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CONTENTS.

	Page.
<i>Education and the War.—The Editor</i>	385
<i>Abraham Lincoln: Freethinker.—J. T. Lloyd</i>	386
<i>"God is With Us" (The Kaiser).—P. A.</i>	387
<i>Under a Fool's Cap.—Mimmermus</i>	388
<i>Science and Spiritualism.—W. Mann</i>	389
<i>Acid Drops</i>	390
<i>You</i>	392
<i>To Correspondents</i>	393
<i>Sugar Plums</i>	393
<i>The Twilight of the Gods.—Robert Arch</i>	394
<i>Disillusioned.—Yelsiap</i>	395
<i>Death of Mr. Julian Gould</i>	395
<i>Bowman and Others v. Secular Society, Limited</i>	395
<i>Letters to the Editor—A Question of Style: Hebert and the "Freethinker," 397; Socialist Sunday-schools</i>	397
<i>Another New Battle Song.—Arthur F. Thorn</i>	398
<i>Notice of Meetings</i>	398

Views and Opinions.

Education and the War.

No apology is needed for once more returning to the subject of religion in the schools. It is one of the vital questions which concern Freethinkers, and it involves not only educational issues, as such, but also very important questions of modern polity. Nor are there wanting signs that the Churches are resolved on making a strenuous, perhaps a final, effort to secure a firmer hold on the schools as their share of gain from the War. In this, their task is not nearly so hopeless as some people imagine. For our own part, we have never shared, and do not now share, the belief that the coming of peace will find us a nation comparatively united in the desire to achieve a social millennium. The mass of people will be concerned only with the relief following so long a period of great strain. The millions of war-weary soldiers will be too ready to enjoy a season of peace to engage in a new warfare at home. And, withal, we shall have the forces of reaction united in making good their position, taking whatever steps are needful to conserve their interests, and greatly assisted by the three or four years of sacrifice of popular liberties and social ideals which the War has entailed. No one would be more pleased than ourselves to find these prognostications falsified by events, but we greatly fear their realization. And it is idle to refuse to face facts because they are not of the kind we desire.

* * *

The Struggle for the Child.

The question of religious instruction in State schools has been raised several times of late. It was the subject the other day of a discussion in the House of Lords, initiated by Lord Parmoor; it forms the text of a Circular Letter recently sent by a Church Council to all the diocesan educational bodies in England, and in other ways one is able to arrive at the conclusion that "educational reconstruction after the War" means, for the Churches, a readiness to pay teachers better

salaries provided more religion, and a more definite religion, is given to the children. The education given, to quote the Circular Letter, is to be "alive with religious force and spirit," and "the schools of Christian England" are to be "places of definite Christian instruction." From other sources it is plain that, in the face of the loss of prestige due to the War, the Nonconformist bodies may be ready to strike a bargain with the Establishment and sell the position, as they have sold it before. A grip on the children is vital to the Churches. It is more vital to them than it is to us, because we can trust our principles to the decision of a matured intelligence. It is vital to them, because if they lose the child they lose all. It is important to us, because if we can see that the child gets a fair start in life, we have made the first step towards the creation of an intelligent and useful citizen.

* * *

Coercing the Teachers.

The speeches of Lord Parmoor, the Bishop of Wakefield, and others (it is significant that the speech of Lord Sheffield in opposition was not reported in any of the papers) together with the circular letter, make it clear that what is now aimed at is not only the introduction of more denominational religion into the schools, but also the more effective religious instruction of the teachers. The Bishop of Wakefield complained that "a teacher was trained in the training colleges on the method of imparting instruction in every subject save the one which, in the opinion of the overwhelming body of the people, should be the predominant subject in the training of character." We leave for a time the question of the veracity of the concluding words of the Bishop, and, indeed, from one point of view, the opening words are unobjectionable. If religion is a subject that ought to be taught in the schools, if it is essential to the training of children, then it is only right to ask that teachers should be as carefully trained in this subject as in others. But it means a more definite religious test for teachers. And it means penalizing those teachers who are not religious even more than they are penalized to-day. If teachers are to be carefully trained in religion, if reports on their fitness in this direction are to be considered in the granting of certificates, and in the making of appointments, it requires no great sagacity to see where it will all end. The presence of religion in the schools at all makes it difficult for thousands of teachers to avoid playing the hypocrite. If the Bishop of Wakefield gets his way this hypocrisy will commence with their entering the training college. And a profession of religion will certainly become a condition—expressed or unexpressed—of their appointment.

* * *

Tradition versus Facts.

Lord Parmoor quoted with approval a *Times* writer who said: "It is essential at the present time to bring out in no uncertain fashion the predominantly religious nature of the whole tradition of English education..... Education without instruction in the Christian verities

is far more dangerous to national life than any inefficiency of organization or inadequacy of curricula." And Lord Sydenham said that if we "neglected spiritual education the result upon the country would be disastrous. The most terrible calamity that the world had ever known could be plainly traced to misdirection." Neither of the speakers seemed to be aware of the fact that such education as the world has had, and for many generations past, has been predominantly religious. Germany is no exception to this rule, since its rulers have never failed to recognize the power of religion as an aid to their ambitions. Of all the countries now at war, France is the only one in which education has been definitely and avowedly separated from religion. Will either Lord Parmoor or Lord Sydenham say that education separated from religion has been disastrous there? And if they will not assert it of France, what reason is there for asserting that a similar policy would be disastrous in this country? That Germany has made a bad use of its educational system no one will deny. But are we doing much better when we utilize the schools to force upon the defenceless minds of children doctrines of which large numbers of educated people are ashamed, and which, as a much larger number will admit, are open to the most serious doubt? It is a prostitution of the schools to use them as a training ground for militarism, and to narrow that which should be devoted to the ideal of humanity to the promotion of imperialistic ambitions. And it is, none the less, a prostitution of the schools to use them for the perpetuation of theological doctrines which ought to have been discarded long ago.

* * *

What Freethinkers May Do.

It is to be observed that nearly all these speeches and circulars in favour of religious instruction in State schools proceed on the cool assumption that the question is one to be settled by a consultation between Christians. The great lesson that these people have to learn is that England is not a Christian country—save in the sense that the majority of its inhabitants profess some form of Christianity. And the majority is a majority in name only. On what they believe there is the widest possible divergence and the sharpest possible contradiction. But there are others beside Christians, and these form an integral part of the State. Unpleasant as the recognition of this fact is to Christians, they will have to face it. And it will be the fault of these non-Christians if they are not made to face it in the near future. Freethinkers are an active-minded body as a whole, and they take a part in all sorts of social and political movements. They can, then, if they will, make their influence felt. There is a great cry at present for reconstruction in education, and this offers a golden opportunity for action. In trade unions, in social or political or educational meetings, wherever the question of education is raised, let them bring this vital question of Secular Education to the fore. As we have seen, Christians are not slow to urge their claims, and Freethinkers should certainly not be less backward in insisting that the modern State, as it embraces all varieties of opinion, should maintain a strict neutrality between them. In insisting upon the application of this principle they are asking for nothing for themselves with which all others are not in perfect agreement. They are asking only for justice from the State between members of the State. Above all, they are claiming justice and freedom for the child—a justice that will protect it from the machinations of this or that Church, and a freedom that will permit its individuality to develop with the aid of an education based on verifiable knowledge and rational assumption.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Abraham Lincoln: Freethinker.

DR. FORT NEWTON, in his first sermon as pastor of the City Temple, stated that Lincoln was an ideal man, and that if every citizen of the United States of America resembled him there would certainly ensue an ideal state of things there. The laws would be just and humane, woman would be honoured as man's equal, "social slavery and industrial brutality would cease to exist," and the nation would be what "it was meant to be, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the service of humanity." Lincoln, so true of heart, so clear of mind, living with malice towards none, with charity for all, was a character worthy of universal imitation. Now, it is true that Dr. Newton did not formally claim him as a Christian; but it is equally true that he did not even remotely hint that he was an unbeliever. Inasmuch, however, as the direct object of his discourse was to show that "Christ is all in all," and in human life, those unacquainted with the illustrious Emancipator's story would naturally have inferred that he had been an enthusiastic follower of the Galilean. So far as the overwhelming majority of his congregation were concerned, the preacher's tactful, though not truthful, silence as to Lincoln's religious views was entirely misleading. In this respect, Dr. Newton loyally followed the example of the innumerable host of his ministerial brethren. It seems to be taken for granted in his profession that every man of genius, every heroic performer of mighty deeds, every practical lover and servant of his fellow-beings, must of necessity be a believer in Christ. When such a philanthropist dies it is customary either tacitly to assume, or openly to assert, that he was a devout believer in the Lord Jesus, though possibly without knowing it. As is well known, Abraham Lincoln was assassinated on April 14, 1865, in the fifty-sixth year of his age. During his public life he had been systematically reticent on the subject of religion. Neither in his speeches nor in his presidential messages had he been in the habit of making any reference to it. Even his Proclamation of Emancipation contained no allusion to a Supreme Being. When, on the 22nd of July, 1862, he read it to his Cabinet, Secretary Chase observed that there ought to be something about God at the close, the President replied: "Put it in; it won't hurt it," an answer which carried with it a suggestion that the desired addition would not help it either.

But no sooner was the great man dead and buried than fanatical Christians began to claim him as a great servant of the Lord. From pulpit and press the word went forth that the murdered President had lived an exemplary Christian life, General Collis going so far as to assert that "Lincoln invoked the power of Almighty God, not the Deist God, but the God whom he worshipped under the forms of the Christian Church of which he was a member." Certain letters he had written were supposed to explain his attitude to the Christian religion; but the daughter of the Rev. Mr. Gurley, who made such a statement about them, admitted her entire ignorance of their contents, and that they had been destroyed by fire.

An anonymous but eminent Christian lady told an equally anonymous friend that once upon a time the President spoke to her thus:—

I think I can say with sincerity that I hope I am a Christian. I had lived until my Willie died without fully realizing these things. That blow overwhelmed me. It showed me my weakness as I had never felt it before, and I think I can safely say that I know something of a change of heart, and I will further add that it has been my intention for some time, at a suitable opportunity, to make a public religious profession.

The late Colonel Ingersoll characterized "this falsehood," which had been related by a Mr. Seip, as "an orphan, a lonely lie without father or mother." The same remark applies to the tale that, on being presented with a Bible by some coloured people of Baltimore, he warmly thanked them, and described the Bible as "God's best gift to man, without which we could not have known right from wrong." Those who knew Lincoln personally, and his estimate of the Scriptures, had no difficulty in showing how absolutely impossible it was for him to have so spoken.

It is a noteworthy fact that not one of the clergymen who claimed that Lincoln was a Christian was able to testify that Lincoln had ever so styled himself in his hearing. The Rev. Mr. Gurley, already mentioned, was quoted as one authority for the truth of the legend; but strangely enough, it was this same Mr. Gurley upon whom had been conferred the honour of preaching a funeral sermon over the body of the murdered President at the White House, and in that discourse he had not claimed that he was a Christian—had, indeed, not said anything about Christ at all. It should also be borne in mind that Bishop Simpson, in his funeral oration, "said nothing about Lincoln having been a Christian."

We are now in possession of the testimony borne by personal, some of them lifelong, friends of the world-famed President, to the effect that he was a convinced, thorough-going Freethinker. Mr. Herndon, for many years his partner, Justice David Davis, Colonel Ward Lamon, the Hon. Jesse W. Fell, William G. Green, the Hon. James Tuttle, Colonel John G. Nicolay, and Colonel Ingersoll, all of whom knew him well, and several of whom were on terms of close intimacy with him, unanimously declared that "he did not believe in the inspiration of the Bible, or the divinity of Christ, or the scheme of salvation, and that he utterly repudiated the dogma of eternal pain." Mr. Herndon added that he did not believe "in the existence of a personal God." In addition to all, we have the clear testimony of Mrs. Lincoln that "her husband *was not a Christian.*" Surely, such evidence, derived from such sources, is perfectly conclusive in utterly discrediting the various legends set in circulation by those whose delusion is that nobility of character, blossoming into just and benevolent deeds, is possible only to genuine disciples of Christ. It is a fundamental article of their creed that Freethought is inevitably either the parent or the offspring of a depraved, wicked heart. But as the Freethought ascribed to Lincoln neither sprang from nor gave rise to vicious habits, there was no escape from the conclusion that, at bottom, he was all along a true Christian. That they were radically mistaken is now beyond all serious controversy. Like Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, Lincoln's beauty of character and purity of motive owed nothing to Christian influence, but were the natural fruit of a clean, healthy nature. He was in every respect superior to the Christian professors in the midst of whom he lived. In the 'thirties and 'forties of last century the Presbyterian, Baptist, Episcopal, and Methodist Churches of the Southern States were passing resolutions in justification of slavery as a Divinely ordained institution, which resolutions are now embodied in *The Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*, by Harriet Beecher Stowe. In 1831 "Lincoln went down the Mississippi in a flat boat at the extravagant salary of ten dollars a month."

When he reached New Orleans, he and some of his companions went about the city. Among other places, they visited a slave market, where men and women were being sold at auction. A young coloured girl was on the block. Lincoln heard the brutal words of the auctioneer—the savage remarks of bidders. The scene filled his soul with indignation and horror. Turning to his com-

panions, he said: "Boys, if ever I get a chance to hit slavery, by God I'll hit it hard" (*The Works of Ingersoll*, vol. iii., p. 143).

In the Northern as well as in the Southern States, the majority of the Churches vigorously supported the institution of slavery. As Lincoln himself once wittily put it, the advocates of abolition were "sinners calling the righteous to repentance." Wendell Phillips, William Lloyd Garrison, and Henry Ward Beecher were insurgent sons of the Church, upon whom her wrath was not seldom visited. A few men of lesser weight, but fully as zealous friends of the slaves, were brutally put to death, notably, Elijah Lovejoy, of Alton, Illinois, of whose courage Emerson speaks with glowing enthusiasm, and John Brown, of Harper's Ferry fame. The Harmony Presbytery of South Carolina solemnly resolved that, as the great head of the Church had recognized the relation of master and slave, it followed that "the existence of slavery itself was not opposed to the will of God," and that those who condemned it had "submitted their necks to the yoke of men, sacrificed their Christian liberty of conscience, and left the infallible word of God for the fancies and doctrines of men." As Ingersoll says, "it does not seem possible that only a few years ago our Constitution, our laws, our Courts, the Pulpit and the Press, defended and upheld the institution of slavery,—that it was a crime to feed the hungry—to give water to the lips of thirst—shelter to a woman flying from the whip and chain"; but it is incontrovertibly true. The Church not only defended and upheld slavery, but cruelly persecuted those of her members who had the courage to denounce it, and to advocate its abolition; and the fact remains that the man who actually emancipated the slaves in the States was outside all Churches, and did not even believe in Christ.

We thank Dr. Fort Newton for his fine eulogy of Lincoln, but beg to remind him that this man, whose "life was a revelation of the genius and purpose of the Republic, its reason for being, and its prophecy of times to come," made no secret of the fact that he was a Freethinker. To him Christ was not all, and in all. America's greatest and noblest statesman did not even pretend to love the Lord, and to "an angel writing in a book of gold" the names of Heaven's favourites he would have said,—

Write me as one that loves his fellow men.

We cannot conclude better than in the closing words of Colonel Ingersoll's lecture on Abraham Lincoln delivered in 1894:—

He knew no fear except the fear of doing wrong. Hating slavery, pitying the master—seeking to conquer, not persons, but prejudices—he was the embodiment of the self-denial, the courage, the hope, and the nobility of a Nation. He spoke not to inflame, not to upbraid, but to convince. He raised his hands, not to strike, but in benediction. He longed to pardon. He loved to see the pearls of joy on the cheeks of a wife whose husband he had rescued from death. Lincoln was the grandest figure of the fiercest civil war. He is the gentlest memory of our world (*Works*, vol. iii., p. 173).

J. T. LLOYD.

"God is With Us" (The Kaiser).

THE air with fragrance is laden,
And the meadows are decked with gold;
All Nature's myriad voices
Thy wond'rous love unfold;
Blind to thy love and beauty,
We have fashioned this human hell—
List to the song of the skylark!
Hark to the bursting shell!

P. A.

Under a Fool's Cap.

Rabelais laughing in his easy chair. —*Pope.*

I class Rabelais with the great creative minds of the world. —*Coleridge.*

Le rire c'est le propre de l'homme. —*Rabelais.*

FRENCH literature is one blaze of splendid scepticism from Abelard to Anatole France, and the name of Francois Rabelais is one of the greatest in this splendid bea-roll. The popular idea of Rabelais coincides with Pope's famous line, depicting the famous writer "laughing in his easy chair." He is pictured as one who laughs and mocks at all things; a hog for appetite; a monkey for tricks. His genius had many facets, and he has been described as a great ethical teacher, a grossly obscene writer, a reckless buffoon, a Catholic, a Protestant, and a Freethinker. To paint him as a moralist alone is to ignore the innate drollery of his character. To set him up as a mere mountebank is to forget the stern reality which underlies his writing.

To treat Rabelais as destitute of all serious purpose in art or life is a great error. Whatever Rabelais may have been, he was not a trifle. He had seen ecclesiastical life from the inside, and he hated priests with every drop of his blood. He studied Greek when it was a forbidden language, and was an enthusiastic disciple of learning when scholars carried their lives in their hands. His zeal for intellectual freedom, untrammelled by priestcraft, entitles him to rank with Erasmus and Von Hutten as an apostle of humanism.

Of middle-class parentage, Francois Rabelais was born in the fifteenth century near the lovely little city of Chinon, on the Vienne, where Henry II. cursed his sons and died. Always he regarded Touraine, its cities, rivers, and vineyards, with affectionate admiration. "Noble, ancient, the first in the world," so he called it in the fullness of his heart. His father, an innkeeper, wished to make him a priest. Accordingly, little Francois was sent at nine years of age to the Benedictine monks of Scully, so young that the white vestment was put over the child's frock. Later he was removed to the Franciscan Monastery of Fontenoy le Comte. The Franciscan vows included ignorance as well as celibacy and poverty. For fifteen years he remained there, taking priest's orders at the age of twenty-eight. Always inquisitive, he amassed that encyclopædic knowledge which he put to so good a use in his immortal book *Gargantua and Pantagruel*.

It is to this long period spent among the bigoted, narrow, intolerant sons of the great lying Catholic Church that we owe his undying hatred of priestcraft. It breaks out in nearly every page of his writings, here passionately, there sorrowfully, with a cry of rage, a sob of pain, or a mocking laugh of *sanglante derision*. He hated the "monk birds" more bitterly than even Erasmus, for his nature was stronger.

At the age of forty he came into the world a free man, at liberty to follow his studies, burning with a pathetic enthusiasm for the new learning. He threw aside the monastic habit, and became secretary to the Bishop of Maillezaïs. Afterwards he went to the University of Montpellier with the object of getting a medical degree. When he attended the lectures he was within sight of his fiftieth year, and he sat by the side of men young enough to be his sons. Two years later he went to Lyons, where he held an appointment as physician to the hospital. His friend, Etienne Dolet, the Freethinker, was already established as a printer in the place.

Rabelais' connection with the first reformers of France is certain; the extent difficult to determine. He had no desire for the martyr's crown, and he never

contemplated following Calvin into exile, or Berguin to the stake. As he humorously explained, he was "too thirsty to like fire." His sympathies, too, were antagonistic to all dogmas. "Presbyter," to him, "was but priest writ large." Luther and Calvin were as abhorrent to him as the priests. The society of Des Perriers, Etienne Dolet, and the Lyonnais Freethinkers, was more congenial to his habits of thought. Moreover, he had an intimate knowledge of the power of the Church, and of the malignity of her hired assassins.

Heretics were then handed over to the secular arm to be burnt for the good of their souls, and the greater glory of God. Rabelais did not intend, if he could help it, to be butchered to make a Roman holiday. When he was denounced as a heretic, he challenged his enemies to produce an heretical proposition from his writings. They were unequal to the task, but, nevertheless, the heresy was there. Rabelais' caution was necessary if he wished to live. Some of his contemporaries suffered severely for heresy. Dolet was burnt to death, Des Perriers was driven to suicide, Marot was a half-starved wanderer in Piedmont. Giordano Bruno, whom he had met at Rome, was also done to death in the accepted Roman manner. Rabelais had every reason for not wishing to be "saved by fire."

His writings, *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, which have kept his memory green through the ages, are a series of satires in a vein of riotous and uproarious mirth on monks, priests, pedants, and all the solecisms of his time. With all their licentiousness and freedom of expression, they reveal a heart aflame with love of liberty, and a passionate desire for the triumph of truth and justice.

It has been said with truth that Rabelais despised women. He did not write till an age when the passion of youth had consumed itself to ashes. Love was killed in Rabelais by that hateful system of monkery which has filled Christendom with unspeakable horrors. Poor Rabelais! Half of humanity was absent from his mind. Love, the central fire of the universe, the source of all human joys and sympathies, the bond of society, appears in the accursed monastic system in which he was trained as corruption and depravity. The damnable discipline surrounded Rabelais from the time he wore a child's frock till he was a man of forty, and the best side of his nature was strangled. He never loved; never even thought of loving. He had no more respect for women than a eunuch in an Eastern seraglio. Nay, more, there had even been crushed out of him that love for his mother which characterizes every Frenchman worthy of the name. As the old galley-slave used to be known by the dragging foot, on which had been the heavy iron fetter, so when the unlovely years had eaten away manhood, imprisoned with its blind instincts and objectless passions, the monk is known by his sexless mind. Thrice poor Rabelais! The priests spoiled his life. The robe he wore was to him like a bodily deformity, narrowing his view, corrupting his mind. Originally, his nature must have been very different, witness those exquisite chapters in which he describes the monks of Thelema, who motto was "Liberty."

Tradition has it that he died saying: "I go to seek the great perhaps." We may picture the rage of his opponents when the old man slipped quietly out of their eager clutches. The Catholic Church never forgets, and it was well for the old scholar that his life was not prolonged.

Rabelais went further than contempt for the trappings of Christianity, and he rejected it altogether. He hoped to cure the evil of religion by spreading knowledge, by bringing priestcraft into contempt, by widening the boundaries of thought. It was his desire that his writings

should be read. To read rationalistic thought is to think rationally, and is the first step towards Freethought. Rabelais knew as much as any man of his time, but he carried his weight of learning with a smile. He was acquainted with the book of the world, and not merely with the world of books. Liberty was Rabelais' sovereign specific for the ills of his time. Finding his contemporaries bound with chains of their own manufacture, it was his life-purpose to break the fetters and set them free.

MIMNERMUS.

Science and Spiritualism.

XV.

(Continued from p. 379.)

Mankind when they grow enthusiastic mistake their hopes and imaginations for evidence of truth, and run like sheep after every new pretender who professes to hold the key of the mystery which they are so passionately anxious to penetrate.

People in search of the miraculous never like to be disappointed.

Belief in the marvellous does not rise from evidence and will not yield to it. There is the easy answer, that infidels are answered according to the impiety of their hearts, that the gods will not and perhaps cannot work miracles in the presence of sceptics.—J. A. Froude, "A Cagliostro of the Second Century," "Short Studies on Great Subjects" (1894), vol. iv., pp. 436-454-473.

Discussion and examination are fatal to miracles.....miracles only exist when people believe in them. The supernatural owes its existence only to faith.....miracles.....never occur where they would be most effective.....A miracle at Paris, for instance, before experienced savants, would put an end to all doubts! But, alas! such a thing never happens. A miracle never takes place before an incredulous and sceptical public, the most in need of such a convincing proof. Credulity on the part of the witness is the essential condition of a miracle. There is not a solitary exception to the rule that miracles are never produced before those who are able or permitted to discuss and criticize them.—Ernest Renan, "The Apostles" (1895), p. 28.

EUSAPIA PALLADINO was born and bred in the slums of Naples, and married, early in life, a travelling conjurer, who no doubt taught her the tricks by means of which she afterwards became famous, or notorious. First investigated at Milan in 1892, she has practised as a spirit medium for the last twenty-five years; and although she has been several times exposed, she still retains the faith of several scientific men.

Among those who assisted at the investigation at Milan in 1892 were Professor Brofferio and M. Schiaparelli, Director of the Astronomical Observatory in Milan, who both signed a report expressing their conviction that some of the things witnessed could not be attributed to normal agency.¹ Professor Richet, who attended some of the sittings, though attaching great weight to the phenomena which he had observed, was not completely satisfied. Therefore, with a view to further investigation, Professor Richet, in the summer of 1894, invited Sir Oliver Lodge, Mr. W. H. Myers, and Dr. Ochorowicz, and one or two others, to his own house in the Ile Roubaud, in the Mediterranean, and later at Carqueiranne, to again meet Eusapia.

The sittings were held in "semi-darkness." The phenomena were of the usual type, and consisted mainly of the movement of furniture at a certain distance from the table, the sounding of musical instruments, grasps and touches felt by the sitters, while Eusapia's hands and feet were believed to be secured by those sitting on either side of her. Professor Richet, Sir Oliver Lodge, and Mr. Myers were convinced that some of the phenomena were due to supernormal agency. "Amongst the phenomena for which Sir Oliver Lodge specially

vouched 'as being the most easily and securely observed, and as being amply sufficient in themselves to establish a scientifically unrecognized truth,' were the movements of a distant chair, visible in the moonlight, bulging of curtain, sounding of notes of untouched piano and accordion, movement and uplifting of a heavy table, and other purposive movements of apparently distant objects; graspings and pittings of hand, arm, and back, whilst the head, hands, and feet of the medium were under complete control and nowhere near the place touched. Further, the rude outline of a large face was seen against the background of the window; little lights like glow-worms were seen to flit about; some scent like verbena appeared on the medium's hands, and blue marks were made on the under surface of a table previously examined and found clean, and on part of Richet's shirtfront under his waistcoat."¹

On another occasion, after the seance, Eusapia took Professor Richet's finger and drew it along a clean sheet of paper. The finger-nail was seen to leave a thick blue mark on the clean white paper, as if made with a blue pencil! The amazing thing is that intelligent and clever men could bring themselves to believe that spirits, who are supposed to consist of pure intellect released from all earthly matter, and far transcending us in knowledge and power, could perform such childish antics as making blue marks under tables, on shirtfronts, and paper. Did they believe that spirits carry blue pencils behind their ears, ready for such tricks as these?

It should be stated that all the investigators positively asserted that the hands and feet of the medium were under control during the phenomena. Nevertheless, when the report of the sittings reached Dr. Hodgson—the exposé of the Blavatsky fraud—he pointed out that the precautions described did not exclude trickery, and declared that all the phenomena "described could be accounted for on the assumption that Eusapia could get a hand or foot free." Mr. Myers, Sir O. Lodge, and Professor Richet each replied at length to Hodgson's criticisms, and all declared that they were fully aware of the dangers referred to. "And really," says Podmore, "to impute negligence on this point to Richet and his fellow-investigators would almost seem equivalent to imputing imbecility."²

Of course, neither Sir Oliver nor his colleagues were at all shaken in their convictions by Dr. Hodgson's arguments; and to prove their conviction, a further series of sittings were arranged for the following summer at Mr. Myers' house at Cambridge, to which Dr. Hodgson, then living at Boston, in America, was especially invited. The result was the discovery that the tricks were performed exactly as Dr. Hodgson had stated in his criticism. Myers, in communicating the results to the Society for Psychical Research, said: "I cannot doubt that we observed much conscious and deliberate fraud, of a kind which must have needed long practice to bring to its present level of skill. Nor can I find any excuse for her fraud (assuming that such excuse would be valid) in the attitude of mind of the persons, several of them distinguished in the world of science, who assisted in this inquiry. Their attitude was a fair and open one; in all cases they showed patience, and in several cases the impression first made on their minds was distinctly favourable.....I do not think there is adequate reason to suppose that any of the phenomena at Cambridge were genuine."³

However, Sir O. Lodge and Richet still maintained their belief in Eusapia, and "A few years later, after witnessing some more of Eusapia's performances in

¹ Podmore, *The Newer Spiritualism*, pp. 93-94.

² *Ibid.*, p. 97.

³ Podmore, *The Newer Spiritualism*, pp. 97-98.

¹ Podmore, *Studies in Psychical Research*, p. 183. Tuckett, *The Evidence for the Supernatural*, p. 80.

Paris, Myers returned to his original allegiance, and formally avowed his renewed belief in the supernormal character of Eusapia's mediumship."¹

But after the exposure of systematic fraud at Cambridge, the Council of the Society for Psychical Research declined to proceed with any further investigation of Eusapia's powers, and her subsequent performances have been confined to foreign investigators. In 1907 she held sittings with Doctors Herlitzka, Charles Foa, and Aggazzotti, the phenomena at which included "the breaking up of a small table before their eyes, and the impression, by radio-activity, of four finger marks on a sensitized plate wrapped in black paper—which they regarded as unquestionably supernormal."

The most elaborate investigation was undertaken by the Institut General Psychologique of Paris, who between the years 1905 and 1907 held no fewer than forty-three sittings with Eusapia. "Of the investigators the best known are M. and Madame Curie. The circle seems to have included several other competent physicists, and the apparatus employed in the inquiry was as well devised as it was, unfortunately, for the most part unproductive."² Of course, when the tests were too rigid, when they could not be got round or got over, then the sitting was "unproductive"—that is, Eusapia did nothing. As Podmore observes: "Eusapia tolerates human 'control'—she understands men and women; but she has a rooted antipathy to scientific apparatus of any kind."

And again, says the same writer:—

Her feet are generally controlled by being placed over or under the feet of the controller-observer on either side. Unfortunately, the Committee found that she suffered from a painful corn on the right foot, so that this foot had generally to be placed on the left foot of her neighbour instead of under it. As to her hands, she practically insists on the method of control already described; one hand may, as a rule, be clasped, but the other must be free, resting wholly or partly on the hand of her neighbour. This preference of hers is due, as would appear from her statement to the Committee of the *Institut*, to cutaneous hyperaesthesia, which makes it difficult for her to tolerate pressure on the hand for long together.³

We shall see the reason for this later. However, "The investigators loyally complied with the conditions imposed, but sought in various ways to devise tests which should still be valid. The really valuable part of their report is the successive rejections or evasions of their tests by Eusapia."⁴ One of the phenomena witnessed was the levitation, or floating, a stool in the air. Photographs were taken of this, which Eusapia allowed on condition that she gave the signal for working the camera. "Three of the photographs," says Podmore, "taken from a position facing the medium, show the little stool against the background of the dark curtain, apparently suspended in the air over the medium. But a fourth photograph, taken simultaneously on the last occasion from the side, shows that the stool was actually supported in quite normal fashion, by Eusapia's head. Unfortunately, Eusapia saw this last photograph, and the cameras, which henceforth lay in wait to right and left, were baulked of their prey, for the little stool was levitated no more."

With the final and crushing exposure, in America, of this super-clever adventuress, we shall deal with in our concluding article.

In reply to Mr. G. Driscoll's inquiry, in last week's "Correspondence Column," as to where he can find Mr.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

² *Ibid.*, p. 102.

³ Podmore, *The Newer Spiritualism*, p. 104.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

Maskelyne's exposure of the Davenport Brothers; I am not aware that Mr. Maskelyne did expose them, that is a fable circulated by our great and glorious free press.

The facts are these. The Davenport Brothers—there were two—came to London from America in September, 1864. Their performance was to allow themselves to be bound with rope by members of the audience. They were then sealed on chairs in a cabinet, accompanied with various musical instruments. The doors were then closed, and immediately after the instruments were heard to play, and some of them were even thrown out of the cabinet through an oval hole near the top. When these phenomena had ceased, the doors were thrown open and the brothers found to be still sealed, securely bound.

After a triumphant season in London, where they were loudly boomed by our beautiful press, they toured the provinces, and in Liverpool met with disaster. Two gentlemen were in the audience who possessed the secret of a special knot, called the "Tom Fool's Knot," which they proceeded to apply to the wrists of the Davenport Brothers, who both protested against it, declining to proceed with the performance. The next night there was a riot, and the brothers had to fly the town. A like reception awaited them at Huddersfield and Hull.

It was some months later when Maskelyne and Cooke, in their Crystal Palace performances, imitated the Davenports' tricks so well that Spiritualists declared that Maskelyne and Cooke were themselves mediums. Podmore gives the facts in *Modern Spiritualism*, vol. ii., pp. 55-60.

(To be concluded.)

W. MANN.

Acid Drops.

"The mailed fist of Germany, with the additional aid of Almighty God." will replace King Tino on the throne. So says the Kaiser, and we are greatly taken with "the additional aid of God." He is evidently a mere auxiliary. And, after all, most people would be willing to wager that if the "mailed fist" doesn't replace Tino, the "additional aid" will not.

The Vicar of Wymondham, Norfolk, complains that it is impossible "reverently" to administer War-bread because it produces so many crumbs. We wonder what exactly is the nature of the "irreverence" produced? Does the worthy Vicar find himself swearing at the Food Controller because of the mixed flour? Or is it that the people who receive the sacrament do the "cussing"?

The Governor of Greenland says that the Greenlanders "are all Christians," and they have a Bible, but no bishops. Christian Evidence lecturers will be delighted to hear that there is one country which can fairly claim to be Christian.

The *Shoe and Leather Record* announces that a Bible 5 ft. 2 in. high and 3 ft. 6 in. wide has been "built" at the Oxford Press. When opened the book measures 7 ft. 10 in. across. The binding is of morocco, and used up twelve goat-skins. The book is to be used in a "Bible Crusade." We haven't the least doubt that the size of the book will impress the type of mind usually ensnared by a "Bible Crusade." Those responsible for such things are not exactly fools, and they make no mistake as to the character of the people for whom they cater.

In the *Pall Mall Gazette* of June 9, Father Vaughan denounces the "war-time growth of spiritism in our midst," and inveighs Spiritualism in the characteristic would-be-infallible style of the exponent of Roman Catholicism. He says that a stern stand should be made to check this folly, and goes on to insinuate that the Spiritualist is a necromancer. Oh, thunder and blue ruin, if the Spiritualist is a necromancer what, pray, is the priest? A little further on he avers that "the powers of evil" proffer false promises

and empty consolation through spiritistic agents. And the "powers of evil" are, in the view of Father Vaughan, the devils who inhabit the Christian hell, that nightmare conception of panicky minds. These "powers of evil" build up "trick towers of hope that inevitably totter and tumble into the lowest depths of despair. In this the Spiritualists are but humble imitators of the Great Lying Church. These "powers of evil" and the Spiritualists differ only in degree of audacity from the Christian priest; and while Roman Catholicism has become almost endemic in some parts of the world, Spiritualism is only mildly sporadic. Spiritualists seem to hold the view that the spirits of the dead exist in close proximity to us but are separated from us by physical barriers, and only through physical media can they communicate with us. But the Roman Catholic Church "knows that any attempt on the part of her children to get into communication with the other side means the violation of the Commandments of God and of his Church." What a tremendous assumption is that of the "other side." To Father Vaughan it means the inane Christian heaven and its concomitant the fiendish Christian hell—and also limbo. What are heaven and hell but a continuance of the insolence, as Omar Khayyam terms it:—

What, without asking, hither hurried *Whence*?
And, without asking, *Whither* hurried hence!
Oh, many a Cup of this forbidden Wine
Must drown the memory of that insolence.

"Relationship with the Other World is contrary to the known will of God." With what colossal assurance does Father Vaughan make this statement? The Christian, or any other God, is merely a supposition; and the Christian God has no more reality than Odin or Zeus, or any other personification of the flood of foolishness that has ever poured over the minds of men. The "other world" is just a similar sort of guess; hence talk of relationship with the other world, and of the known will of God, is simply nothing more than babble. Further, "From what the Divine Master has told us of the Other Side, it seems clear that damned souls have no opportunity of making themselves heard or felt here." Damned souls! What foul ignorance and cruelty are behind these two words. How finely does Omar Khayyam answer:—

Oh Thou, who didst with pitfall and with Gin
Beset the road I was to wander in,
Thou wilt not with Predestination round
Enmesh me, and impute my fall to Sin?
Oh, Thou, who Man of baser Earth didst make
And who with Eden didst devise the Snake;
For all the Sin wherewith the Face of Man
Is blacken'd, Man's Forgiveness give—and take!

Finally—"Personally, I have no doubt whatever that, telepathy and trickery aside, the rest of this bad business is in reality a travesty and caricature of Satanic spirits, who, in more cases than I care to state, start their soul-snatching game with a promise of spiritual consolation, only to end it with ruin and despair." Satanic spirits! Devils! Father Vaughan still believes in hell and hell-fire, and he, presumably, is of opinion that all non-Catholics ought to be roasted in twentieth-century Smithfield fires for the benefit of their souls. Satanic soul-snatching! Puerility of puerilities! Is it not time that the world was purged of Hebrew absurdities and insanities, of Christian babblings and vain imaginings, of the carrion of the crucifix, of the inanities of present-day theological divisions, of the obstacle that all these make against the progress of mankind. What is behind Father Vaughan's utterance is trade rivalry. He sees dangerous competition in the spread of Spiritualism. Therefore, he loudly advertises the Old Firm, "Look here," he shouts, "we have the real goods." But neither has the real goods; both are charlatans.

In view of the electoral privileges shortly to be given to women, the Bishops are wondering how they can keep women in the Church, and they are considering a modest proposal for a larger share of Church government to be extended to the ladies. It must be hard for parsons to regard women as human beings.

The *Daily Chronicle* recalls Dr. Joseph Parker's Thursday services at the City Temple, and mentions a number of well-known people who were attracted by them, and concludes with the tantalizing remark, "one of London's Agnostic leaders" has been "seen listening intently." What a pity that the poor journalist's memory gave way when he got so far as the "Agnostic leader."

A merciful Providence is not disturbed by the European War, in which many millions of soldiers, sailors, and civilians have lost their lives. In a recent tornado which swept through the State of Illinois 300 men, women, and children were killed.

The Bishop of Birmingham has said the nastiest thing of Mr. Wells' *God, the Invisible King*, for he asserts, "I believe that the writer of the fourth gospel and Mr. Wells would have had a good deal in common." And Mr. Wells plumes himself on the idea that he is an up-to-date man.

Two local curates are acting as tram conductors on Chatham trams, and are already adepts at collecting fares. The remaining clergy are attending the fair at parochial functions.

Cardinal Bourne has sent a telegram to Cardinal Gibbons congratulating the Americans on joining the Allies, and the Yankee Cardinal replied that the fight is for "All that Christianity represents." Yet millions of Catholics are fighting in the ranks of the Central Powers.

"If we had sat still and dared nothing, the women and children of Britain would have been treated as those in Belgium," says the Bishop of London. Yet that is precisely what the clergy have done, for they are entirely exempted from military service.

The lunatics at Caterham Asylum have hitherto had the benefit of the spiritual ministrations of a chaplain, who was paid £300 a year. This sum has now been reduced to £200 yearly, in order to save money in war-time.

Our Christian editors are getting demoralized by a three years' War. Most of them allowed about twenty lines to the awful earthquake at San Salvador, in which 60,000 people perished. Yet the Salvation Army flag day received a full column of appreciation. Perhaps the last-named was paid for at the usual advertisement rates.

The Rev. Dr. C. H. Watkins told the Baptist Church at Myrtle Street, Liverpool, on retiring from the pastorate, that "if we were really prepared to stand by and live by Grace, it would revolutionize the world." So it would, most certainly; but the world wouldn't be worth living in then. To live by faith would be to trust God rather than self; to transfer our citizenship from earth to heaven; to depreciate and despise the present life except as merely a preparation for the life to come; to set our affection on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth, and such a life would be an unspeakable absurdity.

No one has ever lived by grace, and there is nothing to indicate that any one will ever do so. Professing Christians live very much like other people, and differ from their neighbours only in cherishing certain unnatural beliefs, and in going in for frequent orgies of emotional intoxication. Christians after the New Testament pattern would be despicable parasites, and the world wouldn't tolerate them. Happily, all the clergymen on earth will never succeed in persuading their hearers even to attempt to live by grace.

Dr. Watkins is amazed that people "are afraid to trust God with hell," the reverend gentleman himself being quite willing "to trust him with a thousand hells." It would be fully as easy to trust him with ten million hells, for both God and his hells are nothing but theological myths which are ceasing to exert any influence over the modern mind.

The belief in hell is already practically dead, and that in God is dying fast.

The clergy are not so cocksure that the Germans are Atheists as they once were. The Rev. J. H. Shakespeare says: "It is perplexing that a country which has been so largely under the influence of Lutheranism should appear almost unanimously to approve of every possible violation of moral and humane considerations." It is only natural that a minister should find the failure of Christianity a "perplexing" matter.

The Bishop of London has been pouring ridicule on conscientious objectors, and he added that his own conscience was "absolutely at peace." The declaration is not surprising. Does not the bishop enjoy a salary of £200 weekly for preaching the gospel of poverty?

There is a suspicious Catholic flavour in the newspapers, which looks as if the journalists were inspired by propagandist motives. Great prominence is given to all the utterances of the Pope and the leading Cardinals, and even the War-news is tinged with Catholic sentiment. One Sunday newspaper printed a quarter-column account of the destruction of a stone angel outside Rheims Cathedral, and the statue was referred to as a "celestial messenger." And all this happens in a time when space is valuable owing to the paper famine.

The Bishop of Birmingham, who has had his portrait reproduced in the newspapers in full war-paint as an Army chaplain, says Christians go through life as learners, and at the close pass hence with Goethe's cry on their lips, "More light!" Yet, if Christianity be true, more people "pass hence" into the "light" of the everlasting bonfire.

Evangelists have many affinities to South Sea Islanders and other uncivilized people, but it is rare that they give themselves away so completely as Prebendary Carlile. Preaching at Holy Trinity Church, Kingsway, he said they had been very fortunate as regards the number of Church Army huts destroyed by the Germans. "When I say this, however, I should also say, 'Touch wood,'" he added. Yet clergymen are astonished that intelligent people no longer regard them as "pastors and masters."

We clip the following from a review in the *Daily Mail* of "Papers from Picardy," by two Army Chaplains. The authors are describing how and why some soldiers pray:—

It is not perhaps a very high type of prayer, it is purely individual, self-centred, and inspired by fear. At one time, especially during the early stages of the war, we heard a great deal about religious revival and a new turning to prayer. There is a story that during a lull in a heavy bombardment a man emerged from a dug-out and shouted inquiries to a neighbouring shelter: "You all right in there, mate?" "Yes, so far, but some of them b—— shells come b—— close." "What have you been doing while it was going on?" "Well, as a matter of fact, we've all been saying our prayers." "So've we—we've been praying like hell."

The majority of soldiers, we imagine, don't even "pray like hell." They simply don't bother about it.

Rev. Andrew Ritchie, of Glasgow, advises that little attention be paid to the thrilling stories of the conversions of soldiers. They are due, he says, "to the inexcusable blindness of the people who told them, or they are pure bunkum." In other words, they are simply not true, and clergymen, such as the Bishop of London and others, when they told their tales were—well, call it romancing. We could use a stronger term, and in business, or politics, or science, or literature, if a man deliberately stated the thing that was not he would be called a liar. But in religion greater latitude is permitted.

English Nonconformity will soon be an American colony. Dr. Newton, of Grand Rapids, Michigan, U.S.A., is now the minister at the City Temple, and Spurgeon's pulpit is occupied by the Rev. Dr. Dixon, another Transatlantic theologian.

If this goes on, English Dissenters will be talking the great American language.

The *Record* has published a first list of signatures it has invited in favour of a Day of National Prayer in connection with the War. Apart from several bishops and other professional defenders of religion, the names include a large number of mayors, who are mostly successful shopkeepers. As Christianity is now a business, the result of the canvass is not surprising.

The members of the Foodstuffs Committee at Ammanford, South Wales, have issued a decree that all persons found working on allotments on Sundays will be prosecuted. The decree is ridiculous and unenforceable, but it is an indication of the mental character of the Committee. We take the information from the *South Wales Daily Post*, but it sounds as though some one had been pulling the editor's leg.

Another paper, the *South Wales Daily Echo*, has the following:—

The Sunday diggers have won a notable victory at the Heath Allotment, Cardiff, where a notice was put up strictly forbidding work on the Sabbath. A Government inspector, so the story goes, visited the scene and gave the authorities twenty-four hours' notice to delete from the board the prohibition command. And they did so quickly.

It is certain that none of these strict Sabbatarians would protest against a battle being fought on a Sunday, or a raid repelled on the Sabbath. Where their own skins, pockets, or stomachs are concerned they are rational enough. It is only when they can do so with immediate safety that their bigotry becomes active.

The head of the American Young Men's Christian Association detachment that has visited England is Dr. Eddy. We wonder if he is related to Mrs. Eddy, the founder of the Christian Science Movement.

The piety of the average pressman is peculiar. The *Daily Express* says it is "almost incredible that any man can doubt" the story of Adam and Eve. The *Express* is very slow in matters intellectual.

Mr. Arthur Henderson dubs the Russian Revolution "the greatest miracle since the beginning of the War." The poor angels of Mons have soon been forgotten.

"The War seems to have made everyone braver," says Dr. Wynn Westcott. Always excepting the dear clergy, who prefer to console the girls the soldiers have left behind.

Over 123,000 children were displaced by the military occupation of elementary schools last year, and members of teachers who have joined the Army have been replaced by parsons. No wonder the Bishop of Chelmsford thanks God that the War is going on.

You.

- You can help us by introducing the *Freethinker* to your friends and acquaintances.
- You can help us by inducing your newsagent to display a copy in his window or paper-rack.
- You can help by leaving your copy, when read, in train, or tram, or 'bus.
- You can help by taking an extra copy and posting it to a likely subscriber.
- You can help by sending us the name and address of anyone whom you think would care to receive a copy.
- You can help in other ways, which your own ingenuity will suggest, to make the *Freethinker* a greater power in the land, and a more potent factor in the cause of enlightenment and progress.

To Correspondents.

- W. BROWNLEE (N.Z.).—Thanks. Shall appear.
- J. BREESE.—We should be very pleased to publish brief notes from *Freethinker* readers as to how they first became acquainted with this paper, and its influence upon them. We agree with you they would prove interesting reading. The idea is a capital one. It remains for our readers to carry it out, if they care to.
- G. F. DIXON.—Thanks for copy of service. You will see it has been used. We have no doubt that when the time comes for making good the deficit, our friends will rise to the occasion.
- G. L.—We quite agree that the pamphlet is a more effective form of propaganda than a book. But pamphlet publishing is not remunerative to either writer or publisher; which, perhaps, explains why it is not more used. But the fact remains, that in all critical struggles the pamphlet has played a great part. And one may add, it does so still.
- S. L. INES.—We do not hesitate to say that the really important obstacle to Freethought propaganda in many places is the inactivity of Freethinkers. There must be at least three million Freethinkers in this country. Just imagine what might be done if only fifty per cent. made up their mind to do something. Instead of a constant anxiety, the work would then be child's play.
- G. H. GRAINGER.—We should have no great objection to anyone using the word "God" to cover admiration of an ideal, so long as conditions did not ensure its being utilized for very different purposes. But it is quite plain to us that with all its historic associations, and its significance to the general mind, "God" is bound to be taken in a theological, and not a social, sense. We are glad to have from a new reader an impression of the "sincerity, courage, and ability" displayed in the *Freethinker*.
- A. McCLEAN.—Pleased to hear from an old attendant at Freethought meetings. We should be pleased to have a chat one day with the gentleman you name.
- J. H. WATERS.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."
- H. TAYLOR.—We have heard before of W. R. Bradlaugh's tale of the recantation of Charles Bradlaugh on his death bed. We should say that anyone who pays attention to what he says is almost past redemption. Some people are content to lie about the living. Others, of less courage, prefer to select dead men as the subjects of their mendacity.
- M. DESHUMBERT.—We are pleased to render assistance to any movement which promises benefit towards the rationalizing of life and the benefit of mankind.
- H. O. ROGER.—It may be that what you call "real Christianity" we should not call Christianity at all. At any rate, we are only concerned with the Christianity with which the world is troubled. And that this has been an evil there is no doubt whatever.
- R. C.—Pleased to see letter in reply to Mr. Runciman. This is exactly the kind of thing that we want to see done generally, and done systematically.
- J. A. REID.—See "Views and Opinions." Thanks.
- J. HUDSON.—We don't know of the firm referred to as having been bombed. The *Freethinker* office escaped, perhaps "Providence" intervened.
- E. W. DATEN (Warrall).—We are quite willing to insert a brief and pertinent reply to Mr. Mann's articles. Of course, "brief" is used with due regard to the length of Mr. Mann's criticism of Spiritualism.
- H. J. BAYLIS (Twickenham).—Shall appear as early as possible.
- J. SMITH.—The Army Council Instruction No. 179, January, 1916, makes it quite clear that a soldier's statement as to his religion must be taken down without comment, or any attempt to influence him. If a soldier insists upon being entered as a Monist, Atheist, Agnostic, or Freethinker, he must be entered as such. If the order is quoted, the officer will doubtless give way.
- F. HAYES-JAMES.—You are probably correct in assuming that the prohibition of discussions on religion in the barrack-room where your son is stationed is due to parsonic uneasiness. We suppose the responsible people are within their rights in making the order, but it is indicative of many things.
- J. BURRELL.—We have no fund to defray the cost of sending the *Freethinker* weekly to the old Secularists you name, and who are unable to purchase it. But we should regret their going without it, and if you will send us on their names and addresses we will see they are sent. The Bowman Report will be republished, as will also Mr. Mann's articles. Thanks for other items of information.

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.

Those who have taken to heart the advice offered for several weeks past at the foot of the "Acid Drops" column will be pleased to learn that their efforts have already borne fruit. There is again a distinctly upward move in our circulation, and although it is not much at the moment, we believe it will grow. We are *sure* it will, if the advice we have given is followed. Unfortunately, every gain is soon swallowed up by increased cost of production; but one day we ought to reap the reward of all our struggles. Meanwhile, we thank most heartily those who have been working to secure new readers.

At last the London County Council has made a move in connection with its unwarranted prohibition of the sale of literature in the parks. Mr. J. Neate, Secretary of the Bethnal Green Branch of the N.S.S., has been served with three summonses for having sold the *Freethinker* on three particular dates. The summonses are returnable on Wednesday, June 20, and as we are writing on Tuesday, the 19th, we are unable to say more than that Mr. Neate will be legally represented at the court. We shall have more to say next week. There is also another matter connected with the law with which we may have something to say at the same time.

The new Swansea and District Branch of the N.S.S., started by Mr. Cohen last winter, has mapped out a very ambitious programme for the forthcoming season, and the "saints" evidently mean to spare no effort in making the Branch a success. We have great hopes ourselves of the Movement in South Wales, and should like to see Cardiff and other neighbouring places showing greater activity. Other places in the country also ought to be soon considering what are the possibilities for the winter of 1917-18.

Enquiries have been received at the N.S.S. office from individuals in the neighbourhoods of Clapham and Battersea, Wood Green, Hammersmith, Shepherd's Bush, and Marylebone, as to the prospects of forming Branches of the N.S.S. at these places. If all those interested in the matter will write Miss Vance, the General Secretary, she will place them in communication, and a start may be made. Those willing to assist may give either moral or financial support, or both—the latter is, of course, preferable.

Mr. L. E. Tate, of 13 Brookhill Road, Plumstead, is anxious to form a Branch of the N.S.S. in Woolwich and district. Will all Freethinkers who are willing to co-operate please communicate with Mr. Tate. A preliminary meeting could then be arranged.

We bring to a close in this issue our report of the judgment in the Bowman case. This has been a full but not a verbatim report. The verbatim report will be issued by the Secular Society, Limited, at as early a date as is possible, and we anticipate a brisk demand for copies. It is a most important deliverance, and marks the opening of a new chapter in the long story of the fight for freedom of thought. In order to make the publication complete, the Board of Directors has asked Mr. Cohen, and he has agreed, to write an introduction giving a history of the case, with a survey of the general question of "blasphemy" and the position of Freethought as affected by the House of Lords' judgment. The whole will form a work which no Freethinker ought to be without.

We are glad to see that the Sheffield and District Small Traders are defying the attempt of local Sabbatarians to enforce Sunday closing. They have ordered all their members to open their shops as usual, and are calling a mass meeting to protest against this exhibition of "religious hypocrisy."

The Twilight of the Gods.

THAT man makes his gods is by this time a truth resting on a solid pedestal of scientific induction. But he who makes can also unmake. And if the story of god making is interesting, that of god-unmaking, in past and present history, is equally so.

It is an incomplete view which ascribes the unmaking of gods solely to the progress of reason. Human nature in the mass is less influenced by reason than by instinct. If reason were the only factor, gods would have been abolished altogether, whereas we see that in history the gods of old have vanished, only to give place to the Trinity, the saints, or Mahomet—each of these being scarcely more or less rational than the others.

The supersession of one god by another is due to changes in human society itself. Primitive man, as Sir J. G. Frazer has shown, deifies such forces of nature as affect him most and seem most to need propitiation. In the climate of Europe, the supreme god was the personification of the sky and weather, Zeus or Jupiter or Woden. Other gods, again, were personifications or alleged ancestors of the tribe or people that worshipped them. Worship was everywhere a State function, designed to propitiate and enlist the support of the gods for the particular city or kingdom. Their existence was self-evident; anyone who denied, to an old Greek, that Zeus existed, would be met with the query: "Who rains, then?" Nevertheless, from the sixth century B.C. onward, the Greek gods were subject among the educated classes to a constant flow of criticism. From Xenophanes to Lucian, over 700 years, various schools of philosophy held up to contempt the myths which, originally descriptive of operations of nature, looked grotesque or indecent when narrated of quasi-human personalities. This rationalist spirit had its root in social development. The spread of trade and colonization, the opening of the Egyptian markets to Greeks in the seventh century B.C., and the increase of travel and intercourse which followed the Persian Wars, enabled wealthy and educated Greeks to compare their religion with others, and in many cases to see the absurdity of them all. This enlightenment was confined to a section of the well-to-do, and did not affect the masses of the population.

Economic development had another result, in breaking up the old political and moral basis of society. The old city-state was formed by the aggregation of a few tribes for mutual protection, the tribes being primitive social groups based on assumed kinship between the members of each. The real and supposed interests of the tribe or city were the mainspring of ancient ethics. But trade, by increasing the wealth of individuals, and war, by subjecting one city to another and by multiplying slave-labour, drove a fatal wedge into this solidarity of interest, so that the fifth century B.C. found prevailing a wide opposition of interest between rich and poor, landed and industrial classes, and individuals in the same class. The conquests of Alexander the Great, and later of Rome, completed the moral disintegration of the ancient world, by destroying the political independence of the cities, and finally substituting a cosmopolitan society based on slave-industry for the old, narrow, social groups based on free agriculture.

In the absence of any visible bond of interest between different classes and individuals, philosophers sought a theoretical basis of conduct in two directions. Some, like the Epicureans and the early Stoics, attempted to show that right conduct was actually the way in which the individual could get the best out of life. Others, *e.g.*, the Platonists, identified the moral sense of man with reason, and reason with the divine nature, and sought

the right aim of life in the triumph of this over the natural man, believing that after the death of the natural man the rational part of him would enjoy eternal life in company with the Deity. This belief was linked up with the teaching of the "mysteries," originally ceremonies connected with the old nature-worships, but now, owing to the rise of the new ideas, professing to sanctify the individual and fit him for eternal life. Various primitive and local cults, such as those of Demeter and Dionysus in Greece, Isis and Osiris in Egypt, and Mithras in Persia, were diffused through the Mediterranean world in the final melting down of ancient society, and made alike to serve these philosophical doctrines.

Christian historians, on account of the affinity between these doctrines and their own, have taken for granted that the mystical and Platonic theories were morally superior, and more calculated to serve the best interests of man, than the Epicurean philosophy; and the latter has, by a sort of pious conspiracy, been represented as selfish, sensual, and shallow. The name of Lucretius alone ought to be taken as a refutation of this. The Epicureans were as much in earnest, and did as good service, in attacking the absurdities and immoralities of ancient religion as the Stoics or Platonists, and they were far more uncompromising in their hostility to it. Their atomistic metaphysics were inadequate as a reading of the riddle of the universe, though even in this they anticipated modern science in some respects. The morality of the Epicureans, in any case, was not sensual, was no more selfish or shallow than that of their detractors, and was much more rational and practical. It is impossible to read the good sense of Lucretius or Lucian without feeling the tragedy that such sound, humane doctrines should have been supplanted in the minds of men by the theosophical slush of Neo-Platonism and the lurid fanaticism of Christianity.

While these developments occurred in the ideas of the unofficial world, the official religion had become crystallized in the forms handed down from the old city-state regime. Down to the first century B.C., indeed, the decline of civic solidarity, and the rationalistic movement, had tended to bring the old forms of worship into disuse, at least so far as the educated were concerned. The attacks of Lucretius excited no resentment among the governing classes at Rome. In the last resort, however, every established government tends to be conservative in religion. Even cults which are not seriously believed in are upheld as useful instruments of government. In the reign of Augustus, the Roman ruling classes began to be appalled at the prevailing tendency to commercialism, cosmopolitanism, and utilitarianism. A serious effort was made to re-establish order, regenerate the Roman aristocracy, enforce marriage on the well-to-do, and revive the old forms of religion. From henceforth the policy of the Government was one of religious conservation. (History repeats itself; in the same way modern governments, consisting largely of individuals who are indifferent or irreligious, none the less support the Established Church, maintain religious education, and enforce the Blasphemy Laws!)

Nothing, however, can, in the long run, protect a religion which has become meaningless to the majority, against movements which, in one way or another, express their aspirations. In country districts where the old agricultural society still persisted against the competition of the great slave-worked estates, the old worships might still have life in them. But among the masses of the urban commercial centres, such as Alexandria, Antioch, Corinth, and Rome itself, among the small artisans, freedmen, slaves, and indigent paupers, who formed the bulk of the population, the new "mystery" religions flourished. These were classes without social and

political interests, to whom religions that promised eternal rewards for good conduct and compensations for suffering endured in this life, would naturally appeal. Some were attracted by the mysteries of Isis, others by those of Mithras, others became proselytes to Judaism. When Christianity appeared, an amalgam of elements derived from all these, it was bound to prove a formidable competitor. The exclusiveness and intolerance which it borrowed from Judaism, while in some respects a handicap, in the end helped to secure its triumph.

ROBERT ARCH.

(To be concluded.)

Disillusioned.

HE was a young man who took a very keen interest in the work of the Church. His parents before him had both been connected with the same church, and as soon as he was able he attended the Sunday-school. When he grew older he joined the Bible class. He noticed quite a number of the lads put nothing into the plate at the door on entering. The subscriptions were very small indeed.

It occurred to this young man one day to make a suggestion regarding the collections. He suggested that instead of leaving the subscriptions to the tender mercies of the plate, a ladle or offertory bag should be passed around the Bible class. This suggestion met with the approval of the minister and was adopted forthwith.

Instead of five shillings, which was usually the average previously, thirty, thirty-five, and forty shillings was now obtained.

At the end of the year, after paying all expenses, a considerable surplus existed. Our young man, who was responsible for the surplus, was endowed with a good supply of the milk of human kindness. The funds of one of the local infirmaries had been depleted very much of late, so our young man thought the surplus of the Bible class should be handed over to the treasurer of the local infirmary, and at the meeting of the Bible class committee he moved accordingly. The minister was otherwise minded. He thought the surplus should be handed over to the "Aged and Infirm Ministers' Scheme." Our young man tried to point out to the minister that they, as a committee, had the right to disburse the money they had raised in any way they thought proper. The minister was adamant and wouldn't yield on the point. The "Aged and Infirm Ministers' Scheme" was the most laudable object that any church money could be given to. Our young man was beaten on the point. He began to consider why should he and his like, who were making very small wages, have to give money to the ministers, who, while they were young men, were making eight or ten times more money than he ever did.

Having made a start with his enquiries, he continued enquiring ever since. The result was the usual kind of ending to the enquiring mind. He does not now go to church, Sunday-school, or Bible class. He attends all the Freethought meetings within his reach. He reads the *Freethinker* every week, likewise the many other Freethought publications. In fact he is one of the most ardent Freethinkers in his district.

YELSIAP.

My memories of the ring go back to the great day when Sayers fought Heenan, and the man who beat the Benicia Boy was the idol of England. I was a small boy at the Preparatory School for Young Gentlemen at Eastbourne at the time, but another boy—a good little boy—told me all about it. He had asked permission to go upstairs to his bedroom half an hour earlier than usual, in order that he might devote himself to pious meditation. That night, as we lay in our little beds in the dormitory, the good little boy told me all about the great fight. He had in some way got hold of a copy of *Bell's Life* with a full report in it, and it was in order to read *Bell's Life* in the privacy of the unoccupied dormitory that he had sought the opportunity of an extra half-hour for pious meditation.—George R. Sims, "My Life."

Death of Mr. Julian Gould.

THE sympathy of all our readers will be extended to Mr. and Mrs. F. J. Gould on the death of their only son, Julian, who was killed in action in France on May 31. Julian Gould was twenty-five years of age, a young man of great promise, and an artist from whom much was hoped. He joined the Army in May, 1915, and went out to France in November of the same year. The loss of so gifted a young man brings out once more the fearful drain made by the War upon the best life of the world. So much evil done in the death, so much good lost to the race in the dying. We are quite sure that whatever comfort Mr. and Mrs. Gould may derive from the knowledge that very many others count themselves as fellow-mourners, will be theirs in full and generous measure.

Bowman and Others

V.

Secular Society, Limited.

(LORD BUCKMASTER—concluded from p. 382.)

THIS objection is stated by Mr. Talbot (to whom I am much indebted for his research and the matter and manner of his argument) by saying that such doctrine offends, in the first case, against the common law, which prohibits blasphemy. He regards the essence of legal blasphemy as the publication of matter denying or hostile to the Christian faith, and he rejects the interpretation put upon it by Mr. Justice Erskine, by Lord Chief Justice Denman, and by Lord Chief Justice Coleridge, each of whom state the law so as to limit the offence to the act of denial associated with ribald, contumelious, or scurrilous language or conduct. I am unable to accept the Appellants' contention as correct. To do so would involve the conclusion that all adverse critical examination of the doctrines of Christianity—even though it was conducted with the utmost reverence—was a blasphemous publication which rendered the writer liable to criminal proceedings. It would, indeed, be hard to find a worse service that could be done to the Christian faith than to prevent people from explaining and inviting an answer to the reasoned convictions that led them to question its truth.

The common law which forbids blasphemy is to be gathered from usage and custom, and it is a striking fact that, with one possible exception—the case of *R. v. Woolston*—every reported case upon the matter, beginning with *R. v. Taylor*, and continuing down to *R. v. Ramsey* and *R. v. Boulter*, is a case where the offence alleged was associated with, and I think constituted by, violent offensive, or indecent words. That it was considered necessary to report the earlier cases as precedents affords, to my mind, a strong presumption that it was the character of the attack which constituted the crime, for if the law was well recognized as forbidding any adverse criticism, the cases where such criticism was coarse and disgraceful would be too plain to merit preservation. In my opinion, therefore, the Common Law of England does not render criminal the mere propagation of doctrines hostile to the Christian faith. The crime consists in the manner in which the doctrines are advocated, and whether in each case this is a crime is a question for the jury, who should be directed, in the words of Mr. Justice Erskine in *Shore v. Wilson*, quoted by the Master of the Rolls in his judgment on the present case.

It is then said that, even if this be conceded, the object of the Society is illegal, not in the sense that acts done to further its objects would be criminal, but that they are of such a nature as to be incapable of establishing a legal right to receive money for their furtherance. I find it difficult to appreciate this distinction, but I understand the contention to be that Christianity is part of the Common Law of England, and it must, therefore, be illegal, even if it were not criminal, for any body of people to promote doctrines that are hostile to its creed. If this argument be carried to its full extent, it will really show that Unitarians, Positivists, Comtists, and other similar religious and ethical bodies, unless relieved by statute, are illegal associations for the Christianity known to the Common Law is certainly not

Unitarian Christianity, nor is it reconcilable with the doctrines of Comte or Hegel. Again, it would result that editors and publishers would be able to deny payment to contributors and authors whom they had expressly employed to write philosophical and scientific articles or books if it could be decided that the work was anti-Christian, while no one could be compelled to pay for any such books when purchased. Indeed, the doctrine, as it seems to me, would apply to a great deal of classical and scientific literature, and the conditions which would condemn these works might vary from year to year as different views from time to time prevailed. It is quite right to point out that, if the law be as the Appellants contend, these considerations afford an argument for its alteration, but do not prove that it does not exist. If, on the other hand, the law is not clear, it is certainly in accordance with the best precedents so to express it that it may stand in agreement with the judgment of reasonable men.

Apart from the criminal cases already mentioned, certain authorities are referred to which, if correctly decided, do appear to afford support for the Appellants' argument. The case of *De Costa v. De Paz*, a decision of Lord Hardwicke's—is one of these authorities; and the Master of Bedford's Charity, is a decision of Lord Eldon's, containing statements to the same effect, and so also is the case of *Briggs v. Hartley*. The first of these was a gift for the purpose of providing a fund to be applied for ever for the reading of the Jewish law, and for advancing and propagating the Jewish faith. It was certainly open to argument that this was not a charitable bequest, and was consequently void as a perpetuity. But it was not upon this ground that the decision was based; it was held that it was a charity (see the report in *Ambler*, p. 228), but that the mode of disposition was such that it could not take effect. It is true that in the Report in 2 Swans the reason why the gift to the specific object of the charity was held imperative was because it was contrary to the Christian religion, but in *Ambler* it is stated that the objects were contrary to the "established" religion, and as at that date the statutory disabilities under which the adherents of the Jewish faith suffered had not been removed, this might have been sufficient for the purpose of the case; indeed, on any other view, it is hard to understand why it was supported as a charity at all. I do not, however, propose further to pursue this question, as I have had the advantage of reading Lord Parker's opinion, and with it I am in entire agreement. The second case was merely a question as to whether Jews might enjoy the benefits of a particular charity, and it was held they might not. The last was a legacy for the best essay on Natural Theology treated as a science, and sufficient when so treated and taught to constitute a true perfect and philosophical system of universal religion; and it was held bad for no further reason than that it was not consistent with Christianity, but the law was in no way examined or criticized.

In the two earlier cases it was stated that Christianity is part of the law of the land, and the authorities quoted in support of the proposition are the cases of *R. v. Taylor* and *R. v. Woolston*; but the pronouncements of Lord Hale and Lord Raymond in these cases must be taken in reference to the subject-matter of the case which, in one instance, certainly, and in the other, possibly, was a prosecution for scurrilous blasphemy.

If the reasons for the decision in *De Costa v. De Paz* were those urged by the Appellants, I should not regard them as correct. If a gift to endow any body that propagates doctrines hostile to the generally accepted view of the Christian religion was at any time contrary to the Common Law, it is, in my opinion, contrary at the present time, and gifts to Unitarians and similar religious bodies for the support and endowment of their religious faith are now void. It is urged in answer to this that the position with regard to Unitarians, as also with regard to Jews, is altered by two Statutes—the one 53 Geo. III. cap., 160, and the other 9 and 10 Vic. cap. 59. I am unable to accept this view. The statutory position appears to me to be plain. By the Act of 1 William and Mary cap. 18 (generally known as the Toleration Act) it is provided that no penalties shall apply to any person dissenting from the Church of England that shall take the oaths that are specified in 1 William and Mary cap. 1, and in

30 Car. II. st. 2, and accept the Articles of Religion, excepting Articles 34, 35, and 36, and certain words of the 20th Article. But Papists and those denying the doctrines of the Blessed Trinity, as declared in the said Articles of Religion, are omitted from the protection of this Statute. The penalties from which this Statute grants relief are statutory penalties and disabilities, and it left the Common Law exactly what it was.

The Act known as the Blasphemy Act—9 and 10 William III., Cap. 32, is really an Act directed against apostates from the Christian faith, and that Act again provides certain penalties, cumulative and severe on second conviction, for any person who, having been educated in, or, at any time, having made profession of the Christian religion within this Realm shall by writing or advised speaking deny any one of the Persons of the Holy Trinity to be God, or who shall assert that there are more Gods than one, or shall deny the Christian religion to be true. This is a disabling Statute still unrepealed, imposing penalties so severe that it is said no prosecution has ever been instituted under its provisions. Its terms, therefore, demand the narrowest and most jealous scrutiny. The fact that it has only incidentally been brought under judicial notice may explain the loose and, as I think, erroneous references made to its effect, as, for example, by Lord Lyndhurst, in *Shore v. Wilson* (9 Cl. and Fin., p. 355, at p. 397), where he says that "those persons who by preaching denied the doctrine of the Trinity are subject to the penalties of the Act," and, again, by Lord Bramwell, in *Cowan v. Milburn*. This is not accurate; only those persons who have been educated in, or had at any time made profession of the Christian religion within the Realm could incur the statutory penalties.

The Act 53 Geo. III. cap. 160 repeals so much of the Toleration Act as provides that the exemption of the Statute shall not extend so as to give its advantage or benefit to persons denying the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, and for the purpose of making this exemption effectual it repeals as far as was necessary 9 and 10 William III. cap. 32. The Statute of 9 and 10 Vic. cap. 59 (the Religious Disabilities Act, 1846), provided that persons professing the Jewish religion shall, in respect of their schools, places of religious worship, educational and charitable purposes, and property held by them, be subject to the same laws as His Majesty's Protestant subjects who dissent from the Church of England. This means that they are freed from all disabilities imposed by Statute and open to all existing at Common Law. This is the view expressly stated by Lord Eldon in *Attorney General v. Pearson*, and is in agreement with the decisions in *Rex v. Carlile* and *Rex v. Waddington*.

So far as holding property is concerned, Jews are to be regarded as being in the same position as His Majesty's Protestant subjects who dissent from the Church of England. This must be taken to mean that they can hold property; for the Common Law—whatever its scope—did not specially safeguard what we now know as the Established Church, but the Christian faith. And there was never anything, apart from statutory disabilities to prevent Protestant Dissenters from holding property. Of course while any particular belief was made the subject of penalty by Statute, a gift to further the purpose of that belief would be contrary to the Statute Law; but when once the Statutory disability was removed, unless some disability could be found outside, there could be nothing to hinder the gift of money for the purpose of any such association.

It is this that explains the decision in the case of *West v. Shuttleworth*, which was a decision on the Statute in relief of Roman Catholics similar to that in relief of Jews (2 and 3 William IV. c. 115). Now the Roman Catholic religion—whatever views may be taken of the Reformation—was certainly never contrary to the Common Law; and, therefore, when once the Statutory Prohibitions were taken away, the receipt of money for the general purpose of their faith was not forbidden. In the case of *Shrewsbury v. Hornby*, a gift in support of Unitarian doctrine was held good, and it is suggested that this was because 53 Geo. III. c. 160 repealed the Common Law so far as it affected Protestant ministers.

I am unable to find that the Statute effects this purpose. If by implication any part of the Common Law is repealed, there would appear to be no particular reason why it should be repealed so as to allow a special class of Protestant Dissenters—but not other people—to deny the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. It would, indeed, be strange if the publication of a book, or the delivery of a lecture would be legal or illegal according to the religious opinion of the person who wrote it, and not according to its contents. If any repeal at all had been effected by these Acts, it would, in my opinion, have been the repeal of the whole doctrine had it ever existed; but the true view in my judgment is that it did not exist. The Common Law throughout remains unaffected, and I cannot find any case where, as a necessary step in the decision, it is enunciated in terms as wide as are necessary to support the appellant's case. For example, in *Thompson v. Thompson*, it was held that a gift will be supported for the encouragement of the general doctrines advocated in a testator's writings if neither atheism, sedition, nor any crime or immorality is to be inculcated. Again, in *Harrison v. Evans*, Lord Mansfield defined the Common Law in these terms: "There was never a single instance from Saxon times down to our own in which a man was ever punished for erroneous opinions concerning rites and modes of worship but upon some positive law. The Common Law of England, which is only common reason or usage, knows of no prosecution for mere opinions. For atheism, blasphemy, and reviling the Christian religion there have been persons prosecuted and punished upon the Common Law." It is unnecessary to determine whether and under what circumstances the promulgation of atheism is illegal, for by atheism in this connection I understand a disbelief in one eternal and invisible God, and I have already stated my views that the Respondents' objects do not properly include the advocacy of such a doctrine. Blasphemy is constituted by violent and gross language and the phrase "reviling the Christian religion" shows that without vilification there is no offence.

I am glad to think that this opinion is supported by the carefully considered and weighty utterances of many learned judges. The case of *Shore and Wilson* in its actual result depended upon a question of construction of deeds of trust and upon special facts, and so regarded the decision could have but little application to other disputes; but when the case was before this House the opinions of the Judges were taken on certain questions, and the sixth question was this: "Whether such (*i.e.*, Unitarian) Ministers, preachers, widows, and persons are in the present state of the law incapable of partaking of such charities or any and which of them." Mr. Justice Erskine (p. 525), Mr. Justice Coleridge (p. 539), Mr. Justice Maule (p. 509), Mr. Justice Williams (p. 545), Baron Gurney (p. 554), Baron Parke (p. 565), Lord Chief Justice Tindal (p. 578), all agreed in thinking that they were not. It is true that Mr. Justice Coleridge based his opinion upon the ground that Unitarians were Christians, but Mr. Justice Maule stated that there was no authority to show that teaching Unitarian doctrine was contrary to the Common Law, and Mr. Justice Erskine stated that it was open to any man "without subjecting himself to any penal consequences soberly and reverently to examine and question the truth of those doctrines which have been assumed as essential to the Christian faith." There is, indeed, to be found in certain of these opinions indications of the view expressed in *R. v. Woolston*, that it is not illegal to deny any doctrine of the Christian faith, but that it is to deny them all collectively. I cannot accept this view of the law. The Christianity, offences against which are illegal at Common Law, is the Christianity known to the Common Law, and Unitarian Christianity is opposed to the central doctrine of this faith.

I have only to add that, apart altogether from these considerations, I think that the Respondents are well founded in arguing that since the Company is a legal entity, and as some at least of its objects are on the face of them lawful, there is no ground upon which it is possible to prevent them from receiving money which has been the subject of a bequest in their favour. I cannot accede to the argument that the later purposes in the Memorandum, which taken alone must be

regarded as proper and lawful objects, become unlawful because they are associated with the first purpose of the Memorandum. If an unequivocal Act be lawful in itself, the motive with which it is performed is immaterial; and if it be said that all the later purposes are the instruments by which the first purpose may be effected, this, as it seems to me, may be an argument for showing that the first purpose is lawful, but it cannot establish that the later purposes are not. Even if all the objects of the Company were illegal, it would not follow that while the certificate of incorporation remained unrevoked, the Company would be unable to receive money. It is a mistake to treat the Company as a trustee, for it has no beneficiaries, and there is no difference between the capacity in which it receives a gift and that in which it obtains payment of a debt. In either case the money can only be used for the purposes of the Company, and in neither case is the money held on trust. If, by oversight or mistake, a Company were incorporated for wholly illegal objects, the right course to follow, where its capacity to receive money were questioned in legal proceedings, would be to direct an adjournment till proper steps had been taken to revoke the incorporation. This matter has been so fully dealt with by Lord Parker, with whose views I entirely agree, that I do not desire to elaborate it further. For these reasons I am of opinion that this Appeal should be dismissed.

Correspondence.

A QUESTION OF STYLE; HEBERT AND THE FREETHINKER.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I can see no reason why I should be asked to dispute, at any rate, in this place, the historical value of *Pere Duchesne*, which, I admit, has the authority of intelligent observation of contemporary events. I fancy that Mr. Farmer has forgotten that this was not the subject of my letter. I must here remind him that an *ipse dixit* even from him is not above suspicion; and here, too, the question is not one of opinion, but of fact. I say, again, with all the emphasis warranted by a recent study of *Pere Duchesne*, that even the mere suggestion of a comparison between Hebert's style and that of the *Freethinker* is as ignorant as it is foolish.

The right thing for Mr. Farmer to do would be to confess that he has made a bad blunder, and to leave it at that. However, instead of doing the right thing, he asks me to waste my time in transcribing a dozen or so pages in French for you to print, thus wasting your space, and asking you to run the risk of a prosecution for obscenity. Now, if he is anxious to get at the truth, he can easily have a copy made for a few shillings by a professional transcriber. But this is no concern of mine. It is surely his business to support his statement when it is challenged, and not to run away from it. GEO. UNDERWOOD.

SOCIALIST SUNDAY-SCHOOLS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In your *Freethinker* of this week you mention a discussion going on in the *Glasgow Herald* concerning the character of Socialist Sunday-schools. I can quite understand the enemies of the schools keen to prove that teaching is quite materialistic in tone. It sounds bad to the ordinary person, and that is what the enemies of Socialist Sunday-schools want. The words of the champions of the Sunday-schools are absolutely incorrect. I, myself, a Freethinker of twenty-five years' standing, happen to be Secretary of The Hampstead Garden Suburb Socialist Sunday-school, and the name Jesus has never been mentioned. I will write you out the Declaration which the children repeat every Sunday, so that you can judge for yourself the character of the teaching;—

DECLARATION.

We desire to be just and loving to all our fellow-men and women.

To work together as Brothers and Sisters.

To be kind to every living creature.
And so help to form a new Society with Justice as its foundation.

And love its law.

Perhaps you will be interested to learn that amongst our S. S. S. children are Joseph McCabe's three little ones.

The superintendent is a Freethinker. So are pretty nearly all the parents of the children. I myself have had my six children exempt all along from religious teaching in the day schools, and my son, who is a C.O., was refused exemption at the local and appeal tribunals on the grounds that as he belonged to no religious organization he could not possibly possess a conscience. We have taken in the *Freethinker* for over twenty-five years, and often came in contact with Mr. Foote and yourself, although you would not remember us. The last time I saw you was at Mr. Foote's Memorial Service. We all wish you the best of success with the *Freethinker*, and I will end by saying that to have a good, sound, moral conviction of what is right and what is wrong is far higher and better than all the drivelling rubbish the parsons would try to cram down one's throat.

(Mrs.) E. SMITH.

Another New Battle Song.

(With Apologies to "John Brown's Body.")

In the brains of cleric humbugs, who should go across the sea,

There's a stunt about the "Saviour" that quite staggers you and me,

As they lie to make men truthful! Let us cry to make men free,

That Cant goes marching on!

There's much talk about war's horror, and the "Saviour," you'll agree,

And we, who know old Humbug well, are smelling knavery, As the bishops' lisp of battle—let us tell humanity—

That Cant goes marching on!

The Churches all will tell you how our "Saviour" gave the key,

How he "died to save all sinners"—Kaiser Bill, and you, and me;

But now this "Saviour" saves us with the Field Artillery! *And Cant goes marching on!*

In the blood-mire of the trenches Christ was gassed across the sea,

With a grenade in his bosom that "transfigures" Fritz and me!

As Christ "died to make men holy"—let us state to make men free,

That Cant goes marching on!

The "Church's one foundation" is a maze of roguery, They twist about like slimy eels with great agility;

So, after all, Freethinkers, its for folk like us to see—

That Truth goes marching on! ARTHUR F. THORN.

So far as science or a rational conception of things is concerned, the fathers of the Church and the framers of our popular theology were mere children. Considerations were all-powerful with them, which to-day would not have a feather's weight with a man of ordinary intelligence. Children readily, even eagerly, believe almost any impossible thing you may tell them about nature. As yet, they have no insight into the course of nature or the law of cause and effect, no fund of experience to serve as a touchstone to the false or impossible. The same was true of the fathers and of the races that witnessed the advent of Christianity.....mere children so far as the development of their scientific faculties were concerned.—*John Burroughs.*

The village had organized an entertainment for the delectation of the local asylum. The inmates listened stolidly, and when the programme was ended, the vicar asked one of the unfortunates how he had enjoyed it. "Ah, weel, sir," said the looney, with a beautiful smile, "it's a good thing that we're daft here!"

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.

MR. A. D. HOWELL SMITH'S DISCUSSION CLASS (N. S. S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street): Thursday, June 28, at 7.30.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 6.15, A. D. Howell Smith, B.A., a Lecture.

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

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

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill): 3.15, G. Rule, a Lecture

REGENT'S PARK N. S. S.: 3.15, A. D. Howell Smith, B.A., a Lecture.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, L. Brandes, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station): 7, Miss Kough, "The Old Order Changeth."

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

PROPAGANDIST LEAFLETS. New Issue. 1. *Christianity a Stupendous Failure*, J. T. Lloyd; 2. *Bible and Teetotalism*, J. M. Wheeler; 3. *Principles of Secularism*, C. Watts; 4. *Where Are Your Hospitals?* R. Ingersoll; 5. *Because the Bible Tells Me So*, W. P. Ball; 6. *Why Be Good?* G. W. Foote. *The Parson's Creed*. Often the means of arresting attention and making new members. Price 9d. per hundred, post free 1s. Samples on receipt of stamped addressed envelope.—N. S. S. SECRETARY, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C. 4.

Population Question and Birth-Control.

POST FREE THREE HALFPENCE.

MALTHUSIAN LEAGUE,
QUEEN ANNE'S CHAMBERS, WESTMINSTER, S.W.

WORLD-WIDE DEMOCRACY.

I have received a number of post cards, letters, and offers of help to inaugurate a journal relative to the above, including writers, soldiers, sailors, and general readers, but I must have hundreds more before I can make a start. When arrangements are complete, particulars will be posted to all who send me a post card.—E. ANDERSON, 11 Salisbury Road, Forest Gate, E 7.

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CONTINUED BY E. M. MACDONALD, 1883-1909.

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