

# THE FREETHINKER

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## Views and Opinions.

### Materialism.

There has of late been much talk in some quarters as to the dangers of Materialism. The warning is an old one. The main purpose of these warnings is, of course, to warn the timid off something which is extremely dangerous to all forms of superstition. But the clergy in particular seek to attain their end by using the word Materialism in a double sense, and while offering one for criticism really working on the other. For Materialism may be used in both a moral sense or in a purely scientific one. Scientifically, Materialism may be taken as meaning that all natural phenomena are ultimately explainable by mechanical formulæ, and that life and mind are elaborate and complex results of purely natural forces. From this point of view the connection between Materialism and morality is about as close as that between geography and genesis, Manhattan and midwifery, or Homer and homœopathy. Apart from this is a secondary social or moral meaning—that of devotion to sensual gratification, with an ignoring of the higher aspects of life. If the protest were only against this last form, it would be endorsed by Freethinkers. But the policy of the clergy is to confuse the two senses of the word, and having proved that certain people are Materialists in the scientific sense of the word, convict them on the moral issue. The trick is characteristically Christian, for in the scale of intellectual virtues Christianity stands as near the bottom as may be.

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### Who Are the Materialists?

Now, surely, the last thing that can be brought against scientific and Freethought workers is that they are materialistic in a social or moral sense. On the contrary, their very idealism has often earned them the ridicule of their fellows. Scientific workers have not gone over the country parading their self-sacrifice with the unctuous selfishness of religious believers, but the last thing that could be said of them is that their lives were selfish or sensualistic. And the same is true of Freethought workers. All over the country hundreds of men and women are found publicly devoting themselves to a cause that can offer them no "worldly advancement, and can only promise slander and abuse." They go on bearing this petty persecution for a cause which the ordinary

Christian repudiates because the solid and immediate personal gain is insufficient. And this very real idealism is the more admirable because it is so often consummated in solitude. It is comparatively easy to undergo martyrdom in a crowd, or to suffer persecution in a cluster. The test of character is to be alone—like Bruno at the stake—and then find in one's principles sufficient strength to stand against all that bigotry can achieve. The idealism of the Materialist is a standing rebuke to the Materialism of the Christian.

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### The Meaning of an Attack.

As a matter of fact, a great many of the arguments of Christians against Freethinkers turn on the Materialism of the former and the idealism of the latter. Everyone is familiar with the argument that in destroying the belief in future rewards and punishments the Freethinker is sowing the seeds of a widespread immorality. And what is this but saying that human nature in itself is neither hopeful enough nor helpful enough to find in conduct sufficient incentive or reward. Our offence here is that our ideals are too high; human nature will not respond to them; it needs palpable rewards or punishments. This may be true, but it is ridiculous calling those materialistic who champion Freethought. The ethical Materialism clearly belongs to the Christian. It is the same with the whole of Christian teaching. Charles Lamb said that he always felt like saying grace before reading Shakespeare; and in a Christian country this is regarded as a joke. But why not? If a man believes in God, why not thank him for *Hamlet* or *Lear*? The Christian who is so afraid of the effects of Materialism, reserves his grace for his dinner. His æsthetic feelings centre about the region of his stomach.

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### Christian Influence on Life.

Let us leave theory, and come to facts. Apart from all theory, could life be conducted on a more materialistic basis than it is in this Christian country after centuries of Christian nurture? Among select circles the artist, the man of letters, the scientist, the reformer, may each receive a measure of appreciation. But what of the mass of the people? It is a sober fact that with them the successful prize-fighter, the famous footballer, the victorious soldier, cuts a far greater figure. What is the ideal character placed before young men just entering life? Not the man who has devoted his life to high ideals, but the one who begins as a poor boy, and by the practice of a miserable thrift, and by qualities of a more or less "toadyish" description has amassed a fortune in solid cash. And once the fortune is made, the man with the money-bags is nowhere so sure of servile attention, flattery, and adulation, as in Church or Chapel. Not on the Stock Exchange is the man of money worshipped so much as in the religious meeting-house. We look down upon our hard-working but poor student, we praise and pension our successful fighting man or idolize our great merchant. Ruskin said that the motto of the Englishman was, wherever he was to get some-

where else, and whatever he had to get more, while the Christianity of England, in practice, was such, that if engineers could build a tunnel to hell, Christians would invest their money in it and close all the churches for fear of lowering the dividends. Is this more than a brutal summary of facts? We have of late been deluged with the speeches about the greatness and the might of England; our Christian humility being quite consonant with self-laudation of the most nauseous character. But if we take the overwhelming majority of people, can we say that their conception of England's greatness ever reaches higher than that of power and money, territory and trade? It is the heretic who is always insisting that character is of more importance than cash; that all the trade and all the territory in the world will not save a country from decadence when it forgets that its only real and permanent wealth is the kind of men and women it breeds. \* \* \*

#### A Demoralizing Creed.

In the vicious and ethical sense of the word, Christianity is a materialistic religion; Christian peoples are materialized by the influence of their creed. A religion that had held up sane and lofty ideals during its history, which has based its teachings upon realities while holding up the ideal of a gradually perfected human society, would have made impossible the money mania of the past four or five generations, as well as have prevented the cataclysm it is now experiencing. But the real worth of Christianity is seen in the fact that it could offer nothing to oppose the more demoralizing tendencies of modern life. Far from opposing them, it sanctioned and defended them. And its opposition to intellectual development and independence involved the brutalization of life all round. The condemnation of theology, said one writer, is its history; and a complete condemnation of Christianity is seen in the present condition of a world in which the Church has stood as a great moulding influence for so many centuries.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

### "Our Holy Mother Church."

#### IV.

It is often truly said that one of the most effective methods of disproving the Divine origin and character of Christianity is to explain its teaching; but it is equally true that no complete exposition of its dogmas is possible without utilizing to the full the witness of history. It is a generally acknowledged fact that of the history of the Christian Church no one can honestly feel proud. On this point even Christian scholars are in perfect agreement. We would naturally have thought, for example, that the Church would have been seen at its highest and best in its General Councils, convoked as the courts of final appeal on all theological and ecclesiastical questions. They were composed of the wisest, holiest, and most learned men of whom the Church could boast, the sole purpose of whose meeting together was to deliberate with the utmost reverence, self-renunciation, patience, and good temper on the various subjects submitted to them. As a matter of fact, however, such Councils were notoriously turbulent, veritable fields of battle where bitterest animosities and hostilities ran riot, and the most venerated Fathers in God were literally at one another's throats. Nobody can read the account of the famous Council of Nicæa, as related by Dean Stanley in his *Eastern Church*, and believe that its decisions were arrived at through the guiding influence of the Holy Ghost. Surely the Holy Ghost was conspicuous only by his absence from that Council; and the same thing

may be said of most other similar gatherings. Dean Milman says:—

Nowhere is Christianity less attractive, and if we look to the ordinary tone and character of the proceedings, less authoritative, than in the Councils of the Church. It is in general a fierce collision of two rival factions, neither of which will yield, each of which is solemnly pledged against conviction. Intrigue, injustice, violence, decisions on authority alone, and that the authority of a turbulent majority, decisions by wild acclamation rather than after sober inquiry, detract from the reverence and impugn the judgments, at least of the later Councils. The close is almost invariably a terrible anathema, in which it is impossible not to discern the tones of human hatred, of arrogant triumph, of rejoicing at the damnation imprecated against the humiliated adversary (*History of Latin Christianity*, vol. i., p. 202).

We now come to the Council of Constance (1414-18), convened after Christianity had been in power for upwards of a thousand years. At this time there were three Popes, each claiming the allegiance of Christendom. A few years previously (1409) a Council had been held at Pisa, which deposed Popes Benedict XIII. and Gregory XII.; and the following is the sentence pronounced upon them:—

The Holy Universal Council, representing the Catholic Church of God, to whom belongs the judgment in this cause, assembled by the grace of the Holy Ghost in the Cathedral of Pisa, having duly heard the promoters of the cause for the extirpation of the detestable and inveterate Schism, and the union and re-establishment of our Holy Mother Church, against Peter di Luna and Angelo Corario, called by some Benedict XIII. and Gregory XII., declares the crimes and excesses, adduced before the Council, to be true, and of public fame. The two competitors, Peter di Luna and Angelo Corario, have been and are notorious schismatics, obstinate partisans, abettors, defenders, approvers of this long schism; notorious heretics as having departed from the faith; involved in the crimes of perjury and breach of their oaths; openly scandalizing the Church by their manifest obstinacy, and utterly incorrigible; by their enormous iniquities and excesses they have made themselves unworthy of all honour and dignity, especially of the Supreme Pontificate; and though by the canons they are actually rejected of God, deprived and cut off from the Church, nevertheless the Church, by this definitive sentence, deposes, rejects, and cuts them off, prohibiting both and each from assuming any longer the Sovereign Pontificate, declaring for further security the Papacy to be vacant.

A new Pope, Alexander V., was duly elected by the grace of the Holy Ghost; but, unfortunately, Benedict XIII. and Gregory XII. declined to be deposed, each, by the grace of the same Holy Ghost, calling himself Christ's sole Vicar on earth. Alexander V. died, and was succeeded by John XXIII. It was in order to put an end to this disgraceful schism that the Council of Constance was convoked conjointly by the Emperor Sigismund and John XXIII. Assuming the legality of the proceedings of the Council of Pisa, John was looked upon as the rightful Pope; and he presided at the early sessions of the Council of Constance. It was a huge assembly, consisting of four Patriarchs, twenty-nine Cardinals, thirty-three Archbishops, one hundred and fifty Bishops, one hundred and thirty-four Abbots, two hundred and fifty Doctors, one hundred and twenty-five Provosts. "With their whole attendance the clergy amounted to eighteen thousand." It was also a tumultuous assembly. The holy men quarrelled over almost every question brought before them. John curried favour on the right and on the left, and, for a time, seemed to be gaining in popularity. He was a man of the most scandalous character. There was scarcely a crime he was not charged with having committed. He tried bribery, heaping gifts and

promises upon the cardinals. He admitted the truth of many of the charges against him, of which there were between fifty and sixty. The feeling against him grew stronger and stronger, until there was a well-nigh general demand for his cession of the Papacy. Like a coward, he took refuge in flight. Eventually he was deposed, and his two rivals as well. It took months of plotting and counter-plotting, and of endless intriguing, to bring the deposition about. So far the Council had assumed and acted on the assumption of its superiority to the Pope; but no sooner was the new Pope, Martin V., elected, who was a strong personality, than it was reduced to a position of slavish subordination. Even the Emperor prostrated himself before the Pontiff, thus recognizing his supremacy. To those who clamoured for reforms his Imperial Majesty bitterly said: "When we urged that reform should precede the election of a Pope, you scorned our judgment and insisted on first having a Pope. Lo, you have a Pope, implore him for reform. I had some power before a Pope was chosen, now I have none." As Milman remarks: "The Council saw its fatal error. In creating a Pope of high character, it had given itself a master." Martin was really opposed to reform, his one ambition being to regain the temporal power.

In the fifteenth century several Councils were held, but practically no reform of the Church resulted. In the words employed the Holy Ghost was much in evidence, but in the deeds of the Papacy there was no trace of his presence. The Pope was again the nominal head of Christendom, but his rule gave rise to a steadily growing amount of popular discontent. Everywhere there were loud complaints against his greed and avarice. Of holiness there was none, and true motherliness was wholly lacking. And from that day to this the Church has been on the downgrade. The learning which it suppressed on coming to power revived, and, for the last three or four centuries, has been slowly but surely exposing and supplanting its quondam suppressor.

J. T. LLOYD.

## The Triumph of Darwinism.

Souls tempered with fire,  
Fervent, heroic, and good,  
Helpers and friends of mankind.

—Matthew Arnold.

Sixty years ago Charles Darwin demonstrated that man has attained his present state through a gradual process of evolution from a lower and less perfect state. The general admission of this truth sweeps away at once the old Biblical legends which men have been accustomed to consider a sufficient explanation of all things. The legend of a fallen race at once disappears, and with it goes the myth of the Devil, and all other strange and monstrous explanations that were necessary to harmonize the theological theory put forth. With it also goes the Bibliolatry which—like so many other idolatries, has served to enchain and cramp the human intellect. The Bible of the ancient Hebrews must descend from its lofty pedestal and take its rank among the sacred books of other and older nations.

Nothing more momentous has taken place since the Renaissance. And, strangest of all, this intellectual lever, which will finally overthrow all existing creeds, has come among us so silently that many have scarcely noticed its approach. Opposition there has been, as there is to all new truths; but, compared with the momentous issues at stake, the opposition has been trifling. Silently and steadily, for sixty years, Darwinism has been resistlessly pushing its way till no

educated man or woman now attempts to contravene it. There has been no "bridal birth of thunder peals" while this "great thought has wedded fact." To the clergy and their congregations, whose innocence will not permit them to follow intelligently the course of scientific thought, the new theory must appear like Banquo's awful ghost to the amazed Macbeth. They look up suddenly from their crosses, candles, and their prayers, and see the awful shape in front of them. Adam and Eve, the Lord God and the Devil, are driven out from the Garden of Eden, not by an angel with a flaming sword, but by Charles Darwin, with the more potent weapon—a steel pen.

Since Darwin's death, the clergy, who formerly denounced him with the whole vocabulary of theological abhorrence, have, hypocritically, claimed him as one of their flock. They buried this black sheep in Westminster Abbey, and calmly pretend that the teachings of Evolution is wholly in accord with that of the Church and the Bible. Only two religious bodies have been honest in this matter. Poles asunder in many respects, the Roman Catholic Church and the Salvation Army have remained faithful to ignorance. On no condition will they part with Eve and the apple and the talking snake. Catholics and Salvationists alike believe that Darwin and his colleagues are suffering the tortures of the damned. These uncultured folk no more believe in evolution than they understand the rudiments of science. But those who are trying to effect a compromise between the irreconcilables, religion and science, from the Archbishop of Canterbury to the glib speakers on Pleasant Sunday Afternoon platforms, are assuring us that the great truths of evolution are all in harmony with the Hebrew Bible, and that the discoveries of science are an assistance to religion.

All this Christian camouflage might succeed were it not for the fact that men have so many other sources of information than the pulpit utterances of their "pastors and masters." The publication of the *Life and Letters of Sir Joseph Hooker* should make many persons think furiously. For in these volumes Darwin, being dead, yet speaks on these tremendous matters. From the letters of this lifelong friend of Darwin we get a wonderful picture of the group of men who made the nineteenth century illustrious by throwing a new light into every corner of human thought. The very names are an inspiration: Huxley, Tyndall, Spencer, Lyell, Hooker, to mention no others. In these pages we find recorded something of the beginnings of the great struggle for the theory of evolution, already so potent a force, yet only, in its modern form, sixty years old. Once more the salient facts are recounted, the facts which are ever in danger of being obscured, misrepresented, or forgotten.

Slowly, with lapses into its "loved Egyptian night," mankind is shaking itself free of the last desperate clutches of superstition. Bewildered by the new light, missing at first the guiding hand of the priests, it stands amazed on the threshold of the future. The fundamental question of man's place in nature has been solved, and the wide acceptance of evolution has already begun to bear fruit in all practical affairs of life. Sooner or later it will lead mankind to a happier, more consummate condition of life, and to loftier ideals:—

New occasions teach new duties, time makes ancient good uncouth,  
They must upward still, and onward, who would keep abreast of truth.....  
Nor attempt the future's portal with the Past's blood-rusted key.

MIMNERMUS.

The bliss of man (could pride that blessing find)  
Is not to think or act beyond mankind. —Pope.

## Is Religion of Use?

### Dr. Lyttelton's Reply.

SIR,—The title at the head of this letter is the one you gave to your last article. I repeat it, though proposing to-day to move the discussion forwards and downwards to a new fundamental issue. Meantime, let me say, our readers—if we have any—ought to be grateful to you for lucid writing. It is a great thing to be dealing with an interlocutor on questions concerning religion who always makes his meaning clear; else, as was once remarked, you only have his own word for it whether he is in the clouds or in the mud.

Let us take your statement of the point now reached, which I will not traverse, because it lets down a shaft into a region whither I have all along been desirous of penetrating, viz., your own positive beliefs about progress; and, if I am not mistaken, they would be not incorrectly stated as follows: Certain non-religious social forces have in the past been associated with religion and have curbed the latter, preventing it from producing far more mischief than it actually has produced, being "an essentially irrational and progressively harmful thing." The rest of your article explains how in the infancy of societies man revealed his childish "volitional" view of nature, and you also give some hints as to these remedial progressive social forces to which mankind owes so much.

Now, I propose to shift the discussion away from the question as to the correctness of your view of man's history, because, as already urged, the discussion of anything historical nearly always leads on to a quagmire, which, owing to its trackless character, is noisy with dissentient voices. It has all the disadvantages of a wilderness combined with the tumult of Cheapside. But if we look at your assumption as to this remedial corrective power which has all along been, and still is, at work cleansing men's minds and sloughing off the outworn rags of religion from the limbs of the body politic, it is plain that we shall be considering something, not of antiquarian, but of present-day interest—to wit: a power for good which not only is operating to-day but is certain to be victorious.

What, then, of this power or these "forces" to which so much is attributed? If this were a vulgar newspaper controversy, which, I am thankful to say, it is not; you would expect me to argue that there is no such thing as this power, or that it is a woeful mistake to suppose that it has acted beneficially, and so on. I am going to do no such thing, simply because I heartily agree with you about the existence of this power and the effects of its operation; and, further, I see hope of a real clearing of the air if we examine into the nature of the thing, and see if we can discern any laws of its working. You imply there are laws, and, again, I agree.

We seem to be like two men engaged in digging for a treasure in the field. One of them (A) has for a long time been saying that he has found it. The other (B) shouts from the hole he has been excavating that A is wrong in supposing that what he has found is a treasure at all; it is really quite worthless, and essentially baneful. A then rejoins: "Never mind that; if it contents me, that is something; but what I wish to ask is, what is the nature of *your* find? Because I strongly suspect that you have come upon another portion of the same treasure, but for some reason, not very plain to me, you are eager to show that your find is wholly different from mine, in quality and in operation. You seem to think we should both be happier men if this fundamental difference could be established, whereas I feel certain we should not be the happier for that at all;

quite the reverse; and that even if you were right in your surmise, it behoves us both to clear up the question, Is our treasure the same or different? because we both believe in the advisability of following after Truth."

In other words, what you, Sir, call social forces, I call God; and the question now looms in sight why you shrink from using the same title; my conviction is that the more your assumption is examined, the more Theistic it will be found to be.

For it has to be observed that these forces are credited with an amazing strength. Anything that raises public opinion on social habits must be uncommonly strong; the public being like a bulky and unskilled mountain climber, full of enthusiasm about getting to the top, but ponderous when it comes to hauling him up the face of a rock. But the forces in question, according to your estimate, have till quite lately been restricted to a tiny, almost invisibly small, section of mankind; I mean those who can fairly be called non-religious. I am here relying on the information of travellers and other learned people, who tell us that there is hardly such a thing as a tribe in the wildest regions of the earth's surface who have not shown that they believe in a God of sorts, and in their own strange way worshipped him. Now, whether we agree with this estimate or not, whether we deplore it or not, is not the question. I affirm that in any case we may only imagine the truly non-religious people to have been a very small minority of the whole number at any given moment. Thus these ameliorative forces, though working in a tiny number, have done a very wonderful thing, even if they should fail in fulfilling your forecast and finally purging mankind from error and unprogressive ways. They have been, and are, lifting the mass of their fellow-men—say some ninety-five per cent.—right up and above the slough of superstition.

We have, surely, gone far enough now to face the really interesting question: Can we define at all clearly what and whence these social forces are? May I invite you to do what our card-playing friends—before the War, of course—used sometimes to do—lay some of your cards on the table? or go back to my previous figure: will B, for a moment, leave off denouncing A's treasure, and tell us as plainly as he can how his own differs from A's? I am afraid A's notion that it is the same treasure all along may strike B as little better than blasphemous, but that is no reason why B should not comply.

E. LYTTELTON.

### Before Worship.

"THE church bell's ringing; hurry up, my dear.

It's turned the quarter—so we must make haste. The weather is all right—the sky quite clear.

I think this hat is in the best of taste.

It's hardly right, as I was saying to dad,

To dress for church in brightly coloured things.

A quiet blouse with georgette's not so bad.....

A simple hat.....I always hated wings!

Now, *are* you coming, dear? Please hurry, do.

We're never there in time—you're always late.

What's that? You've lost your hymn-book, and your Prayer-book too!

Oh! how much longer have I got to wait?

Perhaps you left them — Now, just let me think.....

Behind the workbox on the mantleshelf?

Or on that desk where mother puts the ink?

Oh! let me come—I'll look for them myself.

Why, here they are, upon the new hall chair,

Just where you left them. What a head you've got!

Now, come along.....We are a lively pair!

The church bell's stopped, and we shall have to trot."

ARTHUR F. THORN.

## That Revival of Religion.

The weakest thing about the Victorian age was not its admiration for its great men, in which it will presently be recognized to have been mainly right, nor its interest in ethics, which is in fact its closest link with all the greatest ages of the spirit of man, but a strange delusion into which many of its abler minds were led by its prodigious achievements in science, and the vulgar by its mechanical discoveries. Twenty years ago the writer of these words heard an ordinary fairly intelligent Victorian say that he had "outgrown poetry." The speaker was a man as innocent of the mysteries of machines as of those of the Spencerian philosophy, and he certainly did not know how typical of his age he was. Nor was either he or his age at all aware that the process he referred to is not in fact one with which any word having any connection with growth has anything at all to do. Man cannot live by material progress, mechanical inventions, physical science, and an intellectual system of beliefs or disbeliefs; and the completed bankruptcy of the notion that he can is the greatest achievement of the last thirty years. It has been more complete and conspicuous in France than in England perhaps, and perhaps it was more needed there than here. But it has been very visible in England too. The people who thought that religion and art and poetry belonged to the childhood out of which mankind was passing are dead; and art and poetry and religion are not dead.—"Times" *Literary Supplement*, July 4, 1918.

THIS solemn nonsense forms one of the latest examples of the constantly recurring assertion that the present age is predominantly religious, succeeding to one predominantly irreligious; and here it is amplified to include poetry and art as being then under eclipse. If we understand the writer, he would have us believe that—

- (a) Religion, poetry, and art are allied, and are not found apart.
- (b) The Victorian age was an age of triumphant science and materialistic intellectualism, devoid of religion, science, and art.
- (c) The present time is characterized by a repudiation of these tendencies, and has returned to religion, etc.

These statements we oppose (as Gladstone said) by a very simple method: "Everything the honourable gentleman has affirmed I shall deny; everything he has denied I shall affirm," as thus:—

(a) Poetry is found conjoined with scepticism in many of its greatest masters, *e.g.*, Lucretius, Voltaire, Heine, Burns, Byron, Shelley, Swinburne, Walt Whitman, Hugo, besides Omar, Lessing, George Eliot, Meredith, Hardy, James Thomson, Buchanan, M. Arnold, Eden Philpotts, d'Annunzio, *cum multis aliis*. Art is found conjoined with scepticism in Salvator Rosa, and—more or less veiled—in many other old masters, as Mr. H. G. Farmer shows; and in such moderns as David, Delacroix, Courbet, Turner, Watts, F. Madox Brown, Morris, Rossetti, Linton, Du Maurier, Verestchagin, Berlioz, Wagner, Grieg, to name no more.

(b) The Victorian age was when the great discoveries of science had to struggle for recognition, when Lyell and Darwin were reviled and ridiculed by nearly all popular leaders, such as Gladstone, Beaconsfield, Salisbury, when books on the "wonders of creation" were decorated with hymns and pious invocations, when the mild heresy of *Essays and Reviews* was stigmatized by the good Lord Shaftesbury as the "spawn of hell" (what would he have said to the deliverances of the present Bishop of Hereford?), when Sunday was still a day of penance. It was the era of great preachers and successful revivalists like Spurgeon, Liddon, and Moody, of the immense circulation of devotional books, such as Macduff's, Goulburn's, Oxenden's, of the High-Church Movement, of the "miracles" of Lourdes. Rationalism truly was dawning; its day was at hand. But unpoetical the Victorian age was not; we need but recall the names of Tennyson,

Browning, Swinburne, Whitman, Hugo; in prose imaginative literature it saw Thackeray, Dickens, George Eliot, George Sand, Turgenev; in art, the *maestri* cited above, and others.

(c) That a secular and rationalistic spirit prevailed at last, and is now prevailing, is evidenced by the falling off in attendance at church and Sunday-school, and the popularity of Sunday cinemas, Sunday games, and Sunday excursions, unthinkable fifty years ago, by the tone of the popular press and of the leading novelists (mostly avowed Freethinkers), but the departure of religious allusions from manuals of natural history, even those issued by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, by bishops warning us not to teach the Bible uncorrected by Darwin, by the greater and greater dependence on materialistic rather than "spiritual" aid, *e.g.*, at the War disease is combated, not by holy water from the fount of "Our Lady of Lourdes," but by ordinary, unsanctified HO<sup>2</sup> just run through sand or treated with bleaching powder.

It is a little amusing—we may add—that, according to Dr. Lyttelton, that urbane but earnest Christian advocate, the religious revival took place, not thirty or forty, but 150 years ago.

Moreover, according to Professor Bonney and other pietists, when animadverting on present-day phenomena of which they disapprove, society is now suffering from a "flood of materialism," made in Germany, needless to say. The old adage: "Set a thief to catch a thief" (*mutatis mutandis*, as the back of the dictionary has it, of course), seems appropriate here: set a Christian advocate to refute a Christian advocate.

J. F. RAYNER.

## Acid Drops.

Scotland is moving. There are now Sunday bands in some of the parks, and the local Christian Endeavour Union and Free Presbytery have protested vigorously against this profanation of the "Sabbath." We think they are likely to protest in vain. Once the Scots get a good thing they will not easily let it go. We note that our old friend and contributor, Mr. H. G. Farmer, conducted the band of eighty performers at Kelvingrove. More power to him!

In view of the above we can understand why a discussion is going on in the *Glasgow Record* on "Has Religion Failed?" Some of the older folk will be thinking that religion is dead. Bands on Sunday! Newspapers discussing the failure of Christianity! There should be a great increase of Freethinkers in Glasgow in the near future.

There are good souls who do their little bit to alleviate the hardships of those ministers of the Gospel who have taken up their burden of poverty. Pastor Fort Newton, of the City Temple, who has to struggle along on a salary of getting on for a thousand a year, recently had 100 Treasury notes sent him, with the message, "For your holiday, from a big sinner." We wonder whether Dr. Newton wishes the message came from a bigger sinner?

Religion is admittedly at a low ebb just now, but the decrease in crime is extraordinary. The daily average population of convict establishments in this country before the War was 2,704, whereas to-day it is only 1,393. The county prisons' population has fallen from 14,352 to 7,335, and that of reformatories for inebriates from eighty-one to three.

The Young Men's Christian Association bids fair to become a firm of universal providers. It is now appealing for second-hand clothing and boots for discharged soldiers. Hence some of the young Christians will become "old clo'" men.

Cardinal Farley, Archbishop of New York, has been dangerously ill, and is now dangerously well again.

"There was a time when Martin Luther was popular in England," declares the *Daily News*. Things are come to a pretty pass when the grandmotherly *Daily News* lays this sort of Catholic nonsense on the decorous Nonconformist breakfast table. The reputation of "the solitary monk who shook the world" was not made by journalists; it cannot be upset by them.

The endowment of superstition goes on apace. An anonymous gift of £4,000 has been sent to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.

On August 24, Rev. T. McDonna was charged at Edinburgh with "improper behaviour" towards two boys. In defence, it was said the accused was not conscious of having acted in a wicked way. The Sheriff said that, in view of the severe discipline of the Roman Catholic Church, he thought a fine of £20 would meet the case. Evidently the discipline of the Church had not been powerful enough to prevent the offence being committed.

Three clergymen—Rev. Sir P. Thompson, Rev. R. Sugden, and Canon Stephen Campbell—left between them estates valued at over £267,000. The mortification of spirit they must have undergone in bearing such a burden demands our deepest sympathy. Let us hope they will meet their reward.

Profanity is more popular than it used to be. The *Daily Mirror* recently published a paragraph concerning a woman-gardener with the headline, "Mrs. Adam." If this had appeared in the *Freethinker*, people would have called it vulgar and in bad taste.

Swearing in police courts is not usually a solemn process, but a young Russian girl nearly caused the policeman at the Thames Police Court to faint, when, taking the oath, she broke out with the words, "Everything I shall tell shall be the untruth." This was indeed a home thrust.

The mentality of the real religionist is always an interesting study to those who are interested in psychology. An interesting sample is supplied in a recent issue of the *Express and Advertiser*, Hawick. The anonymous writer describes how some allotment holders, in defiance of custom, religion, and the "unco guid," decided to cultivate their ground on Sunday. This dare-devil resolve took place in the spring. But the Lord was watching them. The Sunday workers planted their seeds a fortnight before those who attended church on the "Sawbath." With what result? A nipping frost came at a vital moment, blighted the seeds that had been sown on Sunday, and left untouched the seeds of the church-goers that had been planted a fortnight later! Thus, says the writer, "it pays to remember the Sabbath and the God who ordained it for the life and needs of man." Thus God punished the violators of the Sabbath—and helped Germany in its endeavours to starve England!

But that is not all. The same writer says that in the South of England there was a vegetable show, and the whole of the four prizes were won by men who, from religious scruples, would not work their land on Sunday. We should much like to know the name of the show and the names of the men. But we are left wondering about the munition-makers who work on Sunday. Does God do anything to them? Or does he only punish those who try to raise food, but blesses those who make shells? If God is half as curious as his advocate in the *Express and Advertiser*, we should not be surprised at anything.

Speaking on the Education Bill at the Glasgow Presbytery meeting last week, Dr. Brown Bellahouston said he did not grudge the Roman Catholics and Episcopalians their privileges, but surely it was reasonable to give the same privilege to the Presbyterian Churches which had 82 per cent. of the

population of Scotland. We wonder how Dr. Brown arrives at his statistics? Does he include as Presbyterians all those who are not either Roman Catholics or Episcopalians, such as Freethinkers, Agnostics, Unitarians, Nothingarians, and others?

Holy Mother Church frowns at divorce, but many people laugh at the Church. Thirty-five *decrees nisi* were made absolute in one day recently in the Vacation Court.

Owing to the decrease of pauperism, a number of work-houses are being closed or amalgamated. Changed economic conditions have produced these alterations when centuries of praying have failed.

Newspaper proprietors all over the country are now charging the usual advertisement rates for notices of religious services instead of inserting them without charge as in pre-War days. If the promised revival of religion takes place, the dear clergy will find that publicity will be expensive.

An Anglican chaplain, who has served for nearly three years in France and Mesopotamia, testifies that the bulk of soldiers are utterly indifferent to religion, and that nothing like a revival has at any time taken place among them. He praises the men in everything except their attitude to religion. He cites the following incident as characteristic:—

Here is a true instance of this kind of attitude in its application to prayer. The enemy is placing a heavy barrage on our lines. Here is a man on his knees, praying hard. A short distance away is another man, watching the "effect" of prayer. Questions of all kinds arise in his mind. Presently a shell kills the "praying man." See the attitude of the watcher: "To hell with prayer; I shall never pray again."

Sir William Tilden, speaking at King's College, said: "Our so-called educated classes were almost entirely ignorant of elementary science." This practically explains why so many people accept the fairy tales of the Bible without question.

A writer in the London *Daily News* declares that Billy Sunday's popularity is owing to his having been a baseball player, and his talk is reminiscent of his sporting days. The dear clergy insist that his popularity is due to religion, but they overlook the tens of thousands of preachers who are unpopular.

The American invasion of British pulpits is going on apace. In a short time the Gospel should "hustle" or "get a move on," and our home-grown sinners "hit the sawdust trail." Educated congregations may sing "The bells of hell go ting-a-ling, a ling."

The Rev. C. L. Drawbridge, Secretary of the Christian Evidence Society, has just published eight pamphlets against Materialism, Atheism, Secularism, and other kindred forms of unbelief, which even the *Church Times* damns with faint praise. Judged on their argumentative merits, "we should have been inclined to doubt if this very scrappy treatment of vast themes could really be convincing." We, on the other hand, are strongly inclined to pronounce the whole series, not merely unconvincing, but fundamentally fallacious.

To E. Romanes, writing in the *Church Times* for August 30: "it is incredible that people should think it worth while to spend money" on "efforts to undermine the faith of young soldiers." To us it is equally incredible that sane people can believe in a religion to the falseness of which all history bears irrefutable testimony, and which converts its genuine believers into despots who cannot tolerate the least opposition.

That there is some religion left in unexpected places is shown by the illuminated sky-sign above a Broadway (New York) cinema theatre, which reads, "To Hell with the Kaiser." This is the title of a picture-play being exhibited there. Let us hope that the management bring the audiences back again.

## "Freethinker" Sustentation Fund.

It is when need arises that one discovers one's friends, and the affection felt by readers for what so many of them call "Our Paper," is again shown by the appended first list of subscriptions to our "War Fund." Such a response is in the highest degree gratifying, although it would be mere affectation to say that we are surprised. We are not, but we are deeply impressed and appreciative. No editor ever had a more loyal body of readers, and the knowledge that they were there, ready to help when called, and often helping without the call, has been the one thing that has given us heart to press on in the face of all difficulties.

To adequately deal with all the letters received would require a special issue of the *Freethinker*, nor do I think it would make an uninteresting number. Many of the letters received are, however, of so generous, and even intimate, a character, that I can only thankfully acknowledge their receipt—and preserve them for re-reading on those occasions when one feels the need of a stimulant. I can only assure their writers that hard as the struggle has been, and is, these communications go a long way in the direction of repayment.

Amongst the first letters opened was one from a member of a whole family of sturdy Freethinkers—Mr. E. D. Side. He writes expressing his pleasure at being able to help, and hopes the response will be such as to at least put financial worries to flight. Mr. R. Wilson sends cheque in acknowledgment of our conduct of "the best paper he knows." Mr. W. D. Columbine writes:—

All Freethinkers are indebted to you for the very able manner in which you are conducting the journal, and I am sure we ought to do all we can to relieve you of any financial burden in connection with the matter.

Mr. J. Pendlebury hopes for a long list of names and "a large total." The same desire is expressed by C. W. B. and many others.

Our old friend, Mr. T. Robertson (Glasgow), writes:—

You have managed during the last year amazingly well. To require less in these times than was raised in pre-war days entitles you to the chairmanship of some of our government spending departments. It is a good thing there is no excess duty on minimized deficits. The £5 enclosed is a very small recompense for the pleasure derived from the pages of the *Freethinker* during the past twelve months, and for the feeling of pride I have in its conspicuous excellence.

Along with a personal compliment, Dr. P. M. McDermott says:—

I have an especial affection for the journal, for it was through accidental contact with it that I was, from a staunch Goddite, converted, found salvation, and became saturated with the grace of reason.

If only half of those who have found "salvation" through this paper recognized it in the same way, what a host of readers and helpers we should have!

A cheery letter comes from Mrs. S. M. Peacock, of South Shields, whom we are glad to say continues her late husband's, and her own, interest in the Cause.

Mr. W. H. Blackmore proposes to send a monthly subscription until at least the end of the year. Finally, "Delta," in the course of a lengthy letter, says:—

I am almost ashamed that I cannot send a cheque adequate to my desire. But such as it is, it comes from one who is in a position to appreciate the nature of the fight you are so successfully conducting. I have been connected with newspaper and publishing enterprises for over thirty years and, therefore, know something of the difficulties that must be met. Frankly, I was one who quite expected that, on the removal of so striking a

personality as the late G. W. Foote, the *Freethinker* would have shared the fate of the *National Reformer* and the *Agnostic Journal*.....It would have been a triumph to have kept the *Freethinker* alive, but to have secured so large an increase in the circulation of the journal, and without asking from its readers more than in a time of peace, is indeed a triumph. As one writing, so to speak, from the inside, this is evidence of both business and organizing capacity that reflects credit on all concerned. After these four years, we Freethinkers can have the fullest confidence in the management of our paper, and the brightest hopes for its future.

As to the last sentence, we have in contemplation a development which will, we believe, be of considerable importance to the *Freethinker*, and to the Cause generally. On that matter we may write more fully a few weeks hence.

The following represents the subscriptions received up to the time of our going to press:—

### First List of Subscriptions.

F. W. Hall, £50. C. W. B., £5. Mrs. F. Burns, £1 1s. Mrs. S. M. Peacock, £1 1s. H. Cairney, £1 1s. W. A., £2. Dr. P. M. McDermott, £10 10s. T. Robertson, £5. A. R. Wykes, 10s. J. B. Middleton, £5. Dr. and Mrs. J. Laing, £3 3s. Victoria Park (per J. Neate), £1. W. E. Bruce, 10s. Halliday (per Miss Vance), 1s. T. Burgess, 4s. 6d. A. Atherton, 5s. J. O. Connor, £1. Pte. D. T. Evans, 2s. 6d. E. A. Macdonald, £1. M. Matthews, 10s. Sergt. McFarlane, 9s. 6d. K. C. Clarkson, 10s. 6d. J. Davie, £1. V. Massey Crosse, £1 1s. J. Sumner, £5 5s. J. B. Palphreyman, 10s. Techne, 10s. G. E. Webb, £1 1s. W. B. Columbine, £10. D. D. B., £3 3s. R. Wilson, £5. J. Pendlebury, £5. A. Delve, £2 2s. S. E. Owen, £1 1s. W. Dodd, £1. G. Backhouse Church, 5s. W. Mather, £2 2s. R. H. Side, £3. E. D. Side, £2. Mrs. E. D. Side, £1. R. H. Side, Jun., 10s. Mrs. A. Robertson, £1. Kepler, 5s. F. Tongue, 2s. 9d. E. Syers, £1. G. White, £1. J. M. Gimson, £5. J. Breese, £2 2s. W. H. Blackmore, 5s. G. R. Harker, £1. Dr. R. T. Nichols, £5 5s. J. T. Jones, £1 1s. J. Greevz Fysher, £1. C. R. Richards, 10s. Anno Domini, 10s. Belgravia, 10s. V. H. Smith, 10s. F. W. Walsh, 1s. 6d. P. and J. P., 10s. M. Bird, £1 10s. E. Wilson, £5. E. B., £1 1s. Dr. A. W. Laing, £5 5s. W. M., 2s. 6d. Pte. W. A. Williams, 2s. J. Kelsey, 3s. W. Kersting, 5s. E. L. G. (Dundee), £1. W. E. Pugh, £2 2s. J. Ferguson (per A. M.), 5s. Major Warren, 10s. M. S., 2s. 6d. S. Sweet, £1 1s. W. P. Jacobs, 10s. J. S. Buckle, £1. W. P. M., £1. J. N. Hill, 2s. A. W. Coleman, £2. T. Teasdale, 2s. H. Tucker, £1. V. P., £1 10s. "Delta," £2 2s.—Total £184 16s. 3d.

A number of acknowledgments are held over until next week.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

### DAILY RULE.

Begin the morning by saying to thyself, I shall meet with the busybody, the ungrateful, the arrogant, deceitful, envious, unsocial. All these things happen to them by reason of their ignorance of what is good and evil. But I who have seen the nature of the good that it is beautiful, and of the bad that it is ugly, and the nature of him who does wrong, that it is akin to me, not (only) of the same blood or seed, but that it participates in (the same) intelligence and (the same) portion of the divinity, I can neither be injured by any of them, for no one can fix on me what is ugly, nor can I be angry with my kinsman, nor hate him. For we are made for co-operation, like feet, like hands, like eyelids, like the rows of the upper and the lower teeth. To act against one another then is contrary to nature; and it is acting against one another to be vexed and to turn away.—*Marcus Aurelius*.

### C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

September 8, Maesteg; September 15, Aberdare; September 22, Birmingham; September 29, Southampton; October 6, Manchester; October 13, Swansea.

### To Correspondents.

MRS. F. BURNS.—No one can value more than we do the appreciation felt by a good woman for the *Freethinker*. We should say that you are, by your life, reading your Christian friends a lesson it would be to their interest to master.

H. CAIRNEY.—We have no doubt we shall, as you say, "emerge successfully" from the fight against the present unparalleled difficulties. We are thankful for your help in pushing sales of the *Freethinker*. Shall look forward to seeing you soon.

D. D. B.—Thanks for subscription, also for sentiments expressed, which we greatly value. We are acting on the suggestion made.

J. S. BUCKLE.—Letters quite to the point. Impossible for us to fathom editor's reason for refusing to insert.

E. PARKER.—Have sent on label for waste paper. Will do as you suggest.

ONE of our readers would like to send a copy of the *Freethinker* to some soldier at the Front. We have no doubt this note will bring the required address.

LIBRA.—Thanks for new reader. We cannot have too many.

W. JANNAWAY.—The only guard against one person exercising undue influence over another is by education on the one side and a sense of moral restraint on the other. But the influence of one person on another is one of the inescapable facts of social life.

B. A. MILLICHAMP.—We are quite ready to send sacks for the transmission of waste paper. There is no need to wrap up parcels in sheets of brown paper. Tied securely with a label attached is quite enough.

C. M.—Thanks for birthday congratulations. You were in time. We achieved our half century on September 1.

T. C. LANGRIDGE.—*Organic Evolution*, by R. S. Lull, Macmillan, 1917, price 16s., is a work we can recommend for its comprehensiveness. As you say, the fact of evolution is questioned by none. It is the factors of evolution around which the discussion turns. *The Romance of the Human Body* will give you in a compact form an account of the human mechanism. Wells, Gardner & Co., 1917, price 5s.

V. H. SMITH.—We are obliged for the encouragement you are giving your newsagent to continue displaying the *Freethinker*.

ANNO DOMINI.—The suggestion you make is a flattering one, but hardly practicable now. Wait till we are out of the wood, then we shall be entitled to shout.

J. E. J. (Barrow).—The notes on Pastor Russell appeared in the issue for December 3, 1916. We hardly think the man's career is worthy of special attention in this paper.

W. SMALLRIDGE.—We are sending a parcel of literature for distribution. We hope it will be useful.

J. BREESE.—Your P.O. came to hand quite safely. We do intend to "keep the flag flying."

R. WILSON.—See "Acid Drops."

W. C. PUGH.—Sorry we cannot place the quotation, "There's none ever feared that the truth should be told, but he whom the truth would indict," for you. We are flattered by your kind words concerning the *Freethinker*. We may one day revive the special feature you name.

MR. J. BLACKHALL writes pointing out, in reference to Mr. Lloyd's article of August 25, that the place where the Papal Nuncio was waylaid and plundered was between Old Cumbris and Berwick, about seventeen miles north-west of the border city.

*The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.*

*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 "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.

There was a transposition of places in last week's announcement of Mr. Cohen's lectures. He lectures at Maesteg on September 8 and Aberdare on the 15, not *vice versa* as announced. The meeting at Maesteg to-day (September 8) will be held in the Gem Cinema, afternoon and evening, at 2.30 and 7 o'clock. We daresay there will be a good muster of Freethinkers if the weather is favourable, and, we hope, a good number of other folk. —

It is some years since Mr. Cohen was in Aberdare, and his lectures there on Sunday next (September 15) will be held in the Grand Theatre, Aberaman; afternoon at 2.30, evening at 7. Admission is by silver collection.

*Freethinker* readers will be pleased to have something of Mr. T. F. Palmer's writings in a more permanent form than that of an article. *The Story of the Evolution of Life* has just been issued by the Secular Society, Limited, and it provides in a concise and comprehensive form an outline of the evidence upon which the theory of Evolution rests. The pamphlet is a purely propagandist effort, and is, therefore, issued at the low price (nowadays) of twopence, postage 1d. We hope to see the pamphlet secure the circulation it well deserves.

Mr. C. R. Richards writes:—

The *Freethinker* seems more interesting than ever, judging by the correspondence I get from the fighting Fronts—France, Italy, and Mesopotamia. It is quite a bright streak in their lives, which they appreciate to the utmost. Never, they say, do you see a copy lying about idle, and at times it forms the basis of very interesting debates, in which the Atheist invariably comes out on top. It is good to know that you are able to carry on so successfully against such odds.

We are delighted to add this testimony to the others as to the part being played by the *Freethinker* in the theatres of war.

Our persistent "nagging" on the question of Secular Education has borne some fruit. We have received reports of forty-seven resolutions passed by Trade Union and other bodies, which have been duly forwarded to the Minister of Education. We should like to see this number greatly increased. Several friends have written suggesting that Mr. Cohen should issue a leaflet on the question. This may be done if he can find the time. Meanwhile there is already in print, in his *Religion and the Child*, an examination of the whole question.

The Swansea Branch opens its autumn meetings to-day (September 8) at 6.30, at the Elysium, with an address by "Casey," subject: "Music and the People." "Casey" is a skilled instrumentalist, and Dr. Vaughan Thomas will preside. Tickets for the lecture are 6d. each, and the proceedings commence at 6.30. We hope to hear of a good send off to the Branch's season. —

A soldier writing from Palestine to the *Bradford Pioneer* says:—

When I started this letter three days ago, I had made a resolution to quit fuming, and to try smiling instead. But today we had a compulsory church service, and once again I am raging. A church service is not a hardship, but to be compelled to attend is unbearable. To make things worse, the chaplain is a fool, and less than half the officers were present. Officers, apparently, do not need spiritual guidance. It was some consolation to see the whole service a fiasco, for the fellows wouldn't sing the hymns nor say the "Amens." The address was "The Beauty of Worship"—worship of a god who is all love and beauty. There was a prayer for "victory" and a "lasting peace," which was a pretty cool request, I thought.

May we again remind our readers that we are still collecting all the waste paper we can get in order to turn it into printing material? We are ready to pay the full schedule prices, and will send labels or sacks on request. This engaging in a kind of marine-store business is not a nice occupation, but we would go round ourselves and collect rags and bones rather than see the *Freethinker* "hung up," and we seem a long way from the end of the wood yet.



## A Search for the Soul.

X.

(Continued from p. 453.)

HAVING fully noticed the materialistic theory of the relation of body to mind and the correlation of the brain and thought, we will now see what the great physicist, Sir Oliver Lodge, has to say upon the subject. In his *Man and the Universe*, that distinguished scientist says:—

The brain is our present organ of thought. Granted; but it does not follow that the brain generates or secretes thought, or that every thinking creature in the universe must possess a brain. Really we know too little about the way the brain *thinks*, if it can properly be said to think at all, to be justified in making any such assertion as that.....The physiological mechanism called brain and nerve are our servants, not our masters: we have to train them to serve our purpose; and if one side of the brain is injured, the other side may be trained to act instead. Destroy certain parts of the brain completely, however, and connection between the psychic and the material regions is for us severed. True; but cutting off or damaging communication is not the same as destroying or damaging the communicator: nor is smashing an organ equivalent to killing the organist. When the Atlantic cable broke, in 1858, instant communication between England and America was destroyed; but that fact did not involve the destruction of either America or England (pp. 92, 93).

The foregoing statements, it is almost needless to say, are not in agreement with science; they are merely a sample of what Americans call "highfalutin." Sir Oliver Lodge commences by admitting that "the brain is our *present* organ of thought," and he immediately proceeds to modify that admission and to contend that it is not that organ at all, but merely an instrument that is controlled by the mind. It does not follow, he says, "that the brain generates thought, or that every thinking creature in the universe must possess a brain." The first of these statements evidently depends upon the second; for if there are "creatures" in the universe that have the power to think without possessing brains, then it might follow that the brain is not necessarily the only organ of thought. So far as we know, however, every thinking creature in the universe has some rudimentary kind of brain; but Sir Oliver, as a Spiritist, believes that the so-called "discarnate spirit" is a "thinking creature," and this accounts for the foregoing statements. The latter is, of course, a purely imaginary being.

Sir Oliver next says that the brain and nerves "are our servants, not our masters." This is pure nonsense; for if the brain by its action induces a state of consciousness called Will, its further action in another region to carry out the mandate of that Will is solely one of co-operation. There could be no Will, in the first instance, without the molecular action of the brain.

Sir Oliver says that "we have to train the brain and nerves to serve our purpose, and if one side of the brain is injured, the other side may be trained to act instead." These statements are questionable. We all know, for instance, that the motor nerves on the right side of the brain move the muscles of the left side of the body, and that those on the left side of the brain move the muscles of the right side of the body; consequently, an injury to the brain on either side might paralyse the voluntary motion of the muscles and limbs on the opposite side. Now, nearly three years ago a young man of my acquaintance received a wound on the left side of the brain, and, in consequence, all the muscles of the right side of his body were completely paralysed. How was the right side of his brain to be "trained" to do the work which the injured side was unable to perform?

The young man did not know, neither did the doctors know. For two full years the latter were unable to effect any change; for the same period no power of will on the part of the wounded man produced any alteration. The young man remained with one side paralysed the whole time—and then died. Comment is superfluous.

"Destroy certain parts of the brain completely," says Sir Oliver, "and connection between the psychic and the material regions is for us severed." This is an apologetic method of saying that when the grey matter of the brain which generates thought is completely destroyed there can be more thought. To speak of a psychical and a material region as two separate entities which require a "connection" is simply misleading; there is no psychic *region* apart from the brain; the whole of that organ is material.

Next, after admitting that when the brain is destroyed the connection is "severed," Sir Oliver says: "True; but cutting off or damaging communication is not the same as destroying or damaging the communicator, nor is smashing an organ equivalent to killing the organist." Here we see that the resultant of the functioning of the brain (*i.e.*, thought) is regarded as something quite apart from the cerebral organ, and, therefore, requiring "communication" between the two; also that smashing an organ is not killing the organist that plays upon it. This, again, is pure mystification. The brain is both organ *and* organist. In "smashing" the first, the second is annihilated. A more fitting parallel would be certain brain-cells of the organ and the music they give forth, the organist being the cerebral energy. Furthermore, we have the Atlantic cable analogue which indicates even more plainly how the brain and thought are regarded as separate entities. In this case, no one with a grain of sense *could* imagine that the breaking of the cable involved the destruction of England or America—a fact which the writer admits on the same page by saying that the argument is inconclusive. But why was such an inane argument ever employed?

Leaving Sir Oliver Lodge and his mystifications, we will now look at a few short extracts from Professor Huxley's lecture on a "Lobster." This physiologist in that lecture said:—

Let us consider the tail of the lobster.....If I look at this physiologically, I see that it is a most beautifully constructed organ of locomotion, by means of which the animal can swiftly propel itself either backwards or forwards. But how is this remarkable propulsive machine made to perform its functions? If I were to open one of these animals and take out the viscera only, leaving the white flesh, I should perceive that the lobster could bend and extend its tail as well as before.....Close observation of the newly opened lobster would soon show that all its movements are due to the same cause—the shortening and thickening of the fleshy fibres, which are technically called muscles.....The movements of the lobster are due to muscular contractility. But why does one group of muscles contract when the lobster wishes to extend his tail, and another group when he desires to bend it? *What is it that originates, directs, and controls the motive power?*.....In the head of the lobster there lies a small mass of that peculiar tissue which is known as nervous substance. Cords of similar matter connect this brain of the lobster, directly or indirectly, with the muscles. Now, if these communication cords are cut, the brain remaining entire, the power of exerting what we call voluntary motion in the parts below the section is destroyed; and, on the other hand, if, the cords remaining entire, the brain mass be destroyed, the same voluntary mobility is equally lost. Whence the inevitable conclusion is, that the power of originating these motions resides in the brain, and is propagated along the nervous cords.

In the foregoing extracts it is conclusively proved that what is called "an act of will" in the living organism can only be performed by means of the brain and nervous system. When the lobster experienced (in the brain) the desire to go backwards or forwards, its wish was telegraphed along the motor nerves to the muscles in the tail, whereupon the energy locked up in those tissues immediately caused the necessary contractions—the movements of the tail instantly following the desire. The case is precisely the same in man and the higher animals; we thus have a clear proof that what is ascribed to the agency of the soul by Dualists like Sir Oliver Lodge is really performed by the brain.

(To be continued.) ABRACADABRA.

### The Massacre of St. Bartholomew Day.

AUGUST 24 was the anniversary of the above-mentioned national crime, and it should be annually borne in mind by every Freethinker throughout the world as an instance of the effects of priestcraft and unchecked religious feelings. It also demonstrates the evil which follows the linking any religion with politics and State affairs.

Let us briefly review the tragical circumstances, and call to mind the doings upon that horrid and terrifying night.

The cause of all the trouble was the Queen-mother of Charles IX. who feared that the influence of the Huguenot faction would ruin her family. This Queen Catherine de Medici found herself supplanted in affairs of state by Admiral Coligni, the leader of the Huguenots, and it is certain that she, with the assistance of the Dukes de Guise, Anjou, Aumale, and others, arranged the massacre, and used the Catholic fanaticism among the people merely as a tool. On August 22 Admiral Coligni was shot at from a window by a follower of the Duke de Guise, and wounded in two places. This enraged his supporters who collected and demonstrated and threatened reprisals. The weak-minded king was easily persuaded that he was in danger, and gave the dreadful decree. It was arranged that the bell of St. Germain should toll out the signal to start the massacre in the dead of night. The guilty mother and horror-stricken son looked from the Louvre windows upon the proceedings. All Paris rang with the murderous cry "Down with the Huguenot! Kill, kill!" About thirty thousand men, women, and children were slaughtered, many in their sleep. All the next day it continued, until in the evening the King sent out his trumpeter to stop the slaughter. It is said that owing to the circumstances, every man could kill his private enemy without fear of any inquiry, and many Catholics suffered from this. Many of the large cities caught the infection, such as Rouen, Lyons, etc., and the Queen took no steps to prevent it.

The end of the story is one which every sensible person expects. The King died two years afterwards, a prey during all that time to bitter remorse and horror, and a broken spirit, filled with every mental and physical suffering.

An event of this nature could not have occurred without the connivance and assistance of the Catholic Bishops, and, as a matter of history, we know that it was blessed by the Pope. Owing to this, the whole responsibility has been debited against the Catholic religion by Protestants; but although we are assured of the universal mischievous effect of Catholic teachings, let us not put all the blame on that source of evil. Protestants and their ideas are also to blame, and until Freethought and Science disposes of all these notions of supernatural things, let us not rest in the idea that we are safe from such tragedies.

E. ANDERSON.

## GOD AND MAN.

An Essay in Common Sense and Natural Morality.

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### Freethought in Christian Circles.

ONE of the strange experiences of my life has been to observe how wide-spread is the principle of freedom of thought in Christian communities. I could write a volume of my experiences in connection with this permeation of freedom of thought right to the very citadel of religious life. A few years ago I was approached by a most eloquent preacher—who, if I attempt to describe, would be instantly recognized, he is so strongly individualized—with the direct request, would I join his Church? Upon my expressing surprise, saying: "Oh, I know you cannot really know my opinions," he said: "I know all about you, I know where you are, you are a good man, you want to live a good life, that is enough for us, I will ask you no questions at all. Give me your consent and you shall be made a member." I thanked him but declined. I know the case of a regular reader of your columns. I have seen his name among your subscribers, yet he has paid pew rent in a chapel for the past fifteen years for no other purpose than his interest in the ethical development of his family. He and his wife at times go to hear the minister. "Oh, he is a fine man; never mind what is his creed. He does you good at times to listen to him." This the justification for attendance upon things the mind has outgrown.

I knew the case of a lady of great culture and wide reading, who is an Agnostic. At her table are to be found at times officers of the Salvation Army. They know her mental attitude towards their beliefs. She subscribes generously towards their social work, saying, they have a mission for the slums which none other can do.

In Scotland there is a distinct phase of temperance—nay, prohibition—reform that is distinctly antagonistic to all religious teaching. The leader is just now in prison as a Conscientious Objector. His following have maintained a very high and earnest opposition to the drink traffic, but have been able to do this separate from religious association.

The other day I attended a Unitarian service. Beautiful hymns were sung; an invocation was read as prayer; the address was a very fine one upon the ancient sun-worshippers. To my own knowledge, every male attendant at that meeting was Agnostic—the preacher himself.

"Oh, I go to church for the choir and organ," said a blunt old shoemaker to me, recently; "I like to get my bass in the singing." This man is an Atheist, and has been one for thirty years of his life.

Go among the society of the Friends, the Theosophists the Free Christians—temperance and humane workers—and everywhere you find men and women who have outgrown creeds and beliefs, who find spiritual homes in churches which they know and realize are not really big enough for them; but they remain inside, but not really of it. Associations of friends, music, culture, reform, altruism in its widest aspiration, keep them there.

Some day a Church will arise big enough to embrace all the needs of mankind, all its moral and emotional aspirations. Was it not Mr. Bradlaugh who said, "No one ever sees a creed die"? It imperceptibly emerges to fit the new growth.

EVOLUTIONIST.

### Correspondence.

#### FREETHOUGHT AND THE PRESS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The article by "Mimnermus" in your issue of March 31, 1918, emphasizes what has repeatedly been urged from our side, namely, that a very considerable proportion—perhaps the greater part—of our public does not care for the Christian religion, if not actually antagonistic to it.

Curiously, in the same issue, you lament, in your "Views and Opinions," that the "press" stands on the religious side. One may well ask, Why? You argue that journalists, knowing better, have to yield to the tastes and predilections of their readers.

Well, if "Mimnermus" is right, the journalists are wrong. That is all. I trust, and I have thought so for a considerable time, that such is really the case. The public would

welcome a daily which is above bigotry and gives them trustworthy information. I do not mean that such a paper must be on the Freethought side, but it should give Rationalism and its activities the same representation as religion. It should be indifferent, as a journal.

I venture to suggest that some wealthy Rationalist, if such a person exists, might start a daily paper in competition with the existing leading papers. Of course, he must be a man of considerable means, because his paper would in the first period have to fight its way, not only against the real enmity of the Black Army and the papers under their thumb, but also against the commercial prudence of advertisers, who would not risk their money before the paper has sufficient readers. I have, however, not the slightest doubt but that it will, even from a purely financial standpoint, eventually be a huge success, and will eclipse the biggest present one-sided daily in popularity.

The proprietor must, of course, be a sound business man, and he will soon attract the best intellects of the journalistic world to his side, and the public will soon find out to which paper they have to look for real news and guidance, and for trustworthy information about politics, social matters, education, science, art, and literature.

Johannesburg, S.A.

J. H. OERDER.

[We are afraid our correspondent underestimates the difficulty, apart from finance, of putting his idea into operation. We are working at breaking down the unofficial boycott, and the efforts made are meeting with some success. What a Freethought paper needs is persistent and adequate advertising. And that resolves itself into questions of finance and organization.—ED.]

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN SCOTTISH SCHOOLS.

SIR,—In yesterday's *Herald* you print the terms of an amendment to the Education Bill, drawn up by the Scottish Churches, etc. In it you refer to the "Conscience Clause" in 1872 Act, which gives relief to parents on behalf of their children. But what about a "Conscience Clause" for teachers who cannot conscientiously teach "religious" instruction? Is it fair that the exemption or relaxation which is granted to the child should be refused to the teacher? Certainly the number of teachers all over Scotland claiming this exemption might be small, but is that any reason why their case should not be considered? Teachers as a body are beginning to demand more control over the curriculum and over their conditions of employment, and are becoming more zealous of the rights of their members. This, then, I think, is a very proper question for the Government to tackle on behalf of a minority that is daily growing.

W. D. K.

[The above letter was sent to the *Glasgow Herald*, but failed to appear. We are asked to insert it, and, as it raises an important point, we comply with the request.—ED.]

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON AUG. 29.

The President, Mr. C. Cohen, occupied the chair. Also present: Messrs. Braddock, Brandes, Eager, Gorniot, Kelf, Leat, Neate, Neary, Palmer, Quinton, Roger, Samuels, Spence, Thurlow, Wood; Miss Kough, Miss Stanley, Miss Pitcher, and the Secretary.

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

New members were received for Bethnal Green, Goldthorpe, Maesteg, Sheffield, Swansea, West Ham, and the Parent Society (eighteen in all).

The President reported further activity in Wales, and it was also reported that summonses against Mr. F. Wood (South London) and the General Secretary (Miss Vance) had been issued at the instance of the L.C.C. for persisting in selling the *Freethinker*; the contention being that, although the permits issued to the N. S. S. were available to the end of September, they gave no authority for the sale of current numbers; therefore the matter would have to be dealt with again.

It was formally reported that the Special Committee elected by the Conference to formulate a scheme for re-

organization had met on August 3 and 4, and their report would shortly be issued.

It was further resolved that the minutes of the Whit-Sunday Conference be sent to the Branches; and these comprise the report of the afternoon and a summary of the morning's proceedings.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary*.

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, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., "Democracy and City Life."

OUTDOOR.

BATTERSEA BRANCH N. S. S. (Battersea Park Gates, Queen's Road): 11.45, Mr. G. Rule, A Lecture.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 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, Mr. H. Brougham Doughty, "Can an Unbeliever Blaspheme?" Mr. R. Norman, "Bible Stories."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, Mr. F. Shaller, A Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Maryland Point Station): 7, Mr. Spence, B.Sc., "Hell."

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Messrs. Shaller and Saphin; 3.15, Messrs. Ratcliffe, Swasey, Kells, and Dales.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

MAESTEG BRANCH N. S. S. (The Gem Cinema, Maesteg): Mr. Chapman Cohen, 2.30, "Do the Dead Live?" 7, "Benefits of Unbelief."

SWANSEA AND DISTRICT BRANCH N. S. S. (The Elysium, High Street): 6.30, "Casey," "Music and the People."

OUTDOOR.

SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH N. S. S. Ramble.—Meet at Harton Road Tram Stop. Leader, Mr. J. Hannan.

WANTED.—Several Copies of Volney's *Ruins of Empires*.—Address P., c/o *Freethinker* Office. Please state Price.

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