

# The FREETHINKER

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## Views and Opinions.

### The Vitality of Lies.

Last week we wrote on the impossibility of perpetually suppressing the truth. It will only serve to keep the balance true if we dwell this week upon the persistency of a legend and the vitality of a lie. In a sense they are two sides of the same thing. All history shows how difficult it is to kill a legend, and daily experience proves that if we once give a lie ten minutes start it will take truth ten years—or more—to overtake it. And if the lie chimes with a current prejudice or prevalent expectation the chase is likely to be a long one. It is thus that every legend brings its cloud of witnesses. In the days of belief in witchcraft one could find plenty of witnesses who had seen old women careering through the air on broomsticks. In the opening months of the War thousands of people saw a Russian army pass through Britain on its way to France. It is hard to kill a lie when it is of the ordinary kind; when it is a religious lie it as nearly achieves immortality as is possible to any human creation.

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### France and the Revival of Religion.

Want of space prevented our noticing last week an article in the *Daily Chronicle*, by Major Redmond, M.P., on "The Great Revival (of Religion) in France." After being a year with the Army in France, Major Redmond is convinced that there has been "at least one beneficial result from the War. It has led to the revival of religion in a most remarkable way." Concerning England, the Major is content to observe that "everyone is agreed on this," and that "it is apparent in a hundred directions." One wonders who "everyone is." Many of the clergy deny it flatly. They lament that the expected revival has not occurred. Church congregations have certainly not increased in numbers. Soldiers home from the Front do not appear more religious than when they went out. We have published testimonies from scores of people, chaplains, soldiers, and writers who have testified that religion is undergoing an eclipse at the Front. Who are the soldiers who are becoming

religious? Where is the revival in civil life? Major Redmond says he has seen it. So did our forefathers see witches travelling through the air. So did our contemporaries see a Russian army travelling through Britain. It is not at all difficult to see things—if one makes up one's mind that they shall be seen.

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### Evidence that is not Proof.

It would be unfair to Major Redmond to say that he does not produce evidence. He does; and it is of the usual religious variety. He finds it in France. Some of the French clergy have found the revival in England. And there is the same suspicious circumstance in either case. The miracle occurs where the writer's audience is not. It is the homage paid by legend to reality. So Major Redmond goes to France to discover something which French writers have failed to observe. He says:—

To those who have been brought to France by the War the manifestations of religion everywhere displayed have come more or less as a surprise, especially to those who had been led to believe from the action of many successive French Governments that the Church was more or less a thing of the past in France. It is hard, of course, to judge of the real depth or intensity of religious feeling, but all one can say is that if this can be done by noticing the attendance at church, then the religion of France is to-day very true and very sincere.

Major Redmond also speaks of the bravery shown by French priests (he says that over 2,000 have been killed), and of the devotion shown by people at church services, etc. It should be noted, however, that the French priests have been killed because the French Government will not permit the priestly garb to serve as a reason for exemption, and because in France all citizens, lay and cleric, have the same duties and responsibilities. The French State is a Secular State, as the French State schools are secular schools.

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### A Biased Witness.

If one wanted proof of Major Redmond's unfitness for judging the effect of the War on French religious, or anti-religious opinion, it is supplied in the passage cited. Everyone who knows France is aware that the majority of French people are still professedly Catholic—particularly in the villages and country districts. Probably about a fifth of the nation are Freethinkers, although in disestablishing the Church in France this minority would have had the support of many others who saw both the injustice of a State religion, and the actual danger to the State the Church had been. Naturally a visitor to France—and one whose service with the British Army would have, of necessity, kept him away from the large cities—would have found many evidences of the existence of religious belief. And with equal certainty he would have seen the religion of the more superstitious peasantry and provincials intensified by the disasters which have overtaken France. The same cause which stimulated the mental activities of the educated and intelligent would, at the same time,



numb the minds of the less educated, the less intelligent, and the naturally superstitious. This is all that Major Redmond's evidence amounts to. If he saw more, it was because he went ready to see more. If he was surprised at seeing this much, it is evidence only of how little he understood either the French character or the position of affairs in France in relation to religion.

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#### Anti-Clericalism and Freethought.

Now, it is very likely that, so far as mere anti-clerical feeling is concerned, some Frenchmen may have had their bitterness toward the clergy toned down by discovering worthy men under the priest's robe. And if that is the case, it is all so much to the good. But to talk of this, or to see in this a great revival of religion, is downright absurdity. And may not this discovery be, so far as Major Redmond is concerned, a mare's nest? If he has been under the delusion that every Freethinker must regard every priest as a scoundrel, he will naturally view the discovery that a Freethinker will treat a priest who proves himself a good man with consideration and respect as epoch-marking. Freethought does not depend for its existence upon there being bad priests, nor can it be killed by every priest becoming a paragon of goodness and courage. A Freethought which depended upon the character of the clergy for its being would not be worth having. Whether English or French, Freethought is quite independent of the character of those who profess a faith in religion. The character of believers, the peculiarity of their mental processes, may be used to point a moral, but it has nothing to do with the development of Freethought. People did not give up the belief in witchcraft because they believed that those who upheld it were cowards, or liars, or rogues; but because their own mental growth had carried them beyond the stage of a belief in broomstick-travelling old women. And that principle holds good of every phase of the relation between Freethought and religion.

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#### French and English.

To imagine that French Freethought, with its army of brilliant intellects, from Voltaire to Anatole France, rested upon whether clergymen were good men or bad ones, is a notion that could only live for five minutes in the brains of a man who lacked all comprehension of the meaning of Freethought, or of the historic and mental processes by which religion is outgrown. And such a notion is supremely ridiculous when we are dealing with the French intellect. For it is one of the most logical and the most fearless in Europe. It is never afraid of its conclusions, never afraid of pushing ideas to their logical issues. It is these features which, in spite of lapses, has kept France Republican since 1789. They enabled it to deal with the Dreyfus case in a way which converted what threatened to be a national disaster into a cause of national strength. It is this directness of thought, this ability to look clearly at the logical issue of a controversy, that makes the French people the most practical in Europe. They are very practical because they do not neglect the things of the mind. They do not neglect the things of the mind because they are practical. This the average Englishman, with his rooted distrust of intellectual processes and his eternal fumbling after a compromise, cannot and will not understand. And the result is, that he prides himself on being less "flighty"—or, to use Major Redmond's phrase, "impressionable"—when in reality he is afflicted with mental timidity, and more practical, all the time that his dislike to logical issues leads for generations to the delay of much-needed reforms.

#### Our Freethinking Ally.

Perhaps a powerful factor in the situation is that while the nation with a Christianity nearest our own is our bitterest enemy in this War, and has distinguished itself by every possible brutality, the nation with which we are in closest alliance has for years been associated with the strongest manifestations of Freethought. France is a secular State. It has no religion in its Constitution; it has no religion in the schools. Its best brains in art, in science, in politics, are definitely freethinking. And what are British Christians to do? Before the War they were pointing out that the new generation of Frenchmen were degenerate because they had been brought up in "godless" schools. French politics was corrupt, because it had no State Church. The French were "decadent"; hence their rejection of religion. The War came, and showed France as healthy, as great, as ever. What were the pietists to do? They dared not say they were wrong; that they were merely lying for the greater glory of God. And yet some explanation must be found. At length it was discovered. There had been a great revival of religion in France. That accounted for everything. And the story does account for a deal. It shows that Christian tactics, whether a nation be at war or at peace, remains the same. It is no wonder that even believers talk of "Christian truth." There is certainly something about "truth" as told in the interest of Christianity which deserves to be distinguished from that which passes under that category.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

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### Faith.

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FAITH is a word to which are attached many different and divergent meanings, though, primarily, in most languages, it signifies honesty, veracity, reliability, trustworthiness. In Biblical Hebrew, for example, the primary sense of the term is retained throughout. Even in the famous passage (Habakkuk ii. 4), "The just shall live by his faith," a more accurate rendering would be, "The righteous shall remain alive by his faithfulness." In short, faith in the sense of trust or belief in God as the sole condition of salvation, does not occur in the Old Testament at all. On entering the New Testament, however, we find that the signification of faith has undergone a decided change. The Gospel Jesus began his public ministry with this declaration: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the Gospel" (Mark i. 15). Here the literal rendering would be, "Have faith in the Gospel." In the Epistles, also, faith is represented as an act of the mind, with God or Christ as its object. In several passages (Gal. iii. 26; 1 Tim. iii. 13) the expression is "Faith in Christ Jesus." In the Pauline Epistles faith is spoken of as the only condition of salvation. In the Pastoral Epistles we get nearer still to the conception of faith for which the orthodox Church has always contended. It denotes the assent and consent of the mind to the truth of the Christian Gospel, trust in, and reliance upon, the finished work of the Redeemer; or a whole-hearted acceptance of, and confidence in, the Christian creed. This is also the meaning of the term in the Epistle of Jude or Judas. The readers are solemnly enjoined "to contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered unto the saints," and to build themselves up on their most holy faith. Beyond a doubt, by faith here is to be understood the sum total of what early Christians verily believed. It was their bounden duty to defend what had been delivered to them once for all, to defend it in argument as well as in conduct, and to recommend it to their



fellow-beings as worthy of all acceptance. Jude has in mind those who oppose the Gospel as unworthy of credence, "denying our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ." This is admitted by so advanced a thinker as Dr. Fort Newton, minister-elect of the City Temple, in a notable sermon which appeared in the *Christian Commonwealth* for February 28. Dr. Newton says:—

Let us never forget that Christianity is first, last, and always a faith. It may be a philosophy, a philanthropy, a prophecy, but it rests on a great adventure of soul, a grand affirmation. So does science, as Huxley has told us. So does philosophy, as Spencer admits.

We have no quarrel with that definition of Christianity, faith in which is, indeed, a great adventure of the mind. Christianity stands before us as an object of belief or disbelief, and both belief and disbelief are equally intellectual attitudes. But Dr. Newton cannot refrain from calumniating unbelievers falsely on moral grounds. He observes:—

Here, as always when the word faith is used in the Bible, the emphasis is moral, and in no sense ecclesiastical or dogmatic. Manifestly it is not a dogma but a devotion, the covenant with purity, the citadel of all the sanctities of the moral and spiritual life. The enemies named are not heretics who may use other words than our own, but "filthy dreamers," who defile all things holy, turning even the grace of God into lasciviousness; men professing the faith with unctuous words, but living like brute beasts. Always the real Atheists are not those who deny our idea of God as unworthy or unequal to the facts, but those practical Atheists who pollute the pieties of life to the service of their own greed or lust.

As a matter of fact, the opponents of the faith in Jude's day were heretics. In the estimation of believers the sin of sins has ever been unbelief or denial. Whether within or without the Church, unbelievers in the Lord Jesus must be denounced in the most scathing terms obtainable. Of course, it is taken for granted that they are dishonest and wicked, that the love of truth is not in them, that they have sold themselves to the Devil, that there is no depth of iniquity into which they cannot descend, and that nothing awaits them but everlasting confusion and shame; but the fountain out of which flows the river of their filth and foul iniquity is their denial of "our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ." Tennyson speaks of "honest doubt," in which "there lives more faith, believe me, than in half the creeds," but in Jude's opinion, doubters blossomed into deniers, who are "hidden rocks in your love-feasts when they feast with you, shepherds that without fear feed themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; wild waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the blackness of darkness is reserved for ever." Exceedingly eloquent is that delineation of the character and deeds of deniers of the Saviour God; but it is a purely fanciful picture of people whom the writer hated and despised simply because they did not share his faith.

Dr. Newton declares that not only is Christianity a faith, but also that it is a faith for which we must fight. The natural inference is that the faith is in danger; but why should it be in danger if it is in harmony with reason? The reverend gentleman avers that it is not opposed to reason, but is reason's basis and inspiration. And yet he admits that its final appeal is not to mortal reason, but to "a Reason greater and wiser than our own." In other words, the Christian religion is neither the basis nor the inspiration of reason, but its systematic ignorer. The claim made on its behalf is that it infinitely transcends the reason, and that, therefore, we have no right to sit in judgment upon it. Such a claim

is the most ridiculous that can be advanced, because our reason is the only standard of judgment known to us, that "greater and wiser Reason than our own" being purely a theological invention. We maintain, then, that the great enemy of the faith is the human reason, of which Atheism is merely the offspring. Dr. Newton's conception of Atheism is utterly irrational, being false. Listen:—

An Atheist, if such there be, is an orphan, a waif, wandering in the midnight streets of time, homeless, and alone. Atheism, indeed, is seldom more than a revulsion from superstition, a protest against an unworthy idea of God, the dark side of a great positive mind in the negative side of faith.

Concerning that statement the only inference we can draw is that its source was abysmal ignorance. Moderate acquaintance with Freethought literature would have rendered such an assertion absolutely impossible. It is true that Atheism is a revulsion from superstition, but it is also true that there are hundreds of thousands of people in whose sight Dr. Newton's New Theology is as fully superstitious as the Old Theology. What Atheists reject is, not this or that dogma, not this or that idea of God, whether noble or ignoble, but supernaturalism, as such, in whatever guise presented. It evidently pleases the reverend gentleman to call them orphans or waifs, "wandering in the midnight streets of time, homeless and alone"; but he forgets that it is Christians who are "strangers and pilgrims on the earth," while Atheists claim Earth as their mother, in whose presence they feel quite at home, studying her laws, learning her ways, and looking upon themselves as brothers and sisters, whose one duty it is to love and serve one another. They live in and for time, while Christians profess to be preparing to live in an unknown eternity, when time is no more. Yes, it is Christians who roam, far from home, along the midnight streets of time.

Dr. Newton draws an imaginary line of demarcation between Atheism and Materialism, defining the latter as "the dread denial which would erase, as with a sponge, all the idealisms, optimisms, and aspirations of humanity," "this horror of great darkness," according to which "all mind, all will, all emotion, all character, all love, is incidental, transitory, vain." Here, again, the preacher makes a pitiable exhibition of his unfathomable ignorance of his subject. The Materialism he describes exists alone in his own brain, and against those who are supposed to affect it he is guilty of bearing glaringly false witness. All things earthly are transitory in their relation to individuals, and yet seemingly endless as related to the race. Dr. Newton conveniently ignores this distinction. Atheists have their idealisms, aspirations, and some of them even optimisms, as well as Christians, with this difference, that Atheist idealisms and aspirations are on behalf of the race as it exists on this earth, and not for individuals as they may exist in some other sphere. We, too, walk by faith, but it is faith in the uniformities of Nature, and in the glorious possibilities already latent in humanity; and, as we walk, our faith is being gradually transformed into knowledge. We admit, with pride, that Atheism does obscure, and would annihilate, the Cross in which Christendom has hitherto professionally gloried, but it tends to strengthen and deepen the love of man for man, and to kindle in every breast a passion for making some contribution, however slight, to the common weal.

We do not believe that Dr. Newton intentionally misrepresents his opponents, but we do hold that he has no right to condemn them on entirely erroneous information; and his guilt is not cancelled, nor in any degree even lessened, by his ignorance.

J. T. LLOYD.



## Most Unnatural History.

In religion,

What damned error, but some sober brow

Will bless it and approve it with a text.—*Shakespeare.*

Learning is good, but common sense is better.—*G. W. Footc.*

THOMAS CARLYLE, probably prompted by an unusually severe attack of dyspepsia, once drew upon his recollection of Shakespeare, and described man as a "two-forked radish." The term was more critical than accurate, and it would not have won the approval of scholarly Charles Darwin, or even of doubting Thomas Huxley. Yet Carlyle erred in most distinguished company, for if the Deity, who, it is alleged, inspired or wrote the Bible, could not recollect accurately such an elementary fact as that the whale is not a fish, although he is supposed to have made millions of them, there is every excuse for the sage of Chelsea.

Curiously, the writers of the Bible were most inaccurate, and were as careless of facts as politicians and Christian Evidence lecturers. They frankly contradicted themselves, and, when bankrupt of ideas, simply copied a passage written elsewhere in the same book and filled the vacancy. They frequently said the thing which was not, but their crowning glory was their knowledge of natural history, which was peculiar and extensive. Their mathematics would disgrace fourth-form schoolboys, their history was almost entirely imaginary, but their excursions into zoology were nearly too funny for words.

Wordsworth has told us that "Nature never did betray the heart that loved her." And this reminds us that there is such an astonishing discrepancy between the zoological conclusions of earnest students of nature and the so-called science of the Oriental writers of the Bible. The consideration of this difference affords us material for a few genial comments, entirely free from that acrimony so often imported unnecessarily into the writings of theologians.

In natural history proper not the veriest tyro, the most myopic bungler, would confound the hare with the ruminants. Yet dear religious folk would have us believe that the creator of Linnæus blundered about the hare chewing the cud, and fondly imagine that the maker of Cuvier wrote delirious jargon about clean beasts and dirty beasts. As a fact, it was actually reserved for mere worms of the dust like Buffon, Lamarck, and Darwin, to clear out the Augean stable of the divine ignorance, and to create the science anew.

Æsop and Bidpai, Phædrus and La Fontaine have assured us that everything talks from a potato-bug to a hairdresser. Even the taciturn tape-worm unfolds itself when in liquor. From their animated descriptions there appears to be an international esperanto. Surely the writers of the Bible could have effected the capture of the various animals as simply as sparrows are captured by salting their tales. A few minutes private conversation would then have verified the accuracy, or otherwise, of their extremely entertaining unnatural history, and thus saved commentators much ink and more headaches.

"Wild beasts used once to roam at will through the whole of England, but now very wild beasts are only found in theological gardens," wrote a juvenile writer. And "very wild beasts" are to be found in the sacred volume. Where else can you find a talking snake, a lodging-house whale, or a pigeon co-respondent? Where else are the fiery serpents, the dragons, the cockatrice, and the worm that never dies? Where, other than in the sacred zoological collection, are the bedevilled pigs, the four-legged fowls, the unicorn, the cherubim, the ventriloquial donkey of Balaam, and the menagerie of the Apocalypse? Even the "human

beings" in the Bible act most strangely. Adam and Eve start life at full age. The lives of the patriarchs ran into centuries, and some fortunate persons had two funerals apiece. Some were so magnificently developed that ordinary folk looked like grasshoppers beside them. Among such a collection of "freaks" it is remarkable that cats are nowhere mentioned. Maybe the third person of the Trinity, that sacred dove, had an objection to that animal. The Bible menagerie likewise boasts of horses of fire which carried Elijah to heaven. There is also Aaron's rod that turns into a serpent and swallows other snakes. The leviathan, mentioned in "Job," is a wonderful creature, with its "comely proportions," its firework "neesings," and organs of vision "like the eyelids of the morning." And what is to be said of the kind-hearted raven who brought refreshments to the prophet Elijah? The Biblical menagerie is unique, there is nothing like it on earth.

These nonsensical ideas emanate from the Bible, and of all the strange, frantic, and incomprehensible books which have issued from the brains of theologians, this volume is one of the most remarkable. And the work which Freethinkers have set themselves is that of freeing their fellows from the absurdities of pre-scientific times, which are perpetuated by this fetish book. To class the Bible as a book of ordered knowledge is the last word in absurdity. It is a Salmagundi of riotous, exuberant, Oriental imagination. If people would only read the volume instead of worshipping it, such absurd veneration would be impossible. The first stage in the religious road to ruin is to regard such a comedy of errors as the truth and nothing but the truth. If the Bible had not been associated with a heavily endowed system of superstition, it would, centuries ago, have been consumed to nothingness in the echoless temple of universal science.

MIMNERMUS.

## Science and Spiritualism.

Whoever seriously thinks that superhuman beings have ever given our race information as to the aim of its existence and that of the world, is still in his childhood. There is no other revelation than the thoughts of the wise.—*Schopenhauer, "Religion and Other Essays,"* p. 117.

When science appeals to uniform experience, the spiritualist will retort, "How do you know that a uniform experience will continue uniform? You tell me that the sun has risen for six thousand years: that is no proof that it will rise to-morrow; within the next twelve hours it may be puffed out by the Almighty." Taking this ground, a man may maintain the story of "Jack and the Beanstalk" in the face of all the science in the world. You urge, in vain, that science has given us all the knowledge of the universe which we now possess, while spiritualism has added nothing to that knowledge. The drugged soul is beyond the reach of reason. It is in vain that impostors are exposed, and the special demon cast out. He has but slightly to change his shape, return to his house, and find it "empty, swept, and garnished."—*Professor Tyndall, "Fragments of Science" (1876),* pp. 321-2.

Ye too, believers of incredible creeds,  
Whose faith enshrines the monsters which it breeds;  
Who, bolder even than Nemrod, think to rise;  
By nonsense heap't on nonsense to the skies;  
Ye shall have miracles, aye, sound ones too,  
Seen, heard, attested, everything—but true.

—*Moore, "The Veiled Prophet" ("Lalla Rookh").*

I do not believe even eye-witnesses when they tell me things opposed to common sense.—*Voltaire.*

THE War, with its relapse into primitive savagery and barbarism, has naturally led to an increase of the superstitions with which savagery and barbarism are identified. Finding no help in the cold, unregarding heavens, many have turned for consolation to the spiritualists, the clairvoyants, the crystal-gazers, and their tribe, who have been reaping a golden harvest.



So great is the scandal that the police have been obliged to interfere, instituting several prosecutions and obtaining several convictions of these charlatans batten on the nation's misfortunes.

It is the old pathetic longing for communion with the dead which is responsible for this revival. As we have said before, it is the longing for the continuance of this earthly existence in another world, or another sphere, that provides the driving-power of religion. If men were certain that death ended existence for them, they would not care a toss whether there was a God or not. They do not care a lot about him now. In that case he might just as well not exist at all.

It is among the parents and lovers of the multitude of young lives sacrificed in the European battlefields, the wives mourning their dead and grasping at the straw of Spiritualism in the vain hope of communing once again with the beloved, that these charlatans have plied their lucrative trade.

This revival of superstition is not so apparent among the uneducated lower classes—whose beliefs vary but little from generation to generation—as among the upper and wealthy classes; and they are kept in countenance in their superstition by a few scientists like Sir William Crookes and Sir Oliver Lodge. The daily papers, as usual in these matters, adopt the "sitting on the fence" attitude, with a decided leaning among the majority towards the supernatural. It is therefore desirable to consider the subject, and see if we can arrive at the facts of the matter.

But before dealing with telepathy and communion with the spirits of the dead, a consideration of the "physical phenomena" of Spiritualism will throw some light upon the subject, or at least will reveal the state of mind which leads to the belief in the supernormal; and we must remember that the "physical phenomena" of Spiritualism—which cannot be produced now for love or money—created a greater sensation between 1870 and 1880 than the "psychical phenomena" is doing to-day. Zollner, the famous Professor of Astronomy, with Professors Fechner, Scribner, and Weber, were converted by the physical manifestations of Slade, the medium.

Professors Richet and Lombroso, Dr. Ochorowicz, Sir Oliver Lodge, and Mr. F. W. H. Myers declared for the genuineness of the physical phenomena produced by the medium, Eusapia Paladino. Sir William Crookes fell to the wiles of Florrie Cook, who actually materialized a female spirit who allowed Sir William to walk about the room with her arm-in-arm, and actually allowed the gallant scientist, after first obtaining permission, to embrace her. Wallace, the great naturalist, also gave his adhesion to the same superstition. It is an imposing array of names, and Spiritualists make the most of them, just as Christians exploit the names of Faraday and Newton in the interests of their creed. No one will deny that these were really great men—that is, in the department of science to which they had dedicated their lives. It must also be conceded that they were also upright and honourable men; but, as has been shown,<sup>1</sup> a man may reach the highest point as a scientific investigator and yet go deplorably astray in matters outside his special studies. As Professor Jastrow has well observed:—

There is a very broadspread notion that anybody can go to a spiritualistic seance and give a reliable opinion as to whether what he or she may chance to see is explicable as conjuring or not. Especially where the right to one's opinion is regarded as a corollary to the right of liberty, does this notion prevail. It is probably not an exaggeration to maintain that most such claimants

are about as competent to form a trustworthy opinion on such a subject as they are to pronounce upon the genuineness of a Syriac manuscript. The matter is in some aspects as much a technical acquisition as is the diagnosticating of a disease. It is not at all to the discredit of anyone's powers of observation or intellectual acumen to be deceived by the performances of a conjuror; and the same holds true of the professional part of mediumistic phenomena. Until this homely but salutary truth is impressed with all its importance upon all intending investigators, there is little hope of bringing about a proper attitude towards these and kindred phenomena.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Ivor Tuckett, commenting on Sir William Crooke's adventure with the materialized spirit, remarks: "Could one want a better example of an unscientific attitude in a scientific investigator? The fact of the matter is that scientific men, who are accustomed to accurate laboratory conditions and instruments, which do not lie or give rise to error—at any rate consciously—are no match for the subtle degrees of deception practised by Home, Moses, and Eusapia. Because the latter appear in their daily intercourse to be reliable, honest persons, the former cannot admit of their being on other occasions the authors of fraud. The soul of truthfulness themselves, they are quite unaware how impossible it is to postulate that anything done by that complex living mechanism, man, is absurd or inconceivable. On the other hand, they are somewhat to blame when they publish observations, bearing the imprimatur of their great names, and so likely to bias the public, which do not conform to their own standards of scientific proof."<sup>2</sup> Mr. Frank Podmore also observes: "The untrained eye is no match for the trained hand of the conjuror. The kind of observation demanded of the investigators at a spiritualistic seance—an observation which is alive to the various artifices employed to distract it, and which, if not actually unremitting, is at least aware of its own lapses—is a quality not called for and not exercised in the investigations of the physical laboratory, and not to be acquired, even to a moderate extent, except by education of a very special kind."<sup>3</sup>

Helmholtz, one of the very greatest scientific minds of the nineteenth century, recognized this clearly when he was once on a visit to England. The Psychical Society sought to interest him in the case of two little girls, the daughters of a clergyman, one of whom held up any playing card behind a closed door, and her sister on the other side described it. When told of this performance by a college professor who had experimented with the children, Helmholtz could hardly take him seriously. The professor, somewhat nettled, named some of his eminent colleagues in the investigation, and said they should be credited with enough common sense to test a thing like that; but finding Helmholtz still incredulous, he asked, "Would you believe it if you saw it yourself?" "Certainly not," answered Helmholtz; "in my investigations, if anything peculiar appears, I do not accept it on the evidence of my eyes. Before any new thing can be even provisionally accepted, I must bring it to the test of many instruments, and if it survives all my tests, then I send it over here to Tyndall, and to investigators in other countries. No, I would not believe any abnormal phenomena on the mere testimony of my eyes."<sup>4</sup> M. D. Conway, who narrates this, adds: "The scepticism of Helmholtz was justified in the case of the clergyman's daughters, who were

<sup>1</sup> Professor J. Jastrow, *Fact and Fable in Psychology* (1901), pp. 147-8.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Ivor Tuckett, *The Evidence for the Supernatural* (1911), pp. 62-3.

<sup>3</sup> F. Podmore, *Modern Spiritualism*, vol. ii., p. 221.

<sup>4</sup> M. D. Conway, *Autobiography*, vol. ii., p. 310.

<sup>1</sup> *The Religion of Famous Men.*



detected in their clever trick." And it should be remembered that Helmholtz knew more about the mechanism and limitations of the eyes than any living man of his time, for it was he who invented the ophthalmoscope, by means of which the living retina was first enabled to be seen.

What is required to test a Spiritualist seance is not a scientist fresh from the laboratory, but an expert illusionist and conjuror, well versed in tricks of sleight-of-hand, like Mr. J. N. Maskelyne, who has assisted at the exposure of many mediums, and who emphatically declares in his book, *The Supernatural*, "there does not exist, and there never has existed, a professed medium of any note who has not been convicted of trickery and fraud" (p. 183).

It should be borne in mind that a great number of equally great men have given their verdict emphatically against Spiritualism. Among them we find Darwin, Faraday, Sir David Brewster, Professors Huxley, Tyndall, and Clifford, Herbert Spencer, Helmholtz, Sir Ray Lankester, Sir Bryan Donkin, and Lord Kelvin. Few people, we imagine—outside his circle of personal friends—would consider Sir Oliver Lodge, as a physicist, the equal of Lord Kelvin, nor Wallace of Darwin; for, although Wallace was the co-discoverer with Darwin of Natural Selection, yet he honourably admitted that he could not have written Darwin's great work, the *Origin of Species*. Few competent judges would consider Sir William Crookes the scientific equal of Helmholtz, to say nothing of Faraday and Tyndall.

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

### Archer on Spooks.

A VAST number of the reflecting public betray no little astonishment that some people can discuss with straight faces the existence of spooks.

This astonishment is mainly due to the fact that the so-called messages vouchsafed to us by the spirits are uniformly of a trumpery or fantastic character. To many people the intrinsic puerilities of the "communications" are evidence enough in themselves of the utter vacuity of these mediumistic pretensions. So, by way of reply to this sceptical attitude, Mr. William Archer, a few days ago in the columns of a contemporary, took up the gauntlet on behalf of the spooks. The discussion arose out of his review of Sir Oliver Lodge's last sensational ghost-book—*Raymond*.

He tacitly admits the charge of their "messages" being trumpery, but pleads that the dear spooks are not to blame. The extenuating plea is, that in the case of good spooks—that is, spooks which have taken no part in any secret crime or possess no knowledge of value to the police or at the law-courts—there would be nothing of interest to communicate.

Lest it should be imagined that I strain his words, let me quote him:—

As for the triviality of the communications concerning sub-lunar matters, why should that surprise us? If I were to die to-morrow, I should have nothing of slightest interest to communicate to my executors or to the police. I have concealed no treasure; I have had no part, either as principal or accessory, in any undiscovered crime.

Hence, messages from good spooks must needs, on this theory, be "trivial"; and, inferentially, we have no grounds for expecting them to be otherwise. He makes no allusion to *wicked* spirits—a strange omission, by-the-by; for, on his theory, they would have something interesting to tell us. Are wicked spooks too few to be of any account? or is it that mediums never bemean themselves by communicating with them?

But surely the spooks, if they know anything at all, would know something of the nature of their own disembodied existence that would be of entrancing interest to multitudes of people, if not to "executors" and "the police"; for instance, to know *how* they recognize and communicate with each other in a "world" where there are no sense-organs and how they know their whereabouts in an existence that is assumed to be spaceless. These are problems that puzzle thousands who would consider any information on the matter as a revelation of first importance. Nevertheless, there is among the spooks, both good and bad, a well-kept conspiracy not to divulge a single secret of that dimensionless world. And Mr. Archer apparently approves of their plot.

His comment upon their equally inane predictions is as follows: "Why should we suppose that 'spirits' have any special power of reading the Book of Destiny?"

That is Mr. Archer's way of admitting that their prophetic pretensions are a piece of charlatanic humbug and imposture; and, at the same time, his way of excusing it.

If Mr. Archer desires to rid his race of the spook-monster, as on the whole he appears to do, I have no hesitation in predicting that he will never succeed by playing the role of spook apologist. A far more successful, as well as a more heroic, method would be to point out how the famous author of the book he was reviewing was morally more culpable than either Ranson, the Divine Healer, or Mrs. Brockway.

Sir Oliver not only induces the public to part with their half-guineas for a volume of spook "rubbish," as the *Daily Mail* describes it: but, by the high and prominent patronage he gives the imposture, he is mainly responsible for the crowds of credulous and often woe-stricken people that frequent the haunts of fortune-tellers and mediums. "Since Sir Oliver Lodge believes in them, there must be some truth in it"—and away they go! more induced by his loudly advertised example than by any attractive inducements offered by the "professionals."

KERIDON.

### Acid Drops.

It seems that women will soon be allowed to practice as solicitors. A Bill to permit this was introduced into the House of Lords (which has really proved itself much more favourable to progressive ideas the past two years than has the House of Commons) by Lord Buckmaster and ordered to be read a second time. Naturally, Lord Halsbury opposed the measure, so did the Lord Chancellor, who voiced the somewhat banalistic argument that "Woman's proper work was to be wife and mother." By "proper," we presume, he meant "best," and in that we agree with him. For a woman who is a good wife and a good mother is doing the best work she can do. But there is no need to artificially bar any woman—even when married—from a vocation which she feels called upon to follow, and still less need to bar those who, from inclination or circumstance, never do become wife and mother. If a woman cannot succeed as a solicitor, there is no need to prevent her by law from qualifying. The question will settle itself. And if she can succeed, it is sheer sex prejudice to say she shall not.

The bottom truth is, that this opposition to women is due partly to religious prejudice, partly to sex prejudice, and partly to trades' union interests. And lawyers of all grades belong to one of the closest trade unions in the country. The legal trade must be kept select that fees may be kept high. That is really the kernel of the matter. There is nothing whatever in a solicitor's business that an educated woman may not master. And if it comes to making out a bill of costs, we have every confidence that she will make that as lengthy as any male could desire. The chief difficulty before ladies practising as solicitors would be to induce men to



come to them for advice. For nineteen men out of twenty would have a very strong prejudice against doing so. Of course, it is sheer prejudice, but it exists, and has to be reckoned with.

W. Mackenzie, one of the Salvation Army chaplains with the Australian forces is a favoured individual. In the *Weekly Dispatch* for Feb. 25, he tells how on many occasions—six within one week—he has been saved from death by shell-fire through a voice telling him to “run at once.” It is a pity that common soldiers were not equally favoured, but perhaps there is something in the Army Regulations which prohibit a man running at the command of a ghostly voice. We are inclined to believe that Chaplain Mackenzie was conscious of a voice telling him to run, and that he obeyed the order. But the War has evidently developed his imaginative powers as well as his abilities as an athlete.

“At a supreme crisis such as this in our nation's life, what right have we to talk about comforts, luxuries, and indulgencies,” says the Bishop of Kensington. Yet 39 ecclesiastics share annually £180,700 between them, sufficient to keep 1,800 ordinary families in comparative comfort.

A mission-worker at Southend stated that at a kit inspection one of the soldiers was found to have a Bible among his belongings. There was some chaff at this, but the tables were turned when the captain ordered the company to parade past the kit in question and take it as a pattern. It sounds as true as the Gospels.

What a pity the high qualities evoked by the War are not equally manifest in youngsters. The *Edinburgh Evening News* joins the ranks of those who are lamenting the increase of juvenile wrong-doing, says (italics ours):—

The War, by reason of the calling up of fathers, the depletion of police forces, dislocation of school hours, spread of unrest, and darkened streets, has set in motion a wave of juvenile depravity. Hooliganism, too, is rampant among youths between 15 and 18, as almost anyone who is about in the older parts of the city at nights is well aware. It surely seems as if a conference of all concerned in the problem is urgently necessary. *What in particular is the Church doing to grapple with juvenile sinners?* Surely this is a moral question, if ever there was one—Who is the “children's minister” in our midst?

The Church is, as usual, studying its own interests. We suggest to the *Evening News* that the less the Church interferes in the matter the better.

Here is another telling paragraph from the same issue of the *Edinburgh Evening News*:—

*Parish ministers in the country districts must view the enhanced cereal prices with infinite gratification. The higher the prices jump the more substantial does the parish stipend become.....As a result of this remarkable rise stipends have been more than doubled since pre-war years. The pity of it, too, is that the activities of the clergy in the main have proceeded in an inverse ratio. It is no uncommon thing to find a man drawing £600 or even £700 a year preaching to a mere handful of people, and that in a populous village. It seems unfortunate that the Excess War Profits Tax does not apply to ministers; but even as regards local rates parish ministers are tenderly treated. It is not generally known that they are exempted by an old statute from payment of poor rates. That a minister should show the opulence of a munition worker is one of war time's idiosyncrasies. The man of the cloth ought certainly to make his contribution towards the needs of the State—or give value to his parishioners for the money received.*

Our “spiritual guides” have a knack of looking after their material interests at all times.

The way the higher clergy risk their precious skins for their country is passing wonderful. The Dean of Bristol announces that he is leaving Bristol for the duration of the War to take up the chaplaincy of Army cadets at Cambridge.

Mrs. Maria Sawkins, of Deal, at the age of 101, is cutting some new teeth. This will not lower the record of Methuselah.

The opening of the new School of Oriental Studies at Finsbury takes from England a grave reproach. Hitherto, in the capital of the Empire, which counts 350 millions of Oriental citizens, there has been no such institution for the prosecution of such study. Paris had a school of Oriental languages over a century ago. This has a real bearing on the fact that English people reverence an Oriental fetish-book, whilst Frenchmen are so largely Freethinkers.

Principal D. L. Ritchie is quite right when he says that “the place where hope is ever born anew for the Churches is childhood.” If a child is let religiously alone till he is well on in his teens, the probability is that he will go through life without religion. The Church must catch the children before they acquire the art of thinking, or she will never get them at all. No child has ever taken to religion as a fish takes to the water. Religion is contrary to nature, and nature must be broken to it by a long and severe course of discipline during childhood. This is why such vital importance attaches to Sunday-schools, and to religious instruction in day-schools.

The study of religious revivals is both entertaining and instructive; entertaining, because they are usually conceived and conducted on thoroughly scientific lines; instructive, because it elicits the fact that they appeal to and succeed in converting, not Infidels and Atheists, but only backslidden believers, the majority of whom are nominally Church members. Unbelievers may attend such emotional gatherings out of curiosity; but they are in such a state of mental health that the religious virus has no chance of inoculating them. They are supplied with a sufficient number of the right kind of phagocytis to consume all hurtful microbes the moment they enter into them. Even religious germs have their use in that, every now and then they furnish a thoroughly good meal for the hungry microphags!

The Government has taken control of timber. This should affect the heads of the Church.

The clerical misstatement concerning the Atheism of the Germans is being disproved by facts constantly. One of the latest brought to light is a leaflet issued by the Salvation Army, dated February, 1917, in which it is clearly stated that, prior to the War, there were 156 corps of the Booth organization in Germany. This will not stop the dear clergy from telling lies of the countrymen of Martin Luther, but some of the people in the pews may be able to judge of the accuracy of their statements.

The United Free Church of Scotland Fire Insurance Trust shows a profit for 1916 of over a million and a quarter sterling. Of course, we quite understand that all the Churches are fundamentally fire insurance societies; but it is not many of them who frankly declare their purpose and avow a profit. And how can they be quite sure that their clients are protected against fire, anyway?

The Bishop of Oxford says, “Democracy is the enemy that the Church has to contend with.” The other bishops are not so frank, but their votes in the House of Lords show conclusively that they have always regarded the working classes as opponents.

The Mrs. Partingtons of the Churches will soon realize that they cannot for ever sweep back the tide of knowledge with their brooms. In the new volume on *Genesis* in the *Cambridge Bible for Schools* it is stated that “The narratives of the Origin of the Universe and the beginnings of the human race from a modern point of view are unscientific.” The same thing was said by Freethinkers a century ago, but it is very welcome in a school-book.

Mr. Lloyd George has addressed an appeal to Free Church pastors and teachers to assist in National Service. The men of God evaded the Military Service Act, and it remains to be seen if they will do anything in the nature of work during the final period of the War.



At a recent sale in London, a fourteenth century medical manuscript contained a prescription for a plaster of sandiago, flex, and the white of eggs to cure a wound in four days. It added that a long Latin prayer and passages from the Bible should be read over the patient. Even this is an advance on the New Testament idea of handkerchiefs healing the sick.

The Rev. J. T. Stafford, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, has expressed surprise that colliers earned £12 weekly. The princely salaries of bishops has evoked no astonishment.

Is the Christian religion ending in smoke? At a Church meeting at Leigh-on-Sea the question as to whether incense should be used at the communion services was put to the vote, and carried by a large majority. These devoted Churchmen seemed to be unaware that 30,000,000 of Christians were in arms, and that their own country was in dire distress.

What a good thing it is that the Allies did not defeat Germany in the autumn of 1914 and the spring of 1915. It was quite "providential." That, at least, is the opinion of Archdeacon Wakeford, of Lincoln, who, as reported in last Monday's *Telegraph*, said that "if the war had ended in the first six months of the war with sweeping victories on land and sea for ourselves, by this time we should have become the rottenest nation the world had ever known." So it was "providentially" kept going for our benefit. That is the Archdeacon's philosophy of the situation. We are a great people. We have said it in hundreds of newspapers over and over again since the War started. We *must* be a great people, for God does not hesitate to keep a war in being that means the deaths of many thousands of people of various nationalities in order to prevent our becoming "the rottenest nation the world had ever known." Good God!

The Rev. Professor J. M. Thomson, of Oxford, is exceedingly broad-minded—for a divine. Reviewing a book entitled *The Future of Christianity*, by Mr. Crompton, he says: "Mr. Crompton takes the Christ-myth theory a little too seriously; but it is a fault on the right side." Evidently, then, Professor Thomson does not believe in the historicity of the Gospel Jesus, which is rather an awkward position for a clergyman to hold, but one from which there is no honest escape for the unprejudiced critic.

Of course, if the Gospel Jesus is not an historical person, all the doctrines of Christianity, such as the incarnation, the atonement, the resurrection, and the ascension, fall to the ground; and there is nothing left but the Christ-myth, which cannot be taken too seriously, not even seriously enough, by those who still pose as his Divinely ordained ambassadors.

The Leicester Watch Committee seriously offended the local Free Church Committee. It gave permission for some cinema exhibitions on Sunday in connection with the Kitchener Memorial, and the Free Church Council entered its solemn protest against desecration of the "Sawbath" "for the second time." We wonder what will happen if the Watch Committee offends a third time in this manner?

A correspondence in the local paper followed this protest—in which the Watch Committee's action was defended by Mr. A. B. Talbot and Mrs. N. Tole, and attacked by Mr. H. B. Bruce. Mr. Bruce feels quite capable of warning his fellow-townsmen of what the introduction of the continental Sunday means, because he has been on the Continent, and so proceeds to tell the people of the horrible things he has witnessed. We do not question Mr. Bruce's veracity. Most people can find on the Continent—or at home—as much vice as they care to look for; and the amount of evil that some English visitors discover in a place like Paris is apt to surprise the ordinary Parisian. Perhaps the best way for English visitors to avoid being affronted by these scenes of continental vice would be to always take their womenfolk with them.

About a fortnight ago there was a bad accident at Three Counties Railway Station, Bedfordshire. A lady attempted to leave a train while in motion, slipped, rolled between the

train and the platform, and was so badly injured that she died soon afterwards. At the Parish Church, the vicar, the Rev. G. J. Mayhew, felt called upon to say something about this "dreadful tragedy," and this is the way he did it:—

I do not think that in such calamities we can do more than look up and in reverence say "Thy Will be done.".....In the first short report of the calamity it appears that some of the poor girl's last words were, "I want to go home to my mother." How wonderful here the instinct, immediate and emphatic, which is, we see, not broken by death. The desire in her great distress to be again with one who had comforted her childhood of years gone by—"Home to my mother." Those words, full of assurance, which now have been graciously fulfilled.

So it was quite "providential." The girl wanted to go home to her mother—who was evidently dead—and God "graciously fulfilled" her desire. Why, then, call it "a dreadful calamity"? When people can sit and listen to such rubbish as that voiced by the vicar, we have less cause for wonder that they should act foolishly in other directions.

The "Holy Land" seems to be in a bad way, judging by the statements in the press concerning a meeting at the Mansion House, in which the Bishop of London's name figured prominently. The paragraph states that "thousands are starving in the Holy Land at this moment. In one district alone the deaths from starvation number 80,000. Children are being sold in the streets for a shilling or two." It is all very terrible, but why does not the dear Bishop get on the telephone to his Master, who is said to have fed thousands of people with a few loaves and fishes?

From the *Cambridge Magazine* we learn that the Cardiff City Council has asked every teacher in its employ, male and female, to sign a schedule headed "Have You Conscientious Objection to Military Service?" This is in furtherance of a resolution passed by the Council that "No person who is a Conscientious Objector to Military Service" shall continue in the employ of the Council. The striking thing about this inquisition is that it is addressed to teachers—and to women as well as men. And, unless there is a desire on the part of Cardiff, that teachers shall actually militarize the minds of the children, what justification is there for such an enquiry? Surely the Cardiff City Fathers do not think the War will continue long enough for the children under its care to take a part therein, and that they must therefore begin to train them at once. And unless they do desire this, what reason is there for discharging a probably competent teacher because he or she has a strong conviction against militarism in any form? One would have thought it sufficient if the teacher had gone about his duties in a satisfactory manner without any reference whatever to militarism. And if we are really in earnest about our professed hatred of militarism, one would have thought that the best way to smash it would be to avoid copying Germany in using schools—in Liebnicht's phrase—as training stables for the Army. If we really desire the world to have done with war, let us begin with the child. That is the logical beginning of all vital reform.

Four thousand pounds was the fine inflicted on a Swansea J.P. for fraud in connection with income-tax returns. His counsel made an "eloquent appeal" on his behalf, pointing out that he was a prominent figure in the religious life of the community. The judge also dwelt upon the regrettable fact that the offence was committed by a man "who was forward in religious matters, a member of a Dissenting Church, taking part in the activities of that church, and a communicating member." We take it the regret was more or less formal. The judge's experience must have provided him with many illustrations of the truth that there is no very close connection between religion and integrity.

Forty-four of the City churches are to be closed for the duration of the War. The *Daily Chronicle* remarks that it will not be a great deprivation to those who find beauty only in ancient buildings. We daresay others beside antiquarians will bear up under the infliction. But we suppose the salaries of the parsons will go on just the same.



## C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

March 11, Birmingham; March 18, Leicester; March 25, Manchester; April 1, Portsmouth; April 8, Swansea.

## To Correspondents.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—March 25, Avondale Hall, Clapham.

FRANCES IVOR.—Thanks. We hope to publish in the course of two or three weeks.

P. FRIEDBERG.—Will look the matter up, and if we discover them, will publish the particulars.

H. YOUNG.—We quite appreciate your concern for the *Freethinker*; but we believe we have the situation well in hand for the present. We agree with you that the bulk of our readers would cheerfully pay more for their paper rather than jeopardize its existence; but, again, you may trust us not to run unnecessary risks. Prices will steady again after a bit; then we shall be able to see where we are. And it is never wise to act in a panic. The struggle is a keen one; but we shall, we hope, pull through this year with not worse results than last.

E. E. STAFFORD.—Pleased to hear from you, and to know that you are making the best of Army life. Coming across so many avowed Freethinkers in the new Army must be quite an education to those officers who have always been in the habit of grouping recruits under one or other of the Christian denominations.

D. G. T. (Inverness).—Inverness is, we fear, rather too long a journey, and at present too expensive, for us to undertake a day's lecturing there now. Later, perhaps. The lines are certainly very apt.

KEPLER writes, in response to Miss Rhoda Lynd's request for Freethought fiction, that he can strongly recommend *Those Lynnekers*, by J. D. Beresford. Miss Lynd will also be pleased to learn that Mr. Underwood has taken her suggestion, and has supplied us with a translation of some of Dekker's work, which we hope to publish shortly.

E. B.—Thanks; will prove very useful. The excuse must be that the "Tom Paine" was used quite innocently, and escaped us in glancing through the article.

C. W. MARSHALL.—In a way we are pleased you are so anxious as to the safety of the *Freethinker*. It is an indication of your interest in the paper. We are very pleased to have read the letters of those to whom you send copies of the *Freethinker*. Its being passed round in hospital and in camp—and appreciatively read—is a promise of good both for ourselves and for the Cause. We have no intention of altering either the size or price of the *Freethinker* at present. We hope to avoid both plans.

D. FISHER.—The place of Mr. Cohen's meetings on April 1 at Portsmouth will be duly announced, and we shall be very pleased to meet you then. There is no Branch of the N. S. S. in Portsmouth at present. Glad you appreciate the attitude of the *Freethinker* in relation to the War. Buchner's *Force and Matter* could only now be obtained second-hand.

C. H. M. GRONN.—Received with thanks, and allocated as desired.

F. SUNDERLAND.—Your friend has been influenced, we think, by what some religious folk find it to their interest to say. There has been no such recession so far as we are aware. You should ask for names.

OLD MEMBER sends us £1 towards advertising the *Freethinker*,

F. HOBY.—We quite appreciate your point of view, and do not think, for a moment, that all members of the I.L.P. are Christians. But it is the fact that Freethinkers in various movements are apt to submit to a boycott of their anti-religious opinions—a boycott which does not extend to opinions in favour of religion. How many of the parsons and Sunday School teachers in the I.L.P. would agree that it was a non-religious movement? Your own position is quite clear and quite logical. And if the same principle applied all round no objection could be raised. So far as we are concerned, we have no intention of dwelling upon the topic, in spite of the many letters received. It is for Freethinking Members of the I.L.P. and other bodies to see that their opinions on religion are treated with due courtesy.

J. W. WHITE.—It is not surprising that the editor of the *Cornish and Devon Post* refused the insertion of your letter. We should have been pleased to have published it ourselves but space forbids.

The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

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When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, giving as long notice as possible.

Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Friends who send us newspapers would enhance the favour by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention. Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

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

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

## Sugar Plums.

To-day (March 11) Mr. Cohen lectures in the Town Hall Birmingham. Owing to local conditions, it has been decided to concentrate on one meeting only—the evening at 7 o'clock. Mr. Cohen's subject is "Will Christianity Survive the War?" and he will deal specially with Mr. H. G. Wells's new book on *War and the Future*. Admission is free, but there will be a collection taken towards defraying the very heavy expenses a Town Hall meeting incurs. We hope our friends who attend will remember that, and will also do their best towards making the meeting as widely known as possible.

We believe our readers are always interested, as we are in letters from Freethinkers in the Army or Navy. One of the late members of the Edmonton Branch of the N. S. S., Mr. Britten, writes to the General Secretary, Miss Vance:—

One of the first questions asked me when I came into barracks was: "What religion?" to which, I replied, "Freethinker." The Master-at-Arms seemed a bit doubtful, but beyond asking me to spell it, raised no query.....I expected trouble, but have been treated very well.

The first Sunday morning on parade, after the usual inspection by the Commodore, I told the Petty Officer in charge of our party that I was a Freethinker, and asked to be allowed to fall out before we were marched into church. He seemed uncertain what to do, but finally said that if I had an objection to attending the service I could fall out.

A change of officers brought further experiences with a little different treatment, but, on the whole, Mr. Britten does not appear to have had an unpleasant time. Everything seems to depend on the officer—and on the man. Consideration on the side of the former, and firmness and civility on the part of the other is what is needed. But the lesson from all the letters we have received is the same—Freethinkers in the Army and Navy should avow their opinions and persistently claim legitimate consideration on their account.

Mr. Lloyd lectures to-day (March 11) in the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester. His subject will be "Humanism versus Christianity." Judging from the title, this will furnish an excellent opportunity for Leicester Freethinkers to bring a Christian friend along with them. We hope all will take the hint. Christians could not wish for a better introduction to Freethought than through the agency of Mr. Lloyd.

The Annual Meeting of the Secular Education League was held at the League's offices on Friday, March 2. The past year has not furnished the occasion for any striking manifestation of its activity, but the principle of Secular Education has been kept to the front, in the press and elsewhere, wherever possible. It is certain that before long the general question of education must come before the country, and this will give an opportunity for the League taking a more prominent position before the public. This can be done the more effectively by a largely increased membership, and we hope this will take place. The Secretary of the League is Mr. Harry Snell, 19 Buckingham Street, Strand, W.C.



Our readers of both sexes should be particularly interested in the address to be given at the North London Branch Debating Society, St. Pancras Reform Club, on Sunday next. The subject is "The Church and Divorce," and the speaker Mrs. Seaton Tiedemann, the Secretary of the Divorce Law Reform Union, who is naturally an authority on all matters connected with the subject. This is one of the planks in the N. S. S. platform, and ample opportunity will be given for questions and discussion. The meeting will commence at 7.30.

Our readers—mothers in particular—will be interested to hear that Kathleen Alma Edith Walter, Mr. G. W. Foote's first and only granddaughter, is the winner of the first prize, offered by the *Mothers' Magazine* for the most beautiful baby. The portrait of the young lady, who is now five years old, appears in the March issue of the magazine. We echo the poet's wish: "Bonnie wee thing! May your face an index be of all your grace and mind."

A meeting of the Glasgow Branch N. S. S. will be held in the Good Templars' Hall, 122 Ingram Street, on Sunday, March 11, at 12 noon; subject, "Humanism," by Mr. Millar Saltcoats. Admission is free, but there will be a collection.

## The Emergence of Man.

### IV.

(Concluded from p. 134.)

THE date of the advent of the human artificers of the Pre-Chellean stone implements is important and interesting alike. Upon the solution of this problem depends any reliable estimate of the centuries covered by the Old Stone Age, as well as the antiquity of Neanderthal and Piltdown man. Osborn is convinced that:—

After weighing all the evidence very carefully, the balance of opinion seems to sustain the view that this epoch should be placed after the close of the third glaciation and before the advent of the fourth, that is, during the Third Interglacial Stage.

It certainly seems significant that the six principal sites of Pre-Chellean culture lie close together. In Pre-Chellean times England formed part of the Continent, and a large river ran along the Channel which now divides us from France. In our island, pre-Chellean savages left their handiwork in Essex and Sussex; in France, on the north and south banks of the Somme, at Chelles, on the Marne; and at Helin, in Belgium.

The primitive men who fashioned the Pre-Chellean tools and weapons appear to have entered Europe from Africa by a northern coast route, and the distribution of their stations undoubtedly points to this. Central Europe has thus far failed to supply any positive evidence of Pre-Chellean or even later Chellean man. It is likewise suggestive that artifacts distinctly Chellean in mode of workmanship have been discovered throughout Africa, from Egypt to the Cape. An inventory has been made of these prehistoric industrial, aggressive, and domestic implements, which embraces planing flints, scrapers, borers, knives, hand-stones, and flint hammers.

Pre-Chellean flint implements were unearthed at St. Acheul in 1907, and it is very noticeable—

that at this dawning stage of human invention the flint workers were not deliberately designing the form of their implements, but were dealing rather with the chance shapes of shattered blocks of flints, seeking with a few well-directed blows to produce a sharp point or a good cutting edge. This was the beginning of the art of "retouch," which was done by means of light blows with a second stone instead of the hammer-stone with which the rough flakes were first knocked off. The re-

touch served a double purpose: Its first and most important object was further to sharpen the point or edge of the tool. This was done by chipping off small flakes from the upper side, so as to give the flint a saw-like edge. Its second object was to protect the hand of the user by blunting any sharp edges or points which might prevent a firm grip of the implement.

Similar rude flints have been met with in Sussex in association with the recently discovered Piltdown skull. This is the most ancient completely human skull yet known to science. This priceless relic was disinterred at Piltdown, about thirty-five miles from Gray's Thurrock, near the Thames, in Essex, where many memorials of prehistoric times have been unearthed. The county of Kent lies to the east of Piltdown, in Sussex, and the Kentish plateau has yielded numerous flint implements of eolithic character.

Dawson discovered the Sussex cranium in a gravel deposit some eighty feet above the level of the southern Ouse. The nature of the surroundings was eminently suitable to the industry of the Pre-Chellean and Chellean workers in stone, and an exceedingly rough chipped flint was found in the layer which contained the Piltdown fossil, in addition to several "eoliths." It seems certain that the Sussex skull dates from an era when the fashioning of stone tools was still in an infant stage even when compared with the rude primitive palæoliths of the Chellean Period. Clement Reid regards the Piltdown deposits as of Pre-Glacial or earlier Pleistocene age, while Dawson, the geologist, who was the finder of the keenly controverted cranium, after critically surveying all the data concerned, came to the conclusion "that the skull and mandible cannot safely be described as of earlier date than the first half of the Pleistocene Epoch. The individual probably lived during the warm cycle in that age."

The discovery of Piltdown man proved the occasion of a lively and protracted debate in the anatomical world. Professors Smith Woodward and Elliot Smith pointed out that the appearance of Piltdown man and the Heidelberg race in geological strata of practically the same antiquity, proves that at the close of the Pliocene Era the human group was already represented in Western Europe by two distinctly divergent stocks. This necessarily presupposes a prolonged anterior period of development of the two races if each arose from a common ancestor. There can be no question that both these rugged human beings—the Heidelberg and the Piltdown (*Evanthropus*, or "dawn man")—manifest marked kinship, not merely with modern races, but with the apes. The several experts assign slightly different positions to the "dawn man" of Piltdown in the pedigree of recent man, while Professor Osborn dismisses the theory that the Piltdown specimen was ancestral either to the Neanderthal or the Heidelberg savages. This scientist thinks that the dawn man's jaw is of a type so low that it represents "a fully adult chimpanzee of a new species." Although the Piltdown skull and jawbone were present in the same deposit, certain men of science were sceptical as to their original association. If the jaw belonged to a different organism to that of the skull-cap, which is unmistakably human, albeit of an extremely primitive type, then there is ample reason for concluding that anthropoid apes survived in Europe during the Ice Age. Moreover, a tooth, apparently human, from Taubach, in Germany, has been attributed to "*Pan vetus*" by Miller, and this is the species of extinct chimpanzee which that anatomist regards as the original possessor of the Piltdown jaw. Osborn now inclines to the view that:—

If confirmed by future discovery, the presence of anthropoid apes related to the chimpanzee in the



deposits of Piltdown, Sussex, and of Taubach, Weimar, is in itself of very great interest, because Taubach is of Third Interglacial Age, and of the Chellean or early Acheulean industrial stage. Both facts, so far as they go, tend to confirm the opinion.....that the Piltdown race belongs to Third Interglacial times.

Evidence has now been accumulated, overwhelming and complete, that man ascended through a series of stages in which he slowly perfected his stone implements. All over the earth, outside Australia, aboriginal man progressed along industrial paths similar to those revealed by the Chellean records of Western Europe. And there remains no legitimate reason for postulating a single centre from which his flint industry radiated in every direction. It is far more likely that primitive man everywhere experienced the necessity for utilizing stone wherever it was available, to satisfy the imperious needs of his precarious life.

It was in Western Europe where man's early efforts were first detected, and in the same quarter of the globe have been discovered the completest evidences of his onward journey. Chelles, on the Marne, in France, has lent its name to the Chellean culture, which progressed on somewhat independent paths. The rude hunters of the Chellean period of the Old Stone Age were a courageous and hardy race, whose flint artifacts testify to their devotion to the chase. From a few rough instruments of the Pre-Chellean period the folk of the later Chellean days evolved seven or eight vastly improved artifacts. Commont has clearly demonstrated that at St. Acheul, on the Somme, there existed an important industrial station from the opening of the Palæolithic Age till its very end. This archæologist's investigations prove that, if we except Castillo, in Spain, St. Acheul was the prehistoric industrial centre whose career was most prolonged. From the dawn of the Old Stone to the Neolithic Age it appears to have been constantly occupied by the workers in flint.

While these ancient artizans were labouring in France, Belgium, and Spain, peoples of the same cultural character resided in Britain. At present, however, no typically Chellean site is known in Italy, or in any district of Central Europe. But at Grays Thurrock, in Essex, scarcely 120 miles from Abbeville, a celebrated Chellean locality, Chellean artificers were firmly established. England was then united with the European mainland, and the workers at the various centres probably passed to and fro. Flints of Chellean design have been discovered in every part of Britain south of the Yorkshire Ouse. All the evidence at our disposal combines to prove that the peoples who fashioned these implements entered Europe along the land bridges which connected the old Western Continent with Africa.

Our positive information concerning the genesis of the several primitive peoples who inhabited Europe in prehistoric centuries is scanty. After an exhaustive survey of all available data, Osborn reaches the conclusion—

that the family tree or lines of descent of the races of the Old Stone Age consist of a number of entirely separate branches, which had been completely formed in the great Eurasiatic continent, a land mass infinitely larger and more capable of producing a variety of races than the diminutive peninsula area of Western Europe.

If not from the Dark Continent's northern borders, the most rudimentary human races—the Piltdown, Heidelberg, and Neanderthal—migrated into Europe from the Mediterranean region. This, at least, is the most reasonable inference to be drawn from the extensive and peculiar distribution of Chellean and Acheulean remains. The superior savage stocks of the Old Stone time possessed abilities of a high order, and their art achievements alone conclusively prove this. All the evidence we have gathered concerning their mental

powers compels the assumption of an immense period of pre-evolution. The foundations of all subsequent civilizations were laid by the more intellectual Old Stone Age stocks. These remote men displayed considerable inventive faculty, and they protected their bodies with raiment. And justly it is claimed that:—

The same is true of the æsthetic powers, of close observation, of the sense of form, of proportion, of symmetry, the appreciation of beauty of animal form, and beauty of line, colouring, and form in modelling and sculpture.....Of the musical sense we have at present no evidence. The religious sense, the appreciation of some power or powers beyond the great phenomena of Nature, is evidenced by reverence for the dead, in burials apparently related to notions of a future existence of the dead, and especially the mysteries of the art of the caverns.

So, much as we note a tremendous interval between the rude and unlettered Teutons pictured by Tacitus, and a Lessing or a Goethe, or between the barbarous ancient Britons and a Shakespeare or a Spencer; likewise, there yawns an enormous chasm between the later men of the Palæolithic Age and the original possessors of the Piltdown and Heidelberg skulls.

T. F. PALMER.

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## Our Dreams.

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It is a modern theory that we realize in dreams the desires we have during the time when we are awake. That theory, we venture to say, is an advance on the one held by primitive people. They, rightly or wrongly, believed that the spirit during sleep took leave of the body and wandered about as freely as imagination would allow it. Of course, all good European Freethinkers will incline towards scepticism at the mention of spirits. We must, therefore, say at once that we wish our readers to take the term in its universal sense and not at its narrow and theological valuation.

We know that life is a fact. We know that life is a journey and a battle from the cradle to the grave. Before and beyond that all our speculations are equally vain. We now speak of dreams while awake, and since neither stake nor faggot can prevent a Freethinker dreaming we will make known our dreams representing our unsatisfied desires. The worst we can say of them is that they do not lean towards oppression; the best, that they represent a contribution to the scheme of life. Man's life should not be as an uncracked nut; if he have ears, eyes, and a tongue, let him speak. Do what he will, he cannot escape the fact that he has a duty to mankind, and, in a like manner to Dante, his life is a sacrament. To a wooden post you ask? We answer, No. Has the time not come when we must throw overboard symbolism of no earthly use except to fetter the mind, to impress the ignorant, and to load the kneeling camel called man with a further burden of stupidity. A good conscience! If Freethinkers do not possess it, they are on the way towards the attainment of it. Let it be written in letters of gold *that we have never traded on man's ignorance*. Does it require any exceptional intelligence to achieve this end? Look at the mental outfit of priests; they do not experience much difficulty in that task. To mankind they say, this is the way. We know that on that way are to be found the fogs and darkness of superstition, phantoms of truth, and scarecrows of bewilderment, whilst in the distance is that will-o'-the-wisp called faith. We will have none of this.

Reality in our waking hours shall make us know that the Gods sell us all they give us, yet shall our *waking* dreams be sweeter. He who shall will his life to the



service of the good (not *beyond* my impatient ones) shall have taken the first step towards a good conscience—and a good conscience has no bad dreams. At present, or any other time for that matter, we would not exchange shoes with any Christian; we prefer to stand upright in a world rapidly becoming a charnel house. With a song on our lips to that spirit of humanity which we know is not dead, we take our place, and let those who may get down on their knees. Where, now, is the bad conscience? The implication of original sin demands this attitude, and they who follow this practice dare to assert that they are the light of the world. Such an assertion is not worth refutation, and one begins to wonder if they would not really like, at present, to hide their light under a bushel. Time is flinging at them more problems than the combined totals of Darwin, Spencer, and Mill; the poets in their wild songs and prophecies are taking their places as the unacknowledged legislators of the world, and the Dionysian spirit of destruction is once again abroad. Woe to Appollo if he resists!

Life is a conflict. There is nothing fixed, be it law, custom, or constitution. Dionysus dislikes the smoothness of Apollo's limbs—in other words, conservation is subject to attack from without and sometimes from within. In this respect we now find Christian religion busily trying to prove that a circle is really square. A writer in the *Times* Educational Supplement says that: "The circumstances of the War make the *odium theologium* odious indeed," and he urges the need for unity on the question of the Churches and education. Shall we not say that this is an attack from within? Have not Freethinkers said times without number, and without a war to inspire them, that Christianity is odious? All temperaments will not have imposed upon them this thing called Christianity; for the lame, halt, and blind intellectually, it may be good enough, but we question the wisdom of such an imposition even in that case.

Another instance of attack from within may be found in an article over the signature of "A. C. B." In the same paper he writes: "Very often, if a speaker begins to talk about God, his hearers lose interest, whether they are laymen listening to a clergyman or boys listening to a master." Have not Freethinkers said the same thing over and over again? Indeed, it would be hard to find ten believers in Christianity whose definition of God would agree, and, sleeping through a sermon was once considered to be joke. "A. C. B." only says the same thing in another form. We feel sure that Freethinkers will scoff at the idea of any value being attached to such admissions as the result of an impact with hideous reality. For Christians to take such unsteady childish steps, with the world of reality behind them, will prove to us how unwilling is religious conservation to advance in any direction leading to universal benefit. Nevertheless, these admissions tend to prove that internal adjustments are being made owing to pressure from without. In other words, orthodoxy is beginning to stammer a few elementary truths of Freethought.

We have travelled a long way to come to our dreams—the dreams of we dissatisfied ones. Awake, nature would seem to say to us, when we have kicked this decadent creed to Limbo: "Rejoice in all the four seasons of the year—in all the four seasons of your life, for I am Lord of all." Alas! for every one it cannot be so. Life demands courage and fortitude; from the stronger of us it demands sincerity. Curiosity, the inclination to climb dizzy mountains, the wish to probe deeper into mysteries than the men of old—life offers to Freethinkers all these avenues of choice, for have they not for ever cast away the cursed formula: "Thou shalt not"? The War has not forced Freethought to read-

just itself, to dilute its thought, to change its attitude, nor compromise with the enemy. We have none of our own words to eat, for we have not allowed ourselves to be deceived, neither have we practised deception on others. We have commanded no one to believe, neither have we attempted to teach naked niggers to clothe themselves, neither have we asked any one to die for us. For these reasons, whilst awake we may come face to face with ourselves without being ashamed, and in our dreams we shall see nothing worse than life as a phenomenon, as something to be approached with gratitude, as something to be moulded by man's effort. On our lips shall be a terrible *nay* to Christian values, but our duties to life shall be somewhat in harmony with the sun, the moon, and the stars, the sea, and the fertile land, and we shall fill our cup from the fountain of Truth. To Christianity we shall say: Your intentions *may* be good, but we doubt the doctrine which demanded a human sacrifice to save immortal souls; that was ignoble. We discerning and dissatisfied thinkers "are unwilling to renounce or to share our responsibilities"; go your way, but beware of asking for obedience if you are unworthy of it.

WILLIAM REPTON.

### Critical Chat.

SIR JOSEPH BAMPFYLDE FULLER is an old member of the Indian Civil Service, and has held several distinguished positions under the Government of India. In the intervals of a busy life he has produced several books of a philosophic cast, and in *Man As He Is: Essays in a New Psychology* (John Murray; 7s. 6d. net) has given the world a noteworthy study of human conduct. If the psychology is not quite so "new" as the sub-title would lead one to believe, it is not the less worthy of attention on that account. And it might be said in defence that it will be new to a very large number of readers; but inasmuch as it is frankly, although not aggressively, Materialistic in tone and teaching, it is not likely to be warmly welcomed by those who still prefer to discuss psychology in terms of a mediævalism which is little better than a refined and disguised Animism.

We say that *Man As He Is* is frankly Materialistic despite the author's brief criticism of Materialism, which is in effect only a criticism of a certain conception of Materialism. When, for instance, we are told that "Materialism can offer no solution of the problem of consciousness or feeling," and that the Materialistic theory "denies that life possesses any energies or impulses of its own," one need only reply that to the first count the reply is given by Sir Bampfylde Fuller himself in the course of his work. And to the second, feeling, or the response of living tissue to certain stimuli, is a fact that no Materialist denies, and no scientific Materialist claims can be adequately expressed in terms that are adequate for a purely physical phenomenon. Every group of phenomena—physical, chemical, biological, and psychological—must be expressed or described in terms framed to cover that group. There is no more need, therefore, for a special life force or a special mind force than there is for an independent chemical or physical force. The rise of a new group of phenomena from the interaction of pre-existing forces, the new group necessitating the framing of new "laws," is involved in the general evolution of the universe. Due consideration of this fact would prevent most of the adverse criticisms of Materialism being written.

Fundamentally, man is a creature of many impulses. That is the bedrock of the author's generalizations. Below consciousness there is going on an unceasing warfare between impulses, each striving for mastery—and



to find expression in action. In taking his stand on impulse as the fundamental psychological fact, Sir Bampfylde Fuller is quite in line with recent psychology, and much of what he says could have been powerfully enforced by reference to the work of Freud and Jung, and their successors. This stock of impulses, possessed in varying degrees of power by all, form our inheritance from our human and pre-human ancestors. They are, to use the author's expression, the force that gives the train its motion. But human life requires not only motion, but direction. It is not enough to liken it to a train in motion; we need rails that will keep it along a given track. Sir Bampfylde Fuller finds this in memory—the recalling of past experiences. It is this "which gives dexterity to our limbs, ideas to our brains, language wherewith to express our ideas, and continuity to our purposes. It is an educative force, raising us from the helplessness of infancy to such skill as no other animal can attain, however richly endowed with the intuitive recollections which have come to the species in the course of evolutionary progress."

It is evident that the more numerous and the more varied our recollections the greater will be the part played by choice in the determination of conduct. But a life of choice is an exhausting life. To stop and weigh consideration for and against any and every possible course of conduct absorbs energy and exhausts vitality. The ideal action is direct action, just as the man who has no thought of wrong-doing is superior to the one who only overcomes the impulse to wrong-doing after lengthy deliberation. Presumably, Sir Bampfylde Fuller, from the large powers he ascribes to "suggestion," would look on this as providing the necessary counterbalance. And in this we should be inclined to agree with him. It is the social life which drills man, and which acts upon all with a power of suggestion not always adequately recognized.

And this brings us to the only real fault we have to find with *Man As He Is*. Although setting out a new psychology, Sir Bampfylde Fuller is sufficiently under the influence of the old to deal largely with the human mind as though it were an individual mind. And this is not really the case. The peculiarity of the human mind is that it is essentially a group mind. Its contents are given in the social life that lies behind it, and in the social life that surrounds it. All that fashions the human mind, language, institutions, traditions, beliefs, all are social products. It is the continuity of social life that provides the basis of human development and human civilization. I do not think for a moment that Sir Bampfylde Fuller would challenge this view. He suggests it in many places in his book, but, all the same, it does not receive the emphasis it deserves.

Apart from this, *Man As He Is* stands as a good and useful piece of work, plainly written on a subject in which it is not at all easy to express oneself plainly without running the risk of misunderstanding. And, so far as its influence extends, it will do something to counteract the flood of nonsense with which under the name of "mysticism" the public mind is deluged.

LUCIAN.

The British and Foreign Bible Society is paying £5,400 for paper for Bibles, which in the piping times of peace cost £2,600. The heathen Chinese, who used to pack their tea-chests with leaves from Bibles, will be sorry to hear this.

The new pound notes have a design of Saint George and the Dragon on the front. As the saintly George was an unscrupulous army contractor, the design is topical, if not complimentary.

## Death of Mrs. Charles Pegg.

WE have learned with the deepest regret of the death of Mrs. Charles Pegg, Secretary of the Manchester Branch of the N. S. S. Mrs. Pegg has been for over thirty-five years associated with Freethought work in Manchester, and during a large part of that period has officiated as Secretary. We think she scarcely ever missed attending a meeting, and, of late years, was often at her post when considerations of health might well have served as a valid reason for her staying at home. During the past few years her health failed, and for some months past she had scarcely left the house—part of the time being spent in bed. On Friday, March 2, the end came. Mrs. Pegg's associations with Freethought covered the whole of the Bradlaugh Parliamentary struggle, the *Freethinker* prosecution, and other striking and dramatic incidents. Hers was a record of long and honourable service in a cause that has little to offer save the consciousness of a duty done. We feel sure that both her husband and her daughter will have the sincere sympathy of many hundreds of Freethinkers throughout the country to whom she was known.—C. C.

## Correspondence.

### THE CRY OF ANGUISH OF THE CHURCH.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—A week or two ago an article appeared in the *Sunday Times*, entitled "What's Wrong with the Church?" This must be disconcerting to those ministers who have told us that the War was setting everything right. It was followed by a correspondence, in which the Rev. A. C. Headlam repeats the stale trash about true science agreeing with the Church and Christian doctrine.

But the crowning piece of terminological obfuscation is as follows:—

But now let us turn to the particular question asked; and first of all it is suggested that Christianity is somehow responsible for the present war. "Why is all this?" Christianity has a very definite answer: It is because of men's sins. From whence comes wars and fighting among you? Come they not hence even of your lust? Ye lust and have not; ye kill and desire to have. Surely no better reason could be given of the reasons which led to the outbreak of this war. It has been a lust of power, a lust of dominion, a lust of commercial wealth, a lust of national greatness; and it has come from just that nation which has more than deliberately refused to listen to the teaching of Christianity.

Well, what is to be thought of the best answer Christianity can make to the charge, not as put by the Rev. Headlam, but as to the responsibility for not having prevented it? No doubt the answer is definite. But where is the defence of a God who, to punish Germany, inflicts punishments on the nations who are her intended victims equal to or even greater than Germany has yet suffered? And is there at the present moment any reasonable guarantee that the Lord intends that the War shall bring justice about as a result? But what can we say to the rev. gentleman's attacks on Germany as being anything like so anti-religious as France, or more indifferent to religion than the English? The evidence of the anti-religion—nay, absolute Atheism—of France is overwhelming, and I daresay, if the rev. gentleman's previous utterances were overhauled, attacks on Godless education in France could be found, as it was quite the fashion with our clergy before the War. And what about the last census in France? Seven million Atheists enumerated; a fact, and quite impossible in so-called Materialistic Germany. And is not the only country in which soldiers need not attend what is called divine worship, France? As to British indifference, the controversy in which the rev. gentleman joins is a proof of it. As Pilate asked, "What is truth?" Well—it is not the utterances that come from the clergy.

A. J. MARRIOTT.

### LIVERPOOL I.L.P. AND THE FREETHINKER.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—My attention has been drawn to the alleged reports of two meetings of the I.L.P. held in Liverpool when your



paper was abused, which appear in the recent issue of the *Freethinker*.

I would draw the attention of yourself and readers to the undermentioned facts which entirely repudiate the suggestions of mean and intolerant bias made in your remarks.

1. The statement that your paper was discussed at two meetings of the I.L.P. is incorrect.

At a branch business meeting which I attended, various members asked the Literature Secretary to place some orthodox Christian periodical on the stall seeing that a *Freethought* periodical was being sold. A very fair and courteous discussion ensued, and it was decided to take the *Freethinker* off the stall. Such an action can hardly be described as pitiable and contemptible.

2. No member threatened to resign, nor was there any suggestion of such an action by any speaker taking part in the discussion.

3. The unwarranted statement that by an overwhelming majority it was decided to burn all copies unsold is, absolutely without foundation.

4. Your statement *re* burning your paper giving Liverpool I.L.P. members pleasure is well answered by the above facts and, I am sure, you will withdraw it.

The points I have raised place an entirely contradictory version to that of your own, which, you said, you had no reason to doubt; this, however, is explained by the fact that Mr. J. W. Gott, who was responsible for the report, informs me that he was not present at any meeting of the I.L.P. when any such action took place, but only sent you the report on versions given him by friends.

I quite appreciate your own position, and can understand that the comments were written in ignorance of the true position on the statements of your correspondent.

I would suggest that such statements will not increase *Freethought* sympathy in Liverpool Socialist circles, nor are they likely to strengthen the sympathy which you already have.

ERNEST W. SILVERMAN.

[Our paragraphs were based on information supplied by Mr. Gott whose word we had no reason to question. His statements were clear and precise, and we have now written him on the subject. We now await his reply, and can only say that we have no desire whatever to do the Liverpool members of the I.L.P. an injustice. But we cannot close our minds to the fact of the hostility shown by a section of the I.L.P. in various parts of the country, and the comparatively free hand given to religious propagandists.—EDITOR, *Freethinker*.]

### The Reflections of Riquet (A Dog).

All passes away, and is succeeded. I, alone, I remain.

Meditation. I love my master Bergeret, because he is powerful and terrible.

Always I am in the middle of all, and the men, the animals, and the things are ranged, hostile or favourable, around me.

At the fall of night, evil powers roam around the house. I bark in order that my master may be warned, and drive them away.

A dog that has not any feeling of piety towards men, and who dislikes the assembled fetishes in his master's house, leads a wicked and erring life.

Men have the divine power of opening all the doors. I am only able to open a very few. Doors are the great spirits that do not voluntarily obey dogs.

One never knows whether one has acted well towards men. It is necessary to adore them without trying to understand them. Their wisdom is mysterious.

Men, animals, stones, grow larger on approach, and when I am near to them, they become enormous. But I do not, Wherever I am, I remain the same size.

ANATOLE FRANCE (Translated by H. W. Edwards).

## 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, Mrs. Seaton Tiedemann (Secretary Divorce Law Reform Union), "The Church and Divorce."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Avondale Hall, Landor Road, Clapham, S.W.): 6, Annual Meeting. 7, P. S. Wilde, "What is Materialism?"

MR. HOWELL SMITH'S DISCUSSION CLASS (N. S. S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street): Thursday, March 15, at 7.30.

CAXTON HALL (Westminster): March 14, at 8, E. C. Saphin, "The Solar Origin of Christianity." Lantern lecture.

QUEEN'S HALL (SMALL) (Langham Place, W.): 6.30, Maurice Maubrey, "The World's New Evangel."

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Messrs. Saphin and Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Kells and Dales; 6.15, Messrs. Shaller and Yates.

### COUNTRY.

#### INDOOR.

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