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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. 43

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1918

PRICE TWOPENCE

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Views and Opinions.

God and the Savage.

There is no lack of gods in the world. Indeed, there never has been a shortage in that direction. Man, to follow Montaigne, who cannot make a flea, has nevertheless made gods by the score. He has made them in all shapes and sizes, colours and qualities. That wonderful procession of the gods in Flaubert's *St. Antony* by no means exhausts the list; it is only a sample from bulk. And from what resulted this extraordinary creative human activity? If I read Dr. Lyttelton's article aright in last week's *Freethinker*, primitive man was a philosopher struggling to express a great idea by means of a consciously devised fable or myth. Hence, in criticizing primitive presentations, we have to penetrate beyond their verbal form or face value to the deeper truth they embody. In this way all religions are true, because all religions embody truth. Our task is to get rid of the *form* in which the religion is presented to us, and hold on to the residual essential facts. This, I admit, is a theory that would save the religious idea. My only objection to it is that, in my judgment, it is quite wrong.

* * *

Getting Down to Facts.

Let us settle down to a few facts. Religion does not begin amongst civilized peoples; it does not root itself in developed knowledge. Civilized people never discover gods—they inherit them. Whether the gods express a fact or embody a truth or not, it is a fact that the belief in gods begins with people who were in the worst possible position to know what the truth was. The belief in spirits, in gods, in the supernatural, commences with the primitive savage. Of that there can be no question. And who was, or who is, for that matter, the primitive savage? On that again, information is easily accessible. The savage is not a philosopher—in our sense of the word; he is not curious about the causes of phenomena; he is not in the least concerned with presenting profound truths to others in the form of allegory or fable; he is, in short, a very matter-of-fact, incurious, ignorant person—very fearful of gods and ghosts, but neither loving them nor desiring them. His only desire is to keep on good terms with them. And his belief in these gods and ghosts is based upon a plain misunderstanding of things, the truth of which becomes apparent to later generations. When the

savage says that a man tossing about in a fit of epilepsy is under the control of an evil spirit, he is not formulating an allegory—he is expressing what is to him a sober statement of fact. All the things around him, which are similarly explained, are equally statements of fact. Early religious beliefs are not fables, or myths, or allegories; they are statements of apparent fact. They become fables and myths and allegories to a later generation, which takes all the facts upon which the religious idea is based, and explains them in a completely non-religious manner. The curious thing is, that while the conception of the world upon which the religious idea is based is rejected, we still have the idea with us. In other words, we reject the world of the savage as false, but we retain a conclusion based upon admittedly false pretences. And man calls himself a rational being!

Error or Allegory?

* * *

Dr. Lyttelton says he would "agree that the early statements made in the childhood of nations generally took the form of myths." In that case, he would certainly not be agreeing with me. For to the people originating these religious "myths," they are not myths at all. They are as much statements of fact as are our own concerning the nature of an electrical disturbance or the motion of the earth round the sun. (There is a later stage at which myths may be consciously fabricated; but I am now concerned only with primitive thought.) Naturally, if *we* want to teach a child a lesson, we may construct an allegory with sole reference to the idea to be enforced. But that is a case of an instructed person teaching an uninstructed one. But with the savage all are uninstructed. Everything has to be learned; everyone has to learn. And it is surely approaching the absurd to assume that men who made the most grotesque blunders about common facts and everyday experiences should have deliberately concocted myths conveying profound moral and "spiritual" truths. Not to understand the body, but to know about the soul; not to understand man, but to know about God; to be completely ignorant of this world, but to be informed about some other state of existence, is a decidedly remarkable achievement. The truth to me is that religious myths are primitive errors. They represent man's first blundering attempts to understand the world in which he lived. And the endeavour to read into these primitive errors some profound moral truth is an attempt to put modern ideas into the brain of the primitive savage. Of course, it can be done, but so could one convert into a profound spiritual allegory Old Mother Hubbard or Jack the Giant Killer. And if these stories had by some chance appeared in the Bible there is not the slightest doubt but that their transformation would have occurred.

"God."

* * *

We are told that in saying the word "God" is used as though it stood for some understood thing, I am assuming that it expresses no more to Dr. Lyttelton than it does to me. Well, I certainly intended nothing

of the kind. I do not know what Dr. Lyttelton means by God; he has not yet told me. I know what is meant by the God of the Bible, or of the Westminster Confession, because in these cases what is meant by God is set forth. My complaint was that in the absence of a definition God means nothing to me, and as under the usual conditions it means little more to others, it is a source of confusion to talk about "God" as though it had a settled meaning, such as gravitation or natural selection. Observe it is not here a question of completely understanding a thing (I doubt if we *completely* understand anything) so much as knowing what it is we are to try and understand. In the case of the child and its parents, the child knows there is something to understand. In the case of "God" that there is something to understand is the very question at issue. It is not understanding that is at issue here, but existence. And if Dr. Lyttelton can make clear the existence of his "God" all the rest will be a voyage of fellow-believers trying to know more about the subject. At present the difficulty is that we do not know there is anything about which to know. We are in the position of trying to understand what a thing is without knowing whether it exists.

A Restatement.

* * *

For the sake of clarity we may sum up the matter thus: What are called religious myths are fundamentally forms of primitive error. In a world of which he knows nothing, and concerning which the only way of learning is by experience, primitive man arrives at certain conclusions concerning natural happenings. These conclusions are expressed in terms of life and intelligence. Gradually a more accurate knowledge about things leads to the primitive animistic theory being discarded in one direction after another. But by that time religion has become an established social fact. It has gathered around it the support of vested interests and of various sentiments. The consequence is, not a complete and logical rejection of the religious idea, but an attempt to import into the primitive theory of things something that was not originally there. The religious explanation, wholly discredited and discarded, becomes the religious myth, and into that myth the modern apologetic mind reads its own feelings, ideas, and aspirations. That, as I have said, may be done equally well with any fable that one likes to take in hand. That it is done with Jonah and the Whale, or the Adam and Eve story in Eden, and not with Little Jack Horner or Old Mother Hubbard, is due to accident of position. Had these stories been in the Bible, I haven't the least doubt but they would have provided texts for hundreds of sermons, and afforded spiritual nourishment to thousands of thirsty souls.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

TESTING OUR GODS.

A poor man, in our day, has many gods foisted on him; and big voices bid him, "Worship, or be —," in a menacing and confusing manner. What shall he do? By far the greater part of said gods, current in the public, whether canonized by Pope or Populus, are mere dumb Apises and beatified Prize-oxen; nay some of them, who have articulate faculty, are devils instead of gods. A poor man that would save his soul alive is reduced to the sad necessity of sharply trying his gods whether they are divine or not; which is a terrible pass for mankind, and lays an awful problem upon each man. The man must do it, however. At his own peril he will have to do this problem too, which is one of the awfulest; and his neighbours, all but a most select portion of them, portion generally *not* clad in official tiaras, can be of next to no help to him in it, nay rather will infinitely hinder him in it, as matters go.—*Carlyle, "Latter-Day Pamphlets."*

"Ignorant Worship."

II.

As St. Paul declares—men do worship—therefore there is something to worship—therefore there is God. And so this leads me to say that for us all it is a question not whether we shall worship, we are sure in some form or other to do that, but whether we shall worship ignorantly or intelligently.

THAT is a sample of the method of reasoning pursued by the Rev. W. Garrett Horder, of Ealing, in a sermon published in the *Middlesex County Times* for September 21, which is the style generally followed in the pulpit. It may satisfy an uncritical, conventional congregation; but it is essentially fallacious and of necessity unconvincing. The mere fact that many people worship furnishes no manner of proof that there is something objectively real to worship. The so-called craving for God is confined to a minority that keeps getting smaller year after year. Mr. Horder declares that its reality is denied or doubted by "people who do not think"; but Professor Leuba, of America, has proved beyond the possibility of a doubt that it is the greatest thinkers who are the greatest disbelievers. American students are rapidly becoming Atheists. Touching the investigations as to their attitude to religion, the Professor observes:—

The deepest impression left by these records is that, so far as religion is concerned, our students are grovelling in darkness. Christianity, as a system of belief, has utterly broken down, and nothing definite, adequate, and convincing has taken its place. Their beliefs, when they have any, are superficial and amateurish in the extreme. There is no generally acknowledged authority; each one believes as he can, and few seem disturbed at being unable to hold the tenets of the Churches (*The Belief in God and Immortality*, p. 213).

The most significant fact is that, in proportion as progress in education takes place, the number of disbelievers increases. Another deeply symptomatic fact is that "in every class of persons investigated, the number of believers in God is less, and in most classes very much less than the number of non-believers," and that "among the more distinguished, unbelief is very much more frequent than among the less distinguished." On this point Professor Leuba sums up as follows:—

The students' statistics show that young people enter college possessed of the beliefs still accepted, more or less perfunctorily, in the average home of the land, and that as their mental powers mature and their horizon widens, a large percentage of them abandon the cardinal Christian beliefs. It seems probable that on leaving college, from 40 to 45 per cent. of the students with whom we are concerned deny or doubt the fundamental dogmas of the Christian religion. The marked decrease in belief that takes place during the later adolescent years, in those who spend those years in study under the influence of persons of high culture, is a portentous indication of the fate which, according to our statistics, increased knowledge and the possession of certain capacities leading to eminence reserve to the beliefs in a personal God and in personal immortality (*Ibid*, pp. 280-1).

We are convinced that what is true of American students is, to say the least, equally true of the same class in our own country, and that, generally speaking, unbelief among men of science is fully as rife here as there. It is well known that many of the most influential professors in our British Universities are non-believers in a personal God as well as in the Christian religion. Mr. Horder is, therefore, radically mistaken when he says that we are all sure, in one form or another, to be worshippers, and with that statement, the other, "Therefore there is a God," inevitably falls to the ground.

This popular Congregational minister, addressing Christian believers, pronounces the Christian conception of God the highest and best; but evidently he does not realize that in doing this he is representing the Divine Being as the creation of the people who worship him. According to him, the chief defect of Hinduism is the bewildering multiplicity of its deities, and the same fault characterizes the religions of Pagan Greece and Rome. With an air of conscious superiority he adds: "Well, this must have been perplexing, to say the least. Polytheism deserves the epithet of St. Paul—of ignorantly worshipping." Buddhism is condemned because originally it had no God at all, and because now it "provides itself with many objects of worship for the eye, if it still claims there is no God for the mind," which is "neither quite satisfactory nor intelligent." Mohammedanism comes in for a word of praise because it "offers one God—one God only—with no idol of any kind to picture him to the eye," which is described as "good—very good." But the Mohammedan Deity will not do at all, because, though exceedingly great, he is forbiddingly hard. Confucianism is dismissed because it substitutes the worship of ancestors for that of a Supreme Being. "Confucius tried indeed to meet the great human craving with an Ethic—a morality without religion. And the heart wants more than that. And so I suppose it may be said Confucianism is a fading faith." Mr. Horder then adds:—

And so I might go over all the faiths of the world—and you would feel, as St. Paul did, that there was needed the declaration of something better. All the faiths of the world had elements which met certain needs, but not all the needs, of the human heart—and therefore something better was wanted. And St. Paul felt that he had that better faith to declare. To his mind Christianity came to meet all the cravings of humanity, as these other faiths had met only certain of them, or met them only imperfectly.

With all due deference to the reverend gentleman, we venture to remind him that his compendium of the characteristics of non-Christian faiths is not only "a poor substitute for seeing the religions themselves and their effects," but also unfair, inaccurate, and misleading. He expresses a wish that they could all be displayed in their true character and effects before our eyes; but is he not aware that in London there are accredited representatives of all of them, who would, doubtless, welcome the opportunity of stating their respective claims, and who would certainly challenge the accuracy of the reverend gentleman's summaries? In any case, is it not a somewhat cowardly action to decry other religions in the absence of their official defenders? Has Mr. Horder forgotten that at the beginning of the seventeenth century there was every likelihood of Christianity becoming the religion of the State in Japan, and that such a consummation was prevented by the bitter jealousies and rivalries between the different orders among its missionaries? In our own time desperate efforts are being put forth to force Christianity upon China in defiance of the fact that heathen China is morally and socially fully equal, if not superior, to Christian Europe.

Mr. Horder closes his interesting discourse with a fervid panegyric of the Christian God as an object of worship. The eulogium is exceedingly eloquent and touching. It would be extremely difficult to improve upon it. We are offered an object of worship created in the image and after the likeness of an ideally good man endowed with the impossible attributes of infinitude and omnipotence. In other words, the Christian God is, as Matthew Arnold used to say, a magnified, non-natural, impossible man, and, of necessity, non-

existent. The worship of such a Being cannot possibly produce either an individual or a nation of the purest and noblest character, because the powers with which he is clothed are wholly imaginary, like himself. He is declared to be sitting as king for ever; but that declaration is true only in the imagination of the pious. In the control of human affairs he has never had any more to do than the man in the moon. He is called the God of love and of peace, who doeth according to his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; but in history he has never once made himself known. Here the powers of good and of evil have been at perpetual strife, victory falling now to the one and now to the other, the Prince of Peace having not yet begun to reign. What has God been doing through all the centuries, and, above all, what is he doing at the moment? *Absolutely nothing because he is but an idol set up in the sanctuary of the religious imagination.* His creators can do what they like with him both in public and in private; but he remains for ever silent and inactive, neither confirming nor protesting against anything they say or do. All parties to the present War passionately appeal to him for victory, but the fighting goes on year after as if he were not.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Exploitation of Death.

We are such stuff
As dreams are made of, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep. —Shakespeare.

"THE angel of death is abroad in the land; you can almost hear the beating of his wings," said John Bright, addressing a hushed and troubled House of Commons at the time of the Crimean War. The words of the great orator come back to-day, when death has been the visitor at so many homes. One, whom we knew, who was near and dear to us, who moved in our little circle, has been met by "the fell sergeant, Death." And the mind circles ceaselessly around the labyrinths of life, that all lead in one direction, into the silent land, whither he whom we knew, he whose hand we touched but yesterday, has gone, never to return.

Since the dawn of the Christian era the fear of death and of pain has increased among the dwellers in the great cities. Fear of death scarcely exists among Asiatics, because, living in the open, their experience tells them that death and life are ever entwined in a struggle for mastery; that the victorious soldier of to-day is the corpse of to-morrow. Under Asiatic skies death is regarded as no less benign than birth, and the shadowy figure with the scythe is not to be feared as an enemy. Dwellers in towns necessarily acquire their knowledge of Nature from books, or from superficial and fleeting observation. For five months in every year Nature is represented in the towns by fog, rain, and snow, and the necessity for fires and artificial lighting. Dwellers in mean streets have no chance of meditating on the rigid processes of natural law.

The clergy exploit this ignorance. Death is, according to these pastors and masters, the "king of terrors." They heighten the effect by appealing to the fears of their hearers, and use the Devil and his fearful pyrotechnics as a lever. The terror such stories inspire is largely owing to the gross ignorance which surrounds the subject of death. Men fear it, like children do the dark, through not knowing what it is. The fear of the night can be dissipated by a little light. Death would be no bugbear if it were known better. And nobody is there to tell people, except a small number of devoted Freethinkers, who are anathema to all the Churches of

Christendom. The sermons from the clergy, archaic in thought and inflated with nonsense, deal in generalities and exaggerations. "The wages of sin is death" is their idea of wisdom. The clergy is hopelessly out of touch with modern man and common sense. Hence the Churches are emptying of men. The "cure of souls" is passing into the physician's hands with the cure of the body. For it is now admitted that a healthy body and a healthy mind go together.

Why should men fear death? It is only our nightly sleep prolonged, without a waking. Shakespeare, the supreme genius of literature, has told us that "our little life is rounded with a sleep." Sleep! All that the human fancy can conceive of refreshing and delightful things is comprised in that gentle word. Poets in all ages and in all countries have sung its praises, but of all tributes uttered on this subject, the most striking, probably, is that which Cervantes puts in the mouth of the stout philosopher, Senor Sancho Panza: "Sleep! It covers a man all over, thoughts and all, like a cloak. It is meat for the hungry, drink for the thirsty, heat for the cold, and cold for the hot." Notice how the grand old Pagans look death in the face without flinching. Epicurus says proudly: "Why should we fear death? For where death is, there are we not; and where we are, there death is not." No less emphatic is Marcus Aurelius, who bids us regard death as a friend:—

What is it to die? If we view it by itself, and stripped of those imaginary terrors in which our fears have dressed it, we shall find it to be nothing more than the mere work of Nature; but it is childish folly to be afraid of what is natural. Nay, it is not only the work of Nature, but is conducive to the good of the universe, which subsists by change.

Modern science shows that the Pagans are right. Sir Henry Halford, towards the close of his medical career, said few of his patients, in the last hours, exhibited signs of severe suffering. Sir Benjamin Brodie, the famous surgeon, stated that the mere act of dying is seldom, in any sense of the word, a painful process. The great anatomist, Sir William Hunter, bore his own dying testimony. Just before he died he whispered to his friend, Dr. Combe: "If I had strength enough to hold a pen, I would write how easy and pleasant a thing it is to die."

For thousands of years priests have chanted the old sad refrain of death as an enemy, but the Freethinker listens to far other strains. Death is the universal law of Nature, which befalls all living beings, though the majority encounter it sooner than man. After centuries of pious stupor, the world is rubbing its eyes and beginning to awake, and the priests are beginning to be found out. The wheels of progress may move slowly, but they do move. Those who drive her triumphal car through the shining fields of the world's to-morrow shall look back and see, far in the rear, a discredited ecclesiasticism. The hope that an ignorant and superstitious minority can always bend the intellectuals to its will is sheer illusion. The terror of death is passing away, because the Christian religion is decaying.

MIMNERMUS.

HIGHEST AND BEST.

The appeal to what is highest and best in men does not pay; a seeming appeal to what is highest and best does. I suppose the wealthiest corporations in the world are the Roman, the Greek, the Lutheran, and the Anglican churches. As a trade, as an art, Religion pays; but whenever there is an actual attempt to transcend, the crucifix and the stake are ready: ostracism for the man of independent means, death by starvation for the poor man, are prompt and inevitable.

—John Davidson.

Modern Methods of Salving the "Soul."

A FEW weeks ago a friend sent me a copy of Dr. McDougall's little primer on physiological psychology in Dent's series, inviting my special attention to his pathetic plea, on behalf of his fantastic "soul" theory, for a fuller recognition of the value of psychic research under the disguise of the euphemistic phrase, "new empirical evidence."

Long before, however, I had reached the end of even the introduction I had found that the author was out on a mission, for he had in this little book taken out his "soul" dogma from under the "bushel" of philosophic terminology and had put it upon the "candle-stick" of common speech so that all might see and be illumined by its metaphysical "light." So long as his views were confined to larger works the peril arising from his reactionary efforts was not such as to cause alarm, for it was more or less confined to cultured people who had sufficient knowledge to weigh his dogmatic pronouncements and estimate them at their true value. But, in the case of a primer, the matter wears an aspect far more alarming. His new and much wider circle of readers will consist largely of youth drawn from the rising generation whose adolescent minds are undisciplined, unfurnished, and unsuspecting, but thirsting for knowledge, and very susceptible to "authority" as sufficient guarantee of the truth of dogmatic pronouncements, and gratuitous assumptions.

This primer has, obviously, a two-fold object—to teach psychology and to inculcate, or at least to sow the seed of, a "soul" doctrine. And without straining the evidence it is quite justifiable to infer that the author regards the latter as the more important mission of the two. For there was no occasion for obtruding his "soul" theory on the attention of his readers. To do so in a small science primer on physiological psychology was useless, irrelevant, and superfluous—an entirely supererogatory task that vitiates an otherwise excellent primer.

He, moreover, displays that instinctive acuteness of vision possessed by insects in the detection of appropriate places for depositing their eggs; he never misses a promising opportunity of dropping a seed of his "soul" theory. And it must be admitted that he possesses rare aptitude for the task. Even if he were a professional dialectician he could not be more proficient in the art of engendering belief in the minds of his readers, and observe more faithfully their cardinal rule—*assume* what you cannot prove, and discuss its alleged attributes and traits; make a liberal use of *question-begging* terms, phrases, epithets, and queries; *deliver* your theories, *pronounce* your dogmas, be *oracular*, and never introduce a gratuitous dogma buttressed with arguments. If, for example, you wish to engender belief in angels, do not attempt to prove their existence, but discuss their orders and functions, or the *pros* and *cons* as to whether or not they actually appeared to the soldiers at Mons. He is verily a past-master of the art of mystification. He delivers his creed with that complacent nonchalance that disarms criticism—that quiet unobtrusiveness that was never excelled by any disciple of the famous saint of Loyola.

When natural truths and principles which had an interpretative bearing upon the origin and meaning of phenomenal existence were first discovered and established, it was invariably found that they were in more or less obvious disagreement and conflict with some primitive dogma or myth of religious belief. As a natural

result of this antagonism a state of war ensued between the votaries of religion and the supporters and advocates of natural knowledge. Goaded by the instincts of self-preservation, the religionists persecuted the innovators with every weapon that malicious ingenuity could devise. And the Deity, if "silence proves consent," obviously approved of the truth-suppressing policy of his priesthood, despite the fact that he himself is credited with being the fountain-head of all truth.

In the end, however, natural science prevailed and myth and dogma, one by one, lay dead or dying; and, like all things inanimate, they tended to subside beneath the waves of oblivion. But religion could not subsist without them. So something had to be done to keep them afloat on the surface of current belief; and the change of policy brought into existence a new functionary—the harmonizing apologist. His duty was to "prove" that there was in reality no contradiction, no conflict, between them. That the antagonism between myth and science was only superficial, and that it required only a little verbal manipulation of the divinely inspired records to bring the two into harmony. So gradually persecution relaxed its methods; it abandoned its barbaric savagery and brutality, and confined its methods to calumny and abuse, and to social ostracism and boycott. And the harmonizer was duly installed in place of the holy inquisitor to keep the contents of the Christian creed floating on the surface as orthodox belief.

Such was the antagonism between the "soul" myth and the gradually discovered fact that mind was the function of the cerebral system.

During the persecuting period the science of any hostile truth was ignored, scouted, and denounced in the name of God; but immediately the "salving" policy had come into vogue a complete *volte face* was effected. Defenders of the faith who had expert knowledge of science were soon at a premium. Intimate scientific knowledge became indispensable in order to endow the harmonizer with that authority to give his "salving platforms" the necessary buoyancy and stability. And for that reason no better man could be found than the author of *Mind and Body* to undertake the operation of "salving the soul."

Before we begin discussing the "barrage" he sets up in defence of his "soul" theory, let us, for an instant, glance at the predeliction and bias betrayed by a somewhat conspicuous inconsistency. He displays a considerable punctiliousness in the use of terms lest they should "commit him to theories and presuppositions." It is, if consistently observed, a most commendable practice. And more, it is a policy that one had a right to expect from the author of *Mind and Body*, and a Fellow of the Royal Society. But alas! he belies his solicitude in almost the very breath with which he avows it. While demurring to using quite innocent psychological terms he freely uses the term "soul" without a demur, apology, or any attempt at defining it. Now, if there is a term in the English language which should be avoided on account of "theoretical" implications, well, that word is "soul." It is imbued with vague notions of personality, immortality, and of "controlment of voluntary actions," besides the emotions of religious bias and sentiment with which it is swathed.

He refers to it as "common sense theory." To dignify a term embodying the superstitious ignorance of a semi-barbaric age as "theory" and as "common sense" is to betray a predeliction of some fixity and strength. And this honourable mention is not an isolated occurrence; it is his wont throughout the primer to allude to any spiritualistic pretensions which appear to

harmonize with his gratuitous theory in terms as respectful as his references to established generalizations of science are uniformly disparaging.

KERIDON.

(To be continued.)

Acid Drops.

Rev. J. T. Cox, Clerk to the Synod of Aberdeen, belongs to the good old school of theologians. We give him the same welcome that we should to a stray member of some almost extinct species. Mr. Cox naturally objects to religious instruction being permissive in the new Scotch Education Bill, and desires it to be mandatory. That, he says, is the only safeguard. It is one of the peculiarities of the situation that, although the clergy declare the people desire religious education, they will not have it unless it is forced on them. But there are some people, says Mr. Cox—Secularists and Agnostics—who object to religious education in the schools. Moreover, some of them are teachers. Here Mr. Cox rises to the occasion. His remedy is, "Clear them out of our schools. We have no use for such instructors of our children." Now, that is the "only way." Clear them out of the schools, also out of the country; that is the only way to check the growing feeling in favour of Secular Education.

The soldier, whose life was saved by a New Testament intercepting a bullet, has again turned up, this time in the *Yorkshire Evening Post*. The incident may be genuine, but a pack of cards would have done just as well. And we feel sure thousands of bullets must have been intercepted during the War by all sorts of things. The incident is only noticeable because of its testimony to the incurable stupidity of some people

The *Daily News* says that Christian Science literature is being supplied to the troops on a very generous scale. It is somewhat late in the day to apply Christian Science in the present War; but they might make a modest start in the Veterinary Department.

The Sabbatarians are unusually active in Hull, and are not only summoning tradesmen for opening on Sundays, but also including customers in the charge for aiding and abetting. Is this a part of the long-promised revival of religion?

A Bayswater clergyman says that optimists had been the curse of the nation. If one has the brains of a hen, surely it is unnecessary to advertise the fact unduly.

A newspaper paragraph states that the Corporal Correction League, which advocates the use of the hard hand on children of tender years, has the support of many clergymen. We can understand the clerical support, for these gentlemen are always flogging dead horses.

A correspondent, who signs himself "A Churchman," writes to say that he cannot understand why we continue to send the *Freethinker* to soldiers, as he considers it a very "one-sided" and "harmful" publication. Therefore, we "deserve to be suppressed." To demonstrate our iniquity, he encloses a cutting from the *Daily Mail* of October 15, containing an alleged interview with a soldier, who says there is one indispensable book for every soldier—the Bible. The character of the *Daily Mail* forbids our questioning the truth of this. Indeed, its veracity is evidenced by the way in which soldiers clamour for Bibles when they come home, write for them when they are abroad, and their constant reading of it in tram, train, and bus.

Candles have gone up in price enormously. Catholic priests will be delighted. We hope it will not mean a strike in Purgatory.

"Clerical Error" was a bold headline in a London daily paper. The accompanying letterpress referred to costing at a factory, and not to the blunders of parsons. The latter are past counting.

Says *Life and Opinion*, a Church of Scotland magazine, an Australian newspaper some time ago conducted a competition as to "Australia's best proverb," and the prize was given to this saying, "When your neighbour quotes Scripture, brand your calves early." It is a popular judgment on Christian profession that may well humiliate. But it is quite evident that the Australians who declared this adage to be the best must have had considerable experience behind them.

Superstitions die hard, but we did think the Mons angels were done with. Now, we really see no reason why some one should not start selling wing feathers as souvenirs. We feel sure many would purchase. At any rate, here is the Bishop of Durham, in a letter to the *Spectator*, saying he heard from the vicar of Crowthwaite, who heard from some British soldiers, who were told by some prisoners, how the Germans were led to retreat in 1914 because "they saw strong reinforcements" coming along. Now, the original story was not that British soldiers were seen coming, but that angels were seen in the sky. This story was confessedly manufactured by Mr. Arthur Machen, and was repeated as true, until he exposed the whole thing. Perhaps the Bishop of Durham thinks that after four years people may have forgotten its origin. What we should like to know is, does the Bishop of Durham believe it?

That such a story should be told, and believed, is enough to make one almost despair of human sanity. In any case, it is a reminder of how slight is our claim to be called a civilized people. The War itself was a challenge to that claim. The amount of credulity, hatred, lying, and brutality evidenced during these four years, whatever the qualities of a contrary character manifested; the general appeals for days of prayer, humiliation, repentance, etc., to achieve success in the War; the picture of the Prime Minister leading a procession of Members of Parliament to one of our "joss-houses" to pray for victory—like so many savages petitioning for the help of their tribal "joss"—are all evidence of how near the surface is the primitive savage. Talk about our work being done! Why, we have only just commenced. We are just making good our foothold. We have yet to tread a path broad enough for all to follow.

Many people imagined that the Devil was dead, but, on the authority of General Sir Ian Hamilton, this is not so. His Satanic Majesty is only on the retired list. The General assures us that "the Devil has had a seal set upon him that he will deceive the nations no more for a thousand years." Plainly, there is nothing to do but to disband the clergy for that period.

The Church frowns at divorce, but the public smiles at the Church. At the Divorce Court there has never been such a glut of work, no less than 935 cases being on the list for trial.

The Service Candidates' Committee has received names of 1,400 soldiers who wish to become parsons at the end of the War. Will someone tell these men of the unhappy "rural dean" who fed his family on 6½d. a meal?

The "godly" occasionally drop into evil ways. Here are two illustrations from the same issue of the *News of the World*. Harry Bowen, a married man, of West Bromwich, and a Sunday-school teacher, was summoned for the maintenance of an illegitimate child. The usual order was made. In the other case, a curate, of Rock Ferry, was charged with insulting behaviour towards women in Lord Street, Liverpool. Some of the evidence given by girls was of a rather startling nature. The Vicar of St. George's, Stockport, gave the accused an excellent character, but the magistrate said

he never felt less doubt about any case before him. Result 40s. fine or one month.

The organist of an Isle of Wight church is also a hair-dresser; so a London newspaper says. We can guess which is the better-paid employment.

The cause of the Allies' success is now given to the world. It is due neither to the strategy of Foch nor the bravery of the soldiers. On the authority of Alderman L. Pound (City London), just before the orders for the advance were given, "a bishop of the Church of England, who happened to be present," suggested to General Haig that General Headquarters should stop work and ask for divine guidance and protection. This was done, and success resulted. Now we know all about it. For no one would doubt the word of Alderman Pound.

The Dean of Carlisle is a gentleman who receives a comfortable salary for preaching the Gospel of non-resistance, and of returning good for evil. By way of showing that he earns his salary, he is reported in the *Evening News* of October 17 as saying that the way to stop the Germans destroying towns in their retreat is to destroy German towns. He thinks the destruction of some quarters of Berlin would be advisable. How, on earth, that will make good the damage done by the Germans we are puzzled to conceive. Punishment for those responsible for the wanton destruction of towns, we can understand, and advocate to not set about the work of destruction ourselves to show that we can be as brutal as others when occasion serves. And the advocate of this policy is a dean of the Christian Church!

The *Northern Daily Telegraph* reports a speech of the Vicar of Clitheroe complaining of the making of new bishops. He says that each new bishop requires the investing of over £70,000, and for that sum sixteen clergymen could be obtained. We agree that spending all this money on a bishop is a sad waste of funds; but if we are to have sixteen clergymen instead of one, we don't see how we are going to gain by not spending it on a bishop. Much better to spend it in a more reasonable manner.

The following is from a Johannesburg paper, the only reference on the cutting sent being July, 1918:—

On Friday morning four natives were hanged at Bloemfontein gaol (says the *Friend*), three having been sentenced at the last Criminal Sessions for rape on a young white girl at Bethlehem, while the other one was the murderer of the warder at the Ficksburg gaol. All four died Christians. Two were Presbyterians, one Church of England, and the fourth, who was a heathen, was received into the Catholic Church at his own request a few days before he paid the penalty of the law.

We hope this striking testimony to the value of missionary work will be duly recorded in the missionary reports. For without mission work they might have died without the solace of the Christian faith.

CURSE OF INSINCERITY.

This is the sad condition of the insincere man. He is doomed all his days to deal with insincerities; to live, move, and have his being in traditions and conventionalities. If the traditions have grown old, the conventionalities will be mostly false; true in no sense can they be for him; never shall he behold the truth of any matter; formulæ, theologic, economic and other, certain superficial readings of truth, required in the market-place, these he will take with him, these he will apply dextrously, and with these he will have to satisfy himself. Sincerity shall not exist for him; he shall think that he has found it, while it is yet far away. The deep, awful and indeed divine quality of truth that lies in every object, and in virtue of which the object exists,—from his poor eyes this is for ever hidden. Not with austere divine realities which belong to the Universe and to Eternity, but with paltry, ambiguous phantasms, comfortable and uncomfortable, which belong to his own parish, and to the current week, or generation shall he pass his days.—*Carlyle*, "Latter-Day Pamphlets."

C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

November 10, Liverpool; November 17, Birmingham; November 24, Leeds; November 27 to December 1, South Wales; December 8, Leicester; December 15, Nuneaton.

To Correspondents.

- J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—November 3, Manchester; November 10, Sheffield; December 1, Swansea.
- J. DE B.—Received with thanks. We will send *Freethinker* with other literature to soldier as desired. For the information of other readers we may again state that we shall be glad to receive the names and addresses of soldiers and sailors to whom parcels of literature and copies of the *Freethinker* would be of service.
- K. J.—There is really no need to apologise for the smallness of your contribution to the Sustentation Fund. We assume that those who help do so to the extent of their sympathies and circumstances. And that is all we have a right to expect. Of course, if all our readers did something we could laugh at all financial troubles due to the War. But we have no cause and no inclination to complain.
- S. CLOWES.—It is good of you to send along your fourth contribution to the Fund. The other matter is quite all right.
- P. MURPHY.—The address of the Secretary of the Liverpool Branch is: W. McKelvie, 68 St. John's Road, Waterloo, Liverpool. Mr. Cohen will be lecturing in Liverpool on November 10.
- F. JACKSON.—Thanks for cutting. The story might be true, but we do not care to publish it unless accompanied by stronger evidence than is supplied in the paragraph enclosed.
- T. R. N.—There is no evidence, so far as we are aware, of an increase of insanity in the racial stock. There has been an increase in the number of lunatics, but that is due to the suppression of causes that served to eliminate those with a predisposition to insanity.
- B. F. B.—Delays are apt to occur nowadays owing to shortage of labour and uncertainty of postal delivery. We have handed your letter to our shop manager. We appreciate your compliments concerning the *Freethinker*.
- J. AND J. M'GLASHAN.—In quite good time. Thanks for your appreciation and good wishes.
- J. G. F. sends us 9s. for the purpose of distributing literature amongst the troops.
- S. LIDGETT.—We are sending one of our parcels to the address given. Hope it will do good.
- W. J.—What is meant by praying in "a spirit of earnest inquiry"? Would it fill the bill if one prayed without expectation of an answer being received? And if one does expect an answer, one already believes in prayer, and proof is unnecessary.
- G. OGILVIE.—We feel sure you will never be backward in doing what you can to help the *Freethinker*. The past four years has furnished ample proof of how many sincere friends the paper has.
- 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.

The Special Conference ordered by the last General Conference will be held at Birmingham on November 13. The business of the Conference will be the consideration of a scheme of reconstruction drawn up by a Special Committee appointed for that purpose, with all amendments and suggestions that are offered. The Conference will meet in the Repertory Theatre at 10.30 and 2.30, and a public demonstration will be held in the evening. The President will occupy the chair on all three occasions.

As the business to be done at this Conference is of great interest to the future of the Society, we hope that as many members will attend as is possible, and that all Branches will make a special effort to send a delegate. Those who intend visiting the Conference should communicate with the Secretary, Miss Vance, as early as possible, so that accommodation may be secured. The earlier this is done, the better.

Birmingham friends will please note that Mr. Harry Snell lectures in the Repertory Theatre to-day (October 27), at 7 o'clock, on "Fifty Years of Darwinism: its Influence on Religion and Politics." We hope to hear that the theatre was crowded. It ought to be?

A commencement is being made with Freethought work in Pontypridd, South Wales, to-day (October 27). Mr. Saphin will lecture in the I.L.P. Hall, Graig, at 2.30. We trust that Freethinkers in the district will give the "Revival" a good start by making a special effort to be present. Mr. Cohen is hoping to visit Pontypridd towards the end of November.

Next Sunday (Nov. 3) Mr. Clifford Williams lectures at the Baths Assembly Rooms, at 7 o'clock, on "Secularism v. Christianity." The local Secretary, Mr. R. C. Hughes, 224 Lockhurst Lane, will be pleased to hear from anyone who is willing to co-operate in making the meeting successful. This will be a good occasion to give the new Coventry Branch a good send-off with its propaganda.

One of our readers tells us that after distributing some of our literature among his fellow-soldiers, one of his officers asked him to get some more literature, and they would pay for it. As a result of his propaganda, he has secured a number of new readers, and is expecting more. We hope he will not be disappointed. Meanwhile, we should be glad to hear from soldiers, either at home or abroad, who would care to receive parcels of literature, and would undertake the distribution thereof. It is good work all the time.

We are asked to announce that the *Freethinker*, with all publications of the Pioneer Press, can now be obtained at the Progressive Book Stall, 47 New Street, Paisley. This is one of many centres of distribution we hope to see established in the near future.

"Freethinker" Sustentation Fund.

The purpose of this Fund is to make good part of the deficit caused by the very heavy increase in the cost of paper, advance of wages, etc. A full statement on this head was made in our issue for September 1.

Eighth List of Subscriptions.

Previously acknowledged:—£392 os. 3d. G. H. Green, 5s. W. H. Blackmore (second subscription), 5s. K. J., 2s. 6d. J. De B. and Wife, £1 1s. S. Clowes (fourth subscription), 4s. M. B., 5s. W. E. Hickman, 2s. 6d. W. Francis, 5s. A. B., 10s. J. and J. McGlashan, £2. G. Ogilvie, £1 1s. A. K. Ingarthdale, £1 1s. C. Bridger, 5s. E. Morrison, 10s. R. J. Hunter, 5s. Harold Elliott, 10s. S. Lidgett, 5s. G. B. Baillie, 10s. A. R. Richards, 3s. 6d. J. Stringer, 2s. 10d.

Per E. Pinder:—G. H. Folwell, £1. H. H. Woolley, 10s. W. Hopkins, 3s. E. Pinder, 3s. R. Wheatley, 2s. A. Martin, 2s.

Per Sec. Manchester Branch:—G. Brown, 3s. R. C. Cole, 5s. M. Greenwood, 2s. 6d. Mrs. Wilcock, 2s. 6d. Total, £404 4s. 7d.

Corrections.—"Mr. and Mrs. A. E. Browne, 5s." in our issue for October 6 should read "Mr. and Mrs. A. E. Broome." "A. W. B., £5" in our issue for October 13 should read "A. W. B. Shaw."

A Naturalist's Paradise.

II.

(Continued from p. 550.)

THAT intelligent creature, the orangutan, or maias, as the native Malays call it, is still comparatively common in Borneo, even in Sarawak itself. This ape's distribution throughout the island is, however, dependent on the course of the streams, for the animal never appears to cross any channel, even the narrowest. The orang, or maias, is now restricted to Borneo and Sumatra, although it formerly enjoyed a wider range.

Shelford unsuccessfully strove to ascertain the domestic arrangements of the maias. The animal is extremely difficult to observe in its arboreal home. Essentially a tree-dweller, it rarely descends to earth, save when in need of water, and its favourite trees root in swampy soil through which the inquisitive naturalist slowly progresses while the object of his search skips nimbly along the upper branches of the trees. Again, the investigator is seriously handicapped by the circumstance that, although a large organism, the maias is surprisingly inconspicuous in its leafy surroundings.

A fruit-eating creature, the maias wanders widely to gather food, and seldom lingers on any given spot. The rhinoceros and wild cattle of Borneo have practically disappeared, so ruthless has been their treatment. To prevent the extinction of the maias, the Sarawak authorities imposed a strict limit on the number any one collector was entitled to slay. The wholesale destruction of the island's orchids has also necessitated their protection. In their *History of Sarawak*, Gould and Bampfyde declare that: "Collectors would ruthlessly destroy all orchids, especially the rarer kinds, which they could not carry away, in order to prevent others from collecting them."

Dr. Hose secured an excellent photograph of the nest or couch which the maias (orang-utan) constructs in the branches of the tree in which it sleeps. This structure is little larger than a rook's nest, and is composed of leaves and twigs. Upon this arboreal bed the ape reposes on his back, and firmly clutches the nearest branches with his hands and feet. In this way the maias is supported both by the small nest and the boughs which he holds in firm embrace even in deepest slumber. Shelford possessed a young maias which always retired to rest in an empty apartment. This room contained an iron bedstead, and we are told that

on to the steel laths of this the ape would solemnly climb every evening at about 6.30; he invariably sprawled on the flat of his back, pulled over his head and chest a piece of sacking with which he was provided, and with his hands and feet got a good grip on the posts or frame of the bed. In a few minutes he would be asleep, and his snoring was so loud that he could be heard nearly all over the house.

According to the natives, the female maias, when her period of confinement approaches, arranges a great bed of branches in a trees, and remains there for several days. Most of the Bornean peoples regard this ape as an uncanny creature whose glance is unlucky, and at whom it is unwise to laugh. Both Kayans and Kenyahs view the maias with superstitious dread. Although a powerful animal, the maias is very docile unless enraged by persecution. But when infuriated the ape becomes a formidable antagonist, and will inflict serious injury even on his human enemies. In captivity the young maias proves an affectionate, entertaining, intelligent and cleanly pet. Its tricks betray numerous resemblances to the habits of small children. One of these is certainly sug-

gestive. Shelford notes that the maias, when picking up a tiny object,

such as a pea or a pellet of bread, does so, not with the tips of the thumb and first finger, but pushes the object with the ball of the thumb against the side of the proximal phalanx of the first finger, all the fingers being flexed, and so holding it, lifts it up. A young baby nearly always acts in the same way when trying to pick up a small object.

Several varieties of gibbon are found in Borneo. These little tailless apes congregate in large numbers, and their musical voices hail the sunrise in the primeval forest. The gibbon is a favourite pet not merely with the white residents but with the natives also. The animal walks erect, holding his long arms aloft, although his gait suggests that of a tipsy man. In mental power the gibbon falls far below the other anthropoid apes. By the Kenyahs the gibbon is sometimes regarded as sacred. A Kenyah chief informed Dr. Hose that his people would never dream of killing a gibbon, although "other Kenyahs will kill and probably eat it." In this instance the ape is evidently a tribal totem.

Among the various monkeys there are two quite abundant species of Macaques. One of these monkeys—the pig-tailed Macaque, or Brok, is strikingly intelligent, and the Malays train them to gather coconuts. First we are told:—

A cord is fastened round the monkey's waist, and it is led to a coconut palm which it rapidly climbs. It then lays hold of a nut, and if the owner judges the nut to be ripe for plucking he shouts to the monkey, which then twists the nut round and round till the stalk is broken and lets it fall to the ground; if the monkey clutches hold of an unripe fruit, the owner tugs the end of the cord and the monkey tries another. I have seen a Brok act as a very effective fruit picker, although the use of the cord was dispensed with altogether, the monkey being guided by the tones and inflections of his master's voice.—(*A Naturalist in Borneo*).

While the Moslem Malays thus employ the monkey, the Pagan Kenyahs and Kayans vaguely view the animal as a hairy relative. In the districts inhabited by these tribes the Macaque is very commonly engaged in plundering the rice fields. In such circumstances resentment banishes fear, and the rice stealer is slain. But its flesh is taboo to the people, and they never eat it, although various other Bornean tribes esteem the meat of the Macaque a rare delicacy. Officered and led by a powerful male, this monkey wanders in droves through the jungle, and will fight with savage fury when attacked.

The eminent naturalist, Mr. H. N. Ridley, F.R.S., states that the commonest simian in Borneo, the crab-eating macaque, is also gregarious. It appears that the leading male of one of these monkey bands enjoys special privileges both of bed and board. The young are delivered in the trees, and in cases of troublesome parturition, the other females act as midwives, frequently with tragic consequences to the baby.

The native name for this macaque is "Kra," from the curious cry the animal makes when angered or alarmed. But the monkey really possesses extensive powers of expression. Fear, rage, contentment, wonder, and other feelings are all indicated by special sounds or signs. Ridley assures us that it is quite possible to distinguish the alarm note of this animal in the presence of a tiger from that uttered at the approach of a man.

The remaining monkeys of Borneo are all representatives of the Semnopithecus or Presbytes genus, with the solitary exception of the singular *Nasalis larvatus*, as yet never encountered elsewhere. This large-nosed monkey is a very comical-looking creature, with a most curiously prominent proboscis. The native designation

for this animal is Orang Blanda (Dutchman), presumably because its nasal organ is pointed like that of a European, while the noses of the native races are broad and flat. Contrary to a quite general belief, this monkey subsists exclusively on vegetable food. The stories of its cruel robbery of the eggs and fledglings of beautiful birds appear to be entirely apocryphal.

The island of Madagascar is the chief habitat of the lemur, but two species of these quaint creatures are resident in Borneo. The slow Loris is a tree-dweller, and dozes through the day. As the day declines, the animal awakes, and searches for the insects which form its main food. Like lemurs in general, it is of feeble mentality, and its weird appearance seems solely responsible for the numerous superstitions concerning it which prevail among the Malays. Perhaps a few of this lemur's water-drops might prove useful in hunting for spirits in our own latitudes, for the animal's tears, it is said, "when applied to human eyeballs.....impart such clearness of sight that ghosts become visible."

One of the most uncanny creatures on earth is *Tarsius spectrum*. This little lemur's dark furry body scarcely exceeds $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length, while its naked six-inch tail, something like a rat's, is decked at its extremity with a tuft of scanty hair. Its ears are large and very sensitive, while its eyes are simply enormous. The tarsier's diet mainly consists of cockroaches and insects, which it seizes with its wonderfully efficient hands. The lemur remains dormant during daylight, but as the evening advances it becomes eagerly occupied in its hunt for prey. Shelford refers to a tarsier that was kept under observation as it searched for insects which had tumbled into the traps of *Nepenthes*—the insectivorous pitcher plant. These flies and beetles had been drowned in the water that had gathered in the receptacles of the *Nepenthes*, and they were now drawn forth and greedily devoured by the hungry lemur. It is a pity that this intensely interesting animal so speedily languishes and dies in captivity, because if available as a pet, far fuller knowledge of its habits and instincts might be obtained than is now possessed. The female brings forth a single young one at a time, and this she will bear in her mouth in much the same manner as the domestic cat will carry her kitten.

(To be continued.) T. F. PALMER.

Writers and Readers.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH (1552?-1618).

To the majority of educated Englishmen sentimental emphasis is as hateful as is his Holiness the Pope to an Orangeman. We are nothing if not cool and critical. We prefer under to over-statement. Yet there are times when a little sentimental enthusiasm is salutary, especially when we commemorate the life and work of some great man who has helped to make us what we are. With our equipment, a less critical people would be celebrating an anniversary or some sort of centenary every week in the year. We seem studiously to avoid such rejoicings, possibly because they imply a good conceit of ourselves. Now, modesty is an excellent thing; but it may be carried too far, and it is carried too far when it makes us forget or esteem lightly the men of worth who have given us of their best. Those of my readers who have noted our national idiosyncrasy will be glad to see that the tercentenary of Sir Walter Raleigh's death on October 29 is to be commemorated here in London, and at Raleigh, the capital of North Carolina. Mr. Gosse is to deliver a panegyric at the Mansion House, and, of course, the parsons are to have their say. To-day, at St. Margaret's, Westminster, they will sing the praises of a Lucretian Theist, the friend of the Atheist Marlowe and the founder of the first Freethought circle for the discussion of religion—Raleigh's "School of Atheism," as it was called by a Jesuit pamphleteer of the time.

Raleigh was born about 1552; he was a Devonshire man, and came of good stock, but not good enough to prevent his being looked down upon as an adventurer, a *novus homo*, by the great nobles. He went to Oxford at the age of twelve or thirteen, but how long he was there we do not know. He acquired there, no doubt, that love of reading and study which was a passion with him to the end. He was fighting for the Huguenots in France, and was in the South of France when the Catholics were turning Paris into a hell on St. Bartholomew's Day, 1572. He saw his Protestant friends smoke out their enemies who were hiding in the caves of the Languedoc hills. It is possible, too, that he saw some fighting in the Low Countries. In 1578 he was in England, joining his step-brother, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, in setting out a fleet of legalized pirate ships. In 1580 he was given the rank of captain in the English Army, and sailed to Ireland, to help in quieting that rebellious country. In this sort of work he did not disdain to employ the methods of the "devil-dogs of Spain," for whose brutality he had no words strong enough. In 1581 he was sent to London with despatches, and managed to attract the attention of the elderly queen, who had a passion for handsome young men. His wit, eloquence, and fine manners brought him immense wealth and unlimited power, while his overbearing temper caused the nobility to regard him as an upstart. Up to 1603, he was the best-hated man in England. Temperamentally, he was energetic and restless, and ill-satisfied with the petty intrigues of a court. His ambition was to discover new lands and found colonies oversea. He is said to have spent £40,000 of his own money on the Virginian schemes—a gigantic sum when we remember that the Elizabethan pound was worth eight of ours. Unfortunately, all his enterprises were immediate failures, and when he had lost the patronage of the queen by injudiciously marrying without her permission, he became a butt for the satirist and playwright. A friend of mine, the late Mr. H. C. Hart, identified Raleigh as Sir Puntarvolo in *Everyman out of his Humour* and Amorphus in *Cynthia's Revels*. With all her jealousy and uncertainty of temper, Elizabeth remained a good friend to Raleigh, but at her death he lost everything except that peace which the outer world cannot give. The hypocritical pedant, James, had him tried and condemned on a frivolous charge in 1603, and kept him in prison in the Tower for fourteen years. His confinement was alleviated by reading, meditation, and scientific experiments, and intercourse with his family and friends. There he wrote his political and philosophic essays, and also his long *History of the World*, beginning with chaos and getting no further than the successors of Alexander the Great. In 1617 he was released, and set out once more to discover the golden city of Manoa, on the banks of the Orinoco. He was unsuccessful, and, unfortunately, came into collision with the Spaniards, for whose friendship James was anxious. When Raleigh returned empty-handed and broken, his head was presented as a peace offering to outraged Spain. The barbarous sentence of hanging, drawing, and quartering, originally passed in 1603 (he was then reprieved), was carried out at Westminster on October 29, 1618.

For many people, Raleigh is merely a brave soldier and daring adventurer. Others remember him because he introduced the potato into Ireland, and made the smoking of tobacco fashionable; but for the student of English letters he is a considerable poet in an age of great poetry, and at his best a master of prose style. Linked by close friendship with Spenser, he wrote a fine commendatory sonnet to the first edition of the *Fairy Queen*. It will be found in all the anthologies. His early verses are written in the style of the day; they are witty and full of frigid conceits; he plays with words and feelings. Later, the note of passion deepening, the thoughts take on a melancholy cast; the melancholy of a faith in man chastened and disabused. For him as for Jacques in *As You Like It*, the world is a stage, and men merely strutting players, with feigned words and lying actions:—

We are dressed for life's short comedy,

On earth, the stage.....

The graves which hide us from the scorching sun

Are like drawn curtains when the play is done.

As a prose writer he began with an anonymous tract describing the gallant fight of the little *Revenge* with the great Spanish men-of-war. This was published in 1591, four years before Sidney's *Apologie for Poetrie* saw the light. It is a model of simple and direct prose as this passage will show:—

All the powder of the *Revenge* to the last barrel was now spent, all her pikes broken, forty of her best men slain, and the most part of the rest hurt. In the beginning of the fight she had but one hundred free from sickness, and four score and ten sick, laid in hold upon ballast. A small troop of men to such a ship, and a weak garrison to resist so mighty an army. By those hundred all were sustained, the volleys, the boardings and entrings of fifteen ships of war, besides those which beat her at large. On the contrary, the Spanish were always supplied with soldiers brought from every squadron; all manner of arms, and powder at will. Unto ours there remained no comfort at all, no hope, no supply either of ships, men or weapons; the masts all beaten overboard, all her tackle cut asunder, her upper work altogether razed; and in effect evened she was with the water—but the very foundation or bottom of a ship, nothing being left overhead either for flight or defence.

This is the straightforward prose of a cultured man of action. Its beauty lies in its sinewy strength, its easy adaptability to all moods. With Raleigh it was to evolve into a style rich, complicated, and singularly harmonious, a style to which Sir Thomas Browne was to add the last perfection. It was the fruit of the long hours of thought and meditation spent in the not unpleasant solitude of the Tower—the most fruitful if not the happiest period of Raleigh's life. There he wrote his *History of the World* for the instruction of the engaging Prince Henry. It is a fearsome-looking folio full of painstaking and dull dissertations on impossible subjects, but enriched here and there with eloquent meditations and acute reflections that repay one amply for the trouble of looking for them. The apostrophe to Death, with which the book closes, "O eloquent just and mighty death," is too well known to quote. In the preface he says:—

But let every man value his own wisdom, as he pleaseth. Let the Rich man think all fools, that cannot equal his abundance; the Revenger esteem all negligent that have not trodden down their opposites; the Politician, all gross that cannot merchandise their faith: Yet when we once come in sight of the Port of death, to which all winds drive us, and when by letting fall that fatal Anchor, which can never be weighed again, the Navigation of this life takes end: Then it is, I say, that our own cogitations (those sad and severe cogitations, formerly beaten from us by our health and felicity) return again, and pay us to the uttermost for all the pleasing passages of our life past.....

He ends his historical reflections on the same note of sobriety:—

It is therefore death alone that can suddenly make man to know himself. He tells the proud and insolent that they are Objects, and humbles them at the instant; makes them cry, complain and repent; yea, even to hate their forepassed happiness. He takes account of the rich, and proves him a beggar; a naked beggar, which hath interest in nothing, but in the gravel that fills his mouth. He holds a Glass before the eyes of the most beautiful, and makes them see therein their deformity and rottenness; and they acknowledge it.

I have noted that Raleigh was interested in free discussion of religious subjects, and numbered among his friends many who held heterodox, if not Atheistic, opinions. Like most men in those dangerous times, he made a formal profession of belief having no taste for martyrdom. He had pondered the *Essays* in Roman type, and had found many things to his taste in Charron's *De la Sagesse* (1601), transcribing passages from it in his *History of the World*. "By the audacity of his generalisations," says an acute foreign critic, M. Jusserand "Raleigh is closely related to a critical movement which was to develop unceasingly, beginning with Herbert of Cherbury, Hobbes and Locke, and ending with the deists and sceptics of the eighteenth century." But, I imagine, it is not this aspect of the great Elizabethan that will commend itself to our religious friends to-day at St. Margaret's, Westminster.

GEO. UNDERWOOD,

Correspondence.

BUDDHISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Your contributor, "Mimnermus," on page 532 of your issue dated 13th inst., makes two misleading remarks regarding Buddhism.

In the first place, those acquainted with the teaching of the Gotama Buddha will hardly need to be told that it took the form of a philosophy rather than a religion.

But worse still is the seeming support given to the somewhat vulgar error, that Edwin Arnold's purely imaginary poem, written with the direct object of drawing an analogy between the Founders of Christianity and Buddhism, was an actual rendering of the latter's words.

ARTHUR J. E. PREECE.

THE TEST OF EXPERIENCE.

SIR,—May I be allowed through the medium of your columns briefly to draw attention to a point which seems to militate against the Rationalist criterion? The theory that experience provides the only rational method of acquiring knowledge seems to me to be fraught with some difficulty. I mention it here as one seeking an explanation, which, very probably, you, sir, or some of your readers, may be able to offer. I notice that the Memorandum of Association of the R.P.A. says: "Rationalism may be defined as the mental attitude which unreservedly accepts the supremacy of Reason, and aims at establishing a system of philosophy and ethics verifiable by experience, and independent of all arbitrary assumptions or authority." But, if we are so determined to limit philosophy to what is actually verifiable, it follows that we are deliberately diminishing our possible store of knowledge. Is it not unduly confining Reason, that "King of Heaven and Earth," to make it embrace a field no wider than that of experience? Without in any way belittling the importance of sensation and sense-perception, it seems to me that certainty is also the property of thought, by which man is differentiated from the rest of the animal creation. Plato was one of the first thinkers to appreciate the great distinction between reality and appearance; and before him Heraclitus of Ephesus pointed out that experience ought not to be considered as the ultimate criterion of reality—a truth which many great thinkers of all ages have repeatedly emphasized. There are many commonly accepted scientific truths which owe their origin, not to observation and experience alone, but rather to inductive reasoning on the data supplied by observation and experience. If we were content to accept the test of experience only, we should no longer be able to believe in such scientifically established facts as the motion of the earth in space or the Copernican system. Thus, would not such a method of attempting to exclude a first cause by reason of which all things are—commonly labelled God by theologians—at the same time tend to eliminate Heliocentricism and other accepted scientific beliefs founded on a sound basis of probability? Moreover, it seems to me that such a philosophy must necessarily exclude that very inductive principle by which scientific hypotheses come into being; for this same inductive principle cannot be proved by any appeal to experience, and is itself essentially assumed. It is true that with regard to examined cases experience may be expected to confirm the inductive principle; but, in dealing with unexamined cases, it would appear that an inference from the examined to the unexamined can only be justified by the inductive principle. From this it appears that arguments, purporting to be based on experience, which attempt to argue as to the experienced, can only do so by assuming the inductive principle. Hence to endeavour to apply experience in proof of the inductive principle seems to me to involve a begging of the question.

Thus the Rationalist system of philosophy does seem to require assumptions, and the definition of the Memorandum to which I refer seems to imply a contradiction. Personally, I am inclined to believe that to arrive at certainty

about anything, we are not bound to do so, only through the medium of sensation, though I admit that this is the more usual way. But certainty belongs as much as anything to thought as distinct from animal sensation, and it is a state of mind which may be brought about by inductive reasoning just as much as by direct evidence. This seems to me to explain why people can be certain of the existence of God without having any direct evidence, and in the absence of any infallible proof.

TREVOR T. BERRY.

Obituary.

It is with the deepest regret that we record the death of an old and valued friend of the *Freethinker* in the person of Mr. William Mumby, of Newark, Notts. Mr. Mumby's interest in the Freethought cause dates back to the Bradlaugh days, and that interest remained keen until the end. The head of a large wholesale clothing firm, he stood well with his large staff of employees, and, in 1914, worked out a co-partnership scheme, shares being allotted to them in proportion to years of service. He was also a Justice of the Peace, and a liberal supporter of a number of local movements for the general betterment of the people.

We last saw him at his house some eighteen months ago, when, although unwell, he was quite cheerful, and evidenced his usual lively interest in the affairs of the world. Only about a month ago he wrote us much concerned to know whether we were not working too hard, and begging that we would take things easier. But he said nothing of his own health, and we found nothing in his letter for apprehension. A few days before his death he said to his family: "If I do not recover, I die with my mind at peace. I have always tried to lead an upright life, and I have done no man any harm that I know of." We can echo the local newspaper when it says that those who knew him best will readily concede that this was a fitting epitaph.

At Mr. Mumby's own request the body was conveyed to London and cremated at Golder's Green. His wife and children accompanied the body to the crematorium. The only wreaths permitted to go on the coffin were those from his family. They have lost a good husband and parent, Newark a worthy townsman, and the *Freethinker* and the Freethought cause a staunch and tried friend.—C. COHEN.

On Saturday, October 19, the Freethought Movement became the poorer by the loss of Henry Cowell, one of its most fearless, energetic, loyal, and honourable supporters. Mr. Cowell, who was a Vice-President of the National Secular Society and a Director of the Secular Society, Ltd., had been a Freethinker from his early youth, when, a staunch Radical and follower of Charles Bradlaugh, he worked for him assiduously in Sheffield. On leaving that town, he travelled widely, finally settling down in London, where he became the leading spirit of the Kingsland Branch N. S. S. When in health, he was a most regular attendant at meetings, and a generous supporter of all funds. He was absolutely devoted to principle, and whilst admiring and respecting his leaders, never hesitated to offer opposition and criticism, though in the most open and amiable manner. He lost no opportunity of expounding his views, and distributed much Freethought literature, often to the detriment of his business. His sterling qualities endeared him to all with whom he came in contact, and the grief of his sorrowing widow and youthful son is shared by all his friends. A few weeks ago, when paying what he felt was a farewell visit to the undersigned, he expressed a desire for a Secular burial, which he reiterated on his death-bed. Will friends please note that this will take place at Abney Park Cemetery, Stoke Newington, N., on Tuesday, October 29, at 3.30?—E. M. VANCE.

Do justice to your brother (you can do that whether you love him or not), and you will come to love him. But do injustice to him, because you don't love him; and you will come to hate him.—*Ruskin*.

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.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, J. H. Van Biene, "What Atheism has done for Humanity." Open Debate.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W., near Kennington Oval): 7.30, Mr. J. B. Johnson, "Is the Bible True?"

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.): 11, John A. Hobson, M.A., "Vistas of a New World."

OUTDOOR.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Mr. Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Saphin, Swasey, Dales, and Kells; Councillor Harry Boulter, 4, "Bible Stories"; 6.30, "More Bible Stories."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Repertory Theatre, Station Street): 7, Mr. Harry Snell, "Fifty Years of Darwinism: Its Influence on Religion and Politics."

GLASGOW BRANCH N. S. S. (Good Templar's Hall, 122 Ingram Street): 6, A Lecture, "Richard Jefferies," *The Story of My Heart*.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Miss Margaret McMillan, "Vital Elements in the New Education Bill."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (56 Swan Street): 6.30, Mr. T. F. Greenall, "Atalanta in Calydon."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE BRANCH N. S. S. (12A Clayton Street East): 3, Members' Monthly Meeting and Election of Officers.

SHEFFIELD ETHICAL SOCIETY (Builders' Exchange, Cross Burgess Street): 6.30, Mr. E. N. Simons, "The Jews and their Religion."

SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Hall, First Floor, Fowler Street): 6.30, Mr. J. Fothergill, "Secularism and its Teachers."

SWANSEA AND DISTRICT BRANCH N. S. S. (60 Alexandra Road, Swansea): 6.30, Branch Meeting.

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