to the great mental and physical strain which one has to bear I cannot say, but I do not think my case is exceptional.

"Lieutenant" thinks that "underneath the soil is being prepared" for a greater receptivity to religion, but that may be taken as no more than a pious hope.

"A Soldier" also writes in the same issue of the *Church Times*, and on the same topic. He says:—

Being in the Service, and mixing intimately with men of all classes, I must say that neither do I find any indication whatever of any revival of religious feeling, and as things are at present I have little expectation of any either. I am at present only serving for the duration of the War, but am writing with experience previously gained in the regular Army. As a Church of England man I have always endeavoured—with sadly fluctuating success—to lead a quietly Christian life. In this I regret to say I have received no help or assistance from any Army chaplain, and, incredible though it may seem, I may add that during seven years of my service I did not even speak to one personally.

It should be added both these letters are written by earnest Christians. Their testimony is, because of that, the more important.



## Mr. C. Cohen's Engagements.

March 19, South Shields. April 16, Abertillery.

## To Correspondents.

- S. HAYES.—Certainly. Lea's *Sacerdotal Celibacy* is the authoritative and standard work on the subject, and is not likely to be superseded. It is the mine from which writers like Lecky have dug much material for their studies in early and mediæval Christianity.
- A. L. MORRIS.—We fancy, on reflection, you will see there is no real lack of consistency. Children, as you say, imitate their elders in everything; in this case we were criticizing the ability of a selected thing to explain a certain fact. And there must be a great difference between the influence of a theatrical representation and the power of the whole social environment.
- "BECCLES."—Thanks for proof of article. The author of the book is a well-known man of letters, and we should be glad to review the work if we can secure a copy.
- RADNORSHIRE.—The lack of intellectual companionship is one of the *real* hardships endured by Freethinkers in small places and out-of-the-way districts.
- "PARIS."—This is as near as we can get to a pen-name, as you do not want your name published, and have omitted to supply us with a substitute. We are somewhat dubious as to the success of the stamp experiment. The postcard is more promising, and we will make inquiries as to the cost.
- C. WHITTARD (Sydney, N.S.W.)—Received, and shall appear as soon as possible. This correspondent writes, under date of January 10, "On receiving the last number of the *Freethinker* I was shocked to read a notice of Mr. Foote's death. I have a feeling of great loss, but this is little compared to that of his own household. Blessings be upon his memory. Sorrowfully I tender my sympathies. It was a noble gift he gave to the world in consecrating his life's work to 'the best of all causes'—the advocacy of unpopular truths."
- J. FROST.—Both retorts were excellent. We trust that your boy's ambition will never be of a less healthy character than it is at present.
- E. LEES.—There has been no recent book on the subject that we are aware of, but Sir J. Yoxall had an excellent article in a recent issue of the *Manchester Guardian*. We are pleased to learn that your hopes concerning the *Freethinker* have been "more than realized." Thanks for your efforts in securing new readers.
- "CRIMINOLOGIST."—We did not receive your work, or it would have been noticed. Thanks for your note, of which, you will see, we have made use.
- J. GREEVZ FYSHER.—Thanks. You will see we dealt with the passage you enclose in our last issue.
- J. WRAFTER (Cape Town) encloses cuttings from the *Cape Times* and writes: "You will see by the cuttings that we in this part of the world are not without our religious maniacs. The Bishop of Pretoria is doing his best to outdo the Bishop of London in exhibitions of asinine foolishness. I must take this opportunity of wishing you every success in your position as editor of the *Freethinker*. It is a real pleasure to me every week to read your articles and those of the other able men who support you. The circulation of the paper is greatly hampered in this country, on account of newsagents being afraid to exhibit it. I don't know a single place in this city where it is exposed for sale. They stock it, but won't exhibit." The only thing is to keep on worrying them until they do.
- KERIDON.—Pleased to receive your congratulations on our new get-up. We quite appreciate the other matter you name. We are in the same position ourselves.
- ROBERT STIRTON writes congratulating us on "the well sustained excellence of the *Freethinker*, and its smart and business-like appearance in its new dress."
- J. KING.—Sorry, but we do not know the particulars concerning the incident to which you refer. We feel certain though that if Bradlaugh ever withdrew from a debate he had good reasons for doing so.
- "JOHN."—Yes; Christianity and War are very old acquaintances. Thanks for good wishes.
- "YOUNG FREETHINKER."—We are pleased to hear that the *Freethinker* gives you so much pleasure and instruction. In doing this, it carries out the purpose for which it exists. We are never too busy to read letters from those who take a genuine interest in the paper.

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.

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

Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

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.

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.)

"THE late G. W. Foote helped me on the way to mental freedom, and I have very much pleasure in sending £1 to the Fund you are raising to help his wife." So writes Mr. J. A. Jackson in forwarding his subscription to the Memorial. It is a brief, but eloquent plea, and I do not intend to bury it beneath many words of my own. As will be seen by the appended list, the sum realized is now just over £400, and there are a couple of promises still unredeemed. We have thus a good way to travel to realize the £500 which is hoped for, and there is only the remainder of the month for this to be raised. I am really hopeful that by March 31 we shall be able to report that the £500 has been subscribed, but whether that hope will be realized or not obviously depends upon circumstances beyond my control. I am only certain of two things. First, that it *ought* to be subscribed for such a purpose—even in these times. And, second, those who give, have by far the easier and the pleasanter task. It is less pleasant, and much harder to ask.

C. C.

## "The Roll of Honour."—Thirteenth List.

Previously acknowledged, £394 18s.—J. A. Jackson, £1; Greevz Fisher, £1; C. J., £5; Islay, 1s.; R. Owen, 1s.; E. Wall 10s.; Bruno, 1s.; E. Donat, £1 1s.; S. and E. Dobson, 5s.; Robert Stirton and Friends, Dundee, £1 6s. 6d.; E. Mills, £1.

Per Miss Vance.—John Halliwell, Senior, 1s.

## Sugar Plums.

We are glad to say that we have had nothing but praise for the new appearance of the *Freethinker*. Mr. J. T. Lloyd, whom we are pleased to learn progresses favourably, although still confined to his room, writes: "I like the new type very much, it is a great improvement." Mr. C. A. Watts sends us "Congratulations on the new dress you have provided for your journal." The Editor of a well-known West of England paper, to whom we are indebted for help in the shape of paragraphs, etc., but whose name we are not at liberty to give, writes:—

It was with the utmost pleasure that I saw the form in which this week's *Freethinker* is presented. Its contents have always been admirable, and its present appearance will make them still more attractive. I trust the departure is an indication of present health, and that it will prove the means of future well-being.



"Abracadabra" writes:—

I noticed the new type as well as the new title in the *Freethinker* before reading a word of it. It is all, of course, a decided improvement; but how you were able to get it under the present disadvantages is to me a mystery.

An old reader writes from Stoke-on-Trent: "I am very pleased with the *Freethinker*. You are to be congratulated."

"Mimmermus" writes:—

Allow me to congratulate you on the appearance of the paper; it is simply splendid. I thought I was handling a sixpenny periodical instead of the familiar weekly issue. Go on and conquer! You are making a great bid for fortune, and I feel sure you will get the circulation you want by hammering away.

We have received a large number of other congratulatory letters, which we can acknowledge in no other way than this. Their appreciation encourages us to press forward, and if we do not meet with success, it will not be for want of trying.

And now for the thousand new readers for which we asked at the beginning of the year. Some proportion of that number has been secured, but we want the balance. And it must be borne in mind that, owing to the War and the largely increased cost of materials, the *Freethinker* to-day has to fight against greater difficulties than ever before in its history.

Next Sunday (March 19) Mr. Cohen pays another visit to South Shields. His last meeting there was so satisfactory that the Shields folk determined not to allow the season to close without another lecture. Full particulars next week.

A graceful tribute to the work of our late leader occurs in the Annual Report of the Rationalist Press Association, which has just been issued. The passage is worth quoting;—

A conspicuous victory for the cause of freedom was achieved by the late Mr. G. W. Foote when the judgment of the Court of Appeal in the Bowman case was given by the Master of the Rolls, Lord Justice Pickford, and Lord Justice Warrington. This valuable decision explicitly recognized the legal status of the Secular Society, Limited, and consequently its right to receive the legacy bequeathed to it by the late Mr. Charles Bowman. The unsuccessful litigants have still a right to carry the case to the House of Lords. The Directors feel that the services of Mr. Foote in this matter cannot be overestimated, and it is hoped that the Bowman case will prove a preliminary to the abolition of the restrictions on freedom of thought which are still represented by the Blasphemy Laws.

A lengthy and important leading article on the death of G. W. Foote appears in the *Japan Chronicle* for January 9. We intend reprinting it in our next issue. As it discusses in a very able manner the general question of "blasphemy," it would be a good stroke for such of our readers as feel inclined, to secure extra copies for circulation amongst their more liberal-minded friends.

Mr. Arthur B. Moss has a proud record of forty years' work for social and intellectual reform, and it is pleasant to note Mr. George R. Sims made some graceful references to our colleague in his interesting reminiscences which are appearing in a London paper. It will be remembered that Mr. Moss helped Mr. Sims in the preparation of *How the Poor Live*, a work which created much interest at the time of publication. Mr. Sims refers to Mr. Moss as a "young man," which he was in the 'eighties, but anno domini has played havoc with our colleague's youth, and to-day he is one of the honoured veterans of the Freethought movement.

There has been some delay lately in supply orders for Mr. Foote's photograph, but that has been no fault of ours. As usual, it is the fault of the War. Cards were ordered, but we could not get them delivered, and in these days one can do nothing but wait. We have, however, just received a new stock of cards, and can now supply all the orders on hand, with any others that may be received. A description of the portrait, with price, will be found in our advertisement pages.

A meeting of the Glasgow Branch of the N. S. S. will be held at the Good Templars' Hall, 122 Ingram Street, at 12 o'clock to-day (March 12), when Mr. F. Lonsdale will deliver a lecture on "Robert Buchanan, the Poet of Modern Revolt." Admission is free, and we hope there will be a good attendance.

Those of our readers who possess votes for the Printers' Pensions Fund are invited to give them to Mr. Walter Stewart, a retired compositor, aged 75. They will be well bestowed in easing the declining years of Mr. Stewart's life.

The Moncure Conway Memorial Lecture this year is by Mr. Edward Clodd. The lecture will be delivered at South Place Institute on Friday, March 17, at 6.30 p.m. Mr. Clodd has selected a subject of great interest, "Gibbon and Christianity," and we have no doubt that the lecture will be worthy of the subject. The chair is to be taken by Sir Sydney Olivier, and admission is free. There are some reserved seats at one shilling. We may publish a summarized report of the lecture.

Two or three weeks ago we received a letter from a reader who had offered himself for attestation under the Derby Scheme. On asking to affirm, the officer in charge—in a none too polite manner—declined to accept his affirmation. This gentleman properly declined the oath, and left the recruiting station. On our advice he wrote Lord Derby, expressing his determination not to take the oath, and claiming the right to affirm. The reply came in the form of a letter of regret from the recruiting officer, and an invitation to come and affirm, as he had received "definite instructions" on the matter. We mention the matter here as an example of what may be done by courage, courtesy, and firmness.

Apropos of our notes last week on Jabez Balfour, a well-known writer on criminology says:—

Your article in this week's *Freethinker* is well exemplified by one of the cases in my collection. Many years ago an old and respected magistrate was tried for offences against Christian morality. The letters which obtained his conviction were a compound of the most pious exhortations with the most sensuous details and descriptions. The shallow press screamed "disgusting hypocrisy," yet it could scarcely have been anything so simple, for the discovery of those letters was the cause of his ruin. Such cases are far from rare and are very complex.

In the religious world such cases are fairly common. We have dealt with this subject in a volume that is awaiting the close of the War for publication.

A correspondent sends us the following from a soldier's letter from the Front:—

I must thank you once more for the *Freethinker*. They are "spanking" articles, and I can assure you that before I have read it the other fellows are after it—they did not know it was in existence until I gave it to them to read, and now they have more to say about it than I have.

It looks as though, when the "boys" do come home, we shall be having quite a number of new readers whose acquaintance with the paper was made in the trenches or thereabouts.

The Right Hon. G. W. E. Russell, writing in the *Daily News*, says "Some of the members of the Anglican Episcopate have succumbed to the 'Down Glasses' movement, fostered by the King, Lord Kitchener, and the editor of the *Spectator*." What about the others? Do they drink ginger-beer, or communion port?

In a lengthy article on the approaching Shakespeare celebrations, the *Evening News* sagely informs its readers, "If we read Shakespeare, let us above all things read him for fun." The man who could read *King Lear* or *Hamlet* for "fun" would be able to extract humour from the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*.



## New Testament Criticism.

A FAVOURITE method of criticism with some critics is simply to strike out all the miraculous elements in the Gospel narratives, and then to label the remainder as "probably historical." By this delightful method, which I believe is employed by Unitarians, we get a so-called historical Jesus who went about teaching and uttering all the sayings recorded in the Gospels. But this kind of Jesus is certainly not historic; for if the original Gospel writers had no scruples in ascribing all kinds of fictitious miracles to their new prophet, neither would they be likely to hesitate at attributing to him a large number of fictitious sayings. It should also be remembered that Jesus wrote nothing himself, that his alleged utterances were not taken down at the time, and that many years elapsed before they came to be written. Bearing these and other important facts in mind, I should not like to assert that any of the Gospel narratives are really historical, more especially those which are said to be a fulfilment of prophecy.

Our contributor, Mr. Arch, has however far less doubts upon this subject than I, and in his recent series of papers he proposed "to inquire how much historical fact may be fairly concluded to underlie the narratives of the first three Gospels." As the result of this inquiry, he has made a number of selections which he thinks are historical. The task, however, was not quite such an easy one as he appeared to think; for nearly all his selections appear to me to be very wide of the mark. I certainly should not have chosen any of them myself. I subjoin some examples.

1. After stating his belief in the apologetic theory that "*Mark* was the original Gospel from which the other two Synoptics drew," Mr. Arch says that "the allusion to Alexander and Rufus, the sons of Simon of Cyrene, in *Mark* xv. 21, *must indicate that they were known to Mark's readers*, as otherwise there is no point in the mention of them."

Here the words I have italicised assume, without a scrap of evidence of any kind, that the Gospel story of the trial and Crucifixion is strictly historical. Against this view several good reasons have been adduced—one by Mr. J. M. Robertson—which Mr. Arch ignores as non-existent. But as a matter of fact, the allusion to "Alexander and Rufus" does *not* indicate that these were men known to Mark's readers; but rather that the names had probably appeared in some apocryphal writing in Mark's day. The writer of the Fourth Gospel has inserted a "Nicodemus" and a "Thomas *who is called Didymus*" in his spurious evangel, and both are found in apocryphal writings of his time. Mark has also given a name to a blind beggar—"Bartimæus" (x. 46)—which was apparently unknown to the other two Synoptists. Was this because the beggar was "known to Mark's readers"? Is it an undoubted historical fact that Jesus gave sight to a blind man by saying "Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole"? If it is not, then Mark has given a name to a purely imaginary person—as in the case of "Alexander and Rufus."

2. Mr. Arch says of the non-Markan or Q narratives which are found only in *Matthew* and *Luke*: "External evidence points to the existence of this collection of sayings well before the end of the first century A.D."

This is news to me. Possibly Mr. Arch has been reading some apologetic work in which the statement is made. But it is not true: there is no "external evidence" of the Q narratives in the first century, any more than of the existence of the Gospel of Mark.

It would puzzle Mr. Arch to say where such evidence can be found.

3. Mr. Arch says of the Gospel Jesus: "According to *Mark*, the founder of Christianity was a disciple of John the Baptist—'Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in the Jordan.' There seems no reason to doubt this. Anyone setting out to invent a life of Jesus would certainly have insisted on his originality."

In the first place, even "according to *Mark*," Jesus was *not* "a disciple of John the Baptist": for every one who allowed himself to be baptized would not necessarily be a "disciple." Mr. Arch says: "There seems no reason to doubt this." On the contrary, there is every reason: for the story of the baptism is pure fiction. Mr. Arch has ignored the following statement in *Mark*:—

And he saw the heavens rent asunder, and the Spirit as a dove descending upon him: and a voice came out of the heavens, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased.

But, it might be contended, could not Jesus be baptized by John without a voice from heaven and the descent of the "Spirit" upon him? The answer is, that *the sole object* of the Baptism story was to show that Jesus was the adopted son of God, and was from that day filled with the "Spirit" which gave him wisdom and the power to work miracles. But for this voice and Spirit *the writer would never have represented Jesus as baptized by John at all*. Mr. Arch has founded an argument on the baptism only—which is, of course, fallacious.

4. Mr. Arch says: "The next piece of undoubted history in *Mark* occurs in chapter iii. 20, 21. According to this, the friends of Jesus, hearing of his activities 'went out to lay hold on him; for they said, He is beside himself.' This would not have been invented; a fabricator might have made the enemies of Jesus take this line, but not his friends."

The two verses mentioned by Mr. Arch read:—

And the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. *And when his kinsmen heard, they went out to lay hold on him; for they said, He is beside himself.*

According to verse 21, which I have italicized, Jesus had just said something very extraordinary, if not supremely ridiculous: but what he had said is not given here. It is quite clear, then, that this verse has been separated from its context, and also that the context is an incident recorded further on in the same chapter. I now place it in its proper place:—

And there came his mother and brethren; and, standing without, they sent unto him. And a multitude was sitting about him; and they say unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee. And he answered them, Who is my mother and my brethren! And looking round on them which sat round about him, he said, Behold, my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother. *And when his kinsmen heard, they went out to lay hold on him; for they said, He is beside himself* (*Mark* iii. 31—35, 21).

Verse 21 is now in the only place which fits it in the Second Gospel. And this being so, the passage is one of Mark's many additions to the primitive Matthew—and, as such, it is *not* historical. Mark, though he copied the saying of Jesus, evidently thought that the latter was "beside himself" when he uttered it. A later copyist removed the verse to another part of the chapter. Luke was also ashamed of the saying, and made the incident read as follows:—

And it was told him, Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to see thee, But he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are



these which hear the word of God, and do it (Luke viii. 19—21).

This is a neat and effective "toning down"; but there is no such toning down by Matthew (xii. 46—50). It is almost needless to say that the words "had no time to eat" in Mark iii. 20 could have no connection with verse 21. Mark uses the same expression in vi. 31, meaning only that the crowd was pressing.

5. Mr. Arch says: "We probably have another touch of history in Mark iv. 10—12 which records that Jesus' public teaching was cast entirely in the form of parables, while his real meaning was unfolded only to his immediate followers.....That the historical Jesus, as a matter of fact, did speak in parables is far more probable than the contrary hypothesis."

Here I must beg to differ from Mr. Arch, for "as a matter of fact" this is one of the many circumstances which were suggested to the writer by so-called "prophecy," and for that reason "the contrary hypothesis" is far more probable. This is obvious: for had these "prophecies" been non-existent, Jesus would never have been represented as doing things to fulfil them, and we should not see these alleged events in the Gospels. Instead of looking at the statement in *Mark* we must turn to the original one in *Matthew*, from which Mark took it. There we read:—

All these things spake Jesus in parables.....that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables, etc. (Matt. xiii. 34, 35).

Matthew's quotation was from Psalm lxxviii. 2; but the word "parable" there did not mean an allegorical story like those in the Gospels. Moreover, it was the writer himself who was to utter the parable, and who did so, not Jesus or any one else. The Gospel parables were made up by the early Christians, commencing with Matthew. Luke gives a larger number that were unknown to Matthew and Mark—because composed later.

6. Mr. Arch says: "The historical character of Judas has, I am aware, been disputed.....Unless we are prepared to maintain that the twelve apostles are themselves a creation of the imagination, it is difficult to find an adequate reason why one of them should have falsely been represented as a traitor."

This "adequate reason" is not far to seek. One of the apostles was said to be a traitor because the following passage was believed to be a "prophecy" referring to Jesus:—

Yea, mine own *familiar friend*, in whom I trusted, *which did eat my bread*, hath lifted up his heel against me (Psalm xli. 9).

All the Gospel writers were acquainted with the passage, though only one of them mentions it (John xiii. 18). It is implied in the statement at the "Lord's Supper" in each of the Synoptics—"He that dipped his hand with me in the dish"—and is referred to in Acts i. 16. Paul knew nothing about a traitor, for he says that the risen Jesus "appeared to Cephas; then to *the twelve*.....then he appeared to James; then to *all the apostles*" (1 Cor. xv. 5, 7). Also, in the fragment of the "Gospel of Peter" recovered a few years ago, the writer, who professes to be Peter, says: "But we, *the twelve* disciples of the Lord mourned and were grieved; and each one.....departed to his home." This was nearly a week after the alleged resurrection of Jesus—who had not been seen by any of the disciples up to that date—and Judas was with the other apostles. The fragment ends there.

7. Among the events which Mr. Arch has selected as historical are the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem riding upon an ass, and his driving out all who bought or sold in the court of the temple—both of which were suggested by "prophecy" (Matt. xxi. 4, 5, 9, 13). The

fact that Matthew misinterpreted the passage in the Old Testament (Zech. ix. 9)—"Behold thy king cometh unto thee.....riding upon an ass, *and* upon a colt the foal of an ass"—and, in consequence, he represented Jesus as sending his disciples for both "the ass and the colt," and as actually riding upon the two—this fact proves clearly that the riding into the city is unhistorical, as do also other facts needless to mention. Again, the multitude being represented as shouting "Hosanna ("save now") .....Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord"—words taken from Psalm cxviii. 25, 26—also shows the story to have been fabricated. Moreover, the words put in the mouth of Jesus—"My house shall be called a house of prayer; but ye make it a den of robbers," which were taken from Isaiah lvi. 7 and Jer. vii. 11—these again show that we have to do with a made-up story. That Mark and Luke have only one ass in their version of the story does not affect the question. They only used their common sense in copying the narrative: Matthew was the originator of all the narratives derived from the fulfilment of prophecy.

8. Mr. Arch says: "Jesus' last articulate words, as recorded by Mark ('My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?') also seem genuine."

Why, certainly. They are in Psalm xxii., which Matthew had open before him when placing them in the mouth of Jesus.

The foregoing are, I think, sufficient to show how unsafe it is for anyone to say that this, that, or the other Gospel narrative is in all probability historical. As I have already stated, even admitting that "Jesus the Nazarene" was a real person, it does not follow that the Gospel written many years after his death is historical. To me it appears to be nothing more than a religious romance, devoid of all historical foundation whatever. My reasons for this conclusion have been given more than once in this journal, and remain unchanged.

ABRACADABRA.

## Critical Chat.

### THE CASE FOR POSITIVISM.

I take this opportunity of recommending to every Freethinker who wants a solid and weighty exposition of the case for Rationalism—for the service of man as against the service of God—to add to his collection of books the new edition of Dr. J. H. Bridges *Illustrations of Positivism* (Watts & Co., 3s. 6d. net). It is a stout volume of nearly 500 pages, and is made up of eighty-five essays, most of which first appeared in the pages of the *Positivist Review*, a thoughtful monthly journal conducted by English Positivists. The book is made more valuable by a good index. The essays are edited by Mr. Gordon Jones, and are classified according to subject—science, philosophy, religion, and politics. It is far and away the most complete introduction in English to Positivist theory and practice, and it is particularly valuable to the Freethinker because the Positivist point of view is, in many respects, the same as that of Freethought. The casual and unsystematic form of a series of short essays is not unlikely to gain for it many readers who would be inclined to fight shy of a whole, strictly logical exposition.

### POSITIVISM AND ATHEISM.

Comte, Dr. Bridges tells us, rejected an atheistical view of the universe. But his programme in 1848 was to reorganize the shattered frame of modern society by the systematized worship of humanity without God or



King. In his English version of the *Discours sur l'ensemble du Positivisme*, Dr. Bridges rendered the words *sans dieu ni roi*, by irrespectively of God or King so as to avoid the implication of Atheism. This must seem to some of us very like a distinction without a difference. Comte, in spite of his very vague semi-theistic phraseology, and his tendency to a mystical sociology imbibed from St. Simon, was really as much an Atheist as he was a Republican; that is, he left God, as he left monarchy, out of the account. Yet like many people, he seems to have an idea that you cannot deny the existence of God. But as a witty and acute writer has put it, you are as much entitled to deny the existence of God as you are to deny the existence of fairies. There is no jot of evidence to show that fairies do not exist, and yet so soon as it became manifest that there was no evidence to show that they do exist, the case went against them by default. We do not merely *doubt* their existence, we *deny* it. "If I am asked," goes on Mr. Tollemache, "how I can possibly *deny* the existence of fairies, I answer that by the word 'fairies' I mean spiritual beings able and willing to act in a specified manner on human affairs. If junkets mysteriously disappear, their owner unhesitatingly attributes the disappearance to thieves, mice, or some other external agency; in other words, he denies that there exists any 'fairy Mab' able and willing to steal junkets. In like manner, we may confidently deny that there exists a spiritual being who is able and willing to modify natural laws, even with a view to the prevention of sin and sorrow." The rational attitude is not doubt, but denial, and Atheism is practically what we do get in Positivism, although too frequently in an adulterated form. Comte's ethics and sociology are based on Utilitarianism, which is Secularism under another name. Humanity, from which any supernatural is excluded, is the dominant note of Freethought, and progress both for Freethinker and Positivist is evolution considered from the human standpoint—the end proposed being the permanent preponderance of social feeling over self-love.

#### POSITIVISM AND RELIGION.

Where the Freethinker parts company with the Positivist is in the matter of religion. The word is so vague that it is more often a stumbling-block than a help to right thinking. Comte and his disciples, or rather some of his disciples, seem to believe that men are necessarily religious if they have ideals and aspirations, and irreligious if they are without them. Dr. Bridges has an eloquent passage in which he contrasts the spiritual condition of a Freethinker, living without ideals and aspirations, with that of a Catholic peasant who is sustained in dire trouble by prayers to the Virgin. He has no doubt that the peasant is nearer the religion of humanity. Now, I cannot see that there is much to choose between them; but there is this to be said for the Freethinker, he is, more often than not, a man who has thought himself out of religion, and that in itself implies ideals and aspirations. And what is more, he strongly objects to be labelled *religious* merely because his attitude to life is not one of "cynical epicureanism or hopeless apathy." Surely nothing could be less positive than Comte's exaltation of Humanity into the throne occupied by the Supreme Being of monotheistic systems; and, as Lord Morley has pointed out, the invention does not help us. "We have still to settle what is good for humanity in the old-fashioned way. There is no guidance in the conception. No effective unity can follow from it, because you can only find out the right and wrong of a given course by summing up the advantages and disadvantages, and striking a balance, and there is

nothing in the Religion of Humanity to force two men to find the balance on the same side." In judging policy, events, and conduct, the Positivist, assisted by his religion, is no better equipped than the Freethinker without a religion.

#### Pernicious Pars.

"Thank God for a strong public opposition to the pestilential Peace Cranks who are doing their very best to stop the War. Christ would, we feel sure, turn in fierce anger and righteous wrath upon these decadent poltroons and lash them with his scourge of divine punishment and military imprisonment. If we read the New Testament we shall find an answer to every argument which these dangerous Peacemongers may bring forward. Let the Church be of good cheer."—*Christian Commercialist*.

"There can be no doubt that the War will prove the divinity of Christ in a way which will baffle the Agnostics, Atheists, and Freethinkers. The War will prove the tremendous uplifting power of Christianity and fill the infidel with dismay. Through Christ alone can peace and progress come.....We are glad to see that the Conscription Bill is now certain of success. Those laggards and slackers who refuse to fight will now be compelled."—*Christian Adventurer*.

"God will not allow the Kaiser to succeed in this glorious War. God knows what He is doing. He is under no obligation to the Huns. He is in need of no advice and counsel respecting the War. We may look confidently to Christ to help his Father in every way to bring an ultimate victory to the Allied Forces.....The Workers are, it seems, becoming unruly; but thanks to a strong move on the part of the Government, we need not fear any serious trouble with the lower classes.....The Aristocracy, says Bishop Parasitey, are doing wonders."—*Church Capitalist and Plunderer*.

"Heaven upon Earth will soon be realized. Christ is manifesting himself through this divine War for freedom. Christ is becoming potent at last; there is no need for pessimism among the clergy. God knows that we are fighting for his Son's sake. We note with great pleasure that our Armies in the field are being reinforced by several thousands of Conscripts. Those who refuse to take up a gun or a bayonet during this divine crisis deserve to be blindfolded and shot.....The Bishops are doing remarkably well."—*Heavenly Hooter*.

ARTHUR F. THORN.

#### Obituary.

Mr. James Thomson, an old and worthy adherent of Freethought, has just died in Renfrew, where he resided. He was in his seventy-ninth year, and died as he had lived—a Secularist. His many friends were not confined to Renfrew alone, and he was most highly respected by everyone who knew him. A regular reader of the *Freethinker* to the last, he had in his younger days taken a more active part in the work to which he was devoted. When the Glasgow Secular Society held its meetings in Ingram Street, Mr. Thomson was a regular attender. He had come in touch with Mr. Bradlaugh and Mr. Holyoake, and always spoke of both with the greatest admiration. Mr. Thomson was one of three gentlemen who were the means of bringing the great Iconoclast to lecture in Renfrew—the only occasion on which that champion of Freethought honoured the town with his presence. The funeral of our worthy and respected friend took place on Wednesday, March 1, and was attended by two sons and a daughter, and a number of friends.

WM. ROBERTSON.



**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.

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OUTDOOR.

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

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

GLASGOW BRANCH N. S. S. (122 Ingram Street): 12 (noon), F. Lonsdale, "Robert Buchanan, the Poet of Modern Revolt."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Clarion Cafe, Cable Street entrance): 7, E. Egerton Stafford, "Modern Atheism."

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