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## Views and Opinions.

### The Religion of Sensible Men.

"My religion," said the great Lord Chesterfield, "is that of all sensible men." "What is that?" came the natural question. "Sensible men never tell," was the illuminating or not illuminating reply—it depends entirely upon the point of view. It is a long time since this confession was made, but Chesterfield's intellectual progeny still flourishes. Nowadays, they do not always decline to say what their religion is, very often they make a vague declaration of religious belief in something or the other, but they resemble Lord Chesterfield in concluding that religion is the one thing on which frank speech and fearless thought are least desirable. And one feels that if all sensible men could be induced to say exactly what they thought about religion, we should probably find the number of sensible men large enough to do away with the necessity of even timid ones sinking sense before the folly of fools.

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### Religion and Retioence.

No other subject in the world carries with it so much intellectual insincerity as does religion. In society it is counted bad form to introduce religion into general conversation. In cultured circles expressions such as "Thank God" or "by God's help" are permissible, and at the other end of the social scale one meets with "Gor Blimey" or "Gawd's strewth," but a sober discussion of religious beliefs is counted bad taste, and is almost certain to lead to ill-feeling. Almost any other subject may be discussed without danger to the amenities, but religion is taboo. And yet it is, if we may trust a general profession, the most important subject of all. That a man must have a religion of some sort is one of the canons of respectable society, but he ought not to talk about it. If people did talk about it, they would disagree; and disagreement might disclose the fact that a large number of people only agree to believe in religion so long as they are not clearly aware of what it is in which they profess to believe.

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### The Consequence of Silence.

Now this disinclination to talk about religion seems to me to point to two things. First, there is little genuine

religious conviction to talk about. If the majority of people really believed in religion, if it were an active force in their lives they would not hesitate to talk about it. Take any earlier period of our history you please and you will find that while there is a genuine conviction as to the reality and value of religion there is plenty of talk about it. It crops up in discussions on politics, on art, on literature, and emerges in everything which man undertakes. The early Puritans tried to regulate life by religion because they believed in it. Knox in Scotland, Calvin in Geneva, and the Pilgrim Fathers in America all illustrate the same truth. The trouble then was not to get people to talk about religion, the difficulty was to get them to keep other subjects clear of religion. If things are different now it is because there is less belief, because even Christians realize that religious belief has no vital connection with the general welfare. Curiously enough, it is the unbeliever who is now most ready to talk about religion, and his readiness is due, not to his belief in its value, but to a conviction that the sooner it is cleared away as so much mental lumber the better. There is little doubt that if clear thinking and plain speaking were general, Freethought would be found to have one of the largest followings in the country. Under present conditions, we sacrifice conviction to comfort, and by a boundless dissimulation, cultivate hypocrisy until it becomes a second nature.

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### The Price of Conformity.

The second and more obvious inference from this reticence to speak plainly on matters of religion, is that punishment of some sort is still likely to be the result. I do not believe that many people are so built that they prefer dissimulation. On the other hand, it is only the few who will tell the truth if its telling involves punishment or discomfort. Make the results of plain speech unpleasant and the result is concealment, dissimulation, and hypocrisy. So it happens that having had for centuries the prison, the torture-chamber, and the hundred and one petty punishments of social life before them for plain speaking in matters of religion, the English people have come to the point of regarding it as part of the normal order of things not to be straightforward on questions of religious belief. "No one," said Chesterfield, "should communicate ideas which would trouble the peace of society." And that is exactly the advice one meets with nowadays. What a satire upon human nature is such advice! What a condemnation of the influence of Christianity! People may not be honest for fear they will disturb the peace of society. The bigot and the knave lay down the rules, and better men are content to play the game at their bidding. Who was it said that Christianity was a religion invented by fools for the benefit of knaves? Whoever it was had certainly got hold of a vital truth. For one consequence of Christian dominance has been to provide a plentiful supply of both varieties.

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### Honouring the Bigot.

So much for the Chesterfieldian advice to "sensible"

men. The term is inept. Those who follow it may be cautious or timid, but they can rarely, with truth, be called sensible. If they escape persecution and advance themselves socially there must always remain a galling sense of personal servitude that will be hard to bear. It is not alone the effect on oneself; there is also the effect on one's fellows. The man who practices intellectual reticence himself is inviting others to follow a similar policy. Why should A be more outspoken than B? If it is the wiser policy for one why not for the other? If I know that my profession of religion masks a lie, how can I be sure that someone else's profession expresses the truth? Why should we continue to thus pay homage at the shrine of ignorance and bigotry? It may be said that bigotry is strong and in a position to make its strength felt. Quite so; but how much of that strength is fictitious? I believe that a large part of the strength of religion in this country is due to the timidity of those who are not religious at all. Bigotry is by nature cowardly, but there is small wonder that it acts with the decision which belongs of right to real courage when it finds its commands treated with so much consideration. And surely there is no reason in the nature of things why a lie should be paid exaggerated respect because of its antiquity. The right to freely express heresy will be conceded only when the heretic is strong enough to take that right for granted. Nor need one become either a fanatic or a bully to master the art of expressing opinions without reserve whenever the opportunity permits it being done.

#### Our Need of Courage.

It is all very well talking glibly about teaching people to think. There is plenty of thinking in the world, and plenty of Freethinking too. Our real need is for thought with courage at the back of it. We have scores of politicians, men of science, and men of letters, who are certainly Freethinkers, and who yet keep their opinions on religion to themselves, or voice them only in the company of selected friends. In religion and politics alike the air is saturated with timidity, and in consequence with insincerity. And as few work on the plan of saying all they really believe, no one seems quite certain that they believe all they say. Thus the rule that "sensible" men never tell their opinions on religion only too often ends with their not having opinions worth bothering about. Bigotry cows them during life, and often sets the final seal upon its triumph by perpetuating its mummeries over their dead bodies.

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#### The Need for Plain Speech.

Meanwhile, those who do not believe in Lord Chesterfield's rule pay a heavier price than needs be for their disobedience. The burden of propaganda which would be comparatively light if shared by all, becomes often unbearably heavy because so few have the courage to speak out. The rest are overawed by pasteboard fortresses and dummy guns. The strength of religion is to-day largely due to the weakness of Freethinkers. And there is one thing certain. If Freethinkers desire the respect of the religious world they must show themselves strong enough to command it. There is only one way of getting the world to respect an opinion, and that is by those who hold it leading the way. So long as Freethought opinions are hidden, so long as heresy is put forward by heretics with an apologetic air, so long it will be easy to treat Freethinkers with contempt. Intellectual sincerity and courage alone will ever make Freethought a real force in the country, and there was never greater need for these qualities in our life than there is to-day.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

## Theology and Religion.

FREETHINKERS are often told, by Christian teachers, that religion is absolutely unassailable because it signifies simply the life of God in the souls of believers. "What you attack," they declare, "is not religion, but theology, and you ought to know that religion and theology are two entirely different things. Theology is of the earth, earthy, while religion is from heaven." We have frequently been confronted with this stupid contention, and we have no hesitation whatever in affirming that stupidity is its most conspicuous feature. Religion without theology is wholly inconceivable. The *Church Times* is quite right when it boldly asserts that to ask, "Why can't we have religion without theology? is like saying, can't we have ships and shells and aircraft without mathematics?" Our contemporary adds that "theology is only accurate religion." That is to say, religion and theology are two words expressive of the same fundamental ideas, from which it inevitably follows that to attack the one is to attack the other. The term "believers," by which Christians are generally characterized, indicates that they are of necessity theologians. If they are at all intelligent believers they cannot help being, on some scale, systematic divines. Are they not in the habit of enumerating and defining the various objects of belief? It is generally contended that religion means communion with God in the face of Jesus Christ, but communion with an unknown being is a natural impossibility. Hence to the question, who and what is God? believers in him must surely vouchsafe some definite answer, such as this: "We believe that there is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts, or passions; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the Maker and Preserver of all things both visible and invisible." This is theology, with a vengeance, and it is, of course, a perfectly legitimate object of criticism. We naturally wish to know how any living and true being can be "without body, parts, or passions," or how such a bodiless and passionless being can be the maker and preserver of all that is. To us such a conception is in the highest degree ridiculous, so utterly illogical and absurd as to make it impossible to realize that a sane person can hold it, and yet such is the doctrine set forth in the first Article of Religion promulgated by the Anglican Church.

We agree with those who regard theology as purely human both in origin and nature; but is not the same remark equally true of religion? Who can really commune with an everlasting being, who is "without body, parts, or passions"? Who can live on terms of intimate friendship with an invisible person who is said to fill and transcend the Universe? No wonder Matthew Arnold dismissed such a Deity as "a magnified, non-natural man," between whom and ourselves no intelligible communication is within the range of possibility. Our present point, however, is that in relation to the object of religious worship there can be no religion without a corresponding theology, and that we cannot assail the latter without casting serious doubt upon the former. But the God of the Christians, as defined by themselves, is not only an intellectually preposterous, but also a positively anti-ethical, personality, who has brought into existence a world in which gigantic evils and wrongs have always flourished, flagrantly contradicting the pious dogma that we are living under a Divine Governor of "infinite power, wisdom, and goodness." There is no escape from the terrible conclusion that to worship the maker and preserver of a world like ours is to be guilty of high treason against our own nature. All within us that is noble and honourable revolts against the crime of

bowing the knee to such a Deity, the denial of whose existence is as fatal to religion as to theology.

Let us now look at the Christian God as reflected in the face of Jesus Christ. Who is Jesus Christ, and what has he done for God's world? The simplest of all the Creeds runs thus :—

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven; and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

In the Nicene Creed, the definition of him is much more elaborate, including the following high sounding phrases, "Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father." Then comes this characteristic addition :—

Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man, He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate and suffered and was buried, and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven.

Now, the orthodox Church has always advocated the proper Deity of Jesus Christ, a doctrine apart from which his Saviourhood would be an infinite absurdity. This signifies that the Christology taught by Athanasius and his followers is the indispensable background of the belief that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world. Who can trust him as Redeemer and Lord without being convinced that he is worthy of trust, and how can he be worthy of trust unless he is something more than man? Saving faith in Christ, which is the very core of religion, implies a vast amount of metaphysical theology. Does it not necessarily follow, then, that to assault this theology is to call the Christian religion itself in question? The worship of Christ as Saviour and Lord is a silly farce unless it is founded upon, or flows from, the belief in his Divinity.

We firmly maintain that the belief in the Divinity of Jesus Christ is a totally superstitious belief, absolutely devoid of factual foundation. Is it not beyond all rational doubt that, in the light of historical and literary criticism, the Gospel Jesus has been irrefutably proved to have been a wholly legendary character; or, in other words, that he never lived at all? A God-man is of necessity unhistorical, and it cannot be denied that the Gospel Jesus is a God-man or nothing. He who is supernaturally born, who gives sight to the blind and life to the dead, who walks upon the sea, and converts water into wine, and who, by dying, is said to have become a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, is clearly conceived as a superhuman personality, and the Church has never put him in any other category. Modern criticism, however, has divided Christians into three distinct classes. There are still those who continue to adhere to the orthodox position. Their number is gradually decreasing, it is true, but their loyalty to the God-man theory has not been weakened. Then a rapidly growing school is composed of people who eliminate the supernatural element from the Gospels, and claim that Jesus was only a man specially sent and inspired to enlighten mankind about their relationship to God as his children. Professor Bacon, of Yale University, is a scholarly exponent of this, to us, uncritical school, and he and those who agree with him are known as Liberal Christians. There are others who unblushingly deny the historicity of Jesus and formulate an unhistorical Christology. Chief among the champions of this strange theory is the Rev. Dr. Anderson, of Dundee, who, while rejecting the historicity of the

Gospel Jesus, clings to the Divinity of Christ whom the Church, on his own showing, has created by the grace of the indwelling Spirit. This is the most irrational of all theories.

Concerning these different schools of Christians, several points deserve notice. One important point is that only according to the first is Christ the author of orthodox Christianity. The so-called Liberals do not accept orthodox Christianity at all, preferring to conform to what they style the religion of Jesus, preached and practised by himself, rather than to the religion about Jesus, which owes its origin to the leading apostles, say John and Paul and, to some extent, Peter, and their successors. Dr. Anderson is strongly convinced that the Gospel Jesus never existed, and that, consequently, Christianity is not founded on historical facts, as popularly supposed, but is the gift of the Spiritual Christ to his Church, so that the Church is at once the creator and the creation of that Christ. It is to the first school alone that Christianity is in any true sense a supernatural religion built upon a substantial theological foundation. The other two schools agree in refusing to admit the full historicity of the Gospels as they stand, but differ in that the second undertakes to construct an historical Jesus out of the existing materials, whilst the third can perceive in the four documents nothing but a collection of unbelievable legends, in which it is impossible to distinguish between fact and fable, and undertakes to construct, not an historical Jesus, but a Spiritual Christ and Christianity, not out of any existing documents, but out of its own theological imagination.

Now, it is upon their theologies that these Christian schools subsist. Once those theologies are discredited, the systems lose all religious significance. There never was a religion, in the popularly accepted sense, without its theology; and it is about their different systems of theology that all forms of religion have been so fiercely fighting in all ages. The reason why we so vehemently attack theology is because we know that it is the only thing that keeps religion alive, and that in proportion as it loses its hold upon the popular mind religion decays. Naturally, the clergy are theological apologists because of the same conviction. Happily, in spite of all their efforts to preserve it, interest in theology is decidedly on the wane, and as a result the people are everywhere giving up religion. Yes, as the *Church Times* declares, religion without theology is impossible; and both are now dying together, and so making room for the reign of justice and truth in all the earth.

J. T. LLOYD.

### Tabrum's Tin Trumpet.

Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?  
No, sir, I do not bite my thumb at you,  
sir; but I bite my thumb.

—Shakespeare, "Romeo and Juliet."

Those vulgar heads that look askint on the face of truth.

—Sir T. Browne.

CHRISTIANITY has been described as an organized hypocrisy, and nowhere does the conviction of the truth of the statement force itself upon one's attention so much as when reading orthodox apologetics. A suburban Christian Evidence Society, impelled by the praiseworthy desire to come to the rescue of Omnipotence, has published a book, entitled *Religious Beliefs of Scientists*, by A. H. Tabrum. This publication has the avowed object of proving that there is no antagonism between religion and science; or, in plain language, that the fairy-tales of the Bible are in accordance with ascertained scientific knowledge.

Brother Tabrum has worked harder than a bench of bishops in the production of this work. He has not relied solely on his own efforts, but has invited the cooperation of a number of persons, more or less interested in science. The method was simplicity itself. He sent out a large number of courteous inquiries, and the replies he publishes in his book. He has not taken this matter in hand hastily or inadvisedly, for the letters extend over some fourteen years. Thus the volume represents the industry and slow accretion of years of application, and, therefore, should be more valuable testimony for religion on that account.

The letters printed in the volume are, unfortunately, more interesting than instructive. Nearly all the great and good men who have responded to the seductive appeals of the worthy Tabrum, appear unable to give a straight answer to a plain question. They either confuse the issue or else very reluctantly admit the soft impeachment, much as an elderly lady does when asked her age. Before we consider the replies of these notable persons, who wish to do something for the honour of the Godhead, let the reader remember that the Bible contains the stories of Noah's Ark, Jonah and the Whale, the Feeding of the Five Thousand, the Virgin Birth, the Ascension and Resurrection of Christ, and the numberless other matter-of-fact stories associated with the popular superstition. Now listen to the dulcet tones of the scholarly apologists.

Principal Macalister, of Glasgow University, answers the question in this way:—

In my opinion there is no conflict between science and the moral and spiritual teachings of the Bible.

The attentive reader will notice that Principal Macalister is astute, and has got out of a tight place by avoiding the issue. The ethics of the Bible is not the subject directly in question.

Professor W. Boyd Dawkins, of Owen's College, Manchester, has far more courage, and is frank up to a certain point, when "the rest is silence." He says:—

It is, of course, true that scientific research has shown the imperfection of the cosmogony of the Old Testament; but it has done nothing more.

As Joseph Chamberlain said on a memorable occasion, "This grows more and more sad." For should Professor Dawkins ever find himself in the grasp of the merciful God of the Christians, he will have the same hospitable treatment as Darwin and Huxley and other learned men who did not often trouble the pew-openers.

Dr. Carruthers, F.L.S., late of the British Museum, is modest and unassuming. He writes:—

I know of no fact of science which is antagonistic to the Bible, rightly understood.

This sentence is waspish; it has a sting in its tail. There is much virtue in the qualification.

Sir Dyce Duckworth is the very Saint George of these defenders of the faith. His manner is delightful, and his assurance unbounded. Laying his hand on his heart, so to speak, he purrs:—

You may rest assured that the greatest number of the best and most open-minded men of science find no difficulty in reconciling the Christian religion with the constant additions being made to science.

Indeed, they do not, as Sir Dyce might ascertain easily if he read beyond his own contribution to the Tabrum scrap-book. Not only the living, but the dead, are dragged into this exhibition. The late-lamented Sir J. W. Dawson, LL.D., is quoted as saying that, as far as his experience went, scientists were as devout as any other class of men; and he adds, pathetically, "It is remarkable how many of the most eminent men have been Christians." Professor Scott gives his testimonial: "Scientific men, as far as I have found, are

divided on these questions, much as is the case with other people." In this non-committal attitude he is ably seconded by Professor Sollas, who observes: "Eminent men of science do not appear to me to be any more unanimous on religious questions than other people; they are usually reticent in expressing their opinions." Letters are published from a number of other notorieties, but all to the same effect. All the correspondents seem obsessed with the topsy-turvy idea that religion is scientific and science religious.

The contributors to Tabrum's scrap-book gloss over the ancient conflict between religion and science, which keener eyes than theirs have perceived. Scientific teaching and investigation, or, indeed, any form of intellectual liberty, have always been incompatible with assent to the dogmas and fairy-tales of religion. The entire organization of priestcraft has ever been brought to bear against science, on the ground that it is a most powerful solvent of religious faith. Chemistry was opposed as an impious prying into the secrets of "God," and the early chemists were regarded, charitably, as agents of "the Devil," and treated accordingly. Physiology and medicine were opposed on similar grounds. Chloroform, one of the greatest blessings science ever conferred on the human race, was resented as an infidel attempt to alleviate the pains "God" meant ever to be associated with childbirth. Geology was opposed by the Church because it made the chronology of the Bible look ridiculous. Biology was frowned at because it turned the "Adam and Eve" story into a myth. The Church always bitterly resented inquiry, and preferred explaining natural phenomena by mythological invention and revelation. Even Mrs. Eddy's attempt to erect a purely "Christian" science is disfavoured and discouraged by the orthodox on both sides of the "herring-pond."

The anxiety of the suburban Christians to harmonize the Bible and science is only natural, for without such harmony the Bible is but an ordinary book, written under customary conditions, and subject to all the limitations of a barbarous age. The so-called "science" of "God's Word" is sheer nonsense. Biblical mathematics would disgrace a schoolboy; Biblical geology is stupid; Biblical medicine is ancient moonshine. Biblical history is a Mississippi of falsehood; and Biblical zoology is almost too funny for words. The Bible tells us that the Creator of Cuvier fancied that the whale was a fish; and that the Maker of Linnæus thought that the hare chewed the cud. In the legend of the "Feeding of the Five Thousand," the Bible implies that the part is greater than the whole; which, as old Euclid would say, is absurd. Indeed, it was reserved for mere men like Buffon, Lamarck, Darwin, and Spencer to clear out the stable of the Divine Ignorance, and to create science anew.

The Western mind is gradually freeing itself from the trammels of Hebrew ignorance and superstition. Adam and his "rib"-wife, the talking snake, and the three-headed Jehovah, are at last being driven out from the Garden of Eden, not by a fabled angel with a flaming sword, but by modern scholars with that far more potent weapon, a steel pen. The well-meaning Mr. Tabrum, with his scrap-book, will no more stop the tide of knowledge than Mrs. Partington could sweep back the Atlantic with her mop.

MIMNERMUS.

A widely circulated newspaper recently published a leading article, referring to the Germans, under the heading, "Devil's Work." It must be a soothing reflection to Christians that English editors use similar methods of denunciation to those favoured by South Sea Islanders.

## Nietzsche and His Critics.

## XI.

(Continued from p. 501.)

Nietzsche appears before us like a brusque and pitiless soul-doctor: the treatment which he prescribes for his patients is strict and dangerous to follow, but strengthening: he has no consolation for those who come to tell him of their suffering; he lets their wounds and sores continue to bleed, but he hardens them to pain; he cures his patients radically—or kills them. The vulgar herd is somewhat doubtful of him, and look at him with no little distrust and anxiety: it wonders whether he is not a bad man, and at times it even murmurs the word "executioner"; it draws away from him and goes to another doctor, whose hand is not so heavy, whose tones are milder, and whose treatment is less dangerous and energetic; and perhaps in doing all this the vulgar herd is not altogether wrong. On the other hand, however, Nietzsche is surrounded by a group of faithful followers who love this very roughness of his, his severity, his whole character, and who proclaim to all and sundry the certainty of his knowledge and the excellence of his method. And I think that these followers, too, are not deceived in their admiration or their love. They know, indeed, that it is not due to hardness of heart or inability to perceive pain that he shows himself so harsh towards suffering humanity.....and they reverently bow down to the brave and proud thinker who, amidst all the tortures of an incurable illness, never permitted himself to curse life, and who, under the continual menace of death or madness, maintained to the end, without a moment's weakness, his passionate hymn in honour of Life, eternally young and fecund Life, defying to the end that suffering which may have at last overpowered his reason but never bent his conscient will.—*Henri Lichtenberger, "The Gospel of Superman,"* pp. 209-216.

NIETZSCHE'S most important and best known work is entitled *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, which he describes as "A book for all and none." This book, "mystical and oracular in form, but not mystical in substance," says Mr. Havelock Ellis; "Zarathustra has only a distant relationship to his prototype Zoroaster, the Bactrian prophet"; "he has here allowed himself to set forth his own ideas and ideals in the free and oracular manner of all ancient scriptures, and is thus enabled to present his visions in a concrete form."<sup>1</sup> In this work Nietzsche, in order to attack the ruling ideas upon religion and morality, adopted a style closely resembling that of the prophets of the Old Testament—in the eyes of the pious an aggravation of his already formidable transgressions. "It is somewhat amusing to recall," says Kennedy, in connection with this work, that "it was held back for three months because five hundred thousand copies of a Sunday-school hymn-book had to be sent out first. What Nietzsche's thoughts were when this information was conveyed to him we unfortunately do not know."<sup>2</sup>

*Thus Spake Zarathustra*, "the finest dream-creation of the artist Nietzsche," as his biographer remarks,<sup>3</sup> consists mostly of addresses or sermons which Zarathustra delivers to an imaginary audience. The scene of the book cannot be placed in any time or country; it is outside this age and its conditions. Zarathustra himself lives in a cave amidst the rocks—his only permanent companions being an eagle and a serpent—from whence he goes forth three times to teach men his wisdom. It is true that cities and mobs appear, but they are no more real than the visions of an Eastern tale. The name of the hero himself, Zarathustra, is better known to us under its mutilated Greek form of Zoroaster, the ancient Persian sage, who lived about eight hundred years before Christ, and was adopted as a mere fancy.

The book was written during 1883 and 1884, consists of four parts, and runs to 488 pages. The quaint phraseology and other peculiarities, in which it differed from ordinary books, did not appeal to the public, and

the work had no sale. In fact, the fourth part was printed at Nietzsche's own expense, in forty copies only. "It is a proof of his extreme loneliness that he could only muster seven people to whom he could send a copy. Practically no reviewer, no critic, took any notice of what Nietzsche later called the deepest book and the greatest gift that has ever been bestowed upon men."<sup>1</sup>

It should be remembered that Nietzsche was an eminent scholar, and that he takes it for granted that his readers have an adequate knowledge of literature, of ancient and modern history—especially Greek and Roman—and the concepts and theories of modern science. That is why his works cannot appeal to the unlearned so much as to the educated, although I am acquainted with working men who thoroughly enjoy his aphorisms. But, to the well-read man, Nietzsche's wide and deep knowledge of literature, and of the science and wisdom of the age, gives a peculiar pleasure.

The first part of *Zarathustra* deals with the Superman. When Zarathustra reached thirty years of age, he left his home for a cave in the mountains, where he lived in solitude for ten years, at the end of which time he says, "Lo! I am weary of my wisdom, like the bee that hath gathered too much honey," and he leaves the mountains to teach his wisdom to men.

In the forest, at the foot of a mountain, he meets with an old hermit. "And what doth the saint in the forest?" asks Zarathustra. The saint answered: "I make songs and sing them; and making songs, I laugh, cry, and hum: I praise God thus. With singing, crying, laughing, and humming I praise that God who is my God. But what gift bringest thou to us?"

Zarathustra replied: "What could I give to you? But let me off quickly, lest I take aught from you." And thus they parted from each other, the old man and the young man, like two boys, laughing. When Zarathustra was alone, however, he spoke thus from his heart: "Can it actually be possible! This old saint in his forest hath not yet heard aught of *God being dead!*"<sup>2</sup>

But although Nietzsche held that God was non-existent for all intelligent men, yet he held that the idea would exist among the masses for a long time yet. In his book, *The Gay Science*, he says: "When Buddha was dead, his shadow still continued to be seen for centuries afterwards in a cave—an immense, frightful shadow. God is dead; but, as the human race is constituted, there will perhaps continue to be caves for millenniums in which his shadow will be seen. And we—we have still to get the better of his shadow!"

In the fantastic conclusion to *Zarathustra*, a strange collection of future men are gathered together in Zarathustra's cave: two kings, the last Pope—thrown out of work by the death of God—and many other creatures, including a donkey. As Zarathustra returns to his cave, he hears the sound of prayer and smells incense. On entering, he finds them all "like children and faithful old women, down on their knees, adoring the ass." For "Hath he not created the world after his own image? *i.e.*, as stupid as possible."

After parting with the hermit, Zarathustra arrives at a town where many people had gathered for a promised performance by a rope-dancer, and Zarathustra spake unto them:—

I teach you beyond-man. Man is something that shall be surpassed. What have you done to surpass him?.....

What with man is the ape? A joke or a sore shame. Man shall be the same for beyond man, a joke or a sore shame.

Ye have made your way from worm to man, and much

<sup>1</sup> Havelock Ellis, *Affirmations*, pp. 36-37.

<sup>2</sup> J. M. Kennedy, *Nietzsche*, p. 166.

<sup>3</sup> M. A. Mugge, *Friedrich Nietzsche*, p. 28.

<sup>1</sup> M. A. Mugge, *Friedrich Nietzsche*, p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, pp. 3-4 (1896).

within you is still worm. Once ye were apes, even now man is ape in a higher degree than any ape.....Behold, I teach you beyond-man!

Beyond-man is the significance of earth. Your will shall say: beyond-man shall be the significance of earth.

I conjure you, my brethren, *remain faithful to earth* and do not believe those who speak unto you of super-terrestrial hopes! Poisoners they are, whether they know it or not.<sup>1</sup>

Man is not to remain the highest product of Nature, the finest flower of Evolution. Man is not the ultimate goal towards which Nature has been blindly working for uncounted ages. Man, declares Nietzsche, is merely a bridge to something better. "Man is a rope connecting animal and beyond-man,—a rope over a precipice." As to what Nietzsche's definition, or idea, of the Superman was, we do not know, and, as Mr. Mugge remarks, "It is really love's labour lost to attempt finding an exact statement in Nietzsche's books as to what he really meant by the Superman."<sup>2</sup> In fact, the idea of the Superman, says the same author, "underwent many changes in Nietzsche's mind. At first he was sure to be one great individual," like Napoleon, whose name constantly recurs in Nietzsche's writings; but afterwards he abandoned this idea for that of a superior type of men, who were to embody the highest physical, moral, and intellectual characteristic. There is no basis for the idea, spread abroad by unscrupulous pietists, of the Superman as a bloodthirsty Frankenstein, trampling down with heavy foot all civilization and morality. As his sister, Mrs. Forster Nietzsche, in the first volume of her *Life of Nietzsche*—entitled *The Lonely Nietzsche*—observes:—

The word "superman" has worked an intolerable amount of mischief. It has been misunderstood both by accident and design.....Nietzsche's picture of the prehistoric, pre-moral man, whom he called "the blonde beast," has been confused with the ideal portrait of the superman. The blonde beast has nothing to do with the superman; he is merely an example of unspoiled native vigour, belonging to a remote past, refreshing to contemplate, like all that is strong and powerful, but in no sense an ideal to be pursued.

Whatever else of Nietzsche's thought and philosophy survives or perishes, mankind will never relinquish the beautiful dream of the coming evolution of a higher type of man. It provides an ideal for all time.

(To be concluded.) W. MANN.

## Smiles for Solemnity.

ONE of the effects—perhaps one of the causes—of the decline of religion is the recently more accelerated abandonment of affectation, sententiousness, and solemnity. The early Victorian era was deeply marked by a solemn elegance and vapid verbosity at which we now laugh. What was *impressive* to our grandfathers is *comical* to us. Other times, other men—and other customs; other points of view and other ways of looking at things.

One can readily understand that minds obsessed by an Almighty Supernatural Detective have deeply tragic moods: fits of gnawing remorse, soul-moving, passionate wrestlings in prayer, and so forth. And such minds, when they find an observer merely amused at their spiritual experience, inevitably put him down as a flip-pant, shallow fellow, full of irreverence and a godless tendency to crack jokes. How can such a person appreciate the deep things of God?

<sup>1</sup> Thus Spake Zarathustra, pp. 5-6.

<sup>2</sup> M. A. Mugge, *Friedrich Nietzsche*, p. 74.

Now, this aspect of present-day thought perhaps possesses more significance than most of us realize. *Ridicule* is the great destroyer of superstition. The moment you cease to take your God seriously, that moment the disintegration of supernaturalism begins in you. And we cannot doubt that even Christians themselves are contributing to this result in the minds of many. Thus Mr. G. K. Chesterton—always the buffoon—does not regard the Powers above as continually sitting in judgment, and wearing a constantly stern judicial expression; rather, on the contrary, does he regard them as a group of jolly good fellows—who like a bit of fun and don't mind enjoying themselves—who often have occasion to hold their sides with laughter at the solemn antics of human beings! Indeed, each one of them very much an *edition de luxe* of Mr. Chesterton. As has been indicated in a recent series of articles in these columns quoted from the *Japan Chronicle*, on "Humour in Serious Subjects," it is markedly within the last three decades that Christians have taken to any considerable extent to joking about the Bible and their other sacred things. And the taste for that sort of thing grows and grows. Forty years ago a parson who, from a public platform, ventured jocularly to disagree with Paul, say in his opinion about women, would have been censured by eighty per cent. of his hearers, twenty years ago by only twenty per cent., and to-day by no per cent. That sort of joke is out of date now. Growing appetites must have something stronger, and thus we have even educated people finding a place in the propagation of Christianity for such a man as Billy Sunday. I am disposed to concur with another writer in these columns who advises that, whatever our opinions may be of such a man as Sunday, he requires study as a sign of the times. Perhaps we have not fully understood what such methods as Sunday's mean in America. We should get a wider outlook if we took Dr. O. W. Holmes' advice and "depolarized" terms or names which, by certain associations—sacred or other—have acquired a peculiar, but restricted, meaning for us. A word or name that is hallowed for me may suggest nothing in particular to another person. What may seem the coarsest slang to me may be the only language that another can understand. And thus it is that Sunday fills the place he does. Mark Twain, in one of his books, tells of a converted miner whom he heard teaching in a remote Sunday-school. The Bible stories were fervidly communicated in all the picturesqueness of miners' slang; but every little face was all serious and absorbed attention to new stories eloquently told. It was their mother tongue—the only one they knew.

So there is something deeper than the mere form of expression. Probably we have every reason to believe that Sunday is a man perfectly sincere—of course, he may be an adventurer on the make—but, assuming his sincerity, the mere vehicle of his message is not what matters, but the message itself. And this is where—in spite of the crowds that follow Sunday—the confession of Christian failure peeps out. It is not Sunday's message that brings the crowd, but his *manner*. Sunday is a powerful, eloquent, persuasive, above all entertaining, speaker; but if he were not these things, what size would his audience be? Ask the Liberal Protestant who has emasculated his creed and hangs, like Mohammed's coffin, half-way between earth and heaven. Ask the representatives of the Churches, who are bewailing the decrease in Church membership and in the number of Sunday-school pupils. Ask the not by any means eloquent, persuasive, or entertaining, but heartily sincere and hard-working clergyman with a small cure in an industrial area. Originality, individuality, will always attract and dominate a big crowd of people, whatever

the message may be; but what will remain with the majority of the hearers will be the personality and oratory of the preacher, not the substance of the message.

No, it is not so much the *vehicle* of thought as the *thought* itself that matters in the end for humanity. And it is only the men who are gifted with insight, who actually are deep thinkers, who can fully appreciate how much greater is thought than the form of its expression. The present trouble is that habits of thought are so uncommon. It is the mission of Secularism to make people think,—not to brood like barn owls; but to *think* like intelligent human beings entitled to exercise independently, *for themselves*, the glorious faculty of Reason—destined to be the emancipator of the poor and needy and oppressed.

Happily, Secular thought is not divorced from humour and smiles. It never has been. To-day it is not merely that men have their jokes about God. They have ceased to treat him seriously at the core of their minds.

IGNOTUS.

### Acid Drops.

The folly of the Bishop of London is like the wisdom of God—it passeth all understanding. His lordship has just announced that he is prepared to allow women preachers during the National Mission on condition that (1) they only address women and girls, (2) they must have the permission of the parson in whose church they speak, and (3) they must not speak from the pulpit, lectern, or chancel steps. Result: they may speak, provided they tacitly admit their inferiority to man, in the "House of God." We do not deny that the Bishop is occupying a quite Christian attitude in this matter—indeed, from a properly Christian attitude, he is quite liberal; but his qualifications and restrictions will only serve to point out to many women how little they have to hope for from the Christian Church. Unfortunately, many women like to be dominated, and it is largely these that keep the Churches alive, and so place men such as the Bishop of London in power.

Some very pious busybodies (why are pious people so often busybodies?) have been complaining of the godlessness of the Hampstead Garden City. It seems that on Sunday Christians have their feelings outraged by seeing some of the residents playing tennis, and hearing the garden-roller and grass-cutter at work. The vicar of the place puts, by way of reply, the question, "Which is more acceptable in the sight of God—a tennis match on a Sunday, or a gossip match; to concentrate on one's lawn, or on one's neighbour?" That is a hit, a palpable hit! And if the Garden City must have a vicar, we advise it to stick to the present one, the Rev. B. G. Bouchier.

A cutting from the Johannesburg *Sunday Times* informs us that a Committee of Bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church has been appointed for the purpose of revising the Ten Commandments. They are said to be "too long for this busy world, and it takes too much mental effort for the children to learn them." A religious paper remarks that in the opinion of the Bishops, "Moses is verbose." Chief fault is found with the third, fourth, and fifth.

Mrs. Greenwood, of Hove, left £2,000 to enable over-worked clergy to travel—preferably to Palestine. If no return tickets were issued, we should not mind contributing ourselves to a fund for that purpose. Palestine or anywhere else would do, so long as they travelled.

A London newspaper says that at the execution of Casement "the crowd cheered the tolling bell." It is such things as this that make one realize that this is a "Christian" country.

A clergyman, attacking Sunday band performances and the serving of teas in the park at Southend-on-Sea, referred to

the town as a "godless place." Southend possesses forty-two churches and chapels, in addition to a Jewish synagogue and a Unitarian meeting-house. Southend "godlessness" seems as remarkable as German "Atheism."

A "National Economy" advertisement states that a new hat will buy for steel helmets; a new dress, four rifles; and a new fur coat a machine gun. If this kind of advertising is the right thing, it should include all classes. Here are a few suggestions. An archbishop's salary will buy half a dozen aeroplanes; each bishop costs thousands of shells; a parson's salary will buy a field gun. Why should ordinary citizens be alone singled out?

The Early Christians believed in a community of property. This may account for the prevalence in hotels and boarding-houses of the touching "text," "The proprietor is not responsible for any articles left in the bedrooms."

Some pious people advocate the use of prayer as a precaution against Zeppelins. Why don't they frame prayers against the risk of going to bed? More persons die in bed than anywhere else.

The Americanizing of Christianity, as of so many business concerns, goes on apace. The *Daily News*, commenting on Dr. Newton's visit to the City Temple, London, spoke of this pastor's "general publicity paraphernalia familiar enough in theatrical, but not hitherto in ecclesiastical circles." Our contemporary considers this publicity as a novelty, but it has been a familiar feature since the Moody and Sankey campaign a generation ago.

On August 4, the second anniversary of the War, a circular was sent round by many of the English bishops—perhaps by all—asking shopkeepers to close their establishments for a couple of hours, to join in a service of intercession and prayer. It had been suggested that the prayers should be offered on the Sunday, August 6. But it was ingenuously argued that, in that case, the meetings and resolutions passed on August 4 would be unaccompanied by anything of a religious character. One may trust the clergy to keep their business interests to the front. The anniversary had to be associated with religion somehow. Religion could not prevent the War, it could not humanize the War, but it can make profit from the War. That is about the only moral which can, we think, be drawn from this day of prayer and intercession.

In England we are told of the demoralization that is bound to follow the establishment of Secular Education in State schools. In France, Secular Education is an established fact, and has been for years. The results are before the world. A *Daily Chronicle* writer points out that among the products of the "godless schools" of France is M. Paul Painlevé, Minister of Instruction and of Invention, with whose praise our papers have been lately ringing. The writer says of the French schools:—

They called them "godless schools," incapable of producing men. We now see how mistaken they were, for the men of 18 to 48 years who are defending the French lines from the Somme to the Vosges and in front of Verdun have been produced by these same primary schools.

We hope the *Daily Chronicle*, and English people generally, will remember these things when the topic of religion in the schools is again before the public.

A farmer of Highbridge, Somerset, has been found guilty of wilful murder. The cause was that the murdered man was suspected of bewitching a child and pony belonging to the condemned man. "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live" is the Biblical command. But it does not pay to carry out Bible teachings in this Christian country.

Honour to whom honour is due. There are some clergymen who put their country before their profession. Canon Rashdall, of Hereford Cathedral, has joined the local volunteers.

Mr. James Douglas, writing on matters political in the pages of a contemporary, says: "If the devils have any breath left, they must be laughing till their sides ache down in Hades." Mr. Douglas had better leave that kind of writing to the editors of religious papers. They understand the "frightfulness" of faith better than he does.

Over five hundred peace meetings have been held in Sweden and Denmark, prayers said in all the churches, and the church-bells rung. Meanwhile, the Germans, Austrians, and Turks are preying.

According to the American papers, the new cathedral at Washington, now in course of erection, contains stones from Canterbury, pebbles from the Jordan, marble from Jerusalem. And when the building is open, the preachers will repeat the old, old lies from Palestine.

The Bishop of London likes to have his episcopal finger in every pie. Not content with wearing khaki, and with conducting a crusade against posters and promenades, he has paid a ten days' visit to the British Fleet, and addressed the officers and men. Surely the little village on the Thames should claim his lordship's attention sometimes.

Such is the rarity of Christian charity under the sun that the *British Weekly* considers any outward exhibition of it to be worthy of special notice. It appears that united open-air services are conducted in the park at Rawtenstall every Sunday afternoon. At these gatherings, Anglicans and representatives of the Free Churches take part; but it is understood that the many points on which they differ are on no account to be mentioned. All that these followers of the Galilean are able to do is to co-operate "in those things upon which all agree"—a feat of brotherly love to a description of which in the "British Table Talk" a whole paragraph is devoted.

Dr. Frank Ballard, for many years a professional slayer of Freethinkers, is by no means blind to the dangers which threaten the immediate future of the Christian religion. While the Rev. F. B. Meyer indulges in most glowing and enrapturing descriptions of the coming complete triumph of the Cross, Dr. Ballard declares that we are "on the verge, not of a great religious revival, but of a great spiritual struggle." He is convinced that the Christianity of to-day will not do for to-morrow; that in order to adequately grapple with the problems of the new era it must be greatly modified, or reconstructed; in fact, that to survive at all it "must obey the law of all life—adaptability to environment." We believe that Dr. Ballard is nearer the truth than most of his brethren; but the mistake he makes is to regard Christianity as capable of being rendered acceptable to the new era. In our view, the fate that awaits it is, not revived power and influence, but total extinction.

Clergymen completely ignore unpleasant facts. The Rev. G. E. Darlaston, of Crouch End, London, for example, not only ignores such facts, but openly denies them. In a recent sermon he says: "He (Christ) sways the future both for us in our little lives, and the great world in which we live." Christ has been doing that for nineteen centuries; and all that time, of course, the world has been a perfect paradise, has it not? If Mr. Darlaston is not prepared to come to that conclusion, he is bound to admit that the alleged sway of Christ has been either a colossal fiasco or a terrible curse.

A provincial clergyman describes the cinemas as a "curse," and adds, "if the films depicted dishonest boys being flogged, they might do some good." Bless his clerical heart! Does he think that anybody would pay to see such a Christian exhibition?

Ministers of any denomination are exempted from Military Service. Recently, forty young men were ordained at Wesley's Chapel, City Road, London. And there are 50,000 more parsons in this country, a large number of whom are of military age. As they have nearly all been acting as recruiting

agents, one cannot be at all surprised that, to the man in the street, their conduct is open to very obvious comment.

Without converting anyone to religion who did not previously believe in it, the War has had the effect of intensifying the superstition of many. One evidence of this is seen in the proposal to erect wayside crosses in England, similar to those which exist on the Continent. The promoters of the movement say this is because our soldiers have "been so deeply impressed" by the sight of these things in France. We shall believe that when we learn that it is a soldiers' proposal. From all we can see, the idea originates with those who are at all times enamoured of "relics," "sacred" objects, and the numerous odds and ends of fetishistic worship preserved in the Christian religion.

A contemporary points out that Winchester has more soul-doctors in it than populous Portsmouth, and that the City of London, all warehouses and offices, has more churches and clergy than the great London boroughs. The explanation is that soul-saving is a profession.

The newspapers say that the Pope has ordered his tomb. His Holiness had better order another for the Christian religion.

The Catholic Bishop of Northampton says that the Church has been shunned by the modern generation. Why not? There is not much to attract modern men and women in an out-of-date superstition.

A provincial paper has the following delightful misprint: "The bishop distributed the prizes and mad speeches." And his lordship was out of the pulpit, too!

Judging by the parish magazines, the dear clergy still use the fear of hell as a little lever to promote subscriptions. Clearly, they intend to keep the home fires burning.

Mr. Long says that, by the Census of 1911, 22,320 ministers of religion were returned as under forty-five years of age. Of this number, 17,500 were under military age.

Although the alleged founder of the Christian superstition was poor, some of his followers are familiar with finance. The Pope is said to look after the Pontifical treasure himself, and has managed to form a reserve fund from the income known as "Peter's Pence," which brings in £1,500,000 yearly. Blessed be ye poor is a fine sentiment, eh Papa?

The Lambeth Board of Guardians is impressed with the need for economy in war-time. So they proposed to alter the dietary of the inmates at one of the workhouses by giving half an ounce of meat less daily, and doing without meat altogether one day in each week. At the same time they propose raising the chaplain's salary from £175 to £190. Perhaps it will be held that the greater spiritual value received by the inmates will make up for the lessening of the food that perishes.

A newspaper tells us that a German officer prisoner "cursed" his captors, and that the latter only smiled. Curses are not so effective to-day as in the time of Elisha and the bears.

An Essex paper asks why street preachers wear such dispirited looks? The death's head look is by no means confined to the open-air evangelists. Even High Churchmen have a droop of the lip, whilst the Free Churches boast the expression of a tired funeral horse.

The writer of the Sunday-school Lesson in the *Sunday Companion*, referring to the deaths of Lord Roberts and Kitchener, adds: "To-day, it may be helpful for us to open God's word, and read in it of certain ancient heroes resembling more or less those we have lost." "Ancient heroes," indeed! The Old Testament soldiers were savages, and behaved as such,



### To Correspondents.

- A. D. CORNISH.—We will bear in mind your suggestion about reprints, but we have so many original articles in hand, that our space is mortgaged for some time to come. Still, we will see what can be done presently. We quite appreciate what you say as to the value of the "personal touch."
- J. H. D. (Johannesburg).—In saying that organizations like the Y. M. C. A. are most successful where they are least religious, we did not mean to imply that ministers of religion, as such, are of utility in the social organism. On the contrary, our point is your own, namely, that everything socially useful done by a clergyman, could be done by him in his capacity as an ordinary citizen, and similar work is done by laymen. And once the "minister" is dispensed with, other centres of association will not fail to develop.
- W. G. THORN.—Your idea of a chart of religions to be used as propagandist leaflets is a good one, but we are afraid we are unable to undertake the task at present.
- S. MASON writes, "A paper such as yours is robbing thousands of the faith on which they have hitherto relied." That is quite a handsome compliment, and not weakened, in our opinion, by the addition that we are leaving them "bereft of all that makes life sweet and wholesome." We have never come across the man who had lost his religion who felt in this way.
- F. ROSE (Bloomfontein).—Remittance of £4 4s. received from H. E. Irving, H. Meyers, B. Epstein, and S. Rose, and dealt with as desired. Our Business Manager is attending to the other matters.
- F. HOEY.—Thanks for cases. You will see we have written another note on the matter.
- S. AYRES.—We should have no objection at all to reprinting many of the *Freethinker* articles as leaflets. There is no objection—only a difficulty, and that is wholly a financial one. Printing for free distribution costs just as much as printing for sale—and leaves a larger loss as a result.
- A. J. MARRIOTT.—We think a leaflet on the attitude of the clergy generally towards the Military Service Act would be more suitable than singling out a particular person or resolution.
- 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.*

### Sugar Plums.

Our readers will have observed that last week's issue appeared on a little commoner paper than we are in the habit of using. We say "commoner," because in this case it does not mean cheaper. To be quite candid, the present price of the commonest usable paper is fivepence per pound, against twopence halfpenny only eighteen months ago. Our old paper could not now be procured under sixpence per pound at least. So we were obliged to do something, as the War does not look like ending yet awhile, and orders for paper have to be placed in advance. We hope that readers will realize we have done the best in the circumstances.

Even printing on this commoner paper means exactly doubling our weekly paper bill, and that to a paper such as this one means a considerable financial burden. We

have had many letters expressing surprise at our having kept the old paper unaltered in size, quality, and price during the War, and they would be still more surprised did they know fully what a struggle it has been. Still, we did it, and should have liked to continue unchanged to the end. When our first year of responsible editorship is ended we intend telling the story in greater detail. We will only add now what we have said before, it has been a devil of a time, rather more arduous than we thought it would have been, but exciting enough to keep us from getting dull. And we have kept the flag flying. That, after all, is everything.

We have had several complaints lately of difficulties experienced by readers in getting their weekly copy of the *Freethinker*. There is no reason whatever why there should be any difficulty, and we hope wherever any exists friends will write us. The paper should be obtainable of any newsagent, or at Messrs. Smith's railway bookstalls, by ordering it. Freethinkers should insist on newsagents discharging their order, or take the whole of their custom elsewhere.

From Mr. J. E. Remsburg, President of the American Secular Union, Mr. Cohen has received a very warm congratulatory letter on his election to the Presidency of the N.S.S. Mr. Cohen greatly values the appreciation shown his work on the other side the Atlantic, and when this unhappy War is over we hope to hear that Mr. Remsburg has decided to pay England a visit. So far as the N. S. S. is concerned, we think we can promise Mr. Remsburg the very heartiest of welcomes. Meanwhile, we can only reciprocate the good wishes expressed from a fellow-soldier in the great Army of Liberation.

A couple of cases sent us by a Liverpool correspondent remind us of the request made some time back that all Freethinkers who had been insulted or wrongly treated by the Military Service Tribunals would send us details. We desire to have as full a list of cases as possible, and we are quite certain that those we have received represent only a fraction of the actual number. It is important that Freethinkers should trouble themselves a little over this matter. It is quite impossible to lay a case before the authorities unless the actual facts are in evidence. Mere hearsay, or a vague reference to numerous cases, will not do.

### "Suffer the Little Children."

("FOR OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.")  
*Eminent Clergymen and Patriots are agitating for an Increased Birth-rate.*

BREED faster still and faster :  
 It is the priestly will ;  
 And hell shall ring with laughter,  
 For Moloch's hungry still.

Thy children shall inherit  
 The conscripts' joyous lot,  
 And this shall by thy merit :  
 To breed, and murmur not.

Waste not thy time in praying,  
 For prayers are all in vain ;  
 The nation's task is slaying—  
 Thy children's blood—its gain.

Give of thy blood and sinew,  
 Bow down and murmur not ;  
 For this thou wert created ;  
 Humbly accept thy lot.

P. A.

What idealists Christians are! A lady writer, gushing in the *Sunday Companion*, says, "All God's lovely, glad world has never surely, since its creation, been so beautiful as this year." The dear lady has overlooked the red harvest on the Continent.

## Women and Freemasonry.

IN consequence of the derangement of the postal service in the city in which I am now living, it was not until May 30 that I read the inquiries in regard to female Freemasons in America, made by Mr. S. Sykes, which were published in the *Freethinker* of March 26.

He wishes me to say, in regard to women who claim to be Freemasons, if they are under the control of the Grand Lodge of America? There is, in the British Museum, a book entitled *The Morals and Dogma of the Thirty-Third Degree*, published officially by some Masons in Philadelphia, and the writer states in it that there are more than ninety Grand Lodges, all at "loggerheads." Moreover, there are at least two sects of Freemasons in America, known, I understand, as the York Rite and the Scottish Rite, and the York Rite compels immigrant members on arrival to take a solemn oath to have nothing to do with the Scottish Rite. Both, therefore, may claim to be the Grand Lodge of America. If Mr. Sykes will tell me what institution he means by the "Grand Lodge of America," I will make earnest inquiries, and send the result.

But I beg Mr. Sykes to refer to my article, when he will see I have said nothing of "Lodges," Grand or otherwise, but of the whole "Order." That females are admitted into the "Order" is common knowledge, from the published reports of their presence, in "regalia," at Freemasonic festivities. The case is exactly parallel to an assertion that the Franciscans admit married men into their Order, being met by the statement that married men are not admitted into Franciscan "houses," which would be true, but no denial that they are in the Order, seeing the Third Order of St. Francis, or The Penitents, was founded principally for married people.

The matter is really answered by the letter of Mr. Leonard L. Broome, in the issue of May 7. This is a correction of a statement I did not make. He substitutes "the Masonic Lodge" for the word "Order," and then goes on to show conclusively that not only are women in the "Order," but actually are in the Masonic "Lodge" to the extent of having a "Grand Lodge" of their own, and "Lodges." This Grand Lodge is the "Eastern Star," of whose existence Mr. Broome informs us. This is as really Mason as The Mystic Shrine or any other sect of the religion.

In regard to men and women being in the same Lodge together, I can only at present answer from what I read in an ordinary newspaper, which described, in Philadelphia a "Lodge," and ball afterwards, in which both husbands and wives were in full regalia. As to what degrees of Freemasonry to which women are admitted in America, I should not have the temerity to ask the lady who first amazed me by telling me she was a Freemason, "What degrees she had *not* reached?" She was enthusiastic, and not only rhapsodized as to the high degrees she had passed, but as to the ineffable exaltation of intellectuality she now lives in, in consequence.

I have written to this lady, and sent her the questions Mr. Sykes asks me. Nevertheless, I at once went, as I supposed, to the fountain-head for information. In this city is a very handsome building named the Masonic Temple. It is a solid square, as large as one of the largest clubs in Pall Mall. In the front are three very handsome and imposing doorways—all closed. I went to the first, and opened the door and entered, but saw before me a pair of closed doors, on one of which, in metal letters, was the inscription: "Admittance only for Masons and the families of Masons." Of course, I went away, and tried the other doors, but they were fastened.

I then went around the building, and found a door at the side; but this had on it, in large letters, "No admittance." I then went to the back, and discovered it was all bricked up except a small door, obviously for the dustman. I cannot, therefore, obtain the information desired by Mr. S. Sykes.

But the thin irritation of these gentlemen at their "Order" being mentioned by outsiders—"chouans," or some such variation of the worn "cohun," I believe, is the correct Masonic term for the human race not captured by one or the other of their conflicting associations—raises inquiries as to these organizations.

Here, in the face of my experience and failure to come in contact with any person whatever acknowledging himself a Mason, and the ostentatious denial to the citizens of this Republic of the ordinary intercourse of everyday life, even to the extent of closing the doors of their fortress against them, one is compelled to judge of them by the way they themselves arrange to demonstrate their existence to the gentle world in which they construct their occult State.

These persons in America have a hugh building in every city. They ostentatiously go through the streets in procession, armed with bare swords. They are really—and they, moreover, pose as—a military force, independent of, and consequently logically counter against, the armed forces of the municipality, the State, and the Central Federal Government, to none of which they belong, and, judging by the looks with which they are regarded by soldiers, are accepted by them as being in open antagonism against existing institutions.

The only reason for secret associations is treason against existing laws, governments, and conventions.

In this country mystic societies are registered by the Government—I suppose on the assumption that they are, in fact, provident money clubs. If the Masons are so registered I do not know; but Masonry is not a financial nor a philanthropic institution, and no brother, no—to use Mr. Broome's phrase—"sort of sister," has a claim for one single farthing on any Lodge, nor the whole Order, for whatever munificence they may have shown in maintaining it. In England, Masonry is illegal, and only exists as tolerated by the police. By an Act of Richard II., all chapters of Masons are forbidden and illegal, and by the 19th of George III. Masons that were in existence at the time the Act was passed had to give their names and full particulars of themselves to the Government, the most minute particulars in regard to the Lodges had to be sent in, and the creation of new Lodges after the passing of the Act was forbidden. Consequently, the whole Order is existing in flagrant defiance of English law.

I make these statements on the authority of several different versions of the "Statutes in Force" in the British Museum, and in an old and very careful edition in the St. Martin's Library, which I have studied frequently. In regard to the non-philanthropic character of the Masonic institution, I read this in a letter published in the *Daily News* some years ago, written by the then Earl of Zetland, Acting Grand Master, in protest against charges of neglect of members and of general immorality. As the late King Edward VII. was for many years Grand Master, as his grand-uncle was Grand Master and his brother is so at this time, and, moreover, as the Freemasons in the Army under Lord Roberts displaced the Established Church for some ceremonials, and as Masonic emblems have superceded those of Christianity in new prison chapels, and as in a recent Cabinet eight of its members were said to be Masons; it is clear that the followers of this religion, although expressly illegal, form a police under the orders of the court and wholly apart from

the Government; constitutionally maintained by the nation.

Mr. Broome says no women are ever allowed to learn the secrets of F. and A. M. Is he prepared to assert before brother Masons that he himself has *the* secrets of Freemasonry? I never heard a Freemason who admitted that any other man knew real masonry. The despicable nonsense some imagine to be *the* secret is not more repudiated by intellectual Masons than the transcendental theosophy and archæology of the more refined is by the commonplace. In the book I have quoted, the best known masons—Preston and Webb—are derided as ignoramuses. If the brethren deny each other's orthodoxy in this manner, of what value is their repudiation of a sort of sister lodge? Coloured lodges are acknowledged in this country, and lodges of employees, and their members are really in the Masonic order, notwithstanding that such persons as negroes are not found in white lodges in America, nor working men Freemasons at all in England. In the same manner, the prejudice against women existing among English Masons no more demonstrates the non-reality of their masonry here than the parallel prejudice in the English lodges against every shade of employee proves that such persons cannot truly exist in this institution in this Republic.

Truly, a woman cannot be a Masonic "brother," any more than a Poor Clare can be a "Friar minor," notwithstanding that she is as much a Franciscan as a Capuchin. However, I should not have the courage to tell my lady, *Eastern Star*, friend of Chicago so, and the conception that her husband can keep any kind of secret, however Masonic, from her, appears to me to be actually Bedlamite.

This puzzle-patent dementia of secrets of power to be obtained for ten pounds down and continuous draws after is as pitiable as pernicious. It is an obvious fact that as soon as a secret is known to exist, its betrayal has started. The start to practice a secret art is the first step to instruct the victim in it; obviously, to a well-informed man there is no Masonic "secret," as I was once informed by an old Freemason—but "secrets" which are only the signs by which Masons may know each other—and in regard to these, it is impossible to associate with Freemasons without learning them, a fact which a moment's reflection will show to be inevitable. In the first place, when a man uses the sign of his mystic order, it is to a stranger, and it is an announcement to that stranger that he is segregated from him if he does not understand it. When, as commonly happens in business, one has to see the same sign made to more than one person, one learns it immediately; and when one sees it accepted by a man one knows to belong to a particular order—both the sign and the order are betrayed at once.

But in regard to secrets in Masonry. There are no secrets in nature, and whatever Masons may have secret is merely so by an artificial suppression of knowledge generally—mainly that effected by the religious delusion of sin; which creates a systematized general ignorance that Masons exploit. As Masonry increases in power, so the number of its secrets increase, and the murderous fanaticism the present majority of its adherents have in regard to them. Thus I, for example, have found myself in danger of my life for speaking of matters that were regarded as mere truisms in my boyhood, and for having a knowledge of Masonic paraphernalia which I had seen a thousand times in the window of the Masonic publisher in Great Queen Street. It is a gruesome example of human idiocy, that these men whose first thought is to annihilate one for knowing the original meaning of an Oriental symbol, or of the colour of a ribbon, should have published a number of encyclopædias and

dictionaries of their institutions. There are no fewer than seven of these by different compilers in the Boston library, and they have given copies of their most private rituals to the British Museum, where they are open to the whole world.

My own impression is that all the women in America imagine they—the female sex—constitute Masonry, and that nine-tenths of mankind—"mere" men—do not dream of their magical and mysterious powers. Here, all these money-clubs and reciprocal slavery associations are deistical paganisms, and are practically the same with certain biogtries, and fanatical hypocrisies, and political conspiracies, common to all. It is possible for the same person to belong to a dozen of them; they are religious—or, as I have said, sects of paganism—and look forward to the day when they will come out and supplant the existing Churches, and establish a real tyranny, to be infinitely more drastic than that now exercised by Christians and Jews as religionists; and their controllers the financiers and manufacturers.

I shall continue my inquiries, and send the results for publication.

GEORGE TREBELLS.

## The Materialist Conception of History.

ATHEISTS who are not in the habit of proclaiming themselves as followers of Marx, Engels, and Dietzgen are frequently charged by the devotees of these writers with being unable to state the history of human progress in terms of Materialism. They are told that they must go to Marx, Engels, and Dietzgen if they would rightly understand history. This in spite of the fact that the majority of Atheists are Materialists, who look upon the whole process of universal evolution as essentially the outcome of the interplay of material factors.

Few, if any, Atheists will be found to deny that thought is material in the sense that it is the result of the action and reaction which goes on between the brain and external nature. And most Atheists will admit that all social progress is to be interpreted by reference to such factors as geographical position, climate, soil, food-stuffs, etc., and their influence upon the nerve system and brain of man. This at least has been learned from Buckle and others.

But let us turn to Engels—the great Marxist—for a definition of "The Materialist Conception of History." He tells us:—

This starts from the proposition that the production of the means to support human life and, next to production, the exchange of things produced, is the basis of all social structure; that in every society that has appeared in history, the manner in which wealth is distributed, and society divided into classes or orders, is dependent upon what is produced, how it is produced, and how the products are exchanged. From this point of view the final causes of all social changes and political revolutions are to be sought, not in men's brains, not in man's better insight into eternal truth and justice, but in changes in the modes of production and exchange (*Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, p. 45).

This is accepted, I think, by most Marxists. But it contains a fallacy. I do not deny that the conditions under which economic relations and functions are formed in a society play a part in determining the structure of that society, and are powerful factors in the formation of the beliefs which men hold. Nor do I deny that the economic relations and functions of a society are factors which must be taken into consideration when we try to explain the changes which take place in the whole social structure. But it must be remembered that economic relations and functions—such as modes of production

and distribution—are themselves determined by geographical, geological, climatological, physiological, and psychological factors.

Thus our Materialist conception of history is rooted in a deeper analyses than that which leads to the explanation of everything by modes of production and exchange. "The final causes of all social changes" are *not* to be found "in changes in the modes of production and exchange." Modes of production and exchange are but two of the many ways in which society gives expression to its activity. Hence, to refer to changes in these two spheres of social activity, in order to account for changes in the whole social structure, is fallacious. Changes in modes of production and exchange need to be accounted for just as much as are changes in other spheres of social activity. Engels, in the above quoted passage, blundered into taking social functions, or modes of social activity, as if they were primary factors in the formation of society. Modes of production and exchange are certainly not primary factors. Obviously, the primary factors of social structure are on the one hand man, and on the other the totality of his environment. Between these there has been going on a continuous strife; and man's progress has depended upon his response to the pressure of his environment, partly by submitting to being modified himself, and partly by modifying his environment for his own purposes. As a result of this strife there have come into being various social relations and functions. Not the least in importance are the economic relations and functions, but we must not take them to be primary causes.

The study of economic relations and functions, as a means to the better interpretation of history, is becoming more and more important, and more widely recognized. But we must correlate the knowledge acquired in the economic sphere with that acquired in other spheres, if we would form a comprehensive and valuable interpretation of the universe.

As J. M. Robertson says:—

Men are proximately ruled by their passions or emotions; and the supremacy of the economic factor consists in its being, for the majority, the most permanent director or stimulant of feeling. Therefore, the great social rectification, if it ever come, must needs be economic (*Evolution of States*, p. 71).

But in the way of social adjustment stand not only various economic conditions which need altering, but also numerous economic, sociological, and religious ideas. And these latter must be exchanged for those of a more progressive type, just as much as external conditions must be changed if social progress is to be made. Ideas are potent factors in human evolution. To ignore them is to misread the significance of man's psychic life on its conscious side, which is, that man must learn more and more to consciously adjust himself to his environment if he would bring external nature more to his own service, and realize a more satisfactory social state. In proportion to man's conscious subjugation of the forces of external nature, and his conscious rearrangement of the various relations and functions of society, will be the value of his future evolution. Pressed from the outside by the myriad factors of his environment, the brain of man must prove capable of evolving progressive ideas, which shall guide him in all his efforts to secure social well-being. Otherwise, his conscious life will be of small value.

Recognizing that religious ideas are potent factors in the way of "social rectification," the average Atheist strives to combat those ideas, and draw attention to the value of a Materialist conception of history.

By Marxists, the potency of ideas is often denied, although they continue to propagate ideas in the sphere

of economics, in the hope of influencing their fellow-men, and thus helping to hasten the advent of a new social era. Not only so; Marx, Engels, and Dietzgen all admitted that ideas are powerful factors in human evolution. Engels says, "Tradition is a great retarding force, is the *vis inertia* of history, but, being merely passive, is sure to be broken down" (*Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, Intro., p. 37). Marx says, "Tradition must play a very powerful role in the primitive and undeveloped circumstances," etc. (*Capital*, vol. iii., p. 921). And Dietzgen states, in italics, that "conscious, systematic organization of social labour is the redeemer of modern times" (*Philosophical Essays*, p. 101). Now, consciousness consists largely of ideas, and without ideas we cannot have tradition. If, then, ideas are powerful, either to check or direct the actions of men, they must be treated as factors in human history.

The fact that ideas have no independent existence, but are the product of the interaction which goes on between a material brain and its material environment, is no justification for ignoring the part which ideas play in the world. There is as much sense in refusing to acknowledge that ideas are potent factors in human evolution as there would be in a chemist's refusal to acknowledge a certain gas as a factor in an explosion, just because that gas can be resolved into its constituent elements. It is not "idealism" to claim that ideas must be reckoned with in our attempts to make progress, provided we realize the materialistic nature of ideas.

I must now briefly illustrate the play of ideas and of external natural factors in human life. The origin of all religious ideas can be traced to material sources. To early man the gods, demons, and spirits of his mythology were of a materialistic nature. They were, doubtless, mysterious, inasmuch as they were often invisible, and seemed to act when no one was looking; but they were to be treated like any other material beings. It was necessary to provide them with food and drink; to ask them for mercy when angry; or even to avoid them in case they should inflict bodily harm. But, perhaps, no better instance of the influence which material surroundings have had upon man, in the formation of his religious ideas, can be found than in the idea of another world. In all cases, man's idea of another world is determined by his conditions in this world.

With the changing fortunes of mankind, religious as well as other ideas have to some extent changed; but the formation of religious tradition has often been an obstacle to progress. When suggestions of reform in various religious beliefs and rituals have been made, the would-be reformer has met with opposition from the mass of people who have preferred to retain the old ideas and habits. While from the priesthood there has come opposition on economic grounds the priesthood knowing that if the mass of people become alienated economic support will fail.

On the other hand, the priesthood has at times had to modify its doctrines to meet the demands of new ideas from other than theological studies. Here, again, the economic factor has made itself felt, as a priesthood that cannot adapt its teaching to a new theory—such as that of evolution—must lose respect, and with it financial support.

Having, then, found the origin of ideas in the action and reaction which goes on between the brain and external nature, we must acknowledge them to be factors in human evolution. This can be done without plunging into "Idealism," and without forgetting the economic functions of society, so dear to Marxists.

E. EGERTON STAFFORD.

## Book Chat.

### CRIME AND CRIMINALS.

No more vexed question presents itself to the student of social phenomena than that of "What is Crime?" or the even greater question, "What is the Criminal?" The lawyer, the judge, the politician finds the answer to these questions easy enough. A crime is an infraction of some legal enactment; a criminal is one who is found guilty of the infraction. That, for ages, has been the fixed political and legal attitude, and the result, expressed in terms of reprobation so stereotyped that they have ceased to impress anyone outside a law court, and in savage methods of punishment so brutal, that dislike to the lawbreaker is often more than overbalanced by detestation of the treatment meted out. Indeed, if one were bent on making out a case in behalf of the inherent and incurable stupidity and cruelty of man, a study of crime and of the treatment of criminals would afford the most promising material.

To those who approach the subject from other than a legal point of view, *A History of Penal Methods. Criminals, Witches, Lunatics*, by George Ives, M.A. (Stanley, Paul and Co.) affords a study of great documentary value and of supreme interest. Mr. Ives traces at great length, and with satisfying documentary references, not merely the treatment of ordinary criminals, but, as his sub-title indicates, the penal methods applied to the treatment of witches, lunatics, and suicides. The result is an informing catalogue of horror, the more impressive because it is set forth with the restrained impartiality of one who is not arguing in behalf of a pet theory. Mr. Ives passes in review almost every kind of punishment that has been inflicted in the hope of deterring offenders, and the one word "failure" summarizes the result of each. In relation to crime, man appears to learn even more slowly than in other directions. Perhaps it is because the element of sympathy is wanting; but the description of the treatment of lunatics only a century ago, and of the inmates of prisons little more than a half century ago, reads more like a chapter from the records of the mediæval Inquisition than an account of the treatment of criminals in a civilized country which prided itself upon its humanitarian spirit. Between the nature of the criminal and the punishment inflicted there was not only no conceivable relation—that scarcely exists even now—but there appears to have been no perception that such a relation might and ought to be established. As Mr. Ives says, "If sentences were blindly drawn out of a bag full of numbered tickets, there would not be much greater uncertainty, and perhaps often not much greater injustice."

The latter portion of Mr. Ives' work is taken up with an attempt to classify crimes and offenders, and to indicate the direction of desirable reform. The problem of the police is to catch the criminal—a fairly easy matter. The problem of society is to account for his existence, and not alone that, but to work with a view to his future. Past methods have prepared the wrongdoer for prison life only; and present methods, although an improvement, are not greatly so. Naturally, this part of Mr. Ives' book opens up many debatable points, but his discussion of the subject, particularly the chapter dealing with sexual offences, strikes us as sane and well-balanced. The author's point of view is best indicated in the following passage:—

The treatment of the future must be didactic and developmental, looking not so much on what the convict has done before, but rather on what he or she will prove to be when released. The prisoner must be trained, must be taught self-control, must be allowed within the limits of safety, sufficient liberty to bring that into action, must have innumerable chances of making his,

or her, condition rapidly worse or better according to conduct. In the complexity and struggle of life outside, the consequences of action are mostly too remote, and even uncertain, to be well realized by thoughtless and unbalanced people; but if they followed swiftly and certainly, as they should in prison, some useful lessons might be inculcated.

An approximation of prison life to social life, with such checks, corrections, and incentives as are needful to undeveloped or abnormal characters, appears to be Mr. Ives' ideal, and in that we heartily concur. Mr. Ives' work is one that may safely be commended to all interested in the history of crime and in the treatment of offenders.

### AN OLD FRIEND IN A NEW DRESS.

In *A Modern Job; An Essay on the Problem of Evil*, from the French of Etienne Givan, by F. Rothwell (Open Court Publishing Co., 2s. 6d.), we have an interesting attempt to restate an old problem in modern language. The book is in the form of a conversation, the characters carrying the familiar Biblical names. In this case, Job is a merchant of Holland, who suddenly finds himself plunged into grief and misfortune by the death of his sons, the loss of his ships, and the fraudulent bankruptcy of two of his friends. To him came his three friends—Eliphaz, the orthodox believer; Bildad, the sentimental Christian who has found peace in an emotional surrender to Christ; and Zophar, the man who attempts to disprove facts with the aid of a pseudo-metaphysical Pantheism. The arguments of each is well stated, but the net outcome of the work strikes us as similar to the result of Cudworth's *True Intellectual System*. Setting out to confute Atheism, Cudworth stated the argument for it so fairly, and his refutation was so clearly futile, that it brought down upon him the charge of being an Atheist in disguise. And although we fancy that M. Givan leans towards a religio-metaphysical solution of the problem, it is the Atheistic attitude that is clearly triumphant. The opinion of this modern Job that the believer in Deity must choose between an impotent God and one who, possessing the power, makes himself ridiculous in its use, is the real moral of M. Givan's essay.

The same firm (the Open Court Publishing Co.) also publishes a translation of *The Contingency of the Laws of Nature*, by Emile Boutroux, a work on the same lines as the author's *Natural Laws in Science and Philosophy*, published two years since. We quite agree with Mr. Boutroux that one fault of writers on philosophy is that their fondness for going over and over again the systems of our predecessors prevents their coming into direct relation with the subject-matter of study. In this way a fallacy once perpetrated tends to become perpetual. M. Boutroux avoids this, with the result that he gives us a stimulative piece of writing. The author's thesis that the laws of nature are contingent, and not necessary, turn on a rather questionable use of the term necessity. Natural laws are fundamentally conceptions framed to describe human experience. They have no "necessity" and no compulsion apart from this. And within this conception there is room for all the dignity of life and freedom of action that is reasonably possible. The chief value of works such as these is that they throw the thoughtful student back upon a study of first principles, and so force a clearer comprehension of the points at issue. The published price of the book is 5s. net.

C. C.

The wholesale slaughter of men continues on the Continent. The eagle eyes of Providence can only see sparrows fall.

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FINSBURY PARK N. S. S.: 11.15, R. H. Rosetti, a Lecture.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Messrs. Saphin and Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Smith and Dales, "The Atonement"; 6.30, Messrs. Hyatt, Yates, and Beale.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Ridley Road): 7, F. Schaller, "Atheism."

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