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Views and Opinions.

The Myth of the Jew.

The sufferings of the Jew at the hands of Christians is writ large in European history. For these sufferings the Jew took his revenge in anticipation. He foisted on the Christian his own God. On that score, therefore, the Jew may be said to have held his own. But the Jewish God was not the only myth that the Jew successfully foisted on the Christian world—or, rather, it was the parent of a number of other myths. Along with the God went the early history—largely imaginary—of the Jewish people. They proclaimed themselves a distinct type anthropologically, and the Christian accepted the classification. They said they were a "pure" race, neither marrying nor giving in marriage with outsiders; and that also was accepted. They announced themselves as a great people—in Biblical times; and the Christian world accepted that. And now, in connection with the conquest of Palestine and the proposed handing over of it to the Jews, there is much talk—newspaper talk—of the Jews as a nation, without anyone asking if the Jews really are a distinct nation—whether a Jewish State is possible; or, if possible, is it desirable? * * *

Are the Jews a Nation?

Jews are found all over the world, and everywhere they offer an approximation to the native population. There are negroid Jews in Africa, and there are Mongolian Jews in China, just as there are American, French, English, or Dutch Jews. Everywhere inter-marriages take place, and nowhere is there found a genuine anthropological type marking them off as distinct from other people. Generation after generation these native-born Jews are reared under all sorts of widely differing institutions, and experiencing the influence of widely differing cultures. They share, when permitted, in the common life of the country, and show the same interest in the country's welfare. During the recent War, between three-quarters of a million and a million Jews were fighting in the different armies. They were not fighting as Jews, but as Britons, Frenchmen, Russians, Poles, Germans, Austrians, Americans. They carried into the War, not a common aspiration that marked them off from the other soldiers, but aspirations that differed from each other as did those of the countries to which they belonged. They were not in the armies

as Jews, any more than Catholics or Protestants were there as representing their respective creeds. They were there as English, French, German, or Russian Jews, as others were there as English, French, German, or Russian Christians. * * *

The Bond of Religion.

It is, then, the height of absurdity to talk of this heterogeneous agglomeration of people, differing in their physical type, in their language, their ideas, their aspirations, and in their general outlook on life, as being a nation. They are no more a nation than are Freemasons or Roman Catholics. There is not a single quality or characteristic which can be called national that Jews have in common. The one thing they have in common is religion, and even that presents all sorts of variations, from a vague Theism on the one side to a gross mediæval superstition on the other. And how is it possible to make religion a basis of nationality? The one thing demonstrated beyond the possibility of question by the whole history of the world is that a religious State lacks every element of stability. It stereotypes evils and fails to confer benefits of any lasting value. Byzantium, Geneva, New England, are cases in point. Bring together into one State the Polish, Russian, American, English, and Dutch Jews (force would certainly have to be used to secure some of them), what would they have in common on which to build the ordinary fabric of a State? England has survived as a State precisely because, in spite of the varying and differing religious views of the people, there has persisted an attachment to certain secular institutions, to a certain area of country, and to certain national traditions. But what of this would there exist in a State built up of Jews recruited from all parts of the earth? Their tastes, habits, ideas, and ideals would be in hopeless and irreconcilable antagonism.

* * *

Preserved by Persecution.

So far as the Jews have been held together, it has been by a religion; so far as they have anything in common, it is religion. And for this they have to thank Christians. Christian bigotry and persecution has done what the religion of the Jew could never have done of itself. Persecute savagely, persistently, and you accomplish one of two things. Either you obliterate what is persecuted or you preserve it. The persecution of the Jews drew them together; they became attached to that for which they suffered, as a mother loves the more the child she has borne in agony. Where persecution is relaxed, where the Jew is allowed to mingle without hindrance in the life of the nation to which he belongs, the tendency is for him to disappear altogether. His religion loses its hold on him, and he becomes merged in the peoples around him. The Jew has fought for his religion, and Christians have helped, unconsciously, to keep it alive. His aspirations for Jerusalem were not a national longing, but a religious symbol. He wished for Jerusalem as the Christian longs for heaven—without

any desire to change his locality. The Jewish religion can survive persecution—so could any other religion; but what no religion can survive is freedom. For freedom, real freedom, means enlightenment, and no religion that the world has ever seen can survive that.

* * *

Why not Civilize Christians?

That brings me to the only possible justification for the founding of a Jewish State. And the reasons here are political and humanitarian, not religious. If the persecution of Jews by Christians is to continue, if they are to be outraged and murdered in Poland as they have for so long been outraged in Christian Russia, if Christian Roumania is to continue treating them as outlaws, and other Christian States to indulge in their measure of persecution, then it will be advisable to remove some millions to a part where more desirable conditions may be obtained. But the reason here is political or humanitarian, and does not at all rest on the question of nationality. The desirability of this plan turns upon the unlikelihood of Christians becoming civilized. Assuming that Christians were to become sufficiently civilized to cease persecuting Jews, does anyone claim that the Jew in Poland, or Russia, or Roumania, springing as he does from ancestors who have been settled in these countries for many centuries, will anyone claim that the Jew will prefer exile to a peaceful life in his native country? Of course, to escape persecution, he may be glad to go; but is the civilizing and humanizing of Christians quite a hopeless task? One would really like to get the opinion on this point of those Christians who talk so much about the return of the Jew to Palestine. It would be interesting to discuss what really does lie at the back of their minds.

* * *

Some Questions.

Does the world really desire to see another religious State set up? Is it a desirable thing? And what does it mean? Does it mean a State in which a Jewish Church shall rule—a theocracy with the possibility of developing all the intolerance of which a theocracy is capable? Or will equal rights, absolutely equal rights, be guaranteed to people of all religions, and of no religion? In that case it is a misnomer to call it a Jewish State, it would be a State completely secularized, no matter who were the people composing it. It is really a strange thing that just as other States are moving in the direction of secularization we should set up a new State that is at least nominally religious. And how long would such a State last? Already the missionary societies in this country are appealing for funds in order to convert the proposed new State to Christianity. How would the present population welcome these missionaries? And in a communication, dated March 4, from the Christians and Mohammedans of the Holy Land comes the following:—

We Moslem and Christian inhabitants of Palestine do not accept Jewish immigration into Palestine, nor Palestine becoming a National Home for the Jews, because Palestine is a Moslem and Christian country, and its language has been Arabic for the last 12 centuries..... We expect only justice from the powers, and our request to them is to keep our country for us. We are the born sons of the Holy Land, who have been accepted by both the Christian and Moslem worlds as the inmates of this blessed home, and all the holy places in Palestine are Moslem and Christian.

The only rational justification for transporting the Jews to Palestine and setting up a Jewish State is that it would remove them from the brutality of Christians. It is their conduct that makes such a scheme commendable. But there is always the alternative possibility of the Christian learning to behave better, although one

suspects that improvement will only come by way of a weakening of Christian belief. And as Christianity weakens so will Judaism disappear. It has been kept alive by Christianity, and the world will be the better for the disappearance of both.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Intellectual Awakening in South Wales.

MATTHEW ARNOLD's estimate of the Celtic genius as having "sentiment for its main basis, with love of beauty, charm, and spirituality for its excellence, ineffectualness and self-will for its defect," is, on the whole, remarkably accurate. Nations like the Jews and the Spaniards were inspired and strengthened by the belief in a coming Messiah and a returning Cid Rodriga—"the Perfect One, the Born in the Happy Hour." The Celts had their romance, too, their national hero, who, though dead or asleep, was expected to return from the Isle of Avallon, and lead his people to glorious victory. This hope was cherished by the Welsh people till about the end of the twelfth century. So ardently was this expectation held that the English king thought it necessary to destroy it before the Welsh would settle down to quiet life. To show them the utter unreasonableness of their faith, the monks of Glastonbury claimed to have discovered the coffin of Arthur, his wife, and his son. But superstition dies hard, and the Welsh went on reckoning on the return of Arthur; and even in modern times some shepherds are said to have come upon the cave where Arthur's men are sleeping surrounded by untold treasure, waiting for the signal to march forth to battle. There were other heroes, such as Cadwaladr the Blessed and Owain of the Red Hand, who were expected to return and reign over Britain, subduing all her enemies. Now, romance and religion in Wales have always been very closely related, though romance lost its hold upon the people much earlier than religion. Perhaps it would be nearer the truth to observe that religion never counted for much in the life of the Welsh till the rise of Non-conformity which, in Wales particularly, was only another word for Puritanism. The Established Church had been for a considerable period devoid of all influence among the masses of the people. The majority of the clergy did no work whatever calculated to improve the morals and manners of their parishioners. Of one we read that "he spent his time in taverns, was a public drunkard and brawler, quarrelling with his parishioners and others." What happened in Wales was a religious revival of the wildest kind conducted by such men as Howell Harris and Daniel Rowlands, fanatics of the first water. This is Lecky's description of Harris:—

He seems to have given great provocation, and he certainly met with extreme hostility. He made it his special mission to inveigh against public amusements, and on one occasion during the races at Monmouth, when the ladies and gentry of the county were dining together in the Town Hall, under the presidency of a duke, H. Harris mounted a table which was placed against the window of a room where they were, and poured forth a fierce denunciation of the sinfulness of his auditors. The people and clergy were furious against him. I have already noticed how Seward, who was one of his companions, was killed by the mob. On one occasion a pistol was fired at H. Harris; on another he was beaten almost to death; again and again he was stoned with such fury that his escape appeared almost miraculous. The clergymen were seen distributing intoxicating liquors among the mob to excite them. Another, who held no less a position than that of Chancellor of the diocese of Bangor, stirred up whole districts

against him. Women in his congregation were stripped naked. Men were seized by the pressgangs, and some of his coadjutors had to fly for their lives" (*History of England*, vol. ii., pp. 604-5).

Such preaching brought into existence numerous and powerful Nonconformist bodies, "stronger," we are told, "than those to be found in any other part of the country, while the adherents of the Church had in the Welsh districts dwindled down to a comparatively small class." Throughout the Principality, more especially in the agricultural portions, Nonconformist places of worship, lacking all artistic adornments, sprang up like mushrooms, and the services held therein were often of an extremely excited and noisy character. Every now and then a revival was worked up, during which feelings ran high, inducing a state of irresponsible intoxication lasting for many weeks. The sermons preached were usually fierce attacks upon amusements and carnal pleasures. All play was denounced as sinful, and less than forty years ago a prominent minister was officially reprehended for daring to act as president of a football club. The nineteenth century in Wales was a notoriously dark and dismal period, when children were wickedly robbed of their youth, when even to smile on the Lord's Day was an offence against Heaven, when lurid visions of heaven and hell overshadowed and darkened this earthly life. Man's whole duty consisted in despising and hating the world, and in concentrating his thoughts upon and living alone for eternity. Bible knowledge was the only knowledge worth possessing. The only proper subject of conversation was theology; and there were times when the people generally thought and talked of nothing else. The late Sir John Rhys and Sir D. Brynmor Jones tell the following story in support of that statement:—

About thirty years ago an English professor of theology and a Welsh preacher were taking a morning walk in a very Welsh county, and sat down to rest awhile in a field. Near by two farm labourers, who were finishing their midday meal, were talking in Welsh. Their loud tones and excited gestures attracted the attention of the visitors. Said the Professor: "Are they quarrelling?" "Well," replied the Preacher, "they are not quarrelling more than is usual in a debate on a theological point. They are discussing the question whether Christ had two wills or one. The Monothelite controversy is revived." For the benefit of the Professor the Preacher translated the conversation as it proceeded, and the judgment of the former was that the arguments urged by each disputant were as subtle and absurd as any of those to be found in the old books (*The Welsh People*, p. 474).

Curiously enough, the New Learning never reached Wales at all. There was no Welsh intellectual awakening from the Norman Conquest down to the middle of the nineteenth century. It is frankly admitted that during the whole of that long period, hardly a voice comes from the people as a whole.

They tilled their land, attended to their flocks and their herds, married and died in complete obscurity, without being to any great degree touched by the intellectual movements of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (*The Welsh People*, p. 471).

And yet, by a series of religious revivals, Wales was being unconsciously prepared for an intellectual re-birth. After the Methodist revival came the revival of 1859, which was criticized as being "mere religious hysterics," as leading to "certain wholesome conventionalities being forgotten, and even to a laxity of morals among people of an unstable disposition." Since then a new class of professional revivalists has arisen who go up and down the world manufacturing revivals; and a most profitable profession it has proved to be. But it is having the

desirable effect of killing religion while pretending to renew its life and power. This is specially true of the latest and, in some respects, most marvellous revival known to us, namely, the one conducted by Evan Roberts in South Wales not so many years ago. Already the state of religion in that land is worse than it ever was before. The chapels that were so crowded that several of them had to be enlarged are now empty, or rapidly emptying, and the managers are finding it increasingly difficult to meet their financial liabilities. Thoughtful young men find it impossible any longer to believe in supernaturalism, and flourishing Branches of the National Secular Society have been formed at Swansea, Maesteg, Rhondda Valley, Pontycymmer, and Ogmere Vale. At Abertillery there is a strong Freethought Society, doing splendid work, called the New Era Union, which began its existence as a Bible Class. Young men and women who, on entering the University colleges are zealous Church members and Sunday-school teachers, return in many instances avowed Freethinkers. It is significant of much that many, if not most, of the promising young men who were educated at Ruskin College at the expense of the workers are pronounced Secularists. The truth is that supernatural belief is being dethroned everywhere by natural knowledge. The Christians are aware that their case is hopeless, that the dogmas of their religion cannot be justified at the bar of reason, and that the spread of education militates against the prosperity of the Church. The clergy are loath to come out in public defence of their dying creed, and the only way in which they can hinder the movement is by utilizing all their influence to prevent the Freethinkers from securing halls in which to carry on their propaganda.

J. T. LLOYD.

Christism and Spiritualism.

A world in the hand is worth two in the bush—
Let us have to do with real men and women, and not with skipping ghosts—*Emerson*.

SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE'S conversion to Spiritualism, coupled with his propagandist zeal, has once again revived speculation and discussion over what strange adventures are perpetrated in the name of theology in Christian England. On such an occasion people become aware what a strong hold fancy religions, of which Spiritualism is a specimen, have in this country.

Spiritualism, like Christian Science, thrives upon curiosity. The well-to-do sentimentalist, half-educated, with little to exercise his mind seriously, with money to spend, is ever on the search for new sensations. He is waiting anxiously to be exploited. A charlatan comes along with his trap baited with modern miracle-mongering, and a new disciple is caught without so much as a wriggle. To the professors of Spiritualism, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's conversion is worth much, and his name is being used everywhere as a triumphant proof of the existence of spiritual phenomena.

The so-called argument appears to be that if Conan Doyle is satisfied as to the truth of "spiritual manifestations" then they are true. On the same principle, it seems to me, that, if a distinguished actor, or grocer, or boxer, were to give us his opinions on electrons, criminal lunacy, or evolution, those opinions should carry weight and be accepted without demur. It is carrying authority to the very gates to Colney Hatch.

Present-day Spiritualism seems to me but a natural development of the old belief in omens, warnings, and manifestations. When I pick up a Spiritualist paper I am not surprised to find its advertisement columns

crowded with the manifestoes of astrologers and palmists and alluring displays: inviting me to get into touch with another world at a ridiculously cheap price.

The spiritualistic conception of immortality invites the sarcastic comment that it is an endless capacity for the interchange of platitudinous nonsense. When spiritualistic professors disturb the "ghosts" of great and good men and women, and persuade them to "re-visit the glimpses of the moon" at psychical gatherings, the results are most melancholy and unsatisfactory. Not only have the thoughts of the departed not grown finer nor more original, but invariably there is a vast change for the worse. The reported utterances of Burns and Shakespeare, for example, suggest that these great poets have taken to drink, or are suffering from softening of the brain. They give no iota of information concerning a post-mortem existence, but seem pre-occupied with composing puerile parodies of their previous utterances on earth.

Our scepticism with regard to the "spirit messages" is not mitigated by the supposition that the authors of *Tam O'Shanter* and *Hamlet* may conceivably pass their tremendous and enforced leisure tapping at the under side of tables, or scratching incoherences into locked slates for the professional purposes of Spiritualist professors. It is too significant that the "spirits" are more deeply preoccupied with things temporal rather than with matters dealing with their alleged post-mortem existence. Nor, in our case, is the matter placed in any more favourable light by suggesting that Nelson, Wellington, and Napoleon, to name no others, may fill in their lengthy leisure with discords on concertinas or solos on dinner-gongs for the delectation of psychical students.

We Freethinkers can afford to smile at the crude conceptions of the Spiritualists concerning immortality. Yet it is well to remember that cruder and more barbarous opinions regarding another world are held firmly by millions of people who profess and call themselves Christian. At the worst, the sincere Spiritualists merely wish to meet their lost friends and relatives in another existence. They do not regard discussion as blasphemy, nor do they insult and imprison people who differ from them, nor threaten opponents with everlasting agony elsewhere. If Christianity be true, Burns and Dickens, in company with many millions of other unhappy human beings, are now in a most unenviable position. Frankly, we dislike both the Spiritualistic and the Christian views concerning immortality, but we confess that the Spiritualist conception is far less brutal and degrading than that held by Orthodox Christians. Of the two things, we prefer legerdemain to vivisection.

MIMNERMUS.

SCIENCE.

Just as a single human being, restricted wholly to the fruits of his own labour, could never amass a fortune, but on the contrary the accumulation of the labour of many men in the hands of one is the foundation of wealth and power, so, also, no knowledge worthy of the name can be gathered up in a single human mind limited to the span of a human life and gifted only with finite powers, except by the most exquisite economy of thought and by the careful amassment of the economically ordered experience of thousands of co-workers. What strikes us here as the fruits of sorcery are simply the rewards of excellent housekeeping, as are the like results in civil life. But the business of science has this advantage over every other enterprise, that from its amassment of wealth no one suffers the least loss. This, too, is its blessing, its freeing and saving power.—*Ernst Mach*, "*Popular Lectures*."

What is an "Entity" ?

III.

(Concluded from p. 145.)

HAVING now stated the verdict of science upon the fundamantal relation between the objective universe and our subjective affections, we may now turn to the more general question: "What is a real entity?" To which science replies, that in respect to inanimate or lifeless existence, "an entity is simply a cluster of attributes with an indestructible core."

Though each entity-cluster is usually the final result of several successive unions; yet the actual cluster, with the exception of two attributes to be mentioned below, is always the offspring of the last synthesis. Nature's method of constructing entities is fixed and uniform, of which the following is typical: Two or more entities unite and coalesce. In so doing, the combining clusters *disappear*, and a new group appear in their stead; this new group is the new entity. For example:—

The groups of properties called hydrogen and oxygen unite and vanish, and a new cluster called water springs into existence.

This new entity, water, likewise, in the cells of the sugar plant, unites and coalesces with the entity, carbon; and both water and carbon groups disappear, and a sugar molecule emerges from the union. At each stage the entity becomes more complex, for the new cluster enfolds the latest "remains" of the old one, and will continue to do so as long as it remains an entity.

The process, however, is reversible. We may begin with the sugar molecule, and retrace our steps. As each higher entity vanishes, the enfolded "remains" reappear, until we get to the oxygen and hydrogen cluster with which we began. Thus Nature, in all her entity "creations," is a perfectly "reversible engine."

We stated above that two members of the original clusters were exceptions to this law of *disappearance* and *reappearance*. These are *weight* and *mass*; or, as they are often called, gravity and inertia.

It should be noted that these were not *specific* properties peculiar to one of the combined clusters, but were common to each and all.

Now, at no stage of the ascending or synthetic process did these disappear, and were therefore unchanged and undiminished in the final result—the weight and mass of the sugar crystal were equivalent to the sum of those of the original carbon, oxygen, and hydrogen.

Moreover, these two are not independent attributes. Weight is only an index or coefficient of mass, a fact which is obviously implied in the universal practice of comparing or measuring masses by *weighing* them. Weight is only a convenient measure of mass.

Besides, weight or gravity, though inalienable from mass, is not an invariable property; its intensity is determined by the magnitude and proximity of other masses, while mass or inertia is contingent upon nothing whatsoever. Its value at the centre of the earth is unchanged though weight has vanished.

Hence mass or inertia is the indestructible core—"the irreducible characteristic of matter."

Why weight does not vanish as other urges do at these unions is no mystery. Gravity is not a specific urge directed towards some particular entity but is a universal attribute.

Again, its action is not limited to infinitesimal distances. Hence there is no fulfilment or satisfaction to this urge when those unions occur. It, therefore, remains active throughout.

To this process of chemical union Nature adds another—that of physical combination. Among the

attributes which make up the cluster-entity are molecular forces which bind the chemical entities into physical aggregates, and these gravitate into masses and world entities.

The material universe is thus essentially a hierarchy of entities, ranging from atoms to suns and worlds. Nature is for ever *concreting*, and becomes inevitably *discrete* in the process. I say "material" and not "physical," for it is not known whether the ether is granular or continuous, as the most distinguished physicists hold diametrically opposite views.

Since the entity and the cluster of attributes are one and the same object, it follows that they are indissoluble. You can no more destroy the entity and retain one of its specific attributes than you can preserve a top storey of a building and demolish those beneath. You cannot preserve the sweetness of sugar and destroy its weight and its mass. The cluster must be always complete from above downwards. The grotesque notion of entities having ghosts or spirits is a colossal absurdity; and it shows how little removed we are from the savage, that people can still be gulled by transparent frauds of Spiritualism.

ITS MEANING IN THE ORGANIC WORLD.

In the realm of living things, however, the word "entity" has a totally different meaning. As entities, the difference between living and lifeless objects is as great as it is possible for the mind to conceive. It is not a mere change; it is a complete reversal. The antithesis is as marked as between light and darkness, or zenith and nadir points. It is a change from the *purposeless* to the *purposive*. A living organism is certainly a cluster of attributes, like a sand grain or a world; but all those which are peculiar to it as a *living thing* are purposive.

Nature adopts here a new magic device in the art of constructing her entities. She now not only combines, but *organizes*. Activity has become purposive, and so, to make it efficient, the entity is divided into a number of organs, glands, etc., each with a function or duty to perform, and all made convergent upon one end or objective—to live.

Every part of a plant—root, stem, branch, and leaf—is purposive, and so is every organ, tissue, gland, and secretion in the animal body, as well as every living impulse included in that comprehensive term "instinct."

What makes an organism a living entity is not merely an independent existence, but a *unity of purpose or end*. A living entity may thus be defined as "a cluster of convergent functions, capacities, impulses, and activities—all having one aim."

The carcase left when "life has fled" is a mere physical entity.

Besides this teleological difference, there is still another, though correlative with it. The attributes of an inorganic entity are all related to general or particular affinities, *ie.*, to mutual urges ever tending to draw objects towards each other in space and to bind them together when brought into contact.

The purposive attributes in the organic world, on the contrary, relate one and all to the storing, the releasing, or the utilizing of energy.

It is needless to say that I have not the faintest notion, and I doubt that anyone has, how or why the change arose—how or why the purposeless became purposive; but it would be dishonest to minimize the magnitude or completeness of the change involved.

It was my intention to write another article on "Is Energy an Entity?" but in view of what has been stated in this article, it seems to be wholly unnecessary. Besides, it would be so technical as to be of interest

only to those who have received a training in theoretical mechanics.

Le Bon calls energy the "Great Entity." But as he does not define entity, and expressly refrains from defining energy, there is therefore nothing to prevent him from identifying them. Words without precise and definite meaning are not "enclosures," but "open spaces," whereon anything may be dumped.

Should we define entity as a mathematical quantity or a physical constant, energy would be one and momentum another; but such a definition would at the same time exclude every object which we have in this paper denoted by the term.

To call energy as well as a stone an entity is as humorous as to include triangle and toothache in the same category.

KERIDON

Acid Drops.

In his life of Clemenceau, Mr. Hyndman credits the French Atheist with the saying: "I say to God, if you are not satisfied with me you had only to make me otherwise. But I defy him to answer me." Christians will be struck by the "blasphemy" of this. What strikes us is its common sense. If there is a God we are all as he made us, and if he is not satisfied with his handiwork, he ought to blame himself, not others. The Christian method is to praise God for making the world as it is, and under cover of expressions of satisfaction try to alter things.

Commenting on the cry of the "starving clergy," a daily paper states that "the average stipend of a curate in London is £160." It might have added that many curates would not earn so much as that in the open market.

As for the average wage of a London curate being £160, it is well to recall that a return issued by the Board of Education shows that over 9,000 male teachers and 61,000 female teachers receive less than £150 a year.

The chivalrous Bishop of Carlisle has been saying some nasty things about modern feminine fashions. Perhaps the ladies will remind him that the shovel hat, apron, and gaiters are not exactly things of beauty and a joy for ever.

"The most pathetic thing in London is the crowding of people into picture theatres," is a wise remark made by the Rev. Scott Lidgett. Unfortunately, it is not half so "pathetic" as the crowding in railway trains, or the emptiness of churches and chapels.

Three German officer prisoners, who died in Holyport Camp, were buried in the cemetery at Bray, near Maidenhead. Now there is a demand from the "indignant villagers" that these bodies shall be disinterred and buried in "unhallowed ground." Christianity is a lovely thing, and even the dead are not secure from Christian feeling. The local council also wished the bodies to be disinterred, but then it was discovered it would cost nearly £200. So it was decided to let the bodies remain where they are.

Sir Arthur Yapp declares that "if fifty Y.M.C.A. huts could be placed in the East-end of London, they would bring about a revolution in the social life of the people there." Bigotry mitigated by billiards would not make much of a revolution.

A Church Missionary Society's advertisement announces that "Britain's best gift to the world is the good news of Christ." Gift, indeed! Sometimes the Beatitudes have been enforced by the bayonet.

"The sloppily sentimental woman is of no practical use in public work," said Mrs. Stanhope, at a Young Women's

Christian Association meeting. Dear, dear! And this brand of lady is the mainstay of the Christian Church.

A "V.A.D. of Four Years," writing in the *Daily Mail* on "Where the Church Fails," says "tracts are not a success, except as shaving-papers or pipe-lighters." We have said the same thing for nearly forty years.

Mr. George Robey has been holding an auction sale for philanthropic purposes in connection with the War. As a reward for his efforts in this direction, he has received the O.B.E.—which decoration is thrown about like confetti at a gala, and is about as valuable. But, on the other hand, he has been reprimanded by the Bishop of Willesden, who objects to anyone doing business on Sunday except himself. Mr. George Robey replies to the Bishop's attack by saying that he gives the latter full permission to rehearse any of his gags after his Sunday dinner. And that really seems a good way out. Mr. Robey poaches on the Bishop's Sunday preserves. Therefore let the Bishop, on Sunday, sing one of Mr. Robey's week-day songs. We are quite sure the congregation will appreciate that form of retaliation.

At the Coal Commission, one of the most effective remarks was that of Mr. Smillie, who pointed out that the men who risk their lives and limbs to get wealth for the coalowners were "housed like swine." What a comment on two thousand years of Christian civilization!

Darwin's birthplace, Mount House, Shrewsbury, has been sold. Pious folk will regard this as a judgment of Providence.

Mr. Clarke Hall, the London magistrate, says: "it is a very good thing that boys should play football, even on Sundays." The clergy will remember him in their prayers.

Christians like work done for next to nothing. An advertisement in a daily paper states: "Women between 24 and 50 able to pay their own moderate living expenses are wanted for Y.M.C.A. recreation huts," etc.

At Wakefield a little boy, aged eleven, was killed owing to the explosion of a shell detonator with which he was playing. Several other boys were injured. One of these injured lads dropped the detonator and caused the explosion. A piece of the flying metal struck a pocket in which the lad carried a prayer-book, and the missile was deflected, whereupon the coroner's officer exclaimed in solemn tones: "I may say that had it not been for the prayer-book this boy would undoubtedly have been killed." Providence protected the lad through the medium of the prayer-book. Providence allowed one boy to be killed and several others injured. And who are we that we should judge the ways of Providence?

The *Weekly Dispatch* says that "the terrible cataclysm of the War.....is the measure of the failure of all the churches, whether national or international." Having said this, it immediately "hedges" by saying that the Churches have a chance if they will "reinterpret" their creed in terms of justice and brotherhood. Really if people who have given up Christianity could be recaptured by a plausible "re-interpretation" they would be so silly that they never could have been sensible enough to have escaped from its dislikes in the first place.

The humanizing and beneficent effects of war, concerning which the clergy waxed eloquent, are very plain—to the eye of faith. We have given many from time to time. Here is another reported in the *Daily News* of March 21. A girl, British born, legally a British subject, won a trade scholarship under the Willesden Education Committee. But the girl's parents are Italians by birth, and the Middlesex Education authority has now disallowed the scholarship. The girl's only offence is that her parent's are by birth belonging to one of our Allies in the War. We see that the Willesden

Education Committee is lodging a protest, and we hope it will be effective. People who are responsible for the withholding of the scholarship under such conditions are unfit to be trusted with power on any education body.

The *Nation*, in a review of Mr. Graham Wallas' new edition of *The Life of Francis Place*, remarks, it is only right to add that Place was an Agnostic. We beg to observe that Place was nothing of the kind. This man, who did so much for political radicalism, for education, and for advanced movements generally, was an Atheist. The Agnostic had not then been invented. We owe that term to the compromising tendency of a later age.

One of our readers sends us the following:—

Reference the issue of the *Freethinker*, No. 11, vol. xxxix., of March 16, 1919, paragraph 1 of "Acid Drops," the following are the religious denominations of 17 Conscientious Objectors at present attached to our battalion as recorded in their A. F. B 103s: 2 Society of Friends, 4 Wesleyan, 1 Methodist, 1 Primitive Methodist, 1 Baptist, 1 Strict Baptist, 1 Congregationalist, 1 Salvation Army, 1 Church of England, 2 Jewish, 1 Agnostic, 1 no religion stated.

Speaking of soldiers' religious opinions, the Rev. K. Greenland said at the Free Church Council that "the men at the War made a religion for themselves, not the pottering little thing of bazaars, tea meetings, and foolish nonsense of that kind." Pious people will hardly like Greenland's icy sentences.

Mr. W. A. Appleton, Secretary of the General Federation of Trade Unions, says that "if the Christian Church is to win back the mass, it must preach less of the hereafter and take notice of everyday problems." If the clergy did this, they would find their occupation gone. People can deal with everyday problems without assistance from "medicine-men" of any denomination.

Judge Parry, speaking of professional preachers, said "the first eleven of the apostles—I omit Judas as a disgrace to the team—were all amateurs." Just so! But the firm had so little money in it at the time that Judas sold the whole outfit for thirty shillings.

After careful preparation, and fortified by the prayers of the faithful, the brave Bishop of Sodor and Man is visiting the British Armies on the Continent. No one can accuse him of undue haste, or even of running unnecessary risks.

A newspaper paragraph stated that Sir Arthur Yapp would preach in Durham Cathedral. An unkind critic might suggest that Sir Arthur never did anything else.

"The original home of all ghosts, ancient and modern, is in Dreamland," says a writer in a daily paper. This comprehensive statement includes the Jerusalem ghost and other Biblical bogeys "at one fell swoop."

In his Presidential Address to the National Free Church Council at Sheffield, the Rev. A. T. Guttery said the League of Nations "made Paris one of the holy cities." Is this wise? So many Free Church ministers will want to visit this holy place.

Poetry recitals from Shakespeare are a feature at one City church, whilst a cinema is a star attraction at another. Anything will suit, except the religion of Christ, and Him crucified.

The Church of England Army Chaplains are being demobilized very slowly. Up to the middle of March, of the 3,000 chaplains in the Army, only about 500 had been demobilized. The remainder are still drawing officers' pay at the expense of the Nation. When the fighting was on, parsons were exempted from military service, but were allowed to serve as chaplains. It is a nice game, played slowly.

O. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

March 30, Leeds; April 6, Edinburgh; April 7, Falkirk; April 8, Paisley; April 13, Glasgow; April 27, South Place, London.

To Correspondents.

E. A. MOORE.—Some people seem to take a delight in circulating lies and slanders about the President of the N. S. S. It was the case with Bradlaugh and Foote, and probably no occupant of the office will be exempt. You can tell your friend very definitely that Mr. Cohen does not take a single halfpenny from the N. S. S. in any shape or form—neither for lectures, for writing, for work done, not even to cover the out-of-pocket expenses attendant on the office of President. When he does, there will be no concealment of the matter.

J. H. KENWARD (Salonika).—Sorry we cannot tell you anything of the American institution you name. With regard to withdrawing a child from religious instruction in this country, we believe the "inconvenience" to the child is often very much exaggerated. Our own children have never suffered an unpleasantness; the experience of many of our friends runs on the same lines. There may, of course, be exceptions; but we think they are not numerous. A little knowledge of the character of the school and of the teachers will help you.

J. WILLIAMS.—Thanks for your efforts to get the *Freethinker* poster displayed. It is sometimes difficult to overcome the fears of newsagents; but every success counts as so much to the good.

PT. S. PLEIRIN.—*Bible Handbook* out of print. We are sending you copies of the *Freethinker* for distribution.

WELL-WISHER.—Perhaps something may be done in the way you suggest presently to make our meetings "brighter." We have conveyed your suggestion to the proper quarter.

MR. A. J. MARRIOTT writes that the evidence given at the Coal Commission as to the housing of miners, and noted in "Acid Drops" last week, is a grave reflection upon both the medical and clerical professions. He thinks the money spent on vaccination and church building would have been much better expended on securing better houses, and so eliminate disease by the creating of healthier conditions.

OWING to Mr. Cohen's absence from London, a number of letters are held over until our next issue.

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

The National Secular Society's office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

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

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

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

All Cheques and Postal Orders should be crossed "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 of 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.

To-day (March 30) Mr. Cohen lectures twice in the Town Hall, Leeds—at 3 and 7 o'clock. The Town Hall is a very large building to fill, and an extremely expensive one to hire. Extensive advertising is essential when such a building is taken, and all this means Freethinkers must do their best to see that the meetings are successful. There are a number of reserved seats at 1s. each, and tickets for these may be obtained from Mr. H. R. Youngman, 19 Loverhead Row, Leeds, or from Mr. J. Walker, 63 Portland Crescent. For the benefit of those who come from a distance, tea has been provided at the Clarion Cafe, Gascoigne Street, Boar Lane.

Arrangements for Mr. Cohen's visit to Edinburgh on April 6 are now well in hand. The meetings will be at 11.30 and 6.30, in the Free Gardeners' Hall, Picardy Place. Will local friends who are willing to help advertise the meetings, or who can give other assistance, please communicate with J. Anderson, 95 Hanover Street, Edinburgh?

The Manchester Branch brought its winter season to a close by two good meetings on Sunday last. The evening meeting was the largest of the course, and the admirable singing and playing (piano) before and after the lectures were greatly enjoyed by those present. The Branch is greatly indebted to Messrs. Glynn, Taylor, Echersley, and Tilley, who have sang at the various meetings, and to Miss Williams who has assisted at the piano. At the close of the afternoon lecture a collection was taken up on behalf of the Benevolent Fund of the N.S.S. It is pleasing to record that the Branch is making steady progress in both the number of members and in the influence of its work. The Branch is fortunate in the possession of its Secretary, Mr. H. Black, who is both energetic and resourceful, and his efforts are well backed by a hard-working committee. What the Branch can do was seen in a sale of work, organized by the lady members, held on March 22, and which realized a net profit of about £25. The work of the lady members in this and other directions deserves the highest praise. The Branch is full of hope for a still more successful season next autumn.

Those of our readers who live within the parish of St. Pancras will be interested to learn that Miss Vance has been asked by the National League of the Blind and the St. Pancras Labour Party to stand as candidate in the forthcoming Guardians' Election, and she has agreed to do so. She is specially interested in the care of the blind, and, unfortunately, has now had some years' experience of their difficulties and needs. Freethinkers in that part of North London which lies within the parish of St. Pancras will need no urging to use their vote and interest in the right direction. We gather that there is urgent need for the interests of the blind receiving attention, none are so qualified to see that this is done as one of themselves. Miss Vance's return will ensure that they have at least one firm friend on the Board.

The generous offer of one of our readers in paying for twenty-one quarterly subscriptions for new readers, has been taken up very freely. We have received many more than the twenty-one applications, and are sending out more than the specified number. But a certain number we have been obliged to transfer to our free list for a more limited number of weeks.

Mr. W. Thresh lectures this evening at the Repertory Theatre, Birmingham, his subject being "The Evolution of the Solar System." As this closes the present lecture-season of the Branch, it is hoped that this fine theatre will be crowded. It is to be noted, further, that on this occasion a well-deserved presentation will be made to Mr. Williams.

Freethinker readers who can secure that our new poster shall be displayed, either at newsagents' or elsewhere, will oblige by writing this office. The poster is an effective one, and cannot but do good. In some towns we are having them posted on the walls—a plan we shall elaborate so soon as our resources permit the expenditure.

The time will come when even selfishness will be charitable for its own sake, because at that time the man will have grown and developed to that degree that selfishness demands generosity and kindness and justice. The self becomes so noble that selfishness is a virtue. The lowest form of selfishness is willing to be happy or wishes to be happy at the expense or the misery of another. The highest form of selfishness is when a man becomes so noble that he finds his happiness is making others so. This is the nobility of selfishness.—*Ingersoll.*

In What Sense is Christianity International?

A MEMBER of the Society of Friends, Henry T. Hodgkin, has just issued a very earnest Quaker manifesto,¹ in the hope of helping to restart true Christianity, the Church having failed to develop its own religion effectively. Indeed, Mr. Hodgkin uses almost sensational language to describe the Church's failure to meet the bitter needs of Europe and mankind:—

She has chosen to follow the "lighter than air" school. Inflated by gas, she maintains an unstable equilibrium in the upper air, swept along before the hurricane, while the petrol in her tanks is frozen, and all her bombs are exhausted.

It says a good deal for Mr. Hodgkin's splendid temper that, in spite of such a bankruptcy of spiritual powers, the religion of Jesus still seems to him the supreme resource and hope of humanity.

In the course of his enthusiastic description of what the religion of Jesus can and will do—some day—this gentle soul surveys the globe, and then assures us that, in its very original nature, the system is fitted for a complete international extension. Here is the proposition:—

Undoubtedly, Jesus meant to establish a universal fellowship. Though, in His own life-time He limited his activities very largely to His own nation, His eye was ever on the world, the "other sheep," who were to come into the one flock. His immediate followers so far got hold of this thought as to be able to break away, intensely difficult as it was for them, from the traditions of one of the most narrowly national tribes known to history. The international idea is an integral part of Christianity.

To my humble fancy, Mr. Hodgkin's thought is a little confused. Indeed, the Quakers, owing to their individualistic doctrine of the Inner Light, which shines independently of outside criticism, are not distinguished for logic. A notable example is the fact that, while Inner-lightly objecting to military service, they pay taxes to support the Army and Navy. In other people this would be rudely called hypocrisy. But as it has become a social convention to speak very politely about Quakers (who are often enough rich), I will grovel to the fashion, and merely murmur that I cannot understand the lofty reasoning of the Society of Friends.

I say Mr. Hodgkin seems a little confused, because he talks of "universal fellowship" and the "international idea" as if they were exactly the same thing. Now, universal fellowship may imply a cosmopolitan fraternity pure and simple, and that would mean a general world-friendship which overpassed national frontiers and even gladly obliterated them. To be quite frank on this issue, I here observe that some Secularists approve this doctrine. They would, in effect, be willing to abolish nationality, mainly (not, I think, wholly) on the ground that the nationality-spirit breeds wars. In passing, I may say I do not at all subscribe to this view, but the present occasion is not suitable for a discussion of the Fors and Againsts.

The international idea, strictly speaking, denotes an amicable union of nations which desire to preserve their frontiers and local modes of life and politics and economics, and readily agree to respect the like privileges of neighbours-peoples. This is the form of world-fraternity which I cordially assent to, and for which I have (if I may say so) worked, on educational lines, for many years.

Now, I suspect that friend Hodgkin has not discriminated between these two doctrines—the cosmo-

politan and the international. If we pressed him into a logical corner (where, of course, he would still possess the advantage of the Inner Light), he would, perhaps, confess that he is really a cosmopolitan. If so, he cannot uphold the "international idea." That would be disconcerting for his argument as above quoted.

And now let us turn to the New Testament. Mr. Hodgkin, as we have seen, is obliged to allow that Jesus, "in his own life-time," was very much of a Hebrew. His geographical travels were remarkably short, and his allusions to foreign nationalities very few. Though he was a subject of the Roman Empire, he never expressed any opinion on the vast polity which the Empire represented. Once, when heckled, he stated his agreement with the payment of taxes to the Roman Cæsar. If Jesus used an atlas, it had but one small group of maps in it, namely, Galilee, Samaria, Judæa, and a few restricted regions on the borders.

If you examine the book of Acts and all the epistles, and the Apocalypse, you will see that the early Christian imagination was bounded by these points—on the north, Illyria and Scythia; on the west, Spain; on the south, Cyrene, Egypt, and Ethiopia; on the east, Syria, Babylon, and Media. Practically, this area was less than the Roman Empire, for the Roman eagles had penetrated to Britain and Belgium, the German forests, the Danube, and Persia. The sailors of Carthage had traded with West Africa, and the Greeks and Romans knew something of India. The New Testament writers do not embrace India, Persia, Britain, and West Africa in their evangelical vision.

Take up a modern map of the world. Mark off the boundaries of early Christian knowledge, and you will be struck by the enormous amount of territory outside that tiny world of the New Testament. The Master's eyes, and the Apostolic eyes, and the eyes of Revelation saw nothing of the temples and innumerable villages of India, the plains of China, the isles of Japan and the Pacific, the remote lands of Australia and New Zealand, the mighty rivers and forests of Central Africa, the veldt of the Cape, the gigantic stretches of Siberia, the lakes of Finland, the fiords of Norway, the heather-clad Grampians, the green levels of Ireland, the majestic double continent of America, towered over by the Rocky Mountains and the high peaks of the Andes. It is true that the Devil is said to have unveiled to Jesus all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, and offered the entire assemblage of them as a free gift. It is also true that Jesus is reported to have bidden his disciples go and teach all nations. What "all nations" meant to these primitive Christians is perfectly clear from an expression in the book of Acts. That book tells of the descent of the Holy Pneuma, or Celestial Wind, which inspired Peter and his friends to speak in divers tongues, and it says that there were then in Jerusalem pious Jews who had come from "every nation under heaven." The languages are actually named, and we are given to understand that every Jewish visitor to Jerusalem recognized the language of the country in which he usually dwelt. The languages belong only to that limited part of the Roman Empire which I have already outlined. That relatively small area was the Christian "world."

If, then, Jesus and his disciples could have been granted facilities for journeying in the true world—far beyond the confines of Rome—how could they have met the extraordinary situation? Could they have spiritually and intellectually subdued China, India, Japan, America?

Or suppose they could be brought back to earth today, and it was proposed that they should now educate the world. Would they succeed either on the cosmopolitan basis, or the international?

¹ *Lay Religion*. (Headley Brothers).

As to the cosmopolitan basis. Is there the smallest prospect that Christianity will become the universal moral "culture" of mankind, abolishing all frontiers, and superseding all other faiths? What Popes, or priests, or pastors have the necessary genius? For zeal would not suffice. The task would demand genius—a genius that could convince the acute minds of India and Japan, and vanquish the whole round of scientific and humanist thought in the civilized communities. There is no prospect of such a revolution.

As to the international basis. You cannot get the "international idea" into operation unless you understand the "national idea," that is, the history, policy, economics, literature, and local psychology of the many nations (an increasing number) which constitute the social world to-day. If we follow Mr. Hodgkin back to the Gospels, are we likely to find, in the narrow and ill-educated Christians of the Gospel period (the first two centuries), the capacity and statesmanship for such an immense enterprise? If we go to the existing Church, we go to an organization which so little comprehended the international issues of Europe—of nominally Christian Europe—that it could not offer counsel of the slightest moral or political value on the outbreak of the recent lamentable War.

Appoint a bankrupt Chancellor of the Exchequer; import corn from the Sahara; gather figs of thistles; choose Central African pygmies for University chairs; ask Junkers to teach the lessons of democracy; and, after that, elect the Christian Church, as we see it in 1919, to the office of Chaplain to the League of Nations.

F. J. GOULD.

Religion and Life.

BY DR. E. LYTELTON.

SIR,—I am well aware that I have not directly answered all your challenges. Life is not long enough; and the bigger the matter the feebler force is logic. All I can hope to do is to remove some misconceptions from one or two of our readers' minds as to what we Christians have to teach. Believe me, I would give all I have got for the joy it would be to impart to any single seeker after truth the knowledge which has been given to me. But it is impossible to convey in words a thing so wonderful as life; and the personal relation to the Creator of the universe is a relation not of the intellect alone, but of life, and of the whole of man's being.

It may be that a negative proposition or two will clear the air. God is not apprehended as if He were an idea only: He is an Infinite Person, and is only revealed to those who really *wish* to know him. That holds good of all human relations; no two people get to know and love each other against their wills; the thing can't be done. But where there is a genuine wish for knowledge of a person, no intellectual difficulties bar the way for long. Yet A will often talk about B after knowledge has begun as if certain misconceptions had previously barred the way to knowledge; the truth is probably that the only barrier was a languid desire. You may say this is very unsatisfying. So are many facts till they are set in their true relation to other facts; and even then they have to be quickened indescribably. What a long time it took Darwin to understand the facts he had accumulated!

Yet, on the lower level, as I should call it, of intellect, the staggering thing to a Theist is that without assuming God and a purpose in Creation, the whole of this kosmos we call life at once becomes chaos or nonsense. The Theist looks into his own heart and finds a desire to rise up to a life higher than his own. But every effort he

makes to rise is painful: it cuts into his own natural inclinations. What, then, is he to make of this strange inextinguishable desire? His Atheistic friend seems to think it is evolved naturally. We object that as it is painful it cannot simply be the outcome of what is natural. So we ascribe it to our Maker, and that leads us further to ascribe to Him a desire on His part to lift us up into communion with himself; and human life becomes lit up with a "hope of glory": in spite of manifold symptoms of squalid failure and shame.

The Atheist, I gather, makes no attempt to account for the desire except to say he has not got it: but that leaves us where we were. And is that position more rational than the Theist's theory?

Now, these failures and shames are particularly manifest and distressing on the part of those who profess to be children of God and obedient to Him. They "cause the enemy to blaspheme" and to wonder why Theists hold to their belief in spite of the perturbing facts. There are two reasons.

(a) As I have more than once urged: the principles are sound though the practice is often rotten: and the more often it is rotten the stronger the indication that the principles have *not* been evolved by man alone; for not only is it very painful to try to act upon them, but it is, for the most part, unsuccessful. As an instance, take the hideous disorder and strife which are rampant throughout all civilized countries to-day. They are often spoken of as the failure of Christianity, because they are exhibited in so-called Christian countries. But we say on the contrary they are a proof of the soundness of Christ's teaching. Why?

Because we all alike have been guilty of disobedience to that teaching, though we most of us have known all along that it is true. We have striven, for example, to banish suffering from our lives: Christ said that all kinds of sufferings, except sickness, are "blessed"; also that money is a most dangerous possession. Very well: if 95 per cent. of the civilized peoples of the earth ignore His warning and give themselves over to the gathering of money as the most important undertaking possible, and then find that they have been hurrying themselves to ruin; is that an evidence for or against His teaching? We say that it is the former: for the really baffling fact would be if mankind, after rejecting His words, found the course of the world running smooth.

For His words are consonant with our best instincts, though we so often violate them. For four years, Christians, Theists, Atheists, "Nothingarians," the whole boiling of us, in short, have been shown up as hypocrites: there is no other word for it. Very nearly all of us have striven with might and main to banish suffering from our lives: yet when our heroic Tommies walked with a laugh into the trenches to die, flatly and flagrantly flouting our selfish creed, acting in direct opposition to our theory of getting, we one and all hail them as heroes; we pour upon them unstinted admiration; and if anyone dares for a moment to decry them, we turn and rend him. Strange, but true. But is it strange that if we are such fools, we turn the world into a hell? What else could make us think if Armageddon cannot?

If you object, that God ought to have laid down different laws, we say that we all know far too little of ultimate issues to be able to use the word "ought" at all. If a child of six were to sit in judgment on his father's conduct of the household or of his business, we should say he was not only a foolish but an unnatural child. The best son is he who not only waits for light, but honours his father meantime.

(b) The next reason why the evils of life do not utterly confound us, is that interwoven with them and *on condition they are interpreted in a certain way*, they bring about

good. Thus, when squarely faced, they save some Christians from conceit; and so far as we can see, nothing else could do that. But observe that it is only if we look at them against the background of God's Fatherhood. Then, and then only, we can see that they are phases of a training towards the higher life. They are not arbitrary explosions from a higher order of being, but moral and spiritual facts, which lead us to learn our own weakness and perversity. Hence we learn that God is able and willing to bring good out of evil; and so soon as a man clearly perceives that, he begins so to interpret life that whatever experiences are in store for him, his mind will be in peace.

Thus, though our Maker and Father gives us plenty of guidance and light for our arduous path onward, it is on condition that we take Him at His word and learn to know Him. He never repels any who seek; but seeking means longing for Him, and not caring in comparison with Him for anything this world can offer. Then the search brings not only guidance, but the true happiness which only comes to those who aim at something immeasurably better. It is difficult for me to believe that a negative creed, the one tenet of which, so far as I can learn, is to deny all this, can justify the hunger of the human soul. In any case, the right way to seek Him is not to affirm through thick and thin that His existence is a figment of the human brain, but to begin by assuming Him; then patiently ponder on His revelation of Himself, and communicate with Him, till the light dawns. That is the way we learnt to love and honour our fathers; but better than anything our earthly parents can offer is the Love of our Unseen Father who has redeemed this world, and offers us Eternal Life not only beyond death, but now.

There are various books I could recommend to any reader who may care to send a postcard, with his address. I will end by thanking you for your ready assent to my suggestion, and the courteous tone you have maintained throughout our correspondence.

Overstrand, Cromer.

Correspondence.

SIN.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I was amused by your "Acid Drop" quotation about a "young innocent boy" impelled to find what sin was by hearing people pray against it. The writer's implied hint that he wasn't sinful before is delicious. How men do idealize their childhood! Most likely this writer was like other boys of seven—that is, a little brute, whose chief pleasures were inflicting pain and gratifying his own appetites, regardless of others' rights, and whose only restraint was fear. I was like that, and, so far as I can see, most boys are now.

Now, it is quite likely that these middle-aged sinners were praying against other sins than these—against mere theological ones; for it is the main business of Christianity to divert moral feeling from real sins to sham ones. But it is absurd to think they could corrupt a boy of seven; he was most likely worse than they were. For the love of cruelty does lessen in later life in at least five people in ten. Without the hindrance of Christianity, it might lessen in nine people out of ten.

C. HARPER.

Jacobi's poetical thought of a divine necessity acting in science will lose none of its loftiness for us if we discover in this necessity the same power that destroys the unfit and fosters the fit. For loftier, nobler, more romantic than poetry is the truth and the reality.—*Ernst Mach, "Popular Lectures,"*

God.

THE Thing is unseen;
It lives
In the Realms of Belief
In splendrous sheen.
It gives
Unbounden grief:—
So-called "All-Love"—
By a Vulture-dove—
To that "Humanity"
Which fears
The Holy Vanity.
Through tears
Of hopelessness,
And the sorrow-pangs of Despair,
True Happiness
And mirth
From Earth
Are cast away
Before Unreason's chilly stare.
"Let us pray
For the healing magic Rod
Of inspired Divinity"—
Chant the Holy Men of God
With unanimity!
I would say:
Though despised and damned
I may thus be—
"Let us trust to *human love*
Of *human right*—
All Priests despise—
In the power
Of Reason's light
To cleanse out the unclean;
Freedom comes not from Above!
Do not kneel and cower!
The Earth can be fair and clean
As the skies,
When fears and lies
No more into the minds of men
Are religiously crammed!

C. B. WARWICK.

Obituary.

On Monday, March 17 last, at Ealing Cemetery, were laid to rest the remains of Rose Thurlow, aged thirty, the beloved wife of Herbert Thurlow, a lifelong reader and occasional contributor to this journal. While not actively associated with anti-Christian propaganda, the deceased was in full sympathy with the fight for intellectual and religious liberty, never attended any place of worship, was entirely untouched by any religious appeal, and devoted all the energies of her pure and unselfish life to promoting the happiness and comfort of one whom she always knew to be an avowed and bitter enemy of the Christian creed. She died as she had lived, without a thought for her own fate, her one concern being for her husband and children. There was no religious ceremony.—H. W. T.

Mr. Geo. Evans, of Aston, Birmingham, an old Freethinker, who in the past did much to further the Cause of Freethought, died on the 14th inst., and was buried at Witton Cemetery on the 18th. His activities belong to the past, for he was a veteran in the Cause. His wishes for a Secular Funeral were respected, Mr. J. P. Warren reading the Service.—J. P.

This is philosophy; to make remote things tangible common things extensively useful, useful things extensively common, and to leave the least necessary for the last.—*W. S. Landor.*

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): 7.30, Social Gathering—Music and Dancing.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, C. Kelf, "A Just and Durable Peace." Open Debate.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W., near Kennington Oval Tube Station): 7, Mr. J. Clarke, M.A., "Secular Education."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.): 11, S. K. Ratcliffe, "America at the Cross Roads."

OUTDOOR.

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

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Repertory Theatre, Station Street): 7, Mr. W. H. Thresh, "The Evolution of the Solar System."

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LEEDS SECULAR SOCIETY (Town Hall, Leeds): Mr. Chapman Cohen, 3, "Why Men Believe in God"; 7, "Do the Dead Live?"

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. F. J. Gould, "The White Man and the Tropics"

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