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*Early religious teaching has owed its power over mankind rather to its being early than to its being religious.*

—JOHN STUART MILL.

## Views and Opinions.

Shakespeare.

The Shakespeare number of the *Freethinker* won a wide and general appreciation. It pleased all its usual readers, it secured new ones, and evidently gave many a quite new conception of the character of Freethought advocacy. It was the first time that anything of the kind had been attempted, and the results were most gratifying. But there was a fly in the ointment. In the *New Witness*, which in true British style is ranked as a high class weekly because a charge of sixpence is made for it, a three column criticism of my own article is offered the public by Mr. Cecil Chesterton. Mr. Cecil Chesterton is the editor of the *New Witness*, and is generally known as the brother of Mr. G. K. Chesterton. In this criticism Mr. Chesterton curiously, but I fancy characteristically, calls my article one on *The Merchant of Venice*. I did not deal with *The Merchant of Venice*, I referred by name to but one of its characters, and that by way of illustration only. The title of my article was "Shakespeare and Jesus." It was plain enough, and I am curious as to why Mr. Chesterton did not quote it correctly. Could it be that there was fear of offending the chaste readers of the *New Witness*? Or was Mr. Chesterton sensible that in any comparison of Shakespeare and Jesus the man would prove greater than the God? At any rate, my contention that the man was the greater was not questioned.

Mr. Chesterton and the "Freethinker."

Mr. Chesterton says he is one of our "presumably small but highly select circle of readers"—a circumstance which must be counted to his credit—and refers to us as "that remarkable paper called the *Freethinker*, which still keeps alive the traditions of a small but very interesting Puritan sect which might otherwise be almost as completely forgotten as the Jezreelites." This contains a compliment when all that is intended is a sneer. For if the *Freethinker* is responsible for keeping alive a movement which without its existence would otherwise have disappeared, that is quite the finest tribute to our efficiency that we have yet seen. We quite realize that the existence of a paper such as the *Freethinker* is essential to the well-being of British Freethought, and we are glad to get this testimony from one who is quite opposed to its teachings. But Mr. Chesterton need not delude himself. Much as I value the work of the *Freethinker* I am not fatuous enough to believe that it keeps Freethought alive. What the *Freethinker* does is to provide Freethought with a voice, and so give it strength and purpose. And the policy of boycott and misrepresentation carried on against it for so many years is testimony to its value in this direction.

Shakespeare and Freethought.

Mr. Chesterton does not really challenge the general assumption that Shakespeare was a Freethinker. What he says is that Shakespeare was "Christian and Catholic in his fundamental assumptions, Freethinking in the real sense, in his intellectual tastes, and intoxicated with the newly discovered wine of Paganism." This strikes me as a "cute" way of covering up an undesirable truth. "Christian and Catholic" should mean belief in specific Christian doctrines as taught by the Catholic Church? Can anyone prove that from Shakespeare's writings? And is it likely to be true of a man "intoxicated with the newly discovered wine of Paganism"? Note how the emergence of this irrepressible fact inevitably overthrows the quite gratuitous assumption. Probably Mr. Chesterton will fall back upon Shakespeare's insistence upon the ethical value of life. That is the common plea of those clergymen who have used him as a text for sermons. But it will deceive no one who does not wish to be deceived. Shakespeare is a teacher—the greatest of teachers—of ethics, and he is that precisely because he avoided giving his morality a "Christian and Catholic" basis. Mr. Chesterton might have saved himself the trouble of reminding his readers that Shakespeare's Freethought was not that of Charles Bradlaugh's. No one but a fool would expect it to be. There is growth in the form of Freethought as in other things. And it would be strange indeed if the Freethinking of the sixteenth century was identical with that of the nineteenth. The victories of Freethought lie in the fact that this is not so. The Freethinking which began with a questioning of the claims of the Church has ended with an attack upon the entire body of Christian doctrines.

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The Cloven Foot.

Nearly the whole of Mr. Chesterton's article is taken up by a criticism of what is alleged to be my conception of Shylock and of Shakespeare's conception of him. And after reading Mr. Chesterton's couple of columns on these points, I can see no justification for their existence except that they afford an opportunity for an outburst of anti-Semitism and a misleading excursus on usury. It is psychologically illuminating to be told that there are people in England guilty of the crime of usury "who have not even the excuse of being Jews," and that if English people to-day understood Shylock as Shakespeare did, there would be "no Jews in the Cabinet." These comments are wholly inconsequential, but they are valuable because they show us the real Mr. Chesterton. One only feels a little surprised that one whose anti-Semitism leads him to desire the exclusion of Jews from the Cabinet—and perhaps from the earth—does not publicly repudiate a religion which worships a Jew as God and a Jewess as his mother. To exclude the Jew from the Cabinet and deify him in the Cathedral seems a trifle inconsistent—unless Mr. Chesterton means us to infer that anything will do for the cathedral; but we must exercise great care whom we place in the Cabinet. Worse still, Mr. Chesterton assumes the cause of Shakespeare depicting Shylock as Mr. Ches-



terton thinks he did was that, when he first came to London, Shakespeare "borrowed money of a Jew," and was, presumably, robbed. Really, Mr. Chesterton, the author of the plays deserves respectful treatment. The creator of Lear, Hamlet, Cæsar, Othello, and Shylock was not quite the man to vilify a race because one of its members did him wrong. Do try and remember, Mr. Chesterton, that it is *Shakespeare* we are dealing with.

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#### Religion and Hatred.

Readers of my article, "Shakespeare and Jesus," will remember that my introduction of the character of Shylock was by way of illustrating the truth that Shakespeare's grasp of human nature was such that it rose superior to the cramping influences of race or creed. And in consequence of this it was inevitable that he should exhibit in the character of Shylock, as in that of Antonio, the distorting influence of religious hatred in human relations. Mr. Chesterton replies that, in depicting Shylock, that is not what Shakespeare *meant*. I can only reply, that is what he does. Observe that Antonio is in all other relations a quite amiable, good-natured gentleman. It is only when he runs up against the Jew that he becomes bitter, rude, contemptuous, and, in the very act of asking a favour, threatens to treat him as rudely in the future as he has done in the past. And the very marrow of Shylock's conduct is the deep, age-long, contemptuous hatred of the Jew for the Christian. Such lines as "I hate him for he is a Christian," "He hates our sacred nation," have no other significance than this. To the Christian gentleman, everything is justifiable against the Jew. To the persecuted Jew, any means of humbling the Christian persecutor is welcome. And the man must be curiously obtuse who cannot realize that the basis of this mutual hatred is religious difference, and that it is in connection with religion that Shakespeare brings out the worst side of both characters. And in this view of Shylock I am not alone. Sir Walter Raleigh, in his excellent little work on *Shakespeare*, remarks:—

Shylock is a man, and a man more sinned against than sinning. He is one of those characters of Shakespeare whose voices we know, whose very tricks of phrasing are peculiar to themselves. Antonio and Bassanio are pale shadows of men compared with this gaunt, tragic figure; whose love of his race is as deep as life; who pleads the cause of a common humanity against the cruelties of prejudice; whose very hatred has in it something of the nobility of patriotic passion; whose heart is stirred with tender memories, even in the midst of his lament over the stolen ducats; who, in the end, is dismissed, unprotesting, to insult and oblivion.

I cannot but feel that it is Mr. Chesterton's rabid anti-Semitism which prevents his realizing this. And I must confess that, to a man who can draw from *The Merchant of Venice* the moral that there should be no Jews in the Cabinet, almost anything is possible. That is quite the most remarkable piece of Shakespearean criticism I have ever encountered. Mr. Chesterton says that whatever I may think, "Shakespeare clearly did not think Shylock was in the right." I neither said nor implied any such thing. All I said was that Shakespeare's delineation of Shylock presented to the world, not the demoniacal child devouring non-human Jew of the mediæval imagination, but the Jew that Christian bigotry and malignity had fashioned. Far from thinking that Shakespeare held Shylock to be in the right, I said that "the worst side" of both Jew and Christian was brought about in connection with religion.

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#### The Jew and the Christian.

Mr. Chesterton prefers the Jew of the mediæval imagination. The hatred of the Jew was due to the

fact that he practised usury; he stood to the Christian civilization of the Middle Ages as the quintessence of wickedness on account of this; and it was because the Christian saw the Jew "torturing the poor for profit, coining the cries of Christian children into gold," that they were ready to believe them capable of any crime. Moreover, the Church, in the manifestation of its kindly protective influence, had condemned usury as a crime. All this would be very effective in a cheap melodrama, but to anyone with the merest smattering of historic knowledge, it is the poorest fustian that ever tried to pass itself off as good broad cloth. In the first place, the Church did not condemn usury—if we keep to the modern sense of *excessive* interest for money lent. What the Church condemned under the name of usury was any interest at all. Does Mr. Chesterton mean that the Church was right in that? Second, it is necessary to point out that neither were all Jews usurers, nor was usury confined to the Jews. The merchants of Lombardy, of various parts of France, of Florence—Edward III. owed the Bardi firm no less than 900,000 gold florins—of Venice, of Milan, all lent money at interest; or, as the Church would have said, at usury. And, third, it will not do to point the mediæval money-lender—Jewish or Christian—as grinding the faces of the poor. Their money was lent to the nobleman, or to the ecclesiastic, or to the merchant. The poor had nothing on which to borrow. The Church and the Christian lord took care of that. And whatever coining of the "cries of Christian children into gold," was done by them. They were the only ones that could do it.

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#### The Jew as a Christian Product.

And after all, the Jew, even though he were in the Middle Ages all that Mr. Chesterton's religious dis-tempered mind painted him, would need explanation. And that, I imagine, *did* appeal to Shakespeare. Why did the mediæval Jew become a usurer—even to the extent to which that statement is true? What made the Jew a money-maker? A money-lover the Jew generally, is not. We have heard of many Christian misers; I cannot recall a single notorious Jewish miser. Who but the Christian taught the Jew that to make money was the chief condition of ease and power? And in what but a Christian-governed world did money ever become so great a symbol of power? Exposed to persecution because of his religion, the Jew in Christendom was compelled to have his wealth in a portable shape. For every common right of protection, for justice, for the mere right to exist, the Jew had to find money. Wherever he turned he found clamorous Christian maws demanding money as the price of peace and an uncertain security. Shut out from more fixed occupation, the Jew was driven to the more mobile fields of financial transactions. In this, as in other directions, the Jews illustrated the sociological law that what men are is determined by the social institutions under which they live. And in this case, the institutions were created by Christians, dominated by Christians, while it was Christians also who taught the Jew that they were ready to sell everything for a price—even religious toleration. The Church—Mr. Chesterton's Church—set the example of rapacity, of oppression, of religious intolerance, of brutal revenge? "If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what would his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge. The villainy you teach me, I will execute? It shall go hard but I will better the instruction." That is Shakespeare's reply, by anticipation to Mr. Chesterton. The Jew at his worst is a Christian product. But for the persecution he has endured he might long since have ceased to exist. His existence to-day, whatever else it



may indicate, is certainly an unimpeachable proof of the villainy of the Church which Mr. Chesterton so unwisely defends.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

## Doubt.

THE Ages of Faith are also called Dark Ages because their faith was based on ignorance and superstition. The people believed because they lacked knowledge. Our own age is admitted by the divines to be really the age of doubt, but there never was a time when knowledge was so ample and so wide spread as it is to-day. Dr. Orchard denies that it is "an age of unbelief, of negative conviction, of dogmatic Atheism"; but surely doubt and belief do not go hand in hand. An age of doubt cannot be an age of faith, of positive conviction, of dogmatic Theism. The question that requires to be faced is why doubt is so general in this highly scientific age, and specially why so few of the best educated people are genuine believers? In a sermon which appeared in the *Christian World Pulpit* for May 3, Dr. Orchard regards doubt as one of "the enemies of the desert" which must be bravely fought and conquered. With some of his statements we are in full agreement. He is entirely out of sympathy with those "Christian theologians and preachers who have not hesitated to declare that doubt about the fundamentals of faith is simply due to leanings towards a life of sin or the secret practice of immorality, for which doubt is simply an excuse." We have often heard such a statement made from the pulpit, and have read it innumerable times in religious journals; and, as Dr. Orchard admits, it has done tremendous harm to multitudes of inquiring young people. According to the reverend gentleman, the Gospel Jesus doubted twice, at the beginning and at the end of his public ministry, and "the Book of Job is the passionate protest of a man whose doubt had been traced to sin," while "the Book of Ecclesiastes contains more ultimate scepticism to the page than any other literature to the volume." There are other statements in the sermon which we are bound to condemn as false and misleading. Take the following assertion:—

There is a verdict of faith which ought to be considered, not only because it is the doctrine of the Church founded in experience, hammered out by great minds in debate, confirmed by the saints, and died for by martyrs, but because to stand outside faith means standing outside the general consensus of humanity and putting oneself out of sympathy with all history.....It is inhuman not to believe, and it takes the key of history out of our hands.

There is in that extract a glaring distortion of history. There has never been a general consensus of humanity in favour of supernatural belief. Professor Rhys Davids informs us that there are five hundred millions of Buddhists in the world who are not even Theists. Buddhism is a philosophy of this earthly life and concerns itself with no other. It even denies the existence of the human soul. Is it inhuman to profess such a religion, and are all the millions who do so without the key of history? It is not so long since Dr. Orchard declared that though "man has instincts, he seems to have no instinct for God," in which case it cannot be inhuman to disbelieve in God. Does the reverend gentleman really think that unbelief is a form of inhumanity, or that Atheists are inhuman?

Again, the saying that "lack of faith is often due to lack of intellect," is extremely misleading, though it may not be wholly false. We are not rash enough to maintain that all Freethinkers are exceptionally intellectual, but

we do hold the conviction that, taken as a class, they are more intellectual than the generality of Christians. Dr. Orchard says that "there are some orthodox theologians whom one could respect much more if they did not decorate their contempt for heresy with sneers at the poor intellectuality of the heretics," which is an immodest claim to the superiority of their own intellectual powers. Our contention is not that unbelief is due to intellectual superiority, but that it is the outcome of the right use of the intellect as the supreme guide to truth. We aver that it is contrary to reason to believe that a God of love made and governs such a world as this has always been and is. Dr. Orchard asserts that "the conscious rejection of faith on this ground will not bear examination"; but he is obviously mistaken. The problem is not so easily solved as he seems to imagine. To say that "some of the most dreadful experiences life holds have often been the means of bringing men to faith," means nothing. It is frequently claimed that God employs suffering as a moral discipline for the purification and ennoblement of character. A man is thrown into the furnace of affliction in order that his imperfections and sins may be burned away. But even on the assumption that some people succeed in turning suffering to good account, on what ground can we explain the universality of suffering? Unfortunately, pain is not confined to human beings, but is the inheritance of all living things. The struggle for existence among the lower animals has always been cruel beyond description. The law of Natural Selection is not an embodiment of benevolence. As Huxley so well puts the case:—

From the point of view of the moralist the animal world is on about the same level as a gladiator's show. The creatures are fairly well treated, and set to fight—whereby the strongest, the swiftest, and the cunningest live to fight another day. The spectator has no need to turn his thumbs down, as no quarter is given. He must admit that the skill and training displayed are wonderful. But he must shut his eyes if he would not see that more or less enduring suffering is the meed of both vanquished and victor. And since the great game is going on, in every corner of the world, thousands of times a minute, it seems to follow that, if this world is governed by benevolence, it must be a different sort of benevolence from that of John Howard (*Essays, Ethical and Political*, pp. 6, 7).

Every sermon preached at present contains some allusion to, or offers some explanation of, the War, and the discourse now under review is no exception to the rule. Dr. Orchard is fully aware that many look upon the War as an event that finally discredits Christianity, because, instead of averting such a disaster, it "has, indeed, been used to fan the conflagration to a fiercer and more all-devouring flame." And here is his explanation:—

But everyone must know the War is due to the deliberate refusal to apply Christianity to international affairs, which, without some earnest endeavour to find a Christian solution, now threaten to embroil us in even more wholesale and ferocious warfare.

Now, why was there a deliberate refusal to apply Christianity to international affairs? Simply because Christianity is not what it claims to be, because it utterly lacks the supernatural qualities and powers which its representatives so proudly describe as resident within it, and because the all-conquering and reigning Christ said to be its only life is as fully a myth as was Osiris or Zeus. Dr. Orchard wants to know "if Christianity is all wrong, what is likely to be right?" but that knowledge can be acquired only by those who have the courage to throw off the yoke of superstition. A Christian clergyman, who pronounces unbelief inhuman, will never discover the truth. It is but natural for him to exclaim,



"Obviously, you cannot trust humanity," because in his sight humanity is fallen and diseased, needing to be lifted up and healed by a supernatural being. To him Nature, too, is unworthy of confidence, and communion with her degrading. Dr. Orchard speaks of Nature as having "produced something which she can neither understand nor satisfy," in consequence of which "we are faced with a tragedy no pessimism can exaggerate"; but he forgets that we can understand Nature and find satisfaction in unbroken obedience to her firm laws. George Meredith was at once a profound philosopher and inspiring poet, and he found both peace and joy in communion with Nature. To him Earth was "that deep breast of song and light." "If modern men would learn the secret of Earth, their intellect, based on courage, would match the primitive instincts, and so raise a swelling flood of song":—

For love we Earth, then serve we all;  
Her mystic secret then is ours;  
We fall, or view our treasures fall,  
Unclouded, as beholds her flowers.

Dr. Orchard belittles Nature because he is under the befogging spell of the Fables of the Above. God forbids him to love the world and its things, because "if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." God is jealous, and demands man's supreme affection. Yes; the Fables of the Above endeavour to sweep Nature aside:—

Crying loud for an opiate boon  
To comfort the human want,  
From the bosom of magical skies.

But she smiles on them, "marking their source," well knowing that man's—

Cry to heaven is a cry to her  
He would evade.

Meredith teaches that communion with Nature is in the highest degree elevating and moralizing:—

I say but that this love of Earth reveals  
A soul beside our own to quicken, quell,  
Irradiate, and through ruinous floods uplift.

J. T. LLOYD.

## The Cardinal's Catspaw.

### A Footnote to the History of Secularism.

People swallow falsehood as a cat laps milk.—G. W. FOOTE.

He who fights with priests may make up his mind to have his poor, good name torn and befouled by the most infamous lies and the most cutting slanders.—HEINE.

THE younger recruits of the Army of Human Liberation can have little conception of the intense hatred and antagonism which the Old Guard of Freethought roused in the Christian camp. To-day, if there be not a greater tolerance, there is at least less bitterness, due as much to increasing religious indifference as to more polished manners. Christian apologists, who never tire of boasting of the tolerance of their intolerant religion, need to be reminded of these things. In the battle for free speech, Richard Carlile and his wife and friends endured fifty years' imprisonment. Daniel Eaton, who was prosecuted seven times, had £2,500 worth of literature destroyed. The poet Shelley was ordered to be deprived of the custody of his children, and a similar dishonour was inflicted on Mrs. Annie Besant many years later. Charles Bradlaugh had to wait five years before he could take his seat in the House of Commons as member for Northampton, and only his alertness prevented his imprisonment for blasphemy. The late Marquis of Queensberry was denied a seat in the House of Lords on account of his infidelity. Last, but not least, thousands of pounds bequeathed for Freethought purposes were diverted to other channels. It was not Christian

justice, but the strong arm of George William Foote that stopped this highway robbery.

Few men, even among these heroic personalities, fought a more arduous battle against the buffetings of bigotry than Charles Bradlaugh. For eleven years he fought for a seat for Northampton, followed by five years of struggle ere he was allowed to occupy it. No enmity is more relentless, or more venomous, than religious hatred. The abuse directed against Mr. Asquith and his colleagues is politeness itself compared with the assault and battery made upon Bradlaugh's reputation. Seven years after his death, Mrs. W. Pitt Byrne published, in her *Social Hours with Celebrities*, an extraordinary account of the great Freethinker, which is worth preserving as a choice example of Christian charity. The lady relates, with delightful piquancy, the share she had in the preparation of some lectures delivered by Cardinal Wiseman on "Modern Unbelief," which were intended to be a reply to one of Charles Bradlaugh's early lectures. It is of interest, not only as showing the venom with which Freethought was opposed by the classes, as in indicating the widespread attention which the propaganda of Secularism claimed amongst the most exalted dignitaries of the religious world. Mrs. Byrne opens her story as follows:—

One day during the spring of 1858 His Eminence (Cardinal Wiseman) called upon me for the purpose of referring to a conversation of the previous day, in which he had remarked that the open advocacy of Atheism by propagandists among the lower orders was becoming a matter for serious concern. He told me that, during the drive from his house to mine, he had observed in Portman Square large, flaring, posting bills, publicly announcing a lecture of apparently blasphemous character to be delivered that evening at a low hall in the slums. His Eminence expressed the interest he felt in knowing the substance of this lecture, and the mode in which the subject would be presented; and, as it would, necessarily, not be within his competency to appear at this place, he wished me to attend, and to furnish him with a report of the proceedings.

The lady sent for a bill of the lecture, which took place under the auspices of the West End Secular Society at the Hope Temperance Hall, Bell-street. Bradlaugh was here lecturing under the name of "Iconoclast," and his subject was boldly announced, "The Bible not a Revelation; not Reliable, neither True nor Useful." Mrs. Byrne continues, with exquisite courtesy:—

I was punctual to the hour. The audience was composed of counter-skippers and boys from inferior shops, women and children. The hall would hold about 300, the benches were rough, dingy, and had no backs, and the floor was dirty. The chair was occupied by a coarse-looking man, with a florid face, encased by bushy, black hair and whiskers, and on either side of the chairman sat several common fellows, with women tawdrily dressed.

This is Mrs. Byrne's description of Charles Bradlaugh:—

He wore a black morning suit, and threw himself into a commanding attitude as he surveyed the rough and ill-clad audience before him. His countenance was very marked, and the form of face and features unquestionably peculiar, decidedly the reverse of handsome, though indicative of intelligence and shrewdness; but I observed during the lecture that they occasionally became distorted with a revengeful and fiendish expression, which made his face altogether repulsive. A curiously long upper lip and prominent teeth beneath the upturned nostrils and small eyes suggested the caricature of a human countenance. His age might be eight-and-twenty. As soon as the man began to speak he showed, together with a wonderful degree of fluency and command of language, unmistakable evidences of insufficient education, an illiterate mind, and a vulgar intonation; besides clipping the Queen's English after a most un-



orthodox fashion, he employed words which, although correctly applied, he had never learned to pronounce, while that significant *pons asinorum*—the letter "h" was everywhere and nowhere at the same time. Of general, or indeed of any kind of reading there was no manifestation, and I thought it not impossible that he might have committed to memory a translation of selected passages from Diderot and Voltaire, put together for him by the Association to which he belonged, with a little additional matter.

This courteous Christian lady then adds that Bradlaugh's discourse "was richly interlarded with those clap-trap phrases which delight the mob." As an example of Bradlaugh's style, she gives what she pretends is a fair sample of his eloquence. There are four and a half pages of outrageous burlesque, from which we quote the peroration as it is printed:—

Let us then, my friends, be up and doin'—doin' 'as more to show for it than bleevin'. Hours is the day for haction, not for bleef. What do I say? bleef! Rather let me call it by its right name—credoolity! the credoolity of old women and hinfants. This is not the mood of men, my friends, of men like you and me. Leave bleef to cripples hunfit for haction, etc.

The Cardinal's lady friend obediently presented to His Eminence her imaginative account of her visit to the Bell Street Hall. Wiseman's rejoinder took the form of four lectures delivered at St. Mary's Church, Moorfields, on "Modern Unbelief," which were afterwards published in book form. The book represents the last fruit of a very old Upas tree, which is slowly dying. It once bore scaffolds, stakes, prisons, and torture-rooms; latterly it has borne lies, libels, and all uncharitableness. Time has adjusted the balance, for after the lapse of years, Bradlaugh is loved and venerated, whilst Wiseman is but a name.

MIMNERMUS.

### Who Made the Gods?—III.

*A Lecture delivered in Chicago by M. M. Mangasarian.  
(Concluded from p. 301.)*

BUT now we have a third and equally interesting question to answer. Why do the gods die? Of course, in a general way, they die because, as already explained, man, their maker, is a mortal. But there are more direct reasons for the passing of the gods. We may never have paused to think of it, nevertheless it is true, that the number of the gods has been steadily reduced mainly for the sake of economy. America is more prosperous than India, for example, because, on the whole, we are more economical as a people. But see how lavishly we spend for food and clothes, while the Hindoo wears rags and lives principally on one vegetable—rice. It is because we are more economical that we have more to spend. Count, if you can, the number of holy cities and enormous temples and hosts of gods the Hindoos have been supporting for centuries. The gods have eaten the Hindoos out of house and board. We have only two or three gods to take care of, and, consequently, more to spend upon ourselves. Moreover, we have taught our divinities to be satisfied with less. We do not pay them the same rations they do in India. Over there the gods demanded young boys and girls to be thrown into the Ganges; and young widows to be cremated alive. Well, we do not permit our gods such luxuries. In America the gods have to be satisfied with a hymn or two, and a few verbal compliments once a week. We have *spiritualized* our gods for reasons of economy. Spiritual beings neither eat nor drink. Formerly, even our gods were fond of roast meat, as we learn from the Bible; but now that they have been

spiritualized, we are relieved of the crushing expense of providing them with flesh and blood sacrifices. The idea that spiritual gifts are alone acceptable to the gods was suggested to us by the necessity to husband our resources and to save our own sons and daughters from starvation. Civilization began with the first act of saving. We learn the lesson of economy by experience. Children are less economical than their elders; that is why the primitive races, who are like children, have more gods and give all they have to them.

Competition is another cause for the passing of the gods. The law of the survival of the fittest applies to them as it does to everything else. When there was no competition, all the gods—the smallest even—had a temple and devotees; but as competition increased only the big and mighty ones survived. "I am a jealous God," says Jehovah. Ah! that shows competition had already begun. Jehovah was in the midst of the competitive struggle when he uttered those words. The competition between theology and science has destroyed more gods than the competition between theology, art, literature, the drama, the newspapers, commerce, travel, wealth, or any other factor in life. It is true all these have contributed to the decline of the gods, but science has put more of them out of commission than all the other agencies combined. The gods are willing to make all sorts of concessions to science, just to be let alone. They are willing to change their names, to live on less, to refrain from ever again interfering in human affairs—to make themselves invisible, to agree to keep their mouths closed, to adopt new ideas, to love all peoples, without distinction of race, colour, or creed—if science would only let them live. "Spare us," is the daily prayer of the gods to science. The gods are even willing to be no more than a Power, or a Tendency, or simply the Eternal, or the All, or Nature—if only they could be spelled in capitals. Yea, they would consent to be only the Unknowable, if science would agree not to invade *that* region. Dr. Lyman Abbott explains the resurrection of Jesus by saying that it was not a physical but a spiritual resurrection. That is the way dogmas die. Dogmas and gods die the same way—by becoming shadows of their former selves. Ask a Protestant about the Eucharist, and he will reply, "The bread is not the body of God except in a spiritual sense"; that is to say, in a sense not at all tangible. The gods and the creeds die by growing thinner, by becoming attenuated—airy, insubstantial, vapoury, vague. Science rises like a sun, and like bubbles the gods melt into air.

But have all the gods left us? No; there is one who is still god, and who was god before any of the others was born. The first god of the savage is also the last god of the civilized man—the Sun. If he dies, we die; if he lives, we live. Thou creator and preserver of us all, hail! As the barbarian, naked of body and pinched in mind, inclined his head before thee, I bow mine! But the Sun asks for no prayers, accepts no gifts, shows no favours. We bring no flowers to his altars, we light no candles in his honour, we sing no anthem to lull his ear. The Sun is self-sufficient. He is a real god. False gods demand offerings, and accept bribes and enjoy flattery; but the Sun is above all that. To worship the Sun is folly, since it can neither please him nor help us. But as long as he shines, the trees will blossom, the grass will grow, the birds will sing, and lovers will mate and build their nests.

My Easter message is that we are all the children of the Sun—the children of the light. Where is the author of our being? He is not in hiding. He greets us every day, enthroned in glory resplendent. We behold him every time we open our eyes. There he shines, radiant and immaculate! We can have no



higher ambition than to be suns ourselves, giving light, dispelling the darkness, turning night into day, and causing the barren earth to produce bread and beauty.

What visions I have seen while gazing at the setting sun! I have stood and watched the slow-slipping orb until my eyes grew moist, and I waved to and fro like some pendant vine in the summer breeze. And how inspiring it is to see the sun ascending the skies from behind the hills, or emerging from the cool depths of the waters! I think of enchanted palaces, of worlds wondrous fair, and peopled all with the children of the light, when I see the great luminary flooding land and sea and sky with his golden presence.

Rise, Brahm, rise, god of India! He cannot rise. Rise, Ormuzd, god of Persia! He will not rise. Rise, Apollo, fair god of Olympus. But neither will he rise. Rise, Jesus, rise! All Christendom cries, "Rise, Jesus!" But they cry in vain. Jesus does not rise. Rise *thou*, O Sun! And the East glows with light, the day breaks, and behold the *risen* Sun!

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## Correspondence.

### THE CASE OF THE CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Very few people seem to be aware that the country is drifting into the infliction of serious persecution upon a large number of young men who, mistaken as they may appear to the majority, are undoubtedly sincere and courageous and not to be moved from their position by any penalties, however extreme. Most of those who abuse them are not acquainted personally with any of them; if they were, they would realize that they are faced with an inflexible faith, out of which martyrs may be made, but not shirkers.

A man who sincerely believes all war to be wicked finds himself, at this time, in a very difficult position. It is not enough for him to abstain from fighting himself: he feels compelled also, as far as he can, not to subject others to the operation of Conscription. Many conscientious objectors have been granted by the Tribunals exemptions conditional upon their changing their occupation. If these men were cowards and shirkers, such an exemption would abundantly satisfy them, since it frees them from the terrors of both the battlefield and the law. But a large majority have felt unable to accept such conditional exemption. They have asked themselves why they were ordered to change their occupation, and they could find no answer except that the change would promote the organization of the nation's resources for war, either by producing goods which the Army needs, or by releasing other men for fighting. Since they believe that fighting is a sin, they cannot bring themselves to help others to fight, even indirectly. The refusal to accept conditional exemption, which proves that they are not shirkers, exposes them to all the rigour of the law.

About 10,000 young men are in this position. Nothing except absolute exemption will meet the conscientious convictions of most of them. In spite of repeated circulars from the Local Government Board informing the Tribunals that they have power to grant complete exemption, many Tribunals (including Appeal Tribunals) have decided that they have no legal right to grant complete exemption, and very few complete exemptions have been granted, even by those which have accepted the official view.

It was certainly not the intention of Parliament that the Conscience Clause should be rendered almost a dead letter by the way in which it has been administered. Many reassuring statements were made by Ministers, but when these statements were quoted by applicants before the Tribunals, they were rejected with derision.

Almost all the Tribunals have taken the view that a man cannot have a conscientious objection to war unless he belongs to a religious body which has this for one of its explicit principles. But conscience is an individual thing, and forbids to one man what it allows to another. Many men who are conscientious objectors are filled with an intense desire to

serve the community, but they believe (strange as this belief must appear to those who do not share it) that they can best serve the community by trying to turn men against war. They feel what Quakers call a "concern" to make a stand for peace. It is no use to try to deter such men by penalties: the greater the penalties, the more ardently they desire the opportunity to testify to the sincerity of their belief.

It is natural that those whose sons or brothers are in the trenches should feel that the conscientious objectors, in spite of punishment, are escaping more lightly than the young men who are fighting for their country. I am not sure that this is true. The moral suffering involved in standing out against public opinion, often against parents and friends, and in incurring obloquy and the taunt of cowardice, is not an easy thing to bear. The instinct of sacrifice is strong in many of those who refuse to fight, and it has been almost unbearable to them that their belief forbade them to share the hardships and dangers of the battlefield. They are glad that the time has come when they, too, must suffer for their cause.

But how will the nation gain by making them suffer? By this time, it is known how many conscientious objectors there are; the number is not large enough to count in a modern army, and, if it were, there is no way of forcing them to become efficient soldiers. If there were ever any whose objection to warfare was not genuine, they have been weeded out by this time. The only possible effect, now, of punishing men for conscience' sake, is that they are taken from useful work and lodged in gaol, where they become a burden to the State.

These men believe, rightly or wrongly, that the evils of militarism and the atrocities that the war has brought forth will never be extirpated by fighting. They believe that militarism can only be destroyed by pacifism, and that hate can only be killed by love. There were such men in Germany. It is reported that many have been shot in that country. But no punishment can prove them mistaken; punishment can only prove their sincerity in the eyes of a doubting public. They believe that, with faith and courage, passive resistance is more unconquerable than bayonets; and if the authorities choose to put them to the test, they are prepared to demonstrate the truth of their belief by their own endurance.

• BERTRAND RUSSELL.

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### INGERSOLL AND ALCOHOL.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—No. It will not do. I pin you to Ingersoll's words, which are emphatically *not* a denunciation of "the evils that accompany the *abuse* of whiskey drinking," but a quite specific denunciation of the *substance*—*whiskey*—which, he says, "from the time it issues from the cooled and poisonous worm, etc., *demoralizes everybody who touches it.*" Either Ingersoll believed this rubbish or he did not. If he believed it, he must have believed that it demoralized *him*, and would demoralize the man to whom he sent it. If he did not believe it, he is convicted of canting in a disgusting fashion for the edification of the Puritan gallery. I think the second the very much more probable hypothesis.

CECIL CHESTERTON.

[We have given Ingersoll's words, with his scornful remarks on those who take such statements with absolute literalness. We are quite content to leave the matter to the judgment of our readers.—Ed.]

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English Catholics recently set apart a Sunday to petition the Throne of Grace with prayers on behalf of the Holy Father, the Pope. Papa must be feeling like King Lear, especially as so many of his children are killing each other.

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John Wesley, at his death, left a fully annotated copy of Shakespeare's works, but his executors regarded it as an immoral work, and burnt it. Perhaps the pages retailing Falstaff's blasphemies were too well thumbed.

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A headline in the dear *Daily News* was worded, "The City of Blue Flame." It did not refer to the place so often mentioned in sermons.



## Acid Drops.

Mr. Zangwill contributes an article to the *Daily Chronicle* of May 5 on "The War and the Churches." The most striking paragraph is the opening one:—

If a man could be drained of his blood, and yet go about with every vital function absolutely unimpaired, if a motor-car could be eviscerated of its valves and cylinders and yet whiz along exactly as before, if an eagle could have its pinions amputated and yet sail aloft into the empyrean as superbly as ever, we should come to the conclusion that the blood, the machinery, the wings, played no real part in the life of the man, the car, the bird, but were mere ornamental appendages. And since, were Christianity now abolished and exiled by the Defence of the Realm Act, there would be no difference whatever visible in the functioning of the State and the prosecution of the War, can we escape a similar conclusion about the Church?

Mr. Zangwill might very easily have carried this thesis further, and have pointed out that life itself is a proof that Christianity is non-important. Suppose we paraphrase Mr. Zangwill thus:—

If multitudes of men and women in this and other countries can live without any desire for specific Christian doctrines and beliefs, if they are not alone destitute of the desire, but their lives are as clean, as honourable, as useful as those of the best of Christians, if they live their lives as nobly and face death as fearlessly as Christians—if, in a word, they are as good in every relation of life as are Christians—can we escape the conclusion that Christianity is a mere ornamental appendage to society, and that life would proceed as well without it as with it?

This is the moral of the position, and we have long tried to get Christians to face it. If Christianity is of real value, evidence of its absence should be unmistakable. Where is such evidence obtainable?

At the Central Criminal Court, the other day, K. R. Randall was sentenced to eighteen months' hard labour for bigamy and stealing. Randall handed in a statement saying that he had been a Sunday-school teacher and a member of a London Diocesan Conference, and asking that he should be put in the second division, so that he might not be corrupted by having to associate with criminals. We quite sympathize with such delicate religious susceptibilities.

An appeal has been issued by a number of clergymen and others asking everybody to go without alcohol on Monday and meat on Thursday. We believe that this has received the unanimous support of teetotalers and vegetarians. But we would suggest that we add another day of abstinence, and go without religion on Sunday. That would release many thousands of clergymen for more useful employment.

In England, Father Bernard Vaughan advises that it is our duty to keep on killing Germans. In Germany, Chaplain Schettler writes:—

The death cries of the Russian troops caught in the Masurian swamps were terrible, but we must rejoice over them, for in slaughtering thousands upon thousands of Russian barbarians we were achieving a noble work, a truly religious work, a service for Christ.....

It is not our fault if in this bloody War we must also carry out the duties of an executioner. Cold steel is put into the hand of the German soldier, and he must use it without hesitation and without mercy. He must thrust the bayonet between the ribs of the enemy; he must shatter the butt end of his rifle on the enemies' skulls—that is his holy duty. Thereby he is serving God. The Almighty has allowed this War to chastise humanity.

And yet there are people in the world who doubt that Christianity is a religion of love and universal brotherhood.

One would have imagined that a Sunday performance for the benefit of blind soldiers would have escaped censure from the most bigoted of religionists. Canon Otley, however, wrote a very indignant letter to the *Times* protesting against such an infringement of the "Sabbath." In reply to the

Canon, Dr. W. Hardwicke wrote a letter which was refused insertion. As he has been good enough to send it on to us, we have much pleasure in printing it here. Dr. Hardwicke's letter runs:—

The letter in to-day's *Times* from Canon Otley is both illogical and narrow-minded, and reeks of Sabbatarianism. He is illogical when he refers to the opening on Sundays of kineema palaces [his knowledge of Greek should have saved him from committing the error of spelling the word "cinema"] as being "an encroachment upon our Sunday liberties," which obviously means liberty for Canon Otley and his friends, but not for others. The Canon should know that all notions that one day of the week is more sacred than another, is contrary to the teaching of the New Testament. Not a single injunction to keep a "Lord's Day" is to be found either in the New Testament or in the dissertation on the Mount. The Judaic Code, which included Sabbath-keeping, was abrogated and replaced by the six commands given in Matt. xix. 18-19; Mark x. 19; and Romans xiii, 9. According to Romans xiv. 5, no one was to be hereafter judged in respect of a holy day or of a Sabbath. Yet the Canon does this! The Lord's Day of the New Testament, as most people know, was the Jewish Sabbath. The reputed author of the Apocalypse tells us that "he was in the spirit on the Lord's Day," *i.e.*, the Sabbath. The religious fanatic Tertullian was the first to apply the title to the first day of the week—the "Feast of the Resurrection." But, as showing that his idea of how to spend the first day of the week was anything but Canon Otley's, he says ["De Corona"] "We count fasting and kneeling in worship on the Lord's Day to be unlawful." The Canon, like the handful of that narrow school of thought, as represented by the Society of which he is Secretary, would throw civilization back to the Puritanism of three centuries ago, and would close all places of innocent amusement and recreation against those who are not disposed to spend the only day of the week available to them in hymn-singing and Bible-classes. And as regards "artists, musicians, actors, and employees," for whom he affects to be so solicitous, from what knowledge I have of these, I should say they want none of his help, and are quite able to look after their own interests in the way of rest and holidays, of which, unfortunately, they are too often overpowered with. But why does the Canon introduce "artists" and "actors" together, when they mean one and the same thing? Is it done for the purpose of swelling unduly the numbers of those engaged in Sunday employment? It is generally understood that some few must work on holidays for the benefit of the great crowd. And it is also understood that those who are willing to do so, take some other day during the week for their recreation. Without such giving and taking life would be unendurable. The Canon's knowledge of the world should have taught him before this that it is impossible for all to take a holiday on the same day. But the tone of the Canon's letter would lead us to believe that his concern is not so much for the welfare of the people, whose cause he affects to advocate, as for his "Lord's Day" fad.

The *Times'* refusal to insert a letter of this character is an apt illustration of the value of a free press in a Christian country.

The *British Weekly* is responsible for the statement that when "the recruiting officer calls out 'What religion, Church of England?' the answer usually is 'Yes,' because it is easier to spell than Congregationalist or whatever else it ought to be." We have always said that the British soldier was most devoted to religion. The above statement proves it. The *British Weekly*, apparently, sees nothing extraordinary in it.

"The new France that came to maturity in the decade before the opening of this War is the moral rock upon which Germanism will be shivered to pieces in the end. It had given its proofs in the days of peace," says the *Daily Telegraph*. We beg to point out that it is precisely this France which disestablished the Church, secularized the State, and which the Christians of this country—before the War—were describing as growing in crime and sensuality on account of its neglect of religion.

Speaking at St. John's Cathedral, New York, on the occasion of the Shakespeare Commemoration Service, Sir Herbert Tree said, "The two countries were united to honour the memory of the greatest man who ever wrote their common language." Gee, Whiz! Sir Herbert ought to read the English language as rendered by the Rev. Billy Sunday and other Transatlantic stylists.



The unkindest thing said about the Sinn Feiners was when the *Irish Times* remarked some time ago: "They seem to be a sort of Christian Scientists, their motto being, 'Don't believe in England, and England will therefore cease to exist.'"

Father Bernard Vaughan says, "We are a nation travelling to the cemetery." He does not despair, however. Maybe he remembers that the clergy will get the funeral fees.

General Booth, speaking at the Hippodrome, Southend-on-Sea, said Salvationists "did not go out into the market-places with a cheap God or an easy religion." "Cheap" is good! It recalls those evangelists who will not start their services till the collecting-hat is full.

A commotion was caused at a Hampstead inquest because two Jewish gentlemen were sworn on the New Testament. They went through the ceremony again, when one of them protested that the second oath was wrong. It should have ended "So help me, Jehovah," and not "So help me, God." The two Jews were sworn for the third time, and the incident ended. We don't know who to admire the more—the deity or the coroner.

The *Yorkshire Evening Post* says:—

Forty odd severe earthquake shocks have been experienced in the Abruzzi region since Good Friday afternoon, says the Milan correspondent of the *Daily Chronicle*.

Panic was caused among the worshippers at the Aquila Cathedral, where the mission preacher was thrown out of the pulpit by the violence of the shock.

There's something wrong here! It does not seem to read properly. It surely ought to have been a Freethinker who was thrown out of the "pulpit." Why is the Lord treating one of his own in this rough manner?

An official communication from Petrograd says: "In the Black Sea we discovered a minefield. All the mines bore the inscription, 'Christ is risen,' painted in white in Bulgarian characters." This is as it should be. When Christians murder Christians, it is quite fitting it should be done with proper religious ceremony.

Miss Helen Mathers wishes the King to personally take charge of the nation's affairs. Her reason is that "there is only one who by right divine is fit to do so." We thought "Me and God" was a peculiarity of the Kaiser's. At any rate, we would remind Miss Mathers that George the Fifth is not King by "right divine," but by the goodwill of the people as expressed through the British Constitution. But we suppose it is hard to avoid stupidities when the religious fit takes one.

The Vicar of Shepreth, Rev. E. H. Tottenham, contributes to the *Cambridge Magazine* a very breezy sketch of a sermon delivered by the Bishop of London in the Church of St. Mary the Great, Cambridge. His opinion of Bishop Ingram is not a very high one, as one may gather from the following summary of the sermon—

The Bishop was not in very good form. He gave one the impression of having undertaken something that was rather beyond his powers. One was disappointed to find no "militarisms" about him—no anecdotes from the trenches—and he only recommended one book published by some students' society. Still, he is always interesting, fresh, and exhilarating, because he is a born "Patterer"—he possesses, in a refined way, the buoyancy of the late Mr. Leno, and the insouciance of the late "General" Booth. As a special pleader for funds he has no equal. Despite a procession of amateur sandwichmen (henchmen of the late Kensit, who got one in the eye at Liverpool), who serenade him wherever he is billed to appear with rude posters and shouts of "Oh, the Bishop of London!"—he annually extracts, with consummate ease, large sums of money from pious low church old ladies for his ritualistic East End Mission.

One can still hear the Bishop's solemn question—"Why does the whole organized labour-world; why does the whole world, look so askance at the Church of England?"

The obvious answer is that it is time for the Church of England to be disestablished.

A blend of Dan Leno and General Booth, with a faculty for extracting money from pious old ladies, is a very caustic description of "F. A. London."

The Rev. J. Sethin Jones, of Southend, who is an Army chaplain, writes that he is sharing "the vicissitudes of his battalion" in France. In a lengthy letter to the local press, he devotes much space to a reference to Bishop Gwynne confirming nearly 200 men in a barn, and adds that the War has "immeasurably furthered the work of Christ and the Church." We can understand the chaplain's delight, for there are more women than men in the churches at home.

The Bishop of Exeter says that in these days all eyes are turned to the Church to see what she will do. We feel that his lordship need not be unduly anxious. So far as we can tell, few care to the value of a brass button what the Church does, or expect it to do anything useful.

The Bishop of London says that in the past the Church has not been successful in pressing people into affectionate, loving brotherhood. A discovery of the obvious, and quite characteristic of the Bishop.

The Bishop of Birmingham says there must be an equalizing of work and payment among the clergy. We have heard this kind of thing before, and all it really means is that the smaller salaries must be increased, not the larger ones reduced.

Rev. F. B. Meyer, addressing a meeting at Birmingham, said people were asking "Where is God?" He replied that he was in the midst of the War. "He was sorrowing with every broken heart, and he was wincing with every hard blow." Poor Deity! But the clergymen, who, we believe, are as well informed as Dr. Meyer, say that God is *not* in the War, so that it would be as well not to waste our sympathy, but reserve it for those earthly persons who *are* in it. And we suggest to Dr. Meyer that the people who ask "Where is God?" are not really concerned with whether God is wincing with every blow, but are wanting to know why God doesn't prevent his naughty children murdering each other. We might reply to God as the boy did when his father said the thrashing he was administering hurt him as much as his son. "Yes, dad, but not in the same place."

A daily paper comments that "for two months the Old Bailey has had no murder cases." There is no cause for apprehension. Christians are not guiltless of homicide across the water.

Preaching at All Saints' Church, Margaret Street, the Rev. R. J. Campbell said "the dreams of our materialistic civilization are destroying themselves." Do dreams commit suicide?

In connection with the Bishop of London's crusade against the music-halls, the newspapers say that "special commissioners have visited variety halls to report on the conditions." Truly a very pleasant crusade.

The National Sunday League has held its sixtieth annual meeting. Since the start of the War it has contributed £11,540 to various charities, and the Sunday concerts at London halls during the past winter were attended by 905,552 people. Won't the Chadbands and the Pecksniffs be delighted?

Those who doubt the Kaiser's piety should bear in mind that he carries with him always a book of prayers and hymns which belonged to his father. At night it is under his pillow, and by day it is in his breast-pocket. And then people ask, "What should we do without religion?"

The Vicar of St. Martin's, Cardiff, says he has noticed something happens when an attack is made on the Church of God. So have we. Usually it takes the form of a series of silly sermons and dishonest apologies.



## To Correspondents.

H. R. WRIGHT.—On the face of it, we should say that the transaction was invalid and illegal. But we should like further details. Who borrowed the money? Who advanced it? And who had authority to offer the rates as security? As it stands, your statement is too brief to warrant an opinion.

A. J. MITCHELL, B. S.—what on earth is "B. S."?—sends us a long and abusive letter of four pages on account of publishing such a paper as the *Freethinker*. He suggests we should change the title to *Foolthinker*. Sorry we can't adopt the suggestion, although we quite realize that with that title Mr. Mitchell would feel more in harmony with the paper when he picks up a copy.

A. RADLEY.—Thanks. You will see we have made good use of your pars.

A. ROBERTSON.—Thanks for good wishes for, and subscription to, Propaganda Fund.

ONE of our French subscribers, M. Lecomte, writes:—"The death of Mr. Foote deeply grieved me. He was a staunch defender of Freethought in England, and I rejoice to see that the *Freethinker* is going on as usual, championing the good struggle against the creeds and Churches, for after the War there will be a big work to deal with, and one feels that Mr. Cohen is equal to that arduous task."

J. CLOSE.—Certainly we shall keep on "pegging away." Being a lover of peace, we are fond of a fight—when it is in a good cause; and no cause could be better than this one. Your idea of getting the *Freethinker* on the railway bookstalls is a good one. We intend pursuing it when conditions become more normal; but for the moment we can only trust to individual Freethinkers doing what they can in this direction.

ROBERT ARCH.—Thanks. Quite all right.

F. W. WALSH writes, apropos our Shakespeare Number: "The Shakespeare Number of the *Freethinker* was excellent. I do not think it could be excelled, and all the contributors were happily inspired in treating various sides of Shakespeare's work. You are to be heartily congratulated on one of the finest tributes that it has been my good fortune to read—and I have read many."

E. RAGGETT.—We have made the correction, as you will see. Thanks for promise of a second subscription, if required, to the Propagandist Fund.

J. WILLEY.—We have not yet received the copy of the private journal you said was on the way. We mention this as you will have been expecting us to return it.

J. A. REID.—Thanks for reference. Will see and deal with it later.

E. B.—Thanks for cuttings.

W. J. RAMSEY writes that we missed a good point in referring, the other day in our notes on Easter, to "Black Monday." He is correct in thinking that we referred to the great bank failure of 1866, and, as he points out, this was really on a Friday. Our phrase should have read "Black Friday," which would have made the point the stronger. We are sorry we mistook the day. It proves the need for constant reference when one is dealing with such matters.

J. BREEZE.—Pleased to have your note of confidence and support. We felt quite certain of it, anyway.

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

*The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.*

*The National Secular Society's office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.*

*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.*

## Special Propaganda Fund.

THE purpose of this Fund will now be quite familiar to all our readers. Its whole scope is expressed in the original proposal made to me, and which I again publish:—

I hereby offer to give to the Freethought Cause, through Chapman Cohen, to be expended as his judgment approves, such sum of money, not in excess of two hundred pounds sterling, as may equal the sum of those donations which shall be actually in the possession of Chapman Cohen, which shall have been given as a result of this offer; said sums to be used in the same way. Mr. Cohen's written statement of the amount due under this offer, dated and signed, to be written on the back of this paper; on receipt of it I will at once remit draft for the amount.

In sending along this very generous proposal the donor said:—

I am desirous of helping the Freethought Cause. I am also desirous of doing this in a way that will stimulate others to do so, rather than cause them to think that my interest in the Cause renders their continued aid of less importance. I hope you will get the entire amount. £400 will give the Cause a great lift.

From the list of subscriptions to date it will be seen that the offer has had precisely the effect intended. It has stimulated friends of the Cause to see that this money shall not be lost, and, in the midst of a great war, with so many calls upon everyone, I cannot adequately put into words my own appreciation of what they are doing. And as every penny of the money will be spent as propaganda work, I think it may safely be promised that the result will be a great stimulus to the Freethought Movement all over the country.

I have already said that I do not like the expenditure of this money to rest only in my hands. So a small committee, consisting of Mr. Lloyd, Mr. C. Quinton, Mr. R. H. Rosetti, and myself, will collectively direct its expenditure. All are members of the Executive of the N. S. S.

Among the many letters that have reached me is one from Mr. F. W. Walsh, and the conditions under which it was written—it will be remembered that Mr. Walsh is completely paralysed and writes holding a pencil between his lips—makes it a treasured document. He says:—

I read your appeal for funds with great pleasure. I send you my wee mite of 1s. 6d., and heartily regret I have no more to give. But every little helps, and if every sympathizer with our Cause gave according to his means, there would be no doubt of a splendid response on behalf of the best of causes.

A well-known writer, whose subscription is acknowledged under "Journalist," says:—

My resources are sadly curtailed in these days, but I must send my mite to help the work in which you are engaged. Only those behind the scenes can fully appreciate the task of keeping a journal like the *Freethinker* alive in these times. That is a service to liberty which all should hasten to recognize, and I am delighted to see by the subscriptions already received, that Freethinkers are not oblivious to the great work you are doing.

Mr. H. Jessop, in forwarding his promised cheque for £20 on behalf of himself and wife, writes:—

We are delighted to see how well the Freethinkers are responding to your noble lead. What the party requires is a pushing, up-to-date, strong leader, and the people will then do their part. I am pleased you intend going on as you started with the *Freethinker*. Why, man, the very devil cannot stop your progress. The paper is clean, bright, and an education to all readers.



Mr. T. H. Elstob says :—

I can quite see from the improved *Freethinker* that it's going to take more than a European War to sink the old ship. This, when there's "nothing doing" in Christianity, should make us all feel proud. At the moment, no *great* enterprises can be undertaken, but we can prepare for them in the future.

Mr. C. F. Hallam (Cardiff) writes :—

Please find herewith my contribution to the Propaganda Fund. The purpose is an admirable one, and I hope that the whole of the £200 will be received. A Fund of this kind is needed, and I am sure that it will be wisely expended and result in great benefit to the cause of mental emancipation.

Mr. J. W. Wood sends us, with

much pleasure, an earthly *crown*, knowing, though you deserve it, you will never get a heavenly one.

Well, we shouldn't know what to do with if we did.

Mr. J. Sumner (Birmingham) says, with regard to the Fund :—

I am quite sure it could not be in better hands, and I wish you every success. I only wish the energy that is displayed by you and your colleagues could find more congenial soil in which to sow the seed of Freethought than that afforded by the British public.

We also wish the soil was better, but it is our work to try and enrich it so that it may yield a more profitable crop.

As will be seen, the subscriptions amount to £156 6s. 2d. This leaves £43 3s. 10d. to be raised within the next fortnight if the whole of the offered £200 is to be secured. Forty-four people at a sovereign each will realize the full £200 on our part. If more than forty-four are bitten with that desire, no one will complain.

Previously acknowledged, £140 10s. — F. W. Walsh, 1s. 6d.; Mrs. G. W. Foote, 10s. 6d.; W. H. M., £2 2s.; A. Robertson, £1 10s.; J. Close, 2s. 6d.; J. Lazarnick, £1 1s.; Mrs. Turnbull, 10s.; J. W. Wood, 5s.; Journalist, £1 1s.; C. F. Hallam, 10s. 6d.; S. Ayres, 3s.; J. Breeze, £1; G. Backhouse Church, 5s.; T. H. Elstob, £1; Tom White, 10s.; A. W., 2s. 6d.; J. Robertson, 5s.; G. Sandars, 5s.; A. C. Proctor, 5s.; G. Proctor, 5s.; H. King, £1 1s.; G. A., £1 1s.; C. Williams, 10s.; J. Harding, 5s.; P. Hinde, 10s.; Edmonton Boy from the Front, 5s.; J. Burgess, 2s. 6d. *Per Miss Vance* : "Ernest," 2s. 6d. Total, £156 6s. 2d.

The £1 acknowledged from "E. Raggett" on April 30 should have been £1 1s.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

## Sugar Plums.

The second of the South Place lectures was as successful as the first. There was a fine and appreciative audience to hear Mr. Lloyd on "Heroes of our Faith," and judging by the sustained applause at the close of the lecture the address was fully appreciated. Despite his recent illness Mr. Lloyd was in excellent form, and *when* we get some fine weather we have no doubt but that he will shake off the last dregs of his indisposition. The success of these two meetings makes us regret that a longer course was not fixed. We must now, however, possess our souls in patience, and prepare for a vigorous campaign in the Autumn.

The arrangements for the Annual Conference of the National Secular Society, on Whit Sunday, are now practically complete. Queen's Hall, Langham Place, W., has been engaged for the Business Meetings and the Public Meeting in the evening. The list of speakers will be announced next week and the Agenda, which is in the hands of the Committee, will appear in these pages shortly, according to custom. Provincial Delegates and visitors should com-

municate as early as possible with the General Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, stating the nature of the hotel accommodation they require and for how long. Nothing is quite so easily procurable in London as before the War, but the City has marvellous resources and visitors may rely upon the Secretary's best efforts.

The following from the correspondence columns of the *Stirling Observer* will, doubtless, interest many of our readers :—

### AN APPRECIATION.

SIR,—I was very pleased to learn that you had republished in a recent issue an article from the pen of Mr. Chapman Cohen, entitled "Science and Trade," and I write with the more pleasure as an old Stirling High School boy. There I spent six happy years under the late Mr. Hutchison. I beg you to accept this expression of my sincere congratulation.—Yours, etc.,

ROBERT STEVENSON.

Chemical Laboratory, Eglington Iron Works,

Kilwinning, April 21, 1916.

P.S.—I pray that pious Stirling may read, mark, and inwardly digest Mr. Cohen's article.—R. S.

We echo Mr. Stevenson's desire, and do not mind how many articles are "lifted" from the *Freethinker*—with or without acknowledgment. They are certain to do good, anyway. We may say here that we have been both surprised and gratified at the number of newspapers that appear to have lately discovered the existence of the *Freethinker*. We feel that we run the risk of becoming "respectable."

Our Business Manager informs us that readers are taking liberal advantage of the Pioneer Press's offer of John Stuart Mill's *Three Essays on Religion*, originally published at Five Shillings, and which is now being sold at One Shilling and Sixpence. We are pleased to learn this, as no more powerful indictment of the argument that nature discloses the existence of a good and intelligent being was ever penned. As the *Westminster Gazette* remarked at the time of the appearance of the work—we fancy the reviewer was Mr. John Morley, "In pages of vivid and emphatic delineation, which startle us even after the powerful denunciations of Schopenhauer or Leopardi, with which they may be compared, Mr. Mill draws up a terrific indictment against the archetypal idol of the deistical moralist." And, in our opinion, that indictment is simply unanswerable.

We may take as a specimen of this the following reply to those who see a benevolent purpose in nature :—

Nature impales men, breaks them as if on the wheel, casts them to be devoured by wild beasts, burns them to death, crushes them with stones like the first Christian martyrs, starves them with hunger, freezes them with cold, poisons them by the quick or slow venom of her exhalations, and has hundreds of other hideous deaths in reserve, such as the ingenious cruelty of a Nabis or a Domitian never surpassed.

That is the God nature discloses, if it discloses any. And to those who argue that God desires man to be happy, Mill retorts :—

If the maker of the world can do all that he will, he wills misery, and there is no escape from this conclusion. The more consistent of those who have deemed themselves qualified to vindicate the ways of God to man have endeavoured to avoid the alternative by hardening their hearts and denying that misery is an evil. The goodness of God, they say, does not consist in willing the happiness of his creatures, but their virtue; and the universe if not a happy, is a just universe. But waiving the objection to this scheme of ethics, it does not at all get rid of the difficulty. If the Creator of mankind willed that they should all be virtuous, his designs are as completely baffled as if he had willed that they should all be happy; and the order of nature is constructed with even less regard to the requirement of justice than to those of benevolence.

No apologist has yet managed to answer these arguments, and we venture to say none ever will. The *Three Essays* is in itself a handsome volume, and should find a place on the bookshelves of every Freethinker.

Apropos of Mr. Arch's admirable article on "The Freethought of Thomas Hardy," we have received a letter from



Mr. Hardy in which he says, "I have never understood why Mr. Chesterton was so dishonest in his reference to me in his book of *Victorian Literature*." For our part, we find no difficulty in understanding Mr. G. K. Chesterton's purpose in referring to one of the greatest of living writers as "a sort of village Atheist brooding and blaspheming over the village idiot." It is, apparently, Mr. Chesterton's policy never to lose a chance of jeering or jibing at Freethinkers, and by strong, shallow paradoxes, superficial generalizations, and an emptiness of aversion that serves to disguise the flimsiness of his thought, to convince the religious world that the best brains of to-day is on its side. Mr. Chesterton's observations of Mr. Thomas Hardy would have been impertinent in the mouth of an equal (of course, an equal would never have said it), it became quite indecent from one who mistakes the cap and bells for the laurel of literary immortality.

The elder generation of Freethinkers will learn with extreme regret and sorrow of the death, on April 12, of Mr. W. H. Morrish, of Bristol. The news only reached us in a letter from Mrs. Morrish a few days ago, which is the reason for the delay in making the news public. Mr. Morrish was one of the "Old Guard," and throughout a long life was well known as a sincere and brave upholder of Freethought. Of late years his name has been less prominently before the Freethought public than it used to be, but his interest in the Cause never flagged, and very shortly before his death we received from him a letter which showed that his concern for Freethought was as lively as ever. We had the pleasure of staying at his house on our last visit to Bristol, and his cheery confidence was a tonic for anyone suffering from a jaded spirit. His death was immediately due to a complaint of the heart, and he succumbed after a three days' painless illness. In his sleep he passed away to that sleep which knows no awakening. We feel that the Cause of Freethought has lost a real friend, and one of whose work in earlier years the newer generation of Freethinkers is reaping the benefit. We are sure that we are voicing the desire of Mr. Morrish's many friends and acquaintances in offering his wife and children their, and our, sincere sympathy on the loss of one who is well described as "a real friend, a level-minded, and noble-hearted man."

We congratulate the Gould Committee, formed for the promotion of Moral Instruction, on the success that has attended its efforts in providing funds for keeping Mr. F. J. Gould engaged on a work for which he is supremely fitted. It would have been a thousand pities had Mr. Gould been driven, through financial pressure, to spend his energies in other directions. Too many good men have been lost to the Freethought cause through this. From the First Annual Report we see that the Committee has been successful in raising what Mr. Gould calls his "customary salary," and is left with a little balance in hand to start the second year. We hope that the success achieved will make further success the easier.

The Committee of the Rationalist Peace Society forwards us the following resolution, passed at its last meeting:—

That this Committee of the Rationalist Peace Society desire to enter a protest against the proposals now being put forward to follow up the present War by a commercial war. The provocative manner in which these proposals are advocated can only increase the difficulties of negotiations for peace, and if carried out they would inevitably tend to create further strife between the nations.

The Bethnal Green Branch commences its open air propaganda to-day (May 14). The Meetings are held in Victoria Park, near the Band stand. The speaker—at 3.15 and 6.15 will be Mr. Howell Smith, B.A. We hope that all East End Freethinkers will make it a point to be present so as to give the Branch a good send-off.

We have been asked to announce that Freethought meetings are being held in Jail Square, Glasgow, on Sunday afternoon and evenings. We have also heard a good report of the character of these meetings, and we hope that Glasgow Freethinkers and inquiring Christians will find it convenient and useful to attend.

## A Fool on Fools.

MR. G. K. CHESTERTON, the champion of the orthodox, has become a Chestnut Dealer. The Chesterton champagne is becoming stale. Perhaps it was only gooseberry wine after all. Mr. Chesterton, no doubt, has a balance at the bank, for with orthodoxy entrenched as it still is, there can be no doubt that he has a large number of patrons. But of balance of the mental description he has none. His heady wine has gone to his own head.

Mr. Chesterton, in the course of a whimsical article in a recent issue of the *Saturday Westminster Gazette*, declares that the fool "has extinguished that magic lantern in the brain by which we realize the many coloured world without." The fool hath said in his heart "there is no God." It is just people of the Chesterton type who, when they give themselves away the most, the least know it. The many coloured world without does not require a magic lantern for its revelation. The facts of life are more important than Mr. Chesterton's fancies. Dreams help us nought in dealing with realities. No, Mr. Chesterton's definition of a fool is a failure. He will have to try again. He must have a deeper and firmer grasp of the problems of life before he is equipped to tell us authoritatively what is folly and what wisdom. His violent longing to smash the nose of the "modern fellow," the "fair young fool" with the "beautiful hair" and "the beautiful eyelashes," does not help. Like all other kinds of violence it hinders.

We are not to be deceived by Mr. Chesterton's paradoxical tricks. He starts out by saying that men are not merely *mostly* fools, but that they are *all* fools—at least temporarily. But the eternal, hopeless fool with one idea (which he *didn't* derive from his grandmother), the arrogant fool whose brain has stopped, is to be mostly found amongst the "advanced" thinkers—the "modern fellows." The orthodox fools—the fools for Christ—are white fools, and only that at times. The denier of orthodoxy is the black fool—essentially, permanently, and to the very core, an irredeemable "perfect" fool! Why, Mr. Chesterton appears to be enough of a pessimist to limit the power of the religion he professes to defend! Surely,—

While the lamp holds on to burn  
The greatest sinner may return.

But Mr. Chesterton carefully avoids the employment of the term "sinner." It may be that he puts the sinner and the fool in different categories. Or are we to conclude that the folly of the black fools, whose noses have such a fascination for Mr. Chesterton's sinewy fist, is so blinding and all-possessing and controlling that it qualifies for the Lunatic Asylum and therefore does away with responsibility on the part of such fools? In any event there is no manner of service in losing one's temper and yielding to violent impulses to batter such creatures. Fools who are "fierce," "terrible," "demoniac," "rabid" in their folly will not be made wise by punching. They are subjects for rational and dispassionate and logical consideration. They should be subjected to the best scientific treatment at our disposal. But Mr. Chesterton greatly errs in supposing that the majority of that type of fool is to be found among the "advanced," the rationalistic "modern fellows." We find it in all ages among the most orthodox, the most enthusiastically religious, the people most capable of being devoted fanatics. Of such we have outstanding instances in the Prussian theologians and preachers of to-day. The magic lanterns in *their* brains show the many coloured world without to them in one colour, namely, RED.

I venture to think that Mr. Chesterton would have approached nearer to the truth if he had designated the *tools* of such men as the real fools. But what can one



make of a journalistic mountebank who displays such vain ignorance and lack of perspective as to presume to call Shelley a fool? Is Mr. Chesterton worthy to loose (or fasten) the latchet of Shelley's shoe? Inferentially there can be no doubt from Mr. Chesterton's conceited article, that if Shelley were with us to-day he would be categorized by the mighty and superior Mr. Chesterton as one of these "modern fellows," sneered at by him as "advanced," and a "fair young fool." But Shelley is not with us in the flesh; otherwise, Mr. Chesterton might not be so eager to provoke reprisals. It is easy to abuse the dead.

The fact is, that Mr. G. K. Chesterton is merely a superficial trifler and a scribbler of cheap persiflage-dictatorial and all as he is in his pronouncements. Is his description of the title of "fool" as "beautiful and sacred" meant to make us laugh? Or what? One can hardly conceive anything more feebly inappropriate. And the questions he imagines to a superstitious modern clergyman are the veriest piffle. Mr. Chesterton sneers at the "intellectual high thinkers" and the men "who profess and call themselves clever." It is clear that Mr. Chesterton has been unfortunate in some of his associates, seeing that the effect of them upon him has been to stir up his pugnacity. Let him be assured that the "fair young fools" he alludes to, and the men "who call themselves clever," form an exceedingly minute, and a contemptible and negligible minority of people who think at all; and a sensible man's experience of them should not have the effect of arousing his pugnacity, but of tickling his risible faculties. The "fair young fool" who sees no necessity for any law or morality, and who thinks we need follow nothing but "our own sweet will," is non-existent in rational circles. But in Germany, the most orthodox country in the world, all law and morality has gone by the board in this War. There the "will" of the fool has had its full gratification. If we might venture to suggest a definition to Mr. Chesterton, we would say that the biggest and most hopeless fool in the world is the man who transgresses natural law at the imaginary commands of imaginary supernatural beings. It is because of the predominance of this fool that the will of the wisest cannot prevail.

IGNOTUS

### Billy Sunday.

THE Reverend William Sunday, the American evangelist and revivalist, is frequently the subject of criticism and attack, and the object of wit and ridicule by Rationalists and Freethinkers, and often by orthodox Christians who do not see eye to eye with Sunday in his beliefs and methods.

Many take the view that he is utterly ignorant of the realities of religion and philosophy, a mere creed-maddened ranter, a self-seeking pietist hashing up meaningless shibboleths in the jargon of the streets and the baseball field. Others say that he is really injurious to religion, that his language is profane and blasphemous, and would be suppressed if uttered by an opponent of Christianity, being tolerated from Sunday because he is on the orthodox and powerful side, and serves the interests even of those who do not entirely approve of his propaganda. Alternatively he may be that most humorous figure—a man who takes himself too seriously.

All these views and opinions of the Reverend Billy Sunday may be correct, and a case can be made out for each of them, but they do not cover the whole circumstances. William Sunday may be defended, or at least explained and extenuated, on several different grounds—personal, religious, and philosophical.

Putting aside the presumption that the baseball evangelist is a self-seeking charlatan; accepting him as a sincere and enthusiastic man honestly believing in what he says, and in the rightness of his methods of appealing to the public, consider his case carefully.

Billy Sunday feels that he has a message to deliver, and cannot contain himself till he has delivered it. Christianity has gripped him with all the force that a newly-heard doctrine seizes untutored and simple minds. Such do not stop to argue or dispute, they have no hesitations or doubts, but feeling in their souls that what they believe is entirely right and good, is in fact the whole truth, they must deliver it to the world.

In this Will Sunday is completely justified. It is a saddening thought that the majority of people have few ideas of their own. They go about their daily tasks and trivial domestic duties varied only by a little cheap amusement, and their minds retain only a miscellaneous and exiguous collection of likes and dislikes, hopes and fears, prejudices, prepossessions, and cloudy and amorphous superstitions and half-truths, culled from a scanty elementary education, from discursive reading, picked up in desultory conversation or fierce unreasoning debate, and in numerous other ways. The mental outfit of the ordinary man and woman is a hotch-potch of scraps and shreds and patches, the despair of thinkers and of all who hope for a better intellectual and social future.

A clearly thought out idea, and the logical expression of it, is so rare that when a man arises who can body forth what is in his mind, we ought to welcome him, even though his hot-gospelling is as disconcerting as a bull in a china-shop. Most thinkers keep their horns wrapped in cork and their tails tucked between their legs, so that it is refreshing and enlivening when one lowers his head and swings his tail and sends some of our delicate porcelain notions crashing earthwards and shattered. The lion so rarely roars that when he does he is almost frightened at the sound of his own voice. In plain English, if any man has anything to say, let him say it. The gift of self-expression is a talent that should be revered and encouraged with as much regard and respect as a Quaker shows for his conscience or a pianist his fingers.

The artist, poet, and novelist are applauded when they make public the fruits of their genius. Billy Sunday can claim that he is as much entitled to the public exposition of his views as they or any other person, be he politician or preacher. The liberty of public speech is so valuable that it is a dangerous precedent to deny it to anyone—even a vociferous revivalist.

After all, no one is obliged to listen to him. If the public likes not the manner and the subject of his address it can starve him to death in a garret, as it has done more than one poet, though we have every reason to believe that Sunday finds prophecy more profitable than poetry. Emerson's "Insist on yourself; never imitate. Every great man is a unique," is the ideal to which we should aspire, and encourage others to aspire as well. The achievement of the aspiration is not necessarily pleasing to the spectators—frequently the reverse.

As a Christian, the Reverend Billy has plenty of precedent on his side. One of the lessons most strongly impressed upon us in Christian countries is that the expounders of Christianity have had to meet and overcome a vast inert mass of orthodoxy and respectability in the delivery of their message. This unconventional preacher could quote Jesus himself, Paul, the preaching friars, John Huss, John Wesley, William Booth, a whole cloud of witnesses to the fact that Christianity has burst upon a smug and self-satisfied world as a thunderbolt of accusatory conscience, stirring the dry bones of drowsy formalism to life and movement. Billy Sunday is, in



fact, reverting to the historic Christian attitude of going out into the highways and hedges and talking to the people in the language that they can understand. That is the characteristic Christian gift of tongues.

Christianity, like all other revolutionary movements, has such a ceaseless tendency to become respectable, that it is necessary every few years that a prophet shall arise who will disturb the slumbrous ease of official routine. Did Billy Sunday quote Nietzsche for any other purpose than consigning him to hell he might say, "It is the ploughshare of wickedness which turns up and fertilizes the exhausted fields of goodness." The still small voice is so apt to remain unheard or to be drowned in the clamour of the market-place, or we get so used to it, that it soothes rather than admonishes. Then it is that the storm and the earthquake serve such good purposes.

Early Christianity, first regarded as a most subversive movement, became the established religion of an Empire, and helped to strengthen the hold of authority upon its subjects. The preaching friars of the Middle Ages, reverting temporarily to the ideal of the seventy disciples sent forth two by two, having neither scrip, money, nor staff, became so officialized, wealthy, and powerful that Matthew Paris asks sarcastically and significantly, "Why, O barefeet, do you run Romewards?"

In the year 1819, when the yeomanry round Glasgow were called out to suppress some rebels called "Radicals," Carlyle describes how he met a lawyer of his acquaintance, with a musket in hand, hurrying to drill. "You should have the like of this," said he, patting his gun. "Yes," replied Carlyle, "but I haven't yet quite settled on which side." Radicalism suppressed by the military! And now its chief exponents sit in the Cabinet and the House of Lords.

Socialism, which was to abolish the old order of Europe, and create a new heaven and a new earth, which even the Kaiser William feared, has become a valuable instrument in the hands of the rulers of Europe, enabling them to discipline the working classes, to train them to obey orders and to organize, and to go meekly to the field of slaughter. No one need be surprised if the day comes when the Nihilists rule Russia, and the King of England calls upon a prominent Anarchist to form a Cabinet.

Against such deadening tendencies revolt is ever necessary. The re-popularizing of popular movements is essential. Any man who breaks out of the massed and orderly ranks, and striking across the wilderness opens up a track which can be seen and followed by others, is a benefactor. The time will arrive when the track becomes a broad highway.

In the United States of America particularly, where religion, like most organizations, becomes the slave of opulence and display, a breaking away from the usual is to be welcomed.

The Reverend William Sunday may be a loud-mouthed, shameless quack, stumping the country with valueless nostrums; he may be a comic figure, fit object for loud and prolonged laughter; but he certainly is a psychological phenomenon, needing careful study and examination by all who are interested in affairs above and beyond the material necessities of life.

A. R. WILLIAMS.

Mr. George Greenwood, M.P., has a pretty wit. Interviewed by the *Weekly Dispatch* he said, "There is stronger evidence that Jesus was an historical person than that William Shakespeare, the player, wrote the plays." This reminds us of the story of the man who defended a very tall story by saying it was "as true as the Gospels."

## Pernicious Pars.

We have been looking forward for some months now to the long-promised visit of the Rev. Billy Sunday, the successful evangelist of the United States, who saves thousands of souls regularly every week. Truly, America is the land of progress; for where in England can we point to so potent a force for Christ as the Rev. Billy Sunday is in the United States? We cast no aspersions upon our own Divines, but we are very reluctantly forced to admit that they cannot pretend to possess the spiritual magnetism which the Rev. Billy Sunday dispenses so effectively.....Christ is at last awake in the United States, for we must not overlook the fact that the Rev. Billy Sunday has made Christianity not only a spiritual success, but also a commercial success—a rare and divine combination.—*Pious Profiteer.*

We feel that the Church has not yet done its full share towards helping to continue the War and to ensure complete victory. We therefore suggest, that owing to the very limited supply of wood now available, and also to the increasing demand for trench-pegs, gun handles, and other necessities of the Military System, the clergy offer all the wood contained in the churches, comprising the pews, benches, tables, lecterns, reading-desks, etc., to the Government for immediate use. We can only trust that the clergy will take this suggestion in the spirit which is intended. Wood must be obtained, and there is an end to the matter. No sacrifice can be too great: no offer too generous. God save the King!—*Church Cannonade.*

We regret to announce that, owing to the present high prices of Communion wines and wafers, combined with the steadily diminishing collections at St. John's Church, Darkdale, in future the Communion Service will be discontinued. To compensate the steadily decreasing congregation (most members of which will undoubtedly miss the Communion Service), the Rev. Timothy Takefee has enlisted the aid of the local cinema proprietors, who have promised to lend a few worn-out films of a sacred kind to be shown in the Sunday-school between the services. We trust that this new feature will speedily increase the congregations to St. John's. We congratulate the Rev. Takefee for his spiritual foresight and ingenuity. The church must be saved at all costs..... We draw our readers' attention to the splendid programme which "Cupid's Cinema" has secured this week. It should not be missed. One film in particular, "The Price of Blood," in two parts, is exceedingly vivid and true to life.—*Church Cinema and Cinematograph.*

It appears that Mr. Huxley has been talking twaddle again about his pet theory of Evolution. When, we ask, will all this modern sophistry cease? Again and again we have exposed this degenerate piffle which Mr. Huxley seeks to make popular. There is really no such thing as Evolution. The word is an arrant catchphrase which has hoodwinked and baffled millions of simple and unsuspecting people. Evolution, the truth being told, is a base materialistic philosophy of the continual development of man above the beasts—a fallacy which, thank God, this great and glorious War has now exploded for all time. Every devout individual revolts from so insidious a theory as Evolution, which is, after all, nothing more nor less than a mere ideal having no basis in truth.....Bishop Rawboney has successfully analysed Mr. Huxley's thesis and has prepared an unanswerable case for the Church, as against Evolution. The Church is builded upon a rock, but Mr. Huxley's theory is builded upon sand.—*Minister's Monotone.*

ARTHUR F. THORN.

War is conducive to the higher virtues, the clergy are always reminding us. Recently a London evening paper said, "We should have to store guns in the Museum, and get mules up the steps of the National Gallery if it were necessary for winning the War." Just so! And if the National Gallery were full, accommodation would be found, perhaps, in St. Martin's Church.



## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

## LONDON.

## OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 3.15 and 6.15, Howell Smith, B.A., Lectures.

FINSBURY PARK N. S. S.: 11.15, Stephen Hooper, B.A., a Lecture.

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

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley Road): 7, E. Burke, "The Religion of War."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill): 3.15, a Lecture.

REGENT'S PARK N. S. S.: 3.15, Stephen Hooper, B.A., a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station): 6.45, J. J. Darby, a Lecture.

## COUNTRY.

## INDOOR.

ABERTILLERY (New Era Union): F. J. Gould, 3, "Rousseau: The Man and His Ideas"; 6, "Britain's Outlook."

GLASGOW BRANCH N. S. S. (Good Templars' Hall, 122 Ingram Street): 12 noon, Annual Business Meeting.

## Determinism or Free Will?

By C. COHEN.

Issued by the Secular Society, Ltd.

## CONTENTS.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Society's affairs are managed by an elected Board of Directors, consisting of not less than five and not more than twelve members, one-third of whom retire (by ballot), each year, but are capable of re-election. An Annual General Meeting of members must be held in London, to receive the Report, elect new Directors, and transact any other business that may arise.

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

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