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Views and Opinions.

*Three Years of War.*

The War that was to end all wars, but which shows a tragic incapacity to end even itself, the War which the Bishop of London hailed as inaugurating a "Day of God," and others as initiating a great moral regeneration, reaches this week its third anniversary. The occasion is to be commemorated—one paper said "celebrated"—by special services in the Churches, and a form of prayer has been "issued by authority" for use. The order sets forth that every minister "shall speak to his people in these or like words," so that there will be at least unity in the message. The document is exactly what one would expect, and I have no doubt that German Christians will "celebrate" the anniversary in much the same way by saying the same things. The form of prayer recounts that we are fighting in defence of our country, for self-preservation, and against aggression. We are fighting for truth, for justice, for decency. We thank God for the unity that prevails, we dedicate ourselves anew to the task, we salute the dead, and we resolve "in his Name" their sacrifice shall not be in vain. In Germany, Christians will be saying the same thing to the same God, and if he does not keep their prayers labelled and separate, there will be some danger of getting his response, if he gives one, wrongly directed. The Christian Churches could do nothing to mitigate its barbarities once war had commenced, they can do nothing to bring it to a close. All they can do in all countries is to encourage the War in its continuance, and to provide a religious sanction for all that occurs. These are things worth bearing in mind while we are "celebrating" this third anniversary.

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*The Record of the Churches.*

Nothing has been more remarkable than the conduct of the Churches during these three years of War. And what they have done has been hardly less remarkable than the things they have left undone. During the War bread has doubled in price, and human life has grown cheaper and cheaper. The Churches have been

silent about the cost of bread, and vocal in reconciling the nation to the loss of life. Profiteers have made their millions, wrung out of the necessities of the nation, and the Churches have talked about the spirit of sacrifice and the nobility of our ideals, but have said never a word against this systematic exploitation. The Government has closed our mouths and opened our letters. The Churches have said nothing. We have had a muzzled press and a strangulated platform. The Churches have been eloquent on our fight for liberty abroad, but have said nothing about our loss of liberty at home. When the War opened and they might have stood as the representatives of those ideals of justice and brotherhood which are so easily obscured when men's passions are roused, the clergy became so many recruiting officers. When the Conscription Bill was before the country the clergy were its ardent advocates, while claiming exemption for their own order. In justice to them it should be said that their objection to military service did not mean a refusal to serve as chaplains, with a military rank, a military uniform, and a good salary. And now, after four years of War, they are commemorating, or "celebrating" the anniversary which, in itself, constitutes an unanswerable indictment of the value of the whole Christian Church. For the clergy to say now that they kneel before God with a clear conscience would be amusing if the comedy was not overshadowed by the tragedy. It was reported in the papers some months ago that a letter found on the dead body of a German soldier suggested the closing of all the Churches until after the War. That letter showed a greater sense of decency than has been displayed by any of the clergy in this country.

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*Dispelling Illusions.*

Three years of war may be said to have at least dispelled some of the illusions bred by it and by previous wars. We hear little now of the claim that this is a War to end war. War settles nothing—not even itself. The Briton who sprays the advancing Germans with a stream of boiling oil is not of necessity a better man than those he destroys; the German who lets free a cloud of poison-gas is not of necessity a better man than the British soldier who suffers from its effects. The consequence of war, we said three years ago, is progressive brutalization; and every month since has enforced the truth of that statement. Jets of flame, boiling oil, gas clouds, poisonous shells, air-raids on women and children, stories on the German side that the English kill all prisoners, stories on the English side that the Germans boil down their dead and use the product for making margarine, this War between Christian nations has equalled in ferocity anything the world has ever seen, and on all sides it has received whatever sanctification the Churches could bestow. So, also, one hears less of the talk that Germany must be "crushed" and kept in perpetual subjection afterwards. A nation of seventy millions cannot be kept in subjection, even supposing that there was anything to guarantee perpetual agreement amongst the Allies themselves. If the peace of the world is to be attained, and



preserved, it can only be done by an agreement between the *peoples* of the world. Not an agreement, be it noted, between one group of nations to keep another group of nations down, but an agreement to which *all* nations shall be consenting parties, with a further relinquishing of those conditions that make friction almost a certainty.

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#### War and the Prize Ring.

It was Mr. Lloyd George—who, when Chancellor of the Exchequer, said the War would be won by the “silver bullet”; an opinion changed to that of the War being won by munitions when he was Minister of Munitions; to be further changed to that of the War being won by men when he was Minister for War—who said that the War must be fought to a “knock-out.” No one quite knew what he meant, but some complained that he was degrading war to the level of the prize ring. It seems to us that he was degrading the prize ring to the level of war. For the prize ring does aim at a fight under equal conditions. The men are matched with a view to something like equality in weight and knowledge. They do not lie about each other before the fight, or during the fight, or after the fight. You do not, in the prize ring, set two men to fight one, or a man with one arm to meet a man with two. You do not get a man down and jump on him till he cries “Enough.” In war you do all these things—if you can. If you can bring ten guns to one you do it. If you can bring a hundred men to one you do it. If you can surprise your enemy and kill him before he is aware of your presence, you do it. The prize-fighter is not in the ring to prove that he is the better *man*—only that he is the better fighter. Victory in war does not even prove that. It may only prove that you have more money, or more men, or more machines, or more deadly chemicals. In Westminster Abbey the Archbishop of Canterbury is to preach before the King, to bring home more fully to the people that we are at war. We wish the people of the world realized more fully that we were at war, and all that war means. If, instead of the spectacular side which is so carefully kept before the people, we could bring home to them the dirt, the disease, the men driven insane or made nervous wrecks by the conditions of modern war, then, indeed, we should have taken a long step towards ending war. For war is always a question of psychology; other things are subordinate. It lives on illusion, and the quickest way to end it is to kill the illusion from which it draws its being.

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#### An Evil Record.

Three years of slaughter, and all that the Churches have to contribute towards its cessation is a commemoration, which will give the platitudes and ambiguities of politicians the covering of sonorous religious verbiage. Or, as an addendum, the Churches ask for a “A Day of Humiliation.” Day of humiliation, forsooth! And for the nation! Truly if anyone should adopt an attitude of humiliation it is the Churches themselves. It is they who have been in a position, had they possessed the wisdom or the inclination, to have made this War an impossibility. No other single organization has been in so commanding a position during the centuries to have achieved this. And the measure of their sin is the measure of their opportunity. In not a single country now at War can Christianity be said to have acted as a restraining force in preserving peace. In not a single country are the Churches acting as a force that makes for the recovery of peace. They can do nothing, they will do nothing, but play to the passions of the moment, careless what may be their nature, so long as it promises an immediate gain.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

## Christianity and the Miraculous.

CHRISTIANITY is pre-eminently a religion founded upon miracles; and in the Christian sense miracles signify supernatural interventions in the order of nature. The Gospel Jesus is himself a unique being brought into existence by a stupendous miracle. Some divines who reject the miracles which Jesus is reported to have performed during his earthly life still retain the belief in his own miraculous personality, ignoring the absurdity of the notion that a supernatural being could go through life without giving any exhibition of his supernatural qualities. Even “Ignotus,” in his interesting article on miracles in the *Manchester City News* for July 14, says that “a man who disbelieved in the miracles ascribed to Jesus Christ, and called them by another name, would not thereby in the slightest degree impugn his Divine character”; but that liberal-minded writer, surely, forgets that to believe in the “Divine character” necessitates belief in the greatest of all miracles, namely, the Incarnation. It is wholly inconceivable to us how a man of the superior intelligence undoubtedly displayed by “Ignotus,” could bring himself to write the following passage:—

He would not be Divine simply because he did supernatural deeds, nor does he forfeit his Divinity if he did not perform them. Divinity was manifested in perfection of life, good works, holy teaching, supreme example. If not a single miracle had been recorded these proofs would remain. As it is, the miracles are only attributed to him during the last three years of his life (between the ages of thirty and thirty-three); yet he was Divine from the first—it was not the miracles at the end of his career that made him so.

Here “Ignotus” goes astray on a plain matter-of-fact. It is perfectly true that the miracles recorded in the Four Canonical Gospels are only attributed to Jesus during the last three years of his life, but he must know, as well as we do, that there were numerous Gospels written which did not find their way into the Canon, and that in these he is said to have done supernatural deeds even from earliest childhood. Now, the performance of such deeds would prove that the doer possessed supernatural gifts, if not that he is a supernatural being. Ordinary human beings cannot accomplish miraculous work; and if Jesus did accomplish such work, it shows either that he was a super-human being, or had been entrusted with super-human endowments. We completely fail to see, therefore, what “Ignotus” gains by giving up the miraculous deeds while holding on to the miraculous person. There is certainly the closest connection possible between the miracles and the Divinity of Jesus Christ; and it is difficult to realize what advantage there is in dismissing the former while retaining the latter.

Matthew Arnold was much more consistent than “Ignotus” appears to be. The former, while entirely discarding the proof from miracles, was logical and honest enough to include the Incarnation among such miracles. “The *Guardian*,” he says, in the preface to the popular edition of *Literature and Dogma*, “proclaims ‘the miracle of the Incarnation’ to be ‘the fundamental truth’ for Christians,” but, “insisting on ‘the miracle of the Incarnation,’ the *Guardian* insists on just that side of Christianity which is perishing.” But “Ignotus” denies the miracles which Jesus *did*, and reaffirms his faith in the miracle which Jesus *is*. If we could believe the latter we would experience no difficulty whatever in accepting the former. “Ignotus” states that, so far as he can judge, “the whole case for or against miracles must be decided on one consummate act—the raising of Lazarus from the dead.”

If this deed were done it was incontestably a miracle, and the case is proved.



For various reasons our critic does not believe that Lazarus was raised from the dead. Now, on the assumption that Jesus was Divine, we can discover no valid justification for rejecting this consummate miracle. To a Divine Being nothing could be easier than to abolish death and bring life and immortality to light. And yet "Ignotus" is convinced that this deed of restoration to life is a legend, because it is recorded only in the Fourth Gospel, while the others contain no allusion to it at all; because Jesus asserted that Lazarus was not dead but simply asleep; and because such a deed would not have been "quite fair to the rest of the world, who also mourned for their departed," but had no hope of their being "restored to them no matter how deep their love or how fervent their prayer." Then he exclaims:—

No—our sick and suffering can be saved, but the dead never come back. It would be unjust that favour should be shown to one, and that the millions and millions should be deprived of hope.

We heartily congratulate the *Manchester City News* on its courage in opening its columns to a free discussion of debatable questions, and "Ignotus" upon his highly rational treatment of many theological dogmas. We are in full agreement with him in his bold rejection of miracles, though regretting his retention of the miraculous. It affords us keen pleasure to make the following quotation:—

If every event recorded as a miracle were really a miracle in the fullest sense of the word, how much the better should we be for it? In what way would the welfare of the world be aided or the progress of men be ensured by the fact that Aaron's rod budded, or that five thousand persons were fed with two loaves and five small fishes? Are we guided in our conduct, is our moral outlook illumined, are our aspirations strengthened by any such circumstances? Is it not better for us to behold universal law everywhere—order, goodness, beneficence, beauty—than to base our faith on temporary and dubious wonders performed in opposition to those recognized laws which govern the created world and all that therein is?

"Ignotus" assures us that he is "as much obliged to those who oppose and criticize as to those who concur." We have the honour to belong to both classes at one and the same time. Completely endorsing his rejection of the doctrine of supernatural infractions of the natural order, we venture to criticize his defence of the reality of a supernatural world, or of the government of the world by a Supernatural Being. If we are living under inexorable laws which apply everywhere, what room or need is there for an Omniscient Ruler? Nay, more, what evidence can be adduced that the Almighty described in the Bible exists at all? Is there at the present moment any sign of the activity of an infinitely just and holy One who "doeth according to his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth"? We are at one with Archbishop Trench's saying that it "would be better to abandon the Christian religion altogether than not to believe in the miracle as a supernatural event." We have acted on that principle; we have abandoned Christianity because its claim to possess and exercise supernatural power has been totally falsified by the events of history. "Ignotus" pertinently asks how much better would the world be if all recorded miracles actually happened; and we beg to suggest that had the world been under the superintendence of supernatural wisdom and goodness, it ought to have been immeasurably juster, holier, and happier than it is today. As a matter of fact, Christendom is in no essential sense superior to Heathendom; and there are those among us who sorrowfully admit that the best Mohammedans or Buddhists compare most favourably with the

very best Christians. This is a terribly humiliating fact for those who proudly declare that the world's only hope of redemption lies in the triumph of the Christian religion. Do they forget that Christianity once held the Western world in the hollow of its hand, and that those Ages of Faith are known in history as Dark Ages? What, then, has the belief in the Divinity of Jesus Christ done for the uplifting and ennoblement of mankind? What has it done for the peace of the world? What has it done for the enfranchisement of woman? What has it done for the abolition of false divisions and classification, for the establishment of just and fair relations between employers and employees, and for the development of brotherhood and fellowship among all alike?

Supernaturalism, in all its forms, has proved a tragic failure. There are those who pretend to find the cause of the War in the fact that Germany has repudiated Christianity and adopted Paganism. On October 10, 1914, the editor of the *Daily News* published an article, entitled "The Return of Odin and the Religion of Valour," in which he falsely proclaimed the triumph of Nietzsche and the re-birth of Paganism in Germany; and now Chancellor P. V. Smith "points to the example of Germany as a warning of the danger of not putting religious instruction in a prominent place in any national system of education." Both Mr. Gardiner and Chancellor Smith entirely misrepresent the attitude of Germany to Christianity. Nothing can be more thoroughly attested than the facts that Germany is a distinctively Christian country, and that "religious instruction is a compulsory subject in all German schools," the object being "to bring up young people in the knowledge of God's Word, to instruct them in Holy Scripture, and to train them so that they may set a good example, may share in the religious work of the community to which they belong, and in general may fulfil every pious duty which falls to their lot in life." The Church of England is dishonest if it points to the example of Germany as a warning against the perils of secular education. The truth is that in Germany, as well as in Great Britain, supernatural religion is a source of weakness, and not of strength, and has been absolutely powerless either to prevent or to put an end to the War.

J. T. LLOYD.

## The Clerical Caste.

The services of the clergy are imaginary, and their payment should be of the same description.—G. W. Footc.

Stuffing the ears of men with false reports.—Shakespeare.

THERE are about fifty thousand men, each bearing the title of "reverend," who are exempted from military service, and who form a caste apart from their fellows. Who are they? What do they do to entitle them to be revered? In what way are they superior to other men who are simple "misters"? These are questions which, in this crisis in the world's affairs, are worth the consideration of democratic minds.

It may be contended that this reverence is paid to these men because they have chosen as their business the supervision and direction of the religious habits of the English people. In reality they are medicine-men engaged in similar work to their coloured prototypes in savage nations. They tell us of gods who get angry with us; of a Devil who must be guarded against; of angels who fly from heaven to earth; of saints who can assist if supplicated. Nearly fifty thousand gentlemen are engaged in this business, to say nothing of their assistants and satellites. And this in England alone. If we include Continental countries and America, there are hundreds of thousands of them, maintained at the cost of hundreds of millions a year. And their profession is



as honest as fortune-telling. Many a poor old woman has been sent to prison for taking money from a servant-girl, after promising her a handsome husband and six fine children; but these ministers are allowed to take large sums of money for promises of good fortune in the "beautiful land above."

Everyone knows that the average "reverend" enjoys a comfortable livelihood, and lives in a nice house. He has just as much, or as little, work as he likes to do, and if he likes to spend three-fourths of each day reading or visiting, there is no one to say him nay. He can count on invitations to dinner and other hospitality all the year round, which is no small saving in the household expenses. And the higher ecclesiastics do better still. Thirty-nine archbishops and bishops share £180,700 yearly, and the bachelor Bishop of London enjoys a salary of £300 weekly, a sum sufficient to keep fifty ordinary families in comfort.

Seeing that little merit attaches to the clerical profession, are we to assume that reverence is due to the exemplary lives led by those belonging to this favoured class of the community? Divorce Court proceedings and Police Court records show that the clerical character in no wise differs from any other class. They may retort that there are black sheep in every fold. True, but people who are not professional religionists do not pretend to being a class apart. They do not ask to be known as "reverend," or by any other title implying special respect. It is because the ministers of Church and Dissent expect us to look up to them that we are compelled to compare their behaviour with their boastings. When they decide to come down from their sacred pedestals we will make the same allowance for them that we make for tinkers and tailors.

It appears, also, that these clergy, who are too proud to fight for their country, are many of them perjurers. They subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion. These articles include the belief that Christ went down bodily to "hell"; that a spirit can be at the same time a father and a son, and also proceed from itself as a ghost; that Adam was the father of the human race, and that he ate forbidden fruit, in consequence of which countless generations are condemned to eternal punishment; that Roman Catholic doctrine is a vain invention; that the Bible is the Word of God; and that the monarch is the head of the Church. To these Articles of Faith, among others, every Church of England minister subscribes. And we know that numbers of them do not believe in them, or observe them; and that their main reasons for remaining in the Church are "purple, palaces, patronage, profit, and power," as a former canon of St. Paul's Cathedral expresses it. And the right to appoint clergymen to benefices is sold for money in the open market, as if it were so much coal or a quack remedy.

We are told from countless pulpits that, when the world-war is over, the national religion is to be different from what we have known before. There is room for more drastic alteration than the discarding of barbaric Biblical passages from the Prayer Book. The votes of the bishops in the House of Lords is sufficient to rouse the lasting hostility of all right-thinking persons, and their shameful opposition to all progress shows how hopelessly the Church of Christ is out of touch with democratic aspirations. The bishops voted against admitting Nonconformists to University degrees, and against removing the civil disabilities of Roman Catholics, Jews, and Rationalists. They opposed the introduction of free education, and voted against admitting women as members of London Borough Councils. None voted for the abolition of flogging women in public, beating women in prison, and the use of the lash in the Army and Navy. Scores of measures for the

bettering of the conditions of the working classes have been opposed by these ecclesiastics, and their record carries its own condemnation.

Few worse misfortunes can befall a people than this of possessing a powerful caste in its midst that saps the very springs of morality, that permits mental confusion, and that hinders the wheels of progress. The word "reverend" is pure humbug. To apply it to the common parson, or to the purse-proud prelate, is as absurd as to apply the terms "All Highest" or "Imperial Majesty" to the pious decadent who controls the destinies of the German people.

MIMNERMUS.

## The Rise and Progress of Mental Power.

In ancient, mediæval, and modern times the more reflective members of the several civilized communities have manifested considerable interest in the subtle problem of human psychology. But it is only in quite recent generations that this subject has been approached from the comparative point of view. With the advances of biological investigation, and, above all, in those departments of physiology which study the functions of the brain and nervous system, distinct progress has been made. The bright light thrown on mental processes as displayed alike by man and the lower animals through the revolutionary researches of Darwin and Spencer, has transformed the concepts of modern naturalists.

The doctrine of evolution not merely embraces the bodily development but also the mental progress of all animal existence. It is now recognized that in order to comprehend the complex workings of human mentality it is essential to study the simpler psychical processes of the lowlier modes of life. It is likewise realized that as man has inherited his anatomical and physiological characteristics from inferior forms of life; so has he derived the foundations of his highest mental capacities from less evolved ancestors.

To-day, in strictly scientific circles, the comparative method reigns supreme in all inquiry pursued for the purpose of elucidating the difficulties which surround the psychological domain. And logically so. For if we were to imagine some intelligent creature steeped in complete ignorance of all the complex causes which condition the motion of a modern Atlantic liner, and were this creature divorced from all knowledge of the multitudinous phenomena which have contributed to the evolution of this huge vessel, and then witnessed the passage of the steamer over the sea, an element in which, during all his previous experience, heavy bodies speedily sank; when we picture this creature's utter inability to proffer any rational explanation of the liner, we may form some conception of the impenetrable mystery which the intellect of a Shakespeare presented to the metaphysicians and pre-evolutionary philosophers, who were denied all understanding of the principles of mental development.

We may fairly claim that the emergence of mind may be traced, step by step, from the simplest beginnings. Herbert Spencer laid the firm foundations of a scientific psychology in a monumental work, his world-celebrated *Principles*. Taine, Ribot, Maudsley, Romanes, and other thinkers erected on these foundations a structure which has been materially strengthened by subsequent study, and which all later criticism has failed to shake.

At the outset of our inquiry we must guard ourselves against the danger of projecting our own involved subjective states into our reading of the simpler nerve



processes of lowly creatures. Buechner and sundry other students and observers of animal psychology were, without question, much too anthropomorphic in their outlook. Other investigators, biased by the earlier tradition of animal automatism have rushed to the opposite extreme. Our knowledge of surrounding bodies may be regarded as objective, and this knowledge can be subjected to the most rigid tests. But in the case of mental phenomena as displayed by inferior or even superior creatures we are compelled to project our own psychical states upon the nervous activities of organisms placed under observation. Professor Clifford coined the useful term "eject" to designate this circumstance. The observer, therefore, becomes the subject, the animal observed the object, while the mental manifestations of the organism observed become the eject.

Outside the realm of living things there exists not the faintest evidence of the presence of mind. That a dim form of feeling occurs in the plant kingdom appears probable, but the clearest and most unmistakable evidences of sensation are encountered in the animal domain. And in tracing the advance of intelligence from its rudest beginnings no other method, save the comparative, is available. As Romanes contends in his *Mental Evolution in Animals* :—

Common sense.....universally feels that analogy is here a safer guide to truth than the sceptical demand for impossible evidence; so that if the objective existence of other organisms and their activities is granted—without which postulate comparative psychology, like all the other sciences, would be an unsubstantial dream—common sense will always and without question conclude that the activities of organisms other than our own, when analogous to those activities of our own which we know to be accompanied by certain mental states, are in them accompanied by analogous mental states.

Possibly the protoplasm of plants forms the seat of a faint perception of differences in light, shade, and temperature. And in the animal world nerve tissue—a substance that chiefly consists of a variety of protoplasm—is invariably associated with mental processes. This wonderful nerve substance serves as a channel of communication between the organism endowed with it and the external world. From the jelly fish up to man this nerve material is found, and whether it occur in man or dog, medusa or snail, bird or bee, its fundamental structure is the same. When examined under high microscopical powers it is seen to be constituted of fibres and vesicles.

From the nerve vesicles or cells nerve fibres proceed, and these fibres link up the cells with one another, and this arrangement extends to the furthest limits of the animal body. The fibres possess the property of conveying stimuli to and from the nerve cells, while the cells themselves are instrumental in generating those impressions which are transmitted along the fibres outwards. Those stimuli that are conducted by the fibres inwards to the cells are set in motion by impressions influencing the nerve fibre at any part of its length, whether these take the form of mechanical pressure, thermal stimuli, impressions produced by irritants, electrical stimuli, or the passing of molecular disturbances from one nerve-fibre to another along their lines of communication.

Nerve cells are commonly arranged in bundles which are termed ganglia, to and from which numerous nerve-fibres arrive and depart. These cord-like clusters of nerve strings are the white filaments known as nerves in the dissecting room. Reflex acts depend upon this relation of the groups of fibres to the bunches of cells or ganglia. These automatic movements have been studied with great care in jelly fish, probably the lowest

animals endowed with a nervous system. In these organisms the neural system is, as we should expect, extremely rudimentary, and when the nerves are stimulated the animal automatically responds to the stimulus. For we learn from an original investigator that with these creatures—

"the simple ganglia are distributed all round the margin of the animal, and respond by reflex action to the stimuli which are applied at any other part of the surface. This has the effect of increasing the rate and the strength of the swimming movements, and so of enabling the animal to escape from the source of danger.

In this phenomenon there appears no element of choice, for the arrangement of a jelly fish's ganglia and nerves is such that when irritated by any outside influence the animal has no alternative but to move away.

For the anatomical plan of a jelly fish is so simple, that all the muscular tissue in the body is spread out in the form of one continuous sheet; so that the only function which the marginal ganglia have to perform when they are stimulated into reflex action, is that of throwing into contraction one continuous sheet of muscular tissue.

We are thus entitled to assume that the genesis of mind arises from an automatic discharge of nervous energy from nerve-cells when these are disturbed by a stimulus conveyed to them through their nerve fibres. As organisms ascend to a higher stage of organization, separate muscles are gradually evolved for the performance of different actions, and nerve-centres likewise become more and more specialized to govern these different activities. Hence such specialized nervous centres are capable of responding only to those stimuli that are carried along their own peculiar communicating structures or nerves. In animals, like the star fish, organisms slightly above the jelly fish in structure and function, there appears a more elaborately evolved system of muscles and nerves. And as we climb the zoological ladder, we discover that the principle of the division of neuro-muscular labour slowly increases in structural and functional complexity.

Herbert Spencer's theory of the genesis of nerves still remains the best. The physical basis of life is protoplasm, and when this substance first assumed the living state, some parts of its single-celled forms became more exposed to external impressions than others. Some surface areas were liable to be habitually stimulated by different forces to those experienced by others. Now, those surface areas most frequently influenced by given impacts tended to respond more and more readily to the influences thus conditioned. In this way were initiated and developed those channels of communication in the unstable and sensitive protoplasm which offered the smallest resistance to the influences of external forces. Spencer vividly illustrates his doctrine somewhat as follows :—

Much as a river constantly broadens and deepens its channel, so molecular waves always flowing in the same tissue tracts are perpetually engaged in excavating more and more definite paths for their passage. When completed, such a line of communication becomes a nerve-fibre, a structure that has been evolved out of a "line of discharge."

And it is certainly noteworthy in this connection that embryological research has established the fact that the sense organs of the higher animals all arise from the skin.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be continued.)

A film-play bears the title "The Treasure of Heaven." Does this treasure include a golden harp?



## The Way of Peace.

THIS is the name of a most remarkable book by the late Mr. H. Fielding-Hall, the author of that famous book, *The Soul of a People*, published some years ago, and in this new work he diagnoses with unerring instinct the present deplorable condition of English society, and points out the true remedies for its restoration to health and happiness.

In chapter ii., aptly entitled "Mother Earth," he describes in plain and simple language the natural connection between the soil and its inhabitants, any disturbance of which must destroy the community, as thus:—

Not only is a community an outcome of the land, but its health, its efficiency, its freedom, its laws and conventions, its whole organism, in fact, is based on the land.

He shows how our present disastrous system of land tenure originated with Magna Charta which, he says, "was not the beginning of the liberties of the English people, but the end of them."

In chapter iii. the condition of society, in the spacious days of good Queen Bess, is vividly depicted; then we come to the sad story of the decadence consequent on the fencing in of the communal land, and the fastening of the grip of the lord of the soil which has destroyed all the natural sense of community among the people.

The numbing effect of religious superstition does not escape the scathing criticism of this keen student of human nature, as thus:—

The base idea of every religion, Christian or other, is that nature and humanity are evil and that life is not worth living. Religions differ only in method, and never in their fundamental conceptions. However they may try to hide it by professing that God made the world, their real certainty is that "the world, the flesh and the devil" are one; however they may profess to be animated by hope, their attitude to life here and now is one of despair. Nothing can be made of life on earth because its very essence is evil and "everyone is conceived and born in sin."

Consequently, no religion has any ethics founded on a knowledge of life, its realities and needs, and designed to secure further and freer and happier life here. We hear a good deal about Christian ethics, but in fact they have never existed in theory.....

Is the New Testament any better? There are a great many delicate and beautiful sayings; are they a true guide to life? They touch the emotions; do they touch the intelligence? Is it good to forgive your enemies as long as they are your enemies and try to hurt you? Is it good to give a robber your cloak as well as the coat he stole, and so encourage crime?

Every virtue is only a virtue in the right place, and in the wrong place it is a vice. The Christian virtues are no exception. To be loyal and obedient to bad rulers and teachers, to be meek instead of redressing wrongs, to love where you ought to hate, to believe what is not true, are not virtues.

Is not the whole spirit of the New Testament one of despair towards this life and a hope to escape from it? You cannot make a true morality and devise true institutions to benefit life if you despair of it. And none such have ever been made by religions.

If you turn from theory to practice, things are no better. Have priests been good guides? They finished the destruction of Roman society which the Empire had begun. They nearly depopulated Europe in the eleventh century. They again ruined the free cities that sprung up later. They nearly strangled England till Thomas Cromwell did away with them for awhile. They talk of love, but their history is one of persecution and massacre, of servility to the rich and those in power, and of hatred

to the poor, thinly disguised beneath fine phrases and a demoralizing "charity."

To ensure the full cultivation of the soil, and to revive the sense of community among the people, Mr. Fielding-Hall proposes that every village should have full control, through the village council, of all the land in its near neighbourhood, each villager being allotted as much land as he can productively use, without any fear of disturbance or rent to pay.

Each village, too, must have its own bank, to be managed by the villagers themselves, and thus ensure a cheap and plentiful supply of money to be loaned at a very low rate of interest.

Other chapters are devoted to a discussion of marriage, and a scathing criticism of our judicial system as being better calculated to foster crime than to cure it.

The book fittingly concludes with a chapter entitled "When War will End," which is the best dissection of the real causes of the present world catastrophe that I have yet seen. The sound lesson it conveys is that if the people were freed from the grip of the landlord and the usurer they would enjoy such prosperity in their own country that they would have no desire for annexation of territory; and, therefore, no cause for aggression on other nations.

In chapter xiii., entitled "A Vernal Wood," a delightful picture is given of the village of Sleepy Hollow, in which the author conveys to us his own idea of religion:—

And so these children, grown into men and women, will make for themselves a new religion, founded not on the nightmares of fanatics or the inventions of priests, but on what they read out of the Book of Life. Their God will be a real God, known as only we can know anyone, by His acts, and no one will need any interpreter for Him.

One impulse from a vernal wood  
May teach you more of man,  
Of moral evil and of good  
Than all the sages can.

Nothing could be more true than that.

Altogether a splendid book inspired by a keen insight into human nature and its springs of action, which ought to be translated into every language and sent broadcast throughout the world as a wholesome antidote to economic and religious superstitions that now render general prosperity and happiness impossible.

G. O. WARREN.

## The Shrine.

WHAT shall we give to the gallant dead  
Who have stemmed the crimson tide?  
We'll build a shrine in a dreary slum,  
And our hearts shall burn with pride.

What shall we give to those who return  
From hell—to their native shore?  
We'll bid them sail for a foreign clime—  
The workhouse will hold no more.

What shall we give to those who have fought  
From Ypres to Sulva Bay?  
We'll give them a nation's grateful thanks,  
For that is the *Christian* way.

What shall we give to those who are left  
To struggle for bread in vain?  
We'll give them a shrine that they may pray,  
For God can console their pain.

And God, perchance, in heaven will hear,  
If a God, indeed, there be;  
And feed the starving with heavenly bread,  
In this land of liberty.

P. A.



## Acid Drops.

It is a condition of entrance to the Commercial Traveller's Schools that all children shall be taught the Church Catechism, and shall attend the service of the Church of England. The condition is, of course, an indefensible one, but it is strange to find the *Christian World* claiming that other forms of worship shall be permitted, and asserting that "much harm may be done if the mind of the child is perverted from the faith of its parents." We fail to see where the harm will occur. The child of Nonconformist parents is not likely to receive more injury from being taught Church of England doctrines than it will by being taught any other form of religion. In our opinion every child is harmed who is taught a speculative religious doctrine as demonstrated truth. That point of view does not, of course, appeal to the *Christian World*. If it did it would claim the freedom of the child from all religious doctrines, its own included. A religion that cannot wait for acceptance is not worth the having.

Some things seem almost too good to be true. For instance, the *Kidderminster Shuttle* of July 21 has the following, under the heading of "Chaddesley Notes," in the course of a description of proceedings in the Parish Church:—

The church dedication services were continued on Sunday. Special sermons were preached by the Rev. D'Arcy. He is a very impressive preacher, with a considerable amount of action and a most pleasing intonation of voice. From the many gems in the sermon I heard, I cull the following: "Education, unless subservient to and subjugated to religion, is disastrous to a nation; a curse rather than a blessing. *It can be proved up to the hilt by statistics that the only nations that are really religious are those nations that are absolutely ignorant.*"

The italics are ours.

The *Liverpool Echo* reports that St. Bede's Church, Sefton Park, was struck by lightning, but, "thanks to the conductor," only some electric globes were damaged. Thanks to the conductor! And that might have been put up by an Atheist!

A man named Saint, an absentee charged at Bradford, said: "I defy the world." Other saints have said the same thing with unhappy results.

After three years of canteen-running and providing entertainments for the troops, the Y.M.C.A. intends to try some evangelical work, and has engaged Billy Sunday for the purpose. According to a daily paper, Billy "is under orders for France, not to battle with Fritz, but to keep his old enemy with the horns and tail" out of the soldiers' way.

Mr. Ethan Dodds, of Pittsburgh, U.S.A., has invented a process for bottling light, which, according to Mr. Marconi, the wireless expert, will revolutionize the lighting systems of the world. Can he come over to England and show us how to bottle our Bishop of London and other pious lights?

Prince Henry is a private in the Eton College Training Corps. He will be fortified in his lowly position by remembering that the "King of Kings" was a carpenter—and a poor one.

Christ and his religion have been at work in the world for nine long centuries, and they have conspicuously failed to teach mankind the fundamental principle of individual, national, and international life. So we are informed by the Rev. Dr. Velimirovic, of Belgrade, in a sermon recently delivered at St. Paul's Cathedral. According to this reverend gentlemen, the fundamental principle of life is sacrifice, but throughout the Christian centuries it has never been carried into practice. Now, however, "is not sacrifice the most obvious thing in this War? Moreover, has not this War even come to make sacrifice the obvious principle of a new society, a new Europe, a new World?"

Let us pause for a moment over that curious statement so naively made by the distinguished Serbian divine. Three

ideas are involved in it, namely, that Christianity has failed to translate sacrifice into a ruling principle in human conduct; that this War has already accomplished the task which Christianity has left undone; and that, consequently, God is the author of the War. One would naturally infer that this War is God's last and only successful method for setting the world right. Dr. Velimirovic forgets one most essential fact, however, which is that this same method has been tried innumerable times before, *with the very opposite result to success each time*. Those who are unselfish now were unselfish before the struggle began, while those who were selfish before are more selfish still. Is it not true that thousands of people are amassing colossal fortunes by means of the War? Is not "profiteering" the curse of the British nation at this very hour?

In spite of the tacit admission and positive assertion to which we have just alluded, Dr. Velimirovic still remains a Christian preacher, declaring that "through all the roaring voices and crying agonies of the present War, Christ is claiming his rights," a thing, it would seem, he never did before. Hitherto, he has had no rights, but only duties; but the War has taught him that he has his rights, upon which he is resolved to insist when peace is re-established.

Now he claims to come into the Government and Parliament of every nation, to sit upon every kingly throne, and to preside in every Foreign Office, in order to rule the nations and to lead the world in his own spirit.

Does his reverence of Belgrade not know, has he not learned from many sources easily at his disposal, that during the famous Ages of Faith, Christ did exercise all those rights, through his chosen ambassadors, and that through the whole of that time Europe lay "in gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity," wallowing in filthiest vices and the darkest crimes? Very gradually has the State succeeded in stripping him of those awful rights; and the world would vigorously protest if any attempt were made to restore him to the thrones with which it has with such difficulty evicted him. Of course, in reality, Christ only means the Church and its ministers, the Christ being merely an ideal or imaginative projection of dominant ecclesiastical personalities, whose day of dominance is happily gone for ever.

Speaking at a Wesleyan Conference at London, the Bishop of Chelmsford said, "I believe that the Bishop of London and myself are the two biggest Methodists in London. Exactly! "Everything by turns, and nothing long."

Dr. Horton has expressed his gratitude to Lord Hugh Cecil in his "brave crusade" of loving the German Christians. All we hope is that, after the War, they will also love one another. When the Lord Bishops have forgiven the Kaiser, they may even pardon the Nonconformists. That will indeed be the millennium.

It is curious to read that someone has presented to the United Free Church of Scotland the house in which Sir J. Y. Simpson made his earliest experiments in the use of chloroform. When Simpson first introduced the anaesthetic many clergymen contended that its use was impious because God intended human beings to bear pain.

The daughter of a New York clergyman was sentenced at the Old Bailey to three months' hard labour for throwing vitriol on a married man. Another testimonial to the value of religious education.

"Viator," of the *Church Times*, is perplexed because "our synodical leaders tell us that some of them (the Psalms) are not suitable for use in Christian worship, and it seems probable that we shall be forbidden to recite them." He is startled by the thought that it has taken the men of God nigh two thousand years to make such a discovery. Speaking for himself, he can see no objection to the use of the Imprecatory Psalms in public worship, his fear being, not that it is wrong to express such sentiments, but that, from a peculiarity of temperament, he may not share them with adequate



intensity. He is convinced that they are not at all inconsistent with the Christian Gospel.

"Viator" is entirely right. To imprecate the vengeance of Heaven on the enemies of God and his kingdom is not at all incompatible with the teaching of the New Testament, or with the temper of the Christian Church in any age. The real meaning of the proposed omission of the Imprecatory Psalms from use in public worship is, that it is symptomatic of the fact that the Church is, perhaps unconsciously, outgrowing itself, under the pressure of that noble spirit of Humanism, which, for several generations, has been manifesting itself in the world outside. In other words, it is a sign of the inevitable disintegration of the Christian religion which is already taking place within the Church itself. As we have more than once observed, it is the beginning of the end of the Great Superstition which has darkened and poisoned human life for so long.

The Dean of Gurnsey is resigning at the age of ninety-six. That the duties of a dean do not make great demands on the holder is shown by the fact that so many of them live to great ages. Here are the ages of some living deans: Exeter, 90; Canterbury, 80; Chester, 85; Gloucester, 81; Salisbury, 82; Hereford, 79.

The figures of Wesleyan Methodism, as given at the Conference, are enough to make John Wesley turn in his grave. Since 1906 there has been a decline of 140,717 scholars in the Sunday-schools. And these figures relate to the most flourishing of the Free Churches.

"A book, by the nephew of Ernest Renan," in support of the Christian superstition is advertised in the publishers' summer lists. Christians have to be thankful for small mercies in these strenuous times.

When Joanna Southcote died, she left a sealed box containing "revelations regarding the second coming of Christ." The box was only to be opened by the bishops at a time of national danger. Now, Mr. J. W. Sharpe, of Bournemouth, claims to have had a vision and a communication from the spirit of W. T. Stead ordering the box to be opened. Several bishops have been asked to open the box, but they have not yet consented to do so. We can't say that the War has led to softening of the brain with some, because there was never a lack of that with many. But it is quite clear that the War has not given to these persons a mental stability of which they appear to be sadly in need.

Rev. F. C. Young, Vicar of Sherburn-in-Elmet, near Leeds, announces in the Parish Magazine that he is leaving the Church because he feels that "the views he now holds are not those which are required of a minister of the Church of England." He says: "There is nothing the matter with Christianity, but there is a great deal the matter with the Church." We cannot say what this means exactly, but, all the same, we congratulate Mr. Young on his straightforwardness. If all the clergymen who do not believe in the teachings of the Church left, what an exodus there would be!

The bubble of German "Atheism" has burst, although the dear clergy found it very useful for a time. The *Sunday Herald* states that the Junker party is Lutheran, and "has always been detested by the German Catholic peoples." The latter statement has the ring of truth in it.

A Westminster magistrate says that a lady who sings, even in the early morning, does not come within the category of "a noisy animal." What would he say to a street evangelist with a harmonium and a dozen lady friends?

A sidelight on the former power of the Church is shown in *The Town Labourer*, a book on English industrial life. It is a letter written to the Home Office after the Peterloo massacre

to explain that a woman who had been killed "was a dangerous character, for she had been heard to curse the curate."

A correspondent points out that the recent orders by which hard-working police officers are made to carry air-raid warnings might be varied, and suggests that this work should be undertaken by the clergy, who only work one day a week, and who are accustomed to tell people to flee from the wrath to come.

We referred last week to the fanatical story of the Rev. Dr. Fitchett concerning some "eminent Freethinkers" who had inferred that the War had shown the world that Christianity was the one thing to save it. In *Life*, a Melbourne magazine, the same gentleman grows tearfully sentimental over the presence in Jerusalem of "the unspeakable Turk." He says:—

A Turkish soldier is on guard night and day in the crypt of the great Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem.....A squad of Turkish soldiers, with sullen faces and loaded rifles, stand on guard all Easter Sunday in front of the Church of the Resurrection. It will surely be a relief to the Christian imagination when the cruel and bloody feet of the Turk no longer trample on spots sacred to the Christian faith.

An important fact Dr. Fitchett conveniently overlooks. The Turkish Government provided soldiers (naturally with "sullen faces," for are they not Mohammedans?) in order to keep the representatives of the various Christian sects from fighting over the birth-place of their Saviour.

Dr. Fitchett cites from a correspondent who appears to be as heartbroken as himself over the base uses to which the "Holy City" is being put. Thus:—

Jerusalem is at present simply overrun by Turks and arrogant German officers. The heights of Calvary have been transformed into a battery. The marble and jade columns and statuary, which have for centuries ornamented the place where our Saviour suffered, have been removed to give way to two Krupp cannons, which are being used for target practice, the targets having been mounted on the slopes of Mount Olivet. The place where Christ taught His disciples the Lord's Prayer has been fenced in with a wattle and barbed-wire fence. Mount Olivet, whence our Lord ascended, is the favourite centre of manoeuvres. Shouts, shots, bugle-calls, abuse, hatred, and blood—that is the atmosphere now surrounding the locality which for two thousand years has been the greatest sanctuary of the world.

All needed to complete the picture is to bear in mind the fact that it is not now, primarily, a war between Mohammedans and Christians, but a war initiated and carried on by Christians, which for sheer barbarity carries us back to some of the most frightful of the religious wars of the past.

America, says one of the daily papers, will cheerfully bear a part of the burden of Great Britain. We suggest sending along the Bench of Bishops.

#### CIVILIZATION AND THE ESKIMOS,

Professor Sollas, speaking of the Eskimo, observes: "The intrusion of the white man has brought with it its usual blight—poverty, sickness, selfishness, and loss of self-respect. It would be beyond our province to give instances, but one case where a different result might have been expected may be cited from Rink. He writes: 'On approaching these places (Ny-Herrnhut and Lichtenfels) the visitor, on being told that each of them contains 100 natives and two or three missionary families, will be at a loss to make out where the former have their abodes. The mission lodges are pretty, spacious, and, for Greenland, even stately in appearance. The stranger will probably be surprised on being informed that these buildings are only inhabited by missionaries because he discovers nothing like human dwellings anywhere else. Then his attention will be drawn to something resembling dunghills scattered over low rocks, and partly overgrown with grass, and he will be surprised to learn that the native population live in these dens.'—H. Rink "Danish Greenland."



## To Correspondents.

"A CHRISTIAN STILL" writes that he has read the *Freethinker* for some weeks without learning anything from it. We hope "A Christian Still" will not be discouraged. Some people learn slowly and others quickly, but understanding will come to the dullest if one persists. Perhaps if "A Christian Still" will get the local clergyman to read it aloud to him he might grasp its meaning better.

F. DE LISLE.—Thanks for magazine. Dr. Fitchett is quite up to his usual level. Presumably he knows his audience.

A. J. MARRIOTT.—Afraid it would initiate a too lengthy discussion, and we have to keep a wary eye on the space at our disposal.

S. ELMES cannot understand why the *Freethinker* has not a very much larger circulation than at present. Suppose we say inability of the public to appreciate a good thing, or ignorance of the fact of its existence? If the explanation is accepted, the remedy is obvious.

MR. A. RENTON suggests, in reply to Mr. Soddy's letter in our last issue, that the discussion of reprisals is futile, since all war is in the nature of a reprisal. Britain's declaration of war was thus a reprisal for the invasion of Belgium, German attack on our commerce a reprisal for our blockade of Germany, etc.

B. SUNDER (Woolwich).—Should be pleased to do something at Woolwich, but it is for the local Freethinkers to move first. We shall then be pleased to assist. We have no leaflet on "Money," and do not know the other to which you refer. We agree that the pious tracts you enclose are an insult to Woolwich folk, but religious tracts are usually of that kind.

E. PURCHAS.—It is indefensible, as you say. We do not see, though, why the question named does not admit of an answer.

M. NEWMAN.—We do not see anything in the cutting you send which specially calls for a reply. Thanks, all the same, for note.

DR. B. DUNLOP writes:—"I agree with your championship of coloured people, but are we prepared to marry them? If not, this difficulty must be added to the cheap labour one referred to by Bishop Frodsham. Perhaps the white peoples should unite in refusing coloured immigrants, and also directly encourage the two-child system."

R. MILES.—We regret to hear of the death of your uncle, Mr. J. C. Goodfellow. We have some recollection of him as a correspondent, and can quite believe all you say of his worthiness as a man, and the sturdiness of his Freethinking opinions. Please convey our sympathy to the members of his family.

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## Sugar Plums.

We feel that the nation is to be congratulated on the proposal—provided it properly materializes—to place the whole of the recruiting system under civil control. It is a vindication of the power of public opinion, muzzled as that opinion has been and is. But nothing can be worse than to place the civil population at the mercy of a military class which, as all experience proves, is totally unfitted for the exercise of such authority. Germany was damned and doomed when it allowed the military caste to gain ascendancy, and the same fate awaits any other nation that follows in its footsteps. A War Office should attend to war, and even in that it is usually the better for civilian surveillance.

Quite an illuminating article—illuminating in a way unseen by the writer—appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* the other day. The writer, who veils himself under the pen-name of "Index," charges the Catholic Church in Ireland with having "temporized with forces that are frankly anti-religious." He suggests as a means of relieving the pressure of the moment, that Conscription should be at once applied to Ireland, and that the Church should advocate its being done. In the writer's opinion, this would get rid of the young men who are at the root of the present unrest. We have seldom come across a plainer statement of the more sinister aspect of militarism, and of the way in which the Church is expected to play the game of reaction.

We are glad to learn that the course of open-air lectures arranged at Sheffield pursues a successful course. Mr. Grimes had a good meeting last Sunday, and this week the speaker will be Mr. F. E. Willis, of Birmingham. We feel quite safe in promising a good lecture for all who attend.

We are asked to call the special attention of South London Freethinkers to the Brockwell Park meetings. We hope our doing so will have all the consequences desired.

Mr. H. J. Stenning writes that he finds Mr. Effel's article in last week's issue very "unsatisfactory." He says that the number of Socialists who accept the theory of Marx is very small, the number who reject it is much larger, and the number indifferent to theories of any sort largest of all. Mr. Stenning says that Socialism is not concerned with "the objective validity of any religion." Mr. Effel is, therefore, wrong in attributing "moral cowardice" to those Socialists who wish to steer clear of all discussions on religion. This, however, was not the point of Mr. Effel's article. His article was a protest against the "deferential attitude" of so many Socialist writers and speakers towards the clergy and the Churches with the nauseating attempt of some to prove that Socialism is "true Christianity." And we believe there is need for the protest. To keep Socialism and religion distinct is a policy we appreciate. But in practice this usually means boycotting all criticisms unfavourable to Christianity, and permitting all attempts to prove that "true Christianity" and Socialism are identical. It was against this attitude our contributor wrote.

It has been for some years the custom of all Branches of the N.S.S., where lectures are given, to devote the nearest Sunday to the birthday of Charles Bradlaugh to a lecture on his life and work. Charles Bradlaugh was born on September 26, 1833, therefore the last Sunday in September is usually chosen, which will, this year, fall on the 30th. Will speakers and Branch secretaries please note?

The younger generation of speakers would be well-advised to furnish themselves with a copy of *Charles Bradlaugh: a Record of His Life and Work*, by his daughter, Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, which can be obtained through the Pioneer Press, price 2s. 6d.

Sovereigns, it is true, call themselves the representatives of God, his vicegerents upon earth. But does the fear of a master more powerful than they incline them seriously to study the welfare of the nations whom Providence has entrusted to their care? Does the pretended terror which ought to be inspired in them by the idea of an invisible judge, to whom alone they acknowledge themselves accountable for their actions, render them more equitable, more compassionate, more sparing of the blood and treasure of their subjects, more temperate in their pleasures, more attentive to their duties? In fine, does this God, by whose authority kings reign, deter them from inflicting a thousand evils upon the people to whom they ought to act as guides, protectors, and fathers? Alas! If we survey the whole earth, we shall see men almost everywhere governed by tyrants, who use religion merely as an instrument to render more stupid the slaves whom they overwhelm under the weight of their vices, or whom they sacrifice without mercy to their extravagances.—*D'Holbach.*



## The Apologist in Blinkers.

IN the *Nineteenth Century and After* for July, 1917, the Very Rev. Canon William Barry, D.D., writes on the much-boomed, if rather unsubstantial, subject of "The Return of Religion." His article serves to show that, while possessed of a good deal more learning and ability than many lights of the Church (the Bishop of London, for example!) he shares with others the common ecclesiastical defect of being totally ignorant of the real foes which religion has to face to-day.

It is, of course, to be expected that an orthodox divine, writing *apropos* of the War, should make full use of the silly claptrap about "German Atheism." This is as much an article of faith with the clergy as is the equally illusory "revival of Christianity" here and in France. Canon Barry is sure that the God of the Bible is not the same as Odin the War-God, whom some cracked professor in Germany referred to as "the ancient, mighty deity of all the Teutonic kindred." We may concede to the Canon that they are not the same. Nevertheless, they are much of a muchness. We have on authority that Canon Barry will not repudiate, that God, "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," authorized the Israelites of old to smite their enemies, "man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass," and was very angry when such orders were not carried out to the letter. It is doubtful if poor, much-maligned Father Odin ever beat that record. The Canon is entitled to plead, if he will, that Yahweh, God of Hosts, has grown milder with advancing years, and is by now quite a reformed character. For all we know to the contrary, so may Odin have done. Anyhow, if the choice is between Yahweh and Odin, it is between one hoary assassin and another, and there is no visible reason why Canon Barry, the Bishop of London, Mr. R. J. Campbell, Mr. G. K. Chesterton, and the other partizans of Yahweh should expect us to get so very excited about the difference between them.

However, it appears that Odin or Yahweh, or whoever is responsible for this War, has done us a very good turn, and that by his good offices we have "escaped"—Canon Barry uses the word advisedly—from the veritable "Valley of the Shadow of Death," as he calls the period of scientific criticism beginning with the discoveries of Darwin. Darwin, we are told, appeared to have "banished mind from the world's development," with the result that science showed us that "its Everlasting Father was nescience," Theism was "reckoned among the mythologies," and Tyndall, in the Belfast Address, "read decorously the Burial Service over it, where no hope of resurrection was held out to God or man." "Materialism was the ready money or the cash kept for its customers' use at the Bank of Nescience. Among its chief cashiers, T. H. Huxley played a famous part." In such phrases as this Canon Barry not unwittingly conveys the impression made on the pious mind by the Agnostic writings of the latter half of the nineteenth century.

We must, however, demur to the idea that the writings of Darwin, Huxley, and Tyndall, great as they were, contained a final and sufficient statement of the case against religion, or that you can dispose of that case by exposing superficial weaknesses in their exposition of it. The case against Theism was conclusively stated by Epicurus 2,200 years before Huxley, and rests on the eternal problem of evil. "Either God is willing, but unable, to abolish evil; or able, but unwilling; or neither able nor willing; or both able and willing. If he is willing, but unable, he is not almighty. If he is able, but unwilling, he is not good. If he is neither able

nor willing, he is neither good nor almighty. If he is able and willing, why is evil not abolished?" That argument has never been bettered. Canon Barry would have done well to have turned his attention to it.

Instead of that, he fastens on what we may call the "trimmings" of the nineteenth-century Agnostic case, and becomingly cuts them into ribbons. "It needs no ghost, come from the dead," to tell us that Huxley, Spencer, Romanes, and their contemporaries, great men as they were, were but men; that Huxley laboured under the disadvantage of having adopted Hume's essentially vulnerable system of philosophy; that Spencer wrote a good deal of plain nonsense about "the unknowable"; and that other Agnostics failed even to face the questions which these two so unsatisfactorily answered. Clearly, if you deny that you can have knowledge of anything but successive impressions and ideas in your own mind, it follows that everything beyond them is hypothesis; that necessity, causation, and law cease to be legitimate matter for inquiry; and that the ground of all action and the validity of all reasoning rests as much on "faith" as Christianity itself. Huxley did great harm to his case by adopting this position. It compelled him, for instance, to admit that miracles were a question of evidence, and to imply that he would readily have accepted the "Gadarene affair" itself if only the Synoptic Gospels had been demonstrably written by eye-witnesses of the events they described!

It is, again, undeniable that the Agnostics of the nineteenth century suffered from a sentimental weakness for the very superstitions which reason forced them to attack, which often gives their criticisms an appearance of half-heartedness. Renan's *Vie de Jesus* is full of instances of this sort of mawkishness, which his orthodox opponents call his "reverent spirit," and applaud accordingly. A passage from Romanes, quoted by Canon Barry, is another example, though this does not justify the Canon in repeating once again the orthodox falsehood that Romanes was "rescued in time out of the dungeon of Giant Despair, and found the Divine Master who had never been far from him," or that he "lived to understand that his reasoning to the perfect Unreason of all things was a pure sophism." Again, Canon Barry is entitled to criticize Huxley's Oxford speech about "the ethical process" being opposed to "the cosmic process," which is obviously impossible if, as we hold, the ethical process is itself part and parcel of the cosmic process.

But when all that is vulnerable in the nineteenth-century Agnostics—their Humean philosophy, their sentimental respect for Christianity, their failure to hold fast to monistic fundamentals—is thrown aside, we are very far indeed from returning to the "other-worldliness" which Canon Barry avowedly wishes to see emerge from the experience of the War. He himself puts the real issue very plainly:—

The question cannot be stated simply as if it concerned our mortal span, whether we shall seek to light it up with an ideal, or to shape its course on the principle of Aristippus and get as much variety or pleasure into it as we find possible. It is a different problem from either of these. We must try to ascertain if our individual life, as we know it, under the conditions of time and space is or is not the prelude to another stage of existence when those conditions have fallen away from us. If it is, then our aspirations and duties ought to conform to "other-worldliness."

Just so; and we may add that to state the question in this form is to answer it. How can there be a "stage of existence" when time and space "have fallen away from us"? The very word "stage" implies time. Take away time and space, and you take away change,



action, personality, existence itself. Canon Barry's question is more specious, but not more possessed of meaning, than the time-honoured problem of how many angels can dance on the point of a needle?

To make a case for religion—which means, as Canon Barry admits, a case for “other-worldliness”—you must prove the existence of your “other world”; a world, that is, independent of the world of time and space, cause and effect, number and form, with which common sense and reason acquaint us. That is just exactly what no alleged “revelation,” Jewish, Christian, Mohammedan, or “Spiritualist,” has ever done. These precious religions, whether they tell us of three Gods or one, ascended Christs or levitated mediums, celestial harps or ethereal cigars, do not reveal “another” world; they allege certain unexplored facts in this world, which must stand for examination at the bar of common sense and reason, like any facts of science or mathematics.

Let our divines, then, be content to plead at this bar; or, if they will not, let them boom sonorously about the virtue of faith and the perils of doubt, thereby frightening or hypnotizing weak minds to whom that sort of thing or appealing. But do not let them think that, by gibes at “the mud-god matter,” witticisms about the “ready money at the Bank of Nescience,” and rhetoric about “soul and flesh,” they can prove their thesis. Above all, let them abstain from the crowning dishonesty, by which Canon Barry's article is disfigured, of misusing the fact of human heroism as shown in the War for the purposes of their dogmatic creed. Canon Barry admits that soldiers do their duty independently of “conscious philosophy.” Very well, then; do not let him pretend that his philosophy is a necessary consequence when it is not.

Finally, let us have a truce to the fiction that the War has revealed religion to people who, being “born in the Darwinian Era,” knew little or nothing about it. I was born in what Canon Barry calls “the Darwinian Era.” So far from knowing nothing about religion, I was educated in the strictest beliefs of the Church of England. The Bible and the Liturgy were, and are, as familiar to me as the *Daily Mail*. I thought my way out of all that, not because of living in the “Darwinian Era,” but because religion appeared to me part and parcel of a social and political system, supported by Darwinians and non-Darwinians alike, which chloroformed every human impulse towards greater and more equal freedom. The so-called Darwinian Era saw the disgraceful attempt to keep Bradlaugh out of the House of Commons, the persecution of Foote and Ramsey under the Blasphemy Acts, the renewed establishment of clericalism by the Education Act of 1902, and the recrudescence of blasphemy prosecutions in recent years. It is ridiculous for Canon Barry, therefore, to pretend that his Church has been the “under dog,” and Secularism insolently triumphant, all this time. I hope and believe that after the War men and women will be more, and not less, impatient of the established system and all that pertains to it. The “Darwinian Era” will then seem an era of compromise and stagnation compared with the period of iconoclasm and upheaval in front of us. Our revival mongers are destined to a rude awakening.

ROBERT ARCH.

### The Crowd.

MUTE in the throng, I saw a stranger stand,  
Alone was he, and bitterly he smiled  
At those who passed, nor held a friendly hand,  
But flowed, unconscious, selfishly beguiled,  
Scanning each face this stranger silent stood,  
Musing how well Almighty God had foiled  
Man's dreams of love, and hopes of brotherhood.

## Science, Telepathy, and Communion with the Dead.

### III.

(Continued from p. 475.)

It is unfortunately true that most persons are quite unprepared to admit the deficiencies of their own powers of observation and of memory, and are also unaware of their own ignorance of perfectly natural occurrences, which continually lead to self-deception and illusion. Moreover, the capacity for logical inference and argument is not common. The whole past and present history of what is called “the occult” is enveloped in an atmosphere of self-deception and of readiness to be deceived by others, to which misplaced confidence in their own cleverness and power of detecting trickery renders many—one may almost say most—people victims. The physician who has given his life to the study of mental aberration and diseases of the mind is the only really qualified investigator of these “marvels,” and no one who has closely studied what is known in the domain of mental physiology and pathology has any difficulty in understanding, and bringing into relation with large classes of established facts as to illusions and mental aberration, the “beliefs” in magic and second-sight which are here and there found flourishing at the present day, as well as the, at first sight startling, evidence of highly accomplished men who have suffered from such delusions.—*Sir Ray Lankester, “Divisions of a Naturalist”* (1915), pp. 363-4.

THAT the thought-reading performance of Blackburn and Smith was the result of trickery is confirmed by an article contributed by Sir James Crichton-Browne to the *Westminster Gazette* for January, 29, 1901, in which he describes some experiments undertaken with Blackburn and Smith at Dean's Yard, London, in the presence of himself, Dr. Francis Galton, Professor Romanes, and Mr. Myers. In this experiment Smith was blindfolded, and succeeded in reproducing a few regular or simple figures upon which Blackburn had concentrated his mind, but completely failed in reproducing an irregular figure which Professor Romanes and Sir James Crichton-Browne subsequently insisted on as a test when they began to suspect the use of a code. The next diagram was the shield on Dr. Galton's signet ring. This had an oval shape, but the reproduction was of a triangular shield. Sir James Crichton-Browne continues:—

By this time I was quite satisfied that Mr. S. was not effectually blindfolded, and that it was practicable for Mr. B. to communicate with him both by sight and hearing; so Romanes and I asked permission, which was granted, to blindfold him anew. We proceeded to do so *secundum artem*. Cotton-wool was procured, the sockets were packed, the ears were plugged, and a large handkerchief made all secure. After that several experiments were tried as before, but there never was the smallest response on the part of Mr. S. to Mr. B.'s volitional endeavours. There was no more flashing of images into his mind. His pencil was idle. Thought-transference was somehow interrupted.

Sir James Crichton-Browne concludes the account as follows: “I was invited to be critical and sceptical, and I was so. I daresay more credulously inclined people will think that my suspicions were unjust and that no trick was practised—that was clearly the feeling of some of the psychical researchers present. The last scene of all, or passage of arms, I vividly recollect. Mr. Myers, standing in front of the fireplace, said, ‘It must be allowed that this demonstration has been a total failure, and I attribute that to the offensive incredulity of Dr. Crichton-Browne.’ To which I rejoined, ‘I hope I always will show offensive incredulity when I find myself in the presence of patent imposture.’”<sup>1</sup>

As Professor Tyndall long ago remarked, the believers in Spiritualism “like to believe, and they do not like to be undeceived. Science is perfectly powerless in the

<sup>1</sup> *Bedrock*, July, 1912; pp. 197-198.



presence of this frame of mind. It is, moreover, a state perfectly compatible with extreme intellectual subtlety and a capacity for devising hypothesis which only require the hardihood engendered by strong conviction, or by callous mendacity, to render them impregnable."<sup>1</sup>

A correspondent writes, asking for an explanation of the thought-reading performance of "Zomah" at the London Coliseum lately. This lady, sitting on the stage with her eyes bandaged, describes any article given to her manager by any member of the audience, and yet her manager addresses no question to her. My correspondent wishes to know whether he is right in believing there is some hypnotic understanding between Madame Zomah and her manager, by means of which she is able to define objects known and seen by him?

I do not know how the trick is worked, but my correspondent may rest absolutely assured that hypnotism has nothing to do with it. When I come to deal with hypnotism, he will see that quite plainly for himself. Madame Zomah's performance is not new, as my correspondent seems to think. At the very time the Zancigs were giving their performance in London (in 1906-7), Dr. Andrew Wilson pointed out, in a letter to the *Daily Chronicle*, that a much more wonderful entertainment was being given at the St. George's Hall by Mr. Devant and his sister. Miss Devant was blindfolded with a thick piece of cloth, previously handed round the audience for examination. Mr. Devant then, says Dr. Wilson, "comes among the audience, receives instructions regarding what his sister is expected to do, and she in turn carries out the instructions to the letter. This is really wonderful, because there is an utter absence—apparent absence, at least—of all communication between the two. There is nothing of the 'This please' or 'Now please' about the entertainment; all is accomplished in silence." Dr. Wilson further remarked: "Comparing the Alhambra and St. George's Hall performances, I wonder to find that people are puzzled over the former feats."<sup>2</sup>

Why, then, did not Mr. Devant and his sister create a sensation and get boomed by the London press like the Zancigs? Because they did not pretend to the possession of mystical powers, or to be more highly gifted than ordinary people. They honestly declared that all their wonderful performance was accomplished without the aid of spirits, Telepathy, Hypnotism, or any supernatural means. Therefore they did not appeal to the bump of wonder of the gaping multitude.

Sir Oliver Lodge has for years past, by means of lectures, articles in magazines, and books, been conducting a propaganda in favour of Telepathy and Spiritualism, lamenting all the while the scepticism and indifference of the scientific world to the fads he adduces in support of his opinions. Dr. Ivor Tuckett, Sir Ray Lankester, and Sir Bryan Donkin, among others, have criticized Sir Oliver's theories, and shown that his so-called facts will not bear critical investigation;<sup>3</sup> and now another scientist takes up Sir Oliver's challenge, namely, Dr. Charles Mercier, the well-known author of several standard works—among others *A New Logic; Psychology: Normal and Morbid; a Text-Book of Insanity; Criminal Responsibility; Crime and Insanity*, etc. Dr. Mercier has also been Examiner in Psychology to the University of London, and Lecturer on Insanity at the Medical Schools of the Westminster, Charing Cross, and Royal Free Hospitals.

As has been pointed out, the only really qualified investigators of Spiritualism are the psychologist, the

conjurer, and the detective. Dr. Mercier is an eminent psychologist, and therefore well qualified to point out the weak spots in Sir Oliver Lodge's spiritual armour, which he has done in his book, *Spiritualism and Sir Oliver Lodge*. In the preface, Dr. Mercier tells us that a copy of Sir Oliver Lodge's book, *Raymond*, was sent to him, with a request that he would examine and review it. He proceeds:—

I found it impossible to do so. The sorrow of a bereaved mother is no fit matter for discussion by strangers in the public press. But the book revealed to me such an astounding mental attitude on the part of its author, that I sent for a previous work of his, *The Survival of Man*, to discover on what ground he, a professor of a certain branch of physical science, and the Principal of a University, speaking with the authority conferred by his occupancy of these positions, could make the assumptions that he does, and promulgate *urbi et orbi* such extraordinary doctrines. I have been engaged for some forty years in the study of the vagaries of the human mind in health and in disease, and am not easily surprised by witnessing new vagaries; but I must confess that *The Survival of Man* did surprise me. Upon inquiry I found that the doctrines and practices therein advocated have attained a very wide vogue. It may also be said that they are become the rage..... The subject has never engaged my attention before. I came to it as a new-comer, and with an open mind. When I saw the consequences to which the doctrines and practices lead; when I read of a table laughing and executing caressing movements; when I read the drivel that is put into the mouths of dead men who when alive were of normal intelligence; I began to suspect that the foundation on which this structure was built was insecure..... For a considerable time my mind misgave me. Again and again I put the task aside as not worthy to engage the time that might be occupied in serious studies, and it seemed that such a structure raised on such foundations might well be left to fall to pieces of its own inherent rottenness; but on consideration of the following arguments advanced by my friends I determined to undertake the task.<sup>1</sup>

The main reason that impelled Dr. Mercier to this task was, to use his own words: "I know from my own medical experience, that the pursuit of the occult, and especially of that form of it that used to go by the name of Spiritualism, but is now called telepathy, telergy, and other high-sounding names, leads to a morbid frame of mind, and tends to render those who are at all predisposed to insanity an easy prey to the disease. I am not alone in that opinion." In proof of which Dr. Mercier quotes from the Annual Report, lately issued, by Dr. G. M. Robertson, Superintendent of the Royal Asylum of Morningside, Edinburgh, the premier institution for the insane in Scotland, who issues a grave warning to those who inherit a latent tendency to nervous disorders: "to have nothing to do with practical inquiries of a spiritualistic nature, lest they should awaken this dormant proclivity to hallucinations within their brains. I have known such a person who had lost her son following the procedure in vogue at present, under advice, first hearing of him through mediums, then getting into touch with him herself, and receiving messages from him, some as impressions and others as audible words, then increasing her circle of spiritual acquaintances, and living more for her spiritual world than for this, to the neglect of her husband and household, till finally God conversed with her in a low musical voice at all times, and confided His plans for the future to her. I would ask spiritualists where, in this case, does spiritualism end and mental disorder begin?"<sup>2</sup> That is the testimony of Dr. Robert-

<sup>1</sup> Professor Tyndall, "Science and the Spirits," *Fragments of Science* (1876), p. 321.

<sup>2</sup> *Daily Chronicle*, January 3, 1907.

<sup>3</sup> See *Bedrock*, January, 1913.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Mercier, *Spiritualism and Sir Oliver Lodge*, pp. v. vi. The book is published by The Mental Culture Enterprise, 329 High Holborn, W.C. 1, at 4s. 6d.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. vii-viii.



son, head of the leading asylum for the insane in Scotland, and no doubt it could be paralleled in every other asylum in the country. We shall follow Dr. Mercier in his examination of Sir Oliver Lodge's facts and opinions in our next article. It will be worth while.

(To be continued.) W. MANN.

## Correspondence.

### TELEPATHY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—From Mr. Mann's article I gather that he denies the existence of controlled telepathy, but I myself can testify to the existence of involuntary telepathy outside my control. I have frequently, while asleep, received messages from relatives, colleagues, friends, and even from my employers. I have made use of the knowledge thus gained.

The Friday night before the recent raid both my wife and I went through, in dreams, almost precisely our experiences of the following Saturday morning. The night that my remaining son at the Front was badly hurt, I dreamt that he told me of his wound and showed me the place.

Having been in a church choir most of my life, I have a wholesome contempt for the supernatural and its paid professors, and would rather be amused by your journal than be bored by the sermon.

I therefore simply record the above experiences as proof that there are more things in the universe than we have yet got the measure of. I discarded the *Church Times* for the *Freethinker* many years ago, but my attitude on supernatural matters, based upon personal experiences in connection with my son who has gone under in this accursed War, leads me now towards *Light*, whilst remaining anchored, like a captive balloon, to the firm ground of the *Freethinker*.

J. J. O.

### SOCIALISTS, FREETHOUGHT, AND RELIGION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I beg leave to protest against J. Effel on two grounds (1) He does nothing to advance the discussion from the point at which it is left by your brief rejoinder to N. Streimer—but runs in with a "red herring." (2) He gives a totally false impression of the attitude and character of James Connolly.

As one who has seen "active service" both as Militant Atheist and Marxian Socialist, I wish to urge: (1) Streimer claims that "ideas play a secondary part in social development." Our Editor replies: "Man is always under the dominion of his ideas, and it is these which are the chief determinants of social conditions," and "no human society exists or ever has existed on an economic basis. The social bond is essentially a psychologic one." The importance of this clear antagonism of opinion is too great to be over-stated. Nothing could be more advantageous than its discussion. Freethought is nothing if it has not a social application. Socialism is either in line with scientifically verified facts or it is worthless, and surely at a time when Marxian ideas have in Russia drawn the attention of the world, there is every practical advantage in an elucidation of the root principles of sociology.

Personally, I am sorry to see this promising controversy side-tracked by a criticism of the detail policy of the Socialist societies. (2) J. Effel sets out to prove the Socialist parties guilty of "Jesuitry" and "kew-towing" to the Church. It is a pity, with so many glaring instances alive and to hand, that he should disturb the dead and quote not matters of general knowledge but a twenty-year old pamphlet written by a self-taught working man struggling almost single-handed to recruit a Socialist Party in the teeth of the best organized Church in the world—the Catholic Church in Ireland.

Such a man in such a place can be forgiven a little "hedging." But did Connolly "hedge"? His essay, "Socialism and Religion," included in the "New Evangel" (originally published in the *Workers' Republic* in 1898 reprinted 1917 by the Socialist Party of Ireland) dealt with the question as one of party policy. He first points out the many leading Freethinkers were and are non-Socialists, and goes on to add

so also is the Pope, whose "ill-reasoned and inconclusive encyclicals lately issued against Socialism make of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church belated camp-followers in the armies marching under the banner raised by the Agnostic exponents of the individualist philosophy."

As to whether the philosophy of Socialism can be reconciled with theology, Connolly says (same essay):—

They (the leading exponents of modern Socialism), as a party, do not base their Socialism upon any interpretation of the language or meaning of Scripture, nor upon the real or supposed intentions of a beneficent Deity. They, as a party, neither affirm nor deny these things.....they wisely prefer to take their stand upon the actual phenomena of social life as they can be observed in operation amongst us to-day, or as they can be traced in the recorded facts of history. If any special interpretation of the meanings of Scripture tends to influence human thought in the direction of Socialism or is found to be on a plane with Socialist doctrine. Then he considers that the said interpretation is stronger because of its identity with the teachings of Socialism, but *he does not necessarily believe that Socialism is stronger or its position more impregnable because of its theological ally* (italics mine).....

We feel that Socialism is based upon a series of facts requiring only unassisted human reason to grasp and master all their details, whereas Religion of every kind is admittedly based upon "faith" in the occurrence in past ages of a series of phenomena inexplicable by any process of mere human reasoning.

I admit that to "be suspicious" of the author of these words as an "emissary of Rome" would be reckless bigotry in any case. In the case of James Connolly, and him dead—words fail me!

THOS. A. JACKSON.

### National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON JULY 26.

The President, Mr. Chapman Cohen, in the chair. Also present: Messrs. Baker, Bowman, Brandes, Leat, Palmer, Quinton, Roger, Samuels, Wood, Miss Kough, Miss Stanley, and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed. Monthly cash statement presented and adopted.

New members were received for the Manchester Branch and the Parent Society.

An application to form a Regent's Park Branch was received and, the conditions being complied with, granted.

The following reports were received and adopted:—

1. Report from Sheffield of Mr. Wilde's successful meetings and of forthcoming arrangements in that town.
2. Report of result of recent Blasphemy case in Birmingham.
3. Report on action to date of the Protest Committee against the prohibition of sale of literature by the L.C.C.

It being found that the holiday season had interfered with full attendances, some minor matters of business were dealt with, and others adjourned until the next meeting.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary*.

### The New "War" God.

It would have been absurd to think that the most colossal war in the history of the universe should have brought about so many changes without bringing about one in God. The intellectual world was, therefore, more or less prepared when Mr. Wells' book, *God the Invisible King*, appeared. It had long been felt that the old ramshackle God, with which we were all so familiar in the past, was played out, and from a revolutionary writer like Mr. Wells it was cheerfully anticipated that something good would be put up. It is unpleasant, however, to find from the newspaper criticisms that the general effect of the book is unsatisfactory, and that the intelligent citizens of Britain have not yet got the thing they wanted.

There is no need, however, to despair, as doubtless many other leading novelists will make a point of "having a shot at the God question"; for the sooner we settle the great puzzle, Who is the King of Glory, who? the better for the



British Empire and, at the same time, the world and the universe. God must be properly located, and his intentions, hopes, fears, loves, hates, completely understood, before we can make any real progress. This glorious uncertainty is becoming intolerable. Under the cold, merciless logic of modern religious thought, God has assumed a somewhat bewildering number of forms. Sometimes "within" us, sometimes "without" us, sometimes we without him; capable of being found without being lost; or of "coming into our hearts" without our knowing it; a Being, a Power, a Manifestation, a One-ness, a Two-ness, a Three-ness; these are a few of his forms, but the average man of to-day is no longer content with a God who cannot work his own universe the way he likes, but who finds his best hopes thwarted by man's obstinacy and brutality, and that is why Mr. Wells' great effort is not likely to last so long as usual. It should never be doubted that God is working for the general good of the human race, but it must be remembered that he does not want the world to be happy too soon. The Invisible King of Mr. Wells seems to possess this latter faculty, and would, perhaps, have become more popular in time of peace. Any other writers who are entering the competition should, so far as possible, go for a "visible" King, that will be at once an effective war-stopping and stomach-filling God, as these are the only lines upon which the up-to-date, God-finding writers are likely to succeed.

Y. C.

### The National Church.

#### HOW IT OPPOSES PROGRESS.

A FEW examples of the votes of the Bishops in the House of Lords which show Christian ethics in practice:—

#### Women and Borough Councils—

Eight voted against admitting women as members of London Borough Councils.

#### Deserted Wives—

Seventeen voted against allowing deserted wives to marry again without penalty if deserted five years.

#### Free Education—

Thirteen voted against free education of the people.

#### Flogging of Women—

None voted for the abolition of flogging women in public, flogging women in prison, or flogging in the Army and Navy.

#### Capital Punishment—

Five voted for still inflicting the death penalty for thefts over £10.

#### Child Labour—

One only supported the first Bill for limiting the hours of child labour.

#### Vivisection Bill—

One voted for, two against, the cruelty to animals in Vivisection Bill.

#### Slave Trade—

Two only voted for the suppression of the slave trade.

#### Reform Bills—

Twenty-one voted against the Reform Bill of 1831, and fifteen voted against the Reform Bill of 1832.

#### Burial of Nonconformists—

Sixteen first, and then ten, voted against permitting burial without Church of England rites.

#### Jewish Disabilities—

Seventeen voted against removing civil disabilities of the Jews.

#### Nonconformists and Universities—

Twenty-two voted against admitting Nonconformists to University degrees.

#### Catholic Emancipation—

Nineteen voted against Catholic emancipation.

Dr. Fort Newton, minister of the City Temple, is going to the Front as the guest of the British Government. We wonder if he will wear khaki, like so many of the clergy.

## 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, Aug 9, at 7.30.

#### OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 6.15, Percy S. Wild, a Lecture.

FINSBURY PARK N. S. S.: 11.15, H. V. Storey, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley Road): 7, Mr. Shaller, "Do Christians Believe?"

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill): 6.30, a Lecture.

REGENT'S PARK BRANCH N. S. S.: 3.15, Miss Kough, "He Can't Do Anything."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3, A. D. Howell Smith, B.A., a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station) 7, Mr. Burke, a Lecture.

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

### COUNTRY.

#### OUTDOOR.

SHEFFIELD BRANCH N. S. S. (Poole Square): 7, F. E. Willis, Vice-President N. S. S., "What is the Use of Prayer?"

## GOD AND THE AIR-RAID.

### The Massacre of the Innocents.

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By C. COHEN.

Price 9d. per 100.

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**WANTED**, Home with Motherly Widow Lady for Young Couple (out at business all day) and Boy, four years old; lady who would take care of boy; Birmingham (Handsworth district preferred); immediately.—"HOME," c/o *Freethinker* Office.

**TALL**, attractive Young Lady, secondary school, certificated, thoroughly trained in shorthand, typing, book-keeping, business methods, etc., a little office experience, wishes for a Responsible Post. Salary expected, £120 p.a.—"TYRO," Manager, *Freethinker* Office.

**COMFORTABLE APARTMENTS**,  $\frac{1}{4}$  miles from Leicester.—Widow, without family, would be pleased to hear from *Freethinkers* wishing to spend their holidays in the Midlands.—MRS. W. PALMER, King Street, Enderby, near Leicester.

## RATIONALIST PEACE SOCIETY

38 CURSITOR STREET, LONDON, E.C.

President: THE RT. HON. J. M. ROBERTSON, M.P.

Chairman: MRS. H. BRADLAUGH BONNER.

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