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Views and Opinions.

The Cult of the Credulous.

The European War has proved itself to be a great disturber of established notions. It upset many things that were taken to be firmly placed, and it established some things that were, to many, highly doubtful. But in all probability the greatest revelation of all was the tremendous amount of sheer primitive credulity of which "civilized" mankind was still capable, provided the right emotional atmosphere could be created. Everyone will recall, for instance, the case of the Angels at Mons. Here we had a story of angelic interference on behalf of the British troops that was deliberately invented by a journalist, with no other motive than the writing of a picturesque and romantic story. Mr. Machen made no secret of how he came to write the story, and disclaimed having any facts whatever to go upon. But that mattered little. Other journalists, like Mr. Harold Begbie, smelt good war time copy, and proceeded to provide "proof" that the story was based on fact. And, of course, several returned soldiers were found who had actually seen the angels, and some of the clergy came forward with *their* evidence. Then we had, it will be remembered, the famous transit of the Russian Army across England. Thousands of people saw and spoke to this non-existent Army. Following, there was the Belgian Baby with its hands cut off, who was seen all over the country, by some one known to the narrator. Then we had the story of the Germans boiling down their dead for the sake of the extraction of fats, etc. Nothing was too wild or too absurd for credence, and the whole provided a striking example of the credulity of civilized mankind, given favourable conditions for its manifestation.

Are we Civilized ?

Last week we wrote a couple of paragraphs concerning the oil-dripping-ceiling at Swanton Novers Rectory. But there are certain aspects of that topic which could neither be dealt with nor dismissed in a paragraph. Day after day the papers contained accounts of a ceiling that mysteriously dripped oil. And the whole essence of the matter lies in that word "mysteriously." Something uncanny, weird, ghostly, was suggested, and it was that which gave the subject its attractiveness. If the dripping of the oil had been recognized by all as necessarily a natural occurrence, due to either trickery or to some

natural cause, there would have been no space spent on it in the press, beyond, perhaps, a chance paragraph. It was the possible emergence of the supernatural that made the subject good "copy," and in that fact lies its significance. For suppose that the population of these islands had been full-grown, mentally, instead of being in the stage of mental undevelopment that is actually the case, would the papers then have written about the oil-dripping ceiling as they did? Everyone knows that they would not have done so. A really educated people, a people that were civilized in thought as well as in a number of superficialities that are only of secondary importance, would never have been attracted to such a subject as containing the possibility of the supernatural. The bare possibility of the thing could never have occurred to them. The newspapers were, as usual, simply writing to a felt demand. And their doing so testifies to the existence of a mass of superstition, latent and active, that contains a very serious menace to the little real civilization we possess.

Is Religion Dead ?

Now, there are many people who tell us, and they appear to believe it, that our work as Freethinkers is done. The Church they say has lost its power, Christianity is dead, therefore, we can cease the attack, our work is over. It is not without significance that many of those who talk in this way usually disprove their own statement by their fearfulness of offending the susceptibilities of religious people. But supposing it were true that Christianity was dead, does that really finish our work? We think not. Our ultimate fight is against the type of mind, the culture stage that expresses itself through Christianity and through all other religions. We are not engaged in a series of exercises in pure dialectic, but in a campaign that has a practical and a social end in view. Freethinkers realize—apparently they are the chief ones who do realize it—that the creation of a better type of society is ultimately dependent upon the existence of a better type of mind, and of a sanely educated intelligence. And you cannot be certain that you have done that by merely destroying Christianity. Christianity is only one of the manifestations of a general superstition; and very often, just as a man prides himself on his advance when he gives up the Roman Church for the English one, so we have others priding themselves on having given up Christianity, and at once adopting another form of irrationalism. Look at the recent performances of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and then say in what way does he represent a social gain or mark an advance in real culture in having given up the Christian faith for Spiritualism. The same type of mind is being perpetuated under another name.

The Social Lesson.

There was one utterance made during the War which contained a vital truth, although those who used it seldom recognized its significance. They told us that the War was a war of ideas. This was true, but only because all social movements, whether of war or peace,

are ultimately due to the play of ideas. And if that be true, it follows that the direction and value of social movements will be finally determined by the kind of thinking of which the social units are capable. Given a people whose emotional output is so little under the control of their reason, or whose mental life is so ill-regulated, as is manifested in the ready acceptance of such manifestly absurd stories as those already named, or a people who do not automatically reject stories or insinuations of the supernatural, and we have a society in which it is always possible to revive the more primitive social ideas, and so make for reaction. This was, indeed, one of the real and important lessons of the War—the readiness with which, quite apart from the question of the justice of this or that side, the primitive qualities of the social mind were roused to a state of almost fanatical activity. It was a revelation that thoughtful students of sociology are not likely to forget. For it really meant that here was a huge reservoir of unreasoning social energy that might be enlisted, provided the proper steps were taken, on the side of conservatism and reaction. And if the lesson should not be lost to reformers, one may rely upon it that it will not be lost to the reactionists. They are certain not to overlook this source of help when the need for it arises.

What Lies Below.

* * *

The truth is, as Sir James Frazer reminded us, that even educated people are for the most part unaware of the extent to which our society is honeycombed with superstitions that are not a whit more intellectually respectable than the superstitions that dominate the minds of recognized savages. Consider the number of people who are ready, while professedly disowning all credence in the supernatural, to tell you of the remarkable occurrences that have happened to themselves or to their friends, and which they suggest cannot be explained by any known or natural force. Or the vogue of palmistry, or the wearing of mascots, or the ebbs and flows of the Spiritualistic cult. To again cite Frazer, the man who opens his eyes can see that the mass of the people of Europe are still in a state of intellectual savagery, and that the "smooth surface of cultured society is sapped and mined by superstition." Now and again these hidden mines explode, sometimes in the world-resounding manner of the European War, sometimes in the quieter manner of the oil-dripping ceiling or of the vogue of "spook-hunting." But in either and every case we have a manifestation of the darker and more hidden of the social forces. And the upshot of the whole matter is that, instead of our work as liberators being nearly finished, we have scarcely made a beginning. All we have done is to clear the ground, so as to make a decisive action the more possible. Superstition is weakening, but, unfortunately, it is not dead. And while it flourishes it is hopeless to expect that the people will ever take such a rational and balanced view of social possibilities as reformers would wish. A people under the sway of superstition is a people ready formed for tyranny and reaction. They lack the strength to resist the one and the intelligence to prevent the other. Mental emancipation is always the high road to social freedom and genuine progress.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

If you wish to be considered essential be careful that the wounds you cause be healed only by yourself. Never neglect yourself. On the last day of your life even, your face may become the guiding star of another's life. If you learn to look brightly at life as a whole you will find for the sorrows of the individual the true sympathy that is the true balm.

—Mme. Leandre.

Where is the Kingdom of God?

KINGDOM, kingdom of God, the kingdom, kingdom of heaven, his kingdom, my kingdom, thy kingdom, are oft-repeated terms in the Bible, and the meaning attached to them therein is always narrow, exclusive, egoistic, and essentially the same. All modern Biblical scholars frankly admit that by the kingdom we are to understand the rule of God over his own peculiar people. In the Old Testament it is a narrow nationalistic conception of it that prevails. The world of the future, the Messianic age, is the exclusive possession of Israel, over whom, thoroughly united once more, some descendant of David is to bear rule. We meet with the same conception in the New Testament, only here Israel after the spirit is substituted for Israel according to the flesh. In both Testaments the kingdom is equally exclusive. Jesus must reign till all his enemies are either converted or permanently put under his feet. W. R. Matthews, M.A., B.D., Dean of King's College, London, in a sermon published in the *Christian World Pulpit* for September 10, says, that when Jesus began to teach "the kingdom of God" was the dominating thought in everybody's mind, the catch-word around which men's religious emotions and political hopes centred. Then he adds:—

There were, we must confess, many superstitions connected with this thought, many unworthy conceptions were mingled with it; so that when we read the literature, a large part of which has only recently been recovered, in which this idea is described, it is sometimes difficult to restrain from a smile. We see how the Jew, with his fervid imagination, pictured to himself the golden age that was coming as one of luxury and idleness. Part of the luxury, we cannot doubt, was to consist in taking revenge upon his enemies.

The Dean does not mention, however, that this Messianic kingdom was not intended to include the Gentiles, except as dependents and servants, never as equal sharers in its rights and privileges. Indeed, according to Professor Charles, in his article on Eschatology in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, the destiny of the Gentiles was "subjection or destruction—generally the latter, always so in the case of those that had been hostile to Israel." So, likewise, the doom of unbelievers under the Christian dispensation is everlasting punishment. Paul describes certain people as "the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction" (Phil. iii. 18).

The Dean of King's College, judging him by the sermon now before us, is by no means a champion of Pauline theology as interpreted in the great Creeds of Christendom. Nor is he a believer in the proper deity of the Gospel Jesus, for he treats him merely as a great teacher, or one who knew how to teach. According to him, Jesus had no new Gospel to preach, no new kingdom to initiate. He merely "took up this conception of the kingdom, purified it from the gross conceptions that marred its beauty, turned it from a material into a spiritual ideal." For Paul, Jesus as teacher barely exists, and his life is but an inference from the facts of his birth and death, the only events that supremely matter being his crucifixion and resurrection; but for these all the rest might not have been. For Mr. Matthews, so far as the discourse under review is concerned, it is the life of teaching and example alone that counts. The blood that cleanses from all sin, the supernatural grace that scotches all iniquity and energizes the soul for a life of pure holiness, the redemption that lifts individuals, and through them society as a whole, into newness of life as by a mighty miracle, for these

there is as little need as there is evidence of their reality. The only thing, apparently, which the Christian Gospel believes in and provides for is the possibility of progress:—

It will have nothing to say to that cry of the faint-hearted, that there can be no movement onwards because human nature remains the same, and, in the long run, it will always defeat any movement upwards and towards a higher ideal. Our Lord asserts, with passionate conviction, that this is a fundamentally false assertion. Human nature is changing, and can be changed. Men can have ideals presented to them, conceptions of life which will transform their action and alter their character from top to bottom. It is in this changeability of human nature, this possibility of changing springs of action, upon which our Lord relies for the possibility of the kingdom of God.

There is very little in that extract that could not be uttered by a Secularist, and nothing that remotely hints at supernaturalism. Jesus was simply an advocate of the practicability of human progress. The message of this sermon consists in the assurance that "the main spring of the kingdom, the source from which it is to come is in the consciences and hearts of men." If Mr. Matthews would but substitute "man" for "God," we would be in substantial agreement with him; but this, of course, being a clergyman, he cannot afford to do. The discourse was first delivered to a congregation of supernatural believers whom, as an ordained minister of a supernatural Gospel, he was bound to consider; but so far as its central, predominating idea is concerned, all terms suggestive of supernaturalism are completely out of place. Having defined the kingdom as the ideal of human intercourse, the reverend gentleman says:—

To us, at any rate, this ideal of the kingdom of God remains an ideal, and centuries hence, we cannot doubt, it will remain an ideal, whatever advance is made in the meantime towards higher and more perfect forms of social intercourse. The kingdom, in fact, is always coming and never comes. It stands before the eyes of men's minds as an endless vista, something to be struggled towards with endless hope and endless effort.

Applied to the ideal of the kingdom of man, that passage would be beautifully and literally true; but its incongruity on the lips of a supernaturalist is colossal. Humanity is constitutionally an evolving race, and its evolution has been going on for at least a hundred thousand years; and as every student is aware, evolution is by no means a uniformly upward movement, but rather a zigzag, undulatory, wavelike one, though on the whole it has been slowly making, in the human world, for a more perfect social intercourse.

In reality, Mr. Matthews reduces Jesus to a wild idealist, an irresponsible visionary or dreamer, though one looks in vain for such a character in the Four Gospels. According to these, Jesus came, not as a preacher of a Gospel, new or old, not as a teacher of a new theory of life, but as the Saviour of his people from their sins, as the almighty restorer of a fallen and ruined humanity, as the reconciler of the race to God through the offering up of his life as a ransom for them. Of this aspect of his mission there is not a single trace in Mr. Matthews' oration. Here we find a supernaturalist compelled by the facts of life to disguise himself as a naturalist. Humanity's upward progress is perfectly natural. The kingdom stands before our mind's eye as "something to be struggled towards with endless hope and endless effort"; and yet every now and then hints are thrown out that it is a movement with a Divine Being and omnipotent power behind it. At one moment God is represented as the irresistible agent, at another the burden of responsibility rests on man's shoulders, so that between the two "the kingdom of God, in fact,

is always coming, and never comes." Nowhere, except in a pulpit or on a political platform, would such hopeless inanity be for a moment tolerated.

As already intimated, apart from the occasional intrusion of theology into it, Mr. Matthews' address is a beautiful and inspiring utterance. It is quite true, as he puts it, that "social life does not mean living together, next door to one another, being subject to the same government, a part of the same system of police and communications, belonging to the same natural state. It means intercourse." Yes—

It means intercourse. The defects of social life at the present time may all be summed up in one phrase—imperfect intercourse. We do not gain from our fellow-beings all that they might give us, and we do not give them all that we might. Therefore, our lives are smaller, poorer, and meaner things than they might be.

Now, these hindrances, these obstructions to perfect intercourse must be removed, if at all, by ourselves, and if we wait for supernatural aid they will never be removed at all. Where is the kingdom of God? It has never been seen on land or sea, and never will be. It is a dream incapable of verification. It is the kingdom of man that we need, and this kingdom's coming is contingent alone upon the due exercise of our faculties. Alas, much of the evidence submitted to the Royal Coal Commission showed that there are multitudes of people in our midst who are strongly opposed to its coming, who, in fact, are determined, as far as in them lies, to prevent its coming. Such selfish motives and aims must be overcome and destroyed, and man must meet man in the sweet bond of brotherhood, all the barriers that divide and alienate must be shattered, and all hatred and animosity dissolved in the ocean of natural human love; and then, but not till then, shall come, in the fullness of its beauty and power, the kingdom which is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit of our Mother Nature.

J. T. LLOYD.

Faith, Filth, and Foolishness.

It is an absolute crime that you should sanction the instilling into the minds of children statements which are not true, and the instruction which they receive a few years later will infallibly upset.—T. H. Huxley.

EDUCATION in this country has always been hampered by the desire to ally with education religious teaching, in spite of the many conflicting opinions among the exponents of theology. The teachings of the Established Church were considered by the Nonconformists to be wrong and harmful, while the instruction given by Dissenters was pronounced by Churchmen to be heretical and dangerous. Ultimately it was agreed that the Bible might be read in the public schools, but that no theological doctrines should be taught. This is what is called the "compromise," and, although it satisfies most of the clergy, who use it as the thin end of a wedge, it still impedes education and fetters progress. For the clergy know that so long as the fetish book is used in education, their own position is safe. They have only to insist that the Bible is the beginning and end of wisdom, and say, or rather shout, that national degeneration must inevitably follow its removal from the schools.

Let us test this sacred volume as a school book, and see whether such extraordinary pretensions can be sustained. There are grave reasons why the Bible should have no official place in our public schools. Its educational teaching is sadly out of date, and sounds "like the horns of Elfland faintly blowing." What do our kindergarten teachers make of such Biblical advice

as "A rod is for the back of him that is void of understanding," "Thou shalt beat him with a rod," "Chasten thy son, and let not thy soul spare for his crying"? Such Bible injunctions may be the teachings of a god, but they are the essence of barbarism. Moreover, parts of the Bible are unfit for children to see. If it were an ordinary volume, instead of a fetish book, it would be pilloried as immoral, and excluded from every school in the country. If parents knew the contents of the sacred volume, they would as soon send their daughters to a house infected with diphtheria or small-pox as put such a book into their hands. For in its sacred pages may be found plain, unvarnished accounts of sodomy, rape, unnatural vice, and all manner of Oriental "frightfulness," written with all the nasty particularity and love of detail which is the peculiar birthright of all Eastern scribes. The florid, heated rhetoric of the Old Testament leaves nothing to the imagination, and the least lettered juvenile could appreciate the glowing periods. In fact, Oriental nastiness begins where Occidental pornography leaves off, and the ordinary sex-novel is a model of purity and restraint compared with the lusciousness of the Bible. No novelist would dare to disfigure his pages with realistic accounts of incest, rape, and various other forms of vice. He would be imprisoned and his books destroyed. Yet the dear clergy force the Bible, which contains all this filth and abomination, into the hands of millions of children, knowing all the time that they themselves dare no longer read it in all its completeness to a mixed audience of adults.

Nor is this all! Bible chronology is utter nonsense. Only grossly ignorant, or mentally feeble persons can believe that the universe was created six thousand years ago. Probably others, similarly afflicted, believe that Adam, Methuselah, and Noah, each lived nine centuries, and that Melchisadech had neither beginning nor ending of days. Philology gets no countenance from the blunders of the building of Babel, or the pious perversions of the tongues of flame at Pentecost. Biblical zoology would strain the credulity of a Gold Coast negro to breaking-point. The story of Noah's Ark is sufficiently funny to make the bronze lions in Trafalgar Square break into a guffaw. The veriest amateur in natural history would rub his eyes at the Biblical error of confounding the hare with the ruminants. Even in the New Testament the whale is described as a fish by the Deity, who is supposed to have made millions of them. The most ordinary common-place of knowledge, such as the part not exceeding the whole, is contradicted by the story of the feeding of the five thousand, where the fragments left over exceed the original amount. In sober truth, throughout the sacred volume the atmosphere is that of *Arabian Nights* and *Grimm's Fairy Tales*. A snake talks, a whale has a boarding-house in his stomach, a pigeon acts as a co-respondent, and a donkey makes speeches. Fiery serpents, unicorns, dragons, flaming horses, giants, satyrs, and cocatrice ramble through the sacred pages.

Concerning medicine, we find the long-discredited notion of demoniacal possession being the cause of disease. Fevers are rebuked, leprosy cured by a fig-poultice, and blindness removed by expectoration. Some happy persons die twice, and others, still more fortunate, never trouble the undertakers at all. Witchcraft is still insisted upon as being true long after it has been discarded by every nation pretending to civilization. Ghosts still squeak and gibber in the pages of the Holy Book.

As for ethics, the least said the better. Where is the moral to be derived from such stories as those of Lot and his daughters, David and his adultery, Jacob and

his wives, Judith, and Ruth? The lives and actions of the Patriarchs, the Kings of Israel and Judah, and other Biblical heroes and heroines, are only paralleled in the Newgate Calendar, and other records of criminal history. Some of the Psalms are a further proof that the Deity's ways are, fortunately, not our ways. In short, the Bible, from the page describing Adam and Eve starting life at full-age until the Second Person of the One and Undivided Trinity ascends into the ether like a flying-machine, is a salmagundi of unrestrained and riotous Oriental imagination. The stories are inconsistent with common sense and ascertained knowledge, and, sooner or later, they will have to be so regarded, in spite of all the ten of thousands of priests in this country.

Of all the strange, frantic, and incomprehensible books which have emanated from the imaginations of religious enthusiasts, the Bible is one of the worst. The work which Freethinkers have set themselves is that of freeing the little children from the absurdities, immoralities, and barbarities of pre-scientific times which are perpetuated in that grossly overrated fetish book. MIMNERMUS.

The New Testament.

II.

THE OPPONENTS OF PAUL.

WE have a first-hand specimen of early anti-Pauline writing in the Epistle of James. This purports to be a letter from "James, a slave of God and the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes of the Dispersion"—*i.e.*, a circular to Jews throughout the Roman world. The author is traditionally identified with "James, the Lord's brother," mentioned by Paul in Galatians i. 19. That this document, which is in pretty good Greek, was not actually composed by a Galilean artizan is certain; but there seems to the present writer no sufficient reason why it should not be an actual circular sent out with James' authority as leader of the Nazarene community, though written no doubt by a Greek-speaking Jew acting as secretary. It is in the main a moral homily, emphasizing the importance of practical benevolence, the blessedness of the poor, and the woe awaiting the rich—corresponding, therefore, roughly to the Gospel teaching as found in the "Sermon on the Mount." It also glances at Paul by directly attacking his doctrine of "justification by faith." Paul, obsessed by the theological problem of the impossibility of any man escaping damnation if escape depended on moral perfection, had asserted that the sacrifice of Jesus would be accepted by God as an expiation for the sins of all sincere believers. For James, the theological problem does not exist; he is impressed by the immorality and absurdity of sinners being considered as saints simply for an act of belief. He takes the plain view that men will be saved by good actions and damned by bad ones. The central Pauline dogma, the resurrection of Jesus, James passes over in significant silence. The border-line between Christianity and orthodox Judaism is in this epistle very thin—a Christian is simply a Jew who accepts Jesus as the promised Messiah. No wonder that this work found its way into the canon with difficulty, and that Luther, concerned to rehabilitate Paul's doctrine of "justification by faith," pronounced it "an epistle of straw," and rejected it altogether.

The materials for dating the Epistle of James are very slight, but it must belong to an early stage of the controversy, before the language of the disputants had finally passed the bounds of permissible violence. In Paul's later epistles, the claims of his supernaturalism grow by leaps and bounds. In Colossians, Ephesians,

and Philipians the "mystery" has become a veritable theosophy. Christ has lost all semblance of humanity, and has become a metaphysical abstraction personified, existing from the beginning of things, his death and resurrection only the latest episodes in a wholly supernatural history. Christian believers are not only *partakers* of the "body of the Lord" in the Eucharist, as in the earlier epistles; they actually *are* that body collectively: doubtless their regular diet of god-flesh in the intervening years had produced this transformation!

In countries so enamoured of the irrational as the Levantine regions in the first century A.D., it was impossible to compete with such a master-myth-monger as Paul. Pauline Christianity triumphed over the Jewish variety by sheer excess of absurdity. When we come to the next document of the anti-Pauline party, the Apocalypse, written in A.D. 69, and addressed to Jewish believers in western Asia Minor, we find that the writer, fierce Jewish patriot and enemy of Paul as he is, goes nearly as far as Paul in his supernatural view of Jesus, and limits his attack on Paul to other points. Christianity as a reformed Jewish sect had no future away from Palestine; it had, in the Ægean world, to make itself a "mystery" in order to live.

The Apocalypse, or Book of Revelation, professes to be a "Revelation from Jesus Christ, which God gave to him, to show his slaves what must shortly happen"—the "happenings" in question being the fall of Jerusalem before the Roman armies, the return of Nero to power, and the renewed persecution of the Christians, followed after three years and six months by the descent of Christ in glory and the inauguration of the millennium. The only item in this prophecy which was fulfilled was the fall of Jerusalem, which took place in the following year (A.D. 70). Nero, being dead and buried, did not return to power; and the Second Advent, after 1,850 years instead of three-and-a-half, remains overdue. The period of three-and-a-half years was selected as having been that during which the temple of Jerusalem had been profaned by Antiochus Epiphanes (168-165 B.C.). Antiochus was the original Antichrist, and is the subject of the prophecies in Daniel xi.-xii.—written, of course, in his time. The reign of Antiochus not having been immediately followed by the Messianic kingdom, the predictions relating to him were subsequently applied by the Jews to Caligula, and by the Christians to Nero, Domitian, Diocletian, Mahomet, the Pope, Napoleon, the Kaiser, and any potentate who happened to get into their bad books at a particular time. The Antichrist of Revelation is Nero (the letters of "Nero Cæsar" in Hebrew adding up to the "number of the beast," 666).

The actual prophecies in Revelation are prefaced by letters from "John," the author, to seven Churches in the Roman province of Asia, in which certain persons are abusively attacked under the various designations of "those who call themselves apostles and are not," "Nicolaitans," "those who say they are Jews and are not," "those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to throw a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, namely, the eating of things sacrificed to idols, and fornication," etc. This is intended by the Jewish author for the followers of Paul—the heretic, who set himself up as an apostle against the twelve, who taught the abrogation of the Jewish law, and who told his converts that they might "eat anything that was sold in the market, and ask no questions for conscience' sake" (1 Cor. x. 25). Paul also figures in the prophecy as the beast who "had two horns like a lamb, but spoke like a dragon" (Rev. xiii. 11), who teaches men to commit idolatry, supports the power of Antichrist, and will finally be thrown, with Nero, into

the lake of fire and brimstone, and be tortured day and night for ever and ever (Rev. xx. 10).

There is thus abundant evidence, in the Pauline Epistles and in the Apocalypse, of the bitter and bloodthirsty hatred that severed the two extreme parties in the early Church—the followers of James, strict Jews in everything except their expectation of the return of Jesus as the Messiah, who hated Rome, and looked upon Gentiles as sinners destined to eternal torment unless they accepted the Jewish law; and the followers of Paul, who would abolish Judaism altogether, and replace it by Paul's new "mystery" of justification by faith in Christ, the crucified and risen God, whose flesh and blood were eaten and drunk in the Eucharist on the analogy of the Pagan "mysterics."

The final history of Paul is unknown. We have no writings of his after the outbreak of persecution under Nero (A.D. 64), and the inference is usually drawn that he perished at that time. The author of Revelation does not seem to have known of Paul's fate, and the earliest external testimony on the subject is that of Clement of Rome (A.D. 95), who refers to Paul's martyrdom as a well-known fact. To the orthodox Christian, Paul is the great "apostle of the Gentiles," the fellow-worker of Peter, and the hero of the interesting adventures recorded in the unhistorical book of the Acts. To the critical historian, he is one of the notable founders of religions, a man of striking personality and will-power, like Mahomet, Luther, and Brigham Young, not remarkable for charity to opponents or scrupulous choice of means, but sincere with the formidable sincerity of self-deception, and an undeniable maker of history.

ROBERT ARCH.

Acid Drops.

Strikes are in the air, and there appears to be a possibility of them extending to the clergy. At any rate, the Cardiff *Evening Express* publishes the following outburst from the Rev. R. Stratton, pastor of the fashionable Calvary Baptist Church, New York:—

Therefore be it resolved that we preachers of America do hereby announce to our churches and to the general public that we will no longer submit to the harsh, heartless treatment to which we have been subjected from time immemorial; that we will not even grant three days' postponement with a view to possible arbitration; but here and now we declare to our churches and to the general public that unless we are given immediately an eight-hour day and a 50 per cent. boost in salary we will go on strike and let them all go to hell.

That is not at all a bad idea, and we would like to see the clergy act on it. In fact, if they would only make a long strike of it, we would not mind subscribing to an unemployment fund. We feel quite sure that the community generally would bear that strike with the greatest of equanimity.

From the *Daily News* of September 12 we see that there is a possibility of the clergy on this side the Atlantic forming a Trade Union. At least, that is the suggestion of G. L. H. Harvey, of the Clergy Association. So we may have a strike after all. And if the strike does come off, we suggest that the clergy should be asked to go on a piecework rate. They could then be paid by results. When the harvest is bad, for instance, they should be put to improving it—by prayer—and paid according to results. The Catholic clergy might also, when they receive money for getting souls out of purgatory, be asked to produce evidence that this had been done, or asked to return the payment. There are many possibilities in this move by the clergy, and we hope that they will be fully explored. But we are just a little afraid that the strike will not materialize.

The clergy are still "starving." A bad case is that of the late Rev. F. St. J. Thackeray, of Mapledurham, Oxford,

who left £10,503. Another case is that of the Rev. A. Gordon, of Edinburgh, who left personal estate of the value of £4,577. Neither of these unfortunate men will ever hear St. Peter say: "Give him a harp."

"Why could we not stop the War?" asks the Bishop of London. And he replies that it was because Christians were not united. The Bishop has a very bad memory, or hopes that other people have very short ones. For the one thing noticeable about the Churches was that they were all united for the War. There never has been such unity about them for any other purpose. And the Bishop should remember that it was he who described the War as "the day of God," and declared that there had not been such another day of God for a thousand years. More, the Bishop dwelt upon the uplifting effect the War had on the people, when anyone with honest sense knew that there never had been a war, whether inevitable or not, that had not resulted in a larger or smaller measure of demoralization. Perhaps the Bishop would like to forget his past. It certainly looks like it.

If women didn't go to church, says the Rev. Kennedy-Bell, the bulk of our population would cease to believe in a God. Exactly; but women *are* ceasing to go to church. They are becoming less afraid of the social taboo, and we fancy men are beginning to appreciate the companionship of women who can take an intelligent and independent interest in the world's affairs, rather than one who is a mere echo of a clergyman's machine-made sentiments.

One of the speakers at the Conference on Labour and Religion, held at Browning Hall, Walworth, said "the workers must unite so that there should not be a slum in Canning Town, Canton, or Calcutta," and Labour should "carry its faith in Jesus and his principles to Asia and Africa." The speaker who proposed this excursion round the world was Mr. B. Matthews, of the London Missionary Society, whose fame as a Labour leader is not wide.

Rev. F. S. Cragg denies that Widnes is a Christian town. He says that when he goes round Widnes and sees all its sin and misery he is convinced that it was a heathen town. Now, we wonder why a town that has sin and misery in it forfeits its right to be called Christian. Christians used to delight in calling themselves "miserable sinners," and it would, therefore, seem that a town full of miserable sinners would be generally Christian. Or perhaps the sinners of Widnes are not miserable, and that robs them of the right to be called Christian. It is quite Christian to present the "heathen" with the sin and misery. At any rate, we are quite sure there has been no lack of parsons in Widnes, and now, perhaps, some of the inhabitants will wonder what benefit the town has derived from their presence.

Many of the English clergy, when it was found that the stories of the growth of religion in the British Army fell on deaf ears, turned their attention to France. There was at any rate a revival there, they said, hoping that this would create a kind of competition. Of course, the one revival was as imaginary as the other. And in the review of literature in the special French number of the *Times*, the writer says that "It cannot be said that the religious revival, expected by many, is evident in literature." He prophesies "a yet longer period of irony and scepticism than the one which followed 1870." Considering that this period was not ended when the War broke out, the prospect is not very cheerful for the Church.

A frenzied appeal is issued by the Bishop of Archangel, asking that the British troops may be allowed to remain, in order to "save God's sanctuaries from defilement." We are not sure what defilement means. To many English Churchmen a church is "defiled" if a Nonconformist mounts the pulpit. And probably all that it means in this case is that some of the churches may be put to secular uses. In any case, we do not see what the British "Tommy" has to do with it. If they are God's sanctuaries, it seems to us to be

God's business to look after them. "Doing God's work" is one of the phrases that one very often hears, but it is really about time that he began to do a bit on his own account. And our pension list is already so large that there is no need to needlessly extend it.

Dr. Fort Newton, of the City Temple, London, has been spending his holiday in France, going over the battlefields. Most of the courageous clergy spent their time away from the battlefields while the War was in progress.

The Rt. Rev. Father-in-God, the Bishop of Winchester, presided at Farnham Picture Palace at the exhibition of a film showing the War-work of the Church Army. A film exhibiting the "War-work" of the clergy themselves should be more interesting, for these fire-eaters were exempted from military service. And there are 50,000 of them.

Mr. Jerome K. Jerome writes in *Common Sense* :—

Will the ruling classes ever get rid of their inborn conviction that the Sermon on the Mount was intended for the exclusive use of the lower orders; that Christianity was intended by its Founder to be an inexpensive supplement to their police force; and heavenly rewards for the meek and humble promised for the purpose of keeping the workers contented under the somewhat depressing conditions of their earthly existence?

This is all very well in its way; but when Mr. Jerome and others have quite finished with all this fantastical folly about what the "Founder" of Christianity intended, and the wild supposition that Christianity was instituted as an aid to the Labour Movement, we should like them to address themselves to the question as to why it is that at all times and under all conditions these same "ruling classes" have found it so much to their interest to see that the "lower orders" had plenty of Christianity? The association is too widespread and too continuous to be accidental. Sentiment is all very well in its way, but what the world requires at the moment is a little clear thinking. We have had nearly 2,000 years of this vapouring about the "Founder of Christianity," and the result is before us. It is about time a little common sense was tried in its place.

The Vicar of St. Jude's on the Hill, Hampstead Garden Suburb, believes in turning one cheek when the other is smitten—except in the case of bicycle stealing. In that case he advises all who catch the thief in the act to "mete out the stern justice such a contemptible crime deserves. The Church will pay the fine gladly." We presume the Vicar is a rider himself. Perhaps he has even lost a "bike" of his own. It is in cases such as these that the clergy show what dare-devils they are. Now, if it were a case of sweating, or rack-renting, or food profiteering, they would proceed more cautiously.

The so-called International Conference on Labour and Religion, held at Walworth, was opened with prayer by a minister of the Government religion. The reverend gentleman also took part in the discussion on "the perils to the workers from materialism." As may be expected, he gave the wicked materialists "hell."

The Bishop of Birmingham is a singularly brave man—on his own confession. Writing in the *Diocesan Magazine*, he says that he is not afraid of the working classes. Doubtless, the working people return the compliment.

The use of Sunday should be that of making it "a day of the most expansive life and profoundist enjoyment" suggests the *Daily Chronicle*. It is a dazzling prospect, but local authorities usually limit the "expansive life" to a band performance with all the liveliness left out.

"If it had not been for the Puritans we should long since have had a working week of seven days" declares the *Daily Chronicle*. Yet, on the Continent, there are no Puritans, and Sunday is a day of real recreation.

“Freethinker”
“Victory” Sustentation Fund.

WE have to again express our thanks to all who have so generously subscribed to our “Victory” Fund. Many who have done so promise to send again, but we feel sure that this will not be necessary—if we may be guided by our previous experience. And from the letters we are receiving there is certainly no falling off in the interest shown in the *Freethinker*. Here we would like to note the many kindly-expressed letters we are receiving from quite recent readers. The paper appears to have come to them as something in the way of a revelation, and their warm appreciation of it is very gratifying to all who are concerned in its production.

Mr. J. B. Palphryman writes:—

I have pleasure in sending you herewith £1 towards the “Victory” Sustentation Fund. I wish I could make it ten times as much, because you deserve well of the whole of the Freethought Society for keeping the Flag of Freedom flying during these difficult times since the death of our great leader, Mr. Foote.

J. C., sending subscription, says:—

I am sending this in memory of one of the finest men I have ever met, and who introduced your paper to me, but who was killed in France in 1917. He was my dearest friend, and when I compare some of my Christian acquaintances, I realize what I have now lost. I am unable to take any very active part in the propaganda of Freethought, but I well remember many wet nights around Jerusalem putting up some very heated arguments for the “greatest of all causes” against “fearful odds.” But I have always had the satisfaction of afterwards being thanked by all the troops who have generally admitted that they had not previously looked at the matter like that.

Mr. H. Silverstein writes:—

You are entitled to every credit for keeping the paper alive and healthy during the trying period of the War, and one can only regret that you were compelled to give so much of your time and great ability without receiving the recompense to which you were fully entitled.

The recompense we want and ask for, are those new readers who are waiting round every corner. And we shan’t be happy till we get them.

Mr. H. Raines says:—

Please accept the enclosed treasury note from one of the smaller “financial” fry who values the *Freethinker* above all the other papers he reads. We cannot all forward substantial cheques, but there must be at least a thousand readers of your paper who could afford to send 5s. each. That alone would be a handsome sum, and I hope this year, at least, all your readers who can do so will make it a point of being represented in the subscription list. My heartiest wishes for your continued success.

Mrs. E. Adams sends cheque, with regrets at her cheque not being larger. Mr. A. Delve sends us a thank-offering for the way we have “carried on.” Mr. W. Moore feels that our work should be sufficiently appreciated to secure a much larger sum than the one named in our appeal. Mr. A. B. Wykes hopes to subscribe again next year if necessary; but we sincerely hope the need will not arise. Finally, Mr. J. Wood writes that as it is usual to give a “grant” to a “Victory” general, “When is one coming to you?” Well, we have already asked for it, and are awaiting its arrival. We have asked for a thousand of our readers to get one new subscriber each within the next month. We know they

can do it if they try; and when it is done we shall be back with our sixteen pages, and we will say, as prettily as we can, “Thank you.”

Mr. J. Breese writes:—

Herewith first instalment, together with my best wishes and sincerest congratulations on your magnificent efforts to keep the good ship going. If I may express my opinion on the “method in your madness” in keeping the *Freethinker* at twopence, it appeals to me as sound business.....your method is sound, I am convinced.

Several have written in the same vein, and we hope to find that events will justify our policy.

Mrs. R. Wilmot finds a very ingenious reason for sending along her subscription:—

Some of your readers appear to have overlooked the fact that, as the pound is now not worth more than 10s., in keeping the *Freethinker* at 2d. you have really been selling it at a penny. I therefore enclose P.O. for 5s. to make up the difference. If all your readers do the same, the result will be very gratifying to everyone who is interested in the welfare of our journal.

Mr. W. J. Wilmot says, in thanking us for the magnificent services you are rendering to a great and noble cause:—

For myself, I must express here and now my unbounded admiration for the manner in which the paper is conducted. The whole year in which it has been my privilege to read each weekly contribution I have never found any falling off in the quality of its articles. In fact each number seems more piquant and forceful than the last.

We thank Mr. Wilmot for his appreciation, but we are a long way short of having done for this paper all we have in our mind to do—one day.

Second List of Subscriptions.

Previously acknowledged, £147 4s. 6d. J. Close, 5s. H. Raines, 10s. Mrs. A. C. Hampson, 5s. F. C. Hampson, 5s. E. Owen, 2s. 6d. Mr. and Mrs. R. H. Rosetti, 2s. 6d. A Friend, £2 2s. Belgravia, 10s. Swansea, £2 2s. Libra, 10s. W. Reynolds, 5s. O. Friedman, £1. T. Bunnins (Norwood), 10s. J. L. Vickery, £5. J. W. Blakey, 5s. J. Breese, £2 2s. Mrs. R. Wilmot, 5s. John’s Grandpa, 10s. Dr. R. T. Nichols, £5 5s. J. G., 10s. W. J. Wilmot, 2s. Mrs. E. Taylor, 7s. 6d. W. S. C., 10s. Mr. and Mrs. P. Gorrie, £1. E. Mills, £2. Gordon, 5s. F. H. Dell, 10s. 6d. T. Good, 10s. F. W. Theobald, 10s. Dr. C. M. Beardnell, 5s. R. B. Harrison, 2s. 6d. T. Baker, 3s. Mrs. E. Adams, £5. A. R. Wykes, 10s. E. A. Wykes, 2s. 6d. W. Moore, 5s. T. Harting, £1. G. L. Alward, £1 1s. Mrs. Robertson, £1. J. W. Wood, 10s. 6d. A. B. Moss, 10s. K. J. (Poplar), 2s. 6d. J. B. Palphryman, £1. T. Sharp, 5s. W. F. Ambrose (2nd sub.), 2s. S. Clowes, 5s. Tynesider, 2s. Dr. R. Rawson, 10s. R. T., 2s. 6d. A. Delve, £1 1s. Philip Winer, 3s. 6d. Total, £188 9s. 6d.

Corrections.—The £3 acknowledged last week from Mr. A. H. Harden should have been from Mr., Mrs., and Miss Harden—£1 from each. We would much rather have it this way than the one announced. It is an indication of family unity on a most important point. Mr. J. W. Arnott, 2s. 6d., was omitted from the list of subscriptions in our last issue from the South Shields Branch.

The volume of nature is the book of knowledge; and he becomes most wise who makes the most judicious selection.

—Goldsmith.

O. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

October 5, Swansea; October 12, South Place, London; October 26, Manchester; November 2, Glasgow; November 3, Paisley; November 4, Milngavie; November 9, Edinburgh; November 16, South Shields; November 23, Leicester; November 30, Birmingham; December 7, Sheffield; December 21, Manchester.

To Correspondents.

ONE of our readers, Mr. A. H. Lye, of 43 Vale Road, Sutton, would be glad to hear from Mr. W. Walder, late of Brighton and B.E.F. This may perhaps catch his eye.

H. JAMES.—See "Sugar Plums."

W. WIDDUP.—Very pleased to hear of the good influence Freethought lectures and speeches have had on you.

J. L. VICKERY.—Very glad to have your warm appreciation of the *Freethinker*. We hope your health is keeping good.

T. BUNNINS.—We are sending on the literature to the addresses given. Passing on the paper when read is an excellent way of getting the paper into fresh hands. And that is all we need. Our motto is: "You find the readers, we keep them."

A. RUSSEL.—We long ago ceased to be surprised at the stupidities of some members of the clergy. As Heine said of the Deity and forgiveness, it is their trade. And besides, there is a certain absorption point for surprise in the human make-up.

MRS. E. TAYLOR.—We hope your efforts will be successful. But for some reason or the other, Huddersfield seems a difficult place to work up. All the more credit for any success that is achieved.

C. T. SHAW.—Cuttings are always useful, if not at the moment, then later. We are pleased to learn of the exhibition of the poster, it is certain to do good. We should like to see more propaganda in your town.

J. H. McNEILL.—We are sending on the copies you say your newsagent was unable to get. But please press for them, and do not be put off a regular delivery. There is no delay at this end. And by pressing for a regular delivery you are defeating those who would put obstacles in the way.

E. MILLS.—We expect that if we looked at the matter from the standpoint of profit and loss we should not bother with the *Freethinker* at all. One doesn't—unless one happens to be a born fool—take up the work of a Freethought propagandist without being prepared for rough times.

PHILIP WINER.—In a general way we should answer yes. But a deal depends upon the skill of the person who is able to balance the relative values of the different qualities.

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 by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

There are persons who never run into any extravagance, because they are so buttressed up with the opinions of others on all sides, that they cannot lean much to one side or the other; they are so little moved with any kind of reasoning, that they remain at an equal distance from every extreme, and are never very far from the truth, because the slowness of their faculties will not suffer them to make much progress in error. These are persons of great judgment. The scales of the mind are pretty sure to remain even, when there is nothing in them.—*Hazlitt*.

Sugar Plums.

Our readers will recall the fact that some time back the London County Council refused to allow the *Freethinker* to be sold in the Council parks. As the paper has been sold in the parks for many years, we have been trying to get from the Council the ground of this decision. But that body declines to give reasons, although, as the Council may discover on that matter, we are not in the dark. We may have more to say later. At the present we are writing to say that the whole question will shortly be raised on the Council, and our London readers can help by getting to work and seeing that their members know something of their opinions on the matter. The press censorship set up by the Council is ridiculous and indefensible. When the grounds of its action is dragged before the public, we feel sure that not even a majority of professing Christians would endorse it. Anyhow, we strongly urge all who desire to guard the right of propaganda to get busy and to see whether their members are sound on this subject. They can send the result of their enquiries to Miss Vance. We refrain from saying more until the matter has been discussed on the Council.

Apropos of the article on the St. Ives tragedy which recently appeared in these columns, one of our readers writes to say that he was in the town on the day of the funeral, and is acquainted with some of the people connected with the affair. They were all members of the Methodist Church, and he describes it as a field day for the parsons—three of them officiating. The youngest child of the woman who was burned has never ceased its cries for its mother, and all the people can say is that God has permitted the tragedy for some purpose of his own. He adds that in no part of the country is Freethought propaganda more urgently needed than in Cornwall. We suggest to our friends that they may do something by the distribution of suitable literature. We shall be pleased to help in the work.

We are pleased to hear that the Swansea Branch made a capital start of the season's work with a musical evening on the 7th by "Casey." Mr. Cohen lectures there on October 5, and good meetings are anticipated. The Secretary writes us that the members are determined to make the meetings a success, and we have every confidence they will succeed. Sixteen meetings have been arranged, and season tickets for the course are on sale at 5s. each—certainly not a striking example of profiteering. It will, however, be a great encouragement to the active workers in the Branch to find a brisk demand for these tickets before the meetings are in full swing, and we hope Swansea "saints" will take the hint. Those who think the 5s. too low can make it up in some other way. There will be a business meeting of the Branch at the Reformers' Bookshop on September 27, at 6.30.

The disgraceful concessions which the Mayor of Brussels, M. Max, and the municipal authorities are making to the religious party by refusing to replace the statue of the Spanish martyr of Freethought, Francisco Ferrer, will have the effect of arousing all sections of anti-clericals. On Monday, October 12, the National Federation of Freethought Societies of Belgium are to commemorate the tenth anniversary of Ferrer's murder at Montjuich on October 13, 1909. It is the intention of Belgian friends to make an imposing procession through the streets of Brussels, and by speeches to let the pusillanimous burgomaster Max and his clerical friends see that they mean business. We wish them the success that should attend a united effort.

Those who appreciate wit and irony of the kind that we have come to associate with Voltaire, and M. Anatole France will find an admirable specimen in *La Pensée* for August 10, where our friend, M. Eugene Hins, exercises his wit and sarcasm on the Mayor of Brussels, the too popular M. Max. It is called "The Burgomaster's Dream; or, the Statue of the Commander." Max dreams that the King of Belgium asks him to visit the Governments of the Great Powers and put

before them the most persuasive arguments for an immediate and definite peace. The King and Queen, poor people, are not equal to the digestive exactions of never-ending banquets, and they choose Max because he is an eloquent and popular trencherman, and his friend, another limelight figure, Cardinal Mercier, is to accompany him. The scene changes, and we get glimpses of Max in England, in America, at the Vatican, in France, and at the Court of Spain, where he charms the Hidalgos with a lyrical tribute to the past splendours and heroisms of the Spanish race. He is on the point of making a guarded allusion to anarchy and the Ferrer affair, but checks himself just in time. The scene changes again, and Max is at a banquet given to his honour by a grateful country. Suddenly heavy steps are heard on the stone pavement of the anti-chamber, and there appears a man with a torch symbolizing the work of the great Ferrer. The banqueters tumble over each other in their haste to get out, and in a few minutes only the great Cardinal and the greater Max are left. The priest's *vade retro, Satanas!* has not the desired effect on the Freethinking ghost, and a flick of the bronze hand stretches the good Cardinal on the floor. Then the ghostly figure strides over to Max, who, like Don Juan, in Moliere's *Festin de Fierre*, is unable to move from his seat:—

Mr. Burgomaster, you seem to have forgotten to invite me to your little banquet; I had thought that the commotion which my name and work, and but lately the injury done to me by the Boche, would surely have raised me to a height illustrious enough to warrant your inviting me to your feast. As you have not done so, I have invited myself, as, I need hardly assure you, I am anxious to pay an official visit to so illustrious a man as M. Max. The worst of it is, my bronze legs make it difficult for me to walk, and I must therefore take the liberty of leaning on you.

The heavy bronze hand dropped on the shoulder of our good burgomaster who had the sensation of being pushed over a precipice. With that his visit came to an end, and he is now seeking some way to deliver himself from this horrible nightmare, or, to speak more correctly, "daymare," for it is a terror that is always upon him. If he has a vestige of his old courage, he will risk the anger of Cardinal Mercier and his clerical friends, and set up the statue in its place of honour. To borrow the actual words of our good friend Mr. Hins: "Et nous le souhaitons pour vous, M. Max, sinon gare!"

A course of lectures has been arranged at the Essex Hall by the R.P.A., to take place on Monday evenings, September 29 and October 6, 13, and 20, at 7.30. Mr. Joseph McCabe is the lecturer, and the charge for admission will be: Single reserved seat ticket, 1s.; reserved seat course ticket, 3s. A full list of subjects will be found on the back page of this issue.

Our Friends, the Clergy.

Through a glass, darkly.—*Saul alias St. Paul.*

JESUS CHRIST appears to have been a transparently honest man. He wanted to make mankind better. Unfortunately, he commenced working on an incorrect premise. All previous prophets of "the chosen people" began with the belief that man is bad. Christ did likewise. This was the beginning of his great "uplift" crusade. He left man as he received him—fundamentally bad.

I have met many men. None of them are perfect. None of them are hopeless. They are in *media via*. But to say man is evil is tremendous. It is wrong. Man is good. He does not require to be made such. What is necessary is to prevent him from becoming evil.

If Christ had been satisfied with remaining a sort of Jewish Socrates, we might have found great benefit from his philosophy. That is to say, we could have retained what was good, and have ignored what was otherwise. But, unfortunately, he adopted the *role* of God.

It follows, therefore, that we must either take his teaching all in all or not at all. His thoughts are not given forth as opinions, but as undeniable and inscrutable truths. They are divine breathings.

In these days of advancing knowledge, it has become essential to modify some of his statements. They have been found to be absolutely in contradiction of established facts. The clergy has had to adopt the changes thus necessitated. They do so as far as possible without remark, and certainly without publicity. Do they not see that if they even change one word of what their Master said, they deny his infallibility, and denying that they deny his divinity.

If he is not a God, he is a man; his teaching is not a religion but a philosophy; his undeniable truths are merely opinions of one who was hedged in as we by environment.

Our dear, kind friends the clergy ignore this. They even deny the virgin birth, and continue to accept payment for teaching religion of the "Son of God."

Are they, then, ministers, that is to say, servants, or are they parasites? It is a hard word. It has an ugly sound. But truth is hard. It is not always beautiful. A taste for truth has to be acquired.

Clergymen are servants in so far as they accept pay. They are leaders in so far as they lead to nothing. Why, then, do they exist? If I had anything to do with it they wouldn't; but, unfortunately, I have very little say in the matter. They are an unnecessary evil.

This plain, undeniable truth that was given forth by the God-Christ is, apparently, so obtuse that interpreters, whose name is legion, are absolutely essential to make plain this morning sunshine of the only true God.

And how do they work? (I wish I had another word I could use instead of "work"—perhaps "proceed" would be more suitable. Certainly "work" is rather far-fetched to describe the carryings-on of these latter-day apostles). Milton hits them off very prettily:—

They also serve who only stand and wait.

We had a rather considerable War the other day, and those ministers of the Gospel who did not shelter behind the legal exemption which was granted them—why, we can only "wait and see"—became chaplains, ranked as officers, and paid as such. Many of these gentlemen performed very gallant acts. Many won decorations. But in doing so, were they carrying out the teaching of their Master? What about turning the other cheek?

But these were exceptions. Mostly the chaplains' time was employed in less lovely and admirable occupations than risking their lives for the glory of the Old Country. Their principal occupation was dragging poor Tommies to worship God by numbers. The love of God entertained by the average soldier is well displayed on the faces of those proceeding to Church Parade. They look like a party of heretics going before an Inquisitor.

This was the parson's ideal of serving his King and Country. Of course, there were some who took other means; for instance, that gentleman who inspired the Tommies with "poetry" written under the imposing *nom-de-guerre* of "Woodbine Willie." I am glad at least that this gentleman cannot be numbered amongst the zealots who chalk up this motto in public places: "*Did Jesus smoke?*"

However, to end this digression, which may be sweet but which will certainly not ingratiate me with my brothers-with-the-King's-Commission, what have they done since they doffed the khaki?

Britain to-day is none too happy a place, and the Peace Conference, like the mountain that with much groaning brought forth the mouse, has brought forth a League of

Nations, which is about as likely to preserve the peace of the world as the said mouse.

Never has Europe been in more perilous times. What, I ask, have the dear clergy done or what are they doing to help make things better?

Well, they are demanding larger salaries. They are asking for subscriptions for memorial halls, etc., for the immortalizing of the fallen and the present glorification of their Churches. More they cannot, in view of the teachings of their Master, be expected to attempt.

They cannot hope to do away with poverty, "for the poor always ye have with you." Thus hedged in by the divinity of one who has been called a Socialist (God save the mark!) what can the poor fellows do? They have either to stick it or look for a new job; and what else in the world are they good for?

Yet the clergy have had some rare birds amongst them. Rabelais was a priest, and Sterne a parson. These two, with all their sensuality, have told us more about life as it really is than all the sermons that were ever preached.

To-day we have amongst us one worthy of the Church: one who with all his might strives to tell us what he thinks we are, a reincarnation of Heraclitus, the weeping philosopher, and John, the voice in the desert; the one I refer to is the gloomy Dean, the moaner, the groaner, the negative teacher.

Such are, then, the servants who would be leaders. I know not whether they are to be more blamed than pitied. We shall never know. The dust tells not its secrets.

H. C. MELLOR.

The Advance of Materialism.

Matter really rises in dignity from physical matter in which physical properties exist, to chemical matter and chemical forces, and from chemical matter to living matter and its modes of force; and then in the scale of life a continuing ascent leads from the lowest kind of living matter with its force or energy, through different kinds of physiological elements with their special energies or functions, to the highest kind of living matter with its force—viz., nerve matter and nerve force; and, lastly, through the different kinds of nerve-cells and their energies to the most exalted agents of mental function.—*Dr. Maudsley, "Body and Mind" (1870), p. 128.*

In fact, there is a sequence in everything, everything is connected up, *everything precedes and succeeds in nature*—in nature there are only series. The isolated fact without antecedent or consequence is a myth. Each phenomenal manifestation is in solidarity with another. It is a metamorphosis of one state of things into another. It is transformation.—*Professor A. Dastre, "Life and Death" ; 1911 ; p. 68.*

One revolution of the wheel of organization evolved the living vegetable world: another culminated in the creation of sentient beings. Higher and higher has arisen the type, finer and finer has grown the product, till brain has become the ruling force, and man has emerged from that darkness which hitherto had never permitted Nature to contemplate herself.—*Lester Ward, "Dynamic Sociology," vol. ii., p. 74.*

WE are sometimes asked how, on the Materialistic hypothesis, we account for the fact of memory. For the fact that, although the body is being constantly renewed, the old and worn-out cells being replaced with new, until, it is said—I know not upon what authority or basis of fact—the body is entirely renewed every seven years. We do not wish, nor is there any need, to dispute this renewal of the substance of the body. We simply do not know why the process should be limited to seven years instead of one, or twenty. Accepting this continual renewal of the body as a fact, say our opponents, "How do you account for the fact that the mind continues unimpaired through all these changes? In a word, how do you account for memory? Is it not a proof that the mind exists independent of the operations of body?"

Professor Tyndall, dealing with the question, "How is the sense of personal identity maintained across this flight of molecules?" answers:—

To man, as we know him, matter is necessary to consciousness; but the matter of any period may be all changed, while consciousness exhibits no solution of continuity. Like changing sentinels, the oxygen, hydrogen, and carbon that depart, seem to whisper their secret to their comrades that arrive, and thus, while the Non-ego shifts, the Ego remains intact. Constancy of form in the grouping of the molecules, and not constancy of the molecules themselves, is the correlative of this constancy of perception. Life is a *wave* which in no two consecutive moments of its existence is composed of the same particles.¹

Moreover, memory is not confined solely to man; it is a characteristic, more or less clear, of all living matter. The horse, the dog, the elephant, and the ape all possess it in a high degree. Nor can it be confined to organic or living matter; for, as Professor Bose observes: "A question long perplexing physiologists and psychologists underlies memory. But now, through certain experiments I have carried out, it is possible to trace 'memory impressions' backwards even in inorganic matter, such latent impressions being capable of subsequent revival."²

Perhaps the statement of Materialism which has aroused more antagonism and brought down more violent denunciation upon their author than any other deliverance on the subject, is the famous declaration of Carl Vogt, that—

Physiology declares itself decidedly and categorically against individual immortality, as against all theories in general which include the special existence of a soul. The soul does not enter into the fetus as the evil spirit does into the possessed, but is produced by the development of the brain, just the same as muscular activity is produced by the development of the muscles, or secretion is produced by the development of the glands,

declaring that "Thoughts stand in the same relation to the brain as bile to the liver, or urine to the kidneys." In this, as Lange points out, Vogt is only repeating substantially the idea of Cabanis, when he said that the brain produces "*la secretion de la pensee*" ("the secretion of thought").³ Even Buchner finds "the comparison unsuitable and badly chosen";⁴ although, as he points out, Vogt introduced the words with the qualification, "to express myself somewhat coarsely." M. Ribot quotes Lewes as saying that if Cabanis really regarded thought as a secretion, then "the outcry against him was justifiable." But then, Lewes, although an Atheist and Materialist, was, like Spencer and Huxley, very timid and nervous of being branded as such. M. Ribot, with French clearness, puts the matter in a nutshell. He says: "He (Cabanis) has been understood to have said that the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile. He never said anything of the sort. It is true that by a deplorable ambiguity of language he may lead us to interpret him as holding that thought is a secretion, while in reality he meant to say that it is a function. But the truth is, that he, like many biologists and psychologists, had very obscure ideas upon function."⁵ Lange says: "By way of supererogation, Du Bois Raymond expressly takes under his protection Vogt's notorious expression, that the thoughts bear the same relation to the brain as the gall to the liver, or urine to the kidneys."⁶ And Du Bois Raymond was regarded,

¹ Tyndall, *Fragments of Science* (1876), p. 463.

² Professor J. C. Bose, *The Socialist Review*, June 19, p. 145.

³ Lange, *Hist. of Materialism*, vol. ii., p. 312.

⁴ Buchner, *Force and Matter*, p. 303.

⁵ Ribot, *English Psychology* (1873), p. 285.

⁶ Lange, *History of Materialism*, vol. ii., p. 312.

in his time, as the great champion of religion against Atheism and Materialism.

Certainly, thoughts are produced by the brain. *There is no thought apart from the brain.* As life arises at a certain point of the evolution of matter, so thought and consciousness arises when the evolution of living matter reaches the complexity of organization necessary for its production.

Materialism has won all along the line. No one with an adequate knowledge of Biology, Psychology, and Anthropology, doubts that Mind, Consciousness, and Life, have evolved naturally from elemental matter. The elements of Matter themselves, the foundation stones of the universe, are now known to have been evolved from the vast clouds of gaseous nebula visible in the night sky; and from their condensation are formed the Stars and Planets destined in due course to be the theatre of Life and Death, which, like everything else, have their cycle of birth, maturity, decay, and dissolution. A ceaseless circulation of Matter. The systole and diastole of the Universe. Eternal and indestructible Matter and Force. In the glowing words of Shelley:—

Worlds on worlds are rolling ever
From creation to decay,
Like the bubbles on a river,
Sparkling, bursting, borne away.¹

And what is the position of religion now towards Materialism? Religion has fought against Materialism with every conceivable weapon. It has attacked its teachers with the vilest innuendoes, and the most furious and malignant rancour. It is the tribute of their fear, as they see this system of thought advanced from strength to strength, out-flanking and encircling the doomed citadel of superstition. As Huxley remarked: "They watch what they conceive to be the progress of materialism, in such fear and powerless anger as a savage feels, when, during an eclipse, the great shadow creeps over the face of the sun."²

(To be continued.) W. MANN.

Obituary.

We regret to report the death of Mrs. Smart, wife of Mr. G. Smart, 83 Ashvill Road, Leyton, in the thirty-seventh year of her age, after a brief but painful illness. She was a highly respected woman, an affectionate, devoted wife and mother, and will be greatly missed. Mr. Smart is a convinced Freethinker, and, in fulfilment of a wish expressed by his wife, a Secular Service was conducted at her funeral, which took place on Friday, September 12, at Woodgrange Park Cemetery. We extend to the family our sincere sympathy.—
J. T. L.

Many Freethinkers in Glasgow will regret to hear of the death of Mr. Charles Taylor, at the early age of 51. He was for many years employed with the Glasgow Corporation as a book-keeper. While in the Infirmary he was given a tract with a hymn on it, "Count your blessings, name them one by one." Being unable to speak, he underlined the words, and wrote "Cancer," which was the cause of his death. We tender to Mrs. Taylor and her family our sincerest sympathy in her great loss. The Secular Burial Service was read by the Secretary of the Glasgow Branch.

F. LONSDALE.

Whoever thinks that a story gains by the prodigious, by adding something out of nature, robs it more than he adds. It is no longer an example, a model; no longer a heart-stirring hero, but an exhibition, a wonder, an anomaly, removed out of range of influence with thoughtful men.

—Emerson.

¹ Shelley, *Hellas*.

² Huxley, *Lay Sermons*, 1880, p. 142.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C. 2): 11, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., "The State and the Church."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Band Stand): 6.15, Mr. W. H. Thresh, "How I Laid the Ghost of Charles Bradlaugh."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 6, Mr. J. J. Darby, A Lecture.

REGENT'S PARK BRANCH N. S. S. (near Band Stand): 3, A Lecture.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, Mr. Edmund Burke, "Progress and Providence."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, A Lecture.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Mr. Samuels; 3.15, Messrs. Saphin, Dales, Ratcliffe, and Baker.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

EDINBURGH BRANCH N. S. S. (Free Gardeners' Hall, Picardy Place): 6.30, Lecture, "Socialism and Religion."

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