

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED · 1881

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

Registered at the General Post Office as a Newspaper.

VOL. XXXVIII.—No. 25

SUNDAY, JUNE 23, 1918

PRICE TWOPENCE

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
Religion and the State.—The Editor	337
"The Church and the League of Nations."—J. T. Lloyd	338
"The Great Achilles Whom We Knew."—Minnermus	339
A Search for the Soul.—Abracadabra	340
Concerning the "Freethinker."—Chapman Cohen	343
The Story of the Tea Plant.—T. F. Palmer	344
"The World Needs Us!"—Ignotus	345
Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.	

Views and Opinions.

Religion and the State.

In criticizing, last week, the Bishop of Oxford's proposals for maintaining religion in the schools, we dealt with the concrete proposals made, and ignored a vital principle that underlay the whole question. This is, the relation of religion to the modern State. And here there are only two logical positions. One is that religion is essential to right character; it is, therefore, a legitimate concern of the State, and cannot be neglected without risk of disaster. As the Bishop of Oxford puts it:—

Education is the process of training the faculties, especially of the young, to enable them intelligently to live their lives and correspond with their opportunities. And plainly, if we believe in God, the most important function of education is to train the young to correspond with the purpose of God, so far as we can know that.

If we accept this, there is hardly less justification for the State teaching and enforcing religion than for teaching arithmetic. Opposed to this position is that which says the State has no business whatever with a person's religious opinions. Whether he has any or none is his own business. Each one, to quote Heine, has the right to go to hell in his own fashion—provided that in selecting the route he does not interfere with the freedom of locomotion of other people.

* * *

Theocracy or Atheocracy.

Religion exists in the State under two conditions. Either social affairs are judged from the point of view of religion, or religious beliefs are judged from the standpoint of social requirements. Either a Theocracy or an Atheocracy. The first is that for which genuine believers have always striven, and it is responsible for many of the evils associated with religion in general, and Christianity in particular. Jew hunts, heresy hunts, witch burnings, etc., have all resulted from the attempt to rule society in accordance with religious belief. And it is no more than just to point out that the evils of religion were consummated by men who were often actuated by a high sense of duty. To them the heretic was a plague spot, a centre of contamination, and the necessity for his elimination appeared the greater as religious belief was stronger. The consequences of attempting to regulate life by religious beliefs are written in some of the most deplorable chapters in the history of the world.

Its condemnation is now so complete that one can scarce find a single responsible person who will stand as its champion. The other condition, that religious beliefs are to be judged from the point of view of social utility, is quite as fatal to religion. For there are none of the functions of life that cannot proceed as well without religion as with it. The proof of this is that it occurs. Believers are neither wiser nor better than unbelievers. The secularization of life is not a theory, but a fact, and a religion that cannot prove itself to be true has small chance of continuing its existence on the plea that it is useful.

* * *

A Vicious Unity.

It is worth noting that the separation of religion from the State, even in theory, is a modern doctrine. Although the Greek and Roman conception of social life was too sane to permit its being subordinated to so grossly and crudely conceived a supernaturalism as afterwards obtained under Christian rule, still the worship of the gods remained a part of the general functions of the State. Splendidly tolerant as Rome was of differing creeds and gods, the head of the State, as such, was the head of the national religion, and officiated as such on occasions of State. And certainly nothing would have been deemed more impious by the early Christians than any separation of the two functions. Their objection to obeying the State in matters of religion was not based upon the belief that it was overstepping the functions, but that it was teaching the wrong religion. The Catholic Church has never receded from the position that the State ought to enforce the true religion; nor has it taken much pains to hide its intention of enforcing it if ever it has the chance of carrying this into practice.

* * *

Nonconformist Cant.

Protestantism in its early stages showed no departure from this principle. None of the Protestant leaders believed that the State ought not to teach religion; all they said was that the State ought to teach only the true religion—theirs being, of course, of the correct brand. As a matter of fact, the establishment of a State Church is entirely owing to Protestantism. But the duty of the State to enforce the true and suppress the false was held by all the Protestant leaders, and all used the civil power as occasion offered. And in every instance where Protestantism succeeded Catholicism was forcibly suppressed, and the newer form of faith forcibly imposed upon the people. Nor could anything be more false, and (in the case of modern Nonconformists) more hypocritical, than the claim that the Puritans and the seventeenth-century dissenters generally fought either for real liberty of conscience or for the separation of Church and State. Nothing was farther from their thoughts. It was merely a repetition of the historic struggle—a desire to replace one form of religious belief by another, and to impose the same penalties upon dissentients. The reign of Puritanism in England and America, with its lengthy and savage list of imprisonments, nose,

tongue, and ear-slittings, brandings and whippings—all for religious offences—is surely enough to give the lie to the modern Nonconformist claims. That those who make these claims *know* better there can be little doubt. That they do not speak more accurately betrays a lively faith in the ignorance of their congregations and in the power of impudent reiteration. In practice, Nonconformists are as anxious as Catholics or Episcopalians to secure State support, and quite as willing to take all that is offered. They support heartily all statutory measures for the prevention of anti-religious propaganda, they protest energetically against the abolition of religious services at all State and Parliamentary functions; they take readily all the solid cash the State cares to give them in the shape of a remission of taxes, and they advocate the teaching of religion in all State schools. In the face of these facts it requires impudence of no mean order to claim that Nonconformists do not believe in the alliance of religion and the State.

* * *

The Causes of State Neutrality.

Two causes are responsible for the modern doctrine that the State should not interfere in matters of religion. The first is the growth of sects. If the limits of Church and State were conterminous; if, that is, only one religion existed in society and all people belonged to it, there would be nothing politically unjust in all contributing to its maintenance. Injustice commences when from a multitude of religious sects the State selects one and uses the whole of the social forces for its maintenance. Dissatisfaction, springing in the first instance from religious rivalry, arises, and later an elaborated political expression of this discontent gives birth to the theory of State neutrality in religion. But State neutrality means, in practice, State indifference. It means the State saying publicly, "We do not care whether you believe in religion or not. So far as we are concerned, it does not matter. We are convinced that you can carry out all the functions of a good citizen without any belief in God or a future life. We are no more concerned with your going to church than with your attending a cinema show. Religion is a matter we decline to enforce, because it appears to us a matter of indifference whether you believe in it or not." And in this the State is a reflection of life. For it is life that gives the lie to religion. The Freethinker does no more than record the fact.

* * *

Religion and the Logic of Life.

The second cause is the growth of unbelief. In a State where all believe, it would be impossible for it to stand aloof. No one who really believes that Christianity is essential to right living could advocate the State leaving it alone, while enforcing other things. And, so far, men like the Bishop of Oxford, who believe in the State teaching religion to both children and adults, have all the logic on their side. It is true that this ideal is a more or less hopeless one, but it is quite logical from the believer's point of view. It is impracticable, because heresy and unbelief can no longer be suppressed or ignored. The State to-day comprises men and women of all kinds of religious belief and of no belief at all. The man with three gods rubs shoulders with the man with no god at all. They join each other in a hundred-and-one different social enterprises, and find a lack of religion no obstacle to efficiency as a citizen. Under such conditions the State patronage of religion becomes both absurd and unjust. The enforcement of religion is no longer possible, because the world no longer believes. And when a religion cannot be imposed upon an adult, it becomes a cowardly tyranny to force it upon the helplessness of a child.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

"The Church and the League of Nations."

THE above is the title of a notable article in the June number of the *Welsh Outlook*, from the pen of Major David Davies, M.P. The writer is a member of a well-known Welsh family of colliery proprietors, and the *Welsh Outlook* is a youthful monthly magazine of exceptional merit, devoted chiefly to matters relating to Wales. It deserves a much wider circulation than it enjoys at present, but we are confident that the interesting variety and excellent quality of its contents will 'ere long secure for it a high position of directive influence in the intellectual, political, and social development of the Principality. Major Davies' article is marked by the serious, sane, view it takes of the peculiar situation created by this great World-War, and it affords us sincere pleasure to express our warm appreciation of the entirely fine spirit that animates it from beginning to end; but our object in reviewing it is to call attention to an obvious fallacy which underlies its whole argument. Major Davies writes from the standpoint of a deeply convinced Christian who is confronted by the undeniable fact of the total failure of the Christian Church. Than this no fact could be more perplexing and humiliating to a sincere believer in Christianity, not only because Christianity claims to be a supernatural and consequently infallible religion, but also and chiefly because the Church is represented to be its supernaturally appointed and endowed agent or instrument, so that there is no possible escape from the conclusion that the failure of the latter of necessity involves the failure of the former. In the New Testament both are described as being equally of Divine origin, and as equally possessing Divine power. It is true that the Church is composed of ordinarily weak and fallible men and women, but as a Church, indwelt by the crucified and ascended Christ, and omnipotently energized by the Holy Ghost, they are absolutely irresistible, all-conquering. Beyond a doubt such is the New Testament conception of the Christian Church, and this Major Davies, as an honest man, is bound to admit. And yet it is absolutely incontrovertible that the Church "has lost her hold upon humanity," with the inevitable result that Christianity, contained within her as a sacred deposit, has come infinitely short of fulfilling its promised mission.

At this point Major Davies introduces several irrelevancies, such as that "man must have a religion of some kind," that "the sense of worship is part of his being, and he cannot divest himself of it," and that even the keen scientist "in his innermost mind is a devotee of some creed or other," and our only purpose in alluding to them is to point out that, as put by him, they are as untrue as they are foreign to the subject under consideration. Equally irrelevant is the reference to the French play, known in English as *False Gods*. It is only in the fifth paragraph of his article that Major Davies comes into direct grips with the question at issue. In the past the Church has, admittedly, not been what she always prides herself upon being, she has not set a disjointed world right, she has not established the reign of universal brotherhood, she has not succeeded in even teaching professing Christians to love one another, and dwell together in beautiful unity. All this is not formally admitted by the writer, but it is surely implied in the following passage:—

This is the Church's opportunity. Will she take it? Will she rise to the occasion? Will she point to the goal? Will she cast away all reservations and throw herself into the fray? Will she rest until the ideal is achieved, so that to future generations her teachers will

be able to point the moral?.....Will it not be truthfully said that if the Church loses this opportunity, our profession of religion is a sham and an illusion? If she hesitates to put the Gospel first, last, and all the time in the forefront, if she seeks, for selfish purposes, to place the nation before the nations, if the Church is to be the tool of the State, then indeed will the people have finally lost all confidence in the message of the Church and we shall inevitably relapse into the barbarism of past ages. What then is the goal? What is the land of promise? What is the special mission? What is the Holy Crusade? What is the vindication of the faith in these days of fire and sword? (the *Welsh Outlook*, vol. v., p. 179).

Such is the fifth paragraph in Major Davies' article; and it is the only truly relevant portion. Futile and false is it to assert that the religion of Christ is "acknowledged by believer and unbeliever alike to be the purest and highest standard of conduct offered to mankind," the only true statement being that this religion "has suffered a set-back," and that "there has been a reaction to Materialism." The so-called "sublime principles of Christianity" have lain, quiescent, as a Divine deposit in the Church for nineteen long and dark centuries, and Major Davies himself cannot be blind to the fact that the millionfold tragedies of the present War are utterly inconceivable "if there is really a Divine Providence guiding the destinies of mankind." Of course, there is another side, a more satisfactory one, to the picture; but both sides represent two sets of good and evil tendencies in human nature for which the appalling curse of war serves as an outlet, and it so serves in the evil instances quite as much as in the good.

But what about the League of Nations, the object of which is to prevent future wars? Let it be borne in mind that Major Davies is a wholehearted believer in Christianity and in the Divine mission of the Church. Let it also be remembered that between his song of praise of the Gospel and his advocacy of the League of Nations there is no logical connection whatever. All he says about Christ and the sublime principles of his religion is totally irrelevant to his argument for the League of Nations. As a matter of fact, were it not for his formal avowal of Christian belief, we could not find the remotest hint of it in his reasoning. On the contrary, his support of the idea of the League of Nations is such as to imply either the non-existence or the complete collapse of the Christian religion. With the argument itself, as well as with his rhetorical commendation of the League, we are in full accord. The following statement is a wholly rational one:—

There can be no permanent peace unless all the nations of the world agree to general disarmament. This is the crux of the whole question.

Such is the next also, which we put in italics:—

Complete disarmament involves the establishment of an international police force, which means that the nations have resolved to pool their resources in order to maintain law and order among themselves.

Judge Wadhams was perfectly justified in saying that "when you see a constable you behold the incarnation of the Magna Charta and the British Constitution"; but is it not equally evident that the existence of a police-force, national or international, is a perpetual reminder of the colossal failure of the Gospel either to set or to keep the world in peaceful order?

J. T. LLOYD.

GOD AND MAN.

An Essay in Common Sense and Natural Morality.

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

PRICE THREEPENCE. POSTAGE ½D.

"The Great Achilles Whom We Knew."

The man who feels that he has truth on his side must step firmly. Truth is not to be dallied with.—*Goethe*.

In this world, if you do not say a thing in an irritating way, you may just as well not say it at all, since nobody will trouble themselves about anything which does not trouble them.

—*Bernard Shaw*.

An interesting feature at the public meeting at the last Congress of the National Secular Society was the reading by Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner of one of her father's speeches, originally delivered at a similar function many years before. As the stately and statesmanlike sentences fell from her lips, I recalled the striking and magnetic personality of Charles Bradlaugh, "the great Achilles whom we knew." Whatever may have been thought of Bradlaugh's significance as a politician and thinker, whatever may be the influence he wielded in public affairs, the memory of his personal career must live while anyone has an eye for the dramatic and romantic in English history. The story of his meteoric rise is like a leaf torn from the pages of Plutarch; the story of his untimely death is as moving and as poignant as a tragedy of Sophocles. He will live with Cromwell, Cobbett, and Gladstone as one whom a vivid and forceful personality must always make interesting. The years since he died have quieted the shoutings and tumult of his strenuous time, but they have left the heroic figure of Charles Bradlaugh clear-cut for our regard. Not only was he a great man; he was a man of real distinction in aspect and carriage. The fight he made in Parliament and outside against an overwhelming majority of opponents was one of the bravest ever fought, and his triumph in the hour of death was as complete as that of Nelson on the deck of the shot-riven *Victory*. Thanks to Bradlaugh's courage and devotion, heterodoxy is no longer a serious bar to the citizen, and ecclesiastical authority has been shorn of its dangers.

It is strange that people are only now beginning to see that Bradlaugh's attitude to religion was actually forced upon him. He had no wish to fight the clergy and their supporters; he did not want to waste his time arraigning the polygamy of the Patriarchs, the gallantries of David, and the absurdities of religion. But he saw clearly that priestcraft was the bulwark of tyranny. It was precisely because the Christian religion was the shield of injustice that he challenged it; and if he seemed to those outside of his influence a mere iconoclast, he has in this only shared the fate of the world's greatest reformers. He died early because of the ill-treatment he received. Dead, he remains a living force by the nobility of his life and the consistency of his example.

"Thorough" was his motto, and throughout life he acted up to it. He was no dreamer of dreams, leaving others to translate his ideas into deeds. First and last, he was a man of action. In his earlier days the Freethinkers were feebly led and fitfully inspired. Without his leadership their stay in the desert might have been prolonged many years. It was he, most ably seconded by men of real talent, doubtless; but, again, first and foremost, he who made the Freethought Party as we know it to-day.

What a price he paid for his leadership! The last time I heard him lecture at the old Hall of Science, I realized that he was a broken man. For a whole generation he had led the forces of Freethought, but the Philistines were too much for even his iron constitution. Brave to the last, he kept a bold front to the enemy, but he was bleeding to death beneath his armour.

Some of his cheering audience nearly broke down, thinking of the fierce old fighting days, when there was no thought of anything but the fight itself. Had his assailants known Bradlaugh as he really was, they could never have hated him as they did. Jealousies and unkindness and bitterness of spirit are in most human labours; but religion, with its insincerities and intellectual meannesses, seems to hold a poison of its own which narrows the vision and blunts the edge of principle.

Bradlaugh fought for liberty, and his life struggle was as heroic as that of the Spartan heroes who held the pass of Thermopylæ against the Persian hosts. He stood like a stone wall against the hordes of priestcraft. Bradlaugh grows larger to one's mental and moral vision the more distant he becomes. The best views of the Alps are to be gained from a distance, and we get the better view of Bradlaugh as we recede from him. A hero in action, he was chivalry incarnate. He was never the man to say to others: "Go on," but he always said: "Come on." Now he is no longer a presence, but a memory, we are free to look at him, free from controversy, and to estimate him at his true worth. Shall our lives not be nobler also because of his worthy example? He fell, prematurely, alas, worn out by hard work and harder usage in that great battle-field of humanity, whose soldiers fight not to shed blood, but to dry up tears; not to kill their fellow-men, but to raise them up. Labouring not for himself, but for others, he made an imperishable name, and gave the world "assurance of a man." Let us salute the memory of one of the truest that ever drew breath.

MIMNERMUS.

A Search for the Soul.

II.

(Continued from p. 329).

BEFORE proceeding with this subject farther, it may be well to glance for a moment at what is known to be the undoubted origin of the soul. In the later part of the Old Testament times, we find that many Jews had come to believe that man possessed within him a counterpart of himself which was able to leave the body during sleep and go roaming about the country at pleasure. This idea originated in dreams, in which the dreamer met and conversed with deceased friends, or fought with enemies no longer living. Upon awakening and being assured that he had never left his couch, he thought the matter over, and ultimately arrived at the conclusion that there must be a second indwelling self that had the power to quit the body for a time and afterwards return to it. The only point upon which he had any doubt was, as to whether this soul or spirit would die with the body. In course of time, however, it came to be the general opinion that all these "spirits of the dead" would go to a place prepared for them under the earth—that is to say, "Sheol," or the Underworld—and would there remain in an eternal sleep to the end of time. The latter place is referred to in the books of Isaiah, Job, Ezekiel, and some of the Psalms.

Upon this subject Tylor, in his *Anthropology* says:—

What, then, is this soul or life which [the primitive man thought] goes and comes in sleep, trance, and death? To the rude philosopher, the question seems to be answered by the very evidence of his senses. When the sleeper awakens from a dream, he believed he had really somehow been away, or that other people had come to him. As it is well known by experience that men's bodies do not go on these excursions, the natural explanation is that every man's living self or soul is his phantom or image, which can go out of his body and

see and be seen itself in dreams..... That men have such unsubstantial images belonging to them is familiar in other ways to the savage philosopher, who has watched their reflections in still water, or their shadows following them about, fading out of sight to reappear presently somewhere else..... Here, then, in a few words, is the savage and barbaric theory of souls, where life, mind, breath, shadow, reflection, dream, vision, come together and account for one another in some such vague confused way as satisfied the untaught reasoner.

That this was how the idea of man possessing a soul originated there cannot be the shadow of a doubt; for it arose in an age of ignorance and credulity, when nothing certain was known of the functions of the human organism, or of the causes of natural phenomena. A similar idea of invisible demons entering the body came later, and was suggested by the violent convulsions in cases of epilepsy (see Mark ix. 17-27).

Returning to history, we find that among the fourteen books called the Apocrypha, which were written during the interval between the Old and New Testaments, there are three which contain passages indicating a belief in a new kind of immortality. In two of these books the spirits of "the righteous" were supposed to be translated to an abode of bliss, and those of the non-righteous were to be left in Sheol for ever. In the third book (that of 2 Esdras) there was to be immortality for all mankind—to be passed either in a heaven of delights or a hell of torments. This last was the immortality adopted by the Essenes and Nazarenes and by the Christians in apostolic times—whence the doctrine of the soul and its imaginary "eternal life" was handed down the ages by the Christian Church to the present day.

Let us now look at the subject a little closer. We are told that man is of a tripartite nature, made up of body, soul, and spirit; but no one now believes that when the body has perished and undergone disintegration, it will ever be raised to life again, though such was the belief in apostolic times. The only hope for immortality, then, is the survival of what are called "soul" and "spirit"; and these are merely the names of two imaginary entities (or two aspects of the same entity) which are believed by Christians and Spiritists to dwell within all human organisms during life, and to survive them at death. Science, however, knows nothing of them; they have never been seen or met with in any of the thousands of surgical operations performed on the human body during life, nor have they ever been seen to leave the body by doctors or relatives at death. The reason of this, we are told, is because they are of so attenuated and intangible a nature as to be invisible—like the imaginary evil spirits in the New Testament. But it is quite evident that any so-called "entity" that could quit the body without being perceived by the relatives in attendance upon the dying person could not possibly represent the personality of that person when in life. Besides many other essentials, personality certainly includes life, consciousness, intelligence, and memory; but no one with a grain of sense could imagine an attenuated, invisible nonentity to possess any of the attributes named; these are the resultant of activities generated by the living organism, and are never found apart from that organism.

In *Man and the Universe*, Sir Oliver Lodge makes the following remarkable statement:—

Though it by no means follows that Mind is itself dependent on matter as we know it, it will probably be still by means of something akin to matter that it will hereafter be manifested..... Christianity clearly supplements the mere survival of a discarnate spirit, a homeless wanderer or melancholy ghost, with the warm and comfortable clothing of something that may legitimately

be spoken of as a "body".....an ethereal or other entity constituting the persistent "other aspect," and fulfilling some of the functions which atoms of terrestrial matter are employed to fulfil now.

Here Sir Oliver evidently sees that a "discarnate spirit" is really nothing in itself, and requires "something akin to matter," not only to hold it together, but to do the mental work previously performed by the material brain. He does not, however, gain much by appropriating the "resurrection body" described by Paul, which now forms part of the Christian Burial Service. The reasoning of that apostle is:—

So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption;.....It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body (1 Cor. xv. 35-44).

The foregoing prognostication, as everyone must perceive, is pure nonsense. The corrupt natural body will never be raised an incorrupt spiritual body; of this there is no doubt whatever. There can be no resurrection. When once committed to the earth, the corpse will never be raised to life in any form, as Sir Oliver Lodge well knows. Why, then, does he refer to this text as giving the discarnate spirit a "warm and comfortable body"? Sir Oliver is quite welcome to an "ethereal body"; but when we know that what is called "ether" is supposed to be many million times thinner than atmospheric air, it is really astonishing to hear it called "warm and comfortable." Compared with ether, the tepid air that leaves the lungs is thick and warm as a blanket.

In his notice of a recent work on "Immortality," by V. F. Storr, Canon of Winchester, the reviewer, T. G. Bonney, D.Sc., says: "Perhaps Canon Storr might have insisted more strongly on the difficulty of conceiving an individuality as wholly disembodied, even in the intermediate state. Consciousness of individuality can hardly exist without a consciousness of limitation, within the boundary." Just so; a soul or spirit which leaves the body must have some kind of outside covering to hold the spirit-form together and keep it separate from the space around it. Such a membrane the "spirit" could not take from the body. Where did it get this covering? Where, also, did it get the spirit-clothes which clairvoyants describe it as wearing? I will leave these questions for Spiritists to answer.

ABRACADABRA.

(To be continued.)

Eternal Beauty.

SPRING, with her love, hath decked the orchards gay;
The drowsy bee to apple blossom wings;
The orchards sing of Autumn gatherings,
And lovely night gives birth to lovelier day.

Of late I've seen a broken apple bough
With bloom all dead in dew-besprinkled green,
The flying steel had severed its gay sheen,
And it lay dead as fickle lover's vow.

Say, who shall weep, what tears shall we let fall
For Beauty sundered from its beauteous stem?
Shall we cry out like misers o'er lost gem
Who, for some paltry worth, had staked their all?

Nay, nay; the lamp of Beauty brightly burns
Forever god-like as the god-like sun;
So will it burn when rusty sword and gun
Shall be as dust in unremembered urns.

WILLIAM REPTON.

Acid Drops.

Ever since the War commenced, Christians of all kinds have been trying to explain why God permitted it. There is something significant even in the attempt, for war is not a new thing in the world. Putting aside war between the great Christian Powers—and if they were out of the way there would be fewer wars in the world—there is nearly always a war going on somewhere. True, these are generally "little" wars; but, although our Bishops don't grow rhapsodical about them, still one may assume that, when men are killed, the distinction between being killed in a "great" war or in a "little" one, is not important. And if all that a people possess are rude huts and primitive furniture, to them their destruction means much what the destruction of a home means in Belgium or France, or elsewhere. We know this is an unchristian way of looking at the matter, but we are built that way.

Now, Miss Esther Mayman comes along with another explanation. "War is God's surgery." "There is a point in man's transgression of spiritual law which we cannot pass and live, and to save the race God cuts men off in millions—not by a miracle, but by the operation of natural causes." All we can say on this is that God bungles*as badly as a surgeon as he does in other directions. What would be said of a surgeon who, because one man broke his leg, cut off another man's arm? Yet this is what occurs. The millions who have died have certainly not all broken those "spiritual laws" which produced the War. German territory has suffered least of all; Belgian territory most of all—and the Belgians simply had nothing to do with it. Those who transgress most suffer least. God kills the more innocent to teach the more guilty a lesson. Good God!

The woes attendant upon the possession of riches do not seem to frighten the clergy. The late Rev. G. B. Morley, of Bournemouth, left £32,148.

Up to a month ago 22,000 out of 42,000 elementary schoolmasters have joined the Army, and 5,000 more have been called up, says Sir James Yoxall, M.P. What a contrast to that of the clerical profession, which has so far been exempted from military service.

The modesty of parsons is proverbial, but journalists sometimes lay the flattery on with a trowel. A London newspaper, referring to Dr. Jowett, the Nonconformist minister who has recently returned from America, says that he has "clearly come back" as an "interpreter of the two Anglo-Saxon peoples to one another." If Dr. Jowett wants an interpreter's job, he might translate the choice Americanese of Billy Sunday for English readers.

Although Freethought is treated very cavalierly in the press, Superstition is always sure of a welcome. In a column review of Sir A. Conan Doyle's spiritist book, *The New Revelation*, the writer refers to Sir Arthur's statement that spiritualistic manifestations are among the fundamental things in the Bible. It is not edifying to find the author of a "new revelation" searching in the dustbins of departed ignorance.

The Rev. John McNeill, who has always been a notorious egotist, whose self-imposed mission seems to be to safeguard God's reputation, is now surpassing himself in the art of saying silly things. Speaking at the Mansion House the other day, he undertook the task of putting the Lord "in the right place" in his relation to the War; and this is how he is reported to have done it:—

Think of him in the right place, and that is at the heart of it, all its issues held and securely held, and guided and unerringly guided, by his hands. He is awaiting the moment to arrive when in his wisdom and purpose he shall lift his hands and say, "Thus far and no farther." Then not another shot shall be fired and not another soldier fall.

Not even the Bishop of London can beat that!

"The Most Excellent Order of the British Empire" bids fair to embrace almost the whole population, excluding children. The latest list of awards includes about 6,000 names, and among those honoured are some Salvation Army officials, several railway station-masters, a police superintendent, typists, princesses, telegraphists, photographers, nurses, and munition girls.

The United States is generally considered to be the home of fancy religions, but consciences appear to have small market value in the land of tall buildings and tall ideals. Forty-five conscientious objectors to militarism were sentenced to imprisonment for life in Texas, but on a merciful reconsideration of their cases the sentence was reduced to a quarter of a century each.

At a meeting of the committee of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel it was stated that an offer was made to supply one of the bishops with an aeroplane to enable him to visit his overseas diocese. The right reverend Father-in-God declined the offer. Maybe he was not anxious to meet his Saviour in the skies.

A Local Preacher asks Professor David Smith, in his Correspondence Column in the *British Weekly* for June 13, what "the functions of the Trinity" are, and, of course, the Professor has no difficulty in giving the desired information. The Head of the Trinity is the Father, whose supreme ambition is to be made known to mankind. For that purpose he sends his Son into the world, who there becomes man and acts the part of the Father's advocate with men. Then he returns to heaven to be men's advocate with the Father, and sends the Holy Ghost to continue his earthly ministry as the Father's advocate with men. Dr. Smith writes as one who knows all about the subject, and the Local Preacher will no longer have any doubt as to what "the functions of the Trinity" are.

The *Daily Telegraph's* brave boast that "King George reigns over an educated people" is sometimes contradicted by facts. At Nottingham Police Court a man complained that his wife had been to a sorceress to have a curse put upon him. The Bench stood the shock like the rock of Gibraltar.

A *Daily Telegraph* reviewer writes, in the course of a notice of a book on Spiritualism by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, that the War has deepened people's interest in the question of a future life. As a statement of fact, that may be true, although we are not aware of any decisive evidence on the point. It is just as likely that what is happening is that a number of people are taking advantage of the War to talk about a future life, in the hope of a more attentive audience. We do not believe that the War will have removed disbelief or created belief. Certainly the destruction of life now going on is not likely to increase the sense of its value.

But the important thing is whether the War has brought any new facts to light bearing on a future life. Quite clearly it has not done this. Death, even death of all sorts of horrible and painful means, did not begin with the War, and it will not end with it. There is no increase of anguish in connection with the War; there are only more people suffering in a given time. And those who suffer find no comfort in a future life—unless they believe in it beforehand. The comfort felt is little more than a conventional expression. As a matter of fact, there is plenty of evidence that the way people face the loss of their loved ones is quite independent of religious belief. It is a question of education, temperament, and native disposition.

The Archbishop of Canterbury asserts that forty-four years ago he and others were trying to get people to understand the same ideals for which we were now fighting. It would have been far better if His Grace had devoted himself to the better education of the clergy in the "same high ideals." The anxiety of the clergy that others should do the fighting is wonderful.

The Rev. Mr. Stockley, vicar of St. Paul's, Burton-on-Trent, is candid enough to confess that "terrible troubles surround the Church of God, and seem every moment about to submerge the Sacred Ship." Mr. Stockley's only hope is fixed on Christ, but he forgets that Christ promised to dwell in the midst of the Church to the end of time. If he spoke the truth, it follows that he, too, is now about to sink with his Church. Consequently, so far as the Divine Being is concerned, the Church is absolutely without hope.

Dr. Campbell Morgan is admittedly an exceedingly able man, and naturally his explanation of what is described as the signal failure of the Church is the very best that can be offered. Preaching at Newport, Mon., the other Sunday morning, he asserted that only those who do not know what the Church's mission in the world is declare that she has failed. He admitted, however, that during this War, in particular, Catholicism has exemplified its utter impotence—has, in fact, been guilty of plainly showing its sympathy with Austria, but claimed that the various Protestant communions, at least, the Nonconformist sections, have been and are fulfilling their mission right nobly. They have sent hundreds of thousands of their best young men to the Front, and they are administering tea and coffee and spiritual consolation to wounded soldiers, as well as reliable guidance to those who come home on leave. And, in addition, are they not kept busy comforting the bereaved parents, brothers and sisters, widows and children, and sweethearts, of those who fall in battle?

Such was the best apology which so eminent a preacher as Dr. Campbell Morgan could suggest for what is universally spoken of as the dismal failure of the Christian Church; and we do not hesitate to affirm that in offering it he but culpably trifled, or palpably juggled, with the subject. The Gospel Jesus likened his kingdom unto "leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." We are assured that the Church is in charge of that Divine leaven, having been Divinely appointed and equipped to hide that leaven, which is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, in the human meal till the whole is leavened. Has Dr. Morgan the hardihood to declare that the whole of humanity has been leavened with the kingdom of heaven? If not, is he not bound to admit that the Church has not fulfilled her mission?

Instead of facing that question Dr. Morgan slips off on a tangent and says: "See, the reality of Christ is being demonstrated during this War as it was never demonstrated before. Everywhere there is sorrow, and everywhere men and women are triumphing over their sorrow because Christ is with them." Does Dr. Morgan really imagine that only Christian believers keep their troubles under, and are able to sing in tribulation? If he does, then his taunted knowledge of human beings is an illusion. Myriads upon myriads of non-Christians are morally strong enough to gain the victory over their sorrows without supernatural aid. It is easy enough to say that to give a cup of coffee to a returned soldier is a *Christly* act; but we prefer to call it an eminently *human* act. The reverend gentleman says that the call to hope and heroism is always Christ's call; but, being himself a fair scholar, he knows that the saying is false. Purity, hope, and heroism are distinctively human virtues, which were in active existence thousands of years before Christ was heard of, and are being practised to-day in lands where his name is not known.

The *Daily Sketch* says that the pay of fourth-class Army chaplains is to be increased from 10s. 6d. to 13s. 6d. per day. "Tommy" gets along on considerably less. But we suppose the increased pay will further stimulate the "patriotic" ardour of the "Black Army."

Cardinal Bourne, speaking at Hampstead in defence of the Pope's attitude on the War, said that in the early days of the conflict the Pope had no first-hand information. Poor papa! His infallibility does not seem worth a straw.

Concerning the "Freethinker."

WE are pleased, but not surprised, to be able to report that our proposed League for guarding the interests of the *Freethinker* is making headway. We have now, excluding London, the names of representatives in eighteen towns who have promised to help, and we see no reason why we should not quadruple that number before long. We made our appeal feeling that it would be well received, and we are not disappointed.

What the members of the *Freethinker* League are asked to undertake is this. They order through their newsagent one or more extra copies of this paper, which are left for display. If they are sold, there is an end of the matter. If they are not sold, the member or members of the League pay for the copies ordered. In the latter case they lose two or three coppers per week. If they are sold, they lose nothing, and have probably gained one or more new subscribers. Some members of the League are undertaking to secure new readers among their friends and acquaintances. This is not by any means so difficult a task as may be imagined. There are thousands who are only waiting for an introduction to the *Freethinker* to become regular readers. We have secured a large number of readers by this method, and we are quite certain we shall get more by the same plan.

Where neither of these plans can be adopted, send us on the names and addresses of likely subscribers, and we will send free specimen copies direct for six weeks.

But we want a register of the names of this band of voluntary workers, and we want them as quickly as possible. We may then be able to suggest other ways in which help may be given with no other expenditure than a little trouble. *We want a representative of this paper in every town and city in Britain.* We are out for a big circulation, and we mean to get it.

One other matter. We have not only to sell the paper, we have to buy paper in order to sell. And that is growing more and more difficult. Paper, when it can be bought, is now nine or ten times the pre-War price. And it is getting scarcer and dearer week by week. The only way to make sure of paper now is to supply the mills with materials for making it. So, in addition to our ordinary work, we have now to act as a waste-paper merchant. And that is where we are quite dependent upon our readers.

We want all our readers to save all their papers and magazines. Save them until they can be dispatched in about 56 lb. parcels. We will send on labels on receipt of a card, and will pay full price for all sent. But we must have the waste paper, and we need as much as we can get to keep going. Paper we must have, and our only source of supply lies with our readers. We feel quite confident that we shall be able to secure an adequate supply of the raw material with their help. They have stood by us loyally and well during these four years of War. We are confident we shall have their warm support to the end.

When peace *does* arrive we shall be able to smile at all the shifts we have made to keep the old ship afloat. At present the work is grim and earnest. But the reward is well worth the striving after.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Let us never forget that an act of goodness is of itself always an act of happiness. It is the flower of a long inner life of joy and contentment; it tells of peaceful hours and days on the sunniest heights of our soul. No reward coming after the event can compare with the sweet reward that went with it.—*Maeterlinck.*

To Correspondents.

- L. ARMSTRONG.—Why not ask your friend to define what he means by a "Christian hospital"? We have never come across one. We know of hospitals to the maintenance of which Christians—and non Christians—contribute, but the treatment is non-Christian, even non-theistic. And that is the decisive test.
- W. J.—Too late for last week's issue. (1) Is there any reason why you should answer every impertinent question that a Christian cares to put to you? We are doing our own work in our own way. (2) Mr. Cohen does not issue challenges to anyone. He is not a prize-fighter. He has never had, and has not, an objection to meeting in debate any reputable Christian representative. But he does not issue "challenges."
- A. PARTON.—Your help is of a very practical kind. It is good news that you made such a success of your canvass for new readers. We are sending on to all the addresses enclosed. Many thanks.
- GREEVZ FYSHER.—Paper being sent.
- D. D. B.—Your cheque for two guineas received. Thanks.
- A. M.—Shall appear as early as possible. But we have a pile of unpublished articles that dumbly reproach us as we write.
- J. CORNWALL.—We are glad to know that your newsagent has increased his sale from six to ten copies during the past month. Keep pegging away.
- E. K.—Pamphlets sent, and name entered. See our "Special" in this issue. You can distribute where you please.
- K. KNIGHTON.—Winwood Read's *Veil of Isis* is out of print, and can only be obtained as a second-hand copy.
- N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges: R. B. Harrison, 5s.
- N. S. S. GENERAL FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges: "G. W. R.," 2s.
- C. MURRAY.—There is no doubt as to Shelley's rejection of all religion. Here are his own words: "My rejection of revealed (religion) proceeds from my perfect conviction of its insufficiency to the happiness of man—to this source I can trace murder, war, intolerance. My rejection of Natural (religion) arises wholly from reason. I once was an enthusiastic Deist, but never a Christian."
- H. SPENCE.—Next week. Much obliged.
- T. O'NEILL.—Will find room in our next issue. Our regards to your son in his affliction.
- AJAX.—We are obliged for what you are doing to introduce the *Freethinker* to new readers.
- JOHN'S GRANDPA (Bognor).—We are looking into the matter, and will write you further. Your newsagent should have little trouble in disposing of the extra copies.
- T. DENNIS.—It is quite interesting for Mr. Cohen to learn, on the authority of a Christian Evidence lecturer, that he had not been in Sheffield five minutes before he wanted to go to a public-house. Those who know Mr. Cohen best will appreciate the story.
- The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.*
- The National Secular Society's office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.*
- When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, giving as long notice as possible.*
- Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.*
- 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.*
- All Cheques and Postal Orders should be crossed and made payable to the "London, City and Midland Bank, Clerkenwell Branch."*
- Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.*
- Friends who send us newspapers would enhance the favour by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.*
- 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.

After June 24, by the order of the Paper Controller, it is not allowable to send out papers on sale or return. We hope that all our readers will bear this in mind, and will see that an order for the *Freethinker* is placed with their local newsagents.

The Exeter reader who paid for the distribution of 2,000 copies of Mr. Cohen's "Pioneer Leaflets" will be pleased to learn that applications for considerably more than that number have been received. We have, however, supplied every applicant with a parcel. We hope their distribution will do good.

We were pleased to note a discussion in the columns of the *Leeds Mercury* on "Science and Christianity." In the issue before us there are two good letters from Mr. J. M. Blakey, and "Atheist Incognito." Such correspondence is certain to do good, and quite apart from its bringing new ideas before many Christians, it helps to break down the press boycott, which is still fairly well maintained.

Mr. D. Keir writes that he was successful in getting a resolution in favour of Secular Education—on the lines suggested by us—passed by the Paisley Trades and Labour Council. The resolution was sent to Mr. Fisher, the local M.P., and others. We again venture to suggest to advanced Societies of all kinds that they should lose no time in seeing that a similar resolution is passed.

One of our soldier readers, Mr. E. Starling, writes:—

There is a big scope for work in the Army, and many have lost what little faith they had in the Christian religion and he power of prayer. A little timely talk, and the man goes away thinking; he gets interested with the views expressed regarding Freethought. A leaflet or two, and he comes back for more for his pals. They start discussing the question. My copy of the *Freethinker* is eagerly sought for, and some "book it" beforehand, so that their turn comes early to have it.

This is one of many letters of a similar kind received. We may pride ourselves on having taken long views in connection with the War and Freethought, and we are certain that our systematic distribution of literature among the soldiers will have a growing influence for good.

MIRACLES.

We do not say that a miracle is impossible, we say only that no miracle has ever yet been proved. Let a worker of miracles come forward to-morrow with pretensions serious enough to deserve examination. Let us suppose him to announce that he is able to raise a dead man to life. What would be done? A committee would be appointed, composed of physiologists, physicians, chemists, and persons accustomed to exact investigation; a body would then be selected which the committee would assure itself was really dead; and a place would be chosen where the experiment was to take place. Every precaution would be taken to leave no opening for uncertainty; and if, under these conditions, the restoration to life was effected, a probability would be arrived at which would be almost equal to certainty. An experiment, however, should always admit of being repeated. What a man has done once he should be able to do again, and in miracles there can be no question of ease or difficulty. The performer would be requested to repeat the operation under other circumstances upon other bodies; and if he succeeded on every occasion, two points would be established: first, that there may be in this world such things as supernatural operations; and, secondly, that the power to perform them is delegated to, or belongs to, particular persons.—But who does not perceive that no miracle was ever performed under such conditions as these?—*Renan*.

The Story of the Tea Plant.

THAT divine drink, our tea, is threatened by the rationer's vigorous hand. If the contemplated restrictions are imposed, each of us will have to be content with a niggardly two ounces per week of a commodity that was until recently within the reach of all. Our sufferings from the sugar shortage, the beer scarcity, the naked and unashamed appearance of Government ale, the deterioration of coffee, the inferior quality of the wine, the enormous increase in the price of cocoa, and the liberally watered condition of all distilled liquors, were largely alleviated by an unlimited supply of Indian tea, while, until recently, that delicate beverage, China tea, was still available for the more fastidious palate. Yet, amid all the vanished and departing glories of more opulent days, we may still dwell in memory on the good old times before the World-War, when we could select our favourite liquids from a fine array of excellent beverages, and placidly regard our planetary abode as a fair place of residence for reasonably thirsty men.

In the spacious period of artful Elizabeth, when the creator of that genial rascal, Falstaff, presumably himself partook of the sugar and the sack so pleasant to the taste of the portly preceptor of Prince Hal, then, the cups that cheer but not inebriate were rare, if not entirely unknown, in England.

Tea appears to have been introduced into our island in 1610, six years only before Shakespeare's death. Its price at that period was prohibitive to all but the very rich, who were prepared to pay ten guineas a pound for the luxury. According to one authority, the East India Company imported tea into England as early as 1571, but the first important consignment of that commodity arrived in London in 1657. A little later, during the Restoration, the consumption of tea was confined to a favoured few. At that time Thomas Garway opened premises in London City, near the Royal Exchange, for the sale of the prepared drink. Tea was an article of domestic consumption in the home of the delightful Pepys in 1667. "Home," writes that prince-of-diarists, "and there find my wife making of tea, a drink which Mr. Pelling, the potticary, tells her is good for her cold and defluxions."

Tea-drinking became fashionable in the reign of Charles II. Catherine, the Portuguese consort of the Merry Monarch, was accustomed to the beverage in her native land, and the Queen's example was eagerly followed by the leaders of fashion. The Court poet, Waller, celebrated the virtues of the heavenly herb, and his tribute to tea is one of the earliest in English literature.

In 1740, the choicest teas were sold at twenty-four shillings a pound, while the cheapest was Bohea at seven shillings. The tea-gardens in London and its suburbs were numerous, and both prosperous and popular. Next in importance to Garway's, or as it was called "Garway's Coffee House," was Twining's, in the Strand. This renowned resort was situated between the Strand and Devereux Court. Twining's Bank was slowly evolved out of the old tea house after this had been carried on for over a century by succeeding generations of the Twining family. The tea house was opened in the reign of Anne, while the Bank which emerged from it is stated by Walford to date as a separate institution "from the commercial panic of 1825."

According to one Chinese tradition, the tea shrub was made known to the Celestial peoples by an Indian ascetic, but this story is doubtful. It is certain that tea was enjoyed as a beverage in the sixth century A.D., while it was in almost universal use in China by the

eighth century of our era. To the Chinese the Japanese seem indebted for their acquaintance with tea. "It is somewhat curious," writes Mr. McEwan,—

that although many of the products of China were known and used in Europe at much earlier times, no reference to tea has yet been traced in European literature prior to 1588. No mention is made of it by Marco Polo, and no knowledge of the substance appears to have reached Europe till after the establishment of intercourse between China and Portugal in 1517. The Portuguese, however, did little towards the introduction of it into Europe, and it was not until the Dutch established themselves at Bantam early in the seventeenth century that these adventurers learnt from the Chinese the habit of tea drinking and brought it into Europe.

Only as a cultivated shrub is the tea plant found in China. In truth, the plant is nowhere known in a wild state save in the forests of Assam. This wild variety is a shrub of vigorous growth which rises to a height of about 40 feet. The cultivated variety of China is a smaller growth which rarely exceeds a height of 15 feet. It was long supposed that black and green tea were the products of distinct plants. Fortune, however, proved that both these teas are yielded by the same plant, their differences being obtained by different processes of production.

The constantly increasing demand for tea in the United Kingdom, coupled with the inferior quality of the commodity imported from China, upon which country we were entirely dependent for our supplies, induced the Bengal Government in 1834 to appoint a committee charged with the duty of elaborating a scheme for the introduction and cultivation of the tea plant in India. As a result of their inquiries, the authorities decided to plant tea estates in the Upper Assam region. "In 1840," Arthur Reade informs us in his *Tea and Tea Drinking*, "the 'Assam Company' was formed, and it is claimed for them that they possess the largest tea plantation in the world." Since that date the progress of tea culture in India has been great, and probably the Peninsular of the Orient will ultimately provide us with the vast bulk of our imports.

Indifferently made tea is a prolific source of dyspepsia. The dreadful decoction served up in metal tea-pots in most of our restaurants until recently was enough to make an alligator miserable. To-day, in London, and other leading centres, tea of fair quality is provided at a reasonable charge in innumerable tea-rooms. The metal tea-pot has been superseded by well-made stone tea-pots, and the horrible liquid carefully boiled with the tea leaves to provide a high colour and rank flavour, has almost disappeared.

To secure an ideal cup of refreshing tea the water should be boiled in a kettle kept scrupulously clean. The earthenware tea-pot should be warm and dry when the boiling water is poured into the vessel. Five minutes is ample for the infusion of the herb, and then the liquid should be poured into the cup. When the tea is permitted to stew the tannin is extracted, and then the beverage is little better than poison.

Dr. Edward Smith was an eminent authority on tea, and he assures us that—

the aim should be to extract all the aroma and dried juices containing theine, with only so much of the substance of the leaf as may give fulness, or, as it is called, *body*, to the infusion.

The kind of water is believed to have great influence over the process; soft water is preferred. The Chinese direction is; 'Take it from a running stream; that from mill springs is the best, river water is the next, and well-water is the worst'; that is to say, take water well mixed with air. Hence avoid hard water, but prefer tap-water or running water to well water.

Many Western visitors while in Russia have learnt to appreciate the Russian fashion of preparing tea. The beverage is served up with a slice of lemon slightly sprinkled with sugar candy, to which no cream or milk are added. In England and elsewhere the use of tea is occasionally condemned. But as Florence Nightingale once wrote:—

A great deal too much against tea is said by wise people, and a great deal too much of it is given to the sick by foolish people. When you see the natural and almost universal craving in English sick for their tea, you cannot but feel that Nature knows what she is about. But a little tea or coffee restores them quite as much as a great deal;.....yet a nurse, because she sees how one or two cups of tea or coffee restore her patient, thinks three or four cups will do twice as much. This is not the case at all: it is, however, certain that there is nothing yet discovered which is a substitute to the English patient for his cup of tea.

(To be continued.) T. F. PALMER

"The World Needs Us!"

So says a clergyman in the *Scotsman* newspaper of May 22. A small "w" for "world," Master Printer, and a big "U" for "Us"—the great "We Are"—if you please!

The conceit of those who imagine that they are indispensable almost passes belief. Great vanity and little wit are always to be found in association. And the small mind seldom has the saving grace of a sense of humour. The heavy solemnity of the supernaturalists is enough to make the angels weep.

At the moment there are urgent calls for Church union. The Scotch Press assures us this is the only topic of supreme importance. But how to herd the voluntaries and the grandsons of voluntaries into the fold of the Establishment without losing some sheep—ah, there's the rub! Or one of the rubs. It is easy to get enthusiastic about union, particularly when the precarious conditions of the present make combination at all costs so eminently desirable—so highly expedient! But is it wise to ignore the formidable difficulties? Can the inheritor of Auld Kirk traditions get the combination of "Crown and Covenant" out of his blood and bones? Can the descendants of the men who came out of the Establishment, and who would not look the side of the road the Erastian was on, wholly forget the past? It is not in Nature to suppose it. We have not yet observed that the Auld Kirk has evinced any burning desire to sacrifice her State connection. She may be open to consider some modification of the form of the bond by which she is united to the secular government; she will, in our opinion, never agree to its complete severance. That must be done by secular reformers—Infidels and Atheists. For truth to tell, we begin to perceive that this War has made many Scottish Presbyterians who are outside the pale of the Establishment willing to consider proposals for coming within it. These have no ancestral memories to restrain them; no voice from the past to rebuke them. They have been picked up by the wayside from here, there, and everywhere; they have entered by all sorts of sideways—Salvation Army, Mission Hall, Y.M.C.A., Yankee revival meetings. Scotch Christians who are keen for union are confronted with a curious dilemma. They stand between two alternatives: on the one hand, the Devil of Rationalism; on the other, the Deep Sea of Disestablishment. And the Devil of Rationalism is, you know, a very real difficulty—a perfect deuce of a fellow; though—

Of course we never mention him
His name is never heard.

Notwithstanding, he bobs up at the most inconvenient times, and proves himself to be a veritable hair raiser in ecclesiastical circles.

As regards Disestablishment the *mot d'ordere* is—"Whcesbt!" But there are, unhappily, some young Scots whose attitude to the Government religion is so hostile that they would even go the length of smashing their own

sect to destroy the Establishment. And where are we all then, oh? These young fellows are bound to the verities of their fathers' faith by a mere thread. Some of them will, without much trouble, in the near future prefer a rationalistic humanism to State-endowed ecclesiasticism; just as there are others who so dread and detest the advance of Freethought that they would rather be Greek or Roman Catholics than Freethinkers.

It is incumbent upon all lovers of freedom to watch this situation with vigilance. But we also think they are justified in contemplating it with equanimity, courage, and hope. It portends the disappearance of the primitive mind.

IGNOTUS.

Correspondence.

ST. GEORGE OF ENGLAND.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I feel that I owe some apology for the delay in availing myself of your courtesy to offer your readers a brief account of England's Soldier Saint, but ill-health and overwork are, I hope, valid excuses. I will not elaborate or say all that could, and perhaps should, be said concerning one who, apart from religion, compels admiration and respect for his manly courage and steadfast devotion to principles, even unto death. "Who was St. George?" has long been the theme of endless, not to say acrimonious, controversy and discussion.

Time, the great destroyer of truth as of fiction, has left us but little beyond the bare facts, and that little, unfortunately, has been overlaid and obscured by monkish and other fairy tales more easily rejected than accepted. But such stories surely were based upon facts, and had some figure around which to cling, just as the parasitic ivy attests the existence of the tower it conceals from view. Professor Owen, the eminent ornithologist, was able, from a single bone, to reconstruct the bird of which it originally formed a part; and from what is actually known of St. George, we are enabled to conjecture what manner of man he was, and how eventually he became the special Patron of Chivalry and the titular Saint of England, whose exemplary life and virtues were worthy of all emulation and have exerted, and will continue to exert, a widespread and inspiring influence over our countrymen.

The identity of St. George, the special Patron of Chivalry, has been clearly established. Briefly, he was of Greek origin and Christian parentage, and born at Lydda in Palestine, in the beautiful vale of Sharon (famous for its roses), on April 23, A.D. 270. He held high military command under the Roman Emperor Diocletian, during whose reign he died a Christian martyr at Nicomedia, in Asia Minor, on the anniversary of his birth (Good Friday), A.D. 303, and was buried at the place of his birth. Although the memory of St. George was highly revered by the valorous King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table—in Saxon times—and our chivalrous crusading King Richard I., it was King Edward III., of glorious memory, who first proclaimed him "Patron of the right noble Roialme of England," founding in his honour, in 1347, the Noble Order of the Garter—the Blue Ribbon of Chivalry.

It is surmised that St. George was sent on a mission to Britain, where, at that time, Constantius, the joint Emperor, with Diocletian, held his Court at his capital city of York (Eboracum). Courtantius had married Helena, a British princess, born at Colchester, and the borough seal (over 500 years old) bears the inscription: "Colchester is the birth-place of Helena, whom the Cross makes glorious." Not without reason, it is surmised, that St. George converted to Christianity, Helena, who, in turn, caused her son Constantine—born at York—to embrace that faith. He, as Constantine the Great, founded Constantinople, and became the first Christian Emperor of Rome, an Englishman, or, shall we say, a southern Briton?

As, already stated, St. George was martyred at Nicomedia, in Asia Minor, whence, after some years, his body was brought to Lydda, his place of birth, and interred with great pomp and ceremony. Now, if we look at the map of Asia Minor,

so familiarized by this dreadful War, we can easily follow the course of the vessel bearing the remains of St. George.

Starting from Nicomedia, at the eastern extremity of what is now the Sea of Marmora, the vessel would sail through the Dardanelles, afterwards known as St. George's Arm, and calling at Thessalonica, where a church was dedicated to St. George, it would sail along the Ægean Sea, past the south-eastern point of Thessaly, know to this day as St. George's Cape, thence by the Isle of Scyros, where is situated the town of St. George, skirting the southern shore of St. George's Bay, to the beautiful city of Beirut, whose inhabitants were, and still are, mostly Christians, and where, and in the district, many churches were built in honour of our Saint. Arriving at Joppa, there are but nine miles inland to Lydda, in the vale of Sharon, where, in one of the most beautiful spots in all Palestine, repose the remains of the Patron Saint of England. Sharon, as recorded in Holy Writ, was celebrated for its roses, and may we not from this fact reasonably infer that the rose—the lovely Queen of Flowers—thus so happily associated with our Patron Saint—became, as it will ever remain, the national emblem of England!

This is the story of St. George. Should the evidence adduced be deemed inconclusive, it follows that much of ancient history must be regarded as unintelligible and fabulous. Gibbon, the great historian of the Roman Empire, unaccountably confused St. George with George, the fraudulent army contractor, who, by devious ways, ultimately became the Arian Archbishop of Alexandria, where his infamous conduct caused him to be slain by his own people, A.D. 362, nearly sixty years after the death of our patron.

Those who have adopted the careless and sneering assertions of Gibbon have, I fancy, done so because they found in him a writer whose position and general accuracy were unchallenged, and whose opinions upon so vexed a subject coincided with their own churlish desire to belittle, with apathetic indifference, or jealous and splenetic envy, the titular soldier Saint of England.

HOWARD RUFF, *Hon. Sec.*,

Royal Society of St. George.

RELIGION IN THE ARMY.

SIR,—Your correspondent of June 2 appears to have had very little experience during his service, and I would suggest, if I may, that, having spent three and a half years in the Army, in varied circumstances, that his statements are hardly correct descriptions of the thoughts of the majority of men in khaki. If they are not indifferent, they must either believe in Christianity or fail to do so. It would greatly help others, perhaps, if they decided to—in the event of their thinking in the latter way—refrain from classing themselves as Church of England men, stating that they were Atheists. Apparently, they have not the courage of their convictions. During the past three years I have had an opportunity of seeing for myself a few things, and I should like you to read them once again, for I am sure that I am not the only one who has written you in this strain. I was sent, while at a General Hospital in France, to receive treatment at a Convalescent Depot, where I found that a service was held each evening in three places—usually open for concerts at other places—where we had a very large congregation, always far exceeding the quarter spoken of. During my stay here, I have had the opportunity of going voluntarily to a service held in the town, roughly a mile from camp, on each Sunday evening, and this place has been full to overflowing. Does this prove the value that the men place on the *Freethinker* and its contemporaries?—for I might add that there are within easy reach a large number of places of entertainment. As for a number of N.C.O.'s making fun of a parade, I can attribute that alone to ignorance, and feel positive that you will agree with me in this. Although I have only looked at your paper, I found a reference in the last one *re* Mr. Smallwood's remark "that the churches after four years of war are empty." The last illustration I gave is quite a good enough example for most people that men in his position say a good many things they know nothing of.

E. COMLEY.

[Judging from our correspondence, we should say that Mr. Comley's experience is unique. Many clergymen have borne testimony in quite the opposite direction.—ED.]

Judgment.

WHY don't Gawd give the world a 'Oliday,
Wiv Swings, an' Roundabouts, an' 'Appenny Shies?
But 'ee don't seem ter mind some'ow ter day;
'Ee sits up lazy somewheres in the skies.

I see a picture larst week in a shop;
There wasn't arf a battle goin' on!
Big guns—an' gas, an' sojgers fit ter drop.
An' Jesus in the sky sed "Carry On."

A lidy ses ter me, "My little man—
Your Poppa's in a place like that you know;
And Jesus tries to help him all He can.
So if your Poppa dies to Heaven he'll go."

An' then I see some 'osses lying dead,
Wiv legs up in the air orl stiff an' straight.
A sojger sed they'd copped a dose of lead,
They won't pull no more bloomin' waggins, mate!

An' Jesus in the sky sed "Carry On,"
"I am the Way, the Truth, the Light," 'ee sed.
An' that ole lidy ses ter me, "My son:
As Gawd knows every drop of blood wots shed,

Gawd knows abaht each pore 'oss wots done in,
An' 'e remembers every sojger's face.
An' Gawd," she ses, "fergives us every sin,
Because," she ses, "'ee made this bloomin' place."

But if, I ses, 'ee made them 'osses die;
An' if 'ees up in 'Eavin a lookin' down;
I ses let 'im stop up there in the sky—
Or take 'isself ter Jerico—an' *drown*.

ARTHUR F. THORN.

THE CHRISTIAN BLIGHT.

The "mighty Julius," the first Cæsar, the greatest of earth's rulers, who swayed the destinies of the civilized world before Christ was born, was far above the superstitions of his age—above the superstition of all ages. Could he "revisit the glimpses of the moon," and behold a great English statesman [Gladstone] gravely discussing a story of devils being turned out of men and sent into swine, he would wonder what blight had fallen upon the human intellect in two thousand years. And were he to learn that such stories are contained in a book which is regarded as divine, which is placed as such in the hands of our children, which is paraded in all our courts of justice, and is deemed the very basis and security of our civilization, he would be at no loss to understand why the greatest rulers and statesmen of modern Europe look small and effeminate beside the best emperors of pagan Rome.—G. W. Foote, "The Grand Old Book."

Science is the real redeemer. It will put honesty above hypocrisy; mental veracity above all belief. It will teach the religion of usefulness. It will destroy bigotry in all its forms. It will put thoughtful doubt above thoughtless faith. It will give us philosophers, thinkers, and savants, instead of priests, theologians, and saints. It will abolish poverty and crime, and greater, grander, nobler than all else, it will make the whole world free.—*Ingersoll*.

Obituary.

On June 8, after a long and painful illness, Robert Taylor, an old member of the Birmingham Branch, passed away. When in good health he worked energetically in the cause, and, at one time, was President of the Birmingham Branch. About two years ago his health broke through heart failure, and since then he was untiringly attended by his wife through a very trying period. Due respect was paid to his wishes, which were that he be cremated and a Secular Service be used on the occasion. Both were carried out at the crematorium, Perry Barr, on June 14.—J. P.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on postcard.

LONDON.
INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.): 11, Dr. Marion Phillips, "Bureaucracy and Common Sense."

OUTDOOR.

BATTERSEA BRANCH N. S. S. (Battersea Park Gates): 11.30, Mr. E. Burke, A Lecture.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 6.15, Mr. James Marshall, A Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 3.15, Mr. E. Burke, A Lecture.

REGENT'S PARK BRANCH N. S. S.: 6, A Lecture.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, Miss K. B. Kough, A Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Maryland Point Station): 7, Mr. Collette Jones, A Lecture.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE BRANCH N. S. S. (12A Clayton Street East): 6.30, Members' Meeting.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Messrs. Shaller and Saphin; 3.30, Messrs. Dales, Ratcliffe, and Kells.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF SECULARISM
By G. W. FOOTE.

A Pamphlet which should be read by all Free-thinkers, and passed on to Christians. A Masterly Exposition by the great Leader of Fighting Free-thought.

PRICE TWOPENCE. Postage ½d.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGTON STREET, E.C. 4.

LIFE-LIKE PORTRAIT OF
MR. CHAPMAN COHEN.

On Rich, Sepia-toned, Bromide-de-Luxe Paper. Mounted in Booklet Form. Cabinet Size, 11 by 8.

Price TWO SHILLINGS. Postage 3d.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGTON ST., LONDON, E.C. 4.

A FIGHT FOR RIGHT.

A Verbatim Report of the Decision in the House of Lords
in re

Bowman and Others v. The Secular Society, Limited.

WITH INTRODUCTION BY CHAPMAN COHEN.

PRICE ONE SHILLING. POSTAGE 1½D.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGTON STREET, E.C. 4.

Population Question and Birth-Control.

POST FREE THREE HALFPENCE

MALTHUSIAN LEAGUE,
48 BROADWAY, WESTMINSTER, S.W. 1.

To South African Residents,
SETTLERS, AND TRAVELLERS.

READERS of the *Freethinker* and sympathisers with its cause will always be welcome to call on or correspond with the following:—

Names for the above list are requested, and will be published from time to time free of charge.

Contributions towards the expense of printing should be marked S. A. I. D.—i.e., South African Information Department.

Pamphlets.

By G. W. FOOTE.

BIBLE AND BEER. Price 1d., postage 1d.
 MY RESURRECTION. Price 1d., postage ½d.
 CHRISTIANITY AND PROGRESS. Price 2d., postage 1d.
 THE NEW CAGLIOSTRO. Price 1d., postage ½d.
 THE MOTHER OF GOD. With Preface. Price 2d.,
 postage 1d.
 ATHEIST SHOEMAKER. Price 1d., postage 1d.

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

DEITY AND DESIGN. Price 1d., postage ½d.
 WAR AND CIVILIZATION. Price 1d., postage ½d.
 RELIGION AND THE CHILD. Price 1d., postage ½d.
 CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIAL ETHICS. Price 1d.,
 postage ½d.
 GOD AND MAN: An Essay in Common Sense and Natural
 Morality. Price 3d., postage ½d.

By J. T. LLOYD.

PRAYER: ITS ORIGIN, HISTORY, AND FUTILITY.
 Price 2d., postage 1d.

By WALTER MANN.

PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN MORALITY. Price 2d.,
 postage ½d.

By MIMNERMUS.

FREETHOUGHT AND LITERATURE. Price 1d., post-
 age ½d.

By COLONEL INGERSOLL.

MISTAKES OF MOSES. Price 1d., postage ½d.
 WOODEN GOD. Price 1d., postage ½d.
 THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION. Price 1d., postage ½d.
 DO I BLASPHEME? Price 1d., postage 1d.
 HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH. Price 1d., postage ½d.
 IS SUICIDE A SIN? AND LAST WORDS ON
 SUICIDE. Price 1d., postage 1d.
 THE GODS. Price 2d., postage 1d.
 LIVE TOPICS. Price 1d., postage ½d.
 ABRAHAM LINCOLN. Price 1d., postage 1d.
 LIMITS OF TOLERATION. Price 1d., postage 1d.
 CREEDS AND SPIRITUALITY. Price 1d., postage ½d.
 FOUNDATIONS OF FAITH. Price 2d., postage 1d.

By J. BENTHAM.

UTILITARIANISM Price 1d., postage 1d.

By LORD BACON.

PAGAN MYTHOLOGY. Price 3d., postage 1½d.

By D. HUME.

ESSAY ON SUICIDE. Price 1d., postage ½d.
 MORTALITY OF SOUL. Price 1d., postage ½d.
 LIBERTY AND NECESSITY. Price 1d., postage 1d.

By M. MANGASARIAN.

MARTYRDOM OF HYPATIA. Price 1d., postage ½d.

By ANTHONY COLLINS.

FREEWILL AND NECESSITY. Price 3d., postage 1½d.

By P. B. SHELLEY.

REFUTATION OF DEISM. Price 1d., postage 1d.

*About 1d. in the 1s. should be added on all Foreign and
 Colonial Orders.*

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGTON STREET, E.C. 4.

For a Freethinker's Bookshelf.**THE GRAMMAR OF LIFE.**

By G. T. WRENCH.

An Exposition of the Principles of Human Society, from
 an uncompromising Freethought point of view.
 Published 6s. net. Price 2s. 6d. Postage 6d.

THE METAPHYSICS OF NATURE.

By CARVETH READ, M.A.

A Scientific and Philosophic Study.
 Published 10s. 6d. net. Price 3s. 6d. Postage 6d.

**AGAINST DOGMA AND FREE WILL
 AND FOR WEISMANNISM.**

By H. CROFT HILLER.

A Suggestive and Informing Work, with an Appendix
 containing the Author's Controversy with Mr. J. M.
 Robertson and others, the application of Weismannism
 to Sociology, etc.
 Published 7s. 6d. net. Price 2s. 6d. Postage 6d.

FLOWERS OF FREETHOUGHT.

By G. W. FOOTE.

First Series, with Portrait, 216 pp. Cloth. Price 2s. 6d net,
 postage 6d.
 Second Series, 302 pp. Cloth. Price 2s. 6d. net, postage 6d.

NATURAL AND SOCIAL MORALS.

By CARVETH READ, M.A.

A Fine Exposition of Morals from the standpoint of a
 Rationalistic Naturalism.
 Published 7s. 6d. net. Price 3s. 6d., postage 6d.

STUDIES IN ROMAN HISTORY.

By DR. E. G. HARDY.

Vol. I.—Christianity and the Roman Government.
 Vol. II.—The Armies and the Empire.
 Published 12s. net. Price 3s. 9d., postage 6d.

DARWINISM TO-DAY.

By PROFESSOR V. L. KELLOGG.

A Discussion of the present standing of Darwinism in the
 light of later and alternative theories of the Development
 of Species.
 Published 7s. 6d. net. Price 3s., postage 6d.

**THE ENGLISH WOMAN: STUDIES IN HER
 PSYCHIC EVOLUTION.**

By D. STAARS.

An Evolutionary and Historic Essay on Woman. With
 Biographical Sketches of Harriet Martineau, George
 Eliot, and others.
 Published 9s. net. Price 2s. 6d., postage 6d.

THREE ESSAYS ON RELIGION.

By J. S. MILL.

There is no need to praise Mill's Essays on Nature, The
 Utility of Religion, and Theism. The work has become a
 Classic in the History of Freethought. No greater attack
 on the morality of nature and the God of natural theology
 has ever been made than in this work.
 Published at 5s. Price 1s. 6d., postage 6d.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGTON STREET, E.C. 4.

Printed and Published by THE PIONEER PRESS (G. W. FOOTE
 AND CO., LTD.), 61, FARRINGTON STREET, LONDON, E.C. 4.