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### Views and Opinions.

#### A Bible Barbarity.

The Bible is a divine book; it has been declared to be the source of England's greatness, and its retention in the schools as a manual of religion and ethics is said to be essential to the development of character. It would be a gross impertinence, therefore, on our part to apologize for the coarseness or the indelicacy of Biblical language, or the crudeness of Biblical thought. So, if the reader will turn to the Book of Numbers (ch. v.), he will find the following: When a man has cause to suspect the fidelity of his wife, he is ordered to bring her to the priest—with a present of barley for the latter—and the priest shall take "holy water," and put in it the dust from the floor of the tabernacle, and he shall then write certain curses in a book, and wash the writing off into the water.

And when he hath made her to drink the water, then it shall come to pass, if she be defiled, and have committed a trespass against her husband, that the water that causeth the curse shall enter into her and become bitter, and her belly shall swell, and her thigh shall rot, and the woman shall be a curse among the people.

So the test for women. There was no corresponding test for men.

\* \* \*

#### Savage Parallels.

So far the Bible, the "Sacred Book" of the Christian. Now for the primitive African in Sierra Leone, as described by Sir James Frazer. Here "red water" is prepared from the bark of a tree, and the medicine-man solemnly performs ceremonies and says prayers over it. The accused then repeats a prayer and utters an imprecation upon himself if he be guilty, and a quantity of the water is drunk, he having previously eaten a little rice. If the rice is vomited, it is a sign of innocence. If the water fails to produce sickness, it is an indication of guilt. So, also, Dr. Livingstone, describing the custom of natives north of the Zambesi, says:—

When a man suspects any of his wives have bewitched him, he sends for the witch-doctor, and all the wives go forth into the field, and remain fasting till the person has made an infusion of the plant called "go ho." They all drink it, each one holding up her hand to heaven in attestation of her innocence. Those who vomit are considered innocent, while those whom it purges are pronounced guilty, and put to death by burning.

The Bible here, Africa there. Nearly every part of the uncivilized or semi-civilized world will furnish similar examples. Can anyone indicate a substantial difference between the cases cited? In the one case, "The Lord spake unto Moses"; in the other, "the Lord" let the witch-doctor alone. But he did as well, or as ill, without divine instruction.

\* \* \*

#### A Christian Practice.

The Christian Church had, among its armoury of savage superstitions, a test of boiling water. The accused plunged an arm into boiling water which had previously been exorcised, thus:—

Oh creature of water, I abjure thee by the living God, by the holy God who in the beginning separated thee from the dry land.....I abjure thee by Him who in Cana of Galilee by His will changed thee to wine, who trod on thee with His holy feet.....I abjure thee by the living God that thou shalt show thyself pure, nor retain any false image, but shall be exorcised water, to make manifest and bring to naught all falsehood, and to make manifest and bring to light all truth; so that he who shall place his hand in thee, if his cause be just and true, shall receive no hurt; but if he be perjured, let his hand be burned with fire, that all men may know the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will come with the Holy Ghost, to judge with fire the quick and the dead, and the world! Amen!

The hand of the accused was plunged into the boiling water, and then wrapped in a cloth. Three days afterwards it was unbound, and guilt or innocence decided by the condition of the limb. So far the new dispensation. This was under the light of the Christian Church, which, we are told, saved civilization. But if someone were to pull the Christian label off the one, the Jewish ticket off the other, and the medicine-man badge off the third, by what method could we distinguish one from the other?

\* \* \*

#### Some other Religious Tests.

There are very many other forms of ordeal among both savages and Christians. Mr. H. C. Lea, in his *Superstition and Force*, has compiled a very lengthy assortment. There was the ordeal of fire, of red-hot iron, of oaths taken on relics, ordeal by lot, and ordeal by eating the Eucharist. Here, again, Christianity simply took over a primitive superstition which consisted in washing an idol in water, and afterwards drinking the fluid. The Christian took as his sanction I Corinthians xi. 28-9—"He that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh damnation to himself." Sometimes the Eucharist choked the guilty person, sometimes other things happened, as in a case cited by Lea, where the Host indignant at being within the body of a criminal, "immediately slipped out at the navel, white and pure as before." Such an occurrence must have caused conviction to the most sceptical mind. There is the still common ordeal by key and Bible, and there was the famous water trial of witches, by which guilt or innocence was determined by floating. If the accused woman sank and was drowned, she was innocent. If she floated

awhile, she was guilty and was burned. In more advanced stages of civilization these methods were very serviceable to Church and State; dangerous people could be easily removed. What Tylor remarks of Africa, that the Fetish man and the Chief—Church and State—could by means of a change of sorcery and subsequent trial easily remove troublesome people, applies to Europe during the period of real Christian domination.

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#### Christianity and Savagery.

What is the real meaning of it all? So far as the poison ordeal is concerned, Professor Frazer thinks it is based on the belief that the poison is an intelligent spirit who, on entering the stomach, detects the symptoms of guilt and punishes accordingly. From what we know of the way in which the primitive intelligence gives a ghost, or double, to nearly everything, this seems far from unlikely. At a later stage, represented more clearly by the Biblical drinking of bitter waters, the process seems to be more purely magical. Hence the mixing of the sacred dust of the sanctuary with the drink, and the writing of a curse and washing it off in the water. In North Africa to-day a native doctor will write his prescription on a cake of barley and give it to the patient to eat. So also in Egypt, a Mohammedan doctor will write verses of the Koran on the inside of a bowl, rinse it out, and then give the sick person the water to drink. Eating a paper on which a charm has been written is a cure for disease in Tibet. There are thus two stages indicated in the Biblical practice. First, the earlier conception of the agent as a living thing; second, a magical process which compels a certain result. The true Bible commentary is not the bulky volumes that are sold as such, but the habits and practices of existing savage races.

\* \* \*

#### Folly and Fraud.

In its later stages the ordeal became an appeal to God to judge which is right or innocent. The process becomes, so to speak, ethicized. God is expected to do something, and he is expected to do it properly, to see that right triumphs. This belief lies at the root of the ordeal of battle, which was so solemnly sanctioned by the Church, and it survives in the appeals of nations to deity in connection with war. Each nation calls on God to behold the justice of its cause, and each regards victory as proof that it has vindicated "God's justice." Really, if there is a God, there is a rough and ready common sense about it all. A God eternally doing nothing is an extremely unsatisfactory figurehead. And if he does anything, civilized human nature will expect him to do it in a satisfactory manner. But between these various stages there is no very substantial difference. The testing of a woman's guilt by drinking "bitter water" is not really different from the religious talk of God's taking the side of this or that nation in a war. The savage persists throughout. The Jewish or Christian priest, the African Fetish man, or the primitive wizard, are all in the same business—all representatives of the same kind of superstition. "The Lord spake unto Moses," says one, "In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," says the other, "Oh, great Spirit," says the third. But it is all one. Religion is always the same. It begins in illusion and ends in fraud.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

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• Mankind marches forward, perfecting its strength. Everything that is unattainable for us now will one day be near and clear; but we must work; we must help with all our force those who seek for truth.—*Tchekhov, "The Cherry Orchard."*

## Responsibility.

I AM grateful to Mr. W. G. Kerle, C.E., for his interesting criticism of my fourth article on "Baseless Assumptions," because it raises a point of great practical importance. His letter, published in last week's number, deals with the subject of responsibility, the existence of which it denies in the name of Determinism, characterizing the usual arguments for it as both illogical and unconvincing. Mr. Kerle is a thoroughgoing Determinist, almost to the extent of being a Fatalist. According to Determinism, every man is what heredity and environment have made him, which means that all his actions are governed by an inexorable law. From this truth Mr. Kerle infers that the individual is wholly irresponsible, having no power whatever over his character, and that, consequently, it is utterly useless to praise or blame him for his conduct. He apparently accepts Mr. Blatchford's teaching on this subject in his well-known books, *God and My Neighbour* and *Not Guilty*, the gist of which seems to be that a tramp who murders a little girl for her money is not responsible for the act. It is perfectly true that a child is not to blame for any evil quality of body or mind with which it is born, and it is equally true that an individual, at any given time, cannot help acting as he does. In the estimation of Determinists, that is a law from which there is absolutely no escape, though some of the acutest thinkers in the world have openly disputed it. Even so distinguished a philosopher as Sir William Hamilton was a zealous advocate of Freewill. Mr. Kerle goes to the length of holding that "individual irresponsibility is the offspring of Determinism," and that even the modifiability of character is not under the individual's control. Curiously enough, however, he regards Society as responsible for the character of the individual; and I naturally ask, to whom is Society responsible? It must be borne in mind that Society is merely a collection of individuals, and that as such alone it exists. I readily admit its responsibility, but I maintain that it is the responsibility of the individuals composing it. Society, in the abstract, neither exists nor can be held responsible. In other words, I am one of those who are accountable for my neighbour's character, which is only another way of saying that I am responsible to my neighbour for my daily conduct; and, surely, if I am responsible to one neighbour, I am of necessity responsible to all my neighbours, which again is only another way of saying that the individual is responsible to Society, as well as Society to the individual. At the time of acting I am literally the slave of the strongest motive. No power in heaven or on earth can make me act differently. Nevertheless, I am responsible for that strongest motive, so that if it is an unworthy one, I am in duty bound to do my utmost to weaken and dethrone it. There are social forces at work of whose help I can avail myself in the attempt to subdue the baser elements in my nature. This is a statement the truth of which I have experienced in my own life and observed in that of others. I am fully aware that the term responsibility is merely a figure of speech, in which several things are simply implied, being so well known that it is not necessary to make formal mention of them. For example, there is the State with its laws which we are expected to obey, but may disobey.

The point I wish specially to emphasize is the improbability of character. There are ethicists who openly teach that a man's character is a thing he receives ready-made from his ancestors; and that all its actions are its necessary unavoidable materialization. Since a man is not the author of his character, it is contended that he has no power over it; and that the only

hope of improvement lies in education. Criticizing the popular form of expression, "We can improve our character if we will," Professor Bain says:—

This seems contradictory to the motive theory of the Will, which makes man, as it were, the creature of circumstances. There is in the language, however, merely an example of the snares that we may get ourselves into through seizing a question by the wrong end. Our character is improvable, where there are present to our minds motives to improve it, it is not improvable without such motives. No character is ever improved without an apposite train of motives—either the punishments renounced by the Owenites, or certain feelings of another kind, such as affections, sympathies, lofty ideals, and so on. To present these motives to the mind of any one is to employ the engines of improvement. To say to a man, you can improve if you will, is to employ a nonsensical formula; under cover of which, however, may lie some genuine motive-power. For the speaker is, at the same time, intimating his own strong wish that his hearer should improve; he is presenting to the hearer's mind the *idea* of improvement; and probably, along with that, a number of fortifying considerations, all of the nature of proper motives (*Mental and Moral Science*, p. 405).

Does not Mr. Kerle feel the force of Bain's argument? The root fact is that character is improvable, and that there are motives available which can be brought to bear upon it with beneficial results. Among such motives are praise and blame. It is incontrovertible that we invariably act in obedience to the most powerful motive. No one can do anything without a motive, and certainly no one has ever followed the weakest. I have known children who were weaned from bad habits by the affectionate administration of praise and blame. I have a distinct recollection of a confirmed drunkard whose awful craving for alcohol was permanently conquered by the all-sacrificing love of a woman. Instances of that kind might be multiplied a hundred times. Mr. Kerle says that a dog cannot help stealing a bone as he passes a butcher's shop; but I happen to have a dog that can and does. A more faithful and devoted friend never lived, and there are several things he refrains from doing purely out of love for me. He has never been punished in his life; but the ministry of praise and blame have been most effectual in its application to him. Surely, what is true of a dog must be truer still of human beings. There is in most boys and girls a peculiar *responsiveness* to certain appeals made to them by those whom they respect and love; but moral responsibility does not involve freedom from causation. Sir William Hamilton argued that we are "either directly conscious of freedom, or indirectly through moral obligation"; but John Stuart Mill replied that we cannot be conscious of free-will because consciousness is confined to the present moment. We are conscious not of what we *can* do, but of what we actually *do*, and only while we do it. Mr. Kerle thinks it is unjust to punish a man for doing what he cannot help; but Mill declares that it certainly is just, "if punishment is the only means by which he can be enabled to help it." Punishment is inflicted as a means towards an end, but if there is no efficacy in the means to procure the end, that is to say, if our volitions are not determined by motives, then punishment is without justification.

Mr. Cohen's arguments are, in my opinion, neither illogical nor unconvincing, and they have the further merit of being in fundamental agreement with those employed by practically all the great Determinists of the past. And I venture to close this article with a quotation from his book, *Determinism or Free-Will?* pp. 69, 70:—

It is our relations to others, and the influence of our actions upon others, combined with the possibility of

our natures being affected by the praise or censure of the social body to which we belong, which set up the fact of responsibility. Conduct creates a social reaction, good or bad, agreeable or disagreeable, and the reacting judgment of society awakens in each of us a consciousness of responsibility, more or less acute, and more or less drastic, to society at large. The individual sees himself in the social mirror. His nature is fashioned by the social medium, his personal life becomes an expression of the social life. Just as the social conscience, in the shape of a legal tribunal, judges each for actions that are past, so the larger social conscience, as expressed in a thousand and one different forms, customs, and associations, judges us for those desires and dispositions that may result in action in the future. Responsibility as a phenomenon of social psychology is obvious, educative, inescapable, and admirable. Responsibility as a phenomenon of individual psychology, whether from the Determinist or Indeterminist point of view, is positively meaningless.

J. T. LLOYD.

### The Secret of Victor Hugo.

Our glorious century gone  
Beheld no head that shone  
More clear across the storm, above the foam,  
More steadfast in the fight  
Of warring night and light,  
True to the truth whose star leads heroes home.  
—Swinburne.

AMONG the cheap reprints of the works of famous authors, it is doubtful if there has been any that have given more general satisfaction than the edition of the works of Victor Hugo which has been issued by the enterprising house of Nelson. Swinburne, who often wrote extravagantly, but seldom at random, has proclaimed with all his unrivalled eloquence that Hugo was the greatest of his contemporaries. Apart from Swinburne's admiration of Hugo, his knowledge of the great Frenchman's writings was unequalled, and his appreciation was always pleasing and inspiring.

Swinburne was never half-hearted, and he always came charging down the wind like a knight in shining armour. Hugo's *Les Chatiments* he described as "a book written in lightning"; *Les Contemplations* as written in "sunlight and starlight." He proclaimed boldly *Les Legendes de Siecles*, Hugo's swan-song, to be "the greatest epic and dramatic work ever created or achieved"; *Les Miserables* to be "the greatest epic and dramatic work ever created or conceived"; *Les Travailleurs de la Mer* to be "a work unsurpassed even among the works of its author for splendour of imagination and of style"; and *Quatre-Vingt-Treize* to be "a work as rich in thought, in tenderness, in wisdom, and in humour, and in pathos, as ever was cast into the mould of poetry or fiction." Finally, Swinburne calls Hugo "one of the very greatest among poets and among men."

It would be difficult to undervalue the insight and sympathy which marks this generous appreciation of the great English poet to the great Frenchman whom he ever regarded as his master. Nor was it a solitary note of praise. Tennyson, who was hard to please as a critic, hailed Hugo almost as enthusiastically as Swinburne. Listen to his praise of Hugo:—

Victor in drama, Victor in Romance,  
Cloud-weaver of phantasmal hopes and fears;  
French of the French, and Lord of human tears;  
Child-lover, Bard whose fame-lit laurels glance  
Darkening the wreaths of all who would advance  
Beyond our strait, their claim to be thy peers.

To produce such an effect, it must be evident that Hugo's work was very different from the pretty toys turned out of the literary workshops at the time. As

often grandiose as grand, he was at least a master-artist, and, compared with others, his work was as the ocean to a millpond. Each succeeding volume from his busy pen proved abundantly his genius. The French language had been ransacked for centuries, yet here was a man who was able to introduce new rhymes by the dozen, and not merely grotesque rhymes, but for the loftiest purposes of poetry. Nothing shows his command of language and his prodigious vocabulary more than this. He was, indeed, a Napoleon of verse, and the prefaces to his poetry remind one of the great Emperor's addresses to his army. They read like the addresses to literary victories. Even when words are put into God's mouth, for Hugo used Deity as Shakespeare did witches, we cannot help seeing the deific alias of the magnificent Hugo.

It is characteristic, too, that all shades of religious opinion should be ably represented in his pages. Theism, Pantheism, Atheism, all moods, from a glowing optimism to a cynical despair, are there. He would have sympathized with the Pagan, Septimus Severus, who kept a statue of Christ in his private room, "along with Jupiter, Orpheus, and other creatures of the same kind."

Hugo is plainly not at home upon "sacred ground." At heart he was too much of a Voltairean to write like Dante, Calderon, or Milton. In reality, he cared no more for the Bible than he did for Herodotus, Ossian, or Sismondi. To write successfully upon Christian subjects, an author must feel as a Christian, if only whilst he is writing. Hugo's piety was but a reflex of the sentimental interludes of his life, inserted between the Freethought of his mother and the scepticism of his later years.

Hugo's chief prose works, *Les Miserables* and *Les Travailleurs de la Mer*, possess undoubted distinction, but I sometimes think that Hugo's personality and life were as dramatic and attractive as anything that he wrote. His long and chequered career was filled with experiences of the most diverse kind. He mixed with princes; he knew the men and women of the streets; he was well known in the political arena; the wide worlds of literature and the theatre were open to him. He knew the extremes of triumph and exile; at one time the popular idol, and at another eating the bitter bread of banishment.

The story of his exile gives dignity to a stormy life. For nineteen dark years his voice did not falter nor his heart quail. From Jersey and Guernsey he dispatched that marvellous series of songs and satires which passed secretly from hand to hand in France, and were read with tears and cries of rage during that reign of terror, which ended with the downfall of the Second Empire and the disgrace of Napoleon the Little. These verses were veritable bombshells in the political arena, for Hugo wrote poetry as an eagle flies, and his devastating genius rocked the French political world out of its complacency.

Did ever despot suffer such impeachment as the pinchbeck Napoleon? Was ever monarch attacked in such sonorous lines, with such sinewy rhetoric, sounding declamation, pictorial richness? The barbed words of the author were carried over hill and dale, over the ocean, and found their responsive chords in humble people living in small towns and remote villages, and became to them things which marked out one day from another by the ecstasy of emotion.

Few men have surpassed Victor Hugo in his devotion to Democracy. For many years he stood in the very forefront of the battle. There is an inspiration in his life and in his works. In his career we find a magnificent expression of the claims of the indomitable human spirit which stands erect in the presence of malign fate.

Let Valjean the convict, Gilliat the fisherman, Gavroche the street urchin, speak of his humanity; and the superb crown of song laid on the altar of Liberty proclaim his love of Freedom. Few such coronals of song have ever been laid at her feet.

MIMNERMUS.

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## The Struggle for Liberty in Russia.

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ONE of the most powerful institutions in the Russian Empire is the Greek Church. Yet, in spite of the claim that religion is the greatest uplifting force that has ever influenced humanity, the Russians have been one of the most suppressed peoples on the face of the earth.

Never has the Greek Church taken any bold and widespread stand against the corruption and inhumanity of the Russian State. In fact, too often have Church and State worked together in the interest of tyranny against the people. Never has this institution for the application of religion to the problems of life been able to abolish the deplorable social conditions under which the Russians have lived for hundreds of years. In this we have historical and sociological proof that a religious institution, no matter what its claims to divine origin may be, is subject to the ordinary economic and psychological factors which play so great a part in human evolution.

It is not my object to deal directly with the history of the Greek Church in Russia. I shall give a brief outline of some of the events in the long struggle for liberty, on the part of the Russians, which gave the Church ample opportunity to prove its profession to have divine power. The reader may then realize the futility of any claim that the liberation of humanity can be brought about by other than natural means. We shall find that in Russia, as in the case of any other nation, the struggle for liberty has always been fought on human lines and by human methods. There has been nothing in the nature of so-called divine interposition.

As late as 1815 serfdom existed in the Russian Empire on an exceedingly large scale. Millions of benighted Russians belonged to the Crown, the Church, the private landlords, and to various institutions. There seems to have been some difference in the conditions of the Crown serfs as against those under private landowners; and the difference seems to have shown in favour of better treatment on the royal estates. But as a rule, the lot of the Russian serf was deplorable. Members of a family were often separated. Some were sold as if they were so many sheep, while those who were left behind had to render extra labour and pay increased dues. Corporal punishments were inflicted, and the serf could be handed over to the army; or, perhaps, sent to Siberia. At the will of the landlord, or his steward, the serf could be imprisoned in underground cellars, put in chains, or whipped to death.

In the spheres of internal administration, corruption and dishonesty were at work on every hand; and provincial military authorities sought their own aggrandizement in robbing the people. Nicholas I. (1825-55) ruled his subjects with the iron hand of a religious autocrat. Freedom of speech and action were suppressed, while the secret police made every effort to shield the Tsar's children from the influence of Western ideas, trying to prevent the spread of revolutionary thought in religious and social subjects. Foreign travel was restricted; study abroad was a sin against the Tsar; and the Censor examined all foreign publications before permitting their entry into Russia. Philosophy was included in the studies of the clergy only, and became a branch of theology, that ever-fruitful source of mystification and

darkening of the human mind. Siberia was the prospective home of those who dared to have forbidden literature in their libraries.

The effect of all this suppression of freedom in religious and political thinking was this: the strength of the Monarchy in Russia "lay in the apathetic indifference and unquestioning loyalty of their subjects; and this was also the source of its weakness; for the structure was bound to crumble to pieces once the nation awakened to political consciousness" (E. Lipson, M.A., *Europe in the Nineteenth Century*; p. 88).

Fortunately, the Censor was unable to prevent the circulation of unprinted manuscripts, and liberal ideas became not altogether unknown. Under Alexander II. (1855-81) there was for a time some relaxation of the autocratic war against the efforts which were being made, in many quarters, to propagate advanced ideas. Restrictions on foreign travel and university studies were removed, and utopian ideas of reform began to abound. But the Tsar was still believed in, and looked to as the fountain-head from which all kinds of improvements were to flow. The mysticism in which he was enrobed by the minds of most of his subjects was not yet dissipated.

In 1861 the "Edict of Emancipation" gave, at least on paper, civil rights to the peasant, and made him a "freeman." Certain other mitigations of the lot of the people were in like manner proclaimed. Unfortunately, however, reaction set in, and the Tsar came under the influence of his most conservative councillors, and the cause of the Russian peasant fell into the background during the latter part of Alexander II.'s reign. All the old restrictions on freedom of thought, speech, and action were revived along with bribery and corruption of the first order.

It was during the reign of this weak and vacillating Tsar that Nihilism passed through its chief phases. At first advocating freedom of thought on all subjects, and freedom of action, then becoming more militant, and afterwards manifesting itself as a revolutionary force bent upon assassinating all who stood in the way of progress, if by no other means redress of social wrongs could be obtained. For the Nihilists, "the passion for individual freedom was merged, as the result of foreign influences, into the greater passion for social and political freedom."—(*Europe in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 102).

From time to time the Government indulged in oppression and terrorism as antedotes to the efforts of the Nihilists to awaken the desire of intellectual, political, and social freedom in the Russian people at large. With the usual stupidity of those who object to revolt against the established order, Russian officials made no attempt to remove established wrongs.

Nearly 150,000 persons were sent to Siberia from 1863 to 1864. Why? Because they failed to agree that it is good to let "the Powers that Be" deprive their subjects of the liberty to enjoy life—a liberty for which so many long but never obtain.

The Nihilists were forced by political and social circumstances to resort to secret conspiracy and assassination, and about three years of terrorism closed the reign of Alexander II., who was assassinated in 1881.

Under the direction of the arch-fiend, Pobedonoster, head of the Holy Synod, reaction made itself prominent in every direction. Steps were taken to render useless all attempts at reform in primary schools, public sanitation, and medical relief to the less fortunate classes.

Some measure of reform had been accomplished by the District Councils, or Zemstovs, in the interests of the people, but for them almost every chance of receiving justice at law was swept away when, in 1889, Land

Captains were appointed to replace the justices of the peace.

The Land Captains and the capitalist were able to exploit the emancipated peasants whose conditions, social, political, educational, were deplorable owing to the economic pressure which was brought to bear upon them. Every opportunity was used to exploit the cheap labour thrown upon the market by the introduction of the modern factory system, which, in many places, supplanted agriculture and primitive manufacture. The Churches continued to befog the minds of the struggling people with their promises of a better time in a new world, but did little or nothing to alleviate the hard lot of many in this life. Fortunately, however, the revolutionary parties were not dead, and by a change of tactics they endeavoured to destroy the power of reaction. Peaceful agitation and the use of strikes were adopted; but, unfortunately, the working-classes of Russia, as of other countries, were not united in their efforts to obtain political and social liberty.

The Government was able to break the power of the people, and strikes were ruthlessly put down. Even when the strikers with their wives and children marched, as on Sunday, January 22, 1905, in peaceful procession with a petition to the Winter Palace, the troops fired upon them. The reactionary party, consisting chiefly of the secret agents of Pobedonoster, the police, and local authorities, organized Pogroms, and visited the villages with pillage and destruction.

But in spite of all the repression and reactionary government under which the Russian people suffered, they became more and more conscious of the necessity for political and social action, and allied themselves with the revolutionary section of the educated classes.

The spread of advanced ideas continued, and the working-classes made efforts to improve the social conditions. But the days were not come when the masses of Russia could take their own affairs into their own hands and work order out of the chaos with which they were confronted.

Within recent years there has been much trial and much failure with social reform in Russia, and the time is yet to come when the peasant will have peace and plenty, and wisdom enough to manage life's duties well.

What the future of the Russian people will be no one can safely predict. There are dark days ahead, no doubt, and the need for wide-spread education—enlightenment as well as knowledge—is as great as the need for political and economic action. Until the Russian acquires some measure of wisdom he must remain in bondage to those who choose to oppress him, whether the oppressor be of the aristocracy or his own class. A lesson which other nations have also to learn. Power—political, economic, social—is good only in the hands of those who have wisdom. E. EGERTON STAFFORD.

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#### POWER OF EDUCATION.

An educated man stands, as it were, in the midst of a boundless arsenal and magazine, filled with all the weapons and engines which man's skill has been able to devise from the earliest times; and he works accordingly, with a strength borrowed from all past ages. How different is his state who stands outside of that storehouse, and feels that its gates must be stormed, or remain for ever shut against him! His means are the commonest and rudest; the mere work done is no measure of his strength. A dwarf behind his steam-engine may remove mountains; but no dwarf will hew them down with a pick-axe; and he must be a Titan that hurls them abroad with his arms.—*Carlyle, "Essay on Burns."*

## Acid Drops.

The *Church Times* strongly favours the visit of one set of Christians to another in order to discuss the differences that exist between them. But why not extend the idea? We are willing to provide a free platform for any minister of religion, from which he may address an audience of Freethinkers, provided he will arrange for a Freethought lecturer to visit and address his congregation. It is surely more important to convert Freethinkers to Christianity than to spend time on Christians. Now, are there any offers?

The clerical mind moves very slowly under pressure. A Dean of Lincoln has been telling the public that he can no longer believe the story of Noah and the Ark. Over a hundred years ago the story of Noah was derided by Thomas Paine; and half a century since Bishop Colenso, a dignitary of the Established Church, subjected the same story to merciless ridicule. At this time of day the dean's discovery will not set the Thames alight.

The Salvation Army has been holding its annual "Self-Denial Week." At the railway stations and public resorts the Salvation lasses beg money of passers-by, and this is called facetiously the "self-denial" of the Salvation Army.

A photograph of the legendary tree in the Garden of Eden was shown recently at the Royal Institution. The picture showed a plum-tree and not an apple-tree. This is certain to give the dear clergy "the pip."

The Bishop of Oxford does not think it would ever be right for the Church to admit women to the priesthood. Yet the most powerful Church in Christendom professes to worship a woman.

The New Testament enjoins the Christian that when he has his coat stolen he should offer the thief his cloak also. The clergy seldom follow this counsel of perfection. For stealing a paltry penny from the box at St. John's Church, Woolwich, a carman was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment at London Sessions. The prisoner will have ample leisure to reflect on the differences between Christian teaching and practice.

The clergy are very fond of strutting around in military uniforms, although they are non-combatants. Even in that capacity they do not always cover themselves in glory. The Rev. R. Harwood, Chaplain to the Forces, has been cashiered by sentence of a general court martial.

The Vicar of Milford, Surrey, has decided to abolish Church collections. He will not rely altogether on Providence, but expects his congregation to make up the usual amount by freewill offerings.

Christians used to get adherents by threats of fire—in the next world. This is now largely a thing of the past. Nowadays they bribe men to come in. That is why the Young Men's Christian Association is continuously advertising for indoor and outdoor games, gramophones, records, and other mundane amusements.

A correspondent of the *Sunday Chronicle* writes an account of his early years that should give the advocates of religious instruction "furiously to think." He says that from early childhood, "I was taken to chapel three times a Sunday, on Monday evening I was sent to a prayer-meeting, on Tuesday evening I was sent to a Band of Hope meeting." The chief end of Sunday-schools he attributes to penning children up. At the prayer-meeting he heard men between thirty and forty praying violently for forgiveness of their "many sins." He adds: "What a glorious atmosphere in which to nurture a young innocent lad—a lad who had little idea what sin was. But I was instigated to find out for myself what sin was. I did." At eight he was asked to

sign the pledge; at twelve he was saved, and duly labelled all right. Net result: he developed into a moral wreck.

Now, it would be absurd to argue that religious instruction always produces a like result; but it is fairly certain that in a great number of cases there is more harm done than aught else. The whole atmosphere in which the child is reared is unreal and unhealthy. The last thing a child's mind should be familiarized with is the religious cant of sin and wickedness. The child grows up with its moral nature undeveloped, and the restraint—which in religious circles passes muster for moral education—has its inevitable reaction when the opportunity offers. The real moralization of the young has, in fact, taken place only with the exclusion of theology and the adoption of more rational and humane methods.

"One man, one job," does not appear to be the universal rule with the dear clergy. The late Rev. W. H. Bliss, a former minor canon of Windsor, was also vicar of Kew. Apparently, Mr. Bliss did not die from overwork, for he was eighty-four years of age at the time of his decease.

The Bishop of London unveiled a war-memorial in the vestibule of Drury Lane Theatre. Did his lordship wear his khaki uniform, or his ecclesiastical petticoats?

Christian institutions are beginning to feel the pressure of the economic crisis. An advertisement of the Navy Mission Society offers "good stipends to suitable men." Workers in the Lord's vineyard will welcome the change.

"If pigs died at the rate at which infants are now dying, a Royal Commission would be appointed," says Mr. R. J. Parr, of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Quite an unsolicited testimonial for poor old Providence.

Providence must be old; it looks as if it was getting careless. Two valuable silver chalices have been stolen from Holy Trinity Church, Bath, and the thief is still at large.

"All scripture is profitable to public morals," says Professor Beresford Pitt. Surely, the genealogical tables would not elevate the morals of a flea.

Lord Hugh Cecil, speaking in the House of Laymen, said "more teaching of the Scriptures was wanted in the pulpits, and not so much a rehash of the daily papers." Unhappily, the newspapers are more interesting—and more truthful.

In a new and topical book on *Clemenceau: The Man and His Time*, by Mr. H. M. Hyndman, the veteran Socialist says that Clemenceau is "a freethinker of the freethinkers." Such candour is rare nowadays.

The Bishop of London has been repeating the story that whilst he was speaking in Victoria Park, some years ago, he was constantly being asked by sceptics, "Where was Cain's wife?" He got so tired of the question that he at last said to his tormentors, "She is buried at Bethnal Green." Perhaps his lordship performed the funeral ceremony—at the customary rates.

The Bishop of Carlisle (Dr. Diggle) told a meeting that, "leaving out holidays, I cannot have worked less than twelve hours a day for forty years." So have hundreds of thousands of men, and drawn less salary in the process, too.

A resolution has been passed by the Catholic Union, protesting against the Divorce Law. You can always trust Catholics to oppose a reasonable reform.

"The Puritanical idea of Christianity is dead," declares the Rev. J. E. Rattenbury. If that be so, why do Christian congregations sing hymns about hell and damnation?

### O. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

March 9, Liverpool; March 16, Leicester; March 23, Manchester; March 26 and 27, Belfast; March 30, Leeds; April 27, South Place, London.

### To Correspondents.

- J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—March 9, Ferndale; March 16, Pontycymer.
- "FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—S. Fergusson, 10s.; J. Badley, 9s. 6d.
- F. T. KNOLL.—Shelley's poetry speaks for itself. Shelley's personal confession, as contained in a letter to Miss Janette Phillips, runs as follows: "My rejection of *revealed* religion proceeds from my perfect conviction of its insufficiency to the happiness of man—to this source I can trace murder, war, and intolerance. My rejection of *natural* religion arises wholly from reason; I *once* was an enthusiastic Deist, but never a Christian." We should have no objection to what you suggest, provided it was properly conducted. There is some prospect of Mr. Cohen visiting Plymouth before the end of May.
- J. SANDERS.—Next week. Space forbids in this issue. Mr. Lloyd, as you will see, is dealing with his critic. We shall republish our *Determinism or Free-Will* so soon as we can get the work done.
- N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—E. Brown 11s.; Nuneaton Branch, 4s. 6d.
- N. S. S. GENERAL FUND.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—Nuneaton Branch, 4s.
- R. HALL.—We see no reason whatever why a paper such as the *Freethinker* should not acquire a really large circulation. We fancy Freethinkers have too readily submitted to the religious boycott, and have too easily taken for granted their helplessness. With the help from friends we hope to ultimately put a different face on the matter. At any rate, we shall not fail for want of trying.
- B. M.—Circumstantial, but not convincing. It reminds us of Balzac's statement that "To those who examine the history of modern times it is evident that historians are privileged liars, who lend their pens to popular beliefs, exactly as most of the newspapers of the day express nothing but the opinions of their readers."
- T. C.—Thanks for cutting and note. A very useful hint. We commented on Athelstan Riley's foolishness.
- W. WILMER.—The *Freethinker* is printed on Wednesday and issued to the whole of the trade by Thursday morning. We do not know what we can do. We are continually stirring them up. Please keep on at your end. We did not receive the cuttings sent.
- PTE. H. GREEN.—Parcel of literature being sent. Thanks for what you are doing to help.
- J. CLARK.—Mr. Heard's book, *The Russian Churches and Dissent*, was published by Sampson Low & Co., in 1887. Mr. J. M. Robertson's *Short History of Christianity* would, probably, give what you require.
- 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.

To-day (March 9) Mr. Cohen lectures twice—at 3 and 7—in the Clarion Cafe, 25 Cable Street, Liverpool. For the benefit of visitors from a distance tea will be provided for those who wish to stay for the evening meeting. Next Sunday Mr. Cohen visits Leicester.

A further agreement in the printing trade concerning a decrease of hours, payment for all holidays, and a full week's holiday paid for, has been arrived at, which equals a substantial rise in wages. This still further increases the cost of production, and makes the lot of papers such as this one still harder. Up to now, the cessation of the War has brought no relief, and cannot for some months yet. What the burden of keeping a paper like the *Freethinker* alive means will be realized when it is pointed out that at present the cost of producing the *Freethinker* is between £18 and £20 per week over the pre-War cost. That has had to be faced by a paper that never possessed a shilling of capital, and which barely met the cost of production at its best.

But we do not intend—unless something very unsuspected happens—increasing the price of the *Freethinker*, and we want to get back to our sixteen pages. So there is only one thing to be done, and that is to meet every increase in the cost of production by increased sales. Increased sales mean increase in other things—influence, Freethought organization, etc. There are many thousands of new readers waiting to be captured, and we want them as speedily as possible. It is a big task, this continuous fight against steadily growing expenses, but we have fought successfully for four and a half years, and, with the help of our friends, we intend pulling through. If only twenty-five per cent. of our readers secured a new subscriber within the next month, the trick would be done.

Thanks to the kindness of a friend, an advertisement of the *Freethinker* is appearing nightly, for some months, on the screen of a large picture palace in the provinces. If this bears fruit, and we think it will, we shall extend the same plan to other towns and cities. We are also advertising the *Freethinker* in newspapers, and intend doing the same by means of posters. It means expense; but there is no sense in sitting down before accumulating difficulties. An obstacle is something to be overcome, not to be cried over. And there is interest in seeing which will win—ourselves or the difficulty.

Under the new rules of the N. S. S., all resolutions for the Conference Agenda, including nominations for the Executive, must be sent to the Secretary two months before the Conference. As the Conference is on June 9, this will make April 9 as the last date. Branches should, therefore, take the matter in hand without delay.

It is gratifying to record that the stream of new members into the N. S. S. continues. Thirty-two were admitted at the last Executive meeting, making 130 this year. Permission was also given to open another Branch in South Wales. The Movement in that part of the country continues to gain strength, and the Churches there are fully alive to their danger. We can see our ideal of a really strong Secular Society gradually realizing itself.

We are ever willing to encourage a poet who takes his art seriously. Mr. G. E. Fussell, whose little sheaf of poems, *A Baker's Dozen* (Gloucester: John Bellows, Eastgate; 1s. net), has just reached us, we know to be both an earnest Freethinker and a graceful versifier. His thirteen poems, with the exception of two sonnets, are exercises in exotic verse-forms—triolet, rondel, rondeau, and villanelle. An attempt was made some while ago to transplant these French forms in our English soil of poetry. But they did not flourish for long, in spite of the loving labour of gardeners like Andrew Lang, Henley, Mr. Gosse, and the present Poet Laureate. They demand a lightness and sureness of touch, and a great verbal and rhythmical dexterity, to pull them off quite successfully. They lend themselves more naturally to fanciful wit than to ardent and powerful emotion. If Mr. Fussell is not above taking our advice, we would recommend him to cultivate the traditional English forms of poetry, for which we feel that he has aptitude.

Criticism without quotation is like mustard without beef. The poem we give ourselves the pleasure of copying out is both a good specimen of Mr. Fussell's dainty muse and a confession of comparative failure, although it does contain a promise of future success. He will sing the new songs—of that we have no doubt—when he is caught up on the wings of some strong emotion; the heavenward lift is what he needs most.

A gift of love; eke must I bring  
Some bright and shining glittering thing  
All lovely decked with gems and gold.  
Or shall it be a jewelled ring,  
Or am I waxing over bold?  
It shall not be a jewelled ring!  
But I will do my best to sing  
A song that I must bid thee hold,  
A gift of love.

But heavy stroke of Fortune's sting,  
The lute has lost its only string,  
And all its music's dead and cold.  
I cannot therefore hope to sing  
The song so new, yet age-long old,  
The gift of love.

A writer in the *Daily Record and Mail* remarks that reading *The Robes of Pan* I should hardly have suspected that Mr. Andrew Millar is a railway signalman. But why not? Capacity has nothing to do with position or even education. Educate a fool for years and he will remain a fool to the end. All he will become is an educated fool, and their number is legion.

A correspondent tells us that in a shop in Wolverhampton is displayed "Read *Christianity and Slavery*. Christians own slums now, they used to own slaves." That is excellent business.

The generous offer made by one of our readers to send the *Freethinker* to twenty-one non-subscribers for thirteen weeks free is still open. There are still several addresses needed to complete the number. And if more than the number are received, we will send them just the same. We are conceited enough to believe that when a man has read the *Freethinker* for thirteen weeks, he will want to keep on reading it.

Coventry and district "saints" will please note that Mr. Clifford Williams will lecture in the Corn Exchange, Smithford Street, to-day (March 9). His subjects are, at 3: "The Madmen of the Gods"; at 7: "The Saviour of Mankind." We hope the meetings will be all that the Coventry friends desire.

The North London Branch of the N. S. S. is continuing its weekly discussions beyond the date originally fixed for their close—March 30. Mr. Van Beine opened an interesting discussion on Sunday last, and to-day Mr. Eager opens on "The Present State of Politics."

We are pleased to hear that Mr. Lloyd had crowded and enthusiastic meetings at Maesteg. Mr. Cohen had a similar experience at Swansea; and to-day (March 9) Mr. Lloyd lectures at the Workman's Hall, Ferndale. We feel sure that his Maesteg experience will be repeated there.

A Committee has been formed at Wolverhampton to organize propaganda and to form a Branch of the N. S. S. We hope all local readers will help. Inquiries may be made of Mr. C. T. Shaw, 64 Worcester Road, Wolverhampton.

## The Birth and Development of Gods.

### VI.

(Concluded from p. 110.)

AMONG the more cultured and philosophical Hebrews, as with the sages of later Rome and Greece, or for that matter among the more enlightened thinkers of our own age, there prevailed little or no belief in a future life. But with the mass of the Jewish race this faith seems to have maintained its power. Apart from subsequent references, the story of the Witch of Endor, who saw gods (ancestral spirits) ascending through the earth, and afterwards called up the prophet Samuel from the realms of the dead, most clearly proves this. Now, Jahweh had departed from Saul, and answered him not at all, either in dreams or through his prophets. Therefore, the king of Israel, when the Philistines made war against him, sought knowledge of the future through communion with the dead. The spirit of Samuel predicted disaster to the arms of Israel, and warned the troubled Saul that "to-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me: the Lord also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines" (1 Samuel xxviii. 17).

It is a fair inference that throughout the entire period covered by Hebrew history and tradition that Jahweh occupied a high, and perhaps a supreme, position among the gods of Israel. As his special cult developed, Jahweh became more and more intolerant of divine competitors dwelling in his sanctuaries. For, despite the many relapses of his people into polytheism recorded in the ancient Scriptures, the jealous Jahweh ultimately outgrew the rival gods. The sacred bull and the phallic emblem with which his cult was so long connected completely disappeared, and the supreme divinity whose dwelling-place was a temple not built with hands, and to whose honour and glory it became sinful to fashion an image, at last emerged from the ghost of a dead chieftain who once reigned in Israel.

There is small doubt that Hebrew influence coloured the theology of the primitive Christian Church. Whether the central figure of the Christian faith is to be regarded as an historical figure or not, we need not inquire. The fact remains that the powerful religion which bears his name treasured the tradition that Jesus was virgin-born upon earth. Jahweh, now become God the Father, in the form of the Holy Ghost, overshadows the carpenter's wife, and in nine months the redeemer of the world is duly delivered in a stable. The miraculous birth, the mission, the death and ascension of the Saviour, are all paralleled in other religions.

Antiquity was long familiar with legends of the abnormal conception and birth of divinities. Godhead was hereditary, and descended from sire to son. Even among the sceptical Greeks the story of the divine parentage of Alexander was welcomed by the common people. In the *Golden Bough*, Frazer has cited a large number of similar legends from many different lands. The Greek rulers of Egypt, from Ptolemy Soter to Cleopatra, were venerated as divine. Julius Cæsar, himself a pronounced Freethinker, was nevertheless officially endowed with the attributes of a god. The Imperial Augustus was placed among the deities. Divine majesty was ascribed to Hadrian, Trajan, and other emperors, and various provincial cities erected altars at which these rulers were adored as supernatural beings. The mighty Julius would have smiled at the stories which gathered round his name. Divine parentage was attributed to him, while a more remote ancestress was the goddess Venus. In ancient India, no distinction was recognized between a royal babe and a deity. Nearer home, the carpenter's son turns out to be a scion of the House of David, and although at first the son of God, he afterwards grows to be his equal both in age and power.

A dispassionate perusal of Froude's brilliant essay, *A Cagliostro of the Second Century*, will enable any unprejudiced reader to form a fair mental picture of the atmosphere in which the myths and legends of the Church arose. And in the sacred art of far subsequent centuries, God the Father is as much a human creature as the man Jesus, or the woman Mary. In our age the religious conceptions of the educated who still cling to a belief or semi-belief in the dogmas and traditions of theology, have been greatly purified by the enlarged views of the universe which modern science has opened up to us. But even so, it cannot be seriously questioned that, were some gifted conjurer, claiming supernatural powers for his performances, to appear among us, he might easily found a new religion, with a vast following. And this in the twentieth century, and in so-called civilized lands. The mascot and other follies are sufficiently indicative of the widespread nature of human ignorance and credulity.

It is simply a truism that even in civilized Europe any real conception of the Deity is that of a manlike



entity. Some years since, in England itself, the Swami trial disclosed the case of an impostor named Theo, who posed as a god. Again, in the Abode of Love affair, Little Glory, a child of the polygamous pastor, was clothed with divine credentials by the faithful. Moreover, at the period when the mysterious Mahatmas were so much discussed, and when their wisdom, or even their existence, were doubted by the profane, we find that a woman so gifted and cultivated as Annie Besant was prepared to vouch for their reality. And the awe-stricken tones in which Mrs. Besant referred to these elusive Mahatmas proved that she regarded them as at least semi-divine in character.

In the light of these facts, we cannot consistently scorn the contemporary races that bow before human gods. Palgrave mentions the deification of living men among Semitic peoples.

"Who is your God?" said an Arab traveller of my acquaintance to a Messaleekh nomade, not far from Basra. "It was Fadee," answered the man, naming a powerful provincial governor of those lands lately deceased; "but since his death I really do not know who is God at the present moment."

With the Dayaks of Borneo the famous Rajah Brooke has been promoted to supernatural rank. Wallace, the eminent naturalist, studied savage humanity in its tropical home, and his natural history collections and researches aroused the open-eyed wonder of the natives. This careful observer thus refers to the Arru Islanders:—

I have no doubt that to the next generation, or even before, I myself shall be transformed into a magician or demi-god, a worker of miracles, and a being of supernatural knowledge. They already believe that all the animals I preserve will come to life again; and to their children it will be related that they actually did so. An unusual spell of fine weather setting in just at my arrival had made them believe that I can control the seasons.

Haeckel's experiences described in his charming volume, *A Visit to Ceylon*, were much the same. Not merely do we possess cogent evidence that deities have been evolved from dead men in the past, but there also exists positive proof that they are thus created at this moment. Herbert Spencer was presented with photographs of Nicobar gods, some of which proved rude but unmistakable images of English residents.

Our own divine faith probably arose among the Galileans, a group of heretical Israelites of composite stock. It was a Syrian cult, and the story of the slain god who died to atone for the sins of the people was already well known among the Syrian devotees of Adonis. In another early Christian centre in Phrygia flourished the cult of Attis, a youthful divinity who lived to sustain, and died to save the sinful. Just as in Christianity, the blood of these slain deities served to purify the transgressor. The god was originally personated by the divine priest who was solemnly put to death. But this blood-sacrifice was later softened at the annual feast of the divinity when, at the vernal season (the time of Easter), the god-priest caused blood to flow from his arms. This rite appears to have been the substitute for the more ancient practice of immolation. In the *Golden Bough* Dr. Frazer has presented overwhelming evidences of the prominent part enacted by slain and resurrected gods in the various religions of those Mediterranean lands which witnessed the rise of the Christian cult. True it is that "The death and resurrection of the humanly embodied god form indeed the keynote of the greatest and most sacred religions of western Asia and north-eastern Africa."

Among mariners, airmen, and others, mascots are cherished charms against misfortune. Underlying this widespread superstition resides a faith in the power of spirits to avert danger. At one time when a vessel was

launched a guardian god, angel, or mascot was obtained by causing the ship to pass over the body of a living victim. The Vikings sprinkled the stems of their galleys with the blood of a sacrificed human creature. Even now, at the ceremony performed when a new ship is launched among ourselves, a bottle of wine is poured over the bows. Red wine has been substituted for the original crimson blood. It is probable that the

images of gods in the bow of a ship were formerly idols in which the spirits thus liberated might dwell, and it was to them that the sailors prayed for assistance in storm or peril.....The modern figure-head still represents these gods; figure-heads essentially similar to the domestic idols occur on New Zealand and Polynesian war canoes.

Human sacrifices to the spirits of the dead have prevailed on a large scale in many climes. And, in addition, countless victims have been religiously murdered for the purpose of providing a guardian ghost to protect the artificial products of man. An only begotten son was considered a most suitable sacrifice, and the purity and innocence of the chosen victim was usually insisted upon. Even when an animal, or a symbol only is offered, there are solid reasons for thinking that the primitive sacrifice was a human being. Many vestiges of original human sacrifice remain. The foundation stones of modern buildings are still ceremonially laid. It is a common fancy that if you catch a man's shadow you gain an influence over his soul. Now, in Roumania, before a new structure is raised, the masons seek to secure the shadow of a passer-by and then place the foundation-stone over it. The shadow is here the substitute for the soul of the victim sacrificed in ruder times. Empty coffins were built into the walls of German churches; uncouth images of tiny children were similarly employed in Holland.

Thus the fear and homage of dead spirits appear to have formed the roots of all religious cults. And some mode of spiritualistic faith bids fair to outlast all the great historical religions. One supernaturalistic cult has followed another in the more anciently civilized countries of the world. The full triumph of Rationalism is for more enlightened times. As Byron sang when viewing the departed glories of classic Greece:—

Son of the morning, rise! approach you here!  
Come—but molest not yon defenceless urn!  
Look on this spot—a nation's sepulchre!  
Abode of gods, whose shrines no longer burn.  
Even gods must yield—religions take their turn;  
'Twas Jove's—'tis Mahomet's; and other creeds  
Will rise with other years, till man shall learn  
Vainly his incense soars, his victim bleeds;  
Poor child of Doubt and Death, whose hope is built on reeds.

T. F. PALMER.

### The Winds of March.

COLD and keen they are, but robust reviving winds, as they whistle and croon in the dark and leafless hedge-row, and stir the bleached and flattened grasses that wreathe about the old fastastic thorn, or whin, or broom; or on the wide moor in the brown tangle of bent and heather, where the hare lies so snugly in its form, "the sheltering rushes waving o'er its head," lies and listens to the solemn soothing minstrelsy of the winds abroad in the world, wild and free on the untravelled, untrammelled, solitary waste; listens, too, alert and keen, discerning the faintest sound of alien or enemy approach, thrilled also, doubtless, with the music of those ancestral winds, in those ancestral wilds, content in that cozy form in the great peace of the wilderness:—

A happy, happy, enviable lot,  
Swift beautiful and timid leveret,  
Is thine, for life and love, alas, and yet,  
For sport, or prey, thou'rt mangled torn and shot.

But here in natural security and happiness, after many fugitive hoppings and nibblings, with other pretty furred and feathered things it rests its little while content upon the lap of earth.

And man, the child of prehistoric sires as wild and free as they, ever and anon returns for rest and refreshment to the wilderness, returns, not always murderous with a gun, but pensive, peaceful, sympathetic, a friend and brother to every denizen of those lone and shaggy places. The native earth is redolent of scent, and scene, and memory. The smell of Spring is in the air, mingling with the permanent, pungent odour of the heath and soil. There are green patches here and there, and underneath the dishevelled faded verdure of yesterday are little green shoots uncurling, anticipating summer suns. The smoke of burning heather is borne on the winds of March, and those little blackened, burnt twigs, or "heather birns" remind him sweetly, yet sadly, of other days, and of all that has passed since he lived beside and loved those other hills. "Time but the impression stronger makes," and what with the present and the past, the inner and the outer sense, there is evolved the very atmosphere and materials of poetry and romance. Yet all is real. No fiction this of foolish faith's or frivolous folly's mind. Extremes meet here. The actual and the ideal combine to form a paradise on earth. It may be but a passing hour. Again, we must descend; and so we sympathize with the leveret in its lair, and all the furred and feathered creatures of the sequestered hills.

Past and present, the future of hope or fear, one is reminded:—

How poor, how rich, how abject, how august, how complicate, how wonderful is man.

Man and the mind of man, even the average normal mind, how instinct with potentialities for goodness and greatness, for sense and vision and usefulness; that wondrous, subtle, slow-formed, complicated machine, scrapped in myriads, in war and peace, like so much old iron, tumbled "into the dark and noisome grave, like a disabled pitcher of no use"—not by Nature only, but by society, by wrong, or no education; by being fed with lies for truth, with ignorance for knowledge, with superstition for reason. Man, in searching for the gods, has lost himself, or is only finding himself slowly, and through what a weary waste of years!

Says a pious poet:—

In lengthening days of windy March  
A spirit spake to me:  
"Dost read a promise in the Spring  
Of immortality?"

But ours is no *promise* of immortality; it is the assurance thereof; it is here and now, and yet eternal with the physical universe.

ANDREW MILLAR.

### The Will to Believe.

*The Psychology of Conviction.* By Prof. Joseph Jastrow.  
(Constable & Co., 10s. 6d., net.)

THE human brain everywhere illustrates in its functioning the same principles. That is an axiom of present-day science. So it would appear that given the same set of facts an identical and universal conclusion should be reached. But everyone knows this is not the case. From the same facts, from the same experiences, different people will draw different and diametrically opposed conclusions. Why is this the case? If our conclusions are logical deductions from agreed premises, whence this disagreement? Well, the answer is that our convictions embody more than the outcome of an exercise in logic. Logic may tell us, and does tell us, how we should think, if we would think correctly; but it is the task of psychology to tell us how we think as we

do, and in what may our thinking is coloured or determined by a logical force.

This is the theme of Professor Jastrow's *Psychology of Conviction*, and his answer is, in general terms, that the wish is father to the thought. Or, to put it in another way, thinking is the product of the whole man. And the attraction is not to the premiss but to the conclusion. We are far more interested in where we shall arrive than in where we start from, and the nature of the road we traverse. And when we announce our conviction, this has been decided by the play of our whole nature—logical, moral, and æsthetic. An analysis of belief is thus more an exercise in logic; it involves a study of some of the deepest and most intractable qualities of human nature.

Every propagandist will recognize the truth contained in this position, and probably many will find in self-examination additional evidence. With children, what we may call the pleasure-pain attitude is, as one would expect, naked and obvious. It is only fear of their elders that drive children into creating excuses for the manifestation of preferences. Later the pressure of social life so operates to disguise from even the subject himself the nature of the motives that impel conviction. In this way conformity is secured at the cost of initiative, and, it may be added, of social efficiency likewise.

Thus Professor Jastrow is on sure ground when he says:—

The chief determinants of the psychology of conviction is emotion and convention. Fundamentally beliefs are formed and held because they satisfy, because they minister to some deep psychological craving, or some simpler need or indulgence; equally significant is the sharing of such beliefs with others, which is their indispensable social reinforcement, and gives the added value of a conscious adjustment and an acknowledged approval.

It is not the force of evidence, but the magnetism of conclusions, that attract attention and secure assent. This is Professor Jastrow's thesis, and it is brilliantly illustrated in a series of chapters that deal with such subjects as Eusapia Paladino, Christian Science, Fact and Fable in Animal Psychology, The Feminine Mind, Militarism and Pacifism, The Will to Believe in the Supernatural, etc. And the uppermost feeling in one's mind after reading is how small is the claim of man to be called a reasoning being. His conduct is directed by his beliefs, and his beliefs are largely determined by qualities and conditions far from logical in their character. Only in one, here and there, is the logical faculty predominant. In only the small minority is there the disinterested desire for truth. Yet it is with that minority the progress of the world ultimately rests. And each member of that select band labours in the conviction that right belief is of all things the most important in the affairs of men, realizing that—

The sceptre in the hands of science is neither a symbol of wanton authority, nor a badge of unearned privilege, nor a licence for extravagance and caprice, but an emblem of law and order—safeguarding all the most cherished opportunities for right knowledge, right beliefs, and right actions, in what measure each is wise enough to consent to be thus governed. It is the prerogative of the scientific method that it enthrones the logical right—the true—as the moral law within enthrones the ethical right—the good. The crowning virtue becomes not conviction, nor the approval of authority, no acceptability, nor general credence, but provability.

P. S.

### National Secular Society.

REPORT OF MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON  
FEBRUARY 27.

The President in the chair. Also present: Messrs. Baker, Davidson, Eager, Gallagher, Gorniot, Kelf, Leat, Neate, Palmer, Quinton, Roger, Rosetti, Samuels, Silverstein, Miss Kough, Miss Pankhurst, Miss Pitcher, Mrs. Rolf, and the Secretary.

Minutes of last meeting read and confirmed.

Monthly financial statement presented and adopted.

New members were received for Battersea, Barnsley, Coventry, Glasgow, Newcastle, North London, South London, Tonypany, and the Parent Society.

Permission was given for the formation of a new Branch at Tonypany.

A communication was received from the International Freethought Bureau, now reinstated in Brussels, inviting the Executive's opinion as to arrangements and proposals for discussion at an International Conference to be held in May. It was resolved to reply that in the present disturbed state of the Continent, the Executive considered the holding of an International Freethought Congress inopportune, and, further, could not endorse the exclusion of delegates of any nationality from an International Freethought Congress.

The Secretary was instructed to enquire which Provincial Branch of the Society was in a position to make arrangements for the holding of the Annual Conference on Whit-Sunday. Replies to be received not later than March 25.

Reports of Provincial lectures were received, and of the action of the Protest Committee *re* Sales of Literature in the Parks, in connection with the L.C.C. elections, and the meeting closed.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary.*

### Correspondence.

#### THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In 1890 there was a debate, in the *Nineteenth Century*, between Professor Huxley and Dr. Wace, very similar to that now going on in the *Freethinker* between Mr. Cohen and Dr. Lyttelton.

Dr. Wace appealed to the Lord's Prayer and the Sermon on the Mount as irrefutable evidence of the divinity of Christ, upon which T. L. M'Cready commented as follows:—

This is most amazing. I cannot understand it. Does Dr. Wace really believe that the Lord's Prayer and the Sermon on the Mount contain "the essential belief and cardinal teaching" of Jesus Christ? It would seem so from what he writes. And yet I am certain that Dr. Wace neither preaches nor practices the "essential belief and cardinal teaching" for which he claims such venerable authority. I am certain of this, not because I have any personal acquaintance with Dr.

The Humanitarian works by Joachim Kaspary, out of print, can be studied in the Reading Room of the British Museum, London. They will, however, be Revised and Published as soon as possible.

#### THE FOLLOWING WORKS ARE IN PRINT.

1. International Peace. Price 2d., post free ... 1898
2. The Guide of Life and the Ethics of Humanitarian Deism compared with those of Christianity and Buddhism ... 1899  
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Wace, but because he is a clergyman of the Church of England, in good standing, and the principal of a well-known and popular English school; and I know that he could not hold these positions if he really believed and taught that men ought to take no thought for the morrow, and give to everyone that asked of them, and in other ways lived according to the cardinal teaching referred to.

Dr. Wace's position is certainly a curious one. He appeals to the doctrines and teachings of Christ as all-sufficient evidences of the divinity of him who uttered them. And then he turns round and says that the doctrines and teachings in question are not to be taken as meaning what they say, but only as interpreted by him, Dr. Wace, and other properly appointed theologians. Now, if the divinity of Christ depends on what Christ said, and what Christ said depends on Dr. Wace's interpretation, it would really seem—well, what would it really seem?

G. O. WARREN, Major (retired).

### Obituary.

SOUTH SHIELDS.—At Horton Cemetery, on the 25th ult., the remains of George Frederick Cardew were interred with every token of respect and sympathy. There was a large gathering of friends and fellow-workmen, together with the sorrowing relatives, at the graveside. Mr. Jas. Fothergill gave an impressive reading of Austin Holyoake's Secular Burial Service. Deceased, who was in his forty-second year, had read and studied the literature of Freethought for some time, and was a staunch supporter of the *Freethinker*. During his last brief illness he desired that no religious ceremony should take place at the burial.—R. C.

### Population Question and Birth-Control.

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If any of the above published works cannot be obtained through Newspaper Agents or Booksellers, please order direct, enclosing Stamps or Postal Orders, from  
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**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.**

**METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY** (Johnson's Dancing Academy, 241 Marylebone Road, W., near Edgware Road): 8, Mr. William Heaford, "Some After-War Problems of Religion and Free-thought"

**NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S.** (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, A. Eager, "Present State of Politics." Open Debate.

**SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S.** (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W., near Kennington Oval Tube Station): 7, Mr. J. H. Van Biene, "False Claims of Religion."

**SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY** (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.): 11, Right Hon. John M. Robertson, "The Economic Bias in Ethics."

**OUTDOOR.**

**HYDE PARK: 11.30,** Mr. Shaller; **3.15,** Messrs. Saphin, Kells, Yates, and Dales.

**COUNTRY.****INDOOR.**

**FERNDALE** (Workmen's Hall): Mr. J. T. Lloyd, 2.30, "Religion and Morals in the Light of Science"; 7, "The Lying Gospel."

**GLASGOW BRANCH N. S. S.** (The Good Templar's Hall, 122 Ingram Street): 12 noon, Old and New Members cordially invited.

**LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY** (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. G. H. D. Cole, "National Guilds."

**LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S.** (Clarion Cafe, 25 Cable Street): Mr. Chapman Cohen, 3, "Religion and the Breeding of a Better Race"; 7, "Freethought, Religion, and Death."

**MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S.** (Baker's Hall, 56 Swan Street): 6.30, Mr. Mack.

**SWANSEA AND DISTRICT BRANCH N. S. S.** (The Docker's Hall, Swansea): 6.30, Dan Griffiths, of Llanelly, "The Churches in War and Peace." Seats, 6d. each.

**PROPAGANDIST LEAFLETS.** New Issue. 1. *Christianity a Stupendous Failure*, J. T. Lloyd; 2. *Bible and Teetotalism*, J. M. Wheeler; 3. *Principles of Secularism*, C. Watts; 4. *Where Are Your Hospitals?* R. Ingersoll; 5. *Because the Bible Tells Me So*, W. P. Ball; 6. *Why Be Good?* G. W. Foote; 7. *The Massacre of the Innocents (God and the Air-Raid)*, Chapman Cohen. *The Parson's Creed.* Often the means of arresting attention and making new members. Price 1s. per hundred, post free 1s. 2d. Samples on receipt of stamped addressed envelope.—N. S. S. SECRETARY, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C. 4.

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