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## Views and Opinions.

### Religion and Psychology.

We have always been greatly interested in the psychology of the religious mind. It has had a special attraction for us, because we were never, so to speak, inside it. Never having possessed any religious beliefs worth bothering about, it has been no easy task to get at the religious persons point of view, and to look at the world as he sees it. And although this may have had its drawbacks, it has had the compensating advantage of making it more of an objective study, giving one the same detachment of mind that one brings to bear in studying the psychology of a different species—although this, again, opened one to a danger from the other side. Some aspects of the religious mind are easy enough to appreciate. It is easy to understand the stories of visions and paroxysms of ecstatic emotion. A little knowledge of the physiology of the nervous system, under both normal and abnormal conditions, puts one on safe ground. It is easy enough to deal with the expression of social and domestic feelings in terms of religion. That is a mere environmental accident. But there are other aspects of religious psychology of a more puzzling character.

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### Pious Lies.

There is, for example, the religious liar. Pulpit talks, and religious papers, particularly those of the poorer kind—for where all are poor there are still degrees of poverty—swarm with stories of a kind that are certainly not true. There is not a street corner preacher, no matter how youthful, and no matter how scanty be his mental equipment, who is not ready with a number of stories, obviously false, concerning the Lord's dealings with him, or his dealings with the Lord. These people will tell you of the cases they have met of people, drunken, miserable, poverty-stricken, etc., who have become shining lights through their interposition. Instead of the Catholic doctrine of the intercession of the saints, we have the Protestant doctrine of the intercession of the street corner preacher, or of the Evangelistic Bible-banger. Now it is easy to dismiss all these stories as

lies; and they *are* lies, inasmuch as they are not true. But they are not lies in the sense that they have been consciously invented by people who appreciate the fact that they are lies. Were this the case, there would be nothing to explain. These stories are usually told as though the speaker *believes* them to be true. I have, myself, been faced in a public meeting by a man who told the audience of a conversation he had with me *while I was in the Salvation Army*. And I believe the man actually was convinced he was speaking the truth. And, after all, the average mind is not built for elaborate, constructive lying. It would be a stronger, even a better mind, if it were. It is more a carelessness of the truth that is in evidence, added to an intense power of self-deception, which, in turn, rests upon the foundation of an ill-trained intellect and a badly balanced emotional nature.

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### A Catalogue of Mendacity.

It would fill a very large volume were one to give a detailed description of all the lies that have been perpetuated in the name of religion. There is the lie historical, which is illustrated in the gross distortion of historic truth in the interest of Christianity. There is the lie documentary, illustrated in the deliberate fabrication of documents to support one branch or another of the Christian Church, or of Christianity in general. There is the lie sectarian, which consists in the lies manufactured and circulated by one Christian sect of other Christian sects, or the lies told by Christians as a whole of non-Christians. There is the ethical lie of the moral benefits flowing from Christianity, or of the moral evil resulting from its absence. All these, and others, are plain to the most casual investigation, and they may perhaps be summed up in the cultural lie, the lie that the world's progress and welfare have ever been to any extent dependent on belief in the Christian religion. Taken altogether, one might challenge the world to show another religion that has been so buttressed by lies as Christianity has been.

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### The Lie of Death.

But the two most persistent and most popular of all pious lies are what one may call the lie of death and the lie of conversion. The lie of death has two phases. It used to be mainly concerned with the deaths of unbelievers, who passed away shrieking in an agony of remorse for God to forgive them. Nearly every great Freethinker, and thousands of small ones, have died in this way. But of late years, as Freethinkers have become more numerous and better known, this lie has lost its force, and it has been largely replaced by the death of the Christian who sent for a particular parson and died "a beautiful death." This, for some time, was a favourite with the Bishop of London. Over and over again he explained how he had been sent for and had just left the death-bed of "one of my dear boys"; and this happened so frequently that it looked as though Providence had deliberately killed some poor devil in order to provide the Bishop with a pathetic passage for



his sermon. But the curious part of the whole matter is this: Death-beds are not uncommon; most people have stood by them; and everyone knows that people do not die in this way. In nearly every case, when death comes, brain and body are so worn that death is quite peaceful. It comes as a sleep, bringing relief, not terror. Yet this death-bed lie is a fairly constant one. Why do people believe it? Those who hear it know that their own experience gives it the lie. And yet the testimony of daily life does not seem proof against this pulpit legend, nor do clergymen seem to feel that they are acting wrongly in manufacturing these death-bed scenes.

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#### The Lie of Conversion.

The stories of Christian conversion are equally mendacious. When we read of how the character of A or B was miraculously changed by this tract or that prayer, we do not need detailed examination to pronounce the story false, we *know* it is a lie. Character is not changed in this way. Miracles are as foreign to the moral world as to the world of physical being. And, as with death-beds, so with conversions. What strikes the critical observer is their monotony. The convert at a revival meeting nearly always tells the same tale. He has always led a desperately wicked life, and he usually seems sorry it was not worse. And the younger ones, waiting their turn for conversion, watch the convert with admiration, wondering how they can pile up a similar record of repudiated rascality. But age matters little in these matters. Quite young people can be found accusing themselves of desperate villainy, and exulting in their depravity—before they accepted Jesus. The similarity of these stories is proof of their falsity, and one hardly knows at which to marvel most—the untruthfulness of the speakers or the credulity of the listeners.

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#### An Evil Environment.

The psychology of religious lying remains an unsolved problem unless we bear in mind the important consideration that in a religious atmosphere ethical values change their nature. A parson will say in the pulpit things he would not say elsewhere, because the pulpit has its own ethic, and its own canons of intellectual righteousness. These stories of conversion, of death-beds, and the like, are part and parcel of the furniture of the pulpit; they are repeated generation after generation, and every young preacher who comes along annexes them as his own. One may get them all in volumes specially prepared for the use of preachers. The whole atmosphere of the pulpit is so unreal that the preacher may with impunity indulge in behaviour that in the social or business world would cause him to be marked as a man whose word was not to be trusted. Every preacher is following a profession in which the great question is not What is true? but What is useful? The end justifies the means, and here the sole end is the advancement of religious belief. Neither carefulness of thought nor accuracy of speech are looked for or desired. Preacher and hearer move for the time being in an environment thick with mental falsities and insincerities, and not the least of the evils of religion are illustrated in the lives of those who—

Keep on till their own lies deceive 'em,  
And oft repeating, at length believe 'em.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

How blest the sage! whose soul can pierce each  
cause  
Of changeful Nature, and her wondrous laws;  
Who tramples Fear beneath his foot, and braves  
Fate, and stern Death, and hell's resounding  
waves.  
—Sotheby, "Georgics of Virgil."

## The Pulpit Discrediting Itself.

At this year's meeting of the Wesleyan Conference, recently held in London, special attention was directed to the mournful fact that for a considerable period Methodism has been steadily losing ground in this country. The Rev. Samuel Chadwick said "there was reason for distress in Methodism, for they could not lose twenty to thirty thousand people in a decade, and still be complacent." The ex-President, Dr. Tasker, however, while admitting the numerical decrease, declined to regard it as being in the highest sense a real loss, for he had found that, "judging from personal observation made during his year of office, the spiritual advance in Methodism was intensive rather than extensive." What exactly Dr. Tasker meant by that statement does not appear, for although there is everywhere a deepening concern for the spiritual welfare of the young, the fact remains, and must be faced, "that in the Church, as in the nation, they lost a potential army every year." To be of any real value, the advance must be extensive as well as intensive. What is true of Methodism is equally, if not more, true of almost every other denomination. For at least two decades the influence of the Churches has been perceptibly on the wane. Despite the numerous conferences for the strengthening of the spiritual life that take place in different parts of the land, despite all the committees and schemes and programmes for the revival of religion, the Churches are becoming more and more ethically impotent. This is an incontrovertible fact; and yet Christian workers must act as if they were ignorant of it. Dr. Tasker quoted the following rule in the Royal Navy: "No officer shall speak discouragingly to his mate either on the watch or at the mess concerning the business in which he is or may be engaged," and then he added that "they must not go up and down the Church manifesting the spirit of discouragement and uttering words of pessimism." With all due deference to the ex-President, we are bound to pronounce his policy essentially misleading and disastrous. It is the policy resorted to by the ostrich when danger threatens, and it has been pursued by the Church in all periods of its history. It is the policy of crying, "Peace, peace," when even the possibility of peace is absent.

Is it any wonder that people of intelligence are renouncing the Churches? Can anything be more damaging to the cause of religion than the report of the discussion on the state of the Church at the Wesleyan Conference, which is contained in the *Christian World* for August 2? Dr. Watkinson, for example, deprecated pessimism, saying that a red flag was better than a wet blanket. A great writer had said: "When any system becomes inoperative, manure it with pessimism"; but he warned the brethren against adopting a needlessly pessimistic attitude towards religion. Nevertheless, there is no possible escape from the fact that the culture of the age is alienating itself from the Christian faith, and that the emptying of churches and chapels is a natural result. Natural knowledge is gradually undermining supernatural belief. Reason is slowly exposing the irrational character of most pulpit utterances. A few Sunday evenings ago we attended a well-known church in the West of London, whose first minister recently retired after a long pastorate of exceptional brilliance. The present occupier of the pulpit is a fair specimen of the Nonconformist teacher of the day, tolerably liberal in theology, but clearly dominated by what is usually called the Nonconformist conscience. He has an excellent command of language, and his sermons are evidently prepared with consummate care and committed to memory. Like his predecessor, he



has the courage of his convictions, though the convictions themselves are not intellectually courageous. In his prayer, for example, he dwelt upon our limitations as human beings, but thanked God that by grace we are enabled to transcend them. Of course, if the Christian religion were true, our limitations could easily be transcended. Our supernatural second birth would endow us with supernatural gifts which would naturally give rise to supernatural deeds. As a matter of fact, however, no human being has ever risen above his limitations. Christians are in no respects whatever superior to non-Christians. The very claim that they can do all things through Christ who strengthens them, is laughed to scorn by the facts of their lives. To thoughtful people such a prayer, as the one to which we allude, is a proof that the man who makes it either does not think at all, but is lost in a sea of superstition, or else is intellectually dishonest, for he cannot be ignorant of the fact that both he and his congregation are utterly incapable of demonstrating its truth in daily life.

The sermon was based upon Isaiah xxii. 1: "The burden of the valley of vision." The theme of the discourse was the burdensomeness of clear vision. They who see clearly and feel keenly the evils by which they are surrounded are necessarily burden bearers, and happiness is impossible to them unless they are doing their utmost to remove those evils. That is an entirely reasonable sentiment, with which no sane person can disagree; and for a time the preacher's treatment of it was perfectly justifiable. It is a natural truth, which is the common property of mankind, and the preacher had the hearty support of all his hearers as long as he so treated it. Unfortunately, he soon drifted into theological quagmires, in which he hopelessly floundered for the rest of the time. Behind all movements was God, and woe was to all who failed to recognize his presence. The War was his "visitation," and in it there was a special message to us Britishers. Well, now, those who saw clearly and felt deeply the evil of our conduct during this War, bore a burden which crushed them to the ground. The newspapers stated that, in spite of many hostile air-raids, Londoners were calm; but it was an appalling lie. Londoners were not, and had no right to be, calm. And yet, after all, Londoners were calm—indecently, wickedly calm. Even the Government did not realize the seriousness of the situation, but acted as if God did not exist at all. Instead of rending their clothes and covering themselves with sackcloth, and ordering the people to do the same, they forgot God, made pleasure and luxury cheap, and provided more beer. The preacher was now in a sarcastic mood, and, from his own idealistic heights, looked down upon the Government and the majority of the British people with withering contempt. They laughed when they ought to weep; they drank beer when they should be filled to overflowing with the Holy Spirit; they flocked to places of amusement when even their half-suppressed sense of duty called upon them to be on their knees, in penitential tears, before God in his temple.

Of course, to the preacher it could not but be galling to be aware that, whilst his chapel was far from being half full, a picture palace not many yards off was crowded to the doors for five hours. Of course, too, the people who frequented the latter place were culpably frivolous, whose love of pleasure proved their ruin. On a Sunday evening all serious-minded and honest-hearted folk were to be found in the house of God. We repeat that to the preacher such estimates of character were professionally natural, and had he but spoken in his own name we could not have found any grievous fault with them, but would have attributed them to his professional vanity and jealousy. But he spoke in the name of God, whom he held responsible for his own ignorant prejudice

and bigotry. All the way through, he acted as Heaven's spokesman.

Now, is it surprising that men and women, who think for themselves, refuse to take the preacher at his own valuation, and, therefore, pay no heed whatever to his various utterances? Were he to speak in his own name, even those who now believe in him would turn away from him in disgust, and very soon nearly all our pulpits would be unoccupied.

J. T. LLOYD.

## Edward Fitzgerald.

That same gentle spirit from whose pen  
Large streams of honey and sweet nectar flow.

—Spenser.

The appearance in a threepenny edition of Edward Fitzgerald's *Omar Khayyam* makes one regret the days when mischievous books were publicly burned by the common hangman.—*Daily Mail*.

EDWARD FITZGERALD, a great English writer, died in 1883, almost unknown. Only a few people had even heard his name. The public had very little chance of hearing it, for he was so shy and retiring that he took more pains to avoid fame than others do to seek it. He wrote about remote subjects, which appealed only to extremely cultured people. When his friend, Alfred Tennyson, dedicated *Tiresias* to Fitzgerald, the tribute seemed merely the outcome of friendship. The ordinary reader discounted the praise of that—

Golden Eastern lay,  
Than which I know no version done  
In English more divinely well.

To-day Fitzgerald's version of *Omar Khayyam* is probably read as much as any verse except that of Shakespeare. It is quoted in leading articles, and few modern novels are complete without one or more quotations from its quatrains; and its haunting verses have been set to music.

If a man is known by his friends, the world has small need of a formal introduction to Edward Fitzgerald. He was a man of many and notable friendships. At school he made acquaintance with James Spedding, the Baconian critic, and at Cambridge University with Thackeray. The years which followed united him to the brothers Alfred and Frederick Tennyson, Thomas Carlyle, Bernard Barton, the quaker poet, Lawrence, the painter, and others.

Fitzgerald's biographer, like the immortal knife-grinder, has no story to tell. He was born at Bredfield, near Woodbridge, in 1809; the same year as Tennyson and Darwin. He was educated at Bury St. Edmunds, and afterwards at Cambridge. He followed no profession after taking his degree. Till 1853, though he often shifted his quarters, he lived mainly in a thatched cottage at Boulge, near Woodbridge, close to his brother's residence, Boulge Hall. He was in lodgings in Woodbridge from 1860 to 1874, when he settled in a small house of his own outside the town, named, at the wish of a lady friend, "Little Grange." And "Laird of Little Grange," as he humorously signed himself, he remained till he died, aged seventy-four, in June, 1883. He is buried in Boulge Churchyard, and a rose, transplanted from the tomb of old Omar Khayyam, has been planted over his grave.

Fitzgerald lived the life of a recluse in Suffolk on the North Sea coast. His friend Carlyle saw in it all "a peaceable, affectionate, ultra-modest man," and an innocent, *far niente* life. Like Shelley, he had a great fondness for the sea, and a deep affection for fishermen and sailors. One old Viking, the hero-fisherman of Lowestoft, whom we know as "Posh," he numbered among his personal



friends. Fitzgerald characteristically considered "Posh" a greater man, than either Tennyson or Thackeray, because he was not self-conscious. The Viking succumbed to an undue devotion to Bacchus, but that did not trouble Fitzgerald, for he was no harsh judge of human frailties. Curiously, the man who gave us Omar's *Rubaiyat*, that immortal rhapsody of wine, woman, and song, was very abstemious. He was a vegetarian, and he nearly killed his friend Tennyson by persuading him, too, to turn vegetarian for six weeks.

Fitzgerald's books were all published without his name on the title-page, except his version of Calderon's dramas. He wrote a memoir to an edition of the poems of his friend, Bernard Barton. Later he printed his remarkable dialogue, *Euphranor. Polonius*, and a rendering of the *Agamemnon*, and four editions of his masterpiece, the *Omar Khayyam*, came out before his death; the first appearing in the year of Darwin's *Origin of Species*, without gaining any immediate recognition.

Owing to his living in the country, Fitzgerald devoted much time to his correspondence, and he was a most delightful letter-writer. His friends, be it remembered, were men of outstanding ability, and the companion of such giants must have been no ordinary character. When a man is loved by other men of his own intellectual stature, and of a wholly different type, we may be certain there is something genuine about him. Men do not like another man simply because he is a genius, least of all when they happen to be geniuses themselves. It would not have been possible for Fitzgerald to keep on writing uninteresting letters to such men for nearly half a century. Indeed, Fitzgerald's letters are among the best in the language. There is hardly a dull line in them, and they are most charming and piquant reading on account of their literary heresies and heterodoxy. His taste was all for ancient books, old friends, familiar jests, and well-known places. His special literary favourites were really great writers, and he loved Cervantes and Scott, Montaigne and Madame de Sevigne, she herself a lover of Montaigne, and with a spice of his Freethought and speech in her. Of course, he loved that old Persian infidel, Omar Khayyam, with whom his own fame is so intimately associated; and that other old-world Freethinker, Lucretius. London had no attractions for him, chiefly because it hid Nature. Like Thoreau, Fitzgerald knew by instinct the life that suited him, and had the wisdom to refuse to be turned aside from it.

If any justification were needed, his version of Omar's wonderful "Rose of the hundred-and-one petals" would be enough. The perennial charm of that immortal poem is that it voices with no uncertain sound the scepticism at the back of all thoughtful men's minds, and makes magnificent music of it. What a translation of Omar was Fitzgerald's! "A plant larger than the sun which cast it," said his friend Tennyson. In truth, the translation is finer than the original, and in this resembles the Authorized Version of the New Testament, which, as Swinburne reminds us, is translated from "canine Greek" to "divine English."

In his version of the *Rubaiyat*, Fitzgerald showed himself a consummate artist. The magnificent opening is pure, unadulterated Fitzgerald; and again and again throughout the poem the master hand is revealed. In one of the later verses, by the addition of two words, Fitzgerald has turned a commonplace into the most fearful indictment ever uttered by man against Deity:—

O Thou, who man of baser earth didst make,  
And even with paradise devise the Snake,  
For all the sin wherewith the face of man  
Is blackened, man's forgiveness give—and take.

In particular, Fitzgerald voices Materialism:—

Oh threats of Hell and hopes of Paradise!  
One thing, at least, is certain—This life flies.

One thing is certain, and the rest is lies;  
The flower that once has blown for ever dies.

Lamentation, just as in Æschylus, or Marcus Aurelius, or even the Book of Job, is apparent in the poem, and it is allied to "linked sweetness, long drawn out":—

Yet ah! that spring should vanish with the rose,  
That youth's sweet-scented manuscript should close;  
The nightingale that in the branches sang,  
Ah, whence and whither flown again—who knows?

Fitzgerald derides prayer in verse of passionate bitterness:—

And that inverted bowl they call the sky,  
Whereunder crawling, cooped, we live and die,  
Lift not your hands to It for help, for it  
As impotently rolls as you and I.

Like Lucretius, the old-world Freethinker, Fitzgerald introduces argument into his poetry, and with the same deadly effect. Noting how self-contradictory is theology, he says:—

What! out of senseless Nothing to provoke  
A conscious Something to resent the yoke  
Of unpermitted pleasure, under pain  
Of everlasting penalties if broke!  
What! from his helpless creature be repaid  
Pure gold for what he lent him, dross alloyed—  
Sue for a debt he never did contract,  
And cannot answer—oh, the sorry trade!

"A sense of tears in human things" breaks out in the following:—

Ah, Love, could you and I with Him conspire  
To grasp this sorry scheme of things entire;  
Would we not shatter it to bits, and then  
Remould it nearer to the heart's desire?

In his adaptation of *Omar*, Edward Fitzgerald, the shy English poet, dreamed one dream more lasting than we ourselves, or he, or the very Suffolk coast he lived on. He gives all who care to read the freedom of that ancient Eastern city of dreams, while far transcends in mystery and splendour the Orient men go out in the ships to see.

Oh! immortals of literature! The old Persian poet sees his vision and writes it; and eight centuries after, the tired merchant, forgetting for a space his counting-house and ledgers, lives a freer life in the wonderland of the poet's genius. Here are nymphs and roses, grotesque imaginings, and human memories. This is immortality indeed! Under the spell of the poet's genius he dreams the self-same dream for one little hour, and is refreshed.

MIMNERMUS.

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

### IV.

(Continued from p. 493.)

It is with the psychical phenomena that Spiritualists are now mainly concerned, and when we examine the materials for belief in, and knowledge of the conditions under which the departed exist in, another life, which these supply, one is staggered that minds of lofty conceptions and ideals can build on them the superstructure of personal immortality. From the enormous mass of communications purporting to come from discarnate spirits, not an ennobling nor high-toned message can be extracted; all, all is nauseating, frivolous, mischievous, spurious drivel. Through his control (the spirit of) a little Indian girl Feda (The spirit of) Raymond Lodge tells his father that the houses in the Beyond are made "from sort of emanations from the earth"; that his white robe is "made from decayed worsted on your side"; that he has his "little doggie" with him; that cigars made "out of essences and ethers and gases" are provided for smokers, and "whisky-sodas" for drinkers! Faugh!—Edward Clodd, "Strand Magazine" (July, 1917), p. 54.

It is extremely unsafe to assume that because Sir Oliver Lodge is a high authority upon electricity, therefore his conclusions about ghosts must be well founded and worthy of adoption. Probably few people would maintain that they adopt his conclusions about ghosts on the ground that he



is an authority upon electricity, but there is no doubt whatever that this is in fact the ground on which a very great many people do adopt his conclusions.—*Dr. Charles A. Mercier, "Spiritualism and Sir Oliver Lodge" (1917), p. 68.*

SIR OLIVER LODGE approaches Spiritualism in the same spirit in which he approaches religion, and between the scientific spirit and the religious spirit there is open war, which will only come to an end by the utter defeat of one side or the other. Sir Oliver himself has pointed out this opposition. In his *Man and the Universe* (1908; p. 11), he observes:—

In disposition, also, Religion and Science are opposite. Science cultivates a vigorous, adult, intelligent, serpent-like wisdom, and active interference with the course of nature; religion fosters a meek, receptive, child-hearted attitude of dove-like resignation to the Divine will.

And it is the child-hearted attitude he adopts in spiritualistic investigations. Mr. Edward Clodd says that an intimate friend of Sir Oliver described him as "longing to believe something." And Mr. Clodd further quotes him as arguing that "in dealing with psychical phenomena, a hazy, muzzy state of mind is better than a mind 'keenly awake' and 'on the spot.'"<sup>1</sup> Probably Dr. Mercier was not aware of these facts, or he would not have expressed such amazement at the simplicity and credulity exhibited by Sir Oliver Lodge in the presence of fraud and humbug.

For instance, Sir Oliver devotes nearly the whole of chapter iv. of his *Survival of Man* to recording his experiments with the two daughters of Herr von Lyro during the summer of 1892, while staying for a fortnight at their house at Portschach am See, Carinthia. In this case, one of the young ladies, while holding the hand of the other, was able to name the number of pips on the cards that were invisible to the speaker, but visible to the sister who held her hand; but when their hands were parted they could do nothing. Sir Oliver tells us "very slight contact was sufficient, for instance, through the backs of the knuckles; but directly the hands were separated, even though but a quarter of an inch, the phenomena ceased—reappearing again directly contact was established."<sup>2</sup>

As Dr. Mercier points out, in an analysis of Sir Oliver's account of this experiment, everything points to the use of the Morse code, and remarks:—

Out of sixteen attempts, ten were successful. Really, the ladies must have been very clumsy if they could produce no better result than this, after years of practice. I have had no practice at all, but I would undertake to get fifteen out of sixteen right at the first attempt, and to name the suit after five minutes' trial with a confederate. But note what follows: Sir Oliver Lodge enters into an elaborate mathematical calculation to show that this amazing result could not possibly be the result of chance guessing. He shows that the probabilities are 8008 to 1310 that it is not the result of chance. Less than one in a million, that is!<sup>3</sup>

But, as Dr. Mercier observes, "Who on earth supposes that it was the result of chance?" And he compares Sir Oliver's mathematical calculation to the patter of the conjurer who wishes to distract the attention from what he does not wish to be seen. "What should be proved is that it could not have been due to collusion, and no mathematical calculation can prove this. The mathematics are a red herring—a red herring? They are 8008 red herrings, they are 1310 red herrings drawn across the scent."<sup>4</sup>

Sir Oliver Lodge admits that this case is not strong enough to convince sceptics, although he has no doubt

of its genuineness himself. As Dr. Mercier remarks, seeing that these experiments are, "on Sir Oliver Lodge's own showing, utterly worthless, it is a pity that for the sake of his own reputation he did not suppress them." As to Sir Oliver's testimony as to the "absolutely genuine and artless manner" in which the young ladies operated, and the "transparent honesty of purpose of all concerned," Dr. Mercier caustically remarks: "What did he expect? Is it the custom for tricksters to behave so as to put their dupes on their guard? Did he watch to see whether Miss R. and Miss E. winked at one another? And as he did not detect them in winking, did he conclude that they must be genuine? Is not every dupe of the confidence trick, or the gold brick swindle, or the Spanish prisoner swindle, perfectly convinced of the transparent honesty of purpose of all concerned? Did he expect that if they were not genuine they would come in masks and cloaks, and whisper together in corners? Apparently he did, and since they behaved in the genuine and artless manner in which ordinary conjurers always do behave, he was convinced that they could not be conjurers. Of what value is his assurance that he believes these performances were genuine?"<sup>1</sup>

It is all of a piece with Sir Oliver's belief in Eusapia Paladino, even after her exposure at Cambridge, when he declared that some of her phenomena might be due to trickery, but not all!

Again, Dr. Mercier joins issue with Sir Oliver upon a plain matter of fact. The Doctor quotes Sir Oliver Lodge as stating, with regard to the famous medium Mrs. Piper, that when she wakes from the trance, during which she communicates with the spirits of the dead, "The look of ecstasy on Mrs. Piper's face at a certain stage in the working process is manifestly similar to that seen in the faces of some dying people; and both describe the subjective visions as of something more beautiful and attractive than those of earth."

This belief in the ecstatic look on the faces of the dying, and their description of beautiful visions seen during their last moments, has been made familiar by means of countless Christian tracts. In fact, nearly all Christian heroes are made to die uttering beautiful sentiments and seeing glorious visions; while unbelievers and sceptics are made to see horrid sights and die in hopeless despair, to the sound of mocking laughter.

The falsity of these fancy pictures has been exposed many times in these columns; but we are glad to give the additional testimony of so eminent a practitioner as Dr. Mercier, who declares:—

As a medical man of many years' residence in medical institutions, I am sure I have seen very many more dying people than Sir Oliver Lodge has, and I have never yet witnessed a look of ecstasy on the face of the dying person. I have asked old and experienced nurses who have seen many more people die than I have, and none of them will say that she has seen a look of ecstasy on the face of a dying person. Dying people often murmur unintelligibly, but neither I nor any I have been able to consult has ever heard a dying person describe subjective visions of something more beautiful and attractive than those of earth. People who die slowly of disease almost always lose much of their consciousness a considerable time before death, and when they are so near death that they can be said to be certainly dying, they have, so far as appearance goes, either no consciousness at all, or so little that it compares with full consciousness as the light of the moon in its last quarter to the glare of the sun at noon. People in such a condition are speechless, and unable to describe any visions, even if they experienced any visions, which is in the last degree unlikely. This is not

<sup>1</sup> Edward Clodd, *Pioneers of Evolution* (1897), p. 136. Citing from an "Address" to the S. P. R. *Proceedings of the S. P. R.*, part xxvi., pp. 14, 15.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Oliver Lodge, *The Survival of Man* (1909), pp. 59, 60.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Mercier, *Spiritualism and Sir Oliver Lodge*, p. 96.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.



a criticism on a trivial point of detail. Mrs. Piper's look of ecstacy is adduced by Sir Oliver Lodge to assimilate her trance condition to the condition of the dying, and so to render more likely her communications with the dead. This is one of rare instances in which we are able to test the accuracy of Sir Oliver Lodge's testimony, and it does not encourage us to place reliance on his testimony when we cannot test it.<sup>1</sup>

But to return to Telepathy, as Dr. Ivor Tuckett has remarked, "the curious fact about the evidence for psychic force, psychometry, spirit-control and telepathy is that conclusive test cases are always attended by failure, and that in other cases the supposed successful observations can seldom or never be repeated."<sup>2</sup> In this matter they resemble miracles, people believe that the dead came to life again two thousand years ago, they also believe that at some distant day everybody will come to life again, but they cannot produce a case to-day.

Sir Ray Lankester tells us that when Sir Oliver Lodge, some years ago, declared that telepathy had been proved:—

At the time, I challenged (in a letter to the press) Sir Oliver Lodge's statement that telepathy had been "discovered." I asked for the demonstration necessary to justify the assertion that telepathy had been "discovered." I professed my willingness to investigate this phenomenon stated to occur in our midst and its asserted discovery. No opportunity of investigating it has ever been offered to me by those who declare that it exists. I was definitely refused the opportunity of examining the asserted phenomenon for which I applied to the Society for Psychical Research.<sup>3</sup>

Time and again, money has been offered for a single test proof of telepathy, without result. A gentleman writes to the *Literary Guide* (August, 1910), saying "my offer of paying £50 for a single case of telepathy has been made so often during the last four or five years that I begin to doubt it if there is any evidence worthy of the name—though I have read all the *ex parte* statements published to date."

A friend of Dr. Ivor Tuckett offered £1,000 to three of the leading English authorities on telepathy for satisfactory proof of one single case with the following result:—

The first replied at once, expressing surprise at my imagining "that incontrovertible evidence could be obtained at all in an inductive problem"! The second at first very kindly expressed his willingness to help, and appeared very keen to meet me and talk the matter over; but, after seeing No. 1, he wrote, "Whilst anxious to help you, I could not undertake to prove the results of a long and difficult investigation to order or for a pecuniary offer," and the third replied, "You may offer £1,000,000 with perfect safety. No sane person will back any mortal to do telepathy to order."<sup>4</sup>

This offer of a thousand pounds has been publicly advertised in the *Times* without result. The only reply Sir Oliver Lodge makes to the offer is an outrageous insult. He says: "The business man takes another line and offers a thousand pounds for proofs which will convince him. *He has, of course, no intention of parting with the money, and is quite satisfied that he can resist any temptation to be convinced.....To all wagers of this kind I trust that those connected with the S.P.R. will always turn a deaf and contemptuous ear.*"<sup>5</sup>

The telepathists offer you tons of evidence on paper, but when you ask for a morsel of evidence

now, as a test, they turn "a deaf and contemptuous ear." To say the least of it, it looks suspicious.

Perhaps the writer of the letter signed "J. J. O.", in last week's *Freethinker*, will accept the above as an answer. What is wanted is not *testimony*—certainly not the testimony of dreams which "J. J. O." offers—but a scientific *test*. If we went on testimony alone, we should have to believe in miracles, witchcraft, sorcery, and a host of other ridiculous and impossible things.

"J. J. O." says that having been in a church choir most of his life, he has "a wholesome contempt for the supernatural." I cannot see the connection. Choristers are not usually regarded as being more rational, or sceptical, than other people.

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

## A Jesuit Question-Box.

THE correspondence columns of newspapers are an interesting and amusing study, especially those appearing in religious newspapers. There is the clerical enquire-within-upon-everything type of person who makes much literary to do about nothing, and generally leaves his correspondent to take religion as he likes it. This type may be met with in the *Christian Commonwealth* and other "advanced" religious journals. At present, however, I have before me a pious journal of a very different order—the *Sodality Magazine*—issued in connection with the Jesuit sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

In this issue (July, 1917) there are three pages of what is called Sodality Correspondence, albeit it is quite clear that some of it does not come from members of the sodality, but is supposed to originate from what Catholics sympathetically call (in England) "our separated brethren." Elsewhere they are damned heretics. But that's another story. These answers to correspondents are written (presumably) by a Jesuit priest, and probably he is also the inventor of the questions he answers. His reverence is by way of being a wit of sorts, and his advice and directions are eloquent of the mentality of his readers for whom, of course, they are provided.

A good Catholic boy wants to know if there is anything wrong in boxing? and is told to "go in for these things." Another youth who signs himself (quite unnecessarily) "Scrupulous," wants to know "at what age should a fellow give up kissing girl friends?" He is told that "this is a puzzle," but "we asked a lady friend, and she said: 'Silly boy, tell him not to give it up at all.'" The scrupulous one is told not to "make any drastic change."

These answers are comprehensible. The Church wants fighters, and she doesn't want "mixed" marriages!

The writer seems to try to compensate his clients for his theological intolerance by his practical liberality. He has a kindly eye for all the weaknesses of men and women—except when they are theological weaknesses. Some one wants to know: "Is it wrong for a devout lady to smoke a cigarette?" Answer: "We prefer it to a pipe, which is *not* elegant. It all depends upon custom." And so on.

Another set of these questions purport to come from non-Catholics, and these enquiries are answered so as to make those who are supposed to have asked them appear ridiculous in the eyes of the pious readers of the *Sodality Magazine*. Thus some one ("M.S.J.")—I cannot help wondering if this is a cryptic joke, and these initials mean member of the Society of Jesus—is supposed to

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Mercier, *Spiritualism and Sir Oliver Lodge*, pp. 60-61.

<sup>2</sup> *Bedrock*, January, 1913, p. 483.

<sup>3</sup> Sir Ray Lankester, *Bedrock*, January, 1913, p. 489.

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Ivor Tuckett, *The Evidence for the Supernatural*, p. 306.

<sup>5</sup> *Bedrock*, April, 1913, pp. 60-61. The italics are ours.



have written saying: "I don't believe in the Devil."

Answer:—

Dear Sir, glad to hear it. That was Eve's little mistake.....Fact is, dear Sir, you *do* believe in the Devil when he says he doesn't exist. Some day you will find he *does*. He's got his tail coiled right round what you gracefully call your intellect.

Similar is the reply to "H.W.," who asks: "Have any Popes gone to Hell?" Answer:—

In a few years you may be able to find out. Its pretty certain an Apostle did. Yes, about three Popes were nothing to boast of, but they were better than the "spiritual head" of the Anglican Church, the Tudor Blue Beard.

Again, "Mrs. H.W." writes to say: "My dear husband, dead now five years, speaks to me every night. How can you say Spiritualism isn't true?" Answer:—

Poor man, we expect its the first opportunity he's had of getting a word in. We don't say Spiritualism isn't true, but its dangerous playing with the Devil (we are not referring to the dear departed). You may ring his majesty up but you may not be able to ring him off.

If the readers of this stuff think these are replies to genuine correspondents, one wonders what sort of taste and intelligence they have if they can chuckle, as doubtless they are intended to, over them.

Finally, there are here some few serious answers to what look more like serious questions from Catholics. Thus, "J.N.A." enquires why the Church forbids marriages of cousins. Answer:—

The reason why the Church forbids marriages between very near relatives is because experience proves that the children of such marriages are frequently weak, unhealthy and queer, and we have quite enough of these. *Still it is possible to obtain a dispensation (italics mine).*

The health and sanity of the next generation is not a doctrine of the Church, and so, even when she knows you are going to put these in jeopardy, you may have a dispensation to do so—for a consideration, of course.

My only reason for making this trash the subject of an article is to point out that in these little pious magazines, in their sodalities, confraternities, and Sunday-schools, the Churches are as crude as ever. In this particular case those who know Catholicism from the inside will recognize the spirit and method of this writer as characteristic. The Church's aim is to prevent people thinking, and among her flock she does it very often by setting up the pleasing delusion that they are thinking and debating, and getting the best of it. As so often happens, the outsider sees most of the game.

The writer of these highly courteous replies invites his "non-Catholic (small n and cap C, Mr. Printer, please) brethren" to inquire of him privately as to their religious difficulties. It is to be hoped his private correspondence is as revelatory of Catholicism as are his public answers.

ALAN HANDSACRE.

### Acid Drops.

The Chaplain-General to the Forces writes to the papers asking for mid-day prayers on behalf of soldiers. He says he knows "how much it is valued and counted upon by them." We are surprised the soldiers do not make their needs in this direction better known through their private correspondence instead of leaving it to Bishop Taylor Smith. If anyone should ask, "Have we not prayed for three years?" Bishop Taylor Smith replies that the "Lord of Hosts" has been with us. All we can say to that is, we wish his help had been more obviously effective.

The clergy sometimes let the cat out of the bag. The Rev. Dr. Selbie, President of the National Free Church Council,

says, "if soldiers do not hate the Church, it is mainly because they despise it."

Canon Green, speaking at a meeting at Manchester, took up the attitude that God called the people to war in 1914, and now calls on them to stop fighting. The way these parsons receive trunk calls from the Almighty must excite the wonder of the ordinary man.

A sensational story of an airman singing to a leopard to scare it away was told in a daily paper. The story goes that the airman climbed a tree and the leopard moved around for forty-five minutes. The airman, a full-throated bass, burst out with "The Admiral's Broom," "Two Eyes of Grey," "O God, our Help in Ages Past," and concluded with a sonorous "Amen." The latter did the trick. Perhaps the leopard bolted to avoid a collection.

The Bishop of Winchester says "it is not true that the clergy have a soft job. Their lives are hard, especially in war-time." We do not know what his lordship's idea of a "soft job" may be; but most of the clergy are well paid for their work. Moreover, they are altogether exempted from military service. His lordship's own modest stipend is a paltry £130 a week.

The Salvation Army is advertising its "hostels," and the Girls' Friendly Society is asking for canteens for City girls. Surely this is taking the "bread of life" a little too literally.

As Mr. H. G. Wells becomes more pious, he is losing his sense of humour. Referring to a book published in 1908, he says it was the "wet clay" of *God the Invisible King*. This suggests that an invisible spirit is made of clay, which is almost as funny as the definition of Deity, "A sort of a something, somewhere."

The Bishop of London, in asking for prayers for victory throughout his diocese, says, "My own belief is that God alone saved us at that critical moment in the history of the world"—presumably at the Marne. We cannot say God was not with us, only we marvel that he was not with us earlier, or more effectively when he did arrive. That is the worst of gods. Either they do what we could do just as well without them, or they do nothing at all. And we prefer the god who does nothing.

"Confirmation, as a habit, is not confined to the Eversley jockeys. In his book on the Cotswolds, Mr. Francis Duckworth recalls the case of a servant girl in the Manor House at Stanton, in Gloucestershire. She had been confirmed three times. When interrogated on the subject she replied that she had found confirmation a good cure for rheumatism!"—*Daily Chronicle*.

"General" Booth suggests that "some of the depressed and hungry millions of the East could be fed and civilized and blessed there. They might even be loved and gossiped and saved." The non-military "general" might ask their permission before starting the offensive.

The *Evening News* says: "In every sense of the words the Pacifists of this country are a contemptible minority." Yet Christians profess to worship the Prince of Peace.

Of thirty-one Wesleyan ministers who are retiring, most of them have completed over forty years in the ministry. Evidently the profession is not a dangerous one.

The dear *Daily News* says "a certain type of modern journalism" works usually by noise, but "does not ignore the possibilities of silence." In plain English, the newspaper editors realize that prejudice may be created by saying too little as well as by saying too much. It does not say much for the glorious free press of a civilized country.



The late Rev. Henry Buckston, of Sutton-on-the-Hill, Derby, left estate of the value of £45,547. This sum seems sufficient to keep Brother Buckston from entering Paradise.

A newspaper paragraph states that Bishop Boyd Carpenter "has a country seat in Devonshire." The carpenter who founded the Christian religion had not where to lay his head.

The *Daily Telegraph*, explaining why the British Advance in the recent "push" was not greater, blames the weather, and remarks on the frequency with which it has been on the side of the enemy during the War. Now here, clearly, is a chance for the clergy. Providence has not had left it much of its ancient state, but God is still allowed some influence here. So let the clergy set to work and call the attention of Providence to the matter. Or, perhaps, some member of the House of Commons might put a question enquiring whether attention had been called to this unneutral behaviour of Providence.

What the newspapers call a "scene" occurred in the House of Commons during the debate on Mr. Henderson's visit to Paris. General Croft charged Mr. Ramsey Macdonald with being "on the side of the Germans." Mr. Macdonald asked him to withdraw the statement. The General offered justification. "The Hon. Member," he said, "believes in the brotherhood of man." The evidence not being considered decisive, the General withdrew the implication, but the frame of mind indicated by the remark is interesting. In the mind of General Croft it would seem that belief in the brotherhood of man and support of Germany is synonymous. We sincerely hope this is not the case, although it may well be that our own militarists see in the belief in the brotherhood of man an enemy to be dreaded.

In Ireland an order has been issued prohibiting the wearing of uniforms by other than members of the Forces. We wonder if this will affect the flat-chested warriors of the Salvation Army.

A headline in a daily paper reads, "Women Saviours." Why not? They can hardly be less successful at this business than men.

The rector who told his parishioners that the War stimulated church-going, will read with pleasure that some thousands of Londoners went to a church at Southgate recently and that the building will cost several hundred pounds to be restored.

Alluding to the mistaken views regarding education, Miss M. J. Tuke, M.A., Principal of Bedford College, London, said at a meeting at Hitchen, that up to the outbreak of war it was firmly thought that silly women made the best wives. Maybe this is one of the reasons why the Christian superstition still flourishes in our midst.

Dr. Charles Mercier, a specialist on mental diseases, has attacked Sir Oliver Lodge in a book, entitled *Spiritualism and Sir Oliver Lodge*. He says roundly that Sir Oliver and other professors "have shut their eyes and opened their mouths and swallowed any trash the mediums liked to present them with."

"The quality of priest and prophet is one which develops under encouragement and cultivation" says a writer in a daily paper. How true the remark is concerning the higher clergy, who point the thorny road to heaven whilst they tread the primrose path of dalliance on the salaries of cabinet ministers.

Says the *Church Times*: "It is not militarism that the world is suffering from, but bellicosity, and, if peace were absolutely and permanently assured, it might still be worth while to pay for a big army as a training-ground for a nation

under arms." We gave one instance a week or so back (the *Daily Telegraph* appeal to the Catholic Church to assist in the application of conscription to Ireland), and here is another, of the sinister alliance between militarism and religion. We may take it for granted that when this War is over, and the attempt is made to foist permanent conscription on this country, we shall find the Church using its best efforts in its behalf. Religion and militarism have always run well together, and will continue in double harness to the end of the chapter.

Our very pious contemporary quite reverses the truth in the above statement. Bellicosity is not at all a bad thing; militarism, which may be taken as a special manifestation of bellicosity, is detestable. The fighting impulse in man leads to discovery, to invention, to improvement; and the man who is fighting against war may be a more pugnacious individual than the one engaged in warfare. The usual error made by the militarist is to assume that because one protests against the value of armed warfare, one is blind to the importance of struggle and effort in human affairs. And if peace were permanently assured, what value is it to have a nation under arms? Is it to keep the home population in order?

The *Irvine Valley News*, a Scottish local weekly for July 20, contains a lively and thoughtful article from one of the Conscientious Objectors imprisoned at Dartmoor. The following passage is both amusing and interesting:—

Dartmoor to-day has another side—bright to dazzling point, and the man who does not find humour here would not find salt water at "Trin." Now this that I'm gaun tae tell is as true as there is spite in a cat. On oor stairheid there are 23 different religious and political parties. We have Quakers, P.B.'s, Seventh Day Adventists, Pentecostals, Salvationists, I.B.S.'ers, Christian Scientists, I.L.P.'ers, B.S.P.'ers, Anarchists, Atheists, Deists, and heaven only knows what. From one cell door you will see a banner flying, "Jesus Saves"; another, "Socialism the World Hope"; another, "There is joy in heaven"; while opposite an Atheist will fly his banner asking, "And wherè the Hell's Heaven?"

We should not be at all surprised if some leave Dartmoor with very different ideas from those with which they entered its precincts.

Dr. Selbie, President of the Free Church Council, and Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford, says it is fatal for the Church to go to people with a list of "dout's." In this case the Church is doomed, for the Ten Commandments all commence "Thou shalt not."

At the Grocers' Conference at Plymouth a speaker called for the prohibition of trading after ten o'clock on Sundays. The time selected would enable the Sabbath breakers to count their ill-gotten gains, and afterwards attend a place of worship and confess they were miserable sinners.

Charged as an absentee at Gateshead, Ernest Bell, a fruiterer, said he was a member of the Church of Christ, and conducted services. The magistrates held that he was entitled to exemption. Even half-time holiness has its advantages.

Some excitement was caused at a Christian Convention at Brighton through the Rev. Charles Inwood asking a blessing for an unnamed "military hospital where God's name is never mentioned except in ridicule." We have no doubt but that Mr. Inwood exaggerates, but we suppose his lament may be taken as an admission that the War is knocking the fear of religion out of the minds of many. Mr. Inwood also prayed for mercy on "doctors and nurses who scorn to think of Thy Holy Name." So that some Brighton hospitals are quite in a bad way—from the Christian point of view.

An Essex clergyman says that the world needs "the Peace of God." This is a peace that passeth all understanding.



## To Correspondents.

E. L.—We do not care to discuss the question of German *versus* British missionaries. You may be quite sure the trader is not far behind either or both. All we feel warranted in saying of both is that they are always a nuisance, and often a dangerous nuisance.

E. B.—Thanks for quotations and cuttings. It is good of you to take so much trouble.

J. NIEL.—Quite a good heading, as you say. Thanks.

G. E. QUIRK.—You are doing good work in getting letters, such as the one contributed by you to *Common Sense*, into the public press. We wish more of our readers would follow your example.

C. W. B.—Received. Shall be pleased to use some of the verses.

A. V. HARRIS.—Very pleased to hear from you. Am sending some literature for use among the men, which we hope will prove useful.

LANCE-CORPL. ROYSTON.—Pamphlets being sent as requested. Will do what we can to make the agents more attentive, but please continue to apply pressure at your end.

A. A. PARTEM.—We do not think you have taken the real point of last week's "Views." We should not have blamed the clergy, *as citizens*, for their support of the War. Our criticism was concerned with their attitude as clergymen, and to have claimed exemption afterwards was surely the height of folly—or knavery. You are correct that there are no creeds in this War, and that in Germany Freethinkers will be saying the same things as Freethinkers here. But surely there is a distinction between this and people *in both countries* praying to the same Deity, and thanking him for his assistance? Finally, we cheerfully concede that there are rules governing war as there are rules governing the prize ring, and that those are to blame who break these rules. But that hardly touches the point that the rules of war are, considered as a fight between men, on a lower level than the rules of the "ring."

T. C.—Glad to know you were pleased with article. The praise of one who possesses discrimination is always appreciated.

A. L. MORRIS.—A chapter on "Cain's Wife" was included in G. W. Foote's *Bible Romances*. There is no elaborate treatise on the subject that we can call to mind, the subject being hardly of sufficient importance.

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

*Friends who send us newspapers would enhance the favour by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.*

*Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4 by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.*

*Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, and not to the Editor.*

*Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.*

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

## Sugar Plums.

Too late for notice last week, we received a copy of the *Hawick Express* containing a notice of the interment of Mr. J. C. Goodfellow, an old correspondent of the *Freethinker*. The funeral presented the interesting feature of being a Secular one conducted by a clergyman. Rev. David Muir delivered an address at the graveside, and, after paying a tribute to Mr. Goodfellow's intellectual attainment, said:—

But to-day we think not merely, and perhaps not chiefly, of the intellectual attainments which made him a conspicuous figure in this town. We remember his wide and genial sympathies, the inborn courtesy that gave distinction to his personality, the qualities of heart and character which won for him a large circle of friends, and in the intimate relationships of home-life united him with lasting bonds of affection to the members of his family. But we remember most of all that during the long years of his life, he stood before his fellow-townsmen as an example of scrupulous honour and irreproachable integrity. All who knew Mr. Goodfellow are aware that in the early years of his life he arrived at convictions which placed him out of sympathy with the creeds of the Christian

religion, and outside the fellowship of the Christian Church. These convictions were reached not through any light or ill-considered impulse, but as the result of the severest mental conflict. Therefore, deeply conscious as we are of the mysteries of the unseen world in whose presence we stand, it is due to the sincerity with which he held his opinions that we should refrain from associating his grave with a religious ritual, against which the whole trend of his mind was in resolute revolt. But, far apart as our cherished beliefs are from those which he maintained, we cannot but honour in him the unflinching intellectual honesty which could brook no compromise, and which refused to rest in any conventional pretence of faith. And we must admire the fearless courage which in scorn of consequences shrank from no conclusion to which he was led according to his light, however painful the sacrifices and alienations it might involve.

We congratulate Mr. Muir on his liberality of mind and geniality of temper.

Another letter from France which, we are sure, will be read with interest;—

Let me assure you that far from a religious revival taking place, there is a widespread wane of Freethought abroad among our men out here. Unmistakable signs are everywhere in evidence. Debates and discussions are taking place in many camps, notably in this one. Let me name a few of the subjects raised: "Christianity, is it a Failure?" "Religion after the War"; "Wake up, Church of England." "What is Wrong with the State Church?" "Brotherhood of Man"; "Abolish the State Church."

The writer who is a keen supporter of Freethought (and has been for a number of years in South Africa), has had many opportunities of forming opinions, both in the line and at the base, of the trend of thought in this direction. The Churches have failed miserably. I have heard the parsons say so from the platforms of our meetings. And no doubt they are making frantic efforts to retrieve their mistakes, etc.; but their days are numbered, their game is fast being played out, and no one knows it better than they. As regards the majority out here, I might quote Scripture: "Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." Living on the fat of the land and drinking of the best, clothed in khaki and Sam Browne belt, which ill befits them, they are an example of hypocrisy and sham. Shepherds! more like wolves. We men see a lot of their carrying on. A few chaplains, but they are men, play the game. A religious revival (what a damnable lie) trumpeted through the land to hoodwink the religious and credulous fools that these gentry fatten upon.

One could write pages on the subject. Certainly the public money is squandered shamefully in the upkeep of these clerical shams. But, never mind, their day is nearly over. The War (in a way the parsons know little of) is indeed a blessing in disguise.

We should hardly have thought it worth while anyone devoting a special reply to the sonorous banalities and platitudinous word-spinning of Mr. Ralph Waldo Trine. Those who are captivated by such writings as *In Tune With the Infinite*, will be proof against criticism, however keen. Still, if it were worth doing, this author is very well dissected by Mr. George Bedborough in *Harmony or Humbug?* (Garden City Press; 6d.). So far as a remedy may be applied to such as suffer from the defect of taking more or less attractively constructed sentences which serve only to disguise an author's lack of clear thinking, Mr. Bedborough's pamphlet is useful, but we have our doubts as to the extent of its application. There are a great many useful pieces of criticism set forth by Mr. Bedborough, and these *will* prove serviceable to the reader in dealing with others than the much-boomed Mr. Trine.

An important business meeting of the newly-formed Regent's Park Branch will be held this Saturday evening, August 11, at the Shamrock Coffee House, North Street, Edgware Road, at 8.30. All members are urgently requested to attend.

Friends and members in the vicinity of Battersea Park are requested to give their support to Messrs. G. Rule and W. H. Braddock, who are holding a meeting at the gates of the Park, by request, on Sunday morning next at 11 o'clock. The intention is to re-start a Battersea Branch.



## The Rise and Progress of Mental Power.

### II.

(Continued from p. 485.)

THE faculty of memory forms the basis of all mental operations. On its physiological side memory power must be viewed as the result of a nervous discharge which, having travelled along a certain channel, generates molecular changes that remain partly permanent, so that when subsequent discharges pass along the same path they revive the modifications set up by their predecessor. Impressions made upon any of the nerve ganglia serve to sustain this truth. For instance, the numerous muscles of an athlete's body will, after long training, automatically respond to the demands made upon them. In the superior nervous centres the like verity holds good. The more frequently a lesson is intelligently repeated the more letter-perfect the learner becomes. On the other hand, after a long interval of inactivity, a proficient performer on a musical instrument will enfeeble his playing power for want of practice, while an expert juggler will become less dexterous in manipulating his balls. A small amount of practice, however, completely restores the original aptitude. A man who has learnt to skate in England may, after a lengthy residence in India, even if he has not skated since boyhood, recover with comparative ease his youthful acquirement. This power of reviving old impressions proves that the nervous ganglia involved possess the capacity of remembering their earlier sensations when the appropriate stimulus is applied.

Memory alone would render small service in mental processes of an involved character were it not the foundation of animal ability to associate sensations as well as to revive them. The single discharges along nerve fibres become compounded when several nerve discharges are generated through the connection of one nervous ganglion with others. The principle which operates when one nerve cell, as the result of repeated stimulation, tends to establish more and more permeable paths of nervous transmission, is equally applicable to several groups of cells linked up by various nerve fibres. We may picture a series of discharges conducted through the same aggregate of nervous arcs as always awakening the same, or a similar series of impressions, and we are entitled to assume that this antecedent series of discharges will facilitate later discharges, because the channels of communication have been rendered more permeable. Not merely do the successive discharges from a common starting-point pursue the same paths, but they revive the same sensations. This explains "the tendency of ideas to recur in the same order as that in which they have previously occurred." This also may be regarded as "a psychological expression of the physiological fact that lines of discharge become more and more permeable by use."

Whether of high or inferior quality, all mental phenomena present a physical substratum. Every mental change is invariably associated with a physical change. These changes represent the two faces of one phenomenon. Moreover, processes ranked as mental have been derived from earlier purely physiological processes. The faculty of discrimination manifested in lowly modes of life is one of the most primitive presentations of psychical phenomena. Darwin's researches into the discriminative capacities resident in the plant domain disclosed remarkable facts. The sensitiveness of plant life in general to the minutest differences in light and darkness are astonishing enough.

But this sensibility is feeble when compared with the extreme susceptibility displayed by the insect-eating and climbing plants. In plants, streams of protoplasm replace the nerve tissue of animals, but the responsive powers of the former unquestionably rival those of the latter. The tentacles of the sundew (*Drosera*) close round their insect victims just as the tentacles of the animal sea-anemone embrace that creature's prey. Yet the rain pattering on the sundew's sensitive surfaces fails to awaken response, while the pressure of substances weighing only 1-78740ths of a grain excite the movements of the plant's tentacles, and several other insectivorous plants are known to display powers of discrimination equally remarkable.

The experimental labours of Hertwig, Loeb, and other biologists have revealed many curious properties of a similar character to the foregoing in single-celled organisms. Microscopic specks of plant and animal protoplasm display a preference for light or shade, heat or cold, or manifest marked differences of responsiveness to chemical stimuli. These simple reactions—tropisms as they are called—doubtless form the foundations of all higher modes of discrimination. If we assume a chemical and physical basis for all the most involved mental processes, we may quite legitimately regard even microscopic jelly specks as responding to appropriate impressions; or, in other words, to stimuli which prove beneficial to them. For we must remember that the most primitive unicellular organisms are themselves the products of evolution, and those so chemically constituted that they responded to stimuli which were fatal to them necessarily disappeared from the roll of life, while those only whose reactions were either appropriate or adaptive survived in the struggle with environing conditions.

That very lowly protoplasmic creature, the amoeba, displays its capacity to distinguish between particles of a nutritious or non-nutritious kind. This apparently discriminative power is, probably, purely physical and chemical in character. Organisms higher in the scale of life possess more complex qualities both of adjustment and discrimination. And these superior attributes arise *pari passu* with a more advanced mechanism. Distinct progress is shown in the medusæ, for these jelly fish are provided with a simple nervous system which enables them to distinguish between light and darkness, and they appear to possess a rudimentary sense of hearing. They also discriminate between stationary and moving objects, and quickly detect the difference between edible and non-edible substances. They are endowed in addition with the capacity to move rapidly, and various other adaptive features indicate their increased powers. In better organized animals, such as the star-fish and worms, their nerve and muscle structures bring these organisms into completer correspondence with their surroundings. A still further advance appears among the mollusca. These creatures are furnished with very sensitive feelers, they select their varied food materials, possess a locality sense, and choose members of the opposite sex as mates. Crabs and lobsters, whose sensory organs are still higher, and whose range of experience is, therefore, larger, manifest activities more numerous and involved, while the delicate antennæ of the spiders, with other elaborated organs of special sense, combined with their advanced type of muscular co-ordination, permit them to attain a higher level of mental development than organisms less evolved.

The principles controlling the preceding phenomena prove equally valid when applied to the superior vertebrates, including man. All the more intelligent animals



possess appendages which enable them to increase their powers to perform varied activities. As Spencer noted, the parrot, which is the cleverest of birds, utilizes beak, tongue, and claw in its examination of objects. The elephant's remarkable mental powers are largely the result of that animal's capacity to extend its experiences with the aid of its marvellously adaptable trunk. And when we rise to apes, monkeys, and men,—

we find repeated under other forms, this same relation between evolution of intellect and evolution of tactual appendages. Not more in the contrasts between them and inferior mammals is this seen than in the contrasts between the genera of the *Primates* themselves. The prehensile and manipulatory powers of the lower kinds are as inferior as their mental powers. On ascending to the very intelligent anthropoid apes, we find the hands so modified as to admit of more complete opposition of the thumb and fingers; the bones of the fore-arms so articulated as to give the hands greater powers of rotation; the arms attached to the body in such a manner as allows them increased range of lateral movement. In all the more developed of the order, the fore-limbs are so constructed that an object can be grasped in one hand while it is being manipulated by the other, or by the lips and teeth—can be held at the most convenient distance from the eyes—can be applied to any part of the body, or any neighbouring objects (*Principles of Psychology*, vol. i., pp. 361, 362).

And with the human race itself the possession of highly specialized organs subserving manipulation, has conferred upon the paragon of animals powers which have played an enormous part in the progress of civilization.

This correspondence between muscular and nervous development; or, stated in other terms, the correlation between the growth of the power of discrimination and a more extensive range of adaptive actions, is precisely what the evolutionist anticipates. For it is plain that the extension of one function would be perfectly useless without the progress of the other. The ability to discern between a beneficial and detrimental stimulus would prove utterly valueless were the organism unprovided with that capacity of co-ordinated movement essential to its profiting through its discriminating faculty. Also, it is clearly evident that an organism possessing powers of co-ordinated adaptation could derive no advantage in life's combat if it lacked that discerning capacity which is imperatively necessary if co-ordinated action is to be other than useless. Science has shown that "all the mechanisms of muscular co-ordination are correlated with mechanisms of nervous co-ordination," and it is now demonstrable that the one system of mechanisms in the absence of the other would prove utterly unserviceable.

In the highest animals the number and complexity of the nerve-fibres and cells form an array so formidable that several generations of workers will be required to determine their various functions. But from the simplest to the most complex creatures the same principles operate, and the discoveries of neurologists in the superior realms of life increasingly testify to this truth. Moreover, as we have seen, there exist numerous forms of life in ascending stages of evolution whose less involved neuro-muscular systems most admirably lend themselves to an understanding of their structure and function. These inferior organisms plainly indicate the paths leading to a far fuller knowledge of the physiology of nerves and muscles than we at present possess.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be continued.)

For freemen mightier grow,  
And slaves more feeble, gazing on their foe.—*Shelley*.

## Shameless Inconsistency!

In his article, "The Relation of the Sexes" (July 27), "Ignotus" truly says that "there is no question that has been more stupidly treated by the Churches than the question of sex." Neurotic novelists, howling der- vishes, and prurient prudes have done their very worst to confuse all the true issues and avoid all real solutions.

Macaulay, in his review of Hallam's *Constitutional History*, passes some scathing comments on the place of the Churches in our history; but in relation to sex matters there is one sentence which stands out as specially applicable, for "Never were principles so loudly professed and so shamelessly abandoned."

Every day for the last two years, in relation to sex, population, marriage, and children, the papers have provided some fresh proof of Macaulay's statement.

In the *Freethinker* of November '12 last, I brought before its readers a sample of what I have for years regarded as one of the most glaring and evil proofs of our national insistency in relation to the State religion and public morals, a sham celibate army, with its inevitable universal flood of prostitution and the futile purity campaigns by which the initial evil is tinkered with.

Just then one of our overworked goody-goody generals, Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien, aided and abetted by that modern wonder of the Church of England and the Colleges of Unreason system, the logical bachelor bishop preacher of Big Families for Poor Curates, Foley Winnington-Ingram, started on a new campaign against the music-halls.

"Furious" and "futile" are the only terms by which to deal with these recurrent explosions of sham morality. The great General seemed to start with the idea that he was the "It" specially suited to, and provided to make a job of, cleaning the so-called Augean stables of "immoral" London; but when he was challenged to define some of the terms he was making such free use of, he had no sort of reply; and when Mr. Oswald Stoll put up a fight and forced him into court, he had to partake of that most nauseous dish a public man can be made to eat, some of his own words.

The mouthy Bishop of London, at the close of an interview reported in *Reynolds'*, September 24, 1916, talked big, as he always does. "We mean to have, when the War is over, a cleaner London. What I want to see is a cleaner London for the boys to come home to."

Mr. Oswald Stoll, in a letter to the *Daily News*, September 17, 1916, recited one of the Bishop's wild statements, "That it was a disgrace there should be 150 bad women in every music-hall every night," and closed his letter by a sentence which seems more and more justified day by day, "That the Bishop had been working too hard, and was beginning to lose the thread of Christianity which should connect his utterances."

Many people have had this idea for a long time.

General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien and his Bishop, having had their little flutter, retired—after, we hope, having a decent lawyer's bill to pay—and after awhile another great reformer appears on the scene. We are treated to a fresh exhibition of military purity-mongering futility, in the person of General Sir Francis Lloyd, who, going the star turn at a performance given by one of the organized purity-mongering associations, gave clear evidence that, however good he might be in defending London against air-raids, knew almost nothing about true morality and sociology.

Another great man on the platform was Sir Edward Henry—also an expert on morals, and much engaged with London's morals—who, according to the *Daily Mail*,



June 28, 1917, made the following statement:—

Conditions in London streets were much better than a few years back (which is in direct contradiction to many of the statements made by the clerics).

In the last three years 19,000 women had been arrested. In the parks things were different. In Hyde Park every day five or six couples were brought into the police-station. The evil was really very serious, and no leniency should be shown.

They who like to believe this are free to do so. It does not really matter whether it be true or not, for whichever way the statement be taken, the final issue is all to the disgrace of those at the top. The statement was followed by the General's "official" word, as the officer commanding the London district, he had no control over the women, but he was taking steps to have more control over the soldiers, especially in Hyde Park, in relation to which he had given the most stringent orders.

A letter was addressed to the General, enclosing a copy of the one sent to General Smith-Dorrien on the occasion of his venture in 1916, drawing special attention to the Army Red Book on Allowances (quoted in *Freethinker*, November 12, 1916).

Sir Francis, by an A.D.C., made answer that his business was not to criticize the "Regulations," but to carry them out, quite failing to see that by his action in taking part in the futile "Purity" Movement he is criticizing a system which is primarily responsible for an immense mass of the prostitution, venereal disease, and sex crime about which he, Sir Edward Henry, and the mass of thinking people are so much moved at the moment—some special phases of which in Hyde Park and Bayswater no discussion is permitted in these days of rigid censorship. (See H. Ellis, *Sexual Inversion*, in Hyde Park.)

This is one view of the Sex *plus* Cant position at which we have arrived: official prohibition of State Church Commanded Marriage, an utterly impossible standard of celibacy and sham morality, and a deluge of indecent behaviour, 19,000 women arrested—are women the only sinners?—and five or six couples per day seized in one public park.

Then, by way of proving the full truth of Macaulay's statement of the scandalous contradictions which obtain, we turn to the public utterances of another Church sociological economist and financial expert.

The *Daily Chronicle*, July 9, 1917, reported that the Rev. R. Meddings, Rector of St. Margaret's, Lee, Kent, preached a sermon on some of the aspects of "Baby-Week." It was no doubt a moving and quite fitting sermon. He dwelt on the facilities and advantages of raising children "for the Empire."

"Parliament should debate the proportional endowment of families; the Government had already accepted the principle in its consideration of remission of the income-tax"; "every childless home 'must be made' to minister to the homes that were not childless"; and then the capstone of his futility, "Bachelors must be taxed." He noted that some of his hearers smiled, but he was confident it would come. "Our greatest national asset and glory was the traditional home."

Having noted which, turn to the back page of the same *Daily Chronicle*, or almost any newspaper, and count day by day the number of advertisements issued by State, municipal, and other public bodies, and private employers, inviting employees, and specifying, "Must be unmarried," or with the yet fouler, "Man and Wife, healthy and of good character, and without encumbrances."

What in the name of common sense and hygiene are these people trying to do by their idiotic "tax the un-

married" nostrum—one of the meanest taxation dodges ever put before worried taxpayers and sweated workers. Do these Janus-faced teachers, pastors and masters, really believe that any educated, self-respecting democracy can be forced to procreate *ad lib.*, even though they be forced to marry by a tax-collector; do they seriously think that the appeal for big armies to build big empires will ever be of value in face of the memory of the waste in life and treasure of the last two years?

In all the long record of taxation futilities and illogical injustice there has never been anything so idle as the much-canvassed taxation of bachelors, a suggestion forced to the front by the age-long attempts of the Churches in encouraging celibacy, as to which I have gathered some strange material of the part played by the body of which the Rev. R. Meddings forms a unit.

(To be continued.) T. SHORE.

## New Testament Legends for Young Readers.

### III.—POWER OVER DEMONS.

A PERSIAN went to a wild and lonely spot, taking some food with him; and he drew a line round himself on the ground, and began muttering sacred words, or magic charms. Each day, he muttered. Very little food did he eat, and each day he tried to eat less than the day before. If he kept this up for forty days (so he had been told), and had no fear of lions, tigers, dragons, and the like, which sprang into his magic circle, he would become, on the 41st day, a Master of the Jinn; that is, a Master of Demons. If a lion appeared, it would come on the 21st day. The Persian of whom I speak told an Englishman (Professor E. G. Browne, about the year 1893) that he had tried the plan, and fancied he beheld a lion on the 21st day, but afterwards he doubted! But, in far-back times, many a Persian had spent his forty days in the Wilderness in this way; and he would afterwards present himself to the people as a Master of the Jinn; and they believed him.

The disciples of the Indian teacher, Buddha, say that he lived under a Bo-tree (or peepal tree) for seven weeks, trying his strength against the demon Mara. The demon promised, that if Buddha would be his ally, he would in seven days give Buddha the wheel of empire, so that he might roll as king over the earth. But the wise Indian said No. Then Mara sent three evil spirits in the shape of very lovely girls, and they thought to win Buddha to the way of sin. This plan also failed. On the 49th day, the king of the gods brought cool water for Buddha to bathe his face, and four angels presented gifts of flowers and perfumes. And now, as the Persians would say, Buddha was Master of the Jinn, and he was ready to go forth as a teacher of the people. ■

Another such story we shall find in the gospel of Luke.

\* \* \* \*

Crowds of people followed a long-haired, and shaggy man, who kept shouting,—

"Turn away from wrong! Wash away your sins! Come and wash in the water of baptism!"

From towns and villages, folk swarmed to hear the preacher, and they shook at his rough words,—

"Poisonous snakes, are you afraid of the fire of God? Bad trees, can you not bear good fruit? If you do not bear good fruit, I tell you in truth, God's axe will hew you down, and in God's fire you will burn!"

"John," said the people, "what shall we do?"

"Give clothes to the poor," replied John the Baptist, "give meat. Do something instead of mere talk! You



that are tax-collectors, mind you don't squeeze more money than is fair from the taxpayers. You soldiers, behave peaceably, and don't brawl and act brutally among the people in whose towns you are billeted. God wants wheat, not chaff. The good honest wheat goes into the store; the chaff goes into the fire. Fire, fire!"

Hundreds of folk stood in the stream, while John poured water on their heads, or dipped them under.

This John was "Heaven's Gift," whom we have met before.

A man, thirty years old, came from Nazareth down to the river, and was baptized. As he stood in the Jordan, a white dove fluttered down upon his head, and a voice from heaven was heard, saying,—“My son, my beloved; I am well pleased with you.”

Then the dove flew towards the rocky wilderness, leading the way, and Jesus of Nazareth followed after, till he came to a wild and lonely spot, where he was to try his strength against the demons. Forty days he dwelt in the place of cliffs and mountain torrents, and the king of the demons,—Satan,—tempted him. His answer was always No.

At the end of forty days, he was very hungry; and when the demon said the Son of God ought to be able to turn the stones into bread, and would he not do so? Jesus answered No.

When, from the top of a high mount, the demon showed him a vast scene of many castles, and cities, and armies, and kingdoms, and said all should be his, if he would bow to Satan as his over-lord, Jesus answered No.

Would he throw himself off one of the spires of the Temple roof at Jerusalem, and float down softly into the street, to the wonder of the crowd? Jesus answered No.

Satan retreated, baffled and beaten: and Jesus, Master of the Jinn, prepared to go out as a preacher, all over Galilee county; and in many a synagogue he spoke to the people about the Coming Kingdom; the devils should be cast out, and God's Kingdom be set up in joy and peace, and every man who put away wrong, and did the right, should enter in, no matter how poor and hungry he was. News of the preacher spread from village to village. Then he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. He went into the synagogue on a Sabbath day, mounted the pulpit, opened a Scripture roll, and read some lines of Isaiah's poem about prisoners let out of jail, and slaves set free from slavery. He rolled up the book, sat down, and looked keenly at the people.

"This is coming true, my friends, now—and here!"

"Fine words from Joseph's son," whispered some of the townsfolk.

"But," he said, "the preacher may not be listened to in his own Nazareth, and the new prophet may not be accepted in his own country. In olden days, God's prophets were sometimes sent, not to the Jews, but to Gentiles.".....

A roar of rage came from the throats of the people in the synagogue. They felt it was an insult to talk as if Gentiles were worth preaching to more than God's own Jews. They rushed to the pulpit, dragged Jesus down, bundled him out, and shoved him towards the edge of a cliff, meaning to fling him headlong.

But he escaped. Whether some of his friends formed a body-guard around him, and bore him away to a place of safety, or whether his own persuasion softened the angry hearts, I know not. Anyhow, the next we hear of Jesus is that he visited a city that lay on the shore of the Lake of Galilee—a sheet of water, pale blue, and bordered by a beach of white pebbles.

There was hardly room for the people who pressed into the synagogue when the preacher from Nazareth spoke about the kingdom. They were listening most eagerly to his speech when a scream was heard. A wild-eyed man shrieked out:

"Go away. Jesus of Nazareth! Away! You are our enemy!"

"Be quiet, demon," said Jesus. "Be quiet! Come out of the man."

The man fell as if in a fit, and lay still awhile, and then rose up, smiling and content.

"Here is a Master of Jinn, indeed!" said the people one to another. "He bids demons come out of men's bodies and hearts, and they obey him. What a word is this! What power!"

Wherever he went, mobs ran after him, anxious to see more marvels. His deeds were the talk of every market-place in Galilee.

"Have you heard?" people would say, "have you heard how Simon's mother-in-law has been healed of her terrible attack of fever? Have you heard of neighbour A., and neighbour B., and neighbour C., getting rid of the demons that were worrying them into their graves? The demons know a Master of Jinn when they see him; yes, indeed! They howl, and rave, and call him Christ, the Son of God; and then they fly out of their victims, and the poor souls have rest."

Such was the gossip of peasants in the fields, customers in the bazaars, and fishermen on the lake.

Early one morning Jesus rose, left the humble cottage where he lodged, and climbed the hills, and went to a silent corner where he might be alone with his thoughts. But the trampling of feet was soon heard. A multitude of country folk had tracked him, and were come to beg him to stay, and show them more wonders.

"No," he replied, "I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also."

\* \* \* \* \*

The legend of the Temptation is told again in John Milton's poem of *Paradise Regained*, which was first published in 1670.

In this poem Satan first appears as an old rustic gathering sticks on the hill-side; and he gets into conversation with the Son of God, and offers him a richly spread table, whereon are set dishes of fish, flesh, fowl, pastry, with wine, and with fruit and flowers heaped up, and music playing all the while. When this lure fails, Satan spreads out a grand view of cities, and armed hosts, and troops of chivalry; and also shows—

Great and glorious Rome, Queen of the Earth,  
So far renowned, and with the spoils enriched  
Of nations. There the Capitol thou seest,  
Above the rest lifting his stately head.....

And in the streets are swarms of Roman soldiers, and Hindoos with white silken turbans, and barbaric Britons and Germans. Of all this grandeur Jesus may be emperor, if (says the Demon-King)—

.....if thou wilt fall down  
And worship me as thy superior lord,  
(Easily done), and hold them all of me.

Of course, the man of Nazareth says No.

Then the night falls, and the Demons try to terrify Jesus by raising an awful tempest, and sending infernal ghosts and hellish furies to yell about his resting-place in the woods. But the Son of God remains calm. After the last scene on the roof of the Temple Satan vanishes, and angels carry Jesus to a flowery valley, set him on a green bank, and spread a banquet of fruit.

Milton was a poet; and the man who wrote the Gospel of *Luke* was a poet. Each poet told the tale in his own way, and as his fancy listed.

F. J. GOULD.



## Correspondence.

SOCIALISTS, FREETHOUGHT, AND RELIGION.  
TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I generally avoid the semblance of ambiguity, but probably, like the Scotsman, I "joke wi' difficulty"; hence any misinterpretation of my meaning in the phrase "emisaries of Rome." I wrote in Dublin, but for the moment forgot that I was not in Belfast! Let Mr. Jackson disabuse his mind of the idea that I could ever have thought that James Connolly was other than a "brave man who did his duty according to his lights," and I, living in the slums of Dublin, know of his Herculean work and his heroism. But, surely, I cannot be blamed for referring to a "twenty-year-old pamphlet" which the Social Party of Ireland thought fit to reprint in 1917!

Mr. Jackson protests against my not doing what I had no intention of doing, advancing the discussion on the basis of human society, much as I may agree that that would be advantageous. As a matter of fact I asked Mr. Cohen to elaborate his "psychologic bond" idea.

I do not deal in red herrings, and although my article was prompted somewhat by the recent correspondence in the *Freethinker*, I did not enter the lists as a controversialist. I propounded my own propositions, and kindly note the title of my article. I believe as much as any one in keeping Atheism and Socialist propaganda separate, but as clearly stated in this week's "Sugar Plums," my article was a protest against the "deferential attitude" adopted by many Socialists towards the Church and the clergy. Whether Socialism is concerned with "the objective validity of any religion" is another question altogether.

I clearly pointed out that Connolly's inference was that many Socialists were Christians; I stated without dubiety that I had never met a Marxian who was a professing Christian. Mr. Jackson is a Marxian and an Atheist, but can he tell us of any who were Marxians and militant Christians? That might give some reason for respecting a creed which I think stands in the way of progress.

J. EFFEL.

Two Sonnets on July 28, 1917,  
Anno Domino.

"Never mind if they bleed," cried an old woman, "so are our boys bleeding in the trenches".....A Canadian called upon the audience to sing "God Save the King."

—*Sunday Times*.

## I.—INTOLERANCE AND THE NATIONAL ANTHEM.

O HISTORY take thy stern and truthful pen,  
A sister muse in bitterness desires,  
And write these words until their meaning fires  
To life and thought the dullest citizen;  
That yesterday a mob of Englishmen  
In London, which a Freedom's war inspires,  
Roused the worst passions of their basest sires,  
Crushed a minority as one to ten.

They burned with ghostly rage intolerant  
Of other men's opinions, drove them forth  
As animals, and then began to sing.  
They sang the tyrant song, the sickly chant  
Of slaves who live yet in this hardy North,  
They sang, O History, "God Save the King."

## II.—THE SEVEN SEAS.

These men who think they serve the modern State  
By fierce intolerance in time of war,  
Driving the imperial city to uproar,  
Against that little school by yon Peace-gate;  
Are they not worthy children, much too late,  
Of all the tyrants, from that one who swore  
The primal curse, to them who still deep-score  
A tortured world with black sulphuric hate?  
Sweet Liberty, "return to us again  
And give us manners"; these low tyrannies  
Remove to chaos, giving us release.  
Then shall our country, taking this new plane  
Of virtue, thus command the Seven Seas:  
Truth, Right, Law, Justice, Progress, Hope, and  
Peace.

H. V. S.

## 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. 16, at 7.30.

## OUTDOOR.

BATTERSEA PARK: 11, George Rule, a Lecture.  
BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 6.15, E. Burke, a Lecture.  
FINSBURY PARK N. S. S.: 11.15, Percy S. Wilde, a Lecture.  
KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley Road): 7, R. Miller, a Lecture.  
NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill): 6.30, H. V. Storey, a Lecture.  
REGENT'S PARK BRANCH N. S. S.: 3.15, E. Burke, a Lecture.  
SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3, George Rule, a Lecture.  
WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station): 7, Mr. Shaller, a Lecture.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Mr. Yeates; 3.15, Messrs. Kells and Dales; 6.30, Messrs. Beale and Hyatt.

## GOD AND THE AIR-RAID.

## The Massacre of the Innocents.

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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*.

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