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## Views and Opinions.

### Advertising the Gospel.

The National Mission of Repentance and Hope has commenced operations by issuing a poster which may have an opposite effect to the one intended. We have not seen the actual poster, but from an advertising press paragraph we may assume it to be a collection of figures intended to portray various forms of distress and squalour, with "a background of factories and smoke, and the white appealing figure of Christ in the foreground." Of course, the poster may suggest to the ultra-religious the need for more Christianity; on the other hand, it is not unlikely to suggest to many the reflection that the existence of so much squalour and misery to-day establishes a presumption in favour of trying some other method of bringing about the social millennium. In any case, the advertising competition of Christianity with pills and bottled beers and the latest Revue is not likely to add either to its dignity or its strength. And if the intellectual condemnation of Christianity may be summed up in the statement "It is not true," its social and moral condemnation is surely given in the existence of those evils which it advertises as reasons for giving it renewed support.

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### Christianity and Brotherhood.

That these evils are grave enough and call for removal none will deny; but it is tolerably certain that Christianity, as such, will never achieve the task. Its impotence to destroy a single social evil has been demonstrated through fifteen hundred years of European history. And the past two years has made that impotence more glaring than ever. As I write, there lies before me a couple of press paragraphs describing attacks made upon the offices of the Peace Society. This is not a new society formed since the opening of the War, it has been in existence for many years, and although not exclusively made up of Christians, its propaganda has always been accompanied with a certain amount of Christian profession. But in the heart of a Christian country it has become offensive to talk about the blessings and superiority of peace over war, and to work for the achievement of peace a crime. The only peace a Christian public seems able to fully appreciate is the peace that comes from one of two

combatants being unable to continue fighting. The brotherhood of the bayonet is the Christian expression of the Brotherhood of Man. The appreciation of those who honestly believe that peace is superior to war, and that the brotherhood of mankind will never be established by high explosive shells is shown by daubing their office windows with filth. So much for the civilizing consequences of fifteen centuries of Christian teaching.

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### Gathering Figs from Thistles.

True, this may be partly attributed to the demoralizing consequences of two years of a war which is now engaging the services of about forty millions of armed men. And I should be the last to dispute the truth of that statement. The wholesale destruction of life, the familiarizing of our minds with long records of killed and maimed, the concentration of the public mind upon the one end of destruction, must always involve a regression towards barbarism. Those who think otherwise would do well to ponder the following from one of the ablest of our war-correspondents—Mr. Philip Gibbs, describing an attack from the actual words of those who took part in it:—

In that hand to hand fighting there was no shouting, but only struggling of interlaced bodies, with fists and claws grabbing for each other's throats. I saw men use teeth and bite their enemy to death with their jaws, gnawing at their windpipes.....The greater number of the bodies still lie between the trenches, and we have been unable to withdraw them. We can see them always, in frightful quantity, some of them intact, others torn to bits by shells which continue to fall upon them. The stench of this corruption floats down upon us with its foul odours. Bits of their rotting carcasses are blown into our faces and over our heads as new shells burst and scatter them. The smell of this corruption taints our food and taints our very souls, that we are spiritually and physically sick. If I thought that a child of mine would have to go through all that I have suffered during these last weeks, I would strangle him in his cradle and so save him from it.

If men are to be made better by *that*, if civilization is to be advanced by experiences of that kind, then indeed has the time come when we may expect to gather figs from thistles.

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### The Worship of Force.

For nearly sixteen centuries the Christian Churches have ruled Europe, and the dominant ideal of the mass of the people is still that of brute force. This is not true of Germany alone. It holds to some extent—one hopes to a lesser extent—of every Christian country. In the Russo-Japanese War it was Japan's efficiency in fighting that induced Christian nations to admit her equality with themselves. That, and that alone. All the centuries during which woman has played her part in the home, in social life, and as one of the most effective agents in the civilizing of man, were not sufficient to convince Christians of her right to political equality with man. Two years' work as a munition-maker convinced a Christian Prime Minister that the case for the enfranchisement of women was now "unanswerable."

The fitness of woman for the vote was demonstrated by women showing their ability to help men in warfare. So, too, with the vote for man. Every soldier, said Sir Edward Carson, should have a vote; they have demonstrated their right to it by the bravery of the past two years. I have no objection to every soldier having a vote; on the contrary, I would give the vote to every adult in the country, and it is little short of a disgrace that military service should rob a man of the rights of citizenship. The significant thing is that the social consciousness of Christians is such that, with the man as with the woman, it is not intelligence, or ability, or manhood, or social service that proves the right to the vote, but the readiness to fight. If that is not the worship of physical force, in the name of all that is sensible what is it?

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#### Christianity's Failure.

It is such facts as these that furnish the most complete proofs of the failure of Christianity, and that provide the chief ground of its condemnation. Failure to altogether realize an ideal one can appreciate and excuse. But failure such as Christianity exhibits admits of no excuse, and no palliation. Mohammedanism can at least argue that under its influence people have been kept free from alcoholism. Buddhism can point to the fact that it curbed the spirit of religious persecution. Hinduism that it made kindness to animals habitual with its followers. What single virtue can Christianity take to its credit? It has mouthed most about love and brotherhood, and the reply to that is the present state of Europe. How much longer will men and women submit to this ghastly imposture? How long before they realize that the safety of civilization can only be secured by killing the savage that is in our midst, and that the best way to achieve this is by ending the reign of a creed which, in its own interests, is ready to pander to any passion which holds out the promise of profit.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

### The Penalty of Treating Fiction as Fact.

SIR JOSEPH COMPTON-RICKETT says that "the nation is subconsciously challenging the very necessity for Church life," and he might have added that it is "subconsciously challenging" the very existence of Christianity itself. In our estimation, that is an exceedingly hopeful sign. That Sir Joseph's statement is true, cannot be reasonably doubted by those who are acquainted with the facts. It is a truism that the Church no longer counts in the life of the nation. Neither politically nor socially does she exert any perceptible influence. No statesman ever dreams of seeking her advice on any subject whatsoever. Her ministers imagine that their profession is the most exalted and important in the world, a delusion in which all candidates for it are most assiduously indoctrinated. But they who thus boast cannot be blind to the fact that they are but zeroes in the national life of the country. They have no message to deliver to which the people at large are prepared to listen, while the few who do hear it pay no practical heed thereto. This is a fact which even the clergy themselves dare not openly deny. Many of us are aware how extremely foolish their utterances often are, and how readily the thoughtless are misled by them. To curry favour with the Socialists some of them go to the absurd length of assuring them that Jesus was the first Socialist, whereas, as a matter of fact, the Gospel Jesus never alluded to social questions at all. To win the homage of the ladies they are in the habit of declaring that Jesus was the best friend woman

ever had, though knowing well that he never did or said a single thing calculated to improve the condition of the fair sex, and that under the rule of his Church woman was denied for centuries all the rights and privileges of a human being. They worship Christ as the Prince of Peace, and assert that our young men are at the Front in answer to his call. They claim Sunday as the Lord's Day, on which no activity is legitimate except that connected with their own profession, conveniently ignoring the fact that the Gospel Jesus is reported to have said that "the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."

The Rev. Edward Shillito contributed an article to the *Christian World* for August 31, entitled "The Fear of Life," in which he culpably misrepresents non-Christians, charging them with constructing "an unreal world and living within it." He says:—

These are they who make the Great Refusal. They may come to talk impressively about life; they look on with interest, but they do not live. They are deserters from life, and in the end they will be judged as traitors.

Here we have the audacity of ignorance and prejudice combined. Does Mr. Shillito have the hardihood to maintain that only ministers and their followers practise the art of living, and to characterize all others as "deserters from life"? Fancy the wicked temerity of the man who tells his hearers and readers that Epicurus, Lucretius, Julius Cæsar, Bruno, Herbert Spencer, Charles Darwin, Thomas Huxley, and Charles Bradlaugh never lived. They and thousands like them made the Great Refusal, as it is called, but they made it in the interest of life, and because they could not honestly do otherwise. Was not life theirs to use as their reason directed? What right has this reverend gentleman to find fault with them and fling the charge of treason at them? Indeed, he virtually admits that he has no right when he concedes that "why we are here no one can tell with any finality." Sharing that inability with all the rest of us, how on earth can he inform us that those whose conception of life differs from his do not live, but are traitors to life? He does not know, and he is guilty of bearing false witness against his neighbours. If he cannot tell why we are here, he must be equally unable to ascertain what the calls of life upon us are. Who are they who "play at living in another kind of world"? The only people who do that are Christians whose citizenship is supposed to be in heaven, and who, in consequence, are but strangers and pilgrims on the earth. At this point Mr. Shillito flies off at a tangent thus:—

The world might have been a very different place; the ugly facts might have been left out; pain, disease, crime might never have been known, and God by his glorious will might have made a race to live in peace and love and unsoiled purity. It might have been a great race; it would not have been our race. It might have been happier and nobler; it would certainly have been different in its standards and values.

We frankly grant that, on the assumption that the universe is the creation of an infinite person, it might have been radically different from what it is, in which case its creator has every reason to be heartily ashamed of both himself and it, the one being a perfect disgrace to the other.

As a matter of fact, however, all the evidence at our disposal goes to show that the universe was never made at all. Nobody knows of a time when it did not exist in one form or another; and it has come to be what it is to-day by the operation of firm, immutable laws. The world might not have been a very different place, and the ugly facts might not have been left out. This is at last a truism to every evolutionist. The human race is

what it is of grim necessity. The struggle for existence and natural selection are inexorable laws from which no living thing is exempt. Of the existence of the glorious will of God there is absolutely no trace anywhere. The universe is under the region of unchangeable laws. Does Mr. Shillito not believe this? After writing as if he did not, he suddenly comes to his senses in the following passage:—

It is better to admit once for all that for those who go through life honestly it is a terrible adventure, and if there is joy in it, that joy must be consistent with hazards and terrors. The mountaineer who sets out to climb a dangerous peak has a great joy, but that is not stayed upon any illusions; he is well aware that a slip means disaster. The truth of human joy is that in its truest form it is only known by those who "live dangerously."

There is a touch of Nietzscheanism in that extract which we warmly appreciate. Unfortunately, however, his theology leads the reverend gentleman astray again. It is not quite clear whether he is an adherent of the Christianity of the great creeds or not; there are sentences which seem to indicate that he is not; but he indulges in eminently pietistic phrases the real import of which is more or less doubtful. The Christ of whom he writes is one who "plunges into the terrors of life himself," and "from within gives to his disciples a new apprehension of the adventure of living here in such a world," and who says, "Fear not, I have overcome the world." He does not remove the terrors, because they are inevitable, escape from them being impossible. What, then, does Christ do for us men? Mr. Shillito waxes sentimental and says, "Christ does not give an answer to our terrors, but he gives us himself." This is mysticism, which no one is competent to explain; it is like the mystical presence in the bread and wine of the Eucharist, insusceptible of proof, but by many firmly believed in. But can Mr. Shillito tell us who this Christ is and where he dwells? The reverend gentleman does not stifle his imagination. He imagines that "our hand is held by Christ, and that the woods at night are not so terrible for us when we hold that hand"; but he wants us to treat this imaginary presence of Christ as if it were objectively real, which it is not. Christ is unknown and unknowable to all alike, and is at best but an object of belief.

Now, imagination is a magnificent faculty, in the operation of which both poets and scientists find great delight; but neither poets nor scientists regard its creations as objective realities. It is the theologians alone who do that. They are literalists, and so are all their followers. All the so-called facts of the spiritual life are fictitious. The Four Gospels are clever novels, which the Church accepts as four biographies of an utterly unhistorical and impossible being. The Church is founded on a lie, and has been throughout its history the most lying institution that ever existed; and because her ministers still persist in representing her high claims as genuine, the masses of the people are turning their backs upon her in ever increasing numbers. Blind faith is dying out in all parts of Christendom, a process which the War is doing much to accelerate. The colossal impotence of the Church in face of the calamitous situation has rendered her an object of ridicule. People simply laugh when they hear her praises sung by such men as the Bishop of London and Dr. Campbell Morgan, well knowing that behind the performance there are no heroic deeds in justification of it. Prayer, so enthusiastically eulogized in the pulpit, is seen to be practically worthless, and only an ever-dwindling number engage in it. It is becoming more and more evident that the all-victorious Christ, of whom we hear so much, is nothing

but an empty myth, and it is his mythical character that accounts for the innumerable pictures of him drawn by his so-called ambassadors, no two of which are alike. When Reason is fully awake, the whole superstition will vanish, and life will be seen in the light of Nature and governed by her laws alone.

J. T. LLOYD.

## "Lying for the Glory of God."

### A Sidelight on Religious Mentality.

Authors who have influence are merely those who express perfectly what other men are thinking; who reveal in people's minds ideas or sentiments which were tending to the birth.

—Joubert.

Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.

—Shelley.

Him not the tales of all the gods in heaven,  
Nor the heaven's lightnings, nor the menacing roar  
Of thunder daunted.

—Lucretius.

One thing is certain, and the rest is lies.—Omar Khayyam.

SHELLEY died so long since that one would have thought the facts concerning his life were well known to every lover of poetry. Yet Christian writers are very loth to admit Shelley's Freethought. Being pious themselves, they pretend that a man of genius cannot be a Freethinker; and so they tell lies, and strain their faculties to disprove what Shelley asserted all through his life.

Some time ago the so-called *Liberal Daily News* thus referred to Shelley:—

Courageously and Christianly he held to his faith in the perfectibility of man. He did not believe in it, it is true, according to the Christian method. But to believe in it at all is a sort of Christianity.

It is enough to break a critic's heart. The idea of the perfectibility of human nature was the very mainspring of the great French Revolution, and every schoolboy should know that the leaders of that revolution were almost without exception militant Freethinkers. Of the new world, foreshadowed by these pioneers, Shelley is the poet. If this were an isolated example of misrepresentation, it would be unworthy of note; but in the case of Shelley, orthodox writers are always finding opportunities of imposing upon the ignorance and credulity of ordinary readers.

Professor Henry Morley, whose pen was at work in the interests of the Christian Church for so many years, was a typical sinner in this respect. In his introduction to a popular edition of Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* he was simply unpardonable. This is the way the Christian professor defamed the dead Freethinker:—

But the refuge he (Shelley) seeks from the wrongs of life is—though he did not know it—at the feet of Christ. The true Christian hears, through the wildest music in the utterance of *Prometheus Unbound*, the cry to which his own soul answers with sure hope, and claims fellowship with the singer, who presses, like the lark, up to the height of heaven, though the way is through the darkness of a cloud.

Professor Morley was not alone in this abominable crusade of defamation. Mr. Edmund Gosse, in his address delivered at the Shelley centenary celebration, since reprinted, said Shelley "rashly styled himself an Atheist, forgetful of the fact that, whatever name he might call himself, he, more than any other poet of the age, saw God in everything."

A more recent writer, Mr. Hector Macpherson, in his *Century of Intellectual Development*, equally debases the moral currency. He writes:—

When the official religion was aiding the State in its ghastly work of despotism and persecution, Shelley was bent upon Christianizing politics, and pleading for a

sociology which would bring the world nearer the ideal of the Sermon on the Mount.

Even that great poet, Robert Browning, who had hailed Shelley as "Sun treader," was so biased by his own pietism, said that Shelley, had he lived, "would have finally ranged himself with the Christians. Richard Holt Hutton, the famous critic of the *Spectator*, asserted that Shelley "learned even to believe in God as he drew near the end." Hosts of Christian critics, from the days of Gilfillan to those of Stopford Brooke, have wilfully refused to take Shelley's Freethought seriously, though the poet's scepticism is "four square to all the winds that blow." Pious admirers of the poet seem as blind as the worst detractors.

Shelley, be it remembered, was expelled from Oxford University for his Atheism, and years afterwards was declared by Lord Eldon, Lord Chancellor, to be unfit to be the custodian of his children, on account of his heterodoxy. The poet's Atheism was never disputed during his unpopular days, when men and women suffered fines and imprisonment for selling his profane *Queen Mab*, which figured in many a trial for blasphemy. But when it was discovered that the star of a great poet had arisen, Shelley was falsely and impudently dubbed a Christian.

The fact does not obtrude itself, but Shelley belonged to an order of writers of which Rousseau and Voltaire and the great French Freethinkers are the representatives. They all wrote, not merely for artistic, but for propagandist ends, to impress their ideas upon others by the force of eloquence. Shelley did not originate the philosophy in his poetry; he merely adopted it, borrowing it from William Godwin and the leading English and French Freethinkers. The ideas had all the force of novelty, but Rousseau and Shelley and others merely carried on a great tradition, which may be traced back to the days of the Renaissance, or even earlier.

In Shelley's lifetime this was freely admitted and acknowledged, and the poet's known Atheism incurred the hatred of the clergy, and no enmity is more relentless or more venomous. The abuse which was supposed to have killed Keats was the quintessence of politeness compared with the assault and battery made upon Shelley by the enlightened press of a Christian country. Here, for example, was what the *Gentleman's Magazine* had to say of him when the news of his death reached England:—

Percy Bysshe Shelley is a fitter subject for a penitentiary dying speech than a lauding elegy; for the muse of the rope rather than of the cypress.

That was what a periodical edited by a Christian gentleman for Christians had to say of the young Freethinker, who had devoted his short life of twenty-nine years to the service of Humanity. Not long before, another representative of the "religion of love," we remember, met Shelley in the post-office at Pisa, called him a "damned Atheist," and knocked him down.

Leigh Hunt, one of the friends who knew him best, spoke the truth:—

Had he lived, he would have made everybody know him for what he was—a man idolized by his friends, studious, temperate, of the gentlest life and conversation, and willing to have died to have done the world a service.

Byron, after Shelley's death, wrote:—

There is thus another man gone about whom the world was ill-naturedly, and ignorantly, and brutally mistaken. It will, perhaps, do him justice now, when he can be no better for it.

Landor gives a high testimonial of Shelley's character:—

His generosity and charity went far beyond those of any man (I believe) at present in existence. He was never known to speak evil of an enemy, unless that

enemy had done some grievous injustice to another; and he divided his income with the fallen and afflicted.

Had Shelley lived! Even though dead, something of this has come to pass. Better than his contemporaries do we of the twentieth century understand Shelley's motives. More plainly than they do we see that his deeds, even when erratic and blameworthy, were never inspired by other than lofty ideals. And, in spite of all the malice of pious detractors, our hearts respond as never before to the most anti-Christian of the English poets, a singer whose life-work is illuminated with his enthusiasm for humanity.

Shelley proclaimed himself an Atheist. He rejoiced in the name. "I took up the word," he says, "as a knight takes up a gauntlet in defiance of injustice." All his life he was fighting the "Galilean serpent." It was a brave thing to do, for it threatened his name with an immortality of libel.

Freethought has wrested so many positions from Christianity that, in order to support the tottering edifice of superstition, believers will hesitate at nothing to drag in some really great men, with whose names and influence they hope to buttress the wavering allegiance of their lukewarm fellow Christians. The Christian Church will never hesitate to claim Shelley as one of her "lambs." She buried the corpse of the great infidel, Charles Darwin, in Westminster Abbey. She interred the remains of doubting Thomas Huxley "in the sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection." She smuggled the dead body of Sir Richard Burton into the Church. She laid hold of Prince Jerome Napoleon in the death extremity, and with equal effrontery and impudence mumbled her mythological nonsense over the coffins of Robert Buchanan and Algernon Swinburne. The Church will never rebuke her faithful followers for "lying for the glory of God." Formerly, the Church used scaffolds, stakes, prisons, and torture-chambers; now she relies on lies, libels, and misrepresentations.

MIMNERMUS.

## The Religion of Beethoven.

(Continued from p. 571.)

### III.

It may be said that Beethoven could still have been a believer in Christianity without being faithful to the Church. On this point one thing is very certain, and that is, he only once confesses being a Christian, and then it is by way of giving point to a joke. It occurs in a letter to his friend Steiner, when lamenting upon the inconvenience of travelling on a Friday, and he says: "However much of a Christian I may be, I am satisfied with one Friday in the week." Indeed, it is very dangerous to take any of Beethoven's remarks, with a pious tag, seriously, until you have read the context. We see him writing such phrases as "Heaven watch over you, the Devil take you," and in a facetious letter to Brunswick (1811), he mixes God up with his joking.

If we take the central doctrine of Christianity—the divinity of Christ—it would appear from report that he said Christ was only "a poor human being and a Jew." Whether this was an actual fact cannot be said, but it is clear that Beethoven's realistic treatment of Christ in his oratorio, *The Mount of Olives*, is on all fours with such a view. Even such a specific doctrine as the Atonement is nowhere referred to by him. But in a letter to Frau Streicher (1816), and a most humorous one, he makes reference to Christ and Golgotha in a fashion which, considering the whole

tenor of the letter, is clearly satirical. "The new kitchen-maid (he says) made an ugly face when asked to carry up wood, but I hope she will remember that our Saviour dragged his cross to Golgotha"! Beethoven *may* have been perfectly serious in the remark, but it seems doubtful.

Beethoven never distinctly refers to a life hereafter. Even on his death-bed, when on the very verge of "that bourne from whence no traveller returns," he is silent about a hereafter. Had he not once said to Bettina, "The intellectual realm is the most precious in my eyes, and far above all temporal and spiritual ones."<sup>1</sup> No; Beethoven had no thoughts about the "courts above," which the faithful are so concerned after. He no doubt agreed with the poet Schiller, whom he admired, that a healthy nature required neither a deity nor immortality to sustain it. Listen to what Beethoven says in his diary: "The truly wise man does not concern himself with the good and evil of this world." And again: "Be not one of those whose spring of action is the hope of reward.....Let the motive be in the deed, not in the outcome." Beethoven had clearly left the ethics of Christianity behind him when he wrote that. As early as 1798 he had said to Zmeskall: "The Devil take you; I don't want to know anything about your whole system of ethics. *Power* is the morality of men who stand out from the rest, and it is also mine."

Beethoven was evidently a Nietzschean before his time. Schindler assures us that Beethoven looked forward to death with truly Socratic wisdom and peace of mind. When the end was drawing nigh, his friends suggested that a priest should be called in, and Beethoven assented. We are told that the ceremony of administering the last rites of the Church was most impressive, and that Beethoven expressed his thanks. But an "outburst of Rabelaisian laughter" was to follow, for as soon as the "ghostly man" had departed, Beethoven turned to his friends saying, *Plaudite, Amici, comœdia finite est* ("Clap your hands, friends, the play is over"). That Beethoven should have characterized the sacrament of extreme unction as a comedy has not been accepted in some quarters, who urge that when Beethoven used these words, which, by the way, usually concluded the antique drama, he merely wished to convey the idea that he viewed life itself as a drama. Personally, I think that religionists ought to accept the first idea, however improper it may seem; for in the latter it is certainly not complimentary to God, the author of this drama of life, that one of the actors, who has to bear the affliction of deafness throughout the action, should cry for applause when the play was over.

That Beethoven *died* in the arms of the Church must be a great consolation to "the crowd," but it really counts for nothing when we know how he *lived*, and that was as "a philosophic Pagan in undisguised revolt against accepted dogmas."<sup>2</sup> As Heine says in *De l'Allemagne*: "These legendary conversions belong at best to pathology.....They only prove that it was impossible to convert those Freethinkers while they were healthy in body and in mind.....They only prove that man turns to religion when he is old and fatigued, when his physical and mental force has left him."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This passage is made to read in Shedlock's translation of Kalischer's edition of *Beethoven's Letters* as the very opposite to this. Mr. Shedlock ought to explain.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Bennett, *Musical Times*, December, 1892.

<sup>3</sup> There is another view that we might take of Beethoven's so-called "conversion." As a musician he belonged to a class which, even if they had outgrown the old German designation—*varrende lut*, and classed with rogues and harlots—were still looked upon with suspicion, especially if they stood, as Beethoven did, outside of the Church. Indeed, it is not improbable that if Beethoven had not received the last sacrament, his body would have been denied

IV.

"It is strange," says Grove,<sup>1</sup> "that the Bible does not appear to have been one of his favourite books." But why strange? It reminds one of a remark made by the "sage of Chelsea" over a similar observation. "It is the wild cry of amazement," says Carlyle, "on the part of all spoonneys that the Titan was not a spooney too!" That Grove should have considered Beethoven not to have been a Bibliolator has raised the indignation of the little Bethels. J. S. Shedlock, whom we challenged a little while ago on the point of his translations of one of Beethoven's letters, is at some pains to rescue Beethoven from Grove's charge of indifference to the Holy Writ, and quotes Beethoven's Biblical references and paraphrases as evidence that he was a student of the Bible.<sup>2</sup> *O Sancta Simplicitas!* Has he not heard that even the Devil could quote Scripture? However, Mr. Shedlock's point does not touch Grove's explicit statement, as the latter admitted that Beethoven "knew his Bible."<sup>3</sup> What Grove clearly said was, that it was "not one of his favourite books." Now, I am inclined to think that Beethoven "knew his Bible," but not in the way that Grove suggests. He frequently uses the Blessed Book as a theme for merriment. In a letter addressed to Von Haslinger (1821), he says: "I intend sending something composed on Steiner's name to show that his is no heart of stone (*Stein*). Adieu, my good friend; it is my most heartfelt wish that you may prosper as a publisher; may all credit be given you, and yet may you never require credit! Sing daily the Epistles of St. Paul, and daily visit Father Werner, who can show you, in his little book, how to go straight to heaven." To his brother Joham (1822) he writes in a similarly humorous strain: "Farewell, my best brother! Read the Gospel every day; take to heart the Epistle of Peter and Paul, travel to Rome and kiss the Pope's slipper. Hearty greetings." Beethoven's letters contain many such sallies at the Bible and orthodoxy. He does not seem to have had even the usual literary appreciation of the Bible, as when the Vienna *Musikfreunde* suggested an oratorio to him on the "Victory of the Cross," he told them that he preferred "the immortal poets"—Homer, Klopstock, and Schiller, who "deserved" being set to music—from which we infer that he considered the Bible was not deserving of such.

H. GEORGE FARMER.

(To be continued.)

The Present Position of Evolution.

IV.

(Continued from p. 566.)

PALÆONTOLOGY has been aptly described as that branch of biology which deals with the distribution of organic products in time, and geographical distribution as that branch which deals with the distribution of organisms in space. The distribution of the earth's floras and faunas furnished Darwin with some of his most conclusive arguments for the doctrine of derivation. To the special creationist, quite to the contrary, the phenomena of animal and plant geography present difficulties of the most exasperating nature. In terms of super-decent and honourable burial. We know what happened to Paganini. He did not call in the Church during his last hours, and, as a result, his friends had to bury him where they could, for the Church closed the proper burial-ground against them. That, of course, was in Italy.

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> *Beethoven's Letters* (Kalischer Edition). Translated by J. S. Shedlock.

<sup>3</sup> *Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (1904), vol. i., p. 251.

natural genesis, one would obviously expect to discover organisms settled in circumstances best suited to their needs. But, as a mere matter of fact, various living forms are found in surroundings in which they pursue a most precarious existence, while organisms are very rarely met with in regions which present the best available advantages to their development and growth. As Wallace has observed, the European watercress flourishes exceedingly in New Zealand, yet it was unknown there until introduced by man. In the Australian streams it attains a height of ten or a dozen feet. Various British birds carried there by colonists have already threatened the existence of the native avifauna. The rabbit, again, thrives in Australia to so great an extent that it has become a curse. Professor Sidney Dickenson informs us that the average annual loss to the Commonwealth approaches a million sterling. And this writer continues:—

Another great pest to the squatters is developing in the foxes, two of which were imported from Cumberland some years ago by a wealthy station owner, who thought that they might breed, and give himself and friends an occasional day with the hounds. His modest desires were soon met in the development of a race of foxes far surpassing the English variety in strength and aggressiveness, which not only devour many sheep, but out of pure depravity worry and kill ten times as many as they can eat.....To these plagues is added the ruin of thousands of acres from the spread of the thistle which a canny Scot brought from the Highlands to keep alive in his breast the memories of Wallace and Bruce.

The Professor deprecates several other evils of this character, but the above are amply sufficient to demonstrate the truth that organisms are certainly not always best adapted to the particular habitat in which, according to the obsolete theory of special creation they were divinely appointed to increase and multiply, and replenish the planet.

Further, if climatic conditions are solely responsible for organic geography, then we are entitled to encounter allied floras and faunas dwelling in similar areas, while dissimilar climates should reveal widely contrasted organic forms. Yet throughout South America—a great continent in which the most varied meteorological conditions prevail—the world of life as a whole displays the closest relationship, while in Africa and Australia, land masses governed by similar weather phenomena, the respective plants and animals of these two continents are quite unlike. Another instance is adduced by Darwin in the Western Hemisphere as follows:—

No two marine faunas are more distinct, with hardly a fish, shell, or crab in common, than those of the eastern and western shores of South and Central America; yet these great faunas are separated only by the narrow but impassable Isthmus of Panama.

The foregoing illustrations combine to prove that organisms usually become adapted to their environment, while their area of distribution is regulated by the presence or absence of impediments to their dispersal.

During the famous voyage of the *Beagle*, Darwin became immensely interested in the remarkable animal life of the Galapagos Islands—a group of volcanic rocks situated some 600 miles from the shores of Ecuador and Peru. The feathered fauna of these islands closely resembles that of the Peruvian coast, and the greater part of the fishes are alike. In this instance no obstacle is presented to their diffusion. But an insuperable barrier exists in the ocean to the transit of land-birds, reptiles, insects, and plants, and these are mostly peculiar to the isles. Numerous species are exclusively confined to the Galapagos, but the organisms of the neighbouring shores betray their near kinship. So American is the fauna of these islands, comments Darwin, that “The

naturalist, looking at the inhabitants of these volcanic isles of the Pacific, feels that he is standing on American land.”

Presumably, if these peculiar animals were specially fashioned by the Creator to dwell in their island home, there was no occasion to cause them to plainly resemble the animals existing in quite unlike surroundings on the adjacent coast. Nor is this all. The Cape Verde Islands, near the African coast, although these are also volcanic, are the habitat of plants and animals distinctly different to those of the Galapagos, but these organisms manifest the clearest affinity to those of the neighbouring coast.

If we assume that each floral or faunal species was originally derived from a given centre, from which it has radiated, then its powers of dispersal must have been regulated by the absence or presence of barriers to its migration from its primeval home. Numerous are the evidences that natural obstacles are largely responsible for the past and present distribution of the organic world. We find that wherever any formidable barrier is presented to the passage of organisms from one region to another, there is practically certain to exist a pronounced unlikeness between the groups so divided. And the differences between these separated floras and faunas will, more or less, correspond to the extent of the barrier which precludes their fusion. Certainly the hindrances offered to distribution are less important to some animals than to others. Man has entered almost every zoological and botanical province, and various birds capable of sustained flight have easily overcome obstructions which completely prevent the migration of most other forms. The vast majority of mammals are quite unable to surmount the barriers erected by seas and oceans, while marine organisms cannot travel over a land barrier. Elevated regions, deserts, and other impediments tend to restrict the wanderings of plants and animals alike. Sea-water usually acts as a preventive to the diffusion of fresh-water life. Taken in their totality, the facts of geographical distribution all indicate the truth of the doctrine of descent.

Isolation can be shown to have co-operated in the evolution of new forms. During the Great Ice Age, the Alps and Pyrenees in Europe, and the White Mountains in America, became the homes of an Arctic flora and fauna. And, when later, the temperature rose and the ice retreated to its Polar realm, and a temperate flora and fauna were restored to the Northern Hemisphere, the snowy solitudes of the Alps, Pyrenees, and White Mountains retained, and still retain, organic types of a markedly Arctic character, although variations have since arisen. Geologically speaking, Britain was quite recently united with the European Continent, and, when surveyed as a whole, its organisms are continental in character, but it possesses several modified forms which are peculiar to our islands. But, in the case of oceanic isles that have been isolated from the mainland masses through vast periods of time, their floras and faunas are usually extremely peculiar, above all in those instances where no connection has been possible with their kindred on the neighbouring land.

It is significant that toads and frogs are unknown in oceanic islands, and that remarkably few mammals are met with in any isle distant more than 300 miles from a large land area. These animals are not absent owing to the unfavourable nature of an island environment, because, when introduced by human agency, they flourish exceedingly. Bats, and various birds, however, are little incommoded by the watery wastes, and wing their way to nearly all islands set apart in the far distant sea. But even among the Aves differences are set up. In the Galapagos Archipelago, “twenty-one land birds are

peculiar out of a total of twenty-six; while of eleven marine birds, only two are peculiar.....Madeira and Bermuda, on the other hand, which are constantly replenished with new stock from the adjoining mainland, have practically no peculiar land birds."

Considerations of space have forbidden anything more than a brief reference to a few of the known evidences of the truth of organic evolution. But we venture to think that the small number of facts that have been submitted are fully sufficient to show that the case for the law of development is quite unanswerable. As the American scientist and philosopher, the gifted Asa Gray, wrote:—

When we gather into one line the several threads of evidence of this sort, we find that they lead in the same direction with the views furnished by other lines of investigation. Slender indeed each thread may be, but they are manifold, and together they bind us firmly to the doctrine of the derivation of species.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be continued.)

### Acid Drops.

There are many replies to the stupid boast that Christianity has taught the world the Brotherhood of Man, the best of which is the Christian nations themselves. But if another is needed, it is surely found in the negro problem in the United States. America possesses a negro population of about ten millions, the ancestors of whom were originally brought there by the ancestors of the white Christian Americans to be bought and sold as slaves. Of this number about three-fourths inhabit what is called the Southern South. And here, not merely public feeling, but the laws are specially severe against the blacks. The vote is restricted or denied, they are taxed for public institutions which they are forbidden to use, they are denied accommodation in hotels and restaurants, they are excluded from white colleges and white churches, and are at all times open to insult. It should be said, to avoid misunderstanding, that in the North there is no legislation aimed against coloured people. Only ten per cent. of the negro population exist in the North, but for the remaining ninety per cent. one may say that their existence is a standing refutation of the monstrous falsehood that Christianity has done, or is doing, anything to bring about a genuine brotherhood of man.

Worse than this legal and social ostracism of the negro in America—although it may not unfairly be regarded as connected with it—is the existence of what one may call the mania for lynching blacks charged with certain offences. From a publication that lies before us, we see that since 1885 no less than 2,843 cases of lynching have occurred. One case, at Waco, on May 8, is told in detail, and illustrated with photographs taken by a special agent. The crowd seized the black, put a chain round his body, which was attached to a motor-car to a space behind the City Hall. "The mob ripped the boy's clothes off.....some one cut his ear off, some one else unsexed him." He was "struck with shovels, bricks, clubs, and others stabbed him and cut him until he was a solid colour of red." The black was then hung up by the chain to a tree and burnt. Then once more the remains were dragged through the city, and, continues the report:—

While the torso was being dragged through the streets behind the horse, the limbs dropped off, and the head was put on the stoop of a disreputable woman in the reservation district. Some little boys pulled out the teeth and sold them to some men for five dollars apiece. The chain was sold for twenty-five cents a link.

Such barbarities almost pass belief, but the publication from which we quote is a responsible one, and it is accompanied by photographs. And horrible as it is, it is well that the truth should be brought home to the minds of the American people.

The real question is, How long will the majority of the American people allow a minority to perpetuate crimes of

this character? For they are crimes. It matters not that the man lynched is a brute, a murderer, one who richly deserves death. When a mob seizes a man from the grasp of the law, a man whom the law has already condemned, and treats him in the manner detailed above, each one of the crowd becomes a criminal in his or her turn. Small wonder that one American writes us that these things make decent Americans "bitterly ashamed" of their country. The feeling does them credit, and we believe that feeling is shared by the vast majority of American men and women. It remains for them to see that this minority shall no longer disgrace the nation by its conduct. We are glad to note that a very strong attempt is being made to rouse public opinion in the South on the subject, and we are not surprised to find the name of Mr. P. G. Peabody as one of its liberal supporters. It should be added that Waco, the scene of this lynching horror, is a city of about 27,000, and possesses no less than sixty-three churches. Quite a Christian city.

Rev. Thomas Fawcett, of Southwood, Pinner, has departed this life, leaving behind him the comfortable sum of £55,352. So does the Lord heap burdens upon the shoulders of the faithful.

Army chaplains and others are always saying that the soldiers are greatly interested in religion, but Admiral Sir H. Meux says that, apart from the War, "the only thing the troops were interested in was the attempt of various ecclesiastical people at home to stop their grog."

The *Church Times* and the *Christian World* have fallen foul of each other over the religious case of "A Youngster of the First Hundred Thousand" who is now living in the wilds of Africa. Brought up as a High Churchman, this young man now feels that in the absence of Church services, the parson, and particularly the Holy Communion, "the thing on which his religious life rested is far away." He wants to know whether the Bible and his own conscience are an adequate chart and rudder for the steering of his religious ship. The *Church Times* says No; and the *Christian World*, Yes. We are in agreement with the *Church Times*, being firmly convinced that religion is utterly alien to man's nature, and can be kept alive only by artificial means. Fully two-thirds of the professing young Christians who go out from Christian homes to our colonies or to foreign countries, leave their religion permanently behind, while the remaining third have to be diligently hunted up by clergymen duly notified from home of their whereabouts, and even then their religious life is hopelessly lukewarm.

Such is the law, and there are no exceptions to it. A child, unless it receives systematic religious instruction, grows up an Atheist, and well the parsons know it. A Christian young man or woman ceases to be a Christian when torn away from the conventional Christian environment. Why, in Great Britain alone, at least a hundred thousand men of God are needed to make churches and chapels going concerns, and yet, in spite of all the care taken of them, most of them are in a languishing condition.

A New Zealand correspondent sends us a batch of newspaper cuttings in order to show us the "trend of thought" in that country. They bear full testimony to the fact that the revolt against religious doctrines is as marked there as here. And no better evidence can be given of this than the newspaper press. Nowadays, newspapers—like politicians—lead opinion from behind, and when a newspaper editor publishes attacks on current religious teaching, one may safely assume that he believes it to be in harmony with a fairly large public opinion. But, as we have often pointed out, the revolt against theology is not local, but general. It is not national but universal. There is not a country in the world in which opinion against Christianity is not growing stronger, and this is bound to find expression in some way or other.

Few people realize how great this anti-theological opinion is. And those who lay themselves out to cater to the public taste realize it least of all. The very qualities of mind which

lead them to fear offending "public opinion" prevents their realizing the true state of affairs. For the public opinion they have always in their mind is that which is crystallized in accepted form and established institution, and which, at present, commands the chief avenues of publicity. And because of this, the holders of advanced opinions remain themselves ignorant of their real numbers and strength. For ourselves, we are quite convinced that any publisher of standing, and any newspaper editor, who made it a set principle to give advanced opinions a fair share of publicity would find that, even from the commercial point of view, he had struck a paying view. The great need of the world is now as ever, courage—moral courage.

Unconscious humour is not the least laughable. A girl-scholar was asked to write, in her own way, an account of the raising of Jairus's daughter. This was the bright and original result: "The funeral party left the house with the parents and friends, and four men followed carrying the beer."

The Vicar of St. Matthew's, Ealing Common, died suddenly from heart failure, just as he was about to celebrate Holy Communion. Had he been about to deliver a Free-thought address, the moral would have been impressive.

Cardinal Bourne has paid a visit to the Grand Fleet, and has given addresses on the battleships. The Bishop of London previously paid a visit to the sailors, who should be in a fair way of becoming accomplished theologians. It only needs a visit from the Chief Rabbi and the Metropolitan of the Greek Church to complete their religious education.

It is many years since Charles Bradlaugh died, but the Christian Press still continues to print jibes concerning that great man. Recently the Right Hon. G. W. Russell, in an article on "Demagogues," referred to Charles Bradlaugh as one of the two great orators of the latter half of the nineteenth century. He said that he has seen Bradlaugh "subdue the turbulence of an excited mob by merely raising his hand." This we can well believe, although we never had the pleasure of either hearing or seeing Bradlaugh. But if there was one thing Bradlaugh was not, he was never a demagogue—that is, unless we keep to the primitive meaning of the word: one who is a leader of the people. A natural leader of men he certainly was; but no man ever played or pandered less to the passions or prejudices of the people he led or sought to lead. His stand against Socialism and his championship of questions that could bring only slander and misrepresentations are proof of this. It was not by an appeal to the prejudices of people that Bradlaugh won them to his side, but by the conviction he engendered of his absolute honesty and courage. And that conviction became almost as strong among his enemies as it was among his friends.

There is a fashion amongst the orthodox when referring to Bradlaugh which is simply stupid, and Mr. Russell follows it as blindly as a newly fledged curate. This fashion is illustrated by the remark, "The dismal doctrines which Bradlaugh taught are as dead as the Hutchinsonian system." Now, we wonder what doctrines are there Bradlaugh taught that can be so described. Bradlaugh was an avowed Republican, a Malthusian, and a Freethinker. Is Republicanism dead? We admit it is not so active in this country as it once was, although we believe it has strengthened during the War. And we have seen in the case of Portugal and China two new republics established within the last few years. Is Malthusianism dead? We advise Mr. Russell to read the Report of the National Birth-Rate Commission if he is under that delusion. Is it, then, Freethought that is dead? That affirmation is too absurd to need confutation. The truth is that Mr. Russell is repeating mere shibboleths; and his shibboleth is an illustration of the worst form of demagogy, since it is, in effect, an appeal to the prejudices and the ignorance of large numbers of people.

Julia Dawson, who writes the "woman's page" in the *Clarion*, considers that "Churches are very lovable." The

fact remains that the Clarionettes will have to shift the "lovable" bishops and 25,000 clergy of the Government religion before they can realize any sort of Socialism.

The *Manchester Guardian* says that soldiers in France are singing a song, "The bells of hell go ting-a-ling-a-ling." Does this portend the long-promised revival of the Christian religion?

Whenever Christians talk about the Church of the Future, it is a sign that the Church of the Present is in a bad way. If it were not, there would be no need to bother. The Church of the Future could then look out for itself. It is the fact of the Church having no present which makes religious people hope that it will have a future. This appears to be the chief ground for a leaflet by Mr. T. Ritzema, J.P., of Blackburn, "The Church of the Future." Mr. Ritzema thinks there is something wrong with the Churches because attendance is decreasing to "an alarming extent," and because even the Sunday-schools are losing their hold on the children. His advice—surely not new—is to have the services shorter and brighter, sermons of only fifteen minutes' duration, and any person absent for three Sundays to be visited by a member of the Church Committee. Why not revive the old law of fining people for not attending? It would be quite as effective.

Mr. Ritzema might himself be a parson, judging from his inability to see the point really at issue. People do not stay away from church because the sermons are too long, but because they do not believe in what is being preached. They do not feel that the services are dull so much as they realize they are concerned with things that are not true. The essential thing is that the average intelligent person is becoming convinced of the lie. While fifteen minutes of a lie is better than sixty minutes, decreasing the quantity does not affect the quality. Nor will singing help. Falseness in hymns is not really more effective than falsehood in a discourse. On the whole, the most hopeful part of Mr. Ritzema's programme is to concentrate on the children. Something under nine or over ninety offers the best material for the Church of the Present. And as for what is to come, well, we feel that, unlike politicians who are said to have a future but no past, the Church has a past but no future.

Sir Oliver Lodge has a good deal of ego in his cosmos. Writing on the subject of survival after death, he says, modestly, that ordinary persons may take comfort "from the assurance that I and a few other students fairly familiar with the whole of the evidence have been convinced." May we describe the oracles as the dozen superior persons scattered throughout the world.

We are indebted to the *Christian World* for the following from the *Chicago Standard* :—

"It is Darwin who is responsible for the European War—responsible for the ideas of evolution that have seized the supermen of Germany." Thus is quoted a well-known Baptist preacher in the public press. The news value of the item lies not in the statement, but in the fact that Mr. John D. Rockefeller, who was in the congregation, is said to have gravely nodded his head in assent.

We do not know why Mr. Rockefeller's agreement with this Baptist preacher should be regarded as of consequence. It is only interesting, so far as it proves that Mr. Rockefeller has a preacher that suits him. And as he is in a position to buy them, that is no cause for wonder. Some years ago he purchased a well-known English preacher, and we have no doubt others are available when required.

Dean Inge is one of the few clergymen who are not so silly as to refer to the Germans as "Atheists." The Dean says, "The notion that all moral principles are in abeyance during war is the most revolting doctrine that can be proclaimed. It is disgusting to find that it is openly defended by many of the religious guides of the German people."

The life of the late Lord Kitchener is to be written by a High Churchman, says the *Guardian*. We imagined that Lord Kitchener was a soldier, and not a parson.



C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

September 10, Queen's Hall, London; September 24, Queen's Hall, London; October 1, Abertillery; October 8, Birmingham; October 22, Sheffield; October 29, Barrow-in-Furness.

To Correspondents.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—September 17, Queen's Hall; September 24, Queen's Hall; October 1, Failsworth; October 8, Leicester; October 29, Sheffield.

We desire to warn the person who persists in sending offensive postcards to this office that we are not ignorant of their source. To write a postcard in printed characters is a very clumsy attempt at disguise. Anyone but a fool—and in this instance it is a filthy fool—would realize that when the printed characters are traced with a pen they disclose their origin almost as clearly as ordinary writing.

S. WIDDOWSON.—See "Acid Drops." Every thoughtful and independent person realizes, sooner or later, that all the Churches want is believers. The whole duty of man is, for them, summed up in "Theirs not to question why," and your experience, if not uncommon, is none the less interesting. We are afraid your proposed questioning will bring little satisfaction. Still, there is no harm in trying.

A. MITCHELL (Smethwick).—Of course, if you think it is about time we had another letter from you, we are bound to get it. That is one of the penalties of our position. But we can assure you we could rub along without it. And our thoughts about you would be kindlier if we heard less from you.

O. M. GERICKE.—Sorry to learn of your indisposition. We are obliged for the information contained in your letter, although its nature is not surprising.

A. H. BRIDGE.—No liberty; on the contrary, we are indebted to you for the trouble taken. The cutting will be useful, as we intend writing on the subject shortly.

T. REYNOLDS.—*The Crimes of Christianity* is one of Mr. Foote's works that we intend reprinting in the near future.

H. ROBERTS (Christchurch).—We are pleased you think the *Freethinker* "much improved." We are doing our best, and if we do not achieve success we will try to deserve it. But we have every encouragement in the results, so far. Cuttings very interesting. We refer to them elsewhere.

J. PITTS.—If the hymn-sheet you send us represents your usual mental food, we are not surprised that you do not care for the *Freethinker*. We hope there is nothing in this paper that children ought not to read, but, all the same, it is written for those of a larger growth.

A. E.—You ask if it is true that G. W. Foote sent for a clergyman shortly before his death. We fancy that if he had wished for clergymen to be present, he would have sent for two. With one on either side of the bed, he would thus have been able to re-enact the situation at the death of the Gospel Jesus.

E. RAGGETT.—We agree with you that Mr. Mann's articles on Nietzsche would make a fine booklet. We must see what can be done.

W. OWEN (Everton).—Your letter did not reach us until Sept. 4, so we were unable to reply by that date. We have written you privately on the matter.

E. RICHMOND.—Dr. Fairfield's letter appeared in the *Daily News* of August 17—the fourth page. Sorry the reference was given to the *Daily Chronicle*.

A. G. HANN.—Pleased to hear that your newsagent has gained so many new subscribers. Posters are being sent.

J. A. FRANKLIN.—We are always pleased to get the opinion of our readers on any subject connected with the paper, and such opinions always receive careful consideration.

J. G. HOWARTH.—We are glad you followed our advice in insisting firmly on your right to affirm. It appears to be a common experience for military officers to be unaware of the right to affirm, but if you insist they are bound to give way. If they will not, complain to headquarters.

G. GROVE.—You have enclosed four penny stamps in your letter, but do not say what for. Perhaps you will advise us.

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.

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

Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C., and not to the Editor.

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

To-day (Sept. 10) Mr. Cohen delivers the first of two special lectures at the Queen's (Minor) Hall Langham Place, Regent Street, W. The hall may be easily reached from any part of London, and in order that visitors may reach their homes at an early hour, the lecture will commence at 6.30. This will enable the meeting to be over by about 8 o'clock. Mr. Cohen's subject is "Woman, the Bible, and the Bishops," and he hopes it will be as exhaustive a discussion of the subject as time will allow. The second of the two lectures will be delivered by Mr. Lloyd, and on the following Sunday (Sept. 24) there will be a demonstration in connection with the Anniversary of Bradlaugh's Birthday and the Jubilee of the National Secular Society.

We are relying largely upon the services of our London friends to make these meetings known. Advertising during the War is more difficult than ever, although as much is being done in that direction as is possible. Those who can assist, therefore, in the distribution of slips announcing these meetings, should write or call for a supply of them either at the N. S. S. offices or the *Freethinker* office. Those who cannot call should write Miss Vance. We beg London Freethinkers to look on this effort as theirs as well as ours. There are other things on the carpet in connection with the London propaganda, about which more will be said later.

The article dealing with University College School (p. 586) is one that deserves special attention from Freethinkers. The story of how a great school, founded for the express purpose of providing an education apart from religious teaching, has been captured by the Churches, is painful reading, and it should have the effect of nerving Freethinkers to more strenuous and more watchful activities. Perhaps it is not too late for some of the parents who have children in University College School to make some sort of a protest.

The August *Malthusian* contains a special review of the Report of the Birth-Rate Commission, and a very large number of our readers will, we are sure, be interested in its perusal. Not the least interesting feature of the issue is an article by Dr. Drysdale on "The Vindication of Neo-Malthusianism" by the Report itself. The price of the *Malthusian* is one penny.

A soldier in Salonika, who is being supplied with the *Freethinker*, sends us his thanks, and adds:—

I am getting the *Freethinker* every week, and I always look forward to its coming. I am enjoying the articles more and more every week, and many a time I am lying reading my *Freethinker* when the shells are bursting round the hills. We had plenty of the parsons when we were camped nearer Salonika; but since we have moved up, and come under shell-fire, I haven't seen one.

We shall be glad to send copies of the *Freethinker*—so far as we are able—to addresses of soldiers that are forwarded to us.

A widely advertised book bears the startling title, *God's Child*. The last event in that very select family took place some two thousand years ago.

## Paulatim-Retrorsum.

### The Story of a Betrayed Trust.

EIGHTY-SIX years ago there was founded in London a school which was almost unique in this country. At a time when religious and sectarian tests barred universities and public schools alike to all dissidents from a dominant sect who were too honest to be hypocritical and perjure themselves, and when the discipline of our schools was characterized by a senseless and brutal excess of corporal punishment, University College School arose as an exemplar of better things. The keynote of its noble recession from the barbarism and intolerance of the evil past—of its pæan to the dawning better day—was struck at a very early date. Under Key—who was joint Headmaster from 1831 to 1842, and then sole Head to 1875—"the school received an impress which, *exceptis excipiendis*, it possesses to this day.....Religious education is left to be dealt with at home."<sup>1</sup> So, again, a later Head wrote concerning the optional classes held out of school-hours for scriptural instruction, that "the classes are wholly optional. We do not expect boys to have orthodox opinions when they enter; we do not guarantee that they shall have orthodox opinions when they leave. We ask no questions; we propose no tests; we teach no dogmas."<sup>2</sup>

So wrote the school's historian just after the transfer of University College School in 1907 from Gower Street to the magnificent buildings in Hampstead; but unhappily, accompanying this transfer, there has gone on a gradual recession from the noble ideals which formerly characterized the University of London, University College, and University College School, alike; and a progressive bowing of the knee to the idols of the people around: and naturally the backsliding down the slippery slope, though slow at first, is beginning to gather way. It was the peculiar glory of University College School that it was in religious matters absolutely neutral; that prayers and religious observances formed no part whatever of its routine; and that consequently parents holding every kind of religious belief or disbelief could send their sons there without hesitation, and without any need for recourse to that Conscience-Clause which, while supposedly safeguarding the sons of unorthodox parents, renders the boys a target for the jibes of their fellows. The school, of course, was not anti-religious; it was nobly neutral; and consequently Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Nonconformists, Unitarians, Jews, and Freethinkers, all could and did send their sons there without fear, knowing that the school was superbly indifferent to their religious views, and that no boy would be subjected to any kind of test or required to participate in any kind of religious rite or observance. The immense benefit to the boys of this intimate association with fellows of the most varied and opposite religious tenets need scarcely be emphasized.

Unhappily, and shameful to say, the peculiar glory of the school has now been stripped from it by the deliberate treason of its Governors to the heritage entrusted unto them; for, faithless to the unique tradition of University College School, they have pandered to the clerical mob. Let us note the stages of the fall. At the laying of the foundation-stone at Hampstead in 1906, and at the opening ceremony in 1907, prayers were offered by the Bishop of Islington and the Archbishop of Canterbury respectively, regardless of the obvious fact that the performance of such sectarian rites was most unfair and unjust to the Roman Catholics, Nonconformists, and Unitarians, whose sons attended the school, and insulting

to the Jews and Freethinkers. Only the day before the opening ceremony at Hampstead there had been a farewell ceremony at Gower Street, on which occasion the Provost of University College had remarked that:—

College and school alike have been built on the great foundation-principles of "religious freedom and liberality of curriculum." Those are the principles upon which our traditions have been formed: they have been held with firm courage and resolve in face of great hostility. "They were not doomed to die: and Fate saves those who hold them courageously."<sup>1</sup>

Noble words indeed; but, unhappily, the next day's proceedings at Hampstead constituted a bitter satire upon them; and the sequel has been that, by the decision of the existing Council of Governors, those "great foundation-principles of religious freedom" are "doomed to die."

In 1910 the former practice of holding optional classes twice a week before school for instruction in Scripture—*i.e.*, in the "documents" of the Christian and Jewish religions—was replaced by the institution of optional classes on Saturday morning—otherwise a holiday—for instruction in Anglican, Nonconformist, or Unitarian tenets by ministers of the respective denominations. On the face of it, there was no very great objection to this change in itself—although it differed from the former practice of giving instruction in the "documents" in order that a boy might acquire material for forming his own judgment later (as one Headmaster had put it),<sup>2</sup> and substituted for a knowledge of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures a more definitely dogmatic course; and it had the one great advantage of affording a working model showing how the insufferable religious squabble about State-schools could be effectually ended; but, unhappily, any who had an uneasy suspicion that the thin end of the clerical wedge was being artfully inserted have had only too good justification for their foresight. In 1912 the tables of curricula in the Schemes of Work annually published were preceded by a page setting forth the arrangements for religious instruction on Saturday, which was thus given ostentatiously the place of honour as a sop to the clerics, and with an obvious desire to create an impression that the religious note was especially characteristic of the school; and since that date the *descensus averni* has been *facilis* indeed. In 1914 the prizes were given away by Archdeacon Deedes—the excuse being, we believe, that he was an old boy—and those at the Preparatory School by Canon Masterman; the motive obviously being to curry favour with the Anglican Church at the cost of faithlessness to the essential note of the school. We must do Archdeacon Deedes the justice of adding that he did not abuse his opportunity. At these annual gatherings it had been the practice to sing the glorious school-song in honour of the founders and in defiance of intolerance; but on this occasion an order was issued that it should not be sung. The order was rescinded; but the song was pre-faced by an apology from the Headmaster to those whose feelings might be hurt by its defiance of intolerance! At the prize-giving in 1915 an otherwise most admirable and inspiring address by a distinguished man was marred by repeated insistence on the services and indispensableness of Christianity—in utter disregard of the fact that the parents present included Jews and Freethinkers; whilst, as the Church of England had been kotowed-to in 1914, that luminary of the Nonconformists, Dr. Horton, was put up to second a vote of thanks, and seized the opportunity to insist upon the necessity of religion and the supreme importance of the Saturday classes. Moreover, this time the school-song

<sup>1</sup> From *Gower Street to Frognaal*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

this token, officially ashamed of its noble founders, was not sung—University College School being now, by ashamed of its glorious tradition, and ashamed of hating and defying intolerance.

Meantime, for some years past the opportunity afforded by annual camps for the O.T.C. had been seized, and morning prayers or Sunday church-parades, or both, had been instituted. Thus the way was carefully paved, little by little, for the final step; and that was now taken. In 1915, without one word of warning or any sort of intimation to parents who had sent their boys to University College School on the definite promise that the school was religiously entirely neutral, and regardless of the fact that many of them might strongly object to the participation by their sons in such rites, morning prayers at school were introduced—at the instance, it is said, of the County Council, who had the insolence to demand the institution of intercessory prayers at University College School; but we are unable to affirm of our own knowledge whether the County Council took the initiative. At the prize-giving on July 27 last, Mr. Harold Wade, Chairman of the Governors' Committee of Management, quite realizing, and indeed emphasizing, the awkwardness of his position, formally announced that the practice of having morning prayers had proved helpful, and notified the audience that the Council wished the school to have, and to be known to have, a distinctly religious character. On this occasion, too, the audience were invited to stand up and sing a hymn to "God, the strength of those that war." The mothers are always in a majority over the fathers at these prize-givings, and in this time of war they were naturally in an overwhelming majority. Women are more religious than men, and also naturally and excusably more averse from manifesting open dissent from mob-movements. The audience, as a whole, therefore stood up and offered at least silent—many, vocal—homage to the God who "is a man of war," as his Scriptures tell us, and as his German ally knows so well; but it was observed that at least one parent, "faithful among the faithless found," remained silent and seated, in protest against that treason to all University College School tradition which the Council of Governors had sanctioned, and in proof that he at least stood by the founders. It may be a very significant fact—it hardly seems probable that the omission was accidental—that in the very long and full report in the *Hampstead and Highgate Express* of August 5, Mr. Harold Wade's announcement and the hymn-singing were not reported. Why not? At whose, if anyone's, instance?

Apologists for the Council will, of course, contend that no boy need attend either school-prayers or church parade in camp, since he can be excused on demand; but the very offer of a Conscience-Clause at University College School is manifest treason to its founders and its record. The aim of the school was to put all boys, religiously, on a level, and to maintain complete religious neutrality; whereas the Conscience-Clause puts a mark upon a boy, and exposes him to the observation and comment of all his schoolfellows. Strict Jews can perhaps invoke a Conscience-Clause without making their boys a target; but Freethinkers cannot. A Freethinking parent may be, and should be, quite ready to display the moral courage required of any protestor or dissident himself; but to invoke a Conscience-Clause for his son is to be courageous by proxy at the boy's expense; and many parents would hesitate to take this line. Besides, the best ideal of education is, so far as possible, to train a boy neither in belief nor in disbelief, but to leave his mind unbiased; and the boy who is excused under a Conscience-Clause is perforce made to take sides at an age

when taking sides in religious controversy is eminently undesirable. Incidentally, too, Freethinking parents who have sent their sons to this school on the faith of a definite bargain for religious neutrality, and who cannot now remove them to another school without upsetting the whole scheme of their education, must in future either abandon their obvious right to attend the prize-giving, or—to the natural discomfort of their sons, to say nothing of themselves—must remain sitting or leave when prayers or hymns are introduced, or must hypocritically take apparent part in the rites by standing up to order.

We know not whether it be already too late for University College School to recover its unique but now lost glory, or whether the forces of reaction and sycophancy to the Churches have now definitely and permanently prevailed; but surely in its long, long list of distinguished old boys there must be many who will be eager to join in a public protest against this treason, and in attempting to restore the covenanted *status quo ante*. We suggest that Mr. Harold Wade and such of his colleagues as have sanctioned and assisted in the carefully schemed and gradually effected lapse from good faith and loyalty should be ejected from the Council, and replaced by men who will be faithful to the trust handed down to them by forerunners greater than themselves; and then, in the words of another of the School's songs—

*Floreat, et in aeternum,  
Alma mater U. C. S.*

\* \* \* \*

The school has a right noble motto, of which it is justly proud—*Paulatim—little by little*. Is it too late to ensure that this shall not be lengthened to *Paulatim retrorsum—little by little backwards, per proditorem perfidiamque*, through treachery and breach of faith?

MATHEMATICUS.

### Crucifixion.

It is a characteristic sign of Christianity that its low water mark is the shedding of blood. We refer specifically to the incident in connection with the Crucifixion of Christ. This baptism of the faith, whilst having no particular interest to all good Freethinkers, will repay an examination if we lift the question of sacrifice to a higher plane than one which finds expression in the feeble and selfish bleat of "What shall I do to be saved?" The grandest little man in history, Socrates by name, represents to us the crucifixion of intellect. Not by any means is his death an isolated case of the penalties attached to thought and active philosophy, and it is our present purpose to reveal the intense selfishness of Christianity by examples of others who died to save the world.

Setting aside the question of whether the world is worth saving, we would ask our readers to recall the symbol for the earth. The upright stroke represents man, the horizontal stroke drawn through the upright represents woman, and a circle drawn round the two represents the earth. On this cross mankind is sacrificed, and a catalogue of the victims would make the solar system shudder. Is it not singular that Christians should pick out *one* man and point to him as the greatest sacrifice of all? Would this not tend to prove the limited outlook on history that makes Christianity a curse in its egotism? We are somewhat astounded at the number when we attempt to remember those lives given for the advancement of mankind, yet this phenomenon, except for the interest of a few aristocratic thinkers, excites little or no admiration among those leading a life only a slight degree above that of vege-

tation. The crudities of the Salvation Army amplify this instance; the destruction or sacrifice of a physical body can be made to appeal to those simple souls who follow the banner of blood and fire. They, poor things, their emotions demoralized by windy rhetoric and blatant noise, would probably hesitate to kill a fly; but they joyfully participate in the mysterious benefits attached to salvation through the cruel physical death of one man. It is a cheap way of rejoicing when someone else pays the penalty of sacrifice.

We shall have to search deeply to find the real motives of those who approach life as a sacrament or dedication of service to mankind. Love of fame may explain some cases; intense religious feelings cause others to make the grand voyage through life at the service of others; at the latter no Freethinker will hurl a stone. But, in this life, where nothing appears to be final, we find a distinct type willing to sacrifice and be sacrificed, and fame and religion play no part in the choice. Why is this? The religious key will not unlock the door to this mystery. Shall we have to explain it by saying that *all* mankind is sacrificed on earth? If we assent, then we are still left with the fact that crucifixion has degrees. Look at the face of Falstaff as a type compared with that of Dante. Now let us try the very common lucre test. Our useful archbishop receives the sum of £15,000 per year for his part in the sacrifice of mankind; are you laughing, reader? Our late leader amassed one fifteenth of that sum during his lifetime. What becomes of the drivel contained in the famous charge of base Materialism made against Freethought? Must we really educate our opponents? Must we be continually pointing out the fact to them that their well-fed and well-clothed bodies, their spacious residences, their long and well-kept lawns, stand for things of the flesh; and, so far, are a direct negation of the teaching of their Master? The only people logically entitled to these privileges are Atheists, Agnostics, and fools who have not learnt the lesson that luxury is the forerunner of degeneration. Luxury is virtue run to seed. Memo for the Freethought superman: Pray God keep me poor!

When Socrates heard his sentence of death he reflected—

that possibly the gods thought it better for him to die now than continue to live, and no wonder, for hitherto he had lived most happily with a consciousness to himself of progressive moral improvement, and with the esteem and love of his friends. Were he to live on now, he might find his faculties impaired, and then the dignity and pleasure of his life would be gone. Were he to be put to death by his judges, he was confident that by posterity he would be regarded as one who had suffered wrongfully, but had done no wrong to others, having only endeavoured to make all men better.

We do not wish to make comparisons with this statement and the one supposed to have been made in the Garden of Gethsemane; we only desire to assist in shattering the fallacy that Christianity is universal as a result of sacrifice. Shall all heroes of spirit and body retreat in the murky shadow of the cross? Not so long as Freethinkers have pen and voice shall we be silent on the subjection of every noble man, from Socrates to Ferrer, to this gigantic imposition of the central figure in Christianity. We say central figure; in our hearts do we know that the Calf of Gold is set up, and Christ's professional followers are unworthy of him, not knowing how to hold—

A sheep-hook, or have learn'd aught else the least  
That to the faithful herdsman's art belongs.

We confess, in fairness to those who arrogate themselves as police of the moral world, we are surprised to find that their pretensions only come up for trial in the midst of Armageddon. Since it is given to this thing

called Christianity to be hydra-headed, it is to be expected that we should hear the retort of "giving it a trial." What in Heaven's name has been taking place during these last two thousand years? Here again do we strike the Christian note of selfishness. What, we would ask, is the matter with Platonism? Or, again, cannot we try Buddhism? Or, failing these two, what is there to prevent the national and rational acceptance of a sane divinity entitled the Good, the True, and the Beautiful? There is more than faith entrenched near the cross, and if Armageddon should extend to the utmost ends of the earth, we should be met by the same cry; that we have not given Christianity a trial. We might summarize this frame of mind as perpetual stupidity. By the firm and fixed idea of the crucifixion of one man, Christian apologists, like squirrels, are seen to be jumping from bough to bough of absurdity, their selfishness raising difficulties to themselves and more doubts to their followers.

We are optimistic in reflecting that Christianity is receiving many deadly blows, but we cannot subscribe to the idea that Freethought will claim all of its deserters. They may be scattered among the diverse sections of religion, and Freethought will probably receive some of the most vigorous minds, tired and disappointed with the emptiness of Christianity. In so far that Freethought is *not* dogmatic, it is a lovely and refreshing country, wherein we hear the music of the joy of life, where we may see the beautiful wrought by the hand of man and the forces of Nature, and where man's mind may be free. With Keats, rather than St. Augustine or St. Paul, do we abide, and the Secular saints who have gone before us need no middleman or frocked priests to demand our devotion. Our foreheads shall be set towards the stars, and physical crucifixion shall be a story best forgotten, since it was told in the uncertain light of the childhood of mankind and repeated by babblers, whose actions resemble those of the hawk, the wolf, and the leech, but seldom those of the parson of the divine Chaucer.

WILLIAM REPTON.

## The Ethics of Propagandism.

### A LITTLE STORY.

*Old Man.* I will tell you (*Young Man*) a little story.

Once upon a time an Infidel was guest in the house of a Christian widow whose little boy was ill and near to death. The Infidel often watched by the bedside and entertained the boy with talk, and he used these opportunities to satisfy a strong longing of his nature—that desire which is in us all to better other people's condition by having them think as we think. He was successful. But the dying boy, in his last moments, reproached him, and said:—

I believed, and was happy in it; you have taken my belief away, and my comfort. Now I have nothing left, and I die miserable; for the things which you have told me do not take the place of that which I have lost.

And the mother, also, reproached the Infidel, and said:—

My child is for ever lost, and my heart is broken. How could you do this cruel thing? We have done you no harm, but only kindness; we made our house your home, you were welcome to all we had, and this is our reward.

The heart of the Infidel was filled with remorse for what he had done, and he said:—

It was wrong—I see it now; but I was only trying to do him good. In my view he was in error; it seemed my duty to teach him the truth.

Then the mother said:—

I had taught him all his little life what I believed to be the truth, and in his believing faith both of us were happy. Now he is dead—and lost; and I am miserable. Our faith came down to us through centuries of believing ancestors; what right had you, or anyone, to disturb it? Where was your honour, where was your shame?

Young Man. He was a miscreant, and deserved death.

O. M. He thought so himself, and said so.

Y. M. Ah—you see, *his conscience was awakened!*

O. M. Yes—his Self-Disapproval was. It *pained* him to see the mother suffer. He was sorry he had done a thing which brought *him* pain. It did not occur to him to think of the mother when he was misteaching the boy, for he was absorbed in providing *pleasure* for himself then. Providing it by satisfying what he believed to be a call of duty.

Y. M. Call it what you please, it is to me a case of *awakened conscience*. That awakened conscience could never get itself into that species of trouble again. A cure like that is a *permanent* cure.

O. M. Pardon—I had not finished the story. We are creatures of *outside influences*—we originate *nothing* within. Whenever we take a new line of thought and drift into a new line of belief and action, the impulse is *always* suggested from the *outside*. Remorse so preyed upon the Infidel that it dissolved his harshness towards the boy's religion and made him come to regard it with tolerance, next with kindness, for the boy's sake and the mother's. Finally he found himself examining it. From that moment his progress in his new trend was steady and rapid. He became a believing Christian. And now his remorse for having robbed the dying boy of his faith and his salvation was bitterer than ever. It gave him no rest, no peace. He *must* have rest and peace—it is the law of our nature. There seemed but one way to get it; he must devote himself to saving imperilled souls. He became a missionary. He landed in a Pagan country, ill and helpless. A native widow took him into her humble home, and nursed him back to convalescence. Then her young boy was taken hopelessly ill, and the grateful missionary helped her tend him. Here was his first opportunity to repair a part of the wrong done to the other boy by doing a precious service for this one by undermining his foolish faith in *his false gods*. He was successful. But the dying boy, in his last moments, reproached him, and said:—

I believed, and was happy in it; you have taken my belief away, and my comfort. Now I have nothing left, and I die miserable; for the things you have told me do not take the place of that which I have lost.

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Then the mother said:—

I had taught him all his little life what I believed to be the truth, and in his believing faith both of us were very happy. Now he is dead—and lost; and I am miserable. Our faith came down to us through centuries of believing ancestors; what right had you, or anyone, to disturb it? Where was your honour, where was your shame?

The missionary's anguish of remorse and sense of treachery were as bitter and persecuting and unappeasable, now, as they had been in the former case. The story is finished. What is your comment?

Y. M. The man's conscience was a fool! It was morbid. It didn't know right from wrong.

O. M. I am not sorry to hear you say that. If you grant that *one* man's conscience does not know right from wrong, it is an admission that there are others like it. This single admission pulls down the whole doctrine of infallibility of judgment in consciences. Meantime, there is one thing which I ask you to notice.

Y. M. What is that?

O. M. That in both cases the man's *act* gave him no spiritual discomfort, and that he was quite satisfied with it and got pleasure out of it. But afterward, when it resulted in *pain* to him, he was sorry. Sorry it had inflicted pain upon the others, but for no reason under the sun except that their pain gave HIM pain. Our consciences take no notice of pain inflicted upon others until it reaches a point where it gives

pain to us. In *all* cases, without exception, we are absolutely indifferent to another person's pain until his sufferings make us uncomfortable. Many an Infidel would not have been troubled by that Christian mother's distress. Don't you believe that?

Y. M. Yes. You might almost say it of the *average* Infidel, I think.

O. M. And many a missionary, sternly fortified by his sense of duty, would not have been troubled by the Pagan mother's distress—Jesuit missionaries in Canada in the early French times, for instance; see episodes quoted by Parkman.

Y. M. Well, let us adjourn. Where have we arrived?

O. M. At this. That we (mankind) have ticketed ourselves with a number of qualities to which we have given misleading names. Love, Hate, Charity, Compassion, Avarice, Benevolence, and so on. I mean we attach misleading meanings to the names. They are all forms of self-contentment, self-gratification, but the names so disguise them that they distract our attention from the fact. Also we have smuggled a word into the dictionary which ought not to be there at all—Self-Sacrifice. It describes a thing which does not exist. But worst of all, we ignore and never mention the Sole Impulse which dictates and compels a man's every act; the imperious necessity of securing his own approval, in every emergency and at all costs. To it we owe all that we are. It is our breath, our heart, our blood. It is our only spur, our whip, our goad, our only impelling power; we have no other. Without it we should be mere inert images, corpses; no one would do anything, there would be no progress, the world would stand still. We ought to stand reverently uncovered when the name of that stupendous power is uttered.

Y. M. I am not convinced.

O. M. You will be when you think.

—Mark Twain, "What Is Man?"

### National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON AUGUST 31.

The President, Mr. Chapman Cohen, occupied the chair. Also present: Messrs. Bowman, Gorniot, Leate, Neate, Nichols, Roger, Rosetti, Samuels, Thurlow, Wood, Miss Kough, Mrs. Rolf, and Miss Stanley.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed. The monthly cash statement was presented and adopted.

New members were received for the Parent Society and the Birmingham and Camberwell Branches.

In reply to questions, it was reported that the Joint Committee against the Prohibition of Sales of Literature at meetings in the London County Council Parks had not yet received the decision of the Council in this matter.

The arrangements for lectures at the Queen's Hall on September 10 and 17, and for the meeting to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the National Secular Society and the birthday of its founder, Charles Bradlaugh, on September 24, were reported as complete.

The receipt of £25 from the Propaganda Fund, per Mr. Cohen, was also reported.

A communication from Mr. Thomas Shore, the promoter of the Secular Funeral scheme, informing the Executive of his ill-health, and consequent inability to proceed with the scheme at present, was read, and the Secretary was instructed to convey to Mr. Shore the thanks of the Executive for his assistance, and their sincere sympathy. The hope was expressed that Mr. Shaw might still be able to take some part in the completion of the work.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary*.

The stress of the European War is waking people up. Here is the *Daily Mail* girding at the Church of England. "The Church is asleep. The printed sayings of many bishops and parsons prove how hopelessly out of touch they are with realities." It has taken our contemporary a very long time to find this out.

## 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.

## INDOOR.

QUEEN'S (MINOR) HALL (Langham Place, W.): 6.30, Chapman Cohen, "Woman, the Bible, and the Bishops."

## LONDON.

## OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 3.30, Mr. Hooper, a Lecture.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 6, Percy Wilde, a Lecture.

FINSBURY PARK N. S. S.: 11.15, Hedley V. Storey, "Why am I Atheist?"

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

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley Road): 7, a Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill): 3.15, E. C. Saphin, "Christian Charity."

REGENT'S PARK N. S. S.: 3.15, Miss Kough, a Lecture.

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

## COUNTRY.

## OUTDOOR.

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

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Secretary: Miss E. M. VANCE.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Friends of the Society who have remembered it in their wills, or who intend to do so, should formally notify the Secretary of the fact, or send a private intimation to the Chairman, who will (if desired) treat it as strictly confidential. This is not necessary, but it is advisable, as wills sometimes get lost or mislaid, and their contents have to be established by competent testimony.

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