

The FREETHINKER

FOUNDED · 1881

EDITED BY CHAPMAN · COHEN EDITOR · 1881-1915 · G · W · FOOTE

VOL. XXXVI.—No. 36

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 3, 1916

PRICE TWOPENCE

CONTENTS.

	Page.
<i>Primitive Beliefs About Women.—The Editor</i> - - -	561
<i>Theism Gone Mad.—J. T. Lloyd</i> - - -	562
<i>Lest We Forget.—Minnermus</i> - - -	564
<i>The Present Position of Evolution.—T. F. Palmer</i> - - -	564
<i>A Discourse on "Charlies."—Kitchener Captain</i> - - -	566
<i>Acid Drops</i> - - -	566
<i>To Correspondents</i> - - -	569
<i>Sugar Plums</i> - - -	569
<i>The Religion of Beethoven.—H. George Farmer</i> - - -	570
<i>David and Solomon.—F. J. Gould</i> - - -	571
<i>Solitude.—Coila</i> - - -	572
<i>The Pope's Prayer.—Alan Tyndall</i> - - -	573
<i>The Freethought Platform</i> - - -	574

Views and Opinions.

Religion the Enemy.

In last week's notes we were concerned with the attitude of the Christian Churches towards woman. Our present purpose is to carry the inquiry to a more fundamental issue. And this, we think, will make it plain that Gambetta's famous phrase, "Clericalism, that is the enemy," may be here paraphrased, so far as woman is concerned, as "Religion, that is the enemy." For so surely as one probes deeply into this age-long woman question, as certainly is it found that religious beliefs furnish the foundation upon which views such as those already outlined are based. But to touch bottom we must get further back than the Christian religion. Here, as in so many other directions, it was only continuing a tradition, a teaching, and a practice. And, also as in many other directions, the teachings of the Christian Church represented a reversion to a lower stage of culture.

* * *

Woman Amongst Primitive Peoples.

To a right view of this subject it is essential that we should set on one side the theoretical inferiority of woman. That, there is every reason for assuming, is a comparatively modern view. Difference between the sexes, difference in status and in treatment, exist everywhere, both amongst savages and amongst civilized peoples; but a difference may be only a difference, and need not involve subjection. It is, indeed, this difference of status among savages that has, apparently, misled many travellers. They are so impressed by the contemplation of a state of affairs different from their own, that they mistake lines of demarcation for a moral valuation. With uncivilized peoples the evidence goes to prove that, while the spheres of the sexes are more clearly differentiated than with us, this difference is seldom, if ever, expressed in terms of superior and inferior. Savages would say there are many things it is wrong for a woman to do, and they would be as shocked at women attempting these things as some of our own people were when women first began to speak at public meetings. But this feeling would not be because these things were "unwomanly," or upon a question of weakness or in-

feriority. The reason is of another order, and it is, to the savage, a very urgent one.

* * *

"Taboo."

The question here is, immediately, one of "taboo," and ultimately of taboo resting upon religious beliefs. But "taboo" does not extinguish "rights" only; it also confirms them. And under its operation, far from it being true that women are without status, or right, or power, these are clearly marked and quickly enforced. Thus, a Kaffir woman, if ill-treated, possesses a right of asylum with her parents until the husband makes atonement. In the Marquesas, a woman may not use a canoe (the religious reason will be seen later). On the other hand, men may not enter certain places set aside for women. With most of the North American tribes a woman possesses supreme power inside the lodge, and generally the husband cannot give away anything belonging to the lodge without the wife's consent. In Nicaragua, no man may enter the woman's marketplace. With the Nootkas, women are consulted on all matters of business. With the Khands, of India, women are consulted on all matters of business. A similar custom holds—or held—of the Pellew Islands. With the Hottentots, women are supreme in the house. These are only a few of the cases that might be cited, but they are sufficient to show that the common view of woman as having no "rights" among savages, and as being treated as an inferior being, is an utter misconception of the facts. These quite justify Starcke's opinion that "We are not justified in assuming that the savage feels a contempt for woman in virtue of her sex." In primitive life the dominant idea about woman is not one of inferiority, but of difference. Superiority and inferiority are much later conceptions; they belong to a comparatively civilized period, and their development offers a fine example of the way in which a custom resting on a sheer superstition becomes transformed into a social prejudice.

* * *

Woman in Primitive Society.

We have not the space at our disposal to deal with the subject at length, or to detail the evidence on which the case rests. We have worked this out at some length in a volume that is already in print, and is only awaiting the end of the War for publication. It is enough now to say that, to the primitive mind, the difference of sex is pregnant with supernatural possibilities. And the supernatural is the one thing against which primitive man is at most pains to guard himself. The consequence is, that a host of regulations are framed, particularly during childbirth and the functional crises of women, defining their position and protecting society against supernatural infection from that source. She is so supernaturally dangerous that there are a whole host of things she may not touch or do. Some people will not allow her to touch a canoe, or weapons that are to be used by men, or even at certain times to prepare food. And all the customs noted by travellers—such as wives not being allowed to eat with their husbands,

special places reserved for women, certain articles taboo to women—are not at all evidence of the “subjection” of women, but only of the superstitions that cluster in the nature of woman. The question of her being the “inferior” creature, or the “weaker vessel,” does not then arise. She is simply the more dangerous of the two because of the supernatural influence around her.

* * *

The Workings of “Taboo.”

Naturally, this conception finds its strongest expression in connection with religion. Thus, among the Australians, women are shut out from any part in the religious ceremonies. In the Sandwich Isles a woman's touch makes a sacrifice unclean. If a Hindu woman touches a sacred image the divinity is destroyed. In Fiji, women are excluded from the temples. The Papuans have the same custom. The Ainus of Japan allow a woman to prepare the sacrifice, but not to offer it. Women are excluded from many Mohammedan mosques. Among the Jews, women have no part in the religious ceremonies. In the Christian Church, women were excluded from the priestly office. A Council held at Auxerre at the end of the sixth century, forbade women touching the Eucharist with their bare hands, and in various churches they were forbidden to approach the altar during Mass. In the Gospels, Jesus forbids the woman to touch him, after the resurrection, although Thomas was allowed to feel his wounds. The Church of the Middle Ages provided itself with eunuchs in order to supply cathedral choirs with the soprano tones. The “Churching” of women still in vogue has its origin in the same superstition that childbirth endows woman with a supernatural influence which must be removed in the interests of others. This ceremony was formerly called “The Order of the Purification of Women,” and was read at the church door before the woman entered the building. Its connection with the ideas indicated above is obvious. The Tahitian practice of excluding women from intercourse with others for two or three weeks after childbirth, with similar practices amongst uncivilized peoples all over the world, led with various modifications up to the current practice of churching. They show, as Frazer says, that in the opinion of primitive peoples “a woman at and after childbirth is pervaded by a certain dangerous influence which can infect anything and anybody she touches, so that in the interest of the community it becomes necessary to seclude her from society for a while, until the virulence of the infection has passed away, when, after submitting to certain rites of purification, she is again free to mingle with her fellows.” The gradual change of this ceremony, from the getting rid of a dangerous supernatural infection to returning thanks for a natural danger passed, is on all fours with what takes place in other directions in relation to religious ideas and practices.

* * *

Woman's Principal Enemy.

Apart from other contributory factors, it is to religious influence that we have to look for the origin of the woman question. It is a story that takes us back to the most primitive times, and quite naturally Christianity, with its encouragement of primitive modes of thinking, encouraged a revival of this superstition also. Of course, at a later stage of social development, other factors, social and economic, begin to play their part. Where, for example, as among the Kassirs, women are not permitted to touch cattle because of this spiritual infection, and where a man's wealth is measured by the cattle he possesses, this would operate in preventing woman assuming equal importance with man. The pursuits from which women were primarily excluded for

religious reasons came to be looked upon as man's natural possessions. And here her weakness does play a part, because she could not take, as man could withhold, by force. But—and this is our chief point—it is upon a foundation of religious belief that the inequality of the sexes is ultimately based. It is that which provides a groundwork for the social and other reasons advanced for the “Subjection of Women.” It is religion that is the enemy all along the line. The recent correspondence in the press, the protests against the desecration of Churches by women preachers, illustrates the truth of this. Just as behind the God there is a ghost, so behind every priest there is a savage. One dares to hope that this theological squabble will bring this truth home to some. It should bring it home to all women. And if only that could be done, the fight—so far as Christianity is concerned—would be almost over.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Theism Gone Mad.

THE pulpit and the religious press are continually discussing problems raised or emphasized by the War, and as a rule the discussion is exceedingly illuminating. Professor P. T. Forsyth has just published a book, entitled *The Christian Ethic of War*, the object of which is to justify the present bloody conflict in the name of the Gospel. Resorting to his peculiar gift of mordant sarcasm, he calls those who oppose the War in the supposed interest of a Gospel of love, “ethical anarchists,” and taunts them with being “willing enough to profit greatly by a social and economic system the guarantee of which is force in the hands of the State.” From a political point of view, the Principal's defence of war is reasonable enough, but his attempt to find the grounds of its justification in the Christian Gospel is grotesque in the extreme. It may be true that “a sentimental view of the Gospel based only on Divine love cuts the nerve of the Gospel”; but it is simply ridiculous to assert that the people who disapprove of war in general and of the present War in particular “bring contempt on the Gospel.” Indeed, the Principal himself declares that “if the spirit and ethic of the Gospel prevailed universally there would be no war.” The fact that the Gospel does not universally prevail in the twentieth century of its history is an irrefutable proof of the fraudulency of the high claims made in its behalf. It is such a colossal failure simply because there is no truth in it. Dr. L. P. Jacks is fundamentally wrong when he maintains that the question, “Why did God allow the War?” should not be asked, regarding it as “a cowardly attempt to shift the responsibility from our own shoulder on to God.” But surely, if Almighty God exists and governs the world, there is no possible escape from the conclusion that he *did* allow the War and is responsible for it. If it be true that ere the foundation of the earth was laid every human being was in his mind, being thought of and planned for, and that in due season they were all called into being to work out his almighty will, does it not of necessity follow that in all that happens he is the prime mover?

To a thoughtful person such an inevitable conclusion is intolerably appalling, and the contemplation of it leads an inquirer to address a divine who holds it thus:—

Do you really think and believe that God created and brought into being all those thousands and thousands of brave young men and knew what was to be their end—to be food for cannons, blown to pieces, maimed and crippled for life? What a thought for the mother who have brought them up, cared for them, sacrificed themselves to give them what they needed; and ye

God knew that they were to come to an end like this.....
As I have four young boys and one dear little girl, I catch myself thinking what need I care how I try and teach them what is right when God has their lives all ordered?

That appeal comes from an anxious mother in Scotland, and the divine to whom it is addressed is Professor David Smith, who, in his Correspondence Column in the *British Weekly* for August 24, endeavours to deal with it. The Professor does not hesitate to express his belief that the Almighty did and does allow this War:—

My heart would collapse if I were not sure that God is behind it all, working out his invincible purpose, and that he is calling us in these bitter days to share the anguish of his redeeming Passion, the anguish which he has suffered ever since sin invaded the world and will suffer until it has been purged away. The sin which has occasioned the age-long tragedy is not his work, nor yet his will; and here we come face to face with an impenetrable mystery—the relation between the foreknowledge of Almighty God and man's freedom and responsibility.

Let us look at this argumentative bubble before it collapses. Our life is an eternal thought of God. Long before we came into existence we were in his mind; he thought of us and planned for us; and in due season he called us into being to work out his almighty will. "Everything is his appointment." Unfortunately, however, we have not worked out his will, nor fulfilled his purpose, nor glorified his name. We have rebelled against purposes and brought disgrace upon his name. History has had nothing to record but the age-long conflict between God and sin. Does it never occur to Dr. Smith how utterly futile such reasoning is? In one breath he puts before us two absolutely contradictory, irreconcilable statements, namely, that God's will is irresistible, and yet that man has succeeded in setting it at naught; that the Divine purpose is invincible, and yet that human perversity has frustrated it. In consequence of this, God is the most miserable being in existence. He is eternally at war with his creature man who prevails over him.

Dr. Smith is aware of the palpable preposterousness of his argument, but instead of openly admitting it, he flies for refuge to the edge of a quagmire called an "impenetrable mystery." He knows how utterly and glaringly foolish it sounds to descant on the absolute sovereignty of God, on the impossibility of thwarting him in any of his designs, and on the certainty that—

Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never-failing skill
He treasures up his bright designs
And works his sovereign Will;

and at the same time to allege that "it was man's perversity and not God's purpose that brought sin and woe into the world." This is as flat a contradiction as it is possible to utter; but Professor Smith prefers to call it an "impenetrable mystery," of which "one day, when we escape into a larger world, we shall discover the solution." The truth is that the reverend gentleman holds a conception of God which does not correspond with the existing "sorry Scheme of Things entire." To him, the invincible sovereignty of God and the glaring imperfection of the world are indisputable, and, because he cannot harmonize them, he jumps to the conclusion that the relation between them is an "impenetrable mystery" here which no doubt will be solved hereafter. Would it not be far more reasonable and manly to regard the undeniable fact of the imperfection of the world in general and of the human race in particular as a practical demonstration of the non-existence of the Deity so confidently preached by this professional divine? He cannot afford to give up the doctrine of

God, and he does not dare to deny the facts of life, with the result that, while admitting that they cannot be harmonized in this life, he maintains that the justification of God's ways with man will be seen by all beyond the tomb. Is not this a begging of the whole question?

Meantime, God is defeated, and his designs are being thwarted. Even the Bishop of London has ventured to make that declaration, and Dr. Smith bravely endorses it. Ever since sin invaded the world there has been no happiness in heaven. God has suffered and will suffer until sin has been purged away. This is what the Professor means by saying that the Almighty is behind the heart-breaking tragedy of this War, working out his invincible purpose of redemption. In short, the War is only "a phrase of the age-long conflict between God and sin," in which case God willed the War as truly as he willed the crucifixion of Christ. Consequently—

The brave mothers who have given their sons are sharing Mary's sorrow. Our lads have heard Christ's call to take up the cross and follow him, "filling up on their part that which is lacking of his afflictions in their flesh." Would we have it otherwise?

Does it not strike Dr. Smith that such teaching, coming from him, is in the highest degree blasphemous? Does he not see that his God is really the slave of his own universe? When he brought it into existence he intended it to be flawless, and as he beheld it, fresh from his hand, he pronounced it very good. He made man in his own image and after his own likeness. Indeed, he "saw everything (including man) that he had made, and behold, it was very good." Surely, when he pronounced that verdict upon the quality of his work the thought of sin was not in his heart, nor did he anticipate that anything would ever go wrong. Dr. Smith bluntly contradicts that statement by saying that "the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ was an eternal decree," and that "Eternal Grace, foreknowing the ill, provided the remedy." Assuming the truth of the Professor's contention, we come face to face with the melancholy fact that the Divinely appointed remedy has signally failed to effect a cure. Sin is still as rampant as ever, and God is waging an unsuccessful conflict with it, of which conflict this bloody War is but a phase.

Our sympathy is with the anxious Scottish mother who cannot accept Dr. Smith's audacious teaching. It is to her, as to us, inconceivable that an all-powerful, all-wise, and all-loving Father could be guilty of the thoughts and deeds attributed to him by the theologians, and her language conveys the impression that she is inclined to doubt their sincerity. The only creed calculated to relieve her anxiety is the one to which the Secularists subscribe, according to which all our troubles and sorrows, all the cruel tragedies of life, are but symptoms of our natural imperfections, through and largely by means of which we are passing on to saner and wholesomer conditions. The War is only a phase of the struggle for national existence which has not yet been sufficiently rationalized, or which shows that the mood of tiger and of ape has not been worked out of us. It is a temporary reversion to a state of barbarism which many of us hoped we had permanently outgrown.

J. T. LLOYD,

It seems difficult for clergymen to be truthful even in ordinary matters. Dr. Aked, who has resigned a ministry at San Francisco, told a *New York World* representative that he was "a man without a home, a wanderer upon the face of the earth, and a pauper too." The reverend gentleman earned £2,500 a year. Unless he has given all he possessed to the poor (which we doubt) Dr. Aked has quaint ideas of veracity.

Lest We Forget.

A Chronicle of Christian Charity.

If we live thus tamely,
To be thus jaded by a piece of scarlet,
Farewell nobility. —*Shakespeare.*

Clericalism, it is the enemy.—*Gambetta.*

MANY people are captivated and ensnared by the siren song that Clericalism is not now what it once was, and that it is wholly altered in its features. That Clericalism may be, that it has been, checked and limited by the pressure of external circumstances, is undoubted; but priestcraft is unchanged and unchangeable in its spirit and purpose. It wants only the opportunity and the power to again forge those fetters which shall rechain the minds of men in the bonds of a silly superstition and damnable despotism. To the Christian Church the progress of man is offensive. Under the glamour of the Gregorian chants, wax lights, and antiquated vestments, is a despotism none the less real because thatched by ecclesiastical stage properties. Such despotism, meekly accepted by millions of nerveless Christians, cannot be lightly regarded, especially when the average worshipper deems it profanity to call an ape an ape, if it but wear a clerical collar. The "Established" Church, far less intolerant than the Roman Catholic Church, and intellectually miles above any Nonconformist body, is still as hostile as ever to all modern impulses. The "Established" Church has not entitled itself to the respect of liberal-minded men and women. A glance at the conduct of the Lords Spiritual is sufficient to rouse the lasting hostility of all right-thinking persons. Here are a few examples of the votes of the Bishops in the House of Lords, which show Christian ethics in practice:—

19 bishops voted against Catholic emancipation; 8 voted against, 2 for, permitting Romanist chaplains to minister in prisons.

22 voted against admitting Dissenters to university degrees.

17 voted against removing the civil disabilities of the Jews.

24 voted against abolishing compulsory church rates (payable by Nonconformists as well as Church people).

16 first, and then 10, voted against permitting burial without the Church of England service.

11 were present but neither spoke nor voted for Lord Stanhope's motion for an address to the Queen against war with China for the Indian opium trade.

18 voted against the resolution condemning the War.

19 voted against the vote of censure on the Government for not helping Denmark against Germany.

21 voted against the Reform Bill of 1831.

15 voted against the Reform Bill of 1832.

2 only voted for the suppression of the slave trade.

1 voted for, 2 against, suppressing the Portuguese slave trade.

Not one took part in prohibiting British capital from being invested in the slave trade.

Not one took part in preventing cruelty to cattle.

Not one took part against pigeon-shooting.

All left the House before dinner when the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Bill was brought in.

1 voted for, 2 against, the Cruelty to Animals in Vivisection Bill.

1 only was present when the Bill forbidding child chimney sweeps was brought in.

1 only supported the first Bill for limiting the hours of child labour.

4 voted against, none for, the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into distress, 1842.

13 voted against, 2 for, the proposal for a Commission to inquire into the conditions of the labouring classes, 1850.

None voted for the repeal of the Corn Laws.

None took any part in improving madhouses.

None voted against the Bill to inflict the death penalty for rioting and machine breaking.

None spoke on the abolition of the death penalty for theft.

5 voted for still inflicting the death penalty for thefts over £10.

None voted for the abolition of flogging women in public, flogging women in prison, or flogging in the Army and Navy.

15 voted against a Committee of the Privy Council to draw up an education scheme.

13 voted against free education for the people.

17 voted against allowing deserted wives to marry again without penalty if deserted for five years.

8 voted against admitting women as members of London borough councils.

2 only supported the provision of seats for women shop assistants.

With such prelates and such a record the Christian Church is indeed in a bad way in this twentieth century. It is this terrible record of reactionary despotism, coupled with a two-thousand years' old superstition, which explains the manless congregations of this country. The Church of England suffers from the drowsiness of all institutions that keep themselves apart from the people; it is largely mediæval, and it has become more and more a caste. The Church is asleep to everything except her own interests. The printed sayings of bishops and parsons prove how hopelessly out of touch they are with realities. The old world of the twelfth century has gone, as though some cosmic catastrophe had smashed it. The growth of knowledge has swirled us on to a new planet, we are face to face with new conditions and tenures of human society. Faced by the ever-pressing problems and increasing knowledge of the twentieth century, the Christian Church cannot survive in its present form. It cannot live if it continues to clang inassy gates against the hopes and aspirations of the enlightened citizens of a civilized country. The fruits of the political, social, and moral growth of Western civilization cannot be longer smothered by petticoated priests and their manless congregations. Judged by its own record, the Christian Church is the enemy of Democracy, and we must fight it to the death.

MIMNERMUS.

The Present Position of Evolution.

III.

(Continued from p. 550.)

THE phenomena of the sensible universe are broadly divided into the lifeless and the living, or the inorganic and the organic. Again, organic Nature is in its turn divided into two great kingdoms, the animal and the vegetable. The most ancient scientific classification that has come down to us is that of Aristotle, who established the distinction between the vertebrate and invertebrate animal types. Aristotle's classification was accepted as final for over two thousand years, when Linnæus, in the eighteenth century of our era, made a marked advance by separating the zoological world into six grand divisions. These were the mammalia, birds, amphibians, fishes, insects, and worms. Then, with the progress of scientific inquiry and the realization of the importance of the study of anatomical structure as a preliminary to comparison, a completer classification became possible. The older groups were more clearly defined, and new ones were created. Step by step the present elaborate systems of arrangement were developed, until many thousands of species, both animal and vegetable, which were quite unknown to the earlier naturalists, have since become the commonplaces of

biology. Each leading class in the floral and faunal domains is split up into smaller and smaller groups. The classes are divided into orders; these are further divided into families, families into genera, and these last are arranged into species and varieties.

With the increase of knowledge it was discovered that the organic world refuses to accommodate itself to any lineal arrangement. The various species could not be packed in square boxes and labelled accordingly, like so many manufactured commodities. Cuvier's studies of the earth's fossils, and Von Baer's researches into comparative embryology, acquainted these investigators with the endless ramifications of the living realm, and scientists were in consequence constrained to adopt an improved method of classification, which assumed the aspect of branches diverging from a parent trunk. Plants and animals, despite all their multitudinous differences, were viewed, albeit dimly, as the vast and varied representatives of the magnificent tree of life.

Distinct as plants and animals superficially appear, there is no real break between them. They may seem on the surface as fundamentally unlike because we are apt to view them in their full period of development. But when we probe more deeply, we discover that they are indissolubly connected, some near the upper branches of the tree of life, others nearer the trunk, where the boughs of the tree spread out in different directions, while from the lower trunk, in long past ages, have arisen, at a period when they were at a primitive stage of evolution, the progenitors of what have since become the outstanding representatives of the floral and faunal worlds.

We do not observe organisms as they came fresh from the hand of God, but as they appear after countless centuries of transmutation. Transitional forms between species abound. Some of these graded organisms so closely resemble recognized species that they may be classed as varieties or separate species, according to the standpoint of the particular naturalist engaged in the classification of living forms.

The main facts of classification were generally recognized; the convenient grouping of the entire organic realm into large divisions which somehow seemed related to one another; and the further sub-divisions into which organisms fell as if appointed for the purpose, were accepted as a matter of course by biologists long prior to their conversion to the doctrine of evolution. But with the theory of development to guide them, philosophically minded naturalists grasped the significance of these puzzling phenomena. No other alternative remained but to acknowledge that the relationships already established among plants and animals were the consequence of their descent from common ancestors. The more recently evolved organisms had added fresh boughs and branches to the stately tree of life.

The pre-evolutionary systems of classification furnished powerful support to the doctrine of descent. The pioneer labours of Cuvier, Agassiz, and Owen—all opponents of evolution, at least officially—likewise found their only explanation in the evolutionary principle. Cuvier may be regarded as the father of palæontology. He prosecuted most elaborate inquiries, particularly among fossil vertebrates. As that able scientist, Professor W. B. Scott, states: "His great work on *Ossements Fossiles* (Paris, 1821) has never been surpassed as a masterpiece of the comparative method of anatomical investigation, and has furnished to the palæontologist the indispensable implements of research."

Agassiz, whose profoundly religious temperament caused him to recoil from the theory of descent, nevertheless made clear many facts which were fatal to the theory to which he so desperately clung. It seems

strange, but Agassiz actually emphasized the marked parallelism which exists between the zoological succession of extinct organisms and the embryological development of modern animals. As Darwin noted: "This view accords admirably with our theory." And in a similar manner Owen's discoveries found their only satisfactory solution in terms of organic transformism.

The palæontological record is admittedly incomplete. Only a very insignificant part of the globe's crust has been examined, and the preservation of organic remains necessarily depends upon a combination of extremely favourable circumstances. In the nature of the case, only the hard materials of organisms, such as wood, bones, teeth, and horns, are, as a rule, preserved. Yet, despite the many missing pages from this rocky volume of the dead, all the recovered documents that we have been permitted to peruse point unreservedly to the truth of evolution.

It is, happily, true that in a few instances the most delicate structures have been preserved. Fossil insects, like the fly, have been found in amber in a beautiful state of preservation. Professor Starr Jordan reminds us that over 800 species of extinct insects have been discovered in amber, a fossil resin from an extinct tree. And Eastman informs us that "Conditions have sometimes permitted even the most perishable structures, such as insect's wings and the impressions of jelly-fishes, to become retained in the soft mud, which afterwards became solidified." The conditions under which such deposits were laid down must have been remarkably tranquil, perhaps, as has been surmised, in the waveless and transparent waters of a coral lagoon. Nevertheless, it must be borne in mind that in all probability every relic of primeval life has long vanished from the rocks, and the embryological record becomes in consequence of priceless value when the student of Nature attempts to unravel the complete history of organic things.

Haeckel once expressed his conviction that the pedigree of every organic group depends upon three ancestral documents—morphology, embryology, and palæontology. Evidence derived from the first and second of these memorials has already been submitted, and we find that the evidences of evolution are also writ large in the rocks.

The flowerless vegetation—algæ, fungi, lichens, mosses, ferns, and horsetails—which comprise the great division of the Cryptogams arose and reached their fullest development while the Phanerogams—a nobler race—were preparing to assert their approaching supremacy in the Floral kingdom. The older ages represent the days of Cryptogamic ascendancy, but during centuries long since grey with antiquity the higher Phanerogams have ruled the floral domain. Phanerogams such as palm ferns (Cycads), true palms, and grasses, cone-bearers similar to the pines and larches, were long supreme, but these in their turn were later eclipsed by Phanerogams higher still. These were the Angiosperms, flowering plants with enclosed seeds, the oak, the maple, the beech, the holly, the roses, lilies of all kinds, while the botanical edifice became crowned by the composites such as the dahlia and the daisy.

But, although when regarded as a whole, the past history of the vegetable world has been mainly progressive, as is proved by the fact that the more recent the remains the more advanced are the plants in structure and function, yet there have been various regressions. As that distinguished palæobotanist, Professor D. H. Scott, writes:—

The palæobotanical record is essentially the story of the successive ascendancy of a series of dominant families, each of which attained its maximum, in organiza-

tion as well as in extent, and then sank into comparative obscurity, giving place to other families, which, under new conditions, were better able to take a leading place.

Now, not merely is there a marked resemblance between the fossil remains of animals in the successive deposits, but there is a striking correspondence in the same continent between the living and the dead. To take a typical example, that presented by Australia, an area which, until man invaded it, possessed no animal population higher in the zoological scale than the Marsupials and Monotremata such as the kangaroo and the duckbill platypus. These contemporary forms are obviously closely related to the extinct animals discovered in the Tertiary deposits of the same continent. Moreover, the peculiar animals which inhabit South America are plainly the modified descendants of the extinct organisms of that region.

In terms of progressive change in organic forms, a certain continuity between successive animals should appear. At the time when Darwin wrote, wide, and apparently unbridgable, chasms existed in the palæontological record, but a large number of these have since been filled in. The pedigree of the camel, the elephant, the horse, and other organisms have now been established in most extraordinary detail. Even the late Professor Huxley, who consistently refused his assent to the palæontological evidence as it originally stood, was so profoundly impressed by Professor Marsh's unbroken chain of fossil evidence relating to the development of the horse from a five-toed ancestor that, having carefully reconsidered the problem in the light of later discovery, Huxley confidently asserted that, had not the theory of descent through modification already existed, the revelations of recent palæontology would have compelled naturalists to invent it.

And, as a matter of fact, confirmatory evidence has accumulated so rapidly during the past ten years that men of science have been overwhelmed by its multiplicity. We may content ourselves by quoting the conservative estimate of Professor W. B. Scott, the geologist. That scientist says:—

Since the *Origin of Species* was written, our knowledge of that record (the geological) has been enormously extended, and we now possess no complete volumes, it is true, but some remarkably full and illuminating chapters. The main significance of the whole lies in the fact that *just in proportion to the completeness of the record is the unequivocal character of its testimony to the truth of the evolutionary theory.*

T. F. PALMER.

(To be continued.)

A Discourse on "Charlies."

AN officer at the Front, a member of the N. S. S., writes Miss Vance:—

Has your attention been drawn to the eulogy of chaplains in the *Morning Post* of (I think) August 2? After extolling their heroism for two-thirds of a column, it gives us the staggering information that two men of God have won the Victoria Cross—most gallantly, I admit—while five whole parsons have been killed. One of these I know to have been killed by a chance shell when someone gave him a lift in a motor-lorry, and the second while conducting a funeral behind the Yser Canal. I notice number six in the next casualty list.

However, the *Morning Post's* statistics show that a man of courage has one chance to two and a half of earning the V. C., and getting away alive with it, if he has the sense to go to war as a chaplain.

How does it work out with the fighting units? We have been more than a year in the field, and on one day, September 25, last year, the brigade had 600 killed. At the

anniversary dinner, our battalion had three of its original officers present, and the other battalions have suffered almost equally heavy losses; the constant drafts having suffered heavily too. How many V. C.'s have been earned? One only! On the other hand, one chaplain has the Military Cross and another has been mentioned in dispatches. What for? For looking over the parapet or for helping in their work, now and again, our gallant stretcher-bearers, for whom we have been unable to get the slightest recognition.

Just consider what a soft job the chaplain has. If he is plucky, and intends to try for honours, he arranges with a semi-Christian brother that the latter shall give his services to the casualty clearing stations and the divisional and other rest camps, while he himself takes his life in his hands and goes forward to brigade headquarters, where he is ensconced in the safest and deepest dug-outs the wit of man has been able to devise, within a mile or more of the firing-line. From this tunnel he emerges when he likes, and only when he likes, to "put the wind up" the men before a scrap, or to take afternoon tea at some officers' mess. When the scrap comes off he can place himself where he likes. If he sees danger he is at perfect liberty to tot up the audience before doing his turn, or to carefully weigh the risks and calculate whether they are more apparent than actual. In other words, for an adventurous man with a desire to shine in the limelight, the conditions are absolutely ideal.

And then this stretcher-bearer business. Everyone who helps a wounded man has two people at once to sing his praises: first the wounded man, and secondly the humble Tommy at the other end of the stretcher, who, in the innocence of his heart, may think that he is, in effect, blowing his own trumpet. And the wounded man; just think what an advertisement he is! He will pour into the ears of a series of brother chaplains the heroism of the representative of their order. Last, but not least, a chaplain is given full captain's pay and status so soon as he puts on khaki.

One V. C. to two and a half killed! Ye gods!

KITCHENER CAPTAIN.

Acid Drops.

Mr. Lloyd George delivered the other day a very impassioned speech on the benefits of differences in religion, and of the necessity for the equal treatment of all religious opinions in the Army. It seems that very early in the War he impressed upon the War Office the need for making arrangements "so as to suit the exigencies of the New Army—men of all sects and of all creeds." As a result of his efforts, he assured his Welsh followers that there is now "a real anxiety" on the part of the authorities to give every denomination equal freedom. This is a very comforting assurance—for the Christian sects, although we fancy some of them will require a good-sized pinch of salt to swallow all Mr. George tells them on this head.

For ourselves, we should be far more impressed by Mr. George's desire for genuine mental liberty if he were a little less of a sectarian—to say nothing about being less of a politician. But if we assume that Mr. Lloyd George is anxious to secure equality of treatment for Christian denominations—and that is all his anxiety comes to—what of those who are outside all the creeds? How on earth can there be equality of opinion in the Army so long as men are ordered to attend a Church service? Giving them a choice of Churches does not establish freedom of opinion. The only way to really achieve this is by abolishing religion altogether so far as the Army regulations are concerned. Leave every soldier free to go to religious service or to stay away. That is a sound and a just policy. The present plan of offering a choice of religions is equal to offering a strict vegetarian a choice of steaks or chops. Let us give fair play to all the creeds, by all means; but let us also give fair play to those who are of no creed at all. France can do without official religion in its Army; why cannot we?

The latest religious advertising dodge is to utilize the various War poster ideas for religious purposes. The trick

is to give a religious turn to all the posters used to induce men to join the Army. The organizers say, with charming ingenuity, "What we want is the nation on its knees." Quite so. A people on its knees, with their eyes shut and their mouths open, is naturally what the Churches want. It is the man who stands firmly on his feet, with his eyes open, whom they all dread.

Although the Lord Mayor has not been able to bring about his proposed union of the Churches, a step has been taken in that direction. There is to be a union of the Churches—in the New Surbiton Cemetery. The cemetery is to be dedicated by the representatives of all Protestant denominations. It is something of a satire on Christian amity that it has taken all these centuries to make Christians forget their sectarian animosities; and the place of starting is a graveyard! Further comment would spoil the picture.

What imaginative people Christians are! Like children, they invest their religion with grotesque exaggeration. Admiral Sir Hedworth Meux, speaking in the House of Commons, referred to "Rehoboam, who broke up the old Hebrew Empire." One might as well refer to Zululand as an "empire."

The clergy are "too proud to fight"; but they like to be in the limelight. In a Church journal there is a weekly list entitled "The Toll of the Parsonage," and referring to clergymen's relations who have lost their lives in the War. It reminds us of Mark Twain's petition for a War Pension on the grounds that he had sacrificed two uncles and three nephews.

"The Potter at His Wheel" was the title of a War anniversary sermon delivered in an "auld kirk" on a Scottish coast. The question was asked, "Have you noticed within the two years of this criminal War how patient and long-suffering the Divine Potter has been with his clay?" With apologies to Omar Khayyam, and all due respect to God, we have only noticed how patient—and stupid—and long-suffering the clay is with the Potter. And what does this Potter imply?—a good Workman, a blundering Deity, or an inconceivably monstrous and totally unimaginable Devil? Neither. It is the paltry palliative, or mere stupidity, of the priestly trade; that unctuous, smiling, bland and blind, unfeeling and immune formalism. Oh for a little feeling, proportion, imagination, *common sense!*

It is said that the actual work of the Bishops' Crusade against immorality is being done by "social workers," who are mostly elderly spinsters. The head of the Crusade is the bachelor Bishop of London. Shade of Pecksniff! What is the Government religion coming to?

Up to the present the War has given Christianity in this country three shocks. First there was the War itself, a decisive disproof of the alleged civilizing effects of the Christian religion. Then came the exemption of the clergy from military service, side by side with their activity as recruiting agents—a move which exposed them to general contempt. Finally there is the controversy over the admission of women preachers during the National Mission. That, in the language of the street, "puts the lid on." Thousands of women have had their eyes open to the real influence of Christianity on their status as a sex, and if women forsake the Church, then, indeed, is their position hopeless.

Those two go-ahead daredevils of the Church, the Bishops of London and Chelmsford, who were at first prepared to allow women preachers during the National Mission—under conditions that mocked their inferiority—have wilted before the opposition and withdrawn their permission. They both think the opposition has been "the work of the Devil," in order to injure the National Mission. It is quite refreshing to get this belief in a personal Devil from two of our bishops, but it is far from complimentary to Satan to imagine that he would seriously disturb himself about such a contemptible thing as the National Mission. We imagine it is sheer

conceit on the part of Bishop Ingram to imagine that the Devil ever thinks about him at all.

Some of the Press references to the Bishops' attitude to the woman question are not the quintessence of politeness. Mr. James Douglas says: "A woman in a pulpit appears to these doddering fossils almost worse than the Devil in a pulpit. The National Mission must be a male monopoly." And he adds: "The cream of the jest is that without Eve the Churches would be empty." It really looks as if the worm was turning at last.

Here is a story which we are pleased to accept as true, and also to believe that many hundreds of similar stories might be told. It is narrated by a returned Army chaplain:—

Up there near Trones Wood last week I found a man with a badly injured foot who had been ordered back to get his foot dressed. He had heard, or fancied he heard, a faint sound of moaning from a shell-hole, out beyond the trench in which he was injured. He had crawled out there on his belly and found there a wounded man who had lain in that hole for three whole days and nights, utterly helpless, chilled to the bone by night, scorched and blackened by the pitiless sun in the days, with foul earth caked about his lips and never a drop of moisture of any kind. The man with the injured foot had secured the fill of his own water-bottle to help him on his limping way down to the dressing station. What does he do now? He used the whole of his treasured drink to cleanse the mouth of the man in the shell-hole, and for that poor chap to drink; then, with infinite labour, dragged him back to cover and, when I found him, was carrying the man picka-back and limping along with him to the dressing station, his own right foot being really badly injured.

I have seen things like that during every single day of this offensive. Nobody had told the man with the injured foot to do anything but look after himself. He was entirely unconscious that he had done anything in the least out of the way, and could not for the life of him see what I could find to admire in his action, any more than I should admire him for the loan of a match. Our fellows are doing this kind of thing all the time, often using abominably bad language while doing it, and always taking such things with a laugh and a joke as an ordinary part of the day's work. If this is not true Christianity, what is it?

The only thing that puzzles us is to discover why this illustrates "true Christianity"? We do not imagine that the soldier troubled his head about Christianity or any other theological nonsense. Such actions spring from the impulse of a common humanity, and it is to this that homage should be rendered. They go some distance towards relieving even this War of some of its barbarity and horror.

The following dialogue occurred before the Devon Tribunal, as reported in the *Express and Echo*:—

What religion are you?

I am a follower of Jesus Christ.

That is no religion.

The War is producing some curious circumstances. Now we have followers of Jesus Christ scheduled as of no religion.

The *Daily Mail and Record* (Glasgow) has a correspondence running through its columns on "Does God Care?" Some of the letters are very plain-spoken, as the following passage indicates: "These two years God has been serenely indifferent. We will leave Him in his serenity, and win the War by the only means it can be won—by force of arms." It is pleasing to notice in the Press generally a much more liberal tone in discussing religious questions. It looks as though the embargo on free speech is "cracking up" a little.

The *Boston Guardian* reports the case of a young soldier whose life was *not* saved by carrying a New Testament. In a letter to the young man's parents, the officer of the regiment to which the deceased belonged forwarded a copy of the New Testament (through which the fatal bullet had passed. For the parents' sake, we regret that the Gospels did not act up to their traditional character.

Father Neville Figgis has had the courage to say, in a Sunday morning sermon at the Grosvenor Chapel, London,

that "Christianity is the great adventure, the most risky and wonderful career, the strangest gamble ever known," and that "it rests upon faith, not upon sight." To call his own religion, which yields him a comfortable living, not only a gamble, but "the strangest gamble ever known," is the most courageous and imprudent act of which a clergyman is capable. We fully agree with him, but we couldn't share his profession.

Dr. Figgis is noted for his outspokenness. "We are afraid of our religion," he says. "No well-bred person likes to talk about it." That is true even of the clergy. The language employed is significant:—

We are afraid of our religion. We clergy, for instance; we can talk about it in the pulpit, and lay bare our inmost soul. But most of us find it precious hard to do so anywhere else. People say that when we visit the poor, we make a mistake if we speak only of general topics.....They expect us to say something about God. We dare not; and we think ourselves tactful.

What is the cause of such diffidence and reticence on the subject of religion? Lack of enthusiasm, resulting from paucity of faith. Cromwell believed in religion with his whole mind, and he was constantly thinking and talking about it. To-day, it is the fashion to *profess* religion, but quite improper to mention it in society.

Canon Peter Green, of Manchester, says, "Can anyone imagine an intelligent working-man reading a parish magazine? Most of them are beneath contempt. And the same may be said of the publications of those religious societies which profess to cater for the workers."

"Another Observer" writes in the *Edinburgh Evening News*:—

"Observer" calls attention to the "patriotism" of ministers at this time. Well, I am a member of a well-known Parish Church. Last year the church was closed for seven weeks, in July, August, and September. This year, despite the Premier's appeal to all classes, it is closed again for a like period. Doubtless the minister will return and prate to those who have had no holiday and who are mourning some dear one who has fallen, of the necessity and duty of sacrifice for our beloved country.

The poor clergy seem to be having quite a lively time.

In an article on "The Church and the Camp" in the *Guardian* there is an account of the furnishing of a "Church hut," and the "fittings" include an alms-bag. Cadging and Christianity seem inseparable.

A movement is on foot, initiated by Lord Shaftesbury, to erect village crosses in memory of the fallen soldiers. Another step backward towards the Middle Ages.

The Right Hon. David Lloyd George, who is an ardent Nonconformist, says "we are fighting for the fundamental principles of Christian faith." Indeed! We imagined that we were fighting against German militarism, and to free France and Belgium from the invaders. And what do the soldiers of "Infidel" France and the Mohammedan and other Eastern warriors of the Allies think about the matter?

Lack of humour appears to be a common failure of latter-day Christianity, and even the scholarly bishops are not above criticism in this respect. The Bishop of Chelmsford recently wrote of the Church's "witness of Him, who, as Mr. Gladstone said, 'is the only hope of fallen humanity.'" Just imagine a politician giving a testimonial to the Almighty!

The private conference convened by the Master Balliol, a few weeks ago, to review the state of English education in all its stages, has given great offence to the religious bodies by its utter silence on the subject of the place of religion in education. Several reforms are recommended, such as "the inclusion of national science in some of its aspects, in every

man's and woman's education," and "the provision of instruction in social ethics, and physical exercises in all schools and universities." The *Church Times*, for example, expresses the opinion that the question of religious education "must be fairly faced, as it never yet has been." True; but our contemporary is not prepared to face it *fairly*. This is what it says:—

In regard to religion, however, there are unhappy diversities of belief, but these have to be reckoned with, not ignored, and the only way to reckon with them is frankly to recognize them. Religion must, in any scheme of reform, be the basis of all education; and religion for each child must mean the religion of its parents.

The *Church Times* forgets, or consciously ignores, the fact that there are thousands of parents in this country who have no religion at all, and who do not believe that religion is the basis of all education. The question *cannot* be faced fairly while such parents are left out of the account. They, too, are citizens who pay rates and taxes; and it is not just to compel them to pay for an education in which they fervently disbelieve. Cannot our contemporary see that the only fair thing to do would be to eliminate religious instruction from all Government supported schools.

The Bible Society announces that during last year it distributed 897,000 more copies of the Bible and the New Testament than in 1914. It adds that "nearly all" these additional copies have gone into the British soldier's knapsack. There is a great virtue in that "nearly all." And we feel a little curious about the destination of these copies soon after they went into the soldier's knapsack. But in a way we envy the Bible Society. We wish someone would place it within our power to be as lavish with a distribution of the *Freethinker*.

According to the *Church Times* the business of the clergy and the various services of the Church is to keep the Devil at bay. "Their absence tends to create a spiritual atmosphere in which Satan gets his opportunity." All baptized and confirmed persons have within them sacramental graces which are operative. "They were given once for all, and they only need to be stirred up." But if they are not stirred up, the enemy of souls will get the upper hand, and dire disaster must ensue. Nevertheless, "where the Holy Sacrifice is continually offered, the activities of Satan are severely limited." How our hearts ought to swell with gratitude to God for having bestowed upon us the gracious ministrations of the clergy! How terrible must be the lot of Freethinkers who neglect all the means of grace, and let the Devil get all the opportunity he desires.

In a leading article on a trip in an aeroplane, a *Daily Chronicle* contributor says "one feels a suggestion of regret that the old writers of the Bible did not know this clean, exquisite feeling of parting from the earth and soaring away to heaven's gates." The dear "old writers of the Bible" did their best in describing the aeronautic excursions of the prophet Elijah and the hero of the Gospels.

Professor Peake, of Manchester University, has never won great success as a Christian apologist. Preaching recently on the Lion of Judah and the Lamb (Rev. v. 5, 6), he declared "that the nations of antiquity were destroyed because they preferred to follow the principles of the Lion (self-gratification) rather than those of the Lamb (self-sacrifice)"; but that is a radical mistake. Self-gratification and self-sacrifice have been at war among all nations, ancient and modern. Indeed, Dr. Peake gave his case away when he added that "the old conflict was being waged to-day on a far more terrible scale than ever before." Speaking generally, the Christian world to-day is morally not one whit farther advanced than was the Pagan world that preceded it.

The "no holidays" mandate is sometimes honoured in the breach rather than the observance. The Bishop of London, in a letter to the press, writes, "I am not ashamed to say that I am having a few weeks' rest." The public will say, with Shakespeare, "for this relief much thanks."

C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

September 10, Queen's Hall, London; September 24, Queen's Hall, London; October 1, Abertillery; October 8, Birmingham; October 29, Barrow-in-Furness.

To Correspondents.

"BONNIE DUNDEE."—We agree with you that Mr. Lloyd George's attempt to bring the Welsh Christian sects into unity is likely to be as successful as his endeavour to harmonize Catholics and Protestants in Ireland.

"KERIDON."—Thanks. Very welcome.

T. FISHER.—Thanks. We believe the writer of the article you send sees the *Freethinker* regularly.

H. MARGETSON.—Yes; it was an error. The lines should have been attributed to Goldsmith.

W. H. CRAIG.—Sorry our space will not allow us to reopen the correspondence.

E. B.—Many thanks for paper and usual batch of cuttings.

G. TREBELLS.—Your article was received safely and appeared in our issue for August 13.

S. DUPREE.—Mr. Cohen will consider your suggestion of a pamphlet on "Christianity and Woman." But publishing propagandist pamphlets at present is an excellent way to lose money, and we are hard put to it to keep our heads above water as it is. Still, we will see what can be done.

T. C.—Bishop "Myrie" is a misprint for Bishop Myriel, the character in Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*. We do not think there is any truth in the rumour to which you refer.

B. KHOTAKI (Calcutta).—We really do not see what can be done under the circumstances. Assuming the advertisement to be a genuine one, you were entitled to the courtesy of a reply, and the behaviour was anything but gentlemanly. Perhaps your not getting a reply was really a compliment. It may have been a trap of some sort.

S. SYKES.—We have sent on your letter to Mr. Trebells.

M. SIBLEY.—We are sending you *Freethinker* handbills, which you kindly offer to distribute.

E. RAYMOND.—These cinematographic productions depicting the blighting consequences of Freethought are very ridiculous, but what can we expect? Christianity is a ridiculous thing, and its apologists must needs act in an absurd manner. But were it possible to screen a play showing the actual consequences of Christian belief, that would be anything but flattering to the faith. But, after all, picture palaces are run for profit, and the pockets of fools are easiest reached through appeals to their folly.

A. WAYMARK.—The Biblical version is Proverbs xiii. 24: "He that spareth his rod hateth his son; but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes." We apologize for the formal error.

A. H. PALMER (Madeira).—Pleased to welcome you to the N. S. S. Miss Vance is sending you the necessary form and information.

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.

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. 3d.

Sugar Plums.

Next Sunday (September 10) Mr. Cohen lectures at the Queen's Hall, Langham Place, W. His subject, "Woman, the Bible and the Bishops," should prove an attractive one under existing circumstances, and we hope that Freethinkers will do their best to induce Christians—particularly

Christian ladies—to be present. The Churches have offered many suggestions as to what to do with women, and a summary of these will be interesting.

On the following Sunday Mr. Lloyd occupies the same platform. We would bespeak the help of London Freethinkers in making these meetings as widely known as possible. It is more difficult than ever during the War to advertise lectures, and we shall have to depend largely upon personal effort. With this in view, a good supply of slips advertising the meetings has been printed, and these can be had on application, personally or by post, to the *Freethinker* office, or to Miss Vance at the Society's offices. Other lectures, in and around London, and in the Provinces, are being arranged. Due notice of these will be given. Thanks to the Propaganda Fund, we hope to see the work carried on with vigour during the whole of the winter.

We have received news of yet another Freethinker killed in the recent "big push." Lieut. Haughton, of Co. Antrim, was only 25 years of age, and judging from the portrait which lies before us as we write, fully deserves the kind things said of him by his family and friends. Lieut. Haughton was a convinced Freethinker, and made no secret of his opinions. The commanding officer, in informing his parents of his death, wrote, "The whole battalion is very sad about him. He was so popular with all ranks." And the Rev. Andrew Gilson, with a humanity that does him credit, writes, "I know not how to write, for I can say with honesty of heart 'I loved him.' 'Tommy' was beloved of all, and in his death he is mourned as few men are.....He lived a beautiful life, and he met death with bravery and courage, and now with his fallen comrades he sleeps content." We can well understand the grief of Lieut. Haughton's parents on the death of such a son. For ourselves, we can only say how deeply we sympathize with them in their sorrow, and in that we feel sure we have all our readers with us.

Complaints continue to reach us of difficulties some readers have in securing copies of this paper. Either it is reported out of print for that week, or the newsagents simply say they have not received it. So far as we are aware, there is no reason whatever why there should be any difficulty whatever. The *Freethinker* is supplied to newsagents on very advantageous terms, unsold copies may be returned, and there is no excuse for customers being treated in this way. They should insist upon getting what they order, or transfer their custom elsewhere.

While we are on this subject we take the opportunity of saying how much we appreciate the efforts of those who have been helping us to secure new readers. Thanks to this, and the small amount of advertising we have been able to do, the advance made in the *Freethinker* circulation has been maintained. And that really means many new readers have been gained to replace those taken away for military service. Naturally, we are not content; we want to push ahead, and we are not without hope that this acknowledgment of past help in pushing sales will lead to still further efforts being made.

"Ignotus" writes apropos of Mr. Lloyd's article: "I was much interested in Mr. Lloyd's recent criticism of a certain religious writer who professed to speak for the Lord, and who appeared to claim the most intimate knowledge of "the Lord's" inmost thoughts. The cocksureness of these gentry is remarkable. But they do not stop with their claim to be the confidants of and spokesmen for the Almighty. They, and they alone, can translate the *Vox Populi*—as well as the *Vox Dei*—apparently because they conceive they know what is best for "the people." "The people" demand this they cry, and "the people" demand that! If the shallow creatures had any clearness of perception, they would realize that each of them speaks merely for a section of unthinking believers, and not for "the people" as a whole at all. Busy business men by the thousand, when they have time, merely smile at their arrogant pretensions." "Ignotus" should reflect that *Vox Populi Vox Dei* is a religious dogma.

The Religion of Beethoven.

For him.....all tongues of Art were hushed,¹
 And Music's realm of flowers lay waste and dead—
 A barren land, save as with Fancy's power,
 He made it fertile to the inward sense.
 What wonder if rebellious thoughts arose,
 And he arraigned the Providence of God!

—Joseph Bennett, "Beethoven."

ALTHOUGH the *aufklärung*—the critical spirit—had been gradually pervading German thought since the days of the Voltairean emperor, Frederick the Great, by the close of the eighteenth century it was still far behind the rationalistic spirit in Britain and France. There can be no doubt that the terrible wastage of the Thirty Years' War had left its indelible imprint upon Germany, for the nation seemed drained of all that was material to culture. When she had recovered herself sufficiently to hearken to the critical spirit, her body was yet too tired to accept any but the most superficial of its kind. At the turn of the mid-century, Nicolai set the ball rolling anew for the *aufklärung*. His assessors—Lessing, Herder, and Moses Mendelssohn, three giants in German literature, were hailed as apostles of the new spirit. Yet not one of these Rationalists were, at the most, anything more than accommodating and sentimental Deists, with a sympathetic leaning towards Christianity. Not even the strong and uncompromising attitude of the Voltairean spirited Bahrtdt seems to have been able to lift the apostles of the critical spirit out of the rut of their accommodating views. The advent of decided Rationalists like Goethe and Schiller certainly was some little advance, but it was not until that revolutionary wave, which swept over German borders from France, that any appreciable breach was made by the *aufklärung* in the walls of the Christian Faith.

It was just at this latter period that Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) came. Although he had been reared from childhood in the Roman Catholic faith, we are told² that he had "early attained to an independent opinion on religious things." Temperamentally averse to all authority and *genie*, Beethoven seems to have looked for much support and guidance in the prevailing Rationalism, yet what this "independent opinion" was precisely, at which he had "arrived," is rather difficult to locate. Very rarely do we get any precise or definite words from Beethoven on the question of religion, yet I think that from such thoughts and expressions which we do get from him, we may be able to arrive at some sort of common denominator.

I.

Beethoven certainly caught some of the watchwords of the Revolution. "Liberty" and "Reason" were two of them; and to him everything in life, human or divine, had to be measured by their standard. "Reason against everything," he writes in his diary (1816). Again, the following year he refers to "Reason, the guide." In Bocke's autograph album he writes: "Love liberty above all things, and never deny the truth, although it be at the throne itself." Beethoven, though not a great reader, naturally favoured the authors who belonged to the *aufklärung*, and amongst those he most admired were Lessing, Herder, Goethe, Schiller, Kant, Seume, Kotzebue, and Varnhagen von Ense—the apostle of "Through culture to Freedom." Even definitely rationalistic works like Fessler's *Views on Religion and Ecclesiasticism* (which, with the *Apocrypha*, was seized by the police as a prohibited work at the sale of his effects after his death) and Sturm's *Observations Concerning God's Works in Nature*, were among his treasured books.

¹ Beethoven became deaf as a young man.

² Kerst, *Beethoven, the Man and the Artist*.

The former was a very outspoken work, and the latter, although written by a Protestant clergyman, has a decided pantheistic tendency. Beethoven was much attracted by it, and suggested that priests should distribute it among the people. Some of Beethoven's observations would suggest that he was also acquainted with another Rationalist work—Eberhard's *New Apology of Socrates*—which argued in effect to place Socrates on a level with Jesus. Beethoven was no doubt influenced by Goethe's criticism of the Old Testament (a very mild affair), which formed an appendix to his *West Cestlicher Divan*. It may be also noted that his copy of Tacitus was, in the translation of the valiant Bahrtdt, a most uncompromising opponent of Christianity. The point raised here concerning these books need not however be pressed, in spite of the old adage that you can read a man's character from his bookcase. Something more material calls our attention.

II.

If we look carefully into Beethoven, in his attitude towards religion (*i.e.*, conventional religion), the Church, Christianity, the Bible, and the God-idea, we may, perhaps, be able to grasp the question of his religion. Beethoven's young friend, Schindler, says that "Plato's Republic was transformed into Beethoven's flesh and blood, and upon the principles of that philosopher he reviewed all the constitutions of the world." This very sweeping statement includes, I take it, the religious view. Yet it will be evident from what we shall learn of Beethoven, that Plato and he were poles asunder on this question. The Greek philosopher, whilst admitting the falsity of conventional religion, insisted upon its acceptance and practice as a basis for his new society, and in his *Laws*, even advises the suppression of the Rationalists by imprisonment or death. Tenets, such as these, could not have been accepted for one moment by the truth and liberty loving Beethoven.

Schindler also reports Beethoven saying: "Religion and Thorough-Bass are settled things, concerning which there should be no disputing." But if Beethoven meant by religion and thorough-bass what we mean by these things, then this remark was merely from the lip and not the heart, for there is proof abundant that if he did not actually "dispute" both, he ignored or ridiculed them. His remark to Ries may be recalled, when the critics—those "rigorists and devotees of antiquity," as he called them, charged him with certain harmonic "heresies" in his music. "Yes, yes," said Beethoven, "they are amazed, and put their heads together because they never found it in any book on Thorough-Bass." This was precisely his attitude towards religion, and had any critics questioned him upon his "heresies" in that, he would no doubt have answered them by defying their textbook on this also.

Joseph Bennett says¹ that Beethoven "belonged to no Church," and "subscribed to no creed." Grove, too, admits² that of "formal religion he apparently had none." Although nominally a member of the Roman Catholic Church, there is no evidence whatever that he ever subscribed to its teachings. Apart from the report that he once narrowly escaped excommunication for saying that "Jesus Christ was only a poor human being and a Jew," the only occasion we see him in direct contact with the Church is on his death-bed. Priests were evidently his pet aversion. He writes humorously to Zmeskall in 1811, saying that he was about to confer on him and others certain imaginary decorations, but adds significantly that he would bestow "none to a priest!" To Frau Streicher, in 1817 (?), he says: "There are men more like cattle—among them the

¹ *Musical Times*, May, 1887.

² *Dictionary of Music and Musicians*.

priest, who deserves cudgelling." This evidently referred to one who had brutally thrashed his beloved nephew.

H. GEORGE FARMER.

(To be continued.)

Talks With Young Listeners.

XIV.—David and Solomon.

DAVID the giant-killer was the people's hero. "Saul has killed his thousands, and David his ten thousands," sang the women, as they clapped their tambourines. Saul was jealous, and, right to his very last hour, when a sword pierced his heart, he was soured by the thought that the shepherd of Bethlehem would oust him or his sons from the kingly seat. Yet David had become a courtier, husband of Saul's daughter, and player of the harp to amuse the king in leisure moments. Of course, he never breathed a word about his being anointed with oil by the old King-maker. With Prince Jonathan he formed a close friendship, and Jonathan, in token of his love, had given David his sword, his bow, and his royal girdle.

David made a raid on the Philistines, slew them with a great slaughter, and returned to Saul's palace amid the cheers of the people. The king—his eyes darkly flashing with jealousy—slung a javelin at his son-in-law, and the weapon narrowly missed. David fled to his house. At dusk, royal officers hovered about the entrance, and David's wife detected them.

"Danger!" she said to her husband. "Fly!"

From a back window she let him down by a rope. When the officers tramped into the house, and right into David's bed-chamber, the lady pointed, and whispered "Sh—sh!"

They saw clothes covering a figure, as of a sick man; and they retired and told Saul.

"Bring him here, bed and all!" was the king's command.

Then they found out that the clothes only covered a large bolster.

In a lonely spot not far off Jonathan and David talked together as sworn and loyal friends. David promised that, if ever he should rise to power (for Jonathan knew the secret of the anointing oil), he would show mercy to his old friend's family. They parted in sorrow, the prince going to the house of his half-mad father, and David wandering from place to place, till he found refuge in the wild and rocky borderland of the South. Here, in a strong fort (the Bible calls it the Cave of Adullam), he felt safe. His brothers, and all sorts of men—debtors and runaways—joined him, until he found himself captain of a band of four hundred outlaws, in constant peril of capture and death, living the life of a brigand chief, and waiting till fortune brought him the crown of Israel.

Saul now and then led an expedition into the wilderness of rocky passes and barren hills where David lurked, but could never lay hands on him. One night the king and his soldiers slept in camp, and David, with one companion, scouted around, discovered the guards in deep slumber, crawled to the spot where royalty lay, and carried off the king's spear and a pitcher of water. When at a secure distance, he awoke the camp with a yell, and mockingly reproached the captain of the guard for not keeping better watch over the king. Saul, feeling very foolish, had to reply—

"Blessed may you be, my son David; you are the better man."

A mighty host of Philistines invaded the country, and the Hebrews mustered all their forces for a desperate fight on the mountains of Gilboa; and Prince Jonathan girded on his sword for the patriot struggle.

The night before the battle, the king dressed himself in common clothes, and, with two of his courtiers, entered a solitary house in the village of En-dor, where dwelt a witch.

"Witch," he said, "you can call up the dead from the chilly cavern of Sheol. Call me up Samuel."

The old Rain-maker had died some time before.

A grey, solemn shade rose up, and gazed sternly at the king.

"Doom!—doom!—doom!" groaned the ghost. "Yahweh has torn the kingdom from you, and given it to David; and to-morrow you and your sons and your warriors will be with me in Sheol."

So saying, he vanished.

Next day the dreadful conflict took place. Jonathan was slain; his brother also; and Saul, rather than fall a prisoner into the hands of the hated Philistines, fell upon the point of his own sword and died.

The Philistines fixed the king's body on the wall of Beth-shan. But a few days afterwards it had disappeared. The men of the city of Jabesh-Gilead, who had never forgotten Saul's heroic rescue of their town when in dire distress, came by starlight to Beth-shan, removed the royal corpse, and burned it on a funeral pile, and buried the ashes under a tree at Jabesh; and the citizens of that place, in grateful honour to Saul's memory, fasted seven days.

David, on hearing the news of the battle, composed an Elegy or Sorrow-song:—

I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan; very pleasant hast thou been unto me; thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women. How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!

Many years later he found a lame man who had dwelt in a modest house, and had shunned the public eye. He was son to Jonathan, and had feared to show himself, for David was wiping out all Saul's family. But he received favour from David, who, for Jonathan's sake, allowed the lame man to eat at the royal table.

David, of course, had become king; and, though he had been crowned at Hebron, he would not rest until he had fixed his royal seat and palace in a city which had long been held by the Canaanites on Mount Zion. He stormed this city—the famous Jerusalem—and captured it, and it was made the capital of his kingdom of the twelve tribes. And for ages to come, this city would be the pride of the Hebrews, and the subject of a thousand psalms of praise. Here he brought the ark of Yahweh one day with a great procession of people, and the clash of harps and trumpets, drums and cymbals; and in his delight he danced a priestly dance before the ark amid the wondering gaze of the crowd. Every citizen went home with a cake of bread, a good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine.

King David waged war with a strong arm, and beat Philistines, Moabites, Syrians, Ammonites; and the fear of him fell on all the nations round about; and so the years glided by, and the shepherd of Bethlehem, giant-killer, and out-law chief, was now War-lord of Jerusalem, surrounded by a bodyguard of mighty men of valour.

Troubles fell upon him in the evening of his days. His handsome son, Absalom, whose long locks of hair were celebrated all over the land, stole the hearts of the men of Israel, and set himself up as king. The enterprise had a sorry end; for Absalom's troops were defeated, and the young prince, galloping away on a mule, rode under an oak, in the boughs of which his wavy hair was caught, and, as he hung there, a royal captain ran him through with three darts. Another trouble was a plague that fell upon the people and carried off thousands, as a punishment upon David for proudly taking a census, or register, of the Hebrew people. Yahweh's angel

flourished his heavenly sword over the land, and wherever he pointed, death did its cruel work.

When David the aged was dead, and had been buried in Jerusalem, his son Solomon the Wise reigned in his stead; and his days were a time of glory for the Jews, and silver and gold were plentiful in the land, and even the King of Egypt was pleased to give his daughter in marriage to David's son. Solomon's throne was of ivory, his guards had golden shields, and apes and peacocks amused the courtiers in the royal gardens. In honour of the national God, Yahweh, Solomon built a temple of cedar-wood and stone; and in the inmost chamber was placed the sacred ark. Heavy were the taxes paid by the folk in order to maintain all this glory.

Famous was the judgment of Solomon in the case of the two women who appeared before him with two babies—one dead, one alive; each woman claiming the living child as hers.

"Cut it in half," ordered Solomon, pointing to the living babe, "and let each take her share."

"Oh, my lord," cried one, "for mercy's sake forbear. Rather let this other woman take the precious little love!"

"No, my lord," coldly said the other, "let us divide it."

"Give the babe to the first woman, who would sooner lose it than see it dead," said Solomon. "She is the mother thereof."

* * * *

The most curious of these legends is that of the witch of En-dor; and it shows us how the Hebrews in early ages believed in the power of such uncanny women to (as Shakespeare says) "call spirits from the vasty deep." The "Sheol," which the olden Jews talked about, was a sort of underground cavern, in the sides of which were niches for the ghosts of the dead. This belief in witches was a very unfortunate and fatal one; and great numbers of women were put to death in ancient times, and yet later times, because they were supposed to cast evil spells upon people, or upon a neighbour's cattle. Even in England, as far on as the seventeenth century, women were burned to death on such charges. Of course, the whole thing was a mistake. No soul on earth was ever guilty of witchcraft, because nobody ever had these magical powers.

It is well to bear in mind that the land of Israel was no larger than Wales, and, though "Solomon in all his glory" stretched his rule beyond these narrow borders, the glory did not last. The fact was, the small Jewish kingdom lay between two vast empires—Egypt and Babylon—and it was certain, sooner or later, to be crushed.

Old legends told how the children of Israel, in the wilderness of Horeb, had a sacred tent, or tabernacle, in which Yahweh sat as their special God; and great tales were repeated about the wonderful furniture of this holy tent. But this splendid affair was a myth, and, after the Hebrews entered Canaan, we hear no more of it. The first house of Yahweh that could be regarded as at all stately was Solomon's Temple. It was of no great size, and was, perhaps, two hundred feet long. Many of the Hebrews disliked the worship of Yahweh, and wished to pray to the Sun-God Baal and other such gods. You see they believed in *many* gods; and such a belief is called Polytheism. As time went on, the many gods were dropped, and the Jews came to think of the world as ruled by *one* law, one mind, one person; and this belief is known as Monotheism.

And so the gods have changed from age to age, because man's thoughts about the world changed.

F. J. GOULD.

Solitude.

Of these am I, Coila my name.

—Burns, "The Vision."

Remote, unfriended, melancholy, slow,
Or by the lazy Scheldt, or wandering Po;
Or in some nearer, dearer district, where
The mossy Lugar flows, and hermit Ayr.

SEEKING the Sunday's relaxation of the earnest and concentrated, or tedious and sedentary week, I proposed to myself a journey—a *sentimental journey*—on that joy wheel, the bicycle; not quite the wheel of fortune, but the good friend of the poor man, the emancipator, recreator, enlarger, democratizer.

It was July, indeed; but ere those notes appear in the enchanting pages of our dear little paper, the sad, sweet notes of the brown-haired singer, Autumn, may be sounding their solemn, soothing contralto in woodlands vast and dim; and where the kindly largesse falls around the russet maid, and nestles in her tresses, and rustles under foot, again I will be there—more loving, more romantic, more "religious" with every passing year; and every twilight in the whispering woods, when the stately singing nymph has passed, will be to me the twilight of the gods, preceding by the brief gloom of a night the dawn—of man.

What wealth of flower and foliage in July, already being scrapped by Nature's careless, cavalier, inexorable hand!

I found a well by the wayside, grass-grown and half hid with rotting slabs, but the water clear and cool and deep—dreadfully deep and still and solemn—awesome in that solitude, in that tired and tragic, apprehensive—aye, and comprehensive—mood. I gazed into the well, and grew afraid; battle and death were reflected there. So gentle, yet such a lethal vault, the inverted liquid monument of the dead men who, living, sunk its shaft and set it round with rough, unhewn stones; a saintly cell, and silent for a century. By night

Its great bright eye most silently
Up to the moon is cast.

By day the sun illumines, as it wheels, the passive cavern of the hermit spring. Over the way is an embowered cottage. The gruff tones of man dictating to some other animal was the only sound of life. The weird well, and the dull day, and the wide melancholy of the green, undulating landscape, oppressed me with a sense of personal insignificance and futility. I was rather sad than tired, somewhat weary of the world. Was I growing old and feeble, the enthusiasm spent, the hero fled? Could I also say,—

The worm, the canker, and the grief are mine alone?

There was a way out: there was the well. But no, no, not *that* narrow way, not that obscure immolation. There was infinite choice: there were the thousand open doors of death. I could choose one at my leisure, or be chosen; there was *no* hurry! It was not with me yet as with poor Juliet, when "The broad horizon of her radiant hope had narrowed to a point¹ where life is agony and death is rest." Shelley thought small potatoes of Addison's *Cato*, but I used to think the "immortality" passage rather fine, if not philosophical.

Thus am I doubly armed: my death and life, my bane and antidote are both before me. This in a moment brings me to an end, and this assures me I shall never die. The soul, secure in her existence, smiles at the drawn dagger, and defies its point. The stars shall fade away, the sun himself grow dim with age, and Nature sink in years, but thou shalt flourish in immortal youth, unhurt amidst the war of elements, the wreck of matter, and the crash of worlds.

¹ M. J. Gauvin, *Truthseeker*, New York.

But here and now, if anywhere, was the true antidote. The well was the result of *human effort*, as were the cottage, the garden, the white farm, the cultivated field. Bricks, not Bibles, to build with; ploughs, not prayers, for husbandry; time, not eternity; men, not gods. We are so apt to "take things for granted," and thank God for "gifts" that only *human effort* has wrested from the brutish earth. We exalt the "general" and forget the soldier. Ah, those toiling, unhistoric millions, and the million unrecorded heroisms of their common life! What? Is enthusiasm returning? Am I heroic still? Gentle and simple, rich and poor, lay and cleric, pious and profane, we are all striving to make the most of this life, just as if there were no other! From cot to castle, everywhere emulation. That minister's manse at the cross-roads there emphasizes the fact; that odd, remote, sequestered dwelling, with its plain and massive walls set in splendid high hedges and arboreal umbellate shade, and through its gateway, as we pass, is caught the red glint of well-tended flowers; effort and emulation still—not *necessarily* heavenwards. It was a psychological moment. A cab drove up for the parson; Christ would have walked, or hired a donkey. I had a glimpse of the good man as he reclined on the cushions, on his way to fill with the Word his passive rustic vessels—vassals, rather, for was he not their parochial spiritual over-lord? He looked (to me) quite truculent and overbearing, fit Spartan to rule over those modern Laconians, helots, and slaves; but certainly I was no impartial judge. To paraphrase my friend Oliver,—

I caught his eye, to share the good man's frown.

Alas! I did not finish my journey. Some low, dim hills, some three miles away, marked the far precinct of my promised land; but flesh and spirit failed. Heaven is my home. No, but home is heaven. And what memories cluster round the old! I turned my back upon the gentle and the savage Past, and followed the lovely windings of the smooth switchback road of a richly sylvan Present, culminating in a leafy bridge and a river's murmurous sound. Solemn slumbrous sound, superb woodland. I worshipped here. I would be natural too, and, like these, make the most of sun and air and soil. There is sadness in the valley, but there are happy hollows. What man is happiest? was asked of the old Greek, and he replied: He who has a sound mind in a sound body. How meagre and barbarous, by way of contrast, the preacher and his message have become! No one *thinks* otherwise; but the unthinking are still numerous—the passive ruminant of hamlet and village, the formalist of the town. Churches abound. The fearful and wonderful Word is proclaimed at every street corner, and piety overflows into the fields in "Gospel tents." Good God! why are we not all good? Truth, to many, is deep and dim as the wayside well; to others, as plain as last night's dream—and as substantial. Every Sunday afternoon, at every "collier row," the pretty children and decent men and women of the unlovely hamlet stand in their doorways, and listen with respect to the raucous, wretched rhodomontade of the Demosthenes who has "found Christ," and spits him out again with all the force of conviction and the fury of declamation. It is not taste; it is tradition. But the blessed bike soon carries me out of earshot of the blessed Word. I may be hurrying to damnation, but it can be nothing to that I leave behind.

COILA.

The clerical control of the Universities has always been a scandal. A pamphlet just issued, relating to Cambridge University, states that "the old methods and old vested interests have retained their dominance," and that "but four colleges are presided over by men of scientific training."

The Pope's Prayer.

FOR a number of years I have had a kind of sneaking regard for the Roman Catholic faith. To swallow holubolus certain beliefs which they conscientiously held seemed such an easy way out of no end of difficulties. The Pope at Rome was the visible vicegerent of God on earth. Here at least was a human being elected by a popular or a semi-popular vote. The human being might be called by the name of Taylor, yet in his official capacity he was on intimate terms with the Almighty. If anyone on earth might be privileged to jog the elbow of Omnipotence, surely that man was the chosen one who reigned at the Vatican.

But I am shocked by a paragraph which appears in the daily papers at the very beginning of August, 1916. Someone in America has taken the trouble to elicit Taylor's views on the War. The Pope himself was, of course, unapproachable. But Cardinal Gasparri was the medium wherewith to enlighten a waiting world. This is the message which Gasparri is good enough to transmit from headquarters to an eager audience. One wonders what Abe Lincoln's remarks would have been, or Paine's, or Voltaire's:—

I have given your telegram to the Holy Father, and his Holiness is grateful for your respect and confidence in the Holy See. He prays that the Lord of Mercies, moved by the prayers of innocent children imploring peace on the second anniversary of the outbreak of this terrible conflict, will deign speedily to end this awful carnage.

Well, now, it is very nice for Taylor to send this soothing message through Gasparri. It breathes the right kind of spirit in these warlike days. Yet one wonders whether Gasparri himself could not have done as well as his chieftain. Looking squarely at the petition, one may be pardoned for suggesting that it is a trifle commonplace. Where be your temporal powers, O Taylor? What has come over the powerful priesthood that once upon a time could burn a Bruno? What mealy-mouthed maxims are these that issue from the Mistress of the Seven Hills? Our Primitive Methodist parson can voice sentiments like these by the bushelful. You should hear our Methodist when he warms to the occasion. So our friend Taylor hopes that the Lord of Mercies will deign speedily to end this awful carnage! But the man of God forgets that the Lord is a man of war. He delights in battles. He is never so happy as when he is girding on his armour. If any "scrap" is toward on this mundane sphere, you may depend that Jehovah will be in it.

Taylor appears to be tired of the holocaust; but he reckons without his host. A paltry two years' warfare is nothing to the God of Battles. He is accustomed to the sacrifice of the firstborn. He is inured to the wholesale slaughter of women and children; besides, what is two years to Omnipresence? A thousand years are but as one day, so that the great assault in the West and East and at Verdun will be a mere flash in the pan. Taylor, if possible, should think imperially. He should look upon the Universe as a great Being or Becoming. Yet at the back of his mind he entertains the idea that this warlike God has the power to end the carnage if he will. But he doesn't; therefore he must be anxious to continue the spectacle. Or he cannot, since Taylor has become his deputy. The Pope should really have settled terms in this contract. In the recesses of the Vatican, he ought to be able to lay a straight proposition before the senior partner. After two years of bloody inquisition, he ought to have sent an ultimatum to Omnipotence, and settle the matter offhand.

ALAN TYNDALL.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 3.15, Miss Kough, a Lecture; 6.15, a Lecture.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 6.30, a Lecture.

FINSBURY PARK N. S. S.: 11.15, E. Dales, a Lecture.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Messrs. Saphin and Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Dales and Smith, "What Did Jesus Teach?" 6.15, Messrs. Beale and Yates.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley Road): 7, T. Thurlow, "The First Convert to Christianity."

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

REGENT'S PARK N. S. S.: 3.15, Percy Wilde, a Lecture.

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

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

GLASGOW (Jail Square): 3.30, R. Ogilvie, a Lecture.

THE TRUTH SEEKER.

FOUNDED BY D. M. BENNETT, 1873.

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

G. E. MACDONALD - - - - - EDITOR.

L. K. WASHBURN - - - - - EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTOR.

Subscription Rates:

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

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

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

THE TRUTH SEEKER COMPANY,

Publishers, Dealers in Freethought Books,

62 VESEY STREET, NEW YORK, U.S.A.

RATIONALIST PEACE SOCIETY

38 CURSITOR STREET, LONDON, E.C.

President: THE RT. HON. J. M. ROBERTSON, M.P.

Chairman: MRS. H. BRADLAUGH BONNER.

The Rationalist Peace Society was formed in 1910 to carry on a propaganda in the interest of International Peace on essentially and avowedly Rationalist lines, without reference to religious sanctions of any kind. The annual subscription is fixed at a minimum of one shilling.

BIBLE STUDIES

ESSAYS ON

Phallic Worship and Other Curious Rites and Customs.

BY

J. M. WHEELER.

Price ONE SHILLING Net.
(Postage 2½d.)

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

Pamphlets by G. W. FOOTE.

	s.	d.
BIBLE AND BEER. 40 pp. post	½d.	0 1
WHAT IS AGNOSTICISM? 32 pp.	½d.	0 1
ROME OR ATHEISM? 32 pp.	½d.	0 1
MRS. BESANT'S THEOSOPHY. 16 pp.	½d.	0 1
MY RESURRECTION. 16 pp.	½d.	0 1
THE NEW CAGLIOSTRO. 16 pp....	½d.	0 1
THE ATHEIST SHOEMAKER. 32 pp.	½d.	0 1
THE PASSING OF JESUS. 24 pp.	½d.	0 1
THE SIGN OF THE CROSS. 48 pp.	1½d.	0 3
HALL OF SCIENCE LIBEL CASE. 58 pp.	1d.	0 3
CHRISTIANITY OR SECULARISM? 120 pp.	1½d.	0 4
THEISM OR ATHEISM? 92 pp.	1½d.	0 6
BIBLE HANDBOOK. 162 pp. Cloth	2d.	1 0

Pamphlets by COL. INGERSOLL.

A CHRISTIAN CATECHISM. 48 pp. ... post	1d.	0 2
WOODEN GOD. 16 pp.	½d.	0 1
THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION. 24 pp.	½d.	0 1
MISTAKES OF MOSES. Pioneer Pamphlet, No. 3. 32 pp.	½d.	0 1
COMING CIVILIZATION. 30 pp....	½d.	0 1
DO I BLASPHEME? 28 pp.	½d.	0 1
ERNEST RENAN. 16 pp....	½d.	0 1
HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH. 16 pp.	½d.	0 1
IS SUICIDE A SIN? AND LAST WORDS ON SUICIDE. 28 pp.	½d.	0 1
MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE. 16 pp.	½d.	0 1
THE GODS. An Oration. 47 pp.	1d.	0 1
LIVE TOPICS. 16 pp.	½d.	0 1
ABRAHAM LINCOLN. An Oration. 30 pp.	½d.	0 1
MYTH AND MIRACLE. 14 pp.	½d.	0 1
ROME OR REASON. 48 pp.	½d.	0 1
LIMITS OF TOLERATION. 29 pp.	½d.	0 1
WHAT MUST WE DO TO BE SAVED? 39 pp.	½d.	0 1
CREEDS AND SPIRITUALITY. 16 pp.	½d.	0 1
SUPERSTITION. 48 pp.	1d.	0 2
SOCIAL SALVATION. 16 pp.	½d.	0 1
WHY I AM AN AGNOSTIC. 23 pp.	½d.	0 1

Other Freethought Pamphlets.

REFUTATION OF DEISM, by P. B. Shelley. 32 pp. post	½d.	0 1
UTILITARIANISM, by J. Bentham. 32 pp... ..	½d.	0 1
PAGAN MYTHOLOGY, by Lord Bacon. 60 pp.	1½d.	0 3
ESSAY ON SUICIDE, by D. Hume. 16 pp.	½d.	0 1
MORTALITY OF SOUL, by D. Hume. 16 pp.	½d.	0 1
MARTYRDOM OF HYPATIA, by M. Mangasarian. 16 pp.	½d.	0 1
CODE OF NATURE, by Diderot and Holbach. 16 pp.	½d.	0 1
FREEWILL AND NECESSITY, Anthony Collins. 82 pp....	1d.	0 3
ESSENCE OF RELIGION, by L. Feuerbach. 82 pp. Nett.	1d.	0 6
LIBERTY AND NECESSITY, by D. Hume. 32 pp.	½d.	0 1
BIRTH OF CHRIST, by D. F. Strauss. 34 pp.	1d.	0 1
THE RELIGION OF FAMOUS MEN, by Walter Mann. 32 pp.	½d.	0 1

About 1d. in the 1s. should be added on Foreign and Colonial orders.

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

About 1d. in the 1s. should be added on all Foreign and Colonial orders

Books Every Freethinker Should Possess.

History of Sacerdotal Celibacy,
By H. C. LEA.

In Two Handsome Volumes, large 8vo.,
Published at 21s. net.
Price 7s. Postage 7d.

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

The World's Desires; or, The Results of Monism.

An Elementary Treatise on a Realistic Religion and Philosophy of Human Life.

By E. A. ASHCROFT.

440 pages. Published at 10s. 6d.
Price 2s. 6d., postage 5d.

Mr. Ashcroft writes from the point of view of a convinced Freethinker, and deals with the question of Man and the Universe in a thoroughly suggestive manner.

Priests, Philosophers, and Prophets,
By T. WHITTAKER.

Large 8vo. 1911. Published at 7s. 6d.
Price 1s. 9d., postage 5d.

Natural and Social Morals,

By CARVETH READ,

Professor of Philosophy in the University of London.

8vo. 1909. Published at 7s. 6d. net.
Price 3s., postage 5d.

A Fine Exposition of Morals from the Standpoint of a Rationalistic Naturalism.

Phases of Evolution and Heredity,
By D. B. HART, M.D.

Crown 8vo. 1910. Published at 5s.
Price 1s. 6d., postage 4d.

An Examination of Evolution as affecting Heredity, Disease, Sex, Religion, etc. With Notes, Glossary, and Index.

The Theories of Evolution,
By YVES DELAGE.

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

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

Three Essays on Religion.
By J. S. MILL.

Published at 5s.
Price 1s. 6d., postage 4d.

There is no need to praise Mill's Essays on Nature, The Utility of Religion, and Theism. The work has become a Classic in the History of Freethought.

Only a limited number of copies available.

No greater attack on the morality of nature and the God of natural theology has ever been made than in this work.

History of the Taxes on Knowledge.
By C. D. COLLET

With an Introduction by George Jacob Holyoake.

Two Vols. Published at 7s.
Price 2s. 6d., postage 5d.

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

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

Determinism or Free Will?

By C. COHEN.

Issued by the Secular Society, Ltd.

CONTENTS.

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

PRICE ONE SHILLING NET.

(POSTAGE 2d.)

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

SOCIALISM, ATHEISM, AND CHRISTIANITY. Price 1d., postage 4d.

CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIAL ETHICS. Price 1d., postage 4d.

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

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

Special Sunday Evening Lectures

AT

Queen's (Minor) Hall,

LANGHAM PLACE, REGENT STREET, LONDON, W.

September 10. Mr. CHAPMAN COHEN.
"Woman, the Bible, and the Bishops."

September 17. Mr. J. T. LLOYD.
"Self-Reliance versus Trust in God."

Reserved Seats 1s. Second Seats 6d. Free Seats at the Back.
Doors open at 6. Chair taken at 6.30.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

President :

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Secretary :

MISS E. M. VANCE, 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

Principles and Objects.

Secularism teaches that conduct should be based on reason and knowledge. It knows nothing of divine guidance or interference; it excludes supernatural hopes and fears; it regards happiness as man's proper aim, and utility as his moral guide.

Secularism affirms that Progress is only possible through Liberty, which is at once a right and a duty; and therefore seeks to remove every barrier to the fullest equal freedom of thought, action, and speech.

Secularism declares that theology is condemned by reason as superstitious, and by experience as mischievous, and assails it as the historic enemy of Progress.

Secularism accordingly seeks to dispel superstition; to spread education; to disestablish religion; to rationalize morality; to promote peace; to dignify labour; to extend material well-being; and to realize the self-government of the people.

Membership.

Any person is eligible as a member on signing the following declaration :—

I desire to join the National Secular Society, and I pledge myself, if admitted as a member, to co-operate in promoting its objects.

Name.....

Address.....

Occupation

Dated this.....day of.....19.....

This declaration should be transmitted to the Secretary with a subscription.

P.S.—Beyond a minimum of Two Shillings per year, every member is left to fix his own subscription according to his means and interest in the cause.

Immediate Practical Objects.

The Legitimation of Bequests to Secular or other Free-thought Societies, for the maintenance and propagation of heterodox opinions on matters of religion, on the same conditions as apply to Christian or Theistic churches or organizations.

The Abolition of the Blasphemy Laws, in order that Religion may be canvassed as freely as other subjects, without fear of fine or imprisonment.

The Disestablishment and Disendowment of the State Churches in England, Scotland, and Wales.

The Abolition of all Religious Teaching and Bible Reading in Schools or other educational establishments supported by the State.

The Opening of all endowed educational institutions to the children and youth of all classes alike.

The Abrogation of all laws interfering with the free use of Sunday for the purpose of culture and recreation; and the Sunday opening of State and Municipal Museums, Libraries, and Art Galleries.

A Reform of the Marriage Laws, especially to secure equal justice for husband and wife, and a reasonable liberty and facility of divorce.

The Equalization of the legal status of men and women, so that all rights may be independent of sexual distinctions.

The Protection of children from all forms of violence, and from the greed of those who would make a profit out of their premature labour.

The Abolition of all hereditary distinctions and privileges fostering a spirit antagonistic to justice and human brotherhood.

The Improvement, by all just and wise means, of the conditions of daily life for the masses of the people, especially in towns and cities, where insanitary and incommodious dwellings, and the want of open spaces, cause physical weakness and disease, and the deterioration of family life.

The Promotion of the right and duty of Labour to organize itself for its moral and economical advancement, and of its claim to legal protection in such combinations.

The Substitution of the idea of Reform for that of Punishment in the treatment of criminals, so that gaols may no longer be places of brutalization, or even of mere detention, but places of physical, intellectual, and moral elevation for those who are afflicted with anti-social tendencies.

An Extension of the moral law to animals, so as to secure them humane treatment and legal protection against cruelty.

The Promotion of Peace between nations, and the substitution of Arbitration for War in the settlement of international disputes.