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Views and Opinions.

Christianity and the Control of Life.

While on a recent lecturing visit in the provinces, one of our friends remarked that a great difficulty in the way of propagandist work was that the Churches had captured the machinery of publicity in that town. I was pleased to hear the observation, because it showed an alertness to the central fact of the situation. It is too often assumed that because the Churches get more accommodating in their teaching, and because they are less able to practice direct methods of persecution, therefore, our work is nearly accomplished. No greater blunder could be made. Our fight is not, after all, against a mere speculative belief only. We object to religious teaching because it is untrue; that is the basis of our attack. But we also fight against the control of social life by religion and by religious organizations, and we really gain but little, our victory is more apparent than real, if, while forcing a modification of teaching, we leave religious organizations in control of the machinery of social existence.

* * *

The Command of Publicity.

Look at the position. The Church of England alone, it has been calculated, represents a capitalized value of over two hundred million sterling. Other Churches and religious organizations also total a huge economic force. And, thanks to tradition and to position, they are enabled to very largely control the avenues of publicity and propaganda. The Press, it is true, is not in the hands of the Churches, but it may be said to be under their control. Columns are given over to the reporting of inane sermons by clergymen all over the country. The publication of reasoned criticisms of Christianity by leading Freethinkers is still denied. Again, the writing of history still proceeds very largely in accordance with the requirements of Christianity. Such books as young men and women are likely to read, either from interest or in the course of their studies, support, more or less openly, traditional views of the nature and historical influence of Christianity which critical students know

to be false. Publishers plainly reject books of an opposite character, for fear of giving offence. Where Christians control the letting of public halls, they are most often refused for Freethought purposes. We still have Christianity enthroned in the Legislature, and political influence is strong to close the mouths of most Freethinkers when they embark on a political career. The finger of the clergyman is in almost every pie, the hand of the Church is more or less in every form of social activity. From the cradle to the grave Christianity has still a powerful, often a controlling, influence on life; and while that obtains the rationalization of life is impossible.

* * *

The Gifford Lectureship.

Let me take a crucial illustration of the truth of what has been said. We refer elsewhere to the Gifford Lectures, and it is well to remind Freethinkers of what that trust is, and how it has been used. Lord Gifford was an eminent Scotch judge, who died about thirty years ago. He was a fervent Theist—of that there is no doubt; but he was one of that rare order who believed that faith could stand criticism, and had consequently no desire to suppress it. By his will he bequeathed a sum of money for the establishment of a lectureship for "Promoting, Advancing, Teaching, and Diffusing the Study of Natural Theology" in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, and St. Andrew's. The bequest amounted to about £80,000, and up to this point there is nothing remarkable in the will. The unusual feature follows. Lecturers were to be appointed for a period of two years, "it being desirable that the subject shall be promoted and illustrated by different minds." The lecturers were not to be subjected to tests of any kind. "They may be of any denomination whatever, or of no denomination at all.....they may be of any religion or way of thinking; or, as is sometimes said, they may be of no religion, or they may be so-called sceptics, or agnostics, or Freethinkers, provided only that the patrons will use diligence to secure that they be able, reverent men, true thinkers, sincere lovers and inquirers after truth." The lecturers were to treat their subject "as a strictly natural science." It was to be considered "just as astronomy or chemistry is." Nothing but good, said Lord Gifford, "can result from free discussion."

* * *

A Betrayed Trust.

Now, Lord Gifford's intention was clear—as clear as express words could make it; and it was an intention that all Freethinkers can honour. Any lecturer of repute was to be invited, no test whatever was to be applied; he might be Christian, Jew, Mohammedan, or Freethinker. The subject of the bearing of natural knowledge upon the belief in God was to be discussed from all points of view, and by all sorts of minds. The trust has now been in existence for nearly thirty years. And with what result? It is quite true that the lectureship has not been restricted to Christians of any particular denomination—even a Jew has delivered one of the courses—and there is nothing to be said against

the quality of the lecturers appointed. But it is quite evident that in one particular Lord Gifford's desire has been deliberately ignored. No thoroughgoing Freethinker has been selected. The question of Theism has not been discussed by one who rejected the idea of God as pure delusion, and was ready to give a reasoned statement of his opinion. The lecturers were all *safe* men. If they were not all avowed Christian denominationalists, they were all ready to profess some kind of Theistic belief, and might be trusted to say nothing openly and plainly hostile to Theism. Lord Gifford's wish was one thing. The policy of the trustees was another thing. The "patrons" accepted the trust, they administered the funds; they completely ignored the one thing that made Lord Gifford's bequest unique in the history of religion, and which might have relieved Christianity of a little of the discredit which rests upon it.

* * *

Men versus Trusts.

What, now, is the moral of this continued abuse—for it is an abuse—of a liberal-minded man's trust? The first, and most obvious, is that no trust-deed, no matter how carefully drawn or how plainly expressed, is proof against a deliberate intention to ignore its provisions. It is all a matter of the men who are entrusted with its administration. There are always ways by which articles of association, or the terms of a trust, may be broken in the spirit even when they are kept in the letter. And such evasion or infraction is peculiarly easy in relation to Freethought, where such a policy is acclaimed as in the interests of religion or morals. High-minded men, minus a Christian training, would, once they undertook the administration of a trust, see that it was justly executed. But even naturally high-minded men, with a Christian training, are seldom to be trusted where the interests of their religion are at stake. They can see nothing wrong in what they do, just as they see nothing wrong in closing the doors of public halls against Freethinkers, in suppressing Freethought literature where possible, or in conniving at the distortion of history in the interests of a religious creed. The golden rule here is always—where the interests of Christianity are at stake, a Christian is seldom to be trusted to deal fairly or justly with the claims of Freethinkers. Christians may be—often are—quite admirable men and women in other directions and in connection with other matters. It is the distortion of their sense of justice by religious belief that is the central fact of the situation.

* * *

A Vital Issue.

The next point for Freethinkers to bear in mind is that our fight is not merely against a speculative belief, held as one might hold a belief concerning Saturn's rings. It is also a fight against a huge vested interest, which is ready to make many concessions, so long as its hold on the machinery of social life remains untouched. Watch the tactics of the Churches closely, and that fact stands out clearly enough. An alteration of opinion concerning the Church of England Articles did not lead to any great exodus of the clergy. They modified their teaching, gave the Articles a new interpretation, and clung to their power and their emoluments. So also with the dissenting Churches. Their teaching, as a whole, differs very widely with their trust-deeds. But neither do they—save in rare instances—sacrifice *their* position or emoluments. In social matters we see the same principle illustrated. The clergy may fight every attempt to secularize the State, but once that attempt is successful, we see them striving, often successfully, to control the new development. And, quite clearly, so long as this obtains, our success is not nearly so great or so thorough as it

appears. We may gain in the world of intellectual conflict, but we do not gain to anything like the same degree in the world of practical social life. We are losing on the swings a great deal of what we make on the roundabouts. Our policy, then, is obvious. We must go on making Freethinkers. That is essential. But we must also see that this Freethought is carried into practical effect. We want the secularization of life as well as the rectification of belief. So long as the social power of the Churches remain, our work is not only not completed, it is being robbed of the larger part of its value.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

"Religion After the War."

UNDER the above title, Sir E. Ray Lankester contributes an article to the December issue of the *Literary Guide*, in which he replies to two critics of some of the views expressed by him in his remarkable paper which occupies the place of honour in the symposium on "Will Orthodox Christianity Survive the World-War?" in the *R. P. A. Annual* for 1917. The two unfortunate critics upon whom he falls in his anger, with the object of demolishing them, are Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner and myself; and in delivering his assault he indulges in a considerable amount of "vituperative emotion." He attributes to us "lack of understanding," "defective knowledge," "discourtesy," "misunderstanding," and "misrepresentation." My own criticism is summarily dismissed as being "equally wanting in pertinence," "conspicuously irrelevant," and "so ill-mannered." These are the "personalities" which the distinguished zoologist so recklessly flings at us, unintentional offenders, but which, he assures us, "he did not set out to discuss and refuses to discuss now." Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, whose reputation as a Rationalist propagandist is certainly not below that of Sir E. Ray Lankester himself, will no doubt deal with these ungracious and "so ill-mannered" accusations, in so far as they relate to herself. Concerning her, I wish to make but one observation, namely, that she has as good a right "to put herself forward as a representative of Rationalism" as even Sir Ray Lankester can claim to possess. I now pass on to the severe strictures upon myself.

My criticism appeared in the *Freethinker* for Nov. 5, under the heading, "A New Christian Apologist," and I contend, in the first place, that it was not in the least degree "ill-mannered," unless it be ill-mannered to differ in opinion from so eminent a man as Sir Ray Lankester. Nearly one-third of my article was a eulogium upon his distinguished work as a leading biologist, and the rest of it was as good-natured as it was possible to make it. From beginning to end I did not indulge in a single "personality," and my attitude was respectful and even deferential. On one point Sir Edwin has entirely misunderstood me. He says, "Mr. Lloyd is taking an unwarrantable liberty in assuming, in the absence of any authority from me, that I personally regard the 'fantastic mythology' of Christianity as 'objectionable.'" For aught he knows, I may admire it very much—even though fantastic—or possibly I may not." As a matter of fact, I did not make such an assumption, did not even hint that the Christian mythology was "objectionable" to Sir Ray Lankester. Indeed, I would not object to it myself did it not survive in a living religion which is offered to the world, by its official representatives, as an infallible remedy for all its maladies. Contemplated as found in religions which have had their day and ceased to be, mythology is to me at once interesting and illuminating, whether I admire it or not.

Sir Ray Lankester censures me for my criticism because he regards it, not only as "so ill-mannered," but also as "conspicuously irrelevant." The question that stands at the head of Sir Edwin's contribution to the *R. P. A. Annual's* symposium is as follows, "Will Orthodox Christianity Survive the World-War?" The majority of the ten contributors to the discussion are of opinion that orthodox Christianity will survive the War, though, perhaps, not in any markedly revived condition; while a few express the belief that it seems clear "to a critical intelligence, that the intelligible basis of current theology has crumbled away." To those who are acquainted with, and keep in mind, the past history of the world, there is much truth in the following remark from the pen of Sir H. H. Johnston:—

In regard to the present War, we should do well to apply our energies to getting it over and making it the last of "great" wars, and not exaggerate its importance as an agency for good or evil in the history of man.

Now, apparently, the two knights who take part in this discussion are under the impression that orthodox Christianity is composed of two entirely different and essentially independent parts, which may be detached the one from the other; but they are both fundamentally mistaken, if the theologians are to be taken as our authorities on this subject. All the great Creeds, and all orthodox expounders of those Creeds, are unanimous in the representation of Christianity as a system, not of morality, but "of personal redemption by mystic union" with the crucified and risen Saviour-God, Jesus Christ. In the history of Christianity, morality has always occupied a secondary position. There are many thousands of evangelical ministers in Christendom to-day who pride themselves upon being, not teachers of morality, but God-ordained preachers of individual salvation through faith in the glorified Lord. It is to Christianity as thus conceived and believed in at the present time, by some five hundred millions of human beings, that we offer our strenuous opposition. Morality follows and grows out of saving faith in Christ, apart from which it possesses no value in the sight of heaven, however luxuriant a product of the natural man it may be. It was with this Christian teaching in mind that I ventured to recommend early Buddhism as an ethical system, completely divorced from supernatural sanction or succour. In this connection, I feel that I must refer to what seems to border on discourtesy when Sir Ray Lankester suggests that I offered him the Buddhist philosophy "as a novelty," when, in reality, I merely wished to remind my readers of the existence of such a philosophy. It is, therefore, somewhat ungracious on his part, to insinuate that he "may have adopted" that system before I "even heard of its existence." That, of course, is possible, but not very probable, considering that he is my senior by but three years, and that I too have been a student from my youth.

I readily accept Sir Edwin's definition of Rationalism, nor do I object to his calling it a religion. Personally, I prefer the word Secularism, Science, or Humanism, but I would never dream of haggling about the most suitable term or terms. To me, Rationalism, Free-thought, and Science are synonyms. Of course, it is beyond all controversy that, as popularly understood and even as conceived by many historical scholars, religion means the mode of Divine worship peculiar to a certain tribe or nation, or a group of tribes or nations, based on some belief in the supernatural held in common by the members thereof. This is the view maintained by the late Professor Tiele, who wrote so voluminously and so learnedly on the subject of religions, of which he supplies us with such a long and varied list. But all I aver just now is, that if Rationalism is a religion, it must be so in

a radically different sense from that in which Christianity is a religion. I am in complete harmony with the statement that "the Rationalist.....is actuated by the desire to discover his relation to the Universe"; but I am persuaded that it would be supremely difficult to find a "most saintly and high-minded Christian," in any period of Christian history, who was actuated by that desire. The supreme desire of the saintly, in all ages, at any rate, since Plato's day, has been to be released from the bonds of Nature, and enter the unseen, supernatural world, wherein alone was to be enjoyed unalloyed and unending bliss. Even the great Newman feared Nature; and, consequently, he buried himself in the Catholic Church in the hope of getting clean away from the more and more vivid suggestions of disbelief in God and the spiritual realm which she had persisted so long in thrusting across his intellectual path. Christianity claims to be a way of escape from the otherwise inescapable tyranny of natural laws. It pretends to bring us into touch with the God of Grace who graciously undertakes to emancipate us from the cruel clutches of the God of Nature. Nature answers no prayer and never forgives; but the Christian God is declared to be most eager both to hear and answer prayer, and to free any believing scoundrel from the law of causation. For this and other cognate reasons, the late Sir Thistleton Dyer informs us, Huxley "threw Christianity overboard bodily," and personally I am proud to take my stand beside that great scientist, as a wholehearted rejecter of the mischievous superstition.

My contention is that Christian morality, the moment it is detached from Christian supernaturalism, ceases to be Christian. Sir Ray Lankester tells us that, in Rationalism, "natural science takes the place once occupied by witchcraft; and later by prayer, sacrifice, and priestly mediation." This is a true saying, and worthy of all acceptance; but orthodox Christianity, which is still dominant in Christendom, lays its heaviest emphasis upon "prayer, sacrifice, and priestly mediation." Countless prayer-meetings have been and are being held in this country and in those of our Allies, as well as in those of our enemies, the purport of which, on both sides of the battle lines, is to implore God to intervene and bring about a speedy victory; and the fighters on both sides are assured by their priests and pastors that they are shedding their blood for the establishment of the kingdom of heaven upon earth. Surely, Sir Ray Lankester cannot be blind and deaf to all this, of which both religious and secular journals have been so full for upwards of two years, and yet he, a Rationalist, has the temerity to affirm that, in his opinion, "the Christian religion is being enormously strengthened in its noblest features by this War." It is true that he qualifies that affirmation by the interjection that the Christian religion "is a complex of many teachings." That is to say, Christianity is a syncretic religion—it borrowed freely from numerous Oriental cults; but it must be remembered, as M. Loisy reminds us, that "each of these Oriental cults was a system of salvation which a god was supposed to have instituted at the beginning, either by his own will, or by the simple fact of his example and of the lot which had fallen to him." The erudite Professor Bacon, of Yale University, agrees with the French *Savant*, and we know that after appropriating, and more or less assimilating, all that those influential religions valued most, Christianity, as soon as it came to power under Constantine, took it into its head to begin the brutal process of suppressing all rivals by force, with the result that ere long it reigned supreme throughout the Roman Empire for more than a thousand years. But at last, about the middle of the fifteenth century, a new rival appeared whose name was Humanism, a

child of the Revival of Learning. Very innocent-looking at first was this, as yet, unconscious aspirant to the throne; but it inevitably grew and gathered strength out of, and was the vital element in, the reawakening of interest in Greek philosophy and poetry, because, naturally, the cultivation once more of the old classic spirit of inquiry diverted men's minds from theology to literature, and through literature to science, in which Sir Ray Lankester is now so shining a light. Well, what has science been doing ever since it began to emerge from the prison into which Christianity, at an early date, had forcibly clapped it? It has been slowly but most surely supplanting its ancient foe; and the force which it has been employing in the process is not physical, but intellectual—knowledge against faith, fact against fiction, verified truth against traditional assumptions. Sir Ray Lankester is not directly, but indirectly, a slayer of superstition; he is a shedder of light, a manufacturer of weapons, a maker of high explosive shells, which are destined, ultimately, to blow supernaturalism to black smithereens.

The end is not yet, nor will it come for many a long day. Christianity will, without a doubt, survive the greatest of all wars, with its stereotyped morality as a kind of appendix, which only the grace of God is said to be able to translate into conduct; but when it has been shattered into a heap of ruins, then, but not till then, shall arise a thoroughly rationalized and humanized system of morality.

J. T. LLOYD.

Sparks from a Literary Anvil.

The moving finger writes, and having writ,
Moves on.
—Omar Khayyam.

The End of a Chapter, by Shane Leslie. Constable. 1916.

VOLTAIRE once said that there is no man who has not something interesting in him; but there are comparatively few who will quite honestly tell us the matters of interest. Rousseau unbosomed himself in his *Confessions*, and the world has been grateful to him ever since. Old Montaigne was sincerity itself, and he showed himself with all his amiable weaknesses. Like Cromwell, who told the artist to paint his portrait showing the warts, he wished posterity to have a truthful picture. English autobiographies, however, usually suffer from the vice of discretion, and are too respectable to be entertaining. Hence a book of memoirs, which has a spice of audacity, is sure of a welcome. Such a volume is Mr. Shane Leslie's *The End of a Chapter*, which is entertaining from cover to cover, and is as full of human interest as an egg is full of meat.

"People who are old enough to write memoirs have usually lost their memory," says Mr. Leslie. The accusation cannot be levelled at him, for he has written his book in the very prime of life; and, perhaps, this is one of the reasons why there is not a dull page in the volume. Mr. Leslie comes of a good stock, for his grandfather was a cousin of the great Duke of Wellington, and he had seen Talleyrand and met Sir Walter Scott. Mr. Leslie himself fought in the present War, and buried his brother, Captain Norman Leslie, at Armentieres, between the guns of two great armies, and it is to the memory of this brother that he dedicates his book.

Whilst invalided home, Mr. Leslie wrote his reminiscences, and turned his convalescence to such excellent account. He recalls his schooldays at Eton College, and has some very amusing passages concerning the religion taught at that ancient and aristocratic seat of knowledge. He says:—

The Sunday sermon was a mild appeal to take holy orders or grow up like Lord Roberts. On Sunday boys

were made to write answers to scriptural questions—a hateful tribute to the Sabbath God, which made Sunday the chosen day for smoking, or catapulting the royal rabbits in Windsor.

The result of the teaching given at Eton was that the boys were good Pagans rather than indifferent Christians. Mr. Leslie says, sagaciously, that the Jesuits are the only people who have been able to impose religion on English boys; and adds, sarcastically:—

Their ideal is Saint Aloysius, a delicate youth with a lily. The popular Etonian inclines to a tomboy with a cricket-bat. Aloysius would have been better for games, and Etonians for the sacramental view of life. The ideal would be a combination of the two.

Schoolboy religion is not the only variety that interests Mr. Leslie. In a cynical chapter on *The Religion of England*, he has some caustic comments:—

The State bishops are objects of envy rather than of reverence. The depths of religious awe between a foreign Catholic and an Anglican appear in the story of the honest Briton arguing with an astonished Frenchman, and ending, "To hell with the Pope." With a pallor befitting the terrible words of his reply, the Frenchman drew himself up and uttered, "To hell with the Archbishop of Canterbury." Whereat the Briton dissolved in laughter. "To hell with the Gold Stick in Waiting" would sound as comic to him.

As may be seen, Mr. Leslie likes a profane story, and the following concerning the Prime Minister visiting some French delegates is amusing:—

Mr. Asquith wore the uniform of an Elder of Trinity House, and this drew a query from a visitor. The incarnation of English Dissent explained in his best French, "I am an elder brother of the Trinity." The Frenchman bowed politely, and said: "Ah! We have discarded all that in France."

With a twinkle in his eye, Mr. Leslie tells a story of the sensation caused by a Scottish prelate who went to France in the purple cassock of the Continental bishops, who, of course, are supposed to be celibates:—

As he brought his wife with him, the pious innkeeper refused to allow her in. "But I am on holiday," said the paragon of diocesan respectability. "There is no doubt that Monseigneur is on holiday," replied the poor innkeeper, to whom the situation was with difficulty explained.

The evangelical and loquacious Lord Radstock is the subject of a humorous story. He once went to preach to the "infidel" French, and was heard to entreat them publicly: "Drink of the *eau de vie*, drink of the *eau de vie*, my brothers." He meant the water of life; but the godless French inquired, smilingly, if brandy was used in the English sacrament. There is an excellent story of the rival ecclesiastics in Ireland. It concerns two archbishops—one Anglican and the other Catholic—and a Papal Legate:—

The interchange of humour and respect kept Archbishop Logue and Archbishop Alexander friends. When Cardinal Vanutelli came to consecrate the new cathedral at Armagh, Alexander left a card on the Pope's legate. The two cardinals paid the Protestant Primate a visit. As the three old men were gossiping under the roof most sacred to Protestant ascendancy a tumult was heard in the streets, and great was their amusement on learning afterwards that rival religious mobs had broken windows in their honour.

There are pleasant glimpses of people worth remembering, and one good story concerns Oscar Browning, a popular professor of King's College. One day, as Tennyson entered the great court at King's, a bulky professor was said to have run to him, explaining, "I am Browning." "No, you are not," replied Tennyson, and walked on.

There are many anecdotes of royal persons, one of which, concerning Queen Victoria, is worth quoting:—

When an unhappy officer of the Guard once risked a slightly improper story at her table, she insisted on its repetition, and remarked in the icy silence which followed, "We are not amused." Her era was moral.

So Mr. Leslie gossips pleasantly to the end, with that genial, cultured manner of his. Indeed, the author's convalescence has been most profitably employed, for he has written one of the most readable books of the year, and he deserves all our thanks.

MIMNERMUS.

Pagan and Christian Morality.

VIII.

(Continued from p. 774.)

When the young man went away sorrowing, Jesus moralized on it, saying: "How hardly shall a rich man enter into the kingdom of heaven.".....That to inculcate religious begging as the *only* form and mode of spiritual perfection is fanatical and mischievous, even the Church of Rome will admit. Protestants universally reject it as a deplorable absurdity—not merely wealthy bishops, squires, and merchants, but the poorest curate also. A man could not preach such a doctrine in a Protestant pulpit without incurring deep reprobation and contempt; but, when preached by Jesus, it is extolled as divine wisdom—and disobeyed.—*Professor Francis Newman, "Phases of Faith" (1891), pp. 155-6.*

The world, and especially that part of it which is called "The Religious World," has suffered much, but never more than at this moment, from unworthy equivocation, from cowardly evasions, and from studied silences. Hundreds of excellent people, clergymen and ministers of all denominations, continue to use phrases, which already possess a definite popular value, in a private sense of their own; and the result is that they leave their congregations under the false impression that they and the preacher think exactly alike. If the preacher really believes that this kind of teaching can advance his hearers one step, he is utterly mistaken. If he thinks he is preserving the worn-out coin by putting a new stamp of his own upon it, he will be doing his best to encourage false weights and measures, and unconsciously depraving the intellectual honesty of those who listen to him.—*Rev. Charles Voisey, "The Testimony of the Four Gospels Concerning Jesus Christ," pp. 13-14.*

WHAT is the fundamental idea at the back of the Four Gospels? It is the idea that the kingdom of heaven is at hand, which pervades the New Testament from beginning to end. As Dr. Conybeare has observed:—

In those earliest times the followers of Jesus the Messiah, as it is now commonly admitted by all schools of critics, believed that their Prophet was going to return and begin almost at once the millennium or kingdom of heaven upon earth. The kingdom was at hand, and no man knew when the heavenly Bridegroom might appear with His angels. The most pressing necessity was therefore to repent. Call there was none to marry and beget children, or to take thought for the morrow and lay up the riches that spoil. How hardly should they that had riches enter into the kingdom of heaven.¹

As Meredith truly remarks, this fact "is supported by such a mass of clear evidence, furnished by his own words, as can scarcely be adduced in proof of any other fact, either in history, science, or morals. Indeed the whole burden—the 'very pith and marrow' of the Gospel doctrines—is the *kingdom of heaven*, and the events concomitant with its coming." And he further adds: "To suppose that the expressions used regarding the kingdom of heaven are intended to be understood in a spiritual sense,—metaphorical sense,—or any other sense than a literal one, is in effect to suppose the whole of the Gospels, and much of the Epistles, to consist

only of allegories, enigmas, and riddles!"¹ It naturally follows from this teaching that, if the present state of things was shortly to be abolished, what was the use of trying to improve it? As Professor Newman says: "Regarding this world as destined to be soon burnt up, it despaired of improving the foundations of society, and laid down the principle of non-resistance, even to injurious force, in terms so unlimited, as practically to throw its entire weight into the scale of tyranny." And again: "Undoubtedly, if we are to expect our Master at cockcrowing, we shall not study the permanent improvement of this transitory scene. To teach the speedy destruction of earthly things, as the *New Testament* does, is to cut the sinews of all earthly progress, to declare war against Intellect and Imagination, against Industrial and Social advancement."²

In reading the New Testament this fact should be constantly borne in mind; it is the key to the right understanding of the Gospels. When the young man appeals to Jesus for time to bury his father, Jesus unfeelingly replies, "Let the dead bury their dead" (Matt. viii. 22); when, at the marriage feast, Jesus rudely and boorishly replied to his mother, "Woman! what have I to do with thee?"; when, on another occasion, he was told that his mother and brothers were outside and wished to speak with him, instead of showing any sign of natural affection, he utterly ignored them, and morosely inquired, "Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?" (Matt. xii. 48); when he advised the rich young man to sell all he possessed and give the proceeds to the poor; when he advises his hearers to follow the example of the birds and the lilies, and take no thought for the morrow, it is this idea of the rapidly approaching end of the world and the inauguration of the kingdom of heaven—which was so close at hand that some of those standing round him would witness it (Matt. xvi. 28)—that is in his mind. What was the use of troubling about earthly duties and affections in the light of the tremendous drama about to be enacted? He would have approved of Wesley's hymn:—

No room for mirth or trifling here,
For worldly hope, or worldly fear,
If life so soon is gone:
If now the Judge is at the door,
And all mankind must stand before
The inexorable throne!

Such a view of life destroys the driving power of progress and civilization, and history attests that wherever this view has prevailed it has acted as a barrier to the advance of mankind.

The fact is, people are trained from earliest childhood to revere the teachings of Jesus as the ideal form of morality, as the highest point of perfection ever reached, far above all human criticism. Therefore, they do not examine these teachings for themselves. They reserve their criticism for other religions.

The truth is, that the best moral teachings of the Gospels were known and practised by the earliest people of whom we have historical records. Of the Egyptian code of morality 5,000 years before Christ, Professor Le Page Renouf tells us:—

The triumph of Right over Wrong, of Right in speech and in action (for the same word signifies both Truth and Justice) is the burden of nine-tenths of the Egyptian texts which have come down to us.....We cannot resist the conviction that the recognized Egyptian code of morality was a very noble and refined one. "None of the Christian virtues," M. Chabas says, "is forgotten in it; piety, charity, gentleness, self-command in word and action, chastity, the protection of the weak, benevolence towards the humble, deference to superiors,

¹ F. C. Conybeare, *The Armenian Apology, and Other Monuments of Early Christianity* (1896), pp. 19-20.

¹ E. P. Meredith, *The Prophet of Nazareth*, pp. 117-147.

² Newman, *Phases of Faith*, pp. 111-136.

respect for property in its minutest details,.....all is expressed there, and in extremely good language." ¹

The most venerable of these texts, the work of Ptahhotep, says the same authority, "which date from the age of the Pyramids, and yet appeals to the authority of the ancients. It is undoubtedly, as M. Chabas called it in the memorable essay in which its contents were first made known, 'The Most Ancient Book of the World.' The manuscript at Paris which contains it was written centuries before the Hebrew lawgiver (Moses) was born, but the author of the work lived as far back as the reign of King Assa Fatkara, of the fifth dynasty.These books are very similar in character and tone to the Book of Proverbs in our Bible. They inculcate the study of wisdom, the duty to parents and superiors, respect for property, the advantages of charitableness and content, of liberality, humility, chastity, and sobriety, of truthfulness and justice; and they show the wickedness and folly of disobedience, strife, arrogance, and pride, of slothfulness, intemperance, unchastity, and other vices." ²

All the so-called "Christian virtues" were known and practised many thousands of years before Christ appeared. In Babylonia, where an equally ancient—some scholars claim that it is more ancient—civilization prevailed, we have the high authority of Professor Jastrow for claiming an equally high standard of morality. He says, in ancient Babylonia, "The rights of individuals were safeguarded by laws that strove to prevent the strong from taking undue advantage of the weak. Business was carried on under the protection of laws and regulations that impress one as remarkably equitable. Underhand practices were severely punished, and contracts had to be faithfully executed. All this, it may be suggested, was dictated by the necessities of the growth of a complicated social organization. True, but what is noticeable in the thousands of business documents now at our behoof, and covering almost all periods from the earliest to the latest, is the *spirit* of justice and equity that pervades the endeavour to regulate the social relations in Babylonia and Assyria. This is particularly apparent in the legal decisions handed down by the judges, of which we have many specimens." ³

In China, five hundred years before Christ, Confucius, affectionately known to the Chinese as the "uncrowned king," taught a higher morality than Jesus, for, unlike him, he held out no hope of reward for practising morality. Says Professor Giles: "Confucius taught man's duty to his neighbour; he taught virtue for virtue's sake, and not for the hope of reward or fear of punishment; he taught loyalty to the sovereign as the foundation-stone of national prosperity, and filial piety as the basis of all happiness in the life of the people. As a simple human moralist he saw clearly the limitations of humanity, and refused to teach his disciples to return good for evil, as suggested by the Old Philosopher, declaring without hesitation that evil should be met by justice." ⁴

The missionary Medhurst, who translated the Confucian classic, the *Shoo-King*, says in the preface to his translation: "The lessons of practical wisdom contained in the 'Shoo-King' are applicable to all ages and nations. Even in enlightened Europe, and at this advanced period of the world's civilization, something may be learned from it, and so long as the world retains the distinction between high and low, rich and poor, so long will the

principles of reciprocal justice and affection, respect, and obedience, laid down in its pages, keep their ground," but laments that it is "miserably deficient in all that respects the spiritual and eternal interests of man"—its greatest recommendation, in our eyes. W. MANN.

"Headquarters"; or, "Carry On."

"DESPAIR is the normal condition of the idealist these days," remarked my friend dismally, as we felt our way carefully in the early morning fog over the invisible pavement of a strange town. We had arrived with our battalion by a special night train, and had received orders to find our new headquarters. The town was strange to us. Neither of us knew where to go, and, apart from being provided with the address, we were quite ignorant of our direction and destination. The fog was dense, but we kept to what we felt to be the main road through the town, and "carried on."

"As a Freethinker," remarked my friend, "I cannot say 'Good God' or 'Great Heavens,' but—" and here my companion grabbed my arm in a most unmilitary fashion, "by jumping chaplains, *this* is the limit! Here we are, stranded in a strange place, groping our way in darkness like the Established Church—looking for an empty house requisitioned by the Government as a headquarters! An empty private house—now occupied by a dozen homesick orderlies awaiting the Official Staff—oh, my friend, the irony of it! An *empty* house, once a home. Somebody else's home! Now, not even that! Just an empty house, and here we are struggling along trying to find it. Isn't the simile obvious? As rational idealists—this is exactly our condition."

I knew these moods of my friend only too well. He was overtired. Six months in the trenches had pulled his nerves to pieces; he was very easily depressed. "You're going to ———," I remonstrated. "I admit that things are black, in every sense of the word, that we are indeed, as you mention, in the dark. But, hang it all, there *is* hope somewhere. Absolute darkness, like absolute evil or absolute good, is unthinkable."

"You were always an optimist," grumbled my friend. "Where the blazes are we?"

"Still on the main road," I replied, good humouredly.

"I repeat," he went on, almost to himself, "Despair is the normal and righteous mood of the idealist." As he spoke we walked into a wall and swore loudly.

"I'm going to lean against this and rest," exclaimed my friend. "Have a cigarette?" We smoked in silence for a minute.

"Thank goodness, the fog's lifting," I said, attempting to be cheerful. "There are some shops opposite."

"Where the hell are headquarters?" exploded my companion irritably.

"Half-a-mo," I exclaimed; "What's that turning over there?"

"Let's have a look, anyway."

We crossed over and felt our way very carefully. Presently we touched iron railings, and stopped dead.

"That's funny," I muttered. "I thought we were in the middle of the street."

"So we are," answered my friend. "It's a monument or something with railings."

I walked round it and rejoined my companion. "It's certainly a monument," I repeated. My friend snorted. "Some local brewer or Bible preacher, I suppose." We looked up, and in the dim morning light we could just discern the standing figure of a man about ten feet above us.

¹ Professor Le Page Renouf, *Origin and Growth of Religion as Illustrated by the Religion of Ancient Egypt* (1893), pp. 71-72.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 76-77.

³ Professor Morris Jastrow, jun., *Aspects of Religious Belief and Practice in Babylonia and Assyria* (1911), pp. 378-379.

⁴ Giles, *The Civilization of China*, p. 70.

"Now, *this* is what I call irony de luxe," remarked my friend cynically. "We set forth from the station on a military errand to discover headquarters, and we find a monument with some local idiot perched on top. Isn't it the height of futility?"

We strained our eyes in the darkness, and, even as we gazed, the fog lifted. "He's a damn fine feller, anyway," I remarked; "a six-footer."

"King Alfred the Great, or a Temperance Reformer," muttered my friend. "I know 'em. Where in all the world would you find what *we* should call a really great man lifted up in the public thoroughfare of a large town on a monument? Its never been done. Never." I did not reply, being too busy endeavouring to read an inscription which was placed immediately under the statue. Suddenly, I turned towards my friend with enthusiasm.

"You miserable old humbug," I cried, dragging him up to the railings. "Look here, while I light a match—read!" Then, as the match flared up in the darkness, my friend craned his neck forward and gasped out two long-drawn words. They were, "Charles—Bradlaugh."

"Its Headquarters," I cried, "and 'carry on.'"

So there in the damp fog, which enveloped Northampton like a yellow pall, two excited soldiers came suddenly to attention and saluted.

ARTHUR F. THORN.

Acid Drops.

The trustees of the Gifford Lectureship have pursued their usual course in inviting a lecturer who was safe to take the side of Theism. If Lord Gifford's *intention* had been respected, we should have had before now a course of lectures on the question of the existence of God, delivered from a non-Theistic point of view. But trust deeds—like most other things—depend for their working upon the kind of men who carry them into operation; and as religious people administer this trust, they will see to it that it is worked in the interests of religion. The lecturer this year is Professor J. Arthur Thomson, who has for his subject "A Study of Animate Nature"—on which he is well able to speak with authority. We have only a brief newspaper report of the concluding address, and so cannot say anything of its general character. But the conclusion is far more worthy the pulpit than a scientific teacher. A scientific description of animate nature, he said,—

is congruent with the view that the whole is the expression of an originaive purpose. The scientific formulation is consistent with the conclusion, which must be reached along other lines, that the "nature" we know immediately may be interpreted as one of the expressions of the divine spirit. No conclusion along our lines of study is likely to be within sight of the truth that does not sound the note of joyous admiration—"Prais'd be the fathomless universe, for life and joy, and for objects and knowledge curious." But shall we not rather seek to worship the Author of this universe—albeit so imperfectly discerned—from whom all comes, by whom all lives, in whom all ends?

Perhaps this is a symptom of the general spirit of reaction now in vogue over the whole of the country, but we confess that such a deliverance carries us back to the religious scientific jargon of the eighteenth century. It is a curious state of the scientific mind which can burst out with "Prais'd be the fathomless universe," etc. Why on earth should we praise anything fathomless? Or if we must, why not praise the fathomless simplicity that can be taken in or beguiled by such verbiage? Such language does not belong to science, nor to a sane philosophy. It is mere religious rhapsody, gratifying to the believer for whose benefit it is prepared and delivered, but of no earthly use to anyone else. If, in due course, Professor Thomson's lectures are published, we hope to have the pleasure of reading the volume. We are quite sure it will be worth the reading, and we are certain that his conclusion will have no connection whatever with the scientific portion of his lectures.

In the interests of economy, the Eastbourne Guardians are recommending poor people to buy clogs. But the Rev. H. Scott had a far more economical suggestion. He suggested that the fashion of going barefooted should be re-introduced. We suggest that Mr. Scott should be compelled to lead the way.

Sooner or later, truth *will* out. Two years ago, the parsons were loudly boasting that there was a marvellous revival of religion everywhere. After a while it was discovered that no revival had taken place in this country, but we were assured that it was proceeding at a fine rate in France. Then came Dr. Paul Sabatier and dissipated this delusion. But a revival *must* be going on *somewhere*, and the Bishop of London went over and found it among our own soldiers at the Front. Then the Rev. Dr. Horton, the notorious miracle-lover, waxed exceedingly fervent while describing the incredible miracles of conversion performed in the trenches. If we had an Atheist here, he said, a visit to the trenches would quickly make him an ardent believer. Two years ago, the Rev. F. C. Spurr confidently predicted the speedy collapse of the Freethought Movement, with all its prophets, and the certain triumph of Christianity. Speaking at Oxford the other day, Mr. Spurr sorrowfully admitted that there is no revival of religion anywhere, *not even at the Front*. Of course, religion will win—*to-morrow*.

The self-denial of the bishops is wonderful. At Farnham Castle, the Bishop of Winchester has closed the hothouses, and the choice flowers have been sold by auction. Other "Fathers in God" have dispensed with some of their flunkys. And these are the men who exhort the British Empire to "repentance."

The Rev. John Evans, of Southend-on-Sea, speaking at a Bible Society meeting, said that there were great difficulties in translating the sacred volume into some languages. We should think so! Imagine a translator, conversant with cannibal dialects, faced with the text, "Except ye eat my flesh and drink my blood."

Dr. Knox, the Bishop of Manchester, suggests "a day of continuous prayer" for December 21. Even Christians might wish this to be an eight hours' day.

Providence was too busy watching the sparrows fall to prevent a two years' old child from being burned to death at Poplar.

The unusual occurrence of a Church of England clergyman conducting the funeral of a Nonconformist at Hershams, near Walton-on-Thames, has received much attention in the Press. Christian charity is a tender plant, of slow growth. It has taken two thousand years for orthodox Christians to remember the elementary fact that an opponent is a man and a brother.

Dr. Newton, of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, U.S.A., has accepted the pastorate of the City Temple, London, and in a letter to the Church Committee he says: "If only you and the dear men on the Committee could know my situation and the agony through which I have been passing for the last month or more. I am willing to suffer financial loss rather than see the Temple lose its place of command in the religious world." Just imagine a month (or more) of agony at the prospect of the salary of a Cabinet Minister, with a motor-car thrown in.

The Society of Authors, Playwrights, and Composers very properly called the Bishop of London to book for his sweeping denunciation of modern plays as "slimy and lecherous." His lordship was asked to state what plays he had in mind when he used the words, and to give specific instances. Our own impression is that, like most men of his type, he had nothing at all in his mind when he used those expressions save the irresponsible cleric's usual desire to say something sweeping and sensational, and to earn a cheap reputation as an ardent social reformer by attacking an interest which the Church is not paid to defend. If actors and actresses were as wealthy and as powerful as, say, land-

owners, the Bishop would have been less sweeping in his condemnation.

But faced with the request for direct evidence, the Bishop replied that he had in mind "certain sketches and parts of revues of an objectionable type which had been produced at music-halls and variety theatres." That is all. The Society replied contemptuously that if it had known that all he meant by such "stern denunciation" was "merely intended to apply to certain verbal indiscretions and unduly abbreviated ballet costumes, the Committee would not have troubled themselves." This was exactly the right tone to adopt, and if the Bishop of London were less thick-skinned, we should say he would feel sat on. But we have our doubts.

The incident is an illustration of what we have so often dwelt on—the irresponsibility of the clergy as a body. They are quite unused to having their utterances checked, and there is always the temptation to make sweeping and sensational statements, which in the case of one type of cleric runs to denunciation of sexual vice. Medical men, who are at the same time psychologists, will see in this the workings of what is called a "suppressed complex," and is a fairly certain indication of unsoundness in one direction, even though there may be some ground for the charge in the actual state of affairs. By all means let us have the stage as healthy as possible, but the method of health does not lie in the way of intemperate denunciation by celibate priests and prurient Puritans. That method was tried in the seventeenth century, and for obvious reasons the theatre grew worse as the denunciations grew. And when the bishops have succeeded in moralizing their own congregations, there will be time to turn their attention to the outside world.

The *Christian World* is clearly of opinion that the prophets, whose utterances are recorded in the Bible, were radically mistaken when they proclaimed the absolute and invincible sovereignty of Jehovah. The Book of Daniel is wrong when it describes the Most High as a being who "doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth," whose hand none can stay, or to whom none can say, "What doest thou?" Our contemporary knows, as well as we do, that the Divine sovereignty is a figment of the theological imagination. The difference between us, however, is immense. The *Christian World* says that "many things happen contrary to God's will"; that in making men free the Deity "limited his own power"; that the term "Almighty" or "Omnipotent" should be abandoned, because it is "a source of much confusion and heartache." We say that there is no evidence whatever of the reality of a Divine will, or of the existence of God. In practice all alike are Atheists, whilst we are Atheists in theory too.

In an excellent article, entitled "Religion After the War," which appears in the *R. P. A. Annual* for 1917. Mr. Arnold Bennett makes, with evident delight, the following confession:—

The moment when I could cut myself free from any religious organization was a moment of intense relief, and from that moment I have never entered a place of worship save in a spirit of sociological, historical, or artistic curiosity, or to take part in some quasi-legal ceremony at which my presence was imperative.

Commenting on that frank admission, the *Christian World* for November 30 says:—

It is strange that it should not strike so keen a mind that such a confession is tantamount to a confession of ignorance as to what present-day Christianity is.

To us, on the contrary, it is strange that it should not strike a journal so theologically liberal as our contemporary is, that such a criticism is steeped in ignorance or prejudice, or both. It is not at all necessary to attend church or chapel to find out what present-day Christianity is. One can easily learn that from books and periodicals and conversations. Besides, what Christianity really is no one can tell, because there are so many different and conflicting versions of it, a fact of which Mr. Bennett is well aware; and each version is declared, by those who hold it, to be the only correct and authentic one.

This is a cogent argument against the truth of the Christian religion.

It is scandalous to observe the way in which the religious leaders of this country have given Professor Rudolf Eucken the cold shoulder since the War broke out. Before the War they were always throwing him at the head of Freethinkers as a great spiritually-minded genius. Since the War there has been scarcely a mention of his name from any of the pulpits or in any of the religious papers. It makes one wonder what would happen if the Jews were ever foolish enough to go back to Palestine, and there was war between them and this country. Would they drop Jesus as they have dropped Eucken and other German Christian writers?

We were set writing the above because we see Professor Eucken has been lecturing on "The Lessons of the War," and discovers that German religion is the greatest spiritual force in the world. Naturally, he believes Germany is in line with the great world-purpose behind the War, etc. We see, also, that the new President of the Chamber of Deputies has stated that the Almighty is Turkey's ally. We feel quite sure that both Eucken and the President are wrong, because God is on *our* side. We booked him very early in the War—even before the War, and ever since we have used him as the Navy does a coaling station. All our spiritual leaders go to him to replenish their steaming power whenever they feel used up. Really, these people all remind us of warring savage tribes going out, each with its particular "Joss" as a victory-bringer. The difference is that each tribe of savages would have a *different* deity. It is left for civilized nations each to pray to the same God for victory, and to believe that he is helping the lot. If there is a sense of humour in heaven, what laughter there must be.

Military men have, naturally, great prominence just now but we fail to see that this makes them any authority upon such a subject as a future life. Their chief business is to see that as many as possible discover the secret for themselves. Speaking at a meeting at the Grafton Galleries on November 28, Major-General Alfred Turner said that it seemed to him "absolutely impossible that people could not believe in a life to come, or in the continuity of life." The only thing that strikes us about this deliverance is its testimony to the speaker's mental limitations. Bearing in mind the names of those men and women who have found it impossible to believe in a future life, Major-General Turner's remark is more of a reflection on himself than upon others.

One outcome of the War—hailed by our religious leaders as a source of national regeneration—is a dearth of candidates for the teaching profession. As a means of combating this evil, the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge have lowered the standard of requirements for admission to training colleges. Which means, not more candidates, but a progressively poorer type of candidate. That also means, in its final result, a poorer education for the children. If we have to compete against the Germany of after the War with a less effectively educated people, the outlook is poor indeed. The way to attract better teachers is to make the position better worth having. Education is the last thing a sensible community would economize in.

The Bishop of London, taking the public into his confidence, says that during the past six months he has lived in two rooms at Fulham Palace. He might have added that he only wears one uniform at a time.

The Rev. Dr. Orchard says, "if you want to be advanced, freethinking, unconventional, revolutionary, there is nothing left now but to adopt Christianity." Yet the ordinary Christian is tamer than a domestic rabbit.

Mr. D. T. Curtin, the American journalist who has returned from a nine months' stay in Germany, says in that country the Sunday-school is a great factor in war propaganda. Another proof that the Germans are Atheists.

C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

December 10, Leicester; December 17, Liverpool; January 7, Chesterfield; January 14, Nottingham; January 28, Swansea; February 4, Abertillery; March 18, Leicester.

To Correspondents.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—December 17, Avondale Hall, Clapham. December 31, Abertillery.

F. PREWETT.—We are very sorry to hear of the death of Mr. Harding. We remember quite well our chat about Lester Ward. Perhaps something will result therefrom one day.

T. A. WILLIAMS.—We have written you privately on the matter. We naturally watch such things as closely as possible, but there are cases where it is impossible to do more than watch.

S. AYRES.—Get your newsagent to display a *Freethinker* poster. Introduce the paper to your friends. Pass on your own copy when read. These are all good ways of helping us. Or, if you can, send along a millionaire who will embark on a really effective advertising scheme.

G. RULE.—We are pleased to hear that the new course of lectures at Avondale Hall, Brixton, opened so favourably on Sunday last. We hope that they will continue to improve until the end, also that individuals interested will "put their back" into advertising the meetings.

H. JAMES writes that he first became acquainted with the *Freethinker* while spending a holiday on Plymouth Hoe. One of his children found the paper placed against a tree, with a notice on it where it could be obtained regularly. He took the hint, and is now bringing up his children so that no such accident will be needed to liberate them.

H. C. S.—We do not care to adopt the suggestion of making the Sustentation Fund continuous, so that the loss may be met as it occurs. We don't like "funds" at all, and would much prefer to see them absent from these columns. But as the lesser of the two evils, we prefer the appeal to be limited in duration. And we must find the way to carry on until, at least, the end of another year. Thanks, though, for your suggestion and help.

E. H. GRIFFIN.—Quite a bull's eye, as you say.

KEPLER.—Thanks. The *Sudbury Parish Magazine* comes as near absolute idiocy as it is possible to get without actually landing there.

G. CRONKSON.—Mills & Boon. Price 1s.

ADELAIDE GREY (Toronto).—We have received no contribution or letter that has given us more genuine pleasure than yours. Such things make one's work much easier.

A CORRESPONDENT, not a Freethinker, writes from France: "I think you will be interested to learn that among the belongings of a dead comrade I found two copies of your paper. I did not know he was a Freethinker, but I respected him as a good 'pal.' We are interested in the information, but greatly regret the occasion.

F. W. PALMER.—Thanks. Very useful.

ESSRE.—Received with thanks.

A. WILSON.—Sending your copy of the *Freethinker* to a friend in Egypt, who in turn passes it on, is a good plan. Glad to know that its arrival is looked for so keenly.

W. MENDEZ.—We share with you the gratification at the ready and generous response to the Sustentation Fund. But we were always assured of the affection of our readers for "the only paper."

S. WILSON.—The *South Wales Echo* report of the Christian Home in India, which received a horse in answer to prayer, is indicative of the intelligence of those sent out to convert the natives.

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

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

Sugar Plums.

To-day (Dec. 10) Mr. Cohen lectures at the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester. The lecture commences at 6.30. We have no doubt there will be the usual good attendance.

Next Sunday (Dec. 17) Mr. Cohen visits Liverpool. There has been some difficulty in obtaining a hall in that City, but the Branch has now secured its old lecture place, the Alexandra Hall, Islington, and its resumption of meetings there will no doubt prove a source of inspiration to Liverpool workers.

We pointed out last week, in our notice of Sir Hiram Maxim's death, how very carefully the newspapers refrained from saying anything about his Freethought. Had he been a member of some miserable little chapel, that fact would have been duly chronicled. As was to be expected, the same discreet silence was maintained about the funeral. In accordance with Sir Hiram's wishes, the ceremony was a Secular one. Mr. F. J. Gould delivered the address on that occasion, and the *Daily Telegraph* achieved distinction in the art of *suggestio falsi* by recording that "Mr. F. J. Gould, of the Religion of Humanity, delivered a memorial address." Mr. Gould is a Positivist, which is called "The Religion of Humanity," but he was *not* there on behalf of the Positivist Society. The *Telegraph* was simply seeing to it that the unthinking should form the comforting impression that some religion was mixed up with it. And religion means to every man *his* religion. Oh, for a really honest newspaper!

Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner visits Glasgow to-day (December 10) and will lecture in the Good Templar's Hall, 122 Ingram Street, at 12 noon and at 6.30 in the evening. Glasgow friends will please note, and do their best to see that the hall is well filled.

Amongst the contributions to our Sustentation Fund there is one from a clergyman of the Established Church, who sends it as "a present for an interesting and instructive treat."

The following Resolution has been passed by the Committee of the Humanitarian League and sent to the Home Secretary:—

JUVENILE OFFENDERS.

That this Committee, in view of the fact that experience has shown the futility of corporal punishment, desires to express its hope that the Government will give no countenance to the demand for an extension of whipping in the case of juvenile offenders, or for the raising of the age at which boys can be sentenced to be birched; and suggests that it would be wiser to deal with causes than with effects, inasmuch as boys cannot be expected to grow up to good manners and useful lives without ample opportunities for interesting activities or friendly guidance.

Our Sustentation Fund.

THE object of this Fund is to make good the loss on the *Freethinker*—entirely due to increased cost of materials, etc.—from October, 1915, to October, 1916, and to provide against the inevitable further losses during the continuation of the War. This Fund will close on January 14.

LIST OF SUBSCRIPTIONS.

Previously acknowledged, £213 2s. 6d.—Adelaide Grey (Toronto), 4s.; W. Mendez, 10s.; H. Silverstein, 5s.; H. James, 1s.; H. C. S. (bi-weekly subscription), 1s.; S. Ayres, 2s. 6d.; J. W., 2s. 6d.; W. Cowdry, 3s.; Old Reader, 2s.; Mrs. H. King, £1; C. Y., 5s.; T. Williamson, 2s.; F. Rose, 3s.; A. Firth, 2s. 6d.; Z. Y. X., 2s. 6d. *Per Miss Vance*: H. Lupton, 5s.; H. Reeve, 2s. 6d.; J. Herbert Sanders, 4s.

Science as the Servitor of Man.

II.

(Continued from p. 780.)

At a period when we were able instantaneously to light up our habitations and thoroughfares with brilliant electric or incandescent gaslight it demands an effort of the imagination to picture the darkness in which our forefathers were compelled to dwell throughout the winter season of the year. Even in our temporarily shrouded streets we retain more light than our ancestors ever enjoyed in the absence of sun or moon. Before the advent of modern illuminants, in old agricultural times, the Christmas festivities were solid and substantial things. With no artificial light, save that provided by the pine torch, the primitive oil flame, or the rushlight, when modern candles were as yet unknown, the rustic population, which then formed the great mass of the people, had, indeed, to labour in the day before the night came on in which no man could work. In such circumstances, preparations for the Yule Tide celebrations really commenced on All Hallows Day, the first of November, and the festival itself did not completely terminate until Candlemas Day, the second of February.

With the exception of the electric light, all artificial illuminants depend upon atmospheric combustion, and in the production of light the early races naturally employed easily obtained substances which readily inflame. Vegetable materials, such as rape-seed oil have been utilized from prehistoric times, and the feeble light of the lamp was only superseded by the shaping of animal fats into very indifferent candles.

The candle was very primitive when its evolution began. It was prepared from an organic fat, such as tallow or ox-fat, and the rush-wick was dipped into the melted substance. These rude candles were called "dips." In the early nineteenth century, chemical discovery began to revolutionize candle-making. From being a domestic occupation, in the sense that the frugal housewife was accustomed to lay aside her unused lard for her candles, it now became a special industry.

The French scientist, Chevreul, ascertained the chemical nature of oils and fats, and the development of modern candle manufacture was made possible. The light-giving power of the candle was gradually increased, the wasteful guttering was abolished, and the evil odours of the home-made article were practically banished. Then, with the old tallow candles there was the constant and most exasperating need of snuffing. For, in immediate contact with the wick of the burning candle there remained the unburnt vapour of the candle substance, and this unconsumed vapour prevented the access of the atmospheric oxygen to the wick. As a result, the wick became blackened by the heat of the flame, but was left unconsumed, with the consequence that the charred wick steadily lengthened, and more liquid fuel was carried up into the flame than could be consumed. A candle so circumstanced gives a wretched light, and sends forth a quantity of nasty smoke. To read, write, or work in this, the then best available illuminant, must have been trying to the most patient and serene among men.

In 1825, Cambaceres improved the candle by introducing flat-plaited or twisted wicks. The candle is still open to improvement, but a well-made candle, protected from draught, now burns with a steady flame. One has only to watch a burning candle to observe that as the wick is consumed its tip bends outwards towards the fringe of the flame, and therefore comes into contact with the atmospheric oxygen. Thus the end of the wick is burnt away, and the services of the ancient

snuffers are unnecessary. And, despite the vast consumption of gas and electric light, the number of candles now manufactured is larger than ever. The unrivalled convenience of the candle for so many minor purposes has secured its survival. In our Islands alone nearly 50,000 tons of candles are used annually, much the larger percentage being paraffin candles.

In the shale beds of the Scottish Lothians are found substances which yield the white paraffin wax from which candles are made. In addition to this, important liquid oils are extracted which, in an earlier stage of the industry, were regarded as by-products of small value. But the ever watchful Germans purchased the oil at a low price, imported it into their country, and subjected it to a careful study. They then invented a lamp in which this oil was used as an illuminant, and then began the use of mineral oil for lighting purposes. Keen competition then followed, and the Scottish shale industry was soon menaced by the discovery and development of oil deposits in several parts of the globe. But the shrewd Scots called in the aid of science, and their oil shale undertaking overcame all its antagonists.

The bubbles of gas which ascend to the surface of a stagnant pond when the mud arising from decomposing vegetation is stirred, may be made to burn if a light be held over the water. From time immemorial this inflammable gas has been popularly associated with swampy soils, and is known as marsh gas. This is the gas which escapes from the coal measures during mining and mixes with the surrounding air to form the dangerous fire-damp. The scientific term for marsh gas is methane, and it is the chief constituent of the inflammable gas which issues from the earth in the oil yielding areas of America, and in the famous region in Baku near the Caspian Sea.

The utilization of mineral oil as an illuminant was, for a time, responsible for many fatal accidents, and this led to State regulation of its use. The fires and explosions in question were mostly due to the imperfect elimination of the more easily combustible constituents of the oil. These volatile ingredients mingled with the air in the lamp's oil container and formed an explosive mixture which caught fire. Professor Findlay remarks:—

To obviate such risks, it has been enacted that only such oil shall be used as does not give off an inflammable vapour below a certain temperature. This is tested by heating the oil in a special apparatus under specified conditions, and determining the temperature at which, on passing a light over the mouth of the vessel containing the oil, a flash of flame is seen. This is known as the flash-point of the oil, and in Great Britain it has been enacted that the flash-point may not be below 73 degrees F., when determined by what is known as the "closed test."

As an illuminant, coal gas continues to occupy the premier place. As early as 1639, men of science were interested in the production of gas from coal. Dr. Clayton despatched a letter to Robert Boyle in which he described experiments on the preparation and storage of inflammable gas distilled from coal. A century later, Lord Dundonald conducted inquiries of a similar character. William Murdoch, however, was the first to successfully establish a system of lighting arrangements on a practical scale. In 1792, he lit up his house in Cornwall, and six years later he illuminated part of Boulton & Watts' manufactory at Soho, Birmingham. Progress was rapid after the lighting up of Westminster Bridge with gas lamps in 1813, and the new illuminant soon outdistanced all competitors.

Judging from the enthusiastic accounts of contemporary writers of the prodigious improvement in public lighting which occurred when gas was introduced, and when we recall the dismal illumination of our thorough-

fares until quite recently, we are constrained to think that before the advent of gas our streets and alleys *must* have been dark. One historian states that the revolution accomplished was so stupendous that the gas lamps gave a light "little inferior to daylight," and the streets lost many "terrors and disagreeables formerly borne with because they were inevitable."

With the coming of electricity the supremacy of gas as an illuminant was severely challenged, but the invention of the incandescent gas mantle saved the industry. This remarkable invention arose in terms of pure science, for Auer von Welsbach made his discovery while prosecuting investigations relating to the oxides of rare metals. In the course of these inquiries, von Welsbach noted that some of these oxides displayed a very brilliant light when incandescent, and this observation led to the evolution of the now famous incandescent mantle. And so remarkable was Welsbach's success, that the world's annual consumption of these mantles is at present estimated as about 300,000,000.

The gas industry was thus granted a further lease of life. A brilliant light equal to that of the electric incandescent lamp became available, while the cost of gas production was cheapened, for it was discovered—

that equally good results could be obtained with a gas of poorer quality, that is, of lower illuminating power. Gas manufacturers, therefore, were able to use cheaper coal, and by carrying out the distillation at a higher temperature, were able to obtain a larger volume of gas from the coal.

Thus is the truth illustrated that artificial illuminants, like other terrestrial phenomena, are moulded by the processes of evolution.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be continued.)

An Excursion.

OUR camp had been pitched these nine days in the Glen of the Rowans, close by an untamed mountain stream. We had explored the glen to its uttermost recesses; once, indeed, we passed beyond its confines, after a march by the banks of several torrents and a perilous journey over a morass, to an adjacent valley, where we were entertained right royally. We had gazed awe-stricken into the abyss at the Eagle's Falls, where a stream tumbles in a thousand-foot cascade over the mountainside. We had cast the subtle, deceitful fly over the haunts of the elusive trout, many of which had been lured to destruction—so many, in fact, that, should the post of Secretary for Foreign Affairs ever again become vacant, we would hint to the Lord High Executioner, or whoever has the distribution of such desirable appointments, that we seem to have all the qualifications necessary for such an office. The 2,400 feet of rocky slabs that frowned down upon our tiny encampment, and which is shown on the survey maps as Trosgeach, had been surmounted in company of the blue-eyed brownie (who for the past nine years has deigned to dwell with us) his mother, and his aunt—both the ladies being intrepid mountaineers. Yet here was I haunted by a feeling of some duty unaccomplished, some shrine unvisited. Yesterday, however, while strolling up the glen, I saw across the moor the lofty peak of Ben Loagh thrusting far into the ether; then I knew what was required of me to secure salvation.

This morning I kissed the brownie and his mother, cut a hefty staff, shouldered my rucsac, and directed my steps resolutely towards the hills. The way thither is superb; at first it leads one through a wooded ravine

from whose depths ascends continually the noise of the turmoil of waters, then across a far-spreading moor where the air is rich in the perfume of the northland—the fragrance of bog myrtle, heather, and thyme—and where the golden plover and the curlew pipe their notes of the wilderness; such is the path that, after many miles, leads me to my delectable mountain. A cloud is wrapped about its summit, so I halt ere I vanish into the vapour. From a high spur I contemplate the far-flung vision of majestic mountains, deep lonely glens, and sparkling lochs, and rivers, and forests sprinkled here and there throughout the picture, and through a cleft in Ben a Chlee comes the shimmer of the western ocean. A vision, but a vision of realities. I have wandered over the summits of most of the mountains, and swam in many of the rivers and lochs.

I will not chronicle here the names of the mountains that come within my ken. While looking round I foregathered with a shepherd; a tall, spare man, with clear blue eyes that are a sure token of the hillman; eyes that see right into the heart of shams, and a brain that with long brooding amongst the solitudes can fathom besetting problems undisturbed by the yelping curs that kennel in Carmelite House. In our crack we discussed many things, amongst others the men who run the country; these the shepherd summed up in a manner instructive to the listener, but certainly not flattering to the personages under review. And of course the Land Problem turned up: one always runs against it in the North. My friend had bitter memories handed down to him by forebears, who had seen bands of people driven like cattle from their glens to a port where a ship was in waiting to carry them to a foreign clime. "They were too religious," said the man of the mountains; "it's not a wise plan to turn the other cheek when the smiter happens to be a sprig of the old 'nobility.'" "Nor," said I, "is it judicious when he is one of the modern industrial pirates." As like as not, that is the explanation of the clearances—the people were too religious; as otherwise they are sterling stuff, these hill folks, and not prone to suffer tyrants gladly. I left him standing erect and majestic, like some minor deity, watching over the destinies of his flock, and, clambering upwards amongst the rocks and clouds, I arrived in the fullness of time at the cairn which crowns the dizzy precipices that hang around the great corrie. The cairn marks the summit of the mountain, and, according to custom, I placed a stone thereon; then, despite the frenzied exhortations of Fleet Street and the first Minister of Munitions, I deliberately uncorked my flask and toasted the mountain in distilled mountain dew; for a mountain is a much nobler thing than a man, even if he owns many newspapers or embraces many policies. This rite satisfactorily performed, I sought shelter in the lee of a gigantic boulder, and from my eyrie pondered over many notions that surged through my brain. Amongst them, suggested, perhaps, by a line in one of Byron's letters (to Shelley, I think) where he likens the mountain mists to "spray on the ocean of hell," and by the mist around as I reflected on those twin illusions, Heaven and Hell; but I in my meditations did not deeper penetrate the haze than did Keats when, on Ben Nevis, he wrote:—

I look into the chasms and a shroud
Vaporous doth hide them—just so much I wist
Mankind do know of hell; I look o'erhead
And there is sullen mist, even so much mankind
Can tell of heaven.....

But a calm happiness was in me, for here I found the very essence of solitude; the outside world shut out by an opaque curtain, dim as the intellect of a bishop.

For me a day on the hills is much more than a mere excursion—it is a regeneration. It stimulates the brain

and tones the muscles. It fills one with a sense of reverence for the mountains; they are so big and so old that one feels they must have absorbed much of the wisdom of the universe, and therefore it is meet that we should pay them homage. They have outlived—aye, and will outlive—dynasties, empires, and religions. "Creeds pass, rites change, no altar standeth whole." But the mountains will stand, if not for eternity, at least for time immeasurable.

It might be a useful discipline for some of our great ones were they to ascend a mountain, and on its summit ponder awhile in solitude, to realize that æons after the omnipotent Coalition Cabinet is forgotten, Ben Loagh will still hang out a fleecy banner to greet the chariot of his creator, the sun. Amidst the wreckage of the rocks, I am reminded of the observation of an academic friend, who said: "You may rhapsodize as much as you care to about your mountain peaks; for me, I like to contemplate them from the valleys. The hills, like the gods, appear to best advantage when beheld from afar. They should be treated reverently; familiarity is apt to bring with it disillusionment." That may be true about the gods. I heeded them not; they are too ethereal. But the mountains are not illusions; they, at least, are tangible, and I find in them a delight that strengthens with the years. There is a continual challenge in their grim, scarred precipices, and a subtle menace in the beautiful snow cornices which overhang their ridges. There is a surging joy in a tussle with a long ice gully. And I like the feel of the winds that wander over them—the pleasant summer zephyr, the robust boisterous breeze from the western ocean, or the surly snow-laden blast of winter. I revel in them all; and a barren, unprofitable mountain-top, with its desolation and its solitude and its sublimity, seems to me to be the ideal sanctuary for one who worships neither profits nor prophets.

JAMES STEWART.

Correspondence.

PEDESTRIAN POETRY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In Mr. Geo. Underwood's fine review of Dobell's sonnets, etc.—which, like all his articles, one reads with pleasure and instruction combined—I note the faulty "profound and deep," and would improve the sense thus:—

And I shall gain that rest *prolonged* and deep.....

But, curiously enough, even more musical poets are still pedestrian, minor, or common, as the case may be—verily, they must be born again; instance, even, these fine lines of Gerald Massey:—

Life's glory, like the bow in heaven,
Still springeth from the cloud;
And soul ne'er soared the starry Seven,
But pain's fire-chariot rode.
They've battled best who've boldest borne;
The kingliest kings are crowned with thorn.

I used also to suspect Shakespeare's "*inaudible and noiseless* foot of Time." Which reminds me I have for long wished to know the source of the lines beginning:—

Time's glory is to calm contending kings.....

Perhaps Mr. Underwood can oblige.

POETICUS.

REPUBLICANISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Beethoven, about whom most interesting articles appeared in your columns lately, was a Republican in principle, in spite of his association with, and patronage by, prelates of the papal Catholic Church and princes and nobles of the Empire.

When Napoleon was first consul, Bernadotte (afterwards King of Sweden) was ambassador of France at Vienna. He

asked Beethoven to compose music in honour of Napoleon. Beethoven did so, putting Napoleon's name, or, rather, Buonaparte, at the top of the title-page, and his own name at the bottom (1803). Just then, Napoleon made himself Emperor, whereupon Beethoven tore the title-page in pieces, and the music, the Heroic Symphony, was published without Napoleon's name. Though Beethoven may not have obtruded his Republicanism upon his high society, he preserved his faith and independence.

Kant was a Prussian. In his *Perpetual Peace* (1795) which has been published in translation two or three times, section 2, The First Definite Article, is, "The Civil constitution of every State must be Republican," and at some length he explains and defends that article.

Excluding Africa, nearly one half of the human race is now under Republican governments. But a large part of the other half, though nominally under monarchy, is self-governing and practically Republican, while Africa is in much the same condition.

It is to be hoped that one of the results of the War will be to make more countries or races Republican, both formally and practically.

W. D.

RUSSIA AND THE DRINK QUESTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—To one who has never been in Russia, the letter in your November 26 issue, above the name of "Maskee," would seem to carry considerable weight as first-hand testimony. But I was struck by the fact that your correspondent mentions being offered jam to put in his tea as an extraordinary incident, occasioned by the action of the authorities in limiting the use of sugar, which might otherwise be used for making alcohol. Now, readers of Anton Tchekov (and, I believe, Maxim Gorki) must have been struck by the matter-of-fact way in which this utterly un-English custom of taking jam in tea is mentioned as a luxury—and that long before the War. The value of your correspondent's testimony, and that of his Russian friends, therefore, would seem to be somewhat questionable.

C. W. PEACHY.

FOOLS OR ROGUES.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—On reading your opening notes in this week's issue of the *Freethinker*, entitled "Religious Fools and Religious Rogues," I could not help thinking of the truth contained in the remark, after an experience as commercial traveller for the past sixteen years. You may have read in the papers of the accident at sea within a mile of the coast, at the little town of Kilkeel, Co. Down, Ireland, where the steam-packet boat, *Connemara* (running between Holyhead and Greenore) and *Retriever* (a coast vessel) collided heavily. The result was, both steamers went down immediately, only one man being saved out of a hundred passengers (ninety-two passengers on the *Connemara* and a crew of eight on the *Retriever*). I am reliably informed by a very respectable customer of mine in Kilkeel Town, that while some sixty bodies lay awaiting identification, their watches, chains, money in their pockets, etc., were actually stolen by a lot of religious ghouls (to be a Freethinker in that district would not be decent), and I am told the priest in the Roman Catholic chapel rebuked his hearers the following Sunday. A lot of parcels containing watches, bracelets, etc., were posted to the Police Barracks by the religious thieves who stole them, and sent in an anonymous way without any name, of course, to prevent detection. My customer (a Protestant herself) informs me there were a lot of Protestants mixed up in the thing also, and some, being arrested by conscience after stealing, actually threw valuables along the rocks, where they were smashed in pieces. Had these things been allowed to remain in the pockets and on the persons of the dead bodies, it would have been the means of securing identification by friends, whereas, in a number of cases, the dead bodies were so mutilated that they became unrecognizable (I suppose owing to the boilers exploding), they had to be buried without identification. In some cases they could not even distinguish their sex; bodies, arms, legs, etc., floating along the beach like corks. It requires

a fool or a rogue to see "Providence" behind an event such as this, and to justify its operations.

I hope to send you a decent subscription at the New Year in aid of your Sustentation Fund, which I notice is required to fortify you against losses entailed, owing to the present exorbitant prices charged for paper. From experience I happen to know what that is.

JAMES HIGGINS.

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON NOVEMBER 30.

The President, Mr. C. Cohen, in the chair. Also present: Messrs. Brandes, Cowell, Lazarnick, Neate, Neary, Quinton, Samuels, Wood, Mrs. Rolf, Miss Kough, Miss Stanley, and the Secretary.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

The monthly cash statement was presented and adopted.

New members were admitted for Birmingham, Camberwell, Kingsland, South Shields, and the Parent Society.

Correspondence having been dealt with and Lecture work reported, the death of Mr. W. J. Ramsey was referred to, and the Secretary instructed to send a letter of condolence to Mrs. Ramsey, together with a cheque towards the expenses of the burial.

Messrs. Brandes, Cowell, and Samuels, Miss Kough and Miss Stanley, were elected to represent the Society at Mr. Ramsey's funeral.

Mr. Cohen gave a report of the last meeting of the Joint Committee of Protest against the Prohibition of the Sales of Literature in the L. C. C. Parks, and stated that the N. S. S. Branches continued to sell literature at their meetings, and would continue to do so, weather permitting.

The death of Sir Hiram S. Maxim was also reported, and on the suggestion of Mr. Cohen the following resolution condoling with Lady Maxim was carried mem. con. :—

That the Executive of the National Secular Society learns with the deepest regret of the death of Sir Hiram S. Maxim, and tenders to Lady Maxim its sincere sympathy with her in her bereavement.

It further desires to place on record its recognition and appreciation of Sir Hiram's services to the cause of Freethought, not the least of which was the example set to other public men by his open avowal and championship of opinions hostile to the established religion of this country.

An application from the Camberwell Branch to revert to its old title, *i.e.*, the South London Branch, in consequence of the increasing area of its work, was received and permission granted.

It was generally agreed that, the time being now unpropitious, the Annual Dinner be again postponed.

Arising from the discussion of finance, the Secretary was asked to call attention to the fact that the subscriptions of all members of the Parent Society become due on January 1, 1917.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary.*

"'Tis the Will o' God."

OH! friends, the hypocrisy and illusion
That hides beneath the shadows of religion;
Look around at the superstition
That lives in the name of a "salving" mission.
Consider that weak-minded saying
Of the folk who exist by praying—
When'er confronted by a great disaster,
They turn their eyes
Toward the skies,
There seeking the help of their Master;
Seeking of he who made the sun,
Of the help that never comes.
And it is always the same,
Whether in sorrow sighing
Or tearfully praying,
To themselves they're lying;
There is no cause, no blame—
"'Tis the will o' God!"

C. B. W.

Funeral of W. J. Ramsey.

THE funeral of Mr. W. J. Ramsey took place at Abney Park Cemetery, on Saturday, December 2, in the presence of a large body of personal friends and sympathisers. Mr. A. B. Moss was amongst those present, as also was Mr. Arthur Kemp, Mr. Ramsey's fellow-prisoner in the famous *Freethinker* prosecution, when he received three months' imprisonment as publisher of the paper. The N. S. S. Executive was represented by Miss Kough, Mr. Cowell, and Miss Stanley. Mr. Ramsey's widow, children, and grandchildren were also present. Mr. George Standring, an old personal friend of the deceased, gave an address at the graveside, in which he briefly sketched W. Ramsey's career from his earliest association with militant Freethought.

His devotion to the Freethought cause had never wavered, and in the prisoner's dock, as in private and public life, he remained faithful to the principles he professed. Unfortunately, his closing years had been spent in the grip of a disease which made him completely bedridden. But even on that bed of sickness his interest in all that pertained to Freethought never slackened. They were saying farewell to a tried soldier in a great cause.

The *Daily Sketch* tells of a clerically dressed individual who perambulates the West End, giving away religious tracts. The other day he handed one to a lady, with the inquiry, "Are you washed?" It is a pity that the lady had not a male attendant with her accustomed to hard hitting.

M. Escoffier, the famous cook, recalls that, in the siege of Paris in the Franco-German War, cats and rats were eaten in fashionable restaurants. Even then the Parisians would have declined to dine with the prophet Ezekiel.

A book has been published with the title, *The Adornment of Spiritual Marriage*. The customary adornment is orange blossom.

"A contemporary whose Curtin lecture of Monday was on German church work had the head-lines beneath:

THE CLERGY.

HATE SERMONS.

It is much more frequently the congregations in this country.'
—*Daily News.*

Obituary.

We regret to record the death of Mr. Charles Harding, of Portsmouth, at the age of seventy. When twenty-four years old he read Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason*, and from that time to his death bore steadfast witness for Freethought. He was one of seven Freethought stalwarts who formed a Portsmouth Branch of the N. S. S., for which he arranged meetings for Charles Bradlaugh in the "stormy" days. The latter personally thanked Mr. Harding for his recommendation that the children of Freethinkers should be withdrawn from religious instructions in schools, thus providing them with security against the Blasphemy Laws, which can only be put in operation against those who have been brought up in the Christian faith. Mr. Harding put this recommendation into practical effect with his own family. Up to the last, Mr. Harding retained full possession of his mental faculties. During his illness he showed keen interest in discussing religious and scientific problems. He viewed death as the end of conscious existence, and accepted it cheerfully. In death as in life, he never wavered in holding fast to his principles. A large number of friends assembled at the graveside, where Mr. Robert Harvey gave a most impressive address, using the Secular Burial Service drawn up by Mr. F. J. Gould. All sympathy is due to the widow and family in their loss. Only those who had the honour of knowing Mr. Harding can fully appreciate it. But he lives in their hearts and minds, an ever active inspiration to honesty and unflinching adherence to the truth.—FRANCES PREWETT.

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.

London.

E.—E. T. Pendrill, 26 Bushfield Street, Bishopsgate. M. Papier, 86 Commercial Street. B. Ruderman, 71 Hanbury Street, Spitalfields. J. Knight & Co., 3 Ripple Road, Barking.

E.C.—W. S. Dexter, 6, Byward Street. Rose & Co., 133 Clerkenwell Road. Mr. Siveridge, 88 Fenchurch Street. J. J. Joques, 191 Old Street. Mr. Henderson, 66 Charing Cross Road.

N.—C. Walker & Son, 84 Grove Road, Holloway. Mr. Keogh, Seven Sisters Road (near Finsbury Park). Mr. West, New Road, Lower Edmonton. T. Perry, 17 Fore Street, Edmonton. H. Hampton, 80 Holloway Road.

N.W.—W. I. Tarbart, 316 Kentish Town Road. W. Lloyd, 5 Falkland Road, Kentish Town.

S.E.—J. H. Vullick, 1 Tyler Street, East Greenwich. Mr. Clayton, High Street, Woodside, South Norwood. W. T. Andrews, 35 Meetinghouse Lane, Peckham.

S.W.—R. Offer, 58 Kenyon Street, Fulham. A. Toleman, 54 Battersea Rise. A. Green, 29 Felsham Road, Putney. F. Locke, 500 Fulham Road. F. Lucas, 683 Fulham Road.

W.—Mr. Fox, 154 King Street, Hammersmith. Mr. Harvey, 1 Becklow Road, Shepherds Bush. Mr. Baker, Northfield Avenue, West Ealing. Thomas Dunbar, 82, Seaford Road, West Ealing.

W.C.—J. Bull, 24 Grays Inn Road.

Country.

Aberdeenshire.—J. Grieg, 16 Marischol Street, Peterhead.

Barrow-in-Furness.—J. Jowett, 56 Forshaw Street. E. L. Jowett, 84 Dalton Road.

Beccles.—C. Chase, Station Road.

Birkenhead.—Mr. Capper, Boundary Road, Port Sunlight.

Birmingham.—J. C. Aston, 39-40 Smallbrook Street. A. G. Beacon & Co., 67 & 68 Worcester Street. F. Holder, 42 Hurst Street. Mr. Benton, High Street, Erdington. Mr. Kimber, Ash Road Post Office, Saltley. W. H. Smith & Son, 34 Union Street.

Bolton.—E. Basnett, Church Street, Westhoughton. W. Atkinson, 364 Blackburn Road.

Brighton.—W. Hillman, 4 Little Western Street.

Bristol.—W. H. Smith & Son, Victoria Street.

Cardiff.—W. H. Smith & Son, Penarth Road.

Carshalton.—Mr. Simmons, 29 North Street.

Gateshead.—Henderson & Birkett, 4 & 5 Hills Street.

Cheltenham.—S. Norris, Ambrose Street.

Cullompton.—A. W. Clitsome, The Square.

Derbyshire.—Mr. Featherstone, Chapel-en-le-Firch.

Dublin.—Mr. Kearney, Upper Stephen Street.

Dundee.—Mr. Cunningham, St. Andrew's Street. "The Hub," High Street. Mr. Lamb, 121 Overgate.

Falkirk.—James Wilson, 76 Graham's Road.

Glasgow.—David Baxter, 32 Brunswick Street.

Gravesend.—Mrs. Troke, 10 Passock Street. Mr. Love, Gassick Street. Mr. Gould, Milton Road. Mr. Troke, Clarence Place.

Hastings.—King Bros., 2 Queen's Road.

Ipswich.—A. E. Hiskey, Old Cattle Market. T. Shelbourne, St. Matthew Street. Mr. Fox, Fore Street. Mr. Fox, St. Helen's Street. Mr. Roberson, Back Hamlet. Mr. Joyce, Fore Street.

Jarrow.—L. Prescod, Railway Street.

Kent.—E. J. Voss, 148 Broadway, Bexley Heath.

Lancashire.—John Turner, Scourbottom, Waterford. W. Restall, Station Bridge, Urmston.

Leeds.—C. H. Pickles, Ltd., 117 Albion Street. J. Bray, 95 Park Lane. J. Sutcliffe, West Street.

Liverpool.—S. Reeves, 316 Derby Road, Bootle. W. H. Smith and Son, 61 Dale Street.

Manchester.—Mrs. Tole, Whitelaw Road, Chorlton-cum-Hardy. John Heywood, Ltd., Deansgate. Abel Heywood & Son, 47-61 Lever Street. W. H. Smith & Son, Blackfriars Street.

Monmouth.—Mr. Davies, Fontnewynidd. Wm. Morris, Windsor Road, Griffithatoun. Wyman & Son, Station Bookstall, Pontypool Road.

Neath.—W. G. Maybury, 57 Windsor Road.

Newcastle-on-Tyne.—W. H. Smith & Son, 2 Forth Place.

Northampton.—Mr. Bates, Bridge Street. A. Bryan, Barracks Road.

Southend-on-Sea.—Harold Elliott, 1 Belle Vue Terrace.

Stockton-on-Tees.—Mr. Elgie, Bowsfield Lane.

Teddington.—H. H. Holwill, 105 High Street.

Torquay.—L. Priston, 103 Union Street. A. Priston, 47 Market Street. A. Peters, Old Mill Road, Chelston. Mr. Ronayne, Walnut Road. H. Peters, 193 Union Street. W. J. Peters, 37 Union Street. Mr. Hunt, Lucius Street.

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.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, off Kentish Town Road, N.W.): 7.30, C. E. Ratcliffe, "Whence? Why? Whither?"

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Avondale Hall, Landor Road, Clapham, S.W.): 7, A. D. Howell Smith, B.A., "The Intolerance of Faith."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park): 3, a Lecture.

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

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

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