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Views and Opinions.

Religion and the War.

As was, perhaps, to be expected, the larger portion of the R. P. A. *Annual* is taken up with the question of religion and the War. There are twelve articles dealing with the effect of the War on religious belief, and of this number, by far the best is that by Mr. Arnold Bennett on "Religion After the War." And the worst is by Sir Ray Lankester, who is curiously anxious to prove that "Rationalism" is as much a religion as is Christianity—which, if true, makes one feel sorry for Rationalism and quite justifies the worst that has been said of it—and makes a deplorable attempt to set up a claim for a Christian morality which is "the basis of the moral creed of all civilized nations." Pity that so many of our scientific men should become so unscientific the moment they touch religion. Sir Ray Lankester's article would alone give strong support to the thesis that wholly clear thinking and quite profitable action will be impossible so long as men and women bother themselves about a "religion" of any sort.

* * *

Mr. Arnold Bennett on the War.

Mr. Arnold Bennett's article is in complete contrast to that of Sir Ray Lankester's. He is properly suspicious of a word with such questionable associations as "religion," and says that, in the ordinary sense of the word, he has no religion, and never remembers having had any. He believes in neither a creator of the universe nor in a future life. And his conscience "is utterly detached from any supernatural sanctions whatever." Equally short shrift does Mr. Bennett give the popular prattle about the War having awakened in the nation a sense of reality. On the contrary, he points out, every nation engaged in the War has lived in the grossest illusion ever since the War commenced. But there has been no revival of Christianity. And if the War, with its reversion to a lower social and mental life, has not been adequate to effect a revival of Christianity, it is not likely to be better situated when the War is over. In the onward march of the race, Christianity is doomed. The utmost it can hope for is a stay of execution.

Our Religion of Peace.

There is, however, one point worth noting in this discussion as to the effect of the War on Christianity. The first is the unexpressed assumption—unexpressed, because if it were once expressed, its absurdity would be glaring—that Christian nations at war is a new phenomenon. But when, and for how long, have Christian nations *not* been at war? There may not always have been a "great" war, but some kind of a war by Christian nations has always been in being somewhere. If, to take our own country, we have not had a war on with one of the "Great Powers," we have had an "Expedition" in Africa or Asia, just to keep our hands in. Let anyone sit down for an hour or two and take European history from, say, the time of the Crusades, and see how many years he can discover when Christians were not at war. The result will probably be a revelation to many. The hypocrisy of Christianity has been so insistent and so universal that its cant of peace and brotherhood has really succeeded in blinding people to the fact that Christian nations have made war one of their regular occupations, with the result that they have always been either at war or preparing for war. Christian nations have been the great disturbers of the world's peace, and it is not without significance that China has been forced along the path of militaristic development, as was Japan, by the pressure of Christian nations. And only a few years ago, after Turkey had deposed its Sultan, the Positivist chief of the Turkish Parliament publicly lamented that the energy the reformers had hoped to spend on internal improvement, the pressure of Italy, Germany, and Austria was compelling them to divert into militaristic channels.

* * *

Christianity and War.

On the face of it, then, there is no reason why a War between Christian nations should be more fatal to Christian belief than previous wars have been. Christianity has lived through other wars; why should it not survive this one? If there is any reason for believing that this War will leave Christianity in a worse position than it was before the War opened, the reason must lie outside the War itself. At most, the War must be incidental to that result. And it must be noted that the Christian Church in each country has behaved in accordance with precedent. Each has assured its followers that the cause for which they are fighting is a Christian one. Just as every German soldier bears on his cap the pious motto, "Gott mit uns," so the clergy in all the allied countries assure each soldier that God is with him. Just as the Bishop of Ripon declares that "Our cause is identified with God's cause," and "General" Booth that "this war is akin to the spirit of Christianity itself," so a leading German Court preacher affirms that "Germany defends Christianity." A German bishop declares that "killing is a divine word," and Archdeacon Wilberforce caps this with the counsel that "the killing of the Germans is a divine service in the fullest sense of the term"; and many German preachers might be cited to match Father Vaughan's statement that our

business is to go on killing Germans. British, French, German, or Russian, the story is the same; and it is a story that seems in complete accord with the history of the Christian Church. * * *

Will Religion Profit from the War?

If the Christian Church lose ground after the War, it will certainly not be because war is in conflict with Christian teaching or is recognized as inconsistent with Christian teaching. Nor will it be because the horror of war comes as a shock to the religious consciousness. A consciousness that can, generation after generation, "harmonize" the existence of God with all the ravages of disease, the disaster of pestilence and earthquake, and the inevitable preying of organism on organism, might easily "harmonize" the horrors of even this War with the moral government of God. And, as everyone knows, these apologies are forthcoming in shoals. Moreover, war, as Mr. J. A. Hobson remarks, is an "orgy of unreason." The lower passions and more primitive feelings tend to become supreme, and the more balanced reflection which makes for ordered progress is replaced by an almost unbounded credulity, unreasoning hatred, and unintelligent suspicion. Out of all this, religion might well expect to make gain, as it has gained on previous and similar occasions. For whatever makes for a lowering of life cannot but make for a strengthening of religion. And in the revival of confession within the Church, in the legends of intervening troops of angels, or in such things as the erection of War shrines with accompanying praying-stools, we have indications of the way in which religion may make capital out of a world-wide disaster. * * *

The War and Self-Revelation.

Other things equal, the Christian Church might well face the outcome of the War with perfect equanimity. It might even count on a decided gain from the War, and thus justify Mr. R. J. Campbell's opinion that the War had given religion the finest chance it had had during his lifetime. But there is one supreme consideration on the other side. Before the War, and for at least two generations, the massed forces of modern science had been steadily undermining the Christian faith. With many the nature of this process had been recognized, and they were fully aware that for them religious belief was non-existent. But there were thousands of others who, while equally exposed to the iconoclastic influence of modern thought, were unconscious of its effect upon them. They remained *professedly* religious, with all the reality gone. To these the War has come with just sufficient of a shock to enable them to realize their position in relation to religious belief. The War will not have destroyed their belief; it will only have shown them they have been living in a fool's paradise. Thus the War will, I anticipate, leave the really religious as religious as before, if not more so. We may have a revival of crude superstition that will astonish many. But, on the other hand, there will be a clearer line of demarcation between the two classes. The issue will be more sharply defined, the evil consequences to society of the existence in its midst of a vast mass of superstition will be more clearly recognized, and that cannot but make for the growth of Freethought.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

God's Will the Scapegoat.

MUCH is being written at present about the Rev. R. J. Campbell, and this kaleidoscopic gentleman has just published a volume of 339 pages entirely about himself. In this book, entitled *A Spiritual Pilgrimage*, he tells the

whole story of his religious life which, he imagines, will in parts be a revelation to all who peruse it. We have read it with special care, but we have utterly failed to discover any revelation in it. We knew Mr. Campbell quite as well before as we do now after wading through it. The reverend gentleman furnished a fairly full revelation of himself in almost every sermon he preached in the City Temple. He has always claimed to be on exceptionally intimate terms with God, and this outrageous claim is the key to his character. He inherited a constitution of extreme delicacy, and as a child he was scarcely ever free from pain of one sort and another; but he thanks God that now he has not the battles with ill-health that made his early days so memorable. And yet both his sufferings in childhood and his comparative immunity therefrom in latter years are regarded as providential, as distinct manifestations of the Divine will. His experience of pain has given him "a certain amount of insight into and sympathy with the woes of others, both physical and mental." It is doubtless true that those who have suffered are naturally the best qualified to help the afflicted, but it by no means follows that they are so as the result of any supernatural intervention. Mr. Campbell seems to believe that all the facts of his life have been Divinely ordered. We find no fault with him for what he calls his spiritual pilgrimage. Brought up with grandparents in the North of Ireland, it was almost inevitable that he should have been associated with Presbyterianism, and when he came to live with his father in England, who was a United Methodist minister, nothing could have been more in the order of things than his becoming a Nonconformist. When he served as junior master in a high school in Cheshire, under the headmastership of an Anglican clergyman, it was only to be expected that he would identify himself with the Church of England; nor is it in the least surprising that, when he encountered intellectual difficulties as to the true nature of the Church, towards the close of his Oxford University career, he accepted a tempting invitation to the pastorate of a Congregational Church at Brighton. What is amazing and distressing is the fact that he fathers these changes on God. At first he declined the call, but it was repeated, and this is how he speaks of it:—

I took the letter straight to Dr. Fairbairn and laid it before him without a word. He read it quietly through, and then, folding it up and handing it back to me, said very solemnly and emphatically: "You cannot decline this; it is a call of God." So I thought myself, and still do. Without further delay I notified my acceptance to the Brighton people, and so ended one of the most important chapters in my history, and another and widely different one began (*A Spiritual Pilgrimage*, p. 73).

For the space of twenty years he remained a Congregational minister. He now tells us that from childhood he longed for the service of the altar, and was temperamentally a lover of high ritual.

I remember making for myself an oratory in a remote corner of our wood, and carving a rude crucifix for it as well as erecting a rough stone altar. Why I did this I cannot imagine, as I am sure I never saw anything of the kind anywhere else at that time, and never took part in anything approximating to Catholic worship, never went inside a Catholic Church, in fact (*Ibid*, p. 12).

As a matter of fact, he disliked Nonconformity for three reasons, namely, its lack of reverence, its treating the very idea of the Church almost as superfluous, and its failure to recognize any distinction between minister and layman. And yet, though at heart a Sacramentalist and completely out of touch with some of the fundamental ideas of Nonconformity, he permitted himself to be non-episcopally ordained, without even the laying-on of hands, and for twenty years to occupy Nonconformist

pulpits. Whilst he asserts that Anglicanism had given him his soul, Nonconformity was privileged to supply him with a comfortable living during the best years of his life. During his occupancy of the City Temple pulpit he often expressed the joy he experienced at being back among his own people, and not seldom expressed his unbelief in the importance of forms. On one occasion, at the celebration of the Lord's Supper, he is reported to have said: "I am one of those who believe with Dr. Dale, though we do not attach ourselves to any material system, nor draw any hard and fast line of ceremonial round about our observance of this historic sacrament, yet there is a special grace attached to it." At another such service he answers objectors to so simple a form of Celebration:—

Another says to me, "Have you not, by your form of religion, deprived yourself of a great consolation, something infinitely precious; the frequent communion of the devout Christian who kneels at the altar to receive it?" And I reply: To him who devoutly seeks his blessing there, God has come indeed; but the Real Presence is not in the altar, but in his own soul. Where are righteousness and truth, where mercy and love have kissed each other, there is the real Holy Communion, and I can discern no other.....I care for nothing but moral and spiritual values. Find me these, and you can make your own forms.

In his last book, already quoted from, speaking of the Bishop of London, he says (pp. 276-7):—

As far back as fourteen years ago he once asked me what I missed most in Nonconformity as compared with the Church of England, and I replied, "The altar." He never forgot this remark, and recurred to it again and again in conversation in after years.

Observe that fourteen years ago, even before he became minister of the City Temple, he was in the habit of telling his Anglican friends how much he missed in Nonconformity, whilst in his public discourses he assured his hearers that their plain, simple forms were, spiritually, fully as valuable as the most elaborate and ornate in the Catholic or the English Church. No wonder that one critic wrote in the *Christian Commonwealth* for October 25: "There is an air of unreality about the whole of Mr. Campbell's Nonconformist ministry." In this instance, insincerity means hypocrisy. This man of God, on his own showing, proclaimed views which he did not hold, but which, at heart, he abhorred as false and pernicious; and yet he has the audacity to declare that all along he wanted to follow God's way, not his own. He entered the Congregational ministry and continued in it for twenty years, though all the time he cherished the Catholic views of the priesthood and the sacraments; and he is not ashamed to affirm that his Nonconformist ministry was abundantly blessed of God.

We are fully convinced that *A Spiritual Pilgrimage* is calculated to be of immense service to Freethought. It deliberately discredits the Christian God and unintentionally exposes the essential hypocrisy of those who call themselves God's spokesmen. On p. 228, Mr. Campbell makes the following humiliating confession, in which he seems to glory:—

Conviction and vocation are not necessarily quite the same thing, and I am as sure to-day as I ever was that it has been my vocation to preach in the City Temple; it is otherwise now.

Addressing the meeting of the City Temple Church members, at which his resignation was accepted, he spoke thus:—

By the manifest will of God I am no longer equal to the work thus involved, and I feel that my vocation here is at an end, and another sounds in my ears; I am free to go where my heart leads. After the City Temple no other Nonconformist pulpit has any attraction for me;

no other church is possible to me as a future sphere of labour than that to which I go (*Ibid*, p. 289).

Such is Mr. Campbell, and such is Mr. Campbell's God, and they suit each other perfectly. The supreme business of the latter is to say Amen to whatever the former says and does. It would have demeaned Mr. Campbell to accept any Nonconformist pastorate after that of the City Temple, it would have been altogether too enormous a step downwards, and so it was God's will that he should seek reordination as a priest of the Holy Catholic Church of England. Not being equal to the work required of him at the City Temple, he was too proud to condescend to become the minister of any smaller church of the same order. After all, it was not his views that really drove him from Nonconformity, but the ill-health which rendered continued success in the cathedral of Nonconformity an impossibility, and the consequent desire for a more dignified ministry, and of much less exacting a character. By declaring that in all this he was guided by the Will of God, he goes far towards proving the non-existence of that will.

J. T. LLOYD.

A Roland for Sir Oliver.

Raymond: Or Life and Death, by Sir Oliver Lodge Methuen. 1916.

SIR OLIVER LODGE's war-time book is certain to cause discussion, for it contains some extraordinary features. His son, Raymond, was killed at the Front in Flanders in September, 1915, and it is claimed that members of his family have been in communication with the young man since that time. The volume contains a record of these alleged conversations between the living and the dead, and this raises again the old, old question as to whether human personality persists beyond the grave.

For a scientist, Sir Oliver Lodge gives very little evidence for so momentous a matter. One point relates to a prophecy of Raymond's death made at a seance in America a month before he was killed. Another refers to a "sitting" shortly after the young man's death, in which an alleged message from Raymond was conveyed to Lady Lodge, containing the words "Good God! how father will be able to speak out! much firmer than he has ever done, because it will touch our hearts." Further "conversations" with Raymond give descriptions of life in the next world, such as:—

There are men here, and there are women here. I don't think that they stand to each other quite the same as they did on the earth plane, but they seem to have the same feeling to each other, with a different expression of it. There don't seem to be any children born here. People are sent into the physical body to have children on the earth plane; they don't have them there.

Another piece of information follows:—

People here try to provide everything that is wanted. A chap came over the other day, who *would* have a cigar. "That's finished them," he thought. He means he thought they would never be able to provide that. But there are laboratories over here, and they manufacture all sorts of things in them. Not like you do, out of solid matter, but out of essences, and ethers, and gases. It's not the same as on the earth plane, but they were able to manufacture what looked like a cigar. He didn't try one himself, because he didn't care to; you know he wouldn't want to. But the other chap jumped at it. But when he began to smoke it, he didn't think so much of it; he had four altogether; and now he doesn't look at one.

That is the bald outline of Sir Oliver Lodge's case for survival after death. There are other matters included, which have no value as evidence, such as exalted visions,

and a statement that Raymond had seen Christ. It all sounds very odd in the face of the familiar clerical argument that the surgeon's knife cannot find the "soul." For, in a sense, Spiritualism does try to find the "soul" with the knife—that is, with material means. It wants to get as good evidence for the existence of John Smith after death as it had for the existence of John Smith before death. The supposed "spirit" of John Smith is required to prove his existence and presence by making himself audible, by showing that he remembers his aunt or his grandmother, or by having his photograph taken.

Now, what is there in Sir Oliver's evidence to convince the world, or even to carry conviction to the minds of plain men and women? The prophecy of his son's dissolution was not improbable, for he was a soldier, and sharing a soldier's constant risk of death. And what are we to make of the "revelations" of the "hereafter," with its "laboratories," and its "cigars," and its "factories"? Are we to suppose that all life is indestructible? In that case, we have still to ask where life begins; and wherever the line may be drawn, it is manifest that the jellyfish, the oyster, and the bug and flea are on the hither side of it, and have "souls." All these, and a thousand other difficulties, encounter us when we try to consider Sir Oliver's account of the "beyond."

Whilst "Raymond's" description of a future life seems absurd to us, there is one point worth noting. Life after death is not painted as being horrific, but as a continuation of life on earth, such as Shelley's sarcastic description of hell as a place "very like London." Apparently, even religious folk now-a-days are getting ashamed of the theological theory of heaven and hell. Unconsciously, their ideas are becoming more and more secularized. Their ideas may be childish, but it is gratifying to find that they are more humane. There is an enormous difference between Sir Oliver Lodge's farcical views of a future existence and the tragical views of the orthodox Christians. Charles Haddon Spurgeon, whose works are so admired by Sir W. Robertson Nicoll, preached and wrote that the majority of mankind were destined to eternal torture in full view of the Deity:—

In fire, exactly like that which we have on earth to-day, will lie, asbestos-like, for ever unconsumed—every nerve a string on which the Devil shall for ever play his diabolical tune of hell's unutterable lament.

The unfortunate people will—

look up there on the throne of God, and it shall be written "For Ever!" When the damned jingle the burning irons of their torment they shall say, "For Ever!" When they howl, echo cries, "For Ever!"

That was what the majority of Christians believed until recently, and similar ideas are still preached by the Salvation and Church Armies, and itinerant evangelists. Yet, many centuries ago, Omar Khayyam, the most splendid poet who swept his lyre under the Mohammedan crescent, chanted nobler ideas in splendid music:—

I sent my soul through the invisible,
Some letter of that after-life to spell,
And by and bye my soul returned to me,
And answered, I myself am heaven and hell.

It must be confessed that the newest and most up-to-date Spiritualism is very like the old. The hand may seem the hand of Esau, but the voice is the voice of Jacob. Behind Sir Oliver Lodge's semi-scientific vocabulary there is always "Sludge, the medium." In spite of the oracle of Birmingham University, the riddle remains unanswered, the sphinx is still silent. Couched in educated language, presented with all the glamour of academic robes, the message is unconvincing.

The new Spiritualism gives no better answer than the old, and the later "messages" from the "other side" are

as unconvincing as the earlier. The savage dreams of his happy hunting-grounds; the Mohammedan peoples his Paradise with houris; the Christian imagines the jewelled streets of the New Jerusalem; and Sir Oliver Lodge is satisfied with his "cigar-smoking" spirits. The world is no nearer a solution than in the far-off days of Lucretius, or in the earlier times when primitive man sobbed over his dead.

And, after all, death is not so much our concern as life. The men of to-day have shown the greatest courage and the highest disdain of death ever shown. It is our present fate, smoky with clouds that hide splendour or doom, to be living at the very apex of the world's history and in the zenith of man's challenge of fate. Nor is there any one of us, however weak, afraid, or unready, who can forget the last quiet words of Charles Frohman when the waters slid on the deck of the doomed ship, "Why fear death? It is the most beautiful adventure in life!" The Secular solution is the best. All sprang from Nature, and have their little day, and all return for their last sleep. Fear should have no place.

Into the breast that gives the rose
Shall we with shuddering fall,

MIMNERMUS.

Pagan and Christian Morality.

IV.

(Continued from p. 726.)

If Jesus had been divine—if he had been omniscient—one would think that it was not too much for him to furnish us with an original system of morals,—one would think that he would have disdained the practice of adopting the old Pagan rites and expressions, and would have produced something that was not already in the world. We do not, however, find that he did so. On the contrary, we find that the purest morality which he taught was borrowed from heathen sources.—E. P. Meredith, "*The Prophet of Nazareth*," pp. 422-3.

What divines had assumed as the distinctive revelations of Christianity, theologic criticism has matched by exact parallels from the Stoics and poets of Greece and Rome. Later, when Confucius and the Indian scriptures were made known, no claim to monopoly of ethical wisdom could be thought of, and the surprising results of the new researches into the history of Egypt have opened to us the deep debt of the churches of Rome and England to the Egyptian hierology.—Emerson, "*Letters and Social Aims*," "*Works*" (1890), p. 468.

From the Jews the Christians derived nearly all that is valuable in their religion. They have added much of pernicious fable. So far from honouring Jews as elder brethren, Christians slandered and persecuted them, with scarcely a pause of ferocity, for a full thousand years, and with varied injustice for some centuries more, in the greater part of Christendom.—Professor F. W. Newman, "*Thoughts on Comprehensive Christianity*," p. 11.

THE teaching of Jesus to "Judge not, that ye be not judged," and that about seeing "the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye," were of the commonest notoriety at the time, and long before the coming of Christ.

The great Jewish teacher, Hillel, taught:—

Judge not thy neighbour until thou hast stood in his place (*Pirke Abot*, 2, 4).

Another teacher in the Talmud admonishes:—

The fault from which thou art not free blame thou not in another (*Baba Mezia*, 59, 2).

Mr. McCabe gives no less than five quotations of this teaching from the Talmud alone.¹

Plutarch, the Greek biographer, living in the first century of our era, citing the example of Plato (400 B.C.), says:—

Whenever Plato was among evil-doers, he was wont to ask himself: Do I myself perchance have the same vice?

¹ McCabe, *Sources of the Morality of the Gospels*, p. 251.

He himself taught :—

Take care that thou be far removed from the things thou findest fault with in another (*On the Use of Enemies*, iv.).

The Emperor Marcus Aurelius advises :—

When thou art offended at any man's fault, forthwith turn to thyself and reflect in what like manner thou dost err thyself (*Thoughts*, x., 30).

Epictetus taught :—

Thou wilt commit the fewest faults in judging if thou art faultless in thy own life (*Fragments*, lvii.).

Seneca observes :—

If we would be righteous judges, let us first persuade ourselves that none of us is blameless (*On Anger*, ii., 28).¹

The teaching of Jesus, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," was an old and well-known commandment among the Jews. We find it word for word in Leviticus (xix. 18). In the Talmud we read :—

Grieve not, my son, we have yet another pardon for sin: that is, to do good and to love your neighbour (*Abot of R. Nathan*, 4).

Seneca taught :—

Thou must live for another, if thou wouldst live for thyself (*Letter xlviii.*, 2).²

"It was Cicero, and no Christian," says Mr. J. A. Farrer, "who said—'Nature ordains that a man shall wish the good of every man, whoever he may be, and for this very reason, that he is a man.'"³ Cicero, the great Roman orator, was born 106 B.C., died 43 B.C.

Of Seneca, the Roman philosopher-statesman (born three years before Christ, died sixty-five years after), Mr. McCabe observes :—

It would be almost possible to find a corresponding sentiment in Seneca for every moral text in the Gospels. Early Christian writers recognized this so clearly that they pretended that Seneca had borrowed of Paul, and even such scholars as Jerome and Augustine accepted the correspondence which was forged in their names. Modern Christians see the absurdity of tracing Christian influence in Seneca, and as they cannot venture to impugn his doctrine, they sneer at his person. Seneca often reflects that he is not an ideal observer of the virtues he recommends, nor would many teachers of virtue pass such a test. But the grosser charges which are lightly repeated from hostile Roman gossipers cannot be sustained. That he was a man of most sober life, and that he faced with nobility a cruel and unjust sentence of death, all admit; and it is no slight tribute to his personal conduct that his wife insisted on dying with him.⁴

The early Christian Fathers evidently did not believe these libels, for St. Jerome, Tertullian, and St. Augustine, among others, speak of him as "Seneca noster"; that is, "our Seneca."⁵

As for the letters Christians forged to show that Seneca was indebted to St. Paul for his morality, Merivale, in his valuable work on the *Romans under the Empire*, observes: "It is hardly necessary to refer to the pretended letters between St. Paul and Seneca. Besides the evidence from style, some of the dates they contain are quite sufficient to stamp them as clumsy forgeries. They are mentioned, but with no expression of belief in their genuineness, by Jerome and Augustine."⁶ And Merivale was no sceptic, but a dean of the Church of England.

Merivale says that Jerome and Augustine gave no expression to a belief in the genuineness of the letters.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 251.

² *Ibid.*, p. 238.

³ J. A. Farrer, *Paganism and Christianity*, pp. 575-6.

⁴ McCabe, *Sources of the Morality of the Gospels*, p. 126.

⁵ Merivale, *History of the Romans under the Empire*, vol. vi., p. 460.

⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. vi., p. 457, note.

On the other hand, they never expressed any doubts upon the subject. In fact, the Rev. W. Capes, in his book on *Stoicism*, says: "St. Jerome not merely speaks of him as 'our own,' a term which he might possibly apply to Virgil, or to any other Latin writer, but says that he ranks him in the catalogue of the saints, on the authority of the well-known correspondence with St. Paul."¹ As to the letters themselves, says the Rev. Capes: "They are indeed a clumsy forgery, for their literary form and thought, and the references which they contain, are such as could not possibly proceed from either writer."²

No modern scholar with a reputation to lose would claim that this powerful Roman statesman and thinker would stoop to borrow his morality from a religion which the Roman government regarded as a degraded and debasing superstition, which circulated among the slaves and the lowest and most ignorant of the population. The same remarks apply to the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, who only alludes to the Christians once, and then contemptuously, as being ready to die "from mere obstinacy."

The Talmud was also collected together later than the time of Christ, but it contains ancient material probably to the time when the Jews were in contact with the Babylonians. The Talmud is really a collection of the teachings and commentaries of the Jewish Rabbis reaching back for hundreds of years prior to the birth of Christ.

That great Hebrew scholar, Emanuel Deutsch, observes: "Such terms as 'Redemption,' 'Baptism,' 'Grace,' 'Faith,' 'Salvation,' 'Regeneration,' 'Son of Man,' 'Son of God,' 'Kingdom of Heaven,' were not, as we are apt to think, invented by Christianity, but were household words of Talmudical Judaism." And further :—

It is utterly impossible to read a page of the Talmud and of the New Testament without coming upon innumerable instances of this kind, as indeed they constantly seem to supplement each other. We need not urge the priority of the Talmud to the New Testament; although the former was redacted at a later period. To assume that the Talmud has borrowed from the New Testament would be like assuming that Sanskrit sprang from Latin, or that French was developed from the Norman words found in English.³

As the historian Buckle remarked, in his great *History of Civilization*, "to assert that Christianity communicated to man moral truths previously unknown argues, on the part of the assertor, either gross ignorance or else wilful fraud."⁴

The truth of this statement is admitted now even by learned dignitaries of the Church. Dean Milman confesses that: "If we were to glean from the later Jewish writings, from the beautiful aphorisms of other Oriental nations, which we cannot fairly trace to Christian sources, and from the Platonic and Stoic philosophy their more striking precepts, we might find perhaps a counterpart to almost all the sayings of Jesus."⁵ And the late Bishop of Peterborough, the Right Reverend W. C. Magee, declared: "Morality and justice were not created, nor even revealed, by Christ; they existed, and were known to exist, before the giving of the Sermon on the Mount, and would have continued to exist, had that discourse never been spoken, or had he who spoke it never appeared among men."⁶

¹ Rev. W. W. Capes, *Stoicism*, p. 167.

² *Ibid.*, p. 166.

³ Deutsch, *Literary Remains* (1874), note.

⁴ Buckle, *History of Civilization* (1904), p. 103, note.

⁵ Dean Milman, *History of Christianity*, bk. i., ch. iv., sec. 3.

⁶ Dr. Magee, "The State and the Sermon on the Mount," *Fortnightly Review*, January, 1890.

So much for the originality and uniqueness of the teachings of Christ, about which so many millions of sermons have been preached.

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

A "Partially Permanent" Peace.

IN the opinion of most writers and speakers of to-day the Peace hoped for after the War is usually one of three kinds: either a "lasting" peace, a "durable" peace, or a "satisfactory" peace, and each one contains a somewhat pathetic tinge of humour. Scarcely any writers, so far, have had the temerity to suggest a "permanent" peace, because it is felt that it is too much to hope for, and that to do so is inviting ridicule.

The history of the human race tells us that war (like the poor) is always with us. And yet every humane person really does hope that we shall finally conquer it.

The historian looks for the causes of war to history; the theologian to Atheism; the Rationalist to religion; the politician to national ambition; the economist to expansion and desire for wealth; and if biologists wrote about war, they would find the causes in the laws of life. The most popular cause, however, is "Prussian militarism." Everyone is agreed that the object of the Allies in this War is to crush Prussian militarism, which is admitted to be the great disturbing element in the continent of Europe.

The question, however, at once arises as to whether this vile Prussian militarism differs fundamentally from the militarism of Napoleon a hundred years ago; or of Attila fifteen hundred years ago; or Julius Cæsar, or Xerxes; and if we continue back a hundred thousand years we have not the slightest reason to doubt that pre-historic European man possessed the same ferocious militarism within him such as we see in any of the savage races of modern times. Proceed further down the evolutionary tree to the common ancestor which gave the world man and the anthropoid apes; further back still, to the "sabre"-toothed tiger, and we will still find the same ferocity and readiness to fight to a finish for either economic (food) or sexual reasons; and after we have passed through ages beyond the power of the mind to grasp, we arrive at the time when two protoplasmic cells first contested for a piece of nourishment that would only support the life of one.

The militarism that was born there is fundamentally the same thing as the Prussian militarism of to-day, and Treitschke was very nearly right when he said: "war is a biologic necessity." Very nearly right, because although it may be described as a necessity in the rest of the organic world, to man it need not be more than a biological fact. But, as such, it must be recognized, which is far from being the case in the minds of the vast majority of mankind to-day. For religious reasons there is still a strong tendency to regard man as something apart from the rest of Nature, something introduced from without, or at least extraneously endowed with the divine attribute of reason. But, even so, it is useless to ignore the fact that the savagery which man inherited from his progenitors, the ape and the tiger, is still there, and not very far below the surface either. Just before the French Revolution, Gibbon, on concluding his history of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, complacently congratulated civilization upon the fact that there were no longer any hordes of barbarians on its frontiers who might repeat the havoc of Attila, the Hun, and Alaric, the Goth. But a few years passed, and the Reign of Terror proved the savage ancestry of man. Before August, 1914, many of our politicians complacently assured the British nation that

war was out of question, showing that although Germany viewed it as a biological necessity, they did not even regard it as a biological fact.

If, then, we admit that war is a biological fact, we must examine the causes which bring about conflicting interests among the individuals of any form of organic life, high or low. To do this we need not, however, break any new ground, as the whole field has already been covered by Malthus and Darwin, with whose works all educated people are familiar; but by a strange anomaly, whilst there are very few serious disputants of Darwin's struggle for existence caused by too rapid increase, there are comparatively few who agree to the contention that this law holds good of man, and Malthus is accordingly discredited. This position is, however, untenable; for to deny Malthus is to deny Darwin, and war must be placed outside of biology, the science of life. If, on the other hand, we give it a purely natural origin, we might describe it as the inherent tendency of living organisms to fight to a finish whenever their individual interests conflict. Ethical man has tried hard, from time to time, to counteract this tendency to fight; but the great economic questions of providing trade, which means food and clothing for fast-increasing populations, are unsettled either internationally or internally, vide hostile tariffs and subsidies aimed by one nation at another's trade; and strikes and trade unionism, aimed by Labour at Capital. And while these questions remain undisposed of, either by scientific political economy or Socialism, it needs no prophets to foretell war. It is a matter of geography and the size and rate of increase of populations; and statesmen and others who talk of "permanent" peace whilst some nations are increasing at the rate of millions per annum, only mislead their devoted countrymen. Sooner or later the European countries must cease to expand. Birth-rates have steadily fallen in most of them ever since 1876, and if they do not continue to fall still further after the War, we can look forward with certainty to another holocaust on a larger scale than the present one. It is only a question of time. The human race has the power to choose between fast-expanding populations with periodical wars, and stationary populations and international peace; but to be effective, the latter course must be adopted by the greater proportion of the nations *simultaneously*. Otherwise we must be content with a peace of the somewhat grimly humorous "lasting," "durable," or "satisfactory" order.

Y. C.

A New Hymn.

(For Would-Be Christians During War.)

FIGHT on, fight on for Jesus,
In khaki and in blood;
Gird up, gird up your bayonet bright;
Stand up, stand up, for God and right;
The truth of love is proved by might,
Through mud and blood and mud.

The Lord he will sustain you,
Through dug-out, trench, and ditch;
Fight on, fight on, stand firm and win,
Through poison gas and bombs and din;
Christ died for all to conquer sin;
Push on without one hitch.

Bear witness to his name;
Its power to bless and save;
Fear not, fear not midst death and hate
Nor stand dismayed at hell's red gate;
Enlist for God—don't be too late;
Find Christ within the grave.

ARTHUR F. THORN

Acid Drops.

Our newspapers continue to publish accounts from German papers showing the professed piety of many German leaders, presumably as proof of German hypocrisy. Why this should be considered so, we are at a loss to discover. Thus, when the Kaiser says:—

The greatest gain for our people from this war will be that it has again turned its gaze to the Lord, that it realises that without Him we can do nothing, that we must reckon with Him.....The greatest thing in the life of the Lord was His struggle in Gethsemane. I can quite understand when a man says, That disturbs me in my pleasures, and so passes the Lord by. But that anyone should pass the Cross with a shrug of the shoulders—that is terrible.....Gentlemen, let there be no dogmatics. Dogma is not suited for our time. We must live with the Lord. We must have practical Christianity. Just imagine if the Lord entered the Church at this moment. Could we look Him in the eyes?

The *Daily Chronicle* finds this "pretence of piety" nauseating. But why "pretence"? Surely the *Daily Chronicle* writer knows enough of history to realize that all sorts of people have found a sanction in Christianity for all sorts of crimes, and will continue to do so. When was there a war that could not be reconciled with a profession of Christianity? And look at the mutual slaughters of Protestants and Catholics, and at all slaughters and tortures in the name of Christianity. The Kaiser is pious enough, and genuine enough in his devotion to Christianity. The real inference from his speeches is the utter valuelessness of Christianity. But that is an inference the *D. C.* dare not draw.

German preachers are convinced that it is part of God's plan for Germany to lead the world. Mr. Bottomley, in the three columns of "flapdoodle" which he grinds out for a Sunday paper, is sure that in "God's scheme of things" "the Anglo-Saxon and Latin races" are to "lead the world," and "for all time." Of the two, we prefer the piety of the German preachers. It sounds more genuine. And what of the Russian people? Mr. Bottomley, when he is expounding "God's scheme of things"—which he does with all the cocksureness of a professional tipster—might have the grace to include all the Allies. We advise him to consult the Deity again. It is the privilege of all religious tipsters to revise their messages from time to time.

The Rector of Winfirth has been charged for not obscuring the lights at the parish church. The rector said that people had been complaining they were unable to see their way, and he added "the people were very fond of excuses, and were only too happy to have this one." The unsympathetic Bench fined the rector 10s. So this particular excuse for the evasion of (Church) service will remain good for the duration of the War.

The clerical crusade against the theatres and music-halls promises to be a very lively campaign. Sir H. Smith-Dorrien, who has dutifully followed the lead of the ecclesiastics, has been summoned for libel by the directorate of a prominent music-hall.

The Bishop of Lichfield, speaking for the Mission of Repentance and Hope, chose some words from Mr. H. G. Wells's new novel, *Mr. Britling Sees it Through*. Usually, parsons select their texts from a much older work of fiction.

Canon Alexander says that Russia had made incalculable contributions to theology and religion. Was he thinking of Tolstoy, or of the Greek Church prelates who persecuted him?

Father Vaughan, in a speech delivered in Glasgow, very neatly pricked the bubble of religious unity at the Front. He points out "the easy terms on which different religions stood in the war zone were limited to the ante-room, the mess-room, etc. Certainly they were not extended to the hospital and chapel." After all, we suppose that in this matter the Catholic Church is the only one that can afford to be honest. And the moral of Father Vaughan's deliverance is that

Christians mix together freely on every occasion where religion is not concerned. Which is what we have always said. It is the social life which unites; it is religion which divides.

The dear *Daily News* knows that its readers are largely Nonconformist, and loses few opportunities of pleasing them. In a recent review of a novel it said, "Mr. Meredith must look down from above on some imitators of his genius." As George Meredith was a Freethinker, it is generous of the Christian *Daily News* to send him to heaven, but has it not forgotten its theology in the process?

The curtailment of the ringing of church-bells in munition areas because they disturb the rest of working people will find sympathy far outside those areas, and especially in towns. Catholic and High Churches start their bell-ringing at 6 o'clock in the morning, and do not add to the piety or serenity of ordinary citizens.

Writing of Dr. Simpson's discovery of chloroform sixty-nine years ago the *Daily News* said, "It is hard for us of this generation to realize that when the discovery was announced many people denounced its use as immoral." The objectors were the clergy and their followers, who urged that God sent pain into the world, and it was wrong to circumvent his will.

A Peterborough parson has issued a circular-letter to his ex-parishioners serving at the Front. "The people at home," he says, "are many of them so rotten, and you boys are so splendid. If they would only pray for you, and stop shrieking and cursing, and money-hunting, and boozing when they can get it, the end would be all the nearer." A soldier on leave replied in the local press to the parson, "He talks of our hardships, but does he not try to make them harder by breeding discontent amongst us as to what the people at home are doing?" A palpable hit!

A "wayside cross" has been erected in Bethnal Green, and the Bishop of London has given it his solemn blessing. We commend this incident, with others, to those who think that the fight with Christianity is over. We foretold—soon after the War opened—a revival of the more ignorant forms of Christianity, and events are quite justifying our prediction.

One of the results of the official recognition of Christianity in this country is that people are asked to believe that genuine patriotism and disinterested public service are impossible when dissociated from religion. There is a patriotism that advertises itself with violent shouting and valiant flag-wagging. It is the kind Dr. Johnson probably had in mind when he said patriotism was the last refuge of the scoundrel. The serviceable patriotism is that which works and doesn't talk. The freethinking private in the trenches is in striking contrast to that shrieking khaki-clad puppet, the Bishop of London, *Et hoc genus omne*. And we are sorry to see that *Punch*, in his issue of November 8 departs from his usual correctitude by the pen of a sonneteer who offers the time-honoured "comfort" of religion to France over her dead at Verdun. He concludes:—

Thou livest to all time, Verdun. Thy dead?

One hath them in His charge. Be comforted.

This gentleman may be unaware that there are far more Rationalists in France than in this country; and the pious consolation will not be of much service to them. Besides, why are we to assume that to be in charge of "One" who never raised a finger to prevent the War, and who has never raised a finger to stop it, should be blessed? The French people have withdrawn official recognition of religion. We are still a long way behind them.

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York have desired that on December 31 a special prayer should be said in the churches "in connection with the War, and thankful recognition made of the devotion which has been shown by the manhood and womanhood of the country." We don't quite see the utility of this prayer. It doesn't appear that God has had anything to do with it. It is the men and women of the

country, and surely the Archbishops do not intend praying to them.

The *Church Times*, in its issue of November 10, is "emphatically" of opinion that a man who refuses to enter the Army should be treated as an outlaw. We wonder what this journal would advise if Jesus Christ made another appearance on earth and insisted on repeating some of his old teachings?

Talk about pot calling kettle black! Here is the *Jewish Chronicle* trouncing Christianity for its treatment of women and declaring that it "excluded women from almost every public and spiritual function; the highest office in the Church to which a woman could aspire during the first three centuries was that of a doorkeeper or a messenger." We find no fault with the indictment, but there is a point in the inquiry of the *Church Times*, "To what office may a woman aspire in a synagogue?" The reply is, of course, none at all. In the Jewish religious services, women simply do not count. She cannot even count as one of the ten persons necessary to perform a service. When it comes to the point, there is little to choose between the two religions, the only advantage that Judaism has over Christianity is that it did not advocate the obscene virtue of celibacy.

A correspondent writes in a London newspaper suggesting that, as the clergy are "too prond to fight," they should be compelled to do munition work. We fancy the dear clergy will emulate "Brer Rabbit," and "lay low and say nothing."

The Nonconformist *Daily News* says a Weather Power is wanted to deal with atmospheric changes in the fighting zone. Has our contemporary forgotten the prayers for fine weather and for rain in the Prayer Book of the Government religion?

How is it so much religious propaganda is included in War correspondents' messages from the Front. The *Daily News* recently printed a thirty-six line message from the Western Headquarters, in which no less than twenty-two lines were devoted to the interesting subject of the King of Montenegro saying his prayers. Has this monarch been converted like Brother Bottomley?

Dean Inge says that social arrogance is wrong. The ecclesiastical authorities will have to muzzle him with a bishporic.

One of the leading articles in the *Church Times* for November 10, entitled "Religion for its own Sake," is a perfect eye-opener, its central, all-important point being that religion has for its object, not goodness, but God; not morality, but worship. That is to say, religion is to be supported, not "because it is useful to the world," not because it helps morality, but because it gives us God and the spiritual world. "What we need to-day," the article says, "is to preach religion for its own sake; not for the sake of morality and worldly usefulness, but for the sake of God. It must be shown that it is not simply one of several helps to morality, but the gateway into the spiritual world."

That definition of religion is more Catholic than Protestant. As a matter of fact, the *Church Times* is a Catholic organ and, in spirit, anti-Protestant. From the first, the primary and supreme mission of religion has been to set a man right, not with his fellow-men, but with heaven's King. Therefore, the *Church Times* condemns the popular phrase, "You can't keep straight without religion," saying:—

In the first place it is not true. It is outrageous to insinuate that those who are not religious cannot attain to that degree of morality which is described as "keeping straight." Secondly, it will tempt many to throw religion aside if they find that they are not immediately able to conquer the more obvious vices.

That is most admirable, considering that it comes from a Christian theologian. This journal, from its very first number, has consistently maintained that religion and morality are two entirely different things. "The object of religion is not morality, but God." We are in complete

agreement with that statement. But we go much further than our contemporary when we affirm that the highest and noblest morals have been and are being practised apart from every form of supernatural religion. Men and women "of stainless honour and patriotism, unselfish, generous, just, and loving," are daily to be seen who believe in neither God nor Devil, who look upon death as the end of individual life, and who live not for themselves, but for the race to which they belong. This is the philosophy of life which we zealously advocate, but we reject supernaturalism not only as unnecessary, but as morally and socially injurious as well.

A well-known actor recently delivered an address on "The People's Amusements" at St. Martin's-in-the-Fields Church, London. What is the religion of the Man of Sorrows coming to?

Great and good men do not know everything. Dean Inge says that fear has almost dropped out of our religion, and we do not hear the word "hell" ever mentioned. To be quite exact, Salvation Army orators and Christian Evidence lecturers call it "'ell."

"We were whittling away the Christian faith before the war," shouts the Bishop of London, "by giving scientific lectures on health." Really, the *Freethinker* contributors write on other subjects besides hygiene.

Sir William Robertson Nicoll is being congratulated on his thirty years' editorship of the *British Weekly*, the popular Nonconformist journal. Sir William writes the theological articles on the front page, and also comments and literary notices, and this gives point to the remark of an admirer, "Dr. Nicoll writes articles with which I, as a business man, agree, and he writes articles on the front page that I can scarcely understand a word of."

Mr. Stephen Graham, author of a book which shows that he might have written one ten times the size, as he knows so little about the subject, says that the British people could learn much from the Russian Church. It is deplorable that the ignorance concerning the influence of the Russian Church should be such as to enable these statements to be made. The only useful lesson to be learned from the Russian Church is to end our own churches as quickly as possible.

Mr. Eardley Norton, a leading Barrister in India, says the Calcutta *Statesman*, told an audience at Adiyar how once at Newcastle he found himself on the same platform as the late Charles Bradlaugh, and how at the end of that worthy's speech he was called upon to address the meeting, a crowded gathering of north country working-men. Will it be believed that the "Lion of Madras," as he has been described, felt positively nervous? "I confess," he said, "I felt my tongue draw to the roof of my mouth, and I insisted that Mr. Bonnerjee as my learned senior should speak first."

When he did begin, however, he drew Charles Bradlaugh. He said he had followed that gentleman's career with great interest, and particularly admired the hold he had obtained upon the affections of the British working classes. Mr. Bradlaugh took up this point in his reply:—

Bradlaugh rose (continued Mr. Norton) and referring to his hold upon the hearts of British workmen he reminded his audience that years ago being prosecuted by the Government in England he had found himself hard pressed pecuniarily in his defence. He recounted how the workmen in England had sent him contributions from their small savings, and had in some instances sent him their coats and boots, asking him to convert them into money. "And, my men," added the speaker, "should a similar need ever arise again and I find myself once more in a similar perplexity, I feel certain that many men in this audience would gladly contribute to my defence by taking their coats off their backs and their shoes off their feet." To my astonishment three-fourths of the audience stood up and, whilst all cheered, many men began to take off their coats.

There are occasions when British working-men recognize a man when they see him, and Bradlaugh's was a case in point.

C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

December 10, Leicester; January 14, Nottingham; February 4, Abertillery.

To Correspondents.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—November 19, Birmingham; December 31, Abertillery.

TAB CAN.—Many thanks for quotation.

R. CHAPMAN.—Received too late for acknowledgment last week. Pleased to hear of the accession of new members. At headquarters the stream of enrolment has been very steady and gratifying.

B. N. KOTAKA.—We have your name right this time, at all events. Accept apologies for previous blunder.

PARSON'S IDOL.—Thanks for the verses, but they have been many times reprinted, and, we believe, are available as a leaflet.

W. I. THETFORD.—The information you give is interesting, but we can hardly give all of it publicity.

T. H. ELSTOB.—Pleased to hear from you and to know that you are well. We feel quite certain that you have enough philosophy in your composition to withstand calmly whatever fate has in store for you.

G. BRADY.—Thanks for help to the Sustentation Fund. As you will see, the loss is a continuous one while the War lasts; but, as you say, "the main thing is for everyone to help." That done, the help need in no case be of the nature of a burden.

MASKEE.—Will appear next week.

G. H. GAWDEN.—Cuttings received. With thanks.

"BONNIE DUNDEE."—We agree with your estimate of the party named. But so long as there is such a plentiful crop of fools, one must expect knaves to utilize their existence. We are obliged for cuttings.

A FRIEND OF MR. F. W. WALSH.—Thanks for your appreciation of the paper and contribution to Fund. We shall be pleased to find room for the communication you mention.

E. RANELL.—Papers will be sent as desired. Thanks.

G. F. DIXON (Accra), in forwarding subscription to the Sustentation Fund, writes: "You have indeed done splendidly, and I trust that your appeal will meet with the speedy response it deserves." Our correspondent will see that the response has left us with no cause for complaint, but with good grounds for congratulation.

S. AYRES.—We note what you say. All we can reply is that it is not from choice that we work for little or nothing. It is a case of getting a work done that must be done. There may be brighter days in store.

C. THOMAS.—Find a suitable hall for a meeting, with a few friends to attend to local arrangements, and we shall only be too pleased to visit your city and try to stir things up.

L. RAWLINSON.—We do not think that any one theory will explain Christianity. Christianity is a complex product of many different causes.

J. F.—Not at all. Brevity in treating a subject—if treated properly—is generally an indication of complete mastery.

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.

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.

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

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.

Our Sustentation Fund.

THE primary purpose of this fund, as stated in the *Freethinker* for October 1, was to make good the deficit of £175 on last year's working. Although a deficit, it was, so to speak, a gratifying one, since it represented only about half of the increased cost of materials; proving that the paper had done better than for many years past. With the resumption of normal conditions there is every reason for assuming that the *Freethinker* will pay its way without any outside financial assistance.

As will be seen, the actual deficit up to October has been more than met. My first intention was to close the fund directly that end had been achieved. But while the War continues, and while prices remain as they are, I am afraid continued loss is inevitable. In preparing my "budget" for this year it would be unwise to reckon on a much smaller loss than that incurred during the past twelve months, say from £3 to £4 per week. I have, therefore, decided, in accordance with the wish of most subscribers, to keep the fund open for a while longer, much as I would prefer to see it disappear from these columns. This would enable me to meet some of the loss as it occurs, instead of the whole of it accumulating in the form of a debt. Still, I hope to be able to announce an early date for closing the fund. In this matter I am quite in the hands of my readers; but I do not count upon the need for assistance after, say, next October, by which time the War should have come to an end—unless it becomes a permanent institution.

Meanwhile, friends will be pleased to learn that in all other respects everything connected with the paper is proceeding satisfactorily. I have commenced advertising, in a very modest way, of course, and although it is too early to say much about it, the applications for specimen copies are full of promise. As funds permit, the advertising will be judiciously extended. We hold readers once we get them, and the paper is winning golden opinions in all directions.

Some good has also been done by the exhibition of *Freethinker* posters by newsagents. We have had a new and attractive poster prepared, and our Business Manager will be pleased to send copies wherever they can be utilized. Friends will greatly oblige by helping in this direction.

The appreciation shown of the extra column of reading matter given in the last two issues, leads me to say that this is only a small instalment of what I had originally in view. Among other things, I had visions of a permanent enlargement, and with cheaper materials and increased sales, that dream may yet be realized. At any rate, I am sure I shall not be lacking literary help in anything I may attempt. I have an abundance of support in that direction, and if the real names of some of the contributors to the *Freethinker* during the past year were made public it would be a surprise to many.

We are all—Editor, contributors, and subscribers—convinced that the *Freethinker* has never had a twentieth of the circulation it deserves, and if hard work will give it a larger sphere of usefulness, I promise it shall not be wanting on my part.

C. C.

LIST OF SUBSCRIPTIONS.

Previously acknowledged, £186 2s. 2d.—G. Brady, £1 1s.; T. H. Elstob, 10s. 6d.; J. Richards, 2s. 6d.; H. Organ, 2s. 6d.; G. F. Dixon, £3 3s.; R. A. D. (Shrewsbury), 10s.; "The Little Cuss" from "H.", 2s. 6d.; Dr. J. Laing, £3 3s.; G. Smith, 10s.; Anno Domini, 10s.; K. Palmer, 2s.; D. C. Drummond, 10s.; A Friend of Mr. F. W. Walsh, 10s. 6d.; L.-Cpl. Robinson, 2s.; E. Day, 1s.; A. Mapp, 2s. 6d. *Per Miss Vance*: J. S. Buckle, £1; F. E. Willis, 7s. 6d.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Cohen had two fine meetings at Glasgow on Sunday last. In the forenoon the hall was comfortably filled, and in the evening every inch of seating and standing accommodation was fully occupied. Even the platform was invaded to find room for those who could not be accommodated elsewhere. And a keener and more interested audience no speaker could desire. There were a number of questions at the close of each lecture, which bore evidence to the closeness with which the address had been followed.

On Monday evening Mr. Cohen lectured at Falkirk. There was a good audience, and a Branch of the N.S.S. is in process of formation. The material there is most promising, and we hope to hear of a systematic propaganda being carried. Being close to Glasgow, it can always rely upon the assistance of the Glasgow Society. At both Glasgow and Falkirk, we understand, there was a good sale of literature at the close of the meetings.

The visit to Falkirk involved an all-night journey to London, in order to be at the office to see the paper through on Tuesday. It was a hard week-end, but it was worth it. We only mention the circumstance in order to explain why a number of letters that would otherwise have been dealt with this week have had to stand over until our next issue.

Mr. Lloyd lectures to-day (Nov. 19) at Birmingham, in the King's Hall, Corporation Street. Time and subject of lecture will be found in our "Lecture Notices," and we hope to hear that the King's Hall was, as it ought to be, crowded.

The third of the course of lectures at the Avondale Hall, Landor Road, Brixton, will be delivered by Mr. Howell Smith. His subject is "How Christianity Won," and we trust the weather will be more favourable than it has been on the previous two Sundays. Avondale Hall is within three minutes' walk of the Clapham Road Tube Station.

We are pleased to learn that Mr. Howell Smith's lecture last Sunday has resulted in enough names being received to justify the starting of one of the proposed reading classes. Younger members of the Movement with a taste for serious study will find this kind of class of much help both as a guide in their reading and a means of expending their time to the most advantage.

A new religious sect has just been inaugurated, called "A Free Religious Movement," with the Rev. Dr. Walsh, until recently minister of the Theistic Church, as its leading prophet. It has no creed of any kind, and we are informed that Zoroaster, Buddha, Plato, Jesus, Emerson, Darwin, Tolstoy, and Walt Whitman are to occupy seats of honour therein. One infers that it cannot be a Christian Church; but is it even a Theistic one? Curiously enough, among its heroes are both Theists and Atheists; but will they be able to dwell together in harmony? We must wait and see. We know Dr. Walsh is a courteous and liberal gentleman, and one who has made a bold stand for his opinions.

A special meeting of those interested in Freethought work in Sheffield is to be held in the Forester's Hall, Trippet Lane, at 7 o'clock this evening (Nov. 19). Sheffield friends will please note.

On Tuesday last the London County Council had before it a recommendation of the Parks Committee that the resolution prohibiting the sale of literature in the public parks be suspended until the close of the War. This was defeated, and the attempt to suppress the long-established right will therefore be made. It is for the Council to take the next step. So far as we are concerned, the agitation will continue more vigorously than ever. A meeting of the Joint Committee is to be held at once, and we shall write at greater length on the whole question next week.

Bertram Dobell as Poet and Critic.

If there is such a thing as a popular interest in intellectual strenuousness, the late Mr. Bertram Dobell (1842-1914) deserves an honourable place in a revised edition of Smiles' *Self Help*. Yet it is, perhaps, just as well there is no such interest; he would be sadly out of his element in the company of hustling "captains of industry," ennobled bacon-washers, and stock-jobbing politicians. His career was one of quiet and persistent energy. Everything seemed against him at the beginning, and, indeed, well on into life; his struggle with adverse fate accounting largely for the vein of melancholy in his poetry, and the general low vitality of his philosophy of life. It was not until middle age that he made his mark as a bookseller. His monthly catalogues then became a source of excitement and pleasure to those of us who had a surplus income for rare editions and fine copies, and a bibliographical treasure and guide to many whose interest in books stopped short of possession. But he was not content to be merely a second-hand bookseller; he became a publisher. Always a good Freethinker, he was ready to give a chance to a writer who, he thought, had the making of an intellectual success on rationalistic lines. He published Dr. Arthur Lynch's *Human Documents*, the only book by that erratic gentleman which has any real vitality; two studies in musical criticism by Mr. Ernest Newman; and some good stories by Mr. Geoffrey Mortimer, who has now forsaken decent fiction for the sloppiest form of sociology. Another side of his publishing energy was devoted to James Thomson, and yet another to unknown seventeenth century writers. He was an intimate friend of many of the leaders of the Freethought movement, especially Mr. Foote, who was, like Dobell, an accomplished connoisseur of our older literature.

I.

I have no doubt that the one form of intellectual activity by which Dobell would have wished to be remembered is that of the poet. Poetry was for him what Nietzsche tells us it was for the Greek, an escape from the terrors and horrors of existence. The ancient Greek made life less unbearable by interposing the "shining dream-birth of the Olympian world" between himself and existence as it appeared to him. The modern poet, who has outgrown the religious beliefs of his ancestors, has no resplendent mythological world which he can create and contemplate. All that he can do is to withdraw into his tower of ivory and fashion for himself a world not ruled by evil, a fellowship of men more gracious and more sincere, weaving into strange and lovely patterns the elusive substance of his dreams. Dobell, it is easy enough to see, loved poetry passionately. His creative faculty did not blind him to the rare qualities in the work of other poets, with the exception of Whitman, whose rhythms were too subtle for his ear. He loved his own verse, as a mother loves her children, with indulgent tenderness. They were a part of his spiritual substance. He had laboured to bring to a relative perfection. In his more detached and critical mood I can imagine that he knew quite well what his poetry was worth, and I am certain he would have deprecated the excessive eulogies of Mr. Bradbury and of his son, Mr. P. J. Dobell. Unintelligent enthusiasm is not less silly, and not less harmful, than unintelligent censure.

It would seem that Dobell wrote verse from early manhood. In *Rosemary and Pansies* (1904), most of the poems are dated, the earliest going back as far as 1867 and thereabouts. But these early verses, and, indeed, even much later ones, are not only not remarkable, they are so bad, that if the critic did not remember

the amazing rubbish printed by Coleridge, he would be inclined to dismiss Dobell's muse as beneath contempt. The lover of fine verse will turn with a shudder from such things as "The Pilgrim's Halt," "The Jealous Lover," "Unspoken Passion," and "The Spiritual Life." Longfellow and Mrs. Wheeler Wilcox never practised the art of sinking with more complete success than Dobell does here. But in lighter verse, verse of an intellectual, rather than an emotional type, he is more successful, as in his epigram on Bernard Shaw:—

Shaw wrote a brilliant article,
And every one did smile,
Which made him tear his hair, for he
Was serious all the while.

He wrote again in jesting mood,
But laughter there was none of it,
His wit had such a serious mark
That none could see the fun of it.

Somewhere about the eighteen nineties Dobell seems to have practised assiduously the sonnet-form—the Shakespearean, not the more difficult and more shapely Petrarchan form. His first book contained some fifty sonnets, the greater part of which reappeared in *A Century of Sonnets* (1910). They were then practically re-phrased, always, I think, for the better. They show a certain facility of expression, although too much dependence is put on uncouth inversions, the general atmosphere being not that of poetry, but of prose. It may be noted, too, that metaphors and similes, the freshness and beauty of which measure the genius of the poet, are carefully avoided, or when they are used are strangely faded and lifeless. But, as is natural enough, when a man who is not a mere word-spinner writes some hundreds of sonnets, at least a few of them are not unlikely to rise above the general level of workmanship. I give myself the pleasure of quoting the one I consider the best, although it is by no means technically perfect, the third line depending wholly on the rhyme. In a mere prose statement Dobell would never have dreamt of using the words "profound and deep" in such a way as to suggest that depth added anything to our idea of profundity:—

Thy course is almost done, and soon the sleep
That comes to all will visit my tired eyes,
And I shall gain that rest profound and deep
From which no call can force me to arise;
And welcome shall that dreamless slumber be,
For now the fierce desire for life has fled:
The passionate soul as on a tideless sea
Rests calmly; hope and fear alike are dead.
No longer am I filled with rage or scorn,
Nor do I now at adverse fate repine;
No more I dream myself a soul forlorn
On whom no ray of hope or joy may shine;
Played well or ill the drama's near its end,
Nor would I, if I might, the acts extend.

It would be possible to find a dozen sonnets of about the same level of inspiration as this, but I certainly think it would be unwise to call Dobell a poet of any but very relative importance on the strength of them. Not one of them comes anywhere near, let me say, the first work of Mr. Austin Dobson, Andrew Lang, Eugene Lee-Hamilton, or even Mr. Gosse, and, if I want the authentic expression, the vibrant emotion of a lover's moods, I turn not to Dobell's sequence of sonnets, but to Wilfred Blunt's *Love Sonnets of Proteus*. Nor do the sonnets which express the thoughts and aspirations of a consistent Freethought reach a higher plane of poetic inspiration. They have what Rossetti called "fundamental brain-work," a quality upon which Dobell seems to have prided himself. The thinking is right enough; but right thinking without the vibration of genuine emotion has never made great poetry. "To a devotee" is one of the best of these Freethought sonnets.

Rise from your knees, sick-thoughted sufferer!
Your prayers but serve to enervate your soul;
Fate listens to no fond idolater;
No Power exists whom you can thus cajole.
Your self-distrust is cowardice at best;
Prayer unavailing adds but to your pain:
'Tis active work, not passive prayer, makes blest;
Your sin's created by your morbid brain.
Arise, and be no more a suppliant slave;
God is no Genghis Khan or Tamerlane:
All nature thunders forth one precept brave—
Courage alone shall life's true end attain.
Weakness above all else the fates despise,
The fearless-hearted only are the wise.

This is a good pedestrian work of a writer whose thoughts refuse to move naturally, and with distinction to any other rhythm but that of prose. You may learn much about the technic of the art of poetry, but you cannot acquire the gift of singing. In the Christian phrase, you must be born again. We see the difference between the elected and the unelected, the sheep and the goats (in the poetical sense of course) when we turn to the work of a genuine poet. Perhaps the best contrast to the prosaic, didactic, and argumentative vein of Dobell is afforded by the slender book of poems by Miss Phillpotts, lately praised with rare intelligence by Mr. Lloyd in these columns.

GEO. UNDERWOOD.

(To be concluded.)

What is a Freethinker?

THE essence of Freethought is a supreme desire to see things as they are, instead of as it pays for the time to see them, or as we like to see them, or as we think it our duty to see them. Many will object that, in that case, every reasonable being is a Freethinker. This is not so, although it is, in a way, a testimonial to the influence of Freethought that most people should wish to pretend it is so. In nearly all Christian denominations, children are brought up, not to desire the truth above all things, but to believe certain things as a duty, unbelief being represented as a sin. That is the negation of Freethought, and that is what we have to fight.

As one who was brought up in the strict profession of the Christian religion as by law established in this country, I may claim without undue presumption to know what religion is; and I may fairly assume my own education to have been typical of that of thousands, if not millions, of others. We were taught religion through the medium of the Church Catechism; and in that interesting document we were given to understand that we were bound to "believe all the articles of the Christian faith," because our godparents had so promised at our baptism. In this way, the juvenile intellect is put upon its honour, so to speak, to believe certain propositions without considering whether they are true or false. We were also encouraged to read the New Testament; and in that volume we found the statement, presumably inspired by God, and tacitly assented to by our instructors, that the unbelieving were destined to eternal torment. The motive of loyalty to what our godparents had promised for us was thus reinforced by the motive of sheer physical fear. This was certainly the case with me, and must be the case with myriads of children to this day. In how many, or how few cases will the instinct of curiosity, if you like to call it so, or the desire for truth, if you prefer that name, be sufficiently powerful to break through the double barrier of loyalty and fear, reinforced, as time goes on, by the insidious force of habit?

So far from the love of truth being a predominant feature of the majority of minds, there is no instinct

which needs such assiduous culture and exercise, or which is so easily atrophied by neglect and suppressed by mishandling. Certain classes of the community, from the nature of their profession, generally lose it beyond recovery. The case of the clerical profession is obvious. A man who, at the age of twenty-three or twenty-five, takes a solemn vow to go on for ever believing what he then believes, shows by that very fact that the love of truth is, at any rate, only a secondary feature in his mental constitution. This does not imply that all, or even most, clergymen are conscious liars. I know that many are not. But they have taken a vow to subordinate their love of truth to other considerations, just as a barrister when he accepts a brief, or a politician when he accepts office, gives implied pledges to the same effect. The professional journalist is in the same position.

It thus happens that truth, as such, and any cause which has nothing to appeal to but truth and reason, are under a severe handicap in the world as it is, inasmuch as the great engines of publicity, the press, the political platform, and the pulpit, are one and all manned by men who have, in this way, undertaken to prefer other considerations to truth. Freethinkers, therefore, are, in the nature of things, in a permanent minority. All the more does it behove them to see that they, at least, act up to their professions, and do not imitate the vices of their adversaries, whether religion, politics, or what-not is the particular field of controversy in which they are for the moment engaged. The vice of downright lying is, perhaps, the least dangerous, especially as Freethinkers are seldom likely to find a use for it. Cant and slipshodness of thinking or speaking; the use of fallacious arguments which we half-consciously see through, but which will serve to impress our less acute listeners; the employment of moral claptrap in connections where no moral issue arises; the confusion between reasoning and mere rhetoric; and last, but not least, the fatal tendency to believe what we want to believe, are pitfalls which no Freethinker can afford to ignore.

It may be objected that there are many people who really wish to know the truth, but who are, nevertheless, not Freethinkers. The answer is, that their pursuit of truth is still vitiated by the acceptance of false criteria of truth, or the admission of irrelevant considerations. We all know what truth is, but we do not all use the same criteria of truth as we should in different fields of investigation. The religiously disposed keep one criterion for everyday life, and quite another criterion for religion and philosophy. If I were to tell one of these people that I had seen a centaur trotting down the Strand, he would consider that I was lying, or had been the victim of a hallucination, or was mad. If I got six different people to swear to the centaur, he would, no doubt, think it very odd, and would be puzzled to account for our agreement in this delusion, but he would not believe us. Yet this man, who will not believe in a man-horse, implicitly believes in a man-God. If I told him that Lord Kitchener had been seen alive by various individuals since the *Hampshire* went down, he would conclude either that they or I were lying or deluded, or perhaps he would wonder if Lord Kitchener had really escaped. Yet he believes, on the alleged "evidence" of Paul and other witnesses, that Jesus Christ was seen alive after he was crucified, and that he really rose from the dead. If I told him that a father of a family had looked on while his children fought, and tortured, and killed one another, able and yet unwilling to stop them, he would call such a father a callous monster, whose only excuse was his probable insanity. Yet he believes in a heavenly father who looks on at the present

War and does not stop it, and he justifies his heavenly father by calling it "punishment," "discipline," or some such name. If I challenged his right to say that two straight lines cannot enclose a space, on the ground that, for all he knew, they might enclose a space in Sirius, though not on earth, he would stare. Yet he challenges my right to find moral imperfections in his hypothetical God, on the ground that "the finite mind cannot comprehend the infinite," and "God moves in a mysterious way." As though it were any more audacious for the "finite mind" to apply the moral law to a hypothetical God, than for it to apply mathematical laws to the starry universe.

If, then, the pursuit of truth is to be fruitful and beneficial, it must be carried on with the aid of constant and invariable criteria. It is difficult to state such a criterion in the abstract, and I do not propose to tackle here that formidable philosophical problem. In the concrete, the method of analogy, such as has been employed above, is good for most purposes. Take an affirmative or negative proposition under dispute; look at the reasons offered; and see whether the major premise, or general principle, used in those reasons, will lead you to true or false conclusions in better-explored departments of knowledge. It will invariably be found that the reasons used to support supernaturalism are such as never would be accepted if tried on more familiar ground.

The admission of irrelevant considerations is another source of error. The classical instance is the objection to Atheism on the ground that it undermines morality. This objection has the sanction of so great a mind as Kant, who held that the moral law would be no longer valid if we rejected God, free-will, and immortality. This is undoubtedly a difficulty to many. The fallacy lies in the assumption that morality must rest on some metaphysical premises, *i.e.*, on some judgments about the nature of existence. In reality, judgments of existence are one thing, and judgments of value (which include morality) entirely another. The moral nature presses its demands upon us, not because of this or that belief we may hold about the universe, but because it is part of us and we cannot escape it. Morality does not depend on premises; it is itself a premise. In this, moral judgments resemble æsthetic judgments; which, like them, are purely judgments of value. I can no more cease to abhor cruelty because I hold a materialistic view of the world than I can cease to enjoy the music of Chopin or Wagner on that account. Virtue and music are their own commendation. The supernaturalist may boast that he can convert a drunkard into a churchwarden by threatening him with the wrath to come—I do not know; but he cannot implant a moral sense in a man who has not got one, any more than he can implant a musical ear to a man who has not got one. A man is not moral if he ceases to drink from fear of God, but only if he ceases to drink from hatred of drunkenness. Our reply, then, to the supernaturalist on this score is that we have better work to do than converting degenerates into God-fearing and hell-fearing pietists, who are none the less degenerates; we wish to combat the environment which calls forth the degeneracy, to work towards a world in which the interests of the individual shall coincide with the interests of the community, and thereby do the soul-savers out of their job. This is the true interest of morality; and it is in no way hindered, but rather helped, by the propagation of a true, because naturalistic, view of Nature in general, and human nature in particular.

ROBERT ARCH.

One should advise only about matters in which one is prepared to co-operate.—*Goethe*.

Skeleton Sermons.

IX.—Sons of Anak.

"Now there were giants in the land in those days." Quite so; there is no reason to doubt that "in those days" (an epoch synchronizing with that delightful period, "once upon a time") there existed certain giants of flesh and blood. Just as one frequently meets men of abnormal stature walking the earth at the present day. But the shadowy giants which loom up at us out of the mists of the Pentateuch and other ages of the past, smack strongly of the mythical. Chroniclers of the days when this grey, old world was young, were possessed of either a fearful and wonderful imagination, a total disregard for veracity, or a profound belief in the gullibility of posterity.

One of them gravely informs us that the first man was over 120 ft. high, and the first woman 118 ft. 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.! Note the exactitude of the precise historian. His chronicles do not state by what means the nine and three quarters were arrived at; and as in all probability foot rules and tape measures were things unknown "in those days," the problem presents a wide field for conjecture. Did Mother Eve take her stand against the tallest tree in the Garden of Eden, while Adam carved a notch at the lady's exact altitude? If so, how did he set about measuring it off? And if Adam and Eve did not take tally of each other's dimensions, who did? There is room for rumination here, fancy free.

The same storyteller—he is dead now—but were he alive, and even kicking, we should not hesitate to tell him that he could take the appellations in any sense he chose. The same storyteller describes the height of Noah as about 100 ft., that of Abraham as 28 ft., Moses 13 ft., and Hercules (who was evidently very small potatoes in such lofty company) as only a paltry 10 ft. In regard to Noah, it is to be presumed that he had a special arrangement with his tailor.

Reverting for a moment to our remote ancestor, Adam, it would appear from the veracious chronicles of the learned Palestinian doctors, that the earth could not possibly have contained many human bipeds of his dimensions at one time, for, in the Talmud, it is asserted with all due solemnity, that when Adam was first created, his head lay at one end of the world, while his toes touched the other; but that after his transgression his figure was greatly shortened, at the request of the intimidated angels. There is a lofty and picturesque disregard for detail in this calm and unemotional statement which is positively refreshing. At which end of the unfortunate Adam did the lopping process commence? Or was he "shortened" (felicitous term) at both ends simultaneously? Or, as a third alternative, did the shorteners dry-dock him, and take a large slice out of his midriff, as is done in the case of ocean liners? The problem is interesting; but whichever course was adopted, the method must have caused our progenitor considerable pain and inconvenience.

The late Goliath of Gath was another of the tall and lofty persuasion who reached the very respectable altitude of "six cubits and a span"; and his four sons who were killed were also of tremendous proportions, although we are not given their definite measurements.

Long even before their time, however, flourished Og, the king of Bashan, whose bed measured nine cubits long by four cubits broad; so that, if it was built to meet the owner's requirements, he must have been an uncommonly bulky individual.

In contrast to the giants of antiquity right down to our own time, it is no uncommon thing to see men of six feet and upwards walking in the streets, and towering

above the heads of average men. There would be no harm in that—on the contrary, it would be an advantage—if the tall men would marry the six-foot girls; but they won't, and this I take to be one of the gravest dangers that menace the world to-day. Tall men like to pose as protectors of the weak; small men are ambitious to conquer those who are physically greater than themselves. This is true no matter whether it takes the form of capturing an enemy or winning a wife; hence it is that so many Brobdingnagian beauties are taken captive by the men of Liliput. From David to Alexander Magnus, and from Alexander to our own Australian Billie Hughes, we can find ample proof of this assertion. All short men admire tall women, but I never met one who could satisfactorily explain why he did so, except the five-foot bard who sang:—

If ever I marry a girl, I'll marry a girl for riches;
I'll marry one that's ten feet high, so that she can't
ever wear my—inexpressibles.

THE OWL.

Correspondence.

THE CHURCH AND PURITY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I send you the following, trusting they may be of interest to the *Freethinker*.

From the *Universal Gazetteer*, published in 1798, written by John Walker, and printed by Messrs. Ogilvy & Son, London, Borough of Southwark. The Bishop of Winchester had formerly a palace here (Southwark) with a park, when there were eighteen brothels alongside the Bankside, licensed by the Bishop, under certain regulations confirmed by Parliament. The prostitutes kept here were commonly called "Winchester Geese."

From an old work, *History of Taunton*, in my possession, I gather the following:—

Another striking example of the importance of a single vote is furnished by Mr. Whitson. In the year 1685 there was so extraordinary a crisis of the Protestant religion, as well deserves mention here, inasmuch that Bishop Burnet partly implies, but Mr. Arthur Onslow more distinctly informs me it once depended on a single vote in the House of Commons, whether King James should be permitted to employ Popish officers in his army or not, which point had he gained there was visibly an end of the public establishment of the Protestant religion in this kingdom. It came, as I said, to a single vote, and a courtier, who was to watch every voter where the member had any employment under the king, observed one that had a regiment going to vote against the court; and seeing him, put him warmly in mind of his regiment. He made answer, "My brother died last night, and has left me £700 yearly"; which "single vote" gained a majority and saved the Protestant religion at this time. If I might use an heathen expression in a case belonging to Christianity, I would say, "Non hoc sine nurmine dixim" (*Whitson's Memoirs*, 2nd edition, p. 19).

The enclosed pamphlet of four pages contains seven prayers to the Christian "God," and one appeal to the clients of the said "God" for coppers to pay for the printing of the prayers.

JOHN W. WHITE.

THE THREE LORD SHAFTESBURYS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—To me it seems quite obvious that Matthew Arnold meant Lord Shaftesbury as the man to whom he regretted to give pain; but what is also equally obvious is the biting satire of the explanation as to why he withdrew the comparison. The clergy were outraged that the Trinity should be compared to a mere man; and then comes the Preface to the cheap edition of *Literature and Dogma*, in which we are told that the author, to spare the feelings of a man for whom he has the profoundest respect, withdraws the comparison.

I wish the Editor would reprint the passage from the early edition, and give underneath the why and wherefore of the suppression from the cheap edition. It should send readers to what is one of the best books they can read.

A LOVER OF ARNOLD.

Where to Obtain the "Freethinker."

The following is not a complete list of newsagents who supply the "Freethinker," and we shall be obliged for other addresses for publication. The "Freethinker" may be obtained on order from any newsagent or railway bookstall.

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" 193 Union Street, H. Peters
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" Lucius Street, Mr. Hunt

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

AVONDALE HALL (Landor Road, Clapham, S.W.): 6.30, A. D. Howell Smith, B.A., "How Christianity Won."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, Victoria Road, off Kentish Town Road, N.W.): 7.30, H. J. Stenning, "Literature and Life."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park): 3.30, a Lecture.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 3, a Lecture.

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

PARLIAMENT HILL: 3.15, a Lecture.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Messrs. Saphin and Shaller, "Lecky"; 3.15, Messrs. Dales and Kells, "Guiding Principles"; 6.30, Messrs. Shaller, Saphin, and Hyatt.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (King's Hall, Corporation Street): 7, J. T. Lloyd, "Self-Reliance *versus* Trust in God."

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