

# THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED • 1881

EDITED BY CHAPMAN COHEN •• EDITOR 1881-1915 G. W. FOOTE

VOL. XXXVII.—No. 13

SUNDAY APRIL 1, 1917

PRICE TWOPENCE

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## Views and Opinions.

### Anthropology and the Soul.

To any one acquainted with all that the past fifty years of anthropological research has taught it will be clear that to discuss the question of a "soul" without taking these results into account is to conduct a discussion of very doubtful value. The anthropological data may be admitted or rejected, but it cannot profitably be ignored. But no one of authority does reject it in substance. The evidence is too conclusive for that. If it is admitted, then the conception of man as a duality, made up of the bodily organism we know, and of an independent, animating, and indestructible "soul," we infer, must be rejected as untenable. For the natural history of the "soul" is known. In its modern form it is a metaphysical survival of the bodily "double" which the savage assumed to exist owing to an admittedly erroneous interpretation of well known and otherwise explainable facts. And following the culture stage of primitive life, we see how the development of thought robs the "soul" of its definite character until it becomes the shadow of a shade, of importance only because it promises an intellectual justification of the primitive belief in survival. Thus the religious metaphysician and his theory of survival is found to rest on no other and no better foundation than the speculations of the savage. Here, as elsewhere, anthropology is the key to theology. Anthropology proves the un-  
veracity of theology in the act of deciphering its history and showing its origin.

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### "The Soul and Its Story."

In *The Soul and Its Story* (Arnold, 10s. 6d. net), Mr. Norman Pearson brings to bear on the subject with which he deals a mind well stored with the results of modern science. He writes well and suggestively, does not rely upon theological doctrines, and provides discussions of many subjects that will interest readers who may not at all care about the purpose for which the book is written. But a fatal and fundamental flaw in his work is precisely the omission of that factor which, to our

mind, is all important. And this makes Mr. Pearson's work, not a story of the 'Soul,' but a statement and a defence of a metaphysical theory which, while professedly based on scientific data, does not arise naturally from modern science. Mr. Pearson finds the theory of a soul in being, and his work may fairly be described as an attempt to frame a justification of that belief in a way which will not obviously conflict with scientific teaching. The result is an interesting work, probably as strong a case as can be made out for the belief in survival, but, nevertheless, an inconclusive case. It may satisfy the believer, it will leave the unbeliever where he was.

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### Metaphysics or Science?

Briefly and baldly put, Mr. Pearson's theory of the soul is this: There is an ultimate reality which we "may call" "Spirit." This ultimate reality gives rise (Spinoza would have said presents two "modes") to both matter and mind. Mind is nearer to matter (a statement which Spinoza, with a keener logical sense than Mr. Pearson possesses, would never have permitted himself to make), but with each atom of matter there is an atom of mind-stuff. At a certain point in evolution the development of mind has become stable enough to persist after the dissolution of the body. (Mr. Pearson conceives these mind-atoms as being built up into complex structures much as chemical compounds are elaborated). Finally, a species of reincarnation is assumed in order to permit continuous development, and a conservation of the experience required. This is, as we have said, only a bald outline of Mr. Pearson's thesis, which is complicated by a discussion of sex, the transmission of acquired qualities, and of modern scientific theories of life and matter. And the general effect on the mind of a philosophic reader will be that of a work which proves at once too much and too little.

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### Materialism, True and False.

One obvious criticism on Mr. Pearson's thesis is that it is mechanistic or nothing. The author would doubtless disclaim Materialism; and yet, if we pay attention to things instead of names, it is there. For one does not escape Materialism by writing "Ultimate Reality" in capital letters. To call it "spirit" tells us nothing, and adds nothing. In a chapter devoted to a criticism of Materialism, Mr. Pearson says that "matter" is no more than an inference from our sense of resisted motion. Well, granted; and what is "mind" but another inference from another group of phenomena? Of "matter" or "mind" we know nothing apart from phenomenal experience. Matter, *per se*, is an abstraction, and so is mind *per se*. But this is not antagonistic to Materialism; it is part of the case for Materialism. Matter, says Mr. Pearson, cannot be explained in terms of itself. Granted; but can *anything* be explained in terms of itself? We can describe matter in terms of matter, and we can describe mind in terms of mind; but we can explain neither in terms of itself. And we cannot do this because a scientific explanation consists in the establishment of equivalents. Thus, we explain the constitution of water



by the formula of  $H_2O$ . If  $H_2O$  is not the equivalent of water, our explanation is faulty. If it is, the explanation is complete. On the other hand, we are bound to describe things in terms of its own class. Thus we frame chemical "laws" to describe the action of chemical elements, biological "laws" to describe the actions of living beings, and psychological "laws" to describe mental phenomena. Mr. Pearson, in his attack on Materialism, appears to have fallen into the common confusion of identifying a scientific description with a scientific explanation. And the two things are distinct. Thus, when Kepler propounded the laws of planetary motion, he described the path of the planets in the heavens. The explanation came when Newton showed that, on the principle of universal attraction, a moving body would of necessity describe an ellipse. Consequently, the Materialist need not attempt to explain "matter" in terms of itself; it is enough that he can so describe it. And if Mr. Pearson were right in assuming that "mind" and "matter" (which are no more than names descriptive of groups of phenomena) are the expression of an "Ultimate Reality," that would in no sense be fatal to Materialism, particularly as Mr. Pearson asserts that as to what this "Reality" is, "Materialist and Idealist stand equally baffled before it." In that case it would seem wiser to cease talking about this "Ultimate Reality," which, in the circumstances, can hardly avoid becoming ultimate nonsense. \* \* \*

#### Mind and Body.

There is another assumption of Mr. Pearson's against which a protest must be made. This is that the problem before the Materialist is to explain how "mind" and "matter," or thought and organization, are connected. He is here in very numerous and distinguished company; but the assumption is quite unwarranted. "The interaction between mind and body," says Mr. Pearson, "is a highly mysterious matter, but its mysteries cannot be dispelled by attempting to suppress the distinction between the two." But who wishes to suppress the distinction between the two? Certainly not the Materialist. Would it be argued that because a musical note and a ray of light are both due to vibration, therefore the distinction between the two is annihilated? And if that is not argued on behalf of two such dissimilar things as these, why should it be the case with regard to mind and body? Identity of origin may well give rise to difference of result, as Mr. Pearson himself shows. Certainly "consciousness and thought belong to one order of phenomena; the chemico-physical changes of brain tissue to which they are correlated to another." But this furnishes no proof that in grouping these two sets of phenomena under different categories, we are proving independence of origin of one of them, any more than because we group music and light under different categories we are giving each of these an independent origin. \* \* \*

#### Turning the Tables.

And the really curious thing is the way in which the Spiritualist calls upon the Materialist to explain in what manner body and mind are connected. But, clearly, the first step is for the Spiritualist to show how they can be separated. The connection between body and mind is not a matter of theory; it is an observed fact. Here are two things always found together; the more we know of their workings, the more certain it is that changes in the one are paralleled by changes in the other. So far as the Materialist is concerned, he takes that connection as a settled fact in the discussion, and is warranted in so doing. But along comes the anti-Materialist. He takes two things never found in separation, and asserts that

one is independent of the other. And having done this, he demands that the Materialist accepts that independence as a fact unless he can show the precise method of their connection. But the Materialist is bound to do nothing of the kind. It is not his place to show how mind and body are connected. It is the business of the Spiritualist to show how they can be separated. That is the real problem, and the Materialist should see that his critic does not escape that plain issue.

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There are other aspects of Mr. Pearson's work with which we will deal next week.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

## Christianity and the Four Gospels.

### I.

So far as the subject of the present article is concerned, it is wholly immaterial when or by whom the Four Gospels were written. They may have undergone many changes, numerous interpolations may have been introduced from time to time, before they assumed the form in which they are now found in the New Testament Canon. Whether they are to be regarded as products of the first or of the second century their relation to the Christian religion remains exactly the same. Taking them precisely as they stand the question to be considered is, Can their hero be legitimately claimed as the Founder of Christianity? Was it the intention or ambition of the Gospel Jesus to add another religion to the large number already in existence? That is to say, did the writers or final editors of the Gospels themselves foresee that ultimately their hero would occupy the proud position of the originator of a new cult? The answer to this question does not lie on the surface, for it is not at all clear to what extent those writers and editors were aware of, and understood, the various religious movements in the midst of which they wrote. No doubt there was an obscure sect in existence known contemptuously as Christians, who were supposed to worship Christ, believing him to be in some sense more than man and the Saviour of the world. We have no historical account of the rise of this sect. In both Jewish and Gentile worlds it was, at first, despised as a depraved form of superstition. The tradition was that Jesus had been supernaturally born, had lived a life crowded with all sorts of miracles, had died a violent death, had been supernaturally raised from the dead, faith in whom closed hell's gate, and opened heaven's for all who possessed it. According to Tacitus (*Annals* xv. 44), Christians were "a race of men detested for their evil practices," and on "account of their sullen hatred of the whole human race." But of Christianity, as we know it, there was, as yet, no trace in either the first or the second century. Now, looking carefully at the Four Gospels, we learn that they indirectly testify to the non-existence of what we understand by Christianity. There is considerable internal evidence to show that the Virgin Birth legend formed no part of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke in their original form. Mark calls Jesus the Son of God, and John refers to him as the Saviour of the World; but no attempt is made to explain in what sense he is either.

The Gospel Jesus never alludes to himself as the founder of a new religion. It is in the light of a reformer of Judaism that he is usually presented. He deliberately repudiates the role of an iconoclast:—

Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets; I came not to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished (Matt. v. 17, 18).



His one purpose in life was to bring the hope of Israel to a happy fruition. The kingdom of God, as he viewed it, was for Israel exclusively. On one occasion a Canaanitish woman appealed to him on behalf of her daughter, who had a devil, but he sought to put her off on the following score: "I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." She was a shrewd woman, for "she came and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me."

And he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs. But, she said, Yea, Lord; for even the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table (Matt. xvii. 21-28).

In Mark's Gospel he displays many purely human traits, in spite of the fact that he is often represented as walking on the sea, feeding thousands off nothing, raising the dead, and giving other signs of being endowed with superhuman powers. In Matthew and Luke the process of deification is much more marked, and the stories of the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection are quite new. In the Fourth Gospel the apotheosis of Jesus is complete. He is introduced as the Word of God, as being from all eternity on an equality with God, and as becoming, in the fulness of time, flesh, and dwelling among men full of grace and truth. But even here, again, Christianity is conspicuous only by its absence, though it is manifest that a movement is in progress the end of which is not yet. In John, salvation by belief in the Son of God is diligently proclaimed, and so thorough is the salvation that it is represented under the symbol of a second birth. We also observe in this Gospel a tendency to subordinate the life of Jesus to a theory of his person. He is constantly represented as having for his supreme object the manifestation of his glory. His miracles are regularly spoken of as "signs"; and this is a point on which John flatly contradicts the Synoptists, who declare on more than one occasion that Jesus flatly refused, on principle, to work "signs." But the Christianity of the Creeds is not here at all except potentially. What we can trace in the Four Gospels is the progressive activity of a movement, the consummation of which, no one could have predicted, not even those who played the part of leaders in it.

Is it not beyond all reasonable controversy absurd, therefore, on the part of Christian apologists, to claim the Gospel Jesus as the Founder of Christianity? There is an abundance of theology in the Gospels, but not the theology of the orthodox Church. Theology streamed incessantly out of the mouth of Jesus; but it was a theology in which there was neither the Fall nor Original Sin, neither a Deity at enmity with mankind because of something it had done at the commencement of its history, nor an Atonement in which to quench for ever the fires of Divine wrath. The sin of sins is declared to be unbelief in the Gospel Jesus. Most emphatic is the statement:—

He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God (John iii. 18).

We may be told that this is Christianity in the making; but nobody could have foreseen what its appearance would be when the process of making it stood completed. This inability is accounted for by the simple fact that all the ingredients requisite to complete the making of it were not present in the process at the stage represented in the Four Gospels. As Alfred Loisy well says:—

Less than thirty years after the death of Christ a religion had issued from the Gospel; and this religion was not a split (*dedoublement*) from Judaism, it was not a heresy or schism which would have broken Judaism up; it was an independent religion, and one which was even

to detach itself entirely from Judaism before the first generation of believers had disappeared. This birth of a new cult, which came into being in the full daylight of history, continues to be for us a problem in many respects unsolved. It was not due to the will nor to the direct action of Christ. No more does it result from this—that Jesus, without having the express intention of so doing, virtually brought into the world a religion essentially new, the revelation of the good God, who pardons sin, and is honoured by trust in his mercy alone (*The Hibbert Journal*, October, 1911).

For that and much cognate teaching M. Loisy was deposed from an honoured position in the priesthood of the Catholic Church; but he finds himself in line with the leading scholars in Christendom to-day. The curious thing is, however, that several of these first-class scholars still call themselves Christians, although they have completely renounced historical Christianity, while M. Loisy himself continues to adhere to historical Christianity in a loose, vague, modernist sense, though repudiating its indebtedness to the Gospel Jesus. We, on the other hand, take our stand upon the utter unhistoricity of the Gospel narratives, maintaining that Christ is only one in a host of God-men and Saviour-Gods, but happens to be the one that has survived. Popularly speaking, this survival was a pure accident, though in the scientific sense it was the effect of exceedingly well-defined causes, the operation of which we shall find extremely instructive and interesting to trace. Meantime, let it be distinctly understood that the roots of the Christian tree are most numerous, and reach deep down into the soil of the past, much further back than the Four Gospels, as we hope abundantly to prove in future articles.

J. T. LLOYD.

## The Bobby Burns of Science.

Verse is the form most apt to preserve whatever the writer confides to it, and we can, I believe, confide to it, besides all sentiments, almost all ideas.

—Sully Prudhomme.

SULLY PRUDHOMME'S name does not often meet the eye in these strenuous and exacting times, but a North Country newspaper report states that a lady has been granted a Fellowship at Durham University, and that her thesis was on the great French poet.

Prudhomme's significance lies in the fact that he caught a glimpse of the new poetry which science has revealed, and which is grander than that which it is destroying. People commonly assert that this is a scientific age, and that good poetry is impossible in such an atmosphere. The poets themselves help this delusion by seeking their subjects from the past. Instead of drawing inspiration from the world around them they find subjects in the Greek drama, the fables of King Arthur, or the legends of the Vikings, and other outworn subjects. Yet Sully Prudhomme was awarded the Nobel prize for the greatest work in pure literature. To those who admire the sham antique school of poetry it must be a shock that the prize for the ideal in literature was awarded to a man who, more than any other modern poet, has embodied in his verse the new material gathered by science, and has best expressed the sceptical spirit which characterizes the age.

Sully Prudhomme's imagination and his modes of thought are scientific. He foreshadows the "Bobby Burns to sing the song of steam" whom Kipling calls for. He is not a poet of the people like Beranger, or a writer of music-hall songs. But he differs from the majority of literary men in that he has caught a glimpse of the new poetry which science reveals. He does not hold to the theory that the vocabulary of three centuries



ago is better fitted to express modern thought and feeling than the living language of to-day. A poet who sings of balloons and barometers, of submarine cables and photography, of evolution and specific gravity determinations, is a novelty to the critics. According to the vulgar standard the sword is more poetical than the revolver. Cavalry may be mentioned, but to introduce torpedo boats into poetry is to attempt too much. That Sully Prudhomme should utilize astronomy is taken for granted, but that he should sing of chemistry and biology is unpardonable. In English the difference between the literary and popular vocabularies is greater than in French, and there is all the more need of poets bold enough to bridge the gulf which separates literature from life. The success of Sully Prudhomme should stimulate our poets to develop the deeper meaning and hidden beauty of life.

This is not by any means an entirely new note in literature. Twenty centuries ago Lucretius made his readers thrill with his magnificent presentation of the atomic theory and other scientific ideas. His very method is but part of the modern method; it is the modern method in its infancy. We may gain some notion of the general effect of his masterpiece, *On the Nature of Things*, if we conceive Tennyson to have devoted his magnificent genius to versifying Spencer's *Synthetic Philosophy*, or Swinburne to have subordinated his splendid gifts to the poetic presentation of Darwin's *Origin of Species*. But Lucretius' presentation of the hidden truths of nature hardly found any further poetic expression until the advent of the nineteenth century.

Among the qualities which science imposes in poetry are clarity and sincerity, and both these are prominent in the poems of Sully Prudhomme. Indeed, Brunetiere, a reactionary, complained that he was "too conscientious," and was too much afraid of the Sorbonne and the Ecole Polytechnique, and did not care enough for the ordinary reader. Brunetiere missed the freedom of phrases when poets sought rather to be musical than truthful, and did not care what they said so long as they said it beautifully. Granting that over-nicety is a blemish, is it not possible that poetry can acquire the exactness demanded by science without losing its charm? Sully Prudhomme has proved that it can. Tennyson, too, in our own tongue, has shown the same thing. Passages from *In Memoriam* and *The Two Voices*, as well as from *Le Bonheur* and *La Justice*, express scientific theories or metaphysical arguments as accurately as any technical treatise, and prove that it is not necessary to be false in order to be poetical.

It was once thought that the advance of science would make poetry impossible. We now know that this is not the case. There is as much poetry to be seen through the microscope and the telescope as with the naked eye. Sully Prudhomme has a truer insight into the significance of the effect of science on poetry than Keats, consummate artist that he was. Like Walt Whitman, Prudhomme does not find it necessary to use the old figures in the literary property-room. What beauty and force the metaphors of science may give to literature has been shown abundantly by Ruskin and Tennyson in English prose and poetry. Maeterlinck's *Life of the Bee*, and many another work, are examples of what may be achieved by those who can handle the new symbolism. It requires a master-hand to use the crude material excavated by science, because it is lacking in poetical association in the public mind. There is always the danger of embodying unassimilable matter. The average poet masks his incapacity by using words and thoughts which he knows are poetical because poets have used them for centuries.

Prudhomme has extended the domain of poetry.

Maybe he occasionally passes over the boundary of poetry into prose in his use of unconventional expression. The boundary line depends largely on the reader. Oliver Wendell Holmes succeeded in *The Chambered Nautilus*, and failed in *The Living Temple*, although it would be hard to say why the anatomy of a mollusc should be more susceptible of poetic employ than that of man.

What seems foreign in the poetry of Sully Prudhomme is his frequent note of sadness, "the sense of tears in mortal things," sinking at times, as in the *Vau*, into a mild meliorism. Not but what he is cheerful compared with so many French writers, who, though often joyful in life, are not often cheerful in literature. Sully Prudhomme's sadness never takes the personal and theatrical form of Byron or Baudelaire, but is clear and cold. In the last resort, like Voltaire, he bids us "cultivate our garden."

Death is to him, as to Whitman, the liberator as well as the supreme consoler, and on this subject he has written with the force and originality of a master-musician. Here is an example which preserves something of the charm of the great original. It is entitled *The Hour of Death*:—

Kindly watcher by my bed, lift no voice in prayer,

Waste not any words on me when the hour is nigh;

Let a stream of melody but flow from some sweet player,

And meekly will I lay my head and fold my hands to die.

Sick am I of idle words, past all reconciling—

Words that weary and perplex, and pander and conceal;

Wake the sounds that cannot lie, for all their sweet beguiling,

The language one need fathom not, but only hear and feel;

Let them roll once more to me, and ripple in my hearing,

Like waves upon some lonely beach, where no craft anchoreth,

That I may steep myself therein, and craving nought, nor fearing,

Drift on through slumber to a dream, and through a dream to death.

MIMNERMUS.

## The French Revolution.

### VIII.

#### ON THE ROCKS.

(Continued from p. 190.)

IN November, 1793, the Revolution had reached its most critical point. Under pressure of military necessity, and that alone, democracy had made conquests unprecedented in the history of the world. France had adopted manhood suffrage; taxes had been imposed, and prices regulated, in the interests of the common people as against the rich; and the nation had ratified a Constitution which was intended to place the Government of France for all time on a basis of the fullest democracy. The bulk of the middle classes who had no liking for these principles, and at first had no intention of applying them, had been forced to acquiesce in them in order that the country might be, so far as possible, united against its external enemies. The war had now turned in favour of France; her soil was free, or all but free, from invaders; and the democrats could not expect, now that this pressure was relaxed, to exact any fresh concessions from the reluctant middle classes. It was time for them to think of consolidating their gains, relaxing the "Terror," negotiating for peace abroad, and putting into force their hardly-won Constitution.

This was at once perceived by Danton. It will be recalled that, after helping to confer the extraordinary powers, which the crisis demanded, on the new Government, Danton had retired in failing health to his native town of Arcis-sur-Aube. He returned to Paris in November to find the organization he had helped to



create being fatally misused; the guillotine in daily use, not only against proved conspirators and traitors, as he had intended, but against men and women whose only offence had been active political opposition to, or even written or spoken criticism of, the democratic policy; the mania of mere vengeance rampant; and the rash enthusiasm of the "dechristianisers" threatening the country with a new religious feud. Danton was himself a Freethinker, but he recognized the hold which Catholicism had in the country districts, and did not wish to engage in a political crusade against it. He wanted France to be a democracy; but, if possible, a united democracy, and no ulterior programme, social or religious, seemed to him worth a civil war.

Three forces were pitted against him in his desire to lead France back to peace and constitutional government. The common people were too unnerved and too excited to listen calmly, as yet, to prudent counsels. The successive betrayals of their interests by the constitutional Royalists and the Girondists had made them suspicious of treason in every quarter; and the insurrections in La Vendee, in Normandy, at Lyons, and at Toulon, had given them the sensations of a small garrison beleaguered by enemies on every side. Danton himself had waned in popularity. The Girondists, before their fall, and irresponsible extremists since then, had imputed all manner of personal and corrupt motives to him; he passed over such accusations with silent contempt; and the mud stuck as mud will. He had been a lawyer in good practice before the Revolution, and was well-off, and it did not seem to the uneducated populace that a rich man could really be their friend. They contrasted him unfavourably with Marat, who had died worth only a few sous, and with Robespierre, whose studied simplicity and frugality impressed them to an extraordinary degree.

Yet Danton might have led the people successfully if he could have secured the goodwill of the Government. The majority of the Committee of Public Safety probably held the same political principles as he did—*i.e.*, their supreme object was to unite the country against the enemies of democracy, and when they were beaten, to put in force the Constitution of 1793. But the two members of the Committee whose special work was the internal administration of France, Billaud-Varenne and Collot-d'Herbois, shared the popular suspicion of Danton, and had committed themselves too deeply to the policy of the "Terror" to be willing to draw back. Collot d'Herbois, in fact, had been guilty of the massacres at Lyons, and was, by now, past arguing with.

The leader of the Government, however, in the eyes of France and the world, was Robespierre. He was, at this moment, the most popular man in France. His political opinions were by no means more democratic than Danton's, and, in some ways, less so. When Danton had been focussing the demand for universal suffrage and the Republic in the Cordeliers' Club, Robespierre, in the Jacobins', had still been for constitutional monarchy and moderation. Not until after August 10, 1792, when the Republic was virtually an accomplished fact, was Robespierre known as a Republican at all. His popularity was due to the fact that he, more than anyone else, voiced the changing opinions of the more advanced section of French middle-class thought. The inspiration of this section came from Rousseau; and Robespierre had swallowed Rousseau absolutely whole. Without original ideas or strong feelings of his own, he was dominated by Jean-Jacques, just as the English Puritans of the seventeenth century were dominated by the Bible. The Jacobins' Club, the "caucus," so to speak, of the Democratic Party, was completely in his hands, voted

resolutions and expelled refractory members at his bidding, and hung rapt on the inspired words that fell from his lips.

Robespierre was fully prepared to co-operate with Danton against the "dechristianisers." He loathed and hated Atheism, because it was contrary to Rousseau. That writer, while rejecting Christianity as generally accepted, had laid down that a "civil religion," a sort of Deistic undenominationalism, should be imposed on members of the community as necessary to morality, *viz.*, belief in a deity, in immortality, and in future rewards and punishments. While condemning "intolerance," Rousseau inconsistently demanded the banishment from the State of any one who did not believe in this minimum of religion. Accordingly, Robespierre sought to impose this "civil religion" on France, and probably cared more for this than for any other part of his programme. His personal quarrel with the Girondists had been less with their social obscurantism than with their religious latitudinarianism. He now came forward, and at the Jacobins' Club delivered a violent speech against Atheism. Atheism, he said, was aristocratic; belief in God was democratic; and he denounced the "dechristianisers" as traitors in the pay of the foreign enemy. This was soon followed by a decree of the Convention in favour of the free practice of religion, and by the circular of the Government to their representatives in the departments, to which allusion has already been made.

At the same time Danton's friends began an attack on the "dechristianisers" in the press. The talented journalist, Camille Desmoulins, who had been prominent among Radical writers from the very beginning of the Revolution, started in December, 1793, a series of pamphlets, entitled the *Vieux Cordelier*, in which he attacked in unmeasured language the leaders of the anti-religious movement, Hebert and Chaumette. The most enthusiastic of them, Anacharsis Clootz, was expelled from the Jacobins' Club, after a vitriolic outburst against him by Robespierre, who reproached him with his German extraction and his large income. Danton's friends, who were now supported by all who, for one reason or another, from public-spirit or self-interest, desired a reaction, grew yet bolder. Desmoulins, in the third of his pamphlets, denounced the "Terror" itself, and demanded a "committee of clemency" to sort out the innocent from among the huge crowd of imprisoned "suspects."

For a moment the Government rocked. The fall of Toulon, about this time, brought home to men generally the fact that the country was again out of danger. The Committee of Public Safety, however, clutched tight at the reins of power. Robespierre ceased to encourage Desmoulins. He had conceived the idea, which was to be his ruin, of using the "Terrorist" machinery, now that the war crisis was passed, to enforce his Rousseauist views on religion and the State; and he was prepared to sacrifice everyone, Dantonist or Hebertist, Atheist or Latitudinarian, who stood in his way. Desmoulins, in his turn, found himself attacked and threatened. His friend and Danton's, Fabre d'Eglantine, who had helped to draw up the Revolutionary Calendar, was arrested on a trumped-up charge of forgery. At the same time Anacharsis Clootz and Thomas Paine were arrested as enemy aliens, although both were devoted to France and the Revolution. Thus, at the outset of the year 1794, the Revolutionary Government had become a grinding tyranny, as fatal to the democrats themselves as to their adversaries.

Why, then, did not Danton strike a blow? Why did he not come forward in the Convention, point out that



the country had no further need of the "Terror," that the policy of the Government had degenerated into mere political persecution, and that the majority must pluck up courage and put an end to it? His inaction is most remarkable. His energy seems to have evaporated. Despondent remarks were attributed to him at this time, as "it is better to be guillotined than to guillotine," which suggest that the stress and strain of the preceding years had really broken him down.

It was the Hebertists, the "dechristianisers," whose strength lay in the Paris municipality and the Cordeliers' Club, who made the first move towards overthrowing the Government. It must not be supposed that they were turning against the "Terror"; on the contrary, they were as vindictive as the worst of the party in power, and even took to their arms Carrier, the commissioner who had been recalled on account of his atrocities at Nantes. They demanded the quickening of the guillotine, the extermination of the remnants of the Girondists, and the trial of Desmoulins, who had attacked them. On March 4 they appealed to the arbitrament of insurrection; but the common people did not respond. The Government struck; and Hebert and his principal associates were arrested.

Following the evil precedent set in the trial of the Girondists, the prisoners were judged in a batch; and to confuse the issue, a number of bankers and miscellaneous doubtful characters, as well as the unfortunate Cloutz, were added to the batch. After a trial on more or less frivolous evidence, nineteen of them were guillotined on March 24.

Few historians have had a good word to say for these particular victims. Most of them had made themselves odious by their identification with the policy of blood; and Hebert, the gutter journalist, was not a character in any way worthy of respect. Yet the same cannot be said of all of them. Cloutz, in particular, was a man of noble heart and intellect, a pioneer of the cause of international brotherhood, and a victim solely to the religious spite of Robespierre. Others of the Hebertist victims were zealous propagandists of land nationalization and early forms of Socialism, and were feared on that account by the Government. "Terrorists" as they were, they could not have shown themselves more ferocious, had they tried, than the Government which executed them soon became.

The Committee of Public Safety then struck at its other opponents. Danton, Desmoulins, and their chief adherents were arrested on March 31. The Convention servilely voted its concurrence. The new "batch" included Herault de Sechelles, author of the democratic Constitution, and a number of swindlers and forgers thrown in, as before, to prejudice the case. Danton defended himself eloquently; whereupon the Government obtained forthwith a new law, empowering the Tribunal to silence the defence of any prisoner who "insulted justice." Danton, Desmoulins, Herault de Sechelles, Fabre d'Eglantine, and eleven others were guillotined on April 5, 1794. Eight days later, the widows of Desmoulins and Hebert suffered, together with Chaumette, the popular and advanced official of the Paris municipality, condemned as an Atheist. Verily, the Revolutionary Government was emulating the worst of the kings and inquisitors of the old regime!

The execution of Danton was "worse than a crime, it was a blunder." Intended to preserve the Democratic Party by destroying those who threatened to split it, it took away the one statesman who could have consolidated the Revolution and headed off the now inevitable reaction. Henceforth, it was only a question how soon the "Marsh," the unorganized reactionary majority of the Convention, would have the courage to overthrow

the Government and seize the reins of power. The real leader of the democracy had been sacrificed to save a Committee of incompetent second-raters.

(To be continued.) ROBERT ARCH.

## Acid Drops.

After all it seems that the clergy will be admitted into the schools as "emergency teachers" under the plea of National Service. It is all of a piece with the English view of education that it should regard a clergyman, without experience or training in teaching, to be fitted to fill the place of a man who has qualified for the work by years of preparation. The permission for the local bodies to employ clergymen as teachers comes direct from the Board of Education, and the permission indicates the view taken of the value of education in high quarters. Anybody or anything will do for a teacher. That is, apparently, the way in which education is regarded by the majority of people in this country. And it clearly presents but a poor outlook for the national regeneration that is so glibly promised us "after the War."

The full significance of the Board of Education's mistaken policy is seen when we bear in mind the fact that these clergymen who are to replace skilled teachers are, themselves, claiming and receiving exemption from military service. Physically they are as "fit" as the teachers whose places they are to take. But the physically fit teacher is to go, the physically fit parson is to remain, and to escape opprobrium because of this specious pretext of National Service. National Service, forsooth! As though any National Service could really make good the neglect of education, and placing clergymen in the schools where their influence can be exercised for no real good, and may be productive of real harm.

Present-day religiosity is not so virile as that of preceding generations. Speaking at a meeting of the Southend Education Committee on the subject of juvenile crime, Alderman J. R. Brightwell said "it seemed a question as to whether the churches or the police would have the paramount influence. He did not know whether the love of religion or the dread of the 'bobby' would have the greater effect." Years ago the alternative would have been the fear of hell or the dread of the birch.

Rev. F. H. Gillingham, the well-known cricketing parson, complains that when the Zeppelins fell near London the people rushed about, singing "Tipperary" and "Rule, Britannia," "without a single thought of God." But what can Mr. Gillingham expect? "God" allowed the Zeppelins to come time after time, and did nothing to prevent their coming or returning. It was not God, but the aviators and the gunners, that did the trick. Without them, Zepps would be as busy as ever. When the people rushed into the streets and sang "Rule Britannia," it was evidence only that for once in a while sense had proved stronger than piety.

All but eight of the City of London churches are to be closed, and the Bishop of London says he cannot justify the retention of sixty clergy to minister to about 14,000 people. He did not add that the vast majority of the "14,000 people" were City policemen, caretakers, and charwomen.

*Apropos* of religion at the Front, in his book, *Bullets and Billets*, Capt. Bruce Bairnsfather writes concerning a priest in a French village where he was billeted:—

I am sorry to say I plead guilty to having cast a certain amount of ridicule at the Cure. He was so splendidly austere, and wore such funny clothes, that I couldn't help perpetrating several sketches of him. The disloyalty of his parishioners was very marked in the way they laughed at these drawings, which were pinned up the row of cottages.....He didn't like soldiers being billeted in his village, so Suzette told me. I think he got this outlook from his rather painful experiences when the Germans were in the same village.....He preached a sermon whilst we were there. I didn't hear it, but was told



about it simultaneously by Suzette, Berthe, and Marthe, who informed me that it was directed against soldiery in general. His text had apparently been "Do not trust them gentle ladies." A gross libel! I retaliated immediately by drawing a picture of him with a girl sitting on each knee, singing, "The soldiers are going, hurrah, hurrah."

The egregious Bishop of London, referring to the needs of the East London Church Fund, said he had been trying to explode the superstition that "you put two pennies in a slot, and out comes a vicar, two handsome curates, and a peal of bells." The pious public may put pennies in the religious slot, but, assuredly, the bishops draw many thousands of pounds annually.

Herr Jacob Schaffner, the poet, characterizes non-German nations as being "godless and partially civilized." This is strange language from an "Atheist," as the clergy describe the Teutonic peoples.

The Bishop of Birmingham is pressing the claims of parenthood, and lamenting the declining birth-rate. Why does he not pen his appeals to the bachelor Bishop of London?

Some two thousand Church of England clergy hold commissions as Army chaplains. The pay is attractive, and they do not have to fight.

The Archbishop of Cologne has instructed the German clergy to pray for victory. Still another proof of the terrible "Atheism" of the Germans.

Among the new American religious notions is a "Christian Efficiency Congress," to be held next September. We welcome the admission of the present inefficiency of the Faith.

The *St. Mary's Parish Magazine* (R.C.) says that our soldiers, "keeping their night watches under starlit skies, feel the presence of a personal God..... Their hearts and their heads tell them with certainty that there is another world, and that there is a kindly Providence." In the next column it prints an account of a fire in a Catholic Home in Canada, in which 180 insane girls were kept, and which resulted in forty-five of the poor creatures being burned to death. Evidently the "kindly Providence" was too busy with the soldiers "keeping their night watches under starlit skies." Pity it could not have paid a little attention to that Catholic Home in Canada.

The "Blue Lion," a public-house without beer, has been opened under Church auspices in Bethnal Green, London. No wonder that lion was blue.

Newspaper editors are making paragraphs concerning the Rev. J. C. Sharp, of Wood Green, who is working six days a week in a factory. Is this so novel a thing for a parson to do?

Parish magazines often contain unconscious humour. One clerical editor writes: "Girls for confirmation at St. Peter's church are asked not to wear dresses." We wonder if there was a crowded congregation?

Providence does not respect vicarages any more than churches. At a fire at St. Stephen's vicarage, Canonbury, a woman of eighty was burned to death.

The Rev. R. J. Campbell says that prior to the War England was given over to Materialism. We know that "materialism," for it was adulterated with the new and old theology.

The Bishop of Lincoln, who has just taken his seat in the House of Lords, brings the number of "spiritual" peers up to the full complement of twenty-six. Of the thirty-eight bishops, only twenty-four are entitled to sit in the House, and the two archbishops always enjoy the privilege. This is one of the privileges of the Government religion, for the Non-

conformists, who are almost as numerous as Church-people, have no representative whatever.

The Bishop of London rejoices that "agricultural labourers are at last to have a living wage." Quite touching; but the Bishop might have pointed out to the readers of *Reynolds's*, to whom the message was addressed, that his own Church has been a powerful factor in preventing the agricultural labourer getting this living wage. No single factor has been so powerful as the Church in keeping him the passive, over-worked, underpaid animal he has been. The Church of England has done *that* work more effectively than any other Church in Europe. And the result is seen in the fact that the English agricultural labourer is without a single revolt to his credit. The parson and the squire have worked too well together for that to have occurred.

Mr. W. C. Buckley, bachelor, aged eighty-five, has bequeathed over £200,000 for the benefit of the Church of England Diocese in Manchester. If any Christian retorts that we are jealous of the Church receiving this, we beg to plead guilty. When we think of the amount of good we could do with only a two-hundredth part of that sum, we confess we do feel jealous. We regret that the possession of so much money should have been accompanied by so little sense in its disposal.

The Rev. F. H. Gillingham, speaking at St. Michael's, Cornhill, said "the Church was full of decrepit deans, tottering canons, and infirm incumbents. We sing like a mighty army of God, but God help the army that moves like the Church at the present time." This is letting the cat out of the bag.

"The City Temple, living up to its reputation for modernity in religion, was crowded to hear Miss Royden, the first woman preacher to occupy the pulpit." Thus the *Daily Chronicle*. Christian ideas of "modernity" are curious, for after 2,000 years of the religion of Christ, the position of woman in the Churches is still subordinate to that of man.

The Chairman of the Lord's Day Observance Society has written the Archbishop of Canterbury expressing his deep regret that the Primate should have yielded to "the mere opinions of war as opposed to the definite commandment of God," on the question of Sunday labour. The impertinence of the extreme pietist knows no limit. We may remind such gentry of the verse in Galatians: "If a man think himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself."

Cardinal Bourne has written that Catholics may "lawfully" engage in agricultural labour on Sundays, provided they do not neglect their religious duties. Quite so; Cardinal Bourne cannot overlook the interests of the Church even in the midst of the War. We wonder that the Church has not hit upon the plan of *selling* dispensations to labour on Sunday.

"A West Country Parson" writes to the *Daily Mail* complaining that at a time when the country is suffering from a shortage of labour, he was called to a meeting about ten miles away, where, with fifteen able-bodied men, a discussion was conducted on "Foreign Missions." He complains that these calls are continuous, and asks: "What are the bishops doing?" Evidently they are practising "Business as usual." But whether we are at War or not the questions discussed by these clerical gatherings are of no earthly benefit to anyone, and if the War brings that home to people it will have done that amount of good.

The superstition of the ordinary Christian is unfathomable. One such was told of a clergyman who had gone to work in his fields on a Sunday, and recommended his parishioners to do the same; and this was her answer: "The wonder is God did not strike him dead for his sinful presumption." She was not in the least impressed by the fact that he still lived on, the only fact that counted for her being that he didn't deserve to live.



A most astonishing commodity is the Nonconformist conscience. It must of necessity be up in revolt against the somewhat more elastic faculty of the Anglican Church. Since the Archbishop of Canterbury approved of Sunday labour under existing circumstances, the Free Church Council was morally obliged to express its disapproval. The Rev. F. B. Meyer and his associates could not possibly endorse his Grace of Canterbury's disloyalty to their Divine Lord. There is nothing that blinds people like religious prejudice.

The Bishop of Oxford condemns the present spiritualistic attempts to get into communication with the dead, forgetting that, according to Church teaching, the Christian life consists almost exclusively in imagined communication with a man who died two thousand years ago.

The Holy Ghost is always working amazingly great miracles through the notorious Gipsy Smith. Every revival conducted by him is the most marvellous on record, the number of conversions having exceeded any ever heard of before. The Gipsy has just spent six months at the Front, and most wonderful results have been reaped from his evangelistic labours there. It has become the talk of the Army, officers and men alike, this unexampled success of his mission. And yet, strange to relate, he needs to go back and stay there to the end!

The Rev. R. J. Campbell says, "Our civilization has got into a cul-de-sac." Yet so many of his colleagues try to assure us that civilization and Christianity are inseparable.

A large number of bakers will not make "hot cross buns" this Easter. Schoolboys will treat this holy time with high-sniffing contempt.

According to the clergy, sacred relics have been preserved miraculously in the War zone, and the faithful Christians believe them. Yet the British and Foreign Bible Society announce that 68,000 Bibles have been lost in four vessels sunk by submarines. Perhaps dear old Providence is a humourist.

According to the American papers, under the laws of some States, it is an offence to libel a dead man, and a citizen named Haffan has been sentenced to six months' imprisonment for remarking in public that George Washington was "intemperate, a hard swearer, and a slave-holder." Perhaps someone will prosecute Theodore Roosevelt for his libellous description of Thomas Paine as "a filthy little Atheist," a record of three lies in three words.

Actors take themselves very seriously nowadays. Mr. H. B. Irving says that modern Germany had been brought up in a school of scoundrelism based on Frederick the Great. Is that so? The pious Kaiser and the German clergy seem to derive their inspiration from the "scoundrelism" of the Old Testament.

Dom Lorenzo Perosi, musical director of the Papal choir, has written a grand symphony, inspired by the world-war. The music of the hemispheres, eh?

The valiant Young Men's Christian Association has opened a hut at Goose Green, Dulwich. The place has an appropriate name.

Speaking at Temple Church, the Bishop of London said something must come out of the War. Just so! The clergy will emerge from the War—with whole skins.

Quite a large number of the clergy are out for Prohibition. Yet when they are in their Sunday-schools they profess a liking for "tiny tots."

The late Rev. Lord Blythswood left estate of the value of £105,197. If the Bible be correct in its denunciation of wealth, he should have trouble in entering the pearly gates of heaven.

A Yorkshire curate is doing shepherd work six days in the week say the newspapers. This suggests that some curates used to work only one day a week.

Mr. A. G. Gardiner, the editor of the *Daily News*, published a leading article with the arresting title, "The Twilight of the Gods." As may be expected, none of the deities of the Christian mythology were so much as mentioned.

"'Business is business' is the key to the character of Judas," says Dr. Lyttelton. Yet priests have made millions out of the Christian religion where poor old Judas made only shillings.

"The country is turning to God, but it is not turning to the Churches," says Dean Inge. This is a cryptic utterance, for in most churches they worship three gods.

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

When, under the table, my master holds out to me the food that he is about to place into his mouth, it is in order to tease me, and he punishes me if I succumb to the temptation. For I cannot believe that he deprives himself for me.

When I am asleep behind my master in his armchair, he keeps me warm. And that is when he seems to be a god. There is also in front of the fire-place a warm hearth. That hearth is divine.

Prayer. O! my master Bergeret, God of carnage, I adore thee. Almighty one, be praised. Be praised, great one. I grovel at thy feet; I lick thy hands. Thou art very great and very beautiful when thou devourest, before the table laden with abundant viands. Thou art very great and very beautiful when, with a slender piece of wood, bursting out in flame, thou changest night into day. Keep me in thy house to the exclusion of all other dogs.....And thou, Angelique, the cook, thou very great and good divinity, I fear thee, and I venerate thee, that thou mayest give to me plenty to eat.

Invocation. Oh, Fear, Fear august and yet tender, Fear saintly and yet healthy, fill me when I am in danger, in order that I may avoid that which might be able to harm me, for fear that, throwing myself on an enemy, I may suffer for my imprudence.

There are carriages that horses pull along the streets. They are terrible. There are also some carriages that go alone, puffing and blowing very strongly. They also are full of enmity. The men in rags and tatters are hateful, and those also who carry baskets on their heads, or who wheel barrows. I do not like the children who, rushing hither and thither, utter great cries in the streets. The world is full of things, hostile and fearful.

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

### Man and God.

The Food Dictator asks the clergy to urge the men to work on Sundays to remedy the food scarcity.—*Daily Press*.

THE Lord spake unto Moses,  
"Six days to work," said he,  
"And one, the seventh only,  
Thou shalt reserve for me."

There was a Food Dictator  
In a land that worships God;  
He overruled the Maker,  
"On the seventh turn the sod."

The moral of my story  
You all can plainly see;  
Man is his own creator,  
And evermore shall be. FRANK BETTS.



## The "Freethinker" and the Paper Famine.

FOLLOWING what was said last week, not very many readers will be surprised to learn that I have decided to keep the *Freethinker*, both as regards number of pages and price, unchanged for the present. After looking at the problem from all sides, and consulting with one or two friends, I think I see my way to doing this without having to face a much heavier loss than was the case last year. This deficit on the working of the paper—entirely due to the increased price of materials—was quickly made good by *Freethinker* readers, and I am confident they will respond as readily again when asked to do so. Some of my correspondents have urged me to raise the price of the paper to threepence, and so relieve myself of this source of anxiety, but that anxiety does not alarm me, so long as I see a way of pulling through. When I accepted the responsibility of maintaining the *Freethinker*, I did not expect an *easy* time. It was taken "for better or for worse," and if—during the War Period—it turns out worse than I took it for, one must just make the best of the situation. There is also the consolation that by this time I may reasonably hope the bulk of readers have enough confidence in my judgment to feel that the best is being done in the circumstances.

What I have kept before my mind all the time is the fact that the primary reason—if not the whole reason—for the existence of the *Freethinker* is that it is a propagandist organ. It exists to serve a great cause, and nothing must be done that will prejudice its utility in that direction. It is fairly certain that were the price of the *Freethinker* increased to threepence, it would lose few of its present readers. But there would be an added difficulty in getting new ones. *And it is new readers I am after.* They represent a clear gain, from both a party and commercial point of view.

The *Freethinker* will, therefore, continue unchanged, in size and price—unless, of course, some wholly unexpected development takes place. The only difference will be that for about four weeks it will be printed on a thinner paper. At a time when it is a case of getting paper where and how one can, and at almost any price, this is unavoidable. But the change will be for a few weeks only.

Meanwhile, may I suggest to those who expected to pay more for their paper, that these unspent coppers could be usefully expended in taking an extra copy of the *Freethinker* and passing it on to a likely subscriber? This will be a real help and, perhaps, a permanent one.

All I have to add is that the position of the *Freethinker* continues to be quite satisfactory. The circulation is better to-day than when I assumed formal editorship, and the little advertising I have been able to afford has borne excellent results. But in the matter of circulation my appetite is insatiable. The *Freethinker* cannot be read by too many people. So we must hang on and fight on. And when the War *does* cease, we shall all reap the advantage of our tenacity.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

### C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

April 1, Portsmouth; April 8, Swansea.

### To Correspondents.

SAPPER J. GORROCK.—Very pleased to learn that so many of your comrades were sympathetic towards the *Freethinker* on seeing it for the first time. Your remark: "This War seems to have driven home to a large number the failure of Christianity," is the one truth which is being constantly endorsed by our correspondents in all parts of the War area.

C. SIBLEIGH writes: "I admire you for carrying on in these hard times, and sincerely hope you will continue to do so until peace brings back some thousands more Freethinkers than ever crossed the Channel before." We have no doubt whatever that when the "boys come home," many of them will read the *Freethinker* who have never read it regularly before.

T. C.—We quite agree with you that a good deal of the more extravagant and emotional outbursts of religion in young persons is little more than a perverted sexualism. We have a volume in the press dealing with the subject, which we hope soon to see published.

S. LEE.—We do not doubt that the bulk of our readers would cheerfully pay extra for their *Freethinker* during the continuance of the War. If we must do so, we shall; but it will be very unwillingly. Thanks for your own offer of help.

G. DAAS (Lahore).—Will do our best to hunt up the articles named, but have been unsuccessful up to the present. Pleased to hear of the prospect of increased freethinking activity.

WARWICKSHIRE MINER.—We think the weekly quotations at the head of the *Freethinker* were greatly appreciated. We dropped them because to print them in addition to the weekly "Contents" gave the page a very "broken" appearance. Perhaps we may discover a method of reviving them.

WILL the two gentlemen from Pendleton (initials "H. B." and "J. E. C.") who gave the chairman at Mr. Cohen's meetings on Sunday last their names at Manchester, please send same on to the Editor, as the slip containing particulars has been inadvertently destroyed?

H. ELLIOT.—Letter sent as requested.

J. DE LISLE (N.Z.).—"Professor" Macintyre's address is, as you say, amusing—so far as absurdity can be described as such. And it is fortunate that absurd statements usually do have an amusing aspect. It helps to make us more tolerant of those who make them.

"ANOTHER SCOTTY."—Crowded out of this issue. Shall appear next week.

W. H. HARRAP.—We have the fullest sympathy with the attempts to re-organize our land system. It is about the worst in Europe. But our hands are really too full of other matters to take it up as part of our work.

FREETHINKER SUSTENTATION FUND.—Manchester Man, 3s.; P. C. Harding, 5s.

J. A. LEIPER.—Will try, next week.

*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. 4 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. 4.*

*Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, 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.

Will all those who have written concerning the *Freethinker* and the paper famine please take this note as an acknowledgment of their communications. The letters have been too numerous for us to thank each writer separately. All who have written are unanimous in the promise of their full support, whether we raise the price of the paper, or continue as it is, making good the deficit in some other manner. The assurance of their confidence is deeply appreciated, and it sends us forward with renewed courage.

Mr. Cohen's meetings at Manchester on Sunday last were splendidly successful, and augur well for the revival of work in that city. Both afternoon and evening the hall was filled, and the audience appeared to highly appreciate the lectures. There was also a good sale of literature, and at the conclusion of both meetings the names and addresses taken of intending members for the new Branch.



At the business meeting on the Saturday evening, at which Mr. Cohen presided, it was resolved that the Executive be asked to dissolve the old Manchester Branch of the N. S. S., and to sanction the formation of a new one. This was done with the full acquiescence of the old members; so there will be no real break, and their co-operation is assured. But this was felt to be the best method of insuring smoothness and efficiency in working. A provisional committee was appointed, and steps are to be taken to secure a permanent meeting-place. Whether arrangements can be made to secure the tenancy of the old hall, or whether it will be found advisable to secure a new headquarters, will be settled as soon as possible. Meanwhile, all who are willing to help in any way should communicate at once with Mr. S. Pulman, 68 Tib Street, Manchester.

To-day (April 1) Mr. Cohen delivers two lectures in the Trades' Hall, Fratton Road, Portsmouth. The afternoon meeting is at 3 and the evening at 7. We hope the local "saints" will make a special note of the time and place of the meetings. On Sunday next (April 8) Mr. Cohen lectures in the Elysium Hall, High Street, Swansea, at 2.30.

Last week we wrote a brief note regarding what can only be called the infamous treatment of a witness in the Clydebank Police Court. A Mr. Charles Stewart, whose address the court officials decline to give, and which we have been unable to obtain, was a witness in a case of theft. When he presented himself before the court he was invited to take the oath, but declined and desired to affirm. The following then transpired:—

Mr. Hepburn: What is your reason for that?  
 Witness: Because I don't believe its right.  
 Mr. Hepburn: What Church do you belong to?  
 Witness: I am not a member of any Church.  
 Mr. Hepburn: Why not take the oath?  
 Witness: I'll affirm, but I will not take the oath.

Mr. Stewart was then ordered to stand down, and at the close of the court, Superintendent and Deputy Chief Inspector Mackay had the accused brought to the bar of the court and informed the magistrate that he would have the case reported to the Burgh Fiscal. We have received information from a correspondent who tried to obtain the witness's address from the court, and who interviewed a reporter in the court, who affirms the accuracy of the above, and adds that the court officials did all they could to browbeat the man into taking the oath. The whole incident is disgraceful. We intend bringing the matter before the N. S. S. Executive, and it will be seen whether the authorities cannot be moved to take some action in the matter. It is monstrous that mere police court officials should be permitted to so openly set the law at defiance. Meanwhile we should be obliged if some of our Scotch readers could furnish us with Mr. Stewart's address?

The Pioneer Press has secured a limited supply of fine works all of which will prove more or less interesting to our readers. These will be found described in the advertising pages of this issue. The Hon. A. J. G. Canning's three works are sufficiently descriptive in their titles. The biography of William Hone, published in 1912, is a most interesting volume, and deals with one of the group of early nineteenth century reformers which played such a prominent part in the struggle for a free press and for free speech. His trials before Lord Ellenborough and Mr. Justice Abbott for publishing parodies of the Athanasian Creed and the Church Catechism are famous, and the account in Mr. Hackwood's work is well done. *The English Woman*, by David Staars, is an interesting and suggestive study of the woman question, published in 1909, on evolutionary and historical lines. That we commend to our readers with every confidence.

With the exception of a small number of copies—a little over 100—the edition of Mr. Cohen's *Determinism or Free Will?* is exhausted. The remaining copies have the covers soiled, so it has been decided to strip off the soiled paper wrappers and bind them in cloth. These will be sold at 1s. 9d. per copy, and we have no doubt that many will prefer

the work in cloth to any other form. As the number in hand is very limited, those who require a copy should apply at once. It will not be advisable to reprint the book until the supply of paper becomes greater than is the case at present.

## The Monarch of Cereals.

THE problem of the human food supply is always with us. The increased population, more and more concentrated in urban areas, in every part of the civilized world, provides a constantly decreasing proportion of agricultural workers. For various reasons, the leading nations, strenuously devoted to industry and commerce, ran grave risks of forgetting the eternal verity that all forms of wealth are ultimately derived from the soil. Not merely do we depend upon Mother Earth for our animal and vegetable products and by-products, but we are equally her debtor for all the coal, iron, clay, oil, and other raw materials utilized in the maintenance of modern civilization. Even before the World-War overwhelmed us there was a decided rise in the price of food, and this upward movement has been steadily progressing throughout the period of bloodshed and sacrifice of the accumulated savings of centuries, which has now set its seal on human kind.

We must procure bread, and whether it contains rye, maize, rice, potatoes, or any other plant product, it is essential to our very being. Important as the many cereal and leguminous foods are, and some 800,000,000 of the earth's inhabitants rely upon rice as their main sustenance, the wheat grain must, nevertheless, be regarded as the leading cereal of human consumption. Surveying the globe as a whole, wheat forms the chief food of man. Both from the standpoint of monetary value and quantity grown, wheat is the king of cereals. Yet, even in the immense corn lands of America, maize, or as it is termed "corn," is the grain crop most extensively cultivated in the United States. In 1899, the estimated value of maize raised in the States was 828,000,000 dollars, while the wheat produced was valued at 370,000,000 dollars only. And in 1906 the respective figures for corn and wheat were 1,100 and 450 for American farms, while the entire earth's annual harvesting and consumption of wheat was in 1908 nearly 3.5 billion bushels.

But while in special areas rice and maize are grown in enormous quantities, the wheat plant is of world-wide cultivation. The amount of wheat milled for human needs is greater than that of all the other cereals put together. In his authoritative volume, *The Book of Wheat*, Professor Dondlinger states that—

62 per cent. of all cereal products milled in the United States during 1900 were from wheat. It is essentially a bread cereal. Bananas, rice, potatoes, and other soil products will sustain a greater population on a given unit of land than wheat will, but they are not so well adapted to a high standard of living. Herein lies the present and increasing importance of wheat, for it seems to be the tendency of the civilized world to raise its standard of living. As the standard of living rises, wheat becomes a relatively more important part of human food. Rye and oats furnished the bread of the great body of the people of Europe during the Middle Ages. Wheat was high-priced and not extensively grown. England early became a wheat-eating nation, France and the other Latin countries followed later. Rye is still extensively used in Germany, but is gradually being superseded by wheat. Even Russia is using more wheat flour than she did twenty years ago.

Wheat is the world's premier food-plant, and for several reasons. Its nutritive qualities, particularly when eaten in the form of whole-meal biscuits or



bread, are very great. The plant varies considerably—over one thousand varieties are known to botanists—and it readily adapts itself to dissimilar climates and soils. It is easily grown, and lends itself to the most economic methods of preparation for use, while the farmer eyes it approvingly in the light of its rapid and bountiful return for the cost and labour bestowed on its cultivation. And in addition to the wheat-kernel baked into bread, the plant supplies several subsidiary products, which greatly amplify its economic and industrial importance.

The rich golden grain of the ripened wheat as we behold it in the harvest-time does not, and never did, exist in uncultivated Nature. This is the outcome of artificial selection, and it has been developed from a wild waving grass. Its genesis, as a cultivated plant, is shrouded in prehistoric darkness, and its geographical origin is still a matter of conjecture. Before the dawn of history, wheat was cultivated by the late Stone Age people, whose dwellings have been discovered in the Swiss lakes. These ancient lake-dwellers, even in their day, were acquainted with at least four varieties of wheat.

Thousands of years before our era the wheaten staff of life was known in China, and it was also a carefully tended crop in Palestine and Egypt in ancient times. Wheat is referred to in the records of all extinct Old World civilizations, and its cultivation antedates all known tongues. It is evidently derived from the early attempts of primitive man to rear and garner the grasses of the field. Many regard Mesopotamia as its birth-place, and there exists some evidence to show that wheat once flourished in a wild state along the valleys of the rivers Tigris and Euphrates, and it may have spread from that region in all directions. Homer declares that wheat grew wild in Sicily, and Siculus shared his belief. Manetho, the Egyptian annalist, attributed its creation to the goddess Isis. Even in his period the cultivation of corn seems to have extended back in the Nile country for many thousands of years. Its introduction into America dates from the discovery of that continent. Maize was previously the chief corn crop in the New World, and although it has been asserted that a wheat plant was native to Chili, this claim has been examined and rejected by no less an authority than Humboldt.

Scientifically, wheat ranks as a member of the grass group, and is in reality a vastly improved form of grass. Wild barley and wild rye are its near relatives. Other plants closely akin to it are various worthless weeds, while that abominable pest to the husbandman, quack-grass, is not a distant if disreputable relation. But, to its credit, several valuable forage plants are its cousins, rye-grass among them. The wild cattle-feeding grasses, which grow so luxuriantly in Southern Europe, are probably the plants from which wheat has been developed. Various species of the genus *Ægilops*—the grasses in question—cross freely with the cultivated wheats. Recent attempts have been made to evolve wheat from these rude grasses, and it is highly probable that, given sufficient time, a very useful wheat could be evolved with heads bearing many grains, instead of the single miserable grain now borne on each stalk by these wild wheats of the South.

The arable areas devoted to wheat in all quarters of the world have been gradually increasing for many years. During the latter half of the nineteenth century it is estimated that the great centre of wheat production in the United States spread 680 miles in a westerly direction and nearly 100 towards the north. The growth of this grain has been steadily extending from the temperate regions, both towards the Tropics and the Poles. Agricultural authorities, like military experts, have been much mistaken. That wheat could be profitably raised in

Siberia or Canada in latitudes north of the 55th parallel was dismissed as chimerical. But this contention had to be abandoned as the cultivation of wheat travelled further and further towards the Arctic circle. In 1900 and 1901, spring wheat, buckwheat, and other cereals were ripened at Sitka, Alaska, which lies 56 degrees north latitude. Various cereals, including wheat, have been most successfully harvested several degrees further north in Canada, while experiments prove that corn culture is practicable quite near the Poles in normal seasons. For example:—

Spring wheat and winter rye have matured perfectly 65 degrees 50 minutes north latitude at Rampart, about 200 miles from the Arctic circle, and at Dawson, equally as far north, over 1,000 miles north of the United States.

Of course, the crop is more precarious in these high latitudes, and barley, oats, and rye will ripen in colder regions than wheat. Wheat will flourish in lands situated from 20 to 25 degrees south or north of the equator. It thrives in Cuba, South Africa, and Southern Brazil within these limits. It is also interesting to observe the heights at which the grain will mature. At the equator it flourishes in the mountain plains of Ecuador and Colombia at an elevation of 10,000 feet above sea-level. The United States census of 1880 shows that—

over 80 per cent. of the grain was grown at an elevation between 500 and 1,500 feet above sea-level. In 1890, the altitudes at which wheat was raised varied from 100 feet below sea-level to over 10,000 feet above sea-level, and about 70 per cent. was raised between 500 and 1,500 feet elevation.

In England, wheat does not succeed in elevated areas, but in Southern Italy the plains and hill slopes favour its growth, and it will mature at a height approaching 2,500 feet. In a damp atmosphere, such as ours, the late spring frosts of the upland areas tell against the profitable growth of the grain. Wheat, however, has been husbanded in the Himalayas at an altitude of 11,000 feet, and it is quite likely that a hardy wheat will be evolved by Burbank, or another scientific plant breeder, which will prove immune to the most inclement conditions which are experienced outside the regions of perpetual snow.

There are innumerable varieties of wheat, and this need awaken no surprise. Man has carried the plant to every part of the habitable globe, and the various climates, soils, and other surroundings have caused the cereal to transform itself in the most remarkable manner. Like the cotton plant, wheat displays extensive capacity for variation, and this instability of type renders any exact classification of its most diverse forms a matter of difficulty. Not only do special regions prove themselves peculiarly adapted to the cultivation of given varieties, but there is the added fact that the plant easily accommodates itself to new conditions in the most striking manner. Then there are the wheats which yield most abundantly when sown in autumn, and those that thrive best when planted in the early spring. Carlton, the famous expert of America, tells us that—

about two-thirds of the wheat raised in the United States is winter wheat. Nearly 90 per cent. of the wheat grown in Russia is spring wheat. In Canada, Manitoba raises spring wheat exclusively, but Ontario and Alberta raise some of the winter variety. In Germany, over 90 per cent. of the wheat grown is of the winter variety, which is largely grown over Southern Europe and the British Isles.

A good illustration of the economic importance of certain varieties of wheat is furnished by the estimate of Professor Hays that the introduction of one variety into Minnesota, known as "Minnesota 169," "has increased the yield of that State from 5 to 10 per cent." Scientific agriculturists, in 1900, after careful experi-



mentation with 1,000 varieties of wheat gathered from the various wheat countries of the world, arrived at the conclusion that, when tested by American standards, there exist 245 pronounced varieties of the cereal. No single kind can claim pre-eminence in all respects, and the value and importance of each must be determined by soil and climate, and the end for which any particular variety is designed.

(To be continued.) T. F. PALMER.

## Science and Spiritualism.

### IV.

(Continued from p. 182).

There are, indeed, always to be found some who are fond of dwelling on instances of the marvellous, as if opening a door to the supernatural; and others, who perhaps confusedly and inadvertently use language to the effect that we are surrounded by wonders and miracles, inscrutable to our faculties. But, as before observed, there are no real mysteries in nature: what is to-day a miracle, may become a well-known phenomenon, subject to law, to-morrow; and assuredly will eventually be so, if inductive inquiry be steadily carried out. The supernatural continually recedes and disappears from our view, and the dominion of nature, order, intelligence, daily advances.—*Professor Baden Powell, "The Order of Nature" (1859), p. 473.*

History teems with delusions, and neither talent nor integrity, piety nor singlemindedness, religion nor law, nor all of them combined, have proved a safeguard against them.—*Brewer, "Dictionary of Miracles" (1884), p. xiv.*

A mystery and a trick are generally two sides of the same object, according as it is turned to the view of the beholder.—*Robert Hall, "Miscellaneous Works," p. 383.*

EVEN expert conjurers have themselves been deluded by spiritualistic physical phenomena. The great Robert Houdin himself testified to the clairvoyant powers of the Frenchman, Alexis Didier, after a visit he paid him in 1847. "Bellachini, Court conjurer at Berlin, in December, 1877, executed a solemn declaration before a notary to the effect that not only had he failed to discover any mechanical means by which the phenomena occurring in Slade's presence could have been produced, but that he regarded it as impossible to explain these occurrences by prestidigitation of any kind." Even the redoubtable Mr. Maskelyne, thirty years ago, put it on record that the movements of a table at a seance he had witnessed were not due to muscular force or trickery, but to some kind of "psychic or nerve force." It is needless to say that Mr. Maskelyne does not hold that opinion now. Harry Kellar, another famous conjurer, after his first seance with Eglinton, was of opinion that the slate-writing "was in no way the result of trickery or sleight-of-hand." Dr. George Herschell, a well-known amateur conjurer, after some months of practice and many sittings with Eglinton, failed to rival the latter's performances, and expressed his opinion that "they could not have been due to trickery or conjuring."<sup>1</sup>

This William Eglinton was a worthy successor to Slade. As we have said, the public has a short memory, and in 1886, ten years after the hurried flight of Slade, we find about a hundred persons, many of them men of distinction in various departments, writing to the Spiritualist newspaper, *Light*, testifying to the marvellous spirit-writing on slates produced in Eglinton's seances. Podmore says, "In the history of the movement no physical manifestation ever won such universal recognition," notwithstanding that he had been detected upon at least two occasions of fraud at materializing seances held in 1876, and of co-operation with Madame Blavatsky in manufacturing a Theosophic miracle.

Professor Carvill Lewis had two sittings with Eglinton

<sup>1</sup> Podmore, *Modern Spiritualism*, vol. i., p. 143; vol. ii., pp. 204-5.

in the winter of 1886, says Podmore, and, "by purposely turning his head away and pretending to divert his attention, Professor Lewis was able not only to hear Eglinton's doings as he wrote on the slates, unrolled a piece of paper on which a question was written, etc., but occasionally to see the movements of the tendons of the wrist in the act of writing, and other signs of muscular action on his part necessary for the performance of the trick."<sup>1</sup>

It was this Eglinton who converted the late Mr. Stead to Spiritualism. Mr. Stead was so impressed by Eglinton's performance that he suggested a seance should be arranged for the benefit of Mr. Maskelyne and a mutual friend. Mr. Maskelyne consented to attend; "but," says Mr. Maskelyne, "Eglinton flatly refused to meet me under any conditions whatever."<sup>2</sup> Thereupon, Mr. Maskelyne procured two slates, upon one of which he wrote a question. "The slates," says Mr. Maskelyne, "were then screwed together, with a morsel of slate pencil between them, and then put into this tin case, which I soldered up as roughly as possible, leaving marks from the soldering bolt which it would be impossible to reproduce, and which were photographed. I sent this case to Mr. Stead, desiring him not to let Eglinton know that it came from me, but to tell him that if he could get an answer written inside, it would be of the greatest possible advantage to Spiritualism, and would make a convert of a great antagonist who had promised to proclaim the result to the world. Eglinton was to be allowed to take the slates home with him and keep them as long as he pleased. He promised to do so, but he ultimately refused to have anything to do with the test."<sup>3</sup>

"Subsequently," says Mr. Maskelyne:—

Mr. Stead arranged with my son to photograph a spirit under conditions which would preclude the possibility of trickery. To this end, Mr. Stead endeavoured to find a medium of unimpeachable character, but was informed by the spiritualists that they only knew of one—a lady who had left for Australia, and therefore was not available. Some months afterwards, I received a letter from Mr. Stead, saying that he had met with a wonderful materializing medium, and desired that we should attend to photograph a spirit at a seance to be held the next day; but as usual, the next post brought the information that the medium had been taken ill, and the seance was postponed. Since then the camera and accessories have been constantly in readiness, but we are still waiting.<sup>4</sup>

The wonderful lady medium was Mrs. Mellon, who, as we have seen, was exposed at Sydney.

In 1853, five years before his death, Robert Owen, the great reformer, was converted to Spiritualism by the tricks of Mrs. Hayden, an American medium on a visit to England, through whom, Owen declared: "I had then for some days various communications with the spirits of my deceased brothers and sisters, all of whom gave me true answers respecting the time and place of their death."<sup>5</sup> Communication with the "spirits" at Mrs. Hayden's seances was obtained by means of raps. The visitor was given a card with the alphabet printed on it, and told to ask a question of the spirits, and to run the pencil slowly down the alphabet until a rap was heard; the letter thus indicated would be written down, and the process repeated until the whole word or sentence had been given. "At about the same date," says Mr. Podmore, "as Owen's manifesto, G. H. Lewes, in the *Leader*, had explained to his readers how the trick was done, and related that by carefully emphasized hesitation

<sup>1</sup> Podmore, *Modern Spiritualism*, vol. ii., pp. 296-7.

<sup>2</sup> *The English Illustrated Magazine*, January, 1895, p. 79.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80.

<sup>4</sup> *The English Illustrated Magazine*, January, 1895, pp. 80-81.

<sup>5</sup> Podmore, *Life of Robert Owen*, vol. ii., p. 606.



at the appropriate letters he had held a conversation with one of the Eumenides, receiving much information, not to be found in any classical dictionary, about his interlocutor's domestic relations; and had induced the table to confess, in reply to his mental questions, that Mrs. Hayden was an impostor, and that the ghost of Hamlet's father had seventeen noses."<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Moncure Conway relates how, at a seance held at his house, the famous medium, Williams, was exposed by himself and Professor Clifford, as follows:—

The method of Williams was that we should surround the table, finger hooked in finger; then in the dark he would make some excuse for changing the finger, and contrive to get those on each side of him to hook the forefinger and little finger of the same hand, leaving one of his hands free to do the tricks. Clifford had heard of that device, and warned me. When we had been seated for some time, Williams said his finger held by Clifford was weary, and proposed to change it; but Clifford in a low voice declined on his side, as I did on mine. Whereupon Williams raised the light and rushed out of the house, leaving his accordion and banjo, which I sent to him next day. Several credulous ladies who had been victimized by Williams were present, and had the detection explained to them. Williams was broken up in London by this exposure, and the last I heard of him was at Rotterdam, where the Customs officers seized his paraphernalia of wigs, masks, rag hands, and phosphorus.<sup>2</sup>

Moncure Conway also relates how, being challenged to test the equally famous medium, Mrs. Guppy, he accepted the challenge, and took Professor Clifford along with him. A dozen sat round the table; raps were heard from the spirits, ordering the lights to be put out and each one of the company to choose something to be thrown on the table. The door was locked, and the key given to Conway to hold. Various things were called for—a rose, a slipper, violets, etc. Says Conway: "Clifford demanded a small plate of artificial teeth, which were in the pocket of his overcoat in the hall. I said it was necessary to call for something not easily concealed under a dress, and demanded a large bandbox. When the lights were turned on everything was on the table except what Clifford and I had demanded. Mrs. Guppy admitted the seance to be a failure, and did not venture on any further experiments."<sup>3</sup>

Dr. Carpenter, after much experience with spirit mediums, declared: "With every disposition to accept facts when I could once satisfy myself that they were facts, I have had to come to the conclusion that whenever I have been permitted to employ such tests as I should employ in any scientific investigation, there was either intentional deception on the part of interested persons, or else self-deception on the part of persons who were very sober-minded and rational upon all ordinary affairs of life."<sup>4</sup>

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

## The Peace Council in Heaven.

[The following appeared originally in *Sondagsnisse*, a well-known Swedish comic paper enjoying a very wide circulation. As our readers will be interested in knowing the state of Free-thinking opinions in foreign countries, it is here reprinted for that purpose. We are indebted to a correspondent for the translation.]

AFTER the Great War had been in progress for two and a half years and no sign of peace was to be discovered. The heavenly dignitaries were summoned to a peace

council. In answer to the summons, the Son, the Holy Ghost, Moses, and Saint Peter gathered round the throne. Saint Peter was only admitted on his assurance that the heavenly gates could safely be left unguarded for a few hours. "There is no great demand on the gates nowadays," he said regretfully, "most people have to be sent downstairs." This statement of Saint Peter was confirmed by other members of the council, and the scarcity of new arrivals was greatly deplored by the assembly. A general opinion seemed to prevail that things were getting rather monotonous in the establishment.

After the angel Gabriel had been appointed to keep the minutes of the meeting, Javeh opened the proceedings by delivering the following discourse:

"Gentlemen,—It is time we put a stop to this sanguinary quarrel going on upon earth, otherwise we shall be made responsible to posterity for too much passivity. So far, I have been hoping that my servants on earth would do their duty and make for peace, but I find that, instead of so doing, the rascals have actually engaged themselves in the service of the belligerents. The only alternative, therefore, is for one of us to depart to earth on a peace mission, and the problem we have now to consider is the election of the one who is the most suitable for the task. Now, there can be no question of going myself, since it would evidently be useless. I have never been on earth before; I have no passport; nobody knows me; and I am therefore most likely to be interned at once as an undesirable. As for you, all of you have at one time or another been staying on earth, and know the conditions prevailing there. Who is willing to play the part of peace-maker? Hullo, where has Peter gone to?"

The latter just then returned from the gate, where he had been to dismiss a Swedish butter merchant who naively imagined he had merited eternal bliss.

"Can you undertake to bring about peace on earth, Peter?" asked the chairman.

Peter hesitated a moment. "No, Your Majesty, it's very awkward for me indeed. I have for centuries been the patron saint of the French fishing population, who during the War is making no end of money on its regular occupation, while the shores are every now and again blessed with sundry flotsam and jetsam which can easily be turned into cash. However much I should personally like to see an end to the misery, therefore, I really cannot betray the trust these people put in me. It would show a great lack of solidarity on my part to interfere. I beg to propose Moses."

"Moses has been proposed," said the chairman; "what has he got to say to it?"

The old patriarch twisted himself uneasily on his cloud cushion and replied after some reflection:

"No, Your Majesty; I am afraid it is impossible for me also. The race of people whose representative and protector I am, would consider an interference on my part highly improper. Most of my people are so heavily engaged in war-work that a sudden stoppage of hostilities would spell rack and ruin to them, and shatter many a prospect of domestic happiness. This is the actual state of affairs, and I regret my inability to act in the capacity of peace-maker. I beg to propose the Holy Ghost."

"Well, having previously accepted an apology from Peter," said the chairman, "I suppose I shall have to accept yours as well; but what about you?" he added, turning to the Holy Ghost, "I don't suppose you are governed by commercial considerations?"

The Holy Ghost shook his head and adopted a reserved attitude. "No thanks, the job is somewhat too risky for me. Look at the way I was slandered the last time I visited earth! I was then accused of being connected

<sup>1</sup> *Leader*, March 12, 1853. Cited in Podmore's *Life of Robert Owen*, vol. ii., p. 609.

<sup>2</sup> Conway, *Autobiography*, vol. ii., p. 352.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 352.

<sup>4</sup> Cited by E. Clodd, *Pioneers of Evolution* (1887), p. 138.



with a scandal with which I had nothing whatever to do.

The same, or worse, may happen now, and I won't risk it."

"There is something in that," said the chairman. "Consequently, you are the only one left," he said, turning to the Son. "You will have to go. In fact, you are the most suitable, for, after all, it is your teaching that is being trampled upon. You go down and make them respect your teaching."

"Alas, Pa," said the Son wearily, "what you say is all very well, but you forget one or two very important facts. In the first place, it should be remembered that I was 33 years old when I left earth. I should therefore come under the military scheme, and I might even be punished as a deserter. In the second place, being really a Turkish subject, I should be drafted into the Turkish Army, and instead of devoting myself to the instilling into my adherents of a better understanding of my teaching, I should be compelled to fight them along with the infidels."

It was with a countenance of utter despair that Javeh listened to this last declaration of impotence. "It comes to this, then, that.....hullo, what is that?"

An angel came flying with a telegram which had just been transmitted by wireless.

"London, 22nd, President Wilson has sent the beligerents a note offering them his co-operation in the opening up of preliminary peace negotiations. Great slump on the New York Stock Exchange."

"Great Scott!" exclaimed the chairman, "while we are engaged in unfruitful parleying, an ordinary little mortal sets to act with speed and determination. Well, let us see what this Wilson can do in the matter. The meeting is adjourned."

Everyone retired.

As Peter left the room the angel Gabriel pulled him by the tail of his coat and said: "I say, you with your French fishermen whom you are so afraid of. What about Wilson? He is the patron saint of thousands of American millionaires who simply swim in war securities, and yet he is not afraid of tackling the peace problem."

Peter waited with his answer while he treated himself to a pinch of snuff and blew his nose with a violence that shook the cloud walls.

"Well! But then, you see, he has just been elected for four years, while my patronship is fixed for an indefinite period. Now, there is that Holy Benedict of Amiens who is constantly touting after my job, so you will understand the necessity of my being shrewd and diplomatic if I want to retain the only little earthly honour I have left. Damnation! There is that knocker going again."

The old saint betook himself to the gate and looked out through the gate window. A scared voice was heard outside.

"A coal dealer are you, desiring admission," repeated Peter, imitating the vernacular of the visitor. "Oh, no! It's rather too cold for you up here, my boy; you will find a much warmer place downstairs, second division, five flights to the left, ta-ta." B. B.

#### Obituary.

We regret to record the death of Renie Santos, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Raphael Santos, of 33, Lime Grove, Shepherd's Bush, W., who died suddenly when only two-and-a-half years old, and was buried at Fulham Cemetery on Tuesday, March 20, when a Secular Service was conducted at the graveside. The parents are staunch Freethinkers, and the grandfather, Mr. N. C. Himmel, took a prominent part in the Freethought movement under the leadership of the late Charles Bradlaugh. We tender the sorrowing family our sincere condolence.—J. T. L.

## 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.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Avondale Hall, Landor Road, Clapham, S.W.): 7, Open Debate, "Is it Reasonable to Believe in God?" Introduced by V. Roger, negative.

MR. HOWELL SMITH'S DISCUSSION CLASS (N. S. S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street): Thursday, April 5, at 7.30.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Messrs. Saphin and Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Kells and Hyatt; 6.30, Messrs. Dales and Yates.

### COUNTRY.

#### INDOOR.

ABERTILLERY (New Era Union): Mrs. H. Bradlaugh Bonner, 3, "The Child and Christianity"; 6, "The Soul: An Inquiry."

PORTSMOUTH (Trades Hall, Fratton Road): Chapman Cohen, 3, "Will Christianity Survive the War?" 7, "What is the Use of Christianity?"

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