

THE FREETHINKER

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EDITED BY CHAPMAN COHEN ■ EDITOR · 1881-1915 · G. W. FOOTE

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Views and Opinions.

Our Birthday.

To talk about oneself is usually of interest to at least one person; in the present instance we flatter ourselves the talk will be of interest to a much larger audience. For the *Freethinker* this month enters the fortieth year of its existence, and "self" in the present case has an extended meaning. It covers all, or nearly all, who read it. We can say that more truthfully than it may be said of most papers because the *Freethinker* is a unique paper, and appeals to a special audience. It is not a paper that everyone wants to read, if it were so the chief reason for its existence would be removed. Nothing quite like the *Freethinker* has ever existed in the annals of advanced journalism, and it may safely be said that few papers in this country evoke so warm a personal feeling between editor, contributors, and subscribers. It has made and maintained its place without any of the adventitious aids which usually go to the establishment of a periodical. It has never asked or angled for help from the general press, and it has never received it. It has made its place and kept it longer than any other Freethought journal in this country has ever done, and we believe longer than has been done by any Freethought paper in Europe. Outside Europe it is beaten, by a few years, by the New York *Truthseeker*, which still maintains a lusty existence, and will, we hope, never give us the chance of saying that we have eclipsed its record of longevity. "Comrades of the Great War"—our war, which is fundamentally a greater war than the one that has just ended—are not so numerous that we can afford to spare any, and the warfare is wide enough to provide scope for the exercise of all kinds of talents and capacities. Merely on account of its age the *Freethinker* may well feel proud of its survival, nor can it be said of it that the passing of the years have brought with it a weakening of policy or hesitancy of teaching. It remains as true to the great ideals which it set itself to promote as it was when its first number shocked the pious and heartened the unorthodox. It has outgrown the weakness of infancy, and has never contracted the impotency of old age.

Early Years.

It was in May, 1881, that the first copy of the *Freethinker* saw the light. It was founded with the avowed

intention of conducting "relentless war against Superstition in general, and the Christian Superstition in particular." It promised to use all the weapons of "Science, Scholarship, Philosophy, and Ethics" in its warfare, and no one will question but that it has lived up to its promise. No informed mind can glance through any volume of the *Freethinker* without being struck by the sustained level of original thinking, and the evidence of what its late editor called "fundamental brain power." We say "informed mind," because there are a great many people in the world who never seem able to discriminate between solemnity and profundity, and who, provided a writing be pompous enough and stodgy enough, are ready to attribute to its soporific qualities an unfathomable degree of wisdom, and to mistake timidity of expression for a Solomonic balance of judgment. Those really able to judge have always held the quality of the *Freethinker* in high esteem. Its friends and admirers have included some of the best known names in the world of thought, and our correspondence, if made public, would surprise many. If the circulation of the paper were as large as it is wide there would be a speedy end to all anxiety on its financial side. Its quality is admired by its friends, and it is confessed by its enemies. There is no paper in the country that the Churches dread so much. The elaborate pretence of ignoring its existence is evidence of this. There are plenty of newspaper offices in which it is regularly read, but it is an unwritten law that its name must never be mentioned. Its very title is a challenge. It expresses what it is; it says what it means, and delivers its message in a language that admits of no mistake as to its meaning. In an atmosphere saturated with the spirit of compromise and with intellectual insincerities that is the unpardonable offence.

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G. W. Foote and the "Freethinker."

When the *Freethinker* first appeared it was as a monthly. It made rapid progress, and soon was issued weekly. It had the good fortune to have for its first editor one who was master of the finest pen ever wielded in the service of Freethought journalism. Widely read, a clear and precise thinker, a powerful platform orator, a lover of literature, with an unerring sense for beauty in language, G. W. Foote presented a combination of qualities unique in the annals of Freethought. And with him there was an entire absence of parade of learning such as is common with superficial thinkers, the only use of which is to dazzle the unread, and to bore all who see through the imposture. No mercy was shown to superstition in the columns of the *Freethinker*. Foote believed with one of his favourite authors, Garth Wilkinson, that "The Duke of Wellington's advice, Do not make a little war, is applicable to internal conflicts against evils in society. For little wars have no background of resources, they do not know the strength of the enemy, and the peace that follows from them, for the most part, leaves the evil in dispute nearly its whole territory; perhaps is purchased by

guaranteeing the evil by treaty; it leaves the cause of offence more difficult of attack by reason of concession to wrong premises." There was never anything of that kind to fear from the *Freethinker*. The enemy knew he could gain nothing in the way of concession, and he paid it the compliment of undiluted hatred. If the *Freethinker* has been fortunate in its friends, it has not been less honoured in the character of its enemies.

* * *

The Weapon of Bigotry.

In 1883 came the prosecution of the *Freethinker* for blasphemy. The infamous treatment of Bradlaugh by the bigots had convinced G. W. Foote that what the bigots needed was the lash—and they got it. The whip was wielded by a master, and every cut penetrated to the bone. The result was a resort to the absurd and brutal law against blasphemy. The policeman was called in to protect God Almighty from attack; Foote was charged with bringing into contempt a religion that demonstrated its contemptible nature by the very method of defence adopted. There were two trials—one before Judge North, a bigot of the first water, and a second trial before Justice Coleridge. The latter broke down, but the former which included Messrs. Ramsey & Kemp as publisher and printer, was successful, the two last named receiving three and six months respectively, Foote was sentenced to twelve months. The sentence was served in full, and immediately on his release Foote had the prosecuted number reprinted and a copy of the paper left, with his card and compliments, at the house of the judge who had sentenced him. No more attempts were made to muzzle the *Freethinker*. The authorities, as the present editor learned during the War, thought twice before attempting repressive measures. It could neither be bought, nor bribed, nor threatened with any prospect of success. The only policy the religious world could adopt was that of the boycott. That has been steadily persisted in, but it is now much weaker than it was. The *Freethinker* is to-day better known than ever. It is sold by newsagents who a few years ago would have been afraid to offer it for sale, and all the wholesale agents in the country handle it freely in the ordinary course of their business. Persecution, boycott, slander, every possible weapon has been employed, one cannot say without effect, but certainly without achieving the objects aimed at.

* * *

A Critical Time.

The next critical period in the history of the *Freethinker* came with the opening of the War and the death of G. W. Foote in 1915. He died before the War had been raging long enough to have any great influence on the paper, but immediately after his death troubles began to gather. Even under normal conditions many of those interested in the paper, bearing in mind the fate of the *National Reformer* after the death of Bradlaugh, and of the *Agnostic Journal* after the death of "Saladin," etc., were prepared to see the *Freethinker* come to an end. But the War brought a great paper shortage, the cost of production increased until it reached double the pre-War figure, and a paper without a halfpenny of capital behind it was faced with the problem of purchasing in advance, at greatly enhanced prices, several months' stock of paper. So far as the mere continuance of the paper was concerned, there had been no such trying time since its foundation. There were some amusing aspects to the situation, when an attempt was made to get the *Freethinker* to advocate a strong Jingo policy during the War in return for providing it with funds to weather the storm. That attempt was met with the reply that the only price of the *Freethinker* was twopence per copy, but there was nothing else for sale in the office. As our

readers know, we emerged, thanks to their loyal help, from the War period in a stronger position than ever. Still, could we have foreseen all our troubles in 1915, we might have easily been induced to give it up as hopeless. But the difficulties accumulated one by one, and one by one they were overcome. We were one of the very few papers that kept its price unaltered during almost the whole of the War period—till April, 1918; and to do that without any reserve of capital or advertising revenue is something of which all concerned may well be proud. The real disappointment came with the end of the War. One expected that by then things would have reached their worst. As a matter of fact, conditions are actually harder to-day than they were at any time during the War period, and the cost of production bids fair to be higher than ever. But as we struggled through the War, we have no doubt but that we shall be able to struggle through the Peace, although up to the present we are sorry to see so many proofs of what we have said over and over again, that while any fool or number of fools can make war, it takes men with level heads and sound judgment to maintain peace.

* * *

The Boycott.

We mentioned above that the boycott, although not dead, is dying. The reverse of that statement is that, although dying, it is not dead. Of that we had two examples a little while ago. In the one case we sent an advertisement of the *Freethinker* to the *Times Literary Supplement*, with a cheque. The cheque was returned, and the advertisement refused. We do not accuse the Northcliffe Press of being actuated by principle in this matter, and at first glance it seemed pleasant that there was something in connection with it that was not for sale. It probably thinks that the *Times* readers are still sufficiently retarded in their mental development to be shocked at a paper such as the *Freethinker*, and that it would not do to acknowledge its existence. But the *Times* naturally appeals to a backward type of mind. The other example came from the *Christian World*. In this case we sent an advertisement of our discussion with Dr. Lyttelton. This was not refused, neither was it accepted. We repeatedly made attempts to get the cost of the advertisement, but without success. So in the end we had to give it up. But it is significant that a discussion which attracted attention all over the country, and which served as the text of sermons in many places, was refused advertising space by a paper which talks so much about religious freedom. Meanwhile, we are going ahead with elaborating a plan of advertising on a very modest scale—the modesty is not voluntary, but financially compulsory—and we hope to enlarge it as our means will permit. Had we means, we would see that there was not a house in the country that was not made aware of the existence of the *Freethinker*. And if that were done, all our troubles would be over—and those of the Churches would be just commencing. But the experience with the *Times* and the *Christian World* proves that it will not do to relax our efforts. The boycott still exists, and it must be broken down. And the only way to break it down is to see that the paper is as widely known as possible. The *Freethinker* is, and must be, its own recommendation. The more widely it is known, the more secure its position, and the greater the service to the Cause it serves.

* * *

Our Friends and the Future.

It would be ungracious to close these notes without a word of acknowledgment to all those who have stood so well by the *Freethinker* during the most trying period of its history. The knowledge that they were there, and could be depended upon to do their part, gave all

concerned a feeling of strength and confidence they could not otherwise have had. And we are pleased to know that their support has not been in vain. A paper holding such views as are held by the *Freethinker*, which could live through the time that we have passed, and without any sacrifice of its independence or without concession to popular feeling, may claim to have something that is almost indestructible about it. Naturally, many plans that we had in mind for the development of the paper have had to stand over; but these have been suspended, not abandoned. The fortieth anniversary of our birthday finds us, we think we may say without conceit, with no indication of old age, but with prospects of increased usefulness in the future. For ourselves, we have every faith in the future of the paper, and in that we have never wavered. For twenty-three years we have been writing in its columns, and during the whole of the time there has only been issued one number without at least one article from our pen. And at the end of the period we can say truthfully that nothing we have done has given us so much satisfaction as our work in its pages. That should surprise none. The warm personal feeling which the *Freethinker* evokes among its readers, it calls forth also from its contributors. And perhaps the secret of this is that it stands as the representative of a great principle and of a great Cause. And great principles have still the power of rousing great emotions and actuating the deeper and more permanent aspects of human nature. In a world where compromise and mental timidity are ever-present features, the *Freethinker* stands for a straightforward declaration of principle. It plays to no party—not even its own. It plays to no passion save the passion for truth, and it exploits no passing sensation. That a journal of this kind can command the warm and generous support it does, restores one's faith in human nature and fills all concerned with confidence for the future.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Is Life Worth Living?

THIS question is usually asked and answered by believers in the soul and its immortality. By the soul is understood an entity which constitutes the real man, the body being merely the tabernacle in which it dwells. Very often we meet with the phrase, "Man has a body but is a soul." According to that theory the object of life is to make the most and best of the soul, and so fit it for a triumphal entry into the Great Beyond. If this view is true, life is worth living only when the interests of the soul are duly attended to and its eternal welfare thereby secured. To those who neglect the soul and treat the earth as their home life is certainly not worth living. Life here is probationary, a trial of character. As Austin Phelps, in his *Still Hour*, says, "Under the laws of Providence life is a probation; probation is a succession of temptations; temptations are emergencies; and for emergencies we need the preparation and the safeguard of prayer." Our business here is not to live, but to acquire the art of living for a future state. Browning, in *A Grammarian's Funeral*, in his own subtle fashion, holds this view up to ridicule. The hero of this dramatic poem had a passion for learning:—

Yea, this in him was the peculiar grace
 (Hearten our chorus!)
 That before living he'd learn how to live—
 No end to learning;
 Earn the means first—God surely will contrive
 Use for our learning.
 Others mistrust and say, "But time escapes:
 Live now or never."
 He said, "What's time? Leave Now for dogs and apes!
 Man has Forever."

Now comes the ironic comment, the tragic consequence:—

Back to his books then: deeper drooped his head:
Calculus racked him:
 Leaden before, his eyes grew dross of lead,
Tussis attacked him.

Then the Grammarian died, having never lived at all.

The Rev. Dr. C. L. Goodell is lecturer in Evangelism at Boston University School of Theology; and true to his profession he brims over with evangelic zeal. His style is highly rhetorical, and he delights in quotations. In a sermon, entitled "The Suicide of the Soul," published in the *Christian World Pulpit* for May 5, he indulges in many extravagant and whimsical statements, possible only to a more or less irresponsible special pleader. He travesties the trader, the scholar, and the Secularist, then ridicules their alleged conceptions of life, and ends by saying, "Over against these and all whose life makes the same answer, the conscience, which in this case is the voice of God, says, 'Thou fool!'" He even represents the trader, the scholar, and the Secularist as at the last finding life a woeful disappointment and a disastrous failure; but the representation is false and culpably misleading. Chesterfield, for example, did not define life as "the sum of those enjoyments which minister to taste and touch and sight and passion." His *Letters*, so brilliantly written, so replete with wisdom, wit, and fine portrait-painting, do not insist unduly on elegance, politeness, and good nature as the essential attributes of a gentleman, as Lord Stanhope convincingly shows in his *History*, iii. 34. Surely, no scholar worthy of the name has ever maintained that human life aims only at "physical enjoyment." What fault can be legitimately found with the following statement? "To unlock some mystery of the past, to discover some hidden law, to solve some problem which has troubled the ages, to bring some contribution to enrich the world's thought; to do this is to live." On the assumption that that is an accurate account of the scholar's attitude to life, on what rational ground can any objection to it be taken? Is it not a worthier object of life to observe, study, and investigate the vast and orderly mechanism which we call Nature than to persuade ignorant and credulous people to accept the Fables of the Above as veritable facts?

After a nebulous and somewhat irrelevant introduction, Dr. Goodell faces his text, which is Proverbs viii. 36: "He that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul." He admits, incidentally, that the speaker in that verse is not God, but wisdom. What we find in the eighth chapter of *Proverbs* is a fine, poetical personification of Wisdom. Now, wisdom signifies discernment, "knowledge made our own and properly applied"; discretion. "We conceive," says Whewell, "prudence as the virtue by which we select right means for given ends, while wisdom implies the selection of right ends as well as of right means." As thus defined, wisdom speaks truly when it says, "He that sinneth against me wrongeth his own life." Dr. Goodell is quite right when he tells us that in the Hebrew and the Greek to sin means primarily to miss the mark. In the text sin denotes the ignoring or missing of wisdom. Being a theologian, however, the reverend gentleman adopts the Biblical definition of wisdom, namely: "Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom," and "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Then he adds: "It is therefore God whom the sinner misses." In fairness to him we are bound to concede that as a theologian no other course was open to him. Curiously enough, having identified wisdom with God, the preacher declares, with Paul, that "the world by wisdom knows not God," which involves a glaring inconsistency.

From this stage to the end the discourse is an amazing combination of dogmatic assertion and practical misrepresentation. It is not the dogmatism of knowledge that we have here, but the dogmatism of ignorance, or mere belief. It is not true that the geologist, as geologist, sees God's "footprints in the rocks and knows he has passed that way." Marvellous beyond compare are the discoveries of modern astronomy. The movements of the heavenly bodies are determined by inexorable laws; but the telescope does not reveal God, nor is he found by spade or microscope or scalpel, and consequently there is no ground in any known fact for the Biblical statement that "the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handiwork." Dr. Goodell, after quoting liberally from the Scriptures and eminent theologians, then says:—

No true life is possible without God. For the eagle the upper air; for the fish the crystal waters; as the fish cannot live without water or the eagle without air, so God and man are so near together, so belong to and supplement one another, that not a man by himself, but a man and God is the true unit of being and power.

Such an assertion is the quintessence of arrogance. As a matter of fact, millions of men and women on the globe to-day do live the truest and noblest life without a scrap of belief in the Deity. If Dr. Goodell is not aware of this, his ignorance is not only unfathomable, but a moral crime. Here is another equally stupid assertion:—

Into every man's life, sooner or later, comes Christ to satisfy every longing of his soul. Every man hears once in his life, at least, the tender message, "The Master is come and calleth for thee." He can fail to heed or make light of the summons if he chooses, but he will never be the same man afterwards.....If the statement of the Apostle, "In him we live," is true, then the proposition must also be true that "Out of him or without him we die." Jesus did not hesitate to say, "I am the way, without me there is no going; I am the truth, without me there is no knowing; I am the light, without me there is no seeing; I am the life, without me there is no living."

That extract contains the gist of the whole deliverance. It must be frankly admitted that Dr. Goodell's loyalty to the Bible is perfect; but he is not on speaking terms with the facts of life. There are multitudes in almost every community to whom the Gospel message has never appealed, into whose lives it has not come at all. Their parents were unbelievers, and they have never felt the slightest inclination to believe; and yet among them are to be found men and women who lead clean, healthy, and eminently useful lives, and who are held in high esteem by their neighbours. There are such people even in Boston, which used to regard itself as the hub of the universe. They are Dr. Goodell's neighbours, and it would do him good if he could but meet them.

Is life without God and Christ worth living? Everything depends upon what is meant by living. In Christian countries, particularly in city slums, there are crowds of people the conditions of whose life are such as to make it impossible for them to know what happiness is, and they cannot help degenerating both physically and mentally. Can they feel that it is worth while to live? And the divines ought to realize that these wicked and degrading conditions prevail after so many centuries of the so-called reign of Christ. Furthermore, many of those directly responsible for the existence of our slums are members of Christian Churches, and claim to be followers of the Lamb and heirs to bliss ineffable beyond the grave. The preacher says: "If we are so busy with our getting that we fail to find God, the blood

of our souls will be required at our hands, and we shall be poor indeed"; but has it never occurred to him that he and his brethren are so busy finding God and insuring their own souls for eternity, that they neglect the social duties lying at their feet? Instead of training evangelists, would it not be unspeakably wiser to train social reformers, whose mission it will be to establish such conditions everywhere as will contribute towards the making of the lives of the people more worth living than they are at present?

J. T. LLOYD.

Mr. Facing-Both-Ways.

Religion is the first thing and the last thing, and until a man has found god, and been found by god, he begins at no beginning, he works to no end.—Mr. H. G. Wells, "Mr. Britling."

Rationalism, indeed, makes one think of the Middle Ages.—Mr. H. G. Wells, in an interview with Mr. F. J. Gould.

Though much has been written foolishly about the antagonism of science and religion, there is indeed no such antagonism.—Mr. H. G. Wells, "The Outline of History."

MR. H. G. WELLS is one of the star-artistes of the religious circus. For years he has been poised, as it were, upon a theological bare-back horse; his career has been one feat of intellectual gymnastics. To become the champion of religion he assumed a position of illogicality only to be sustained by an exquisite achievement in equilibrium. He has attempted to bring about a union between science and religion, which are no more marriageable than fire and water. He has openly flirted with Science, the bugbear of the theologians, and he has steadily insulted Freethinkers. There is scarce a topic from Socialism to Sacerdotalism, from his own pleasant beliefs to the origin of the universe, but he has discussed it with that fluent journalistic familiarity which is peculiarly his own.

Apart from his novels, Mr. Wells's most distinguished performance is his *Outline of History*, which an unkind critic has described as "A Cook's Excursion through Universal History." It took Edward Gibbon, who was not without his vanity, thirty years to write his famous *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. The modest Mr. Wells gallops through the history of the world in as many weeks. And in its scope and diction there is something in this hustled history which endears it to that enormous family in Philistia which is supposed to trouble the pew openers.

In the estimation of his admirers, Mr. Wells is nothing if not broad-minded; and it is a fact that he has never permitted himself to be held by the trammels of the Theism he so passionately preaches. Now, in such a question as the origins of Christianity, criticism is both dangerous and delicate; but hereon Mr. Wells is leonine in his assurance, magnificent in his disdain of opponents. His practice is to dogmatize upon what is incapable of proof, and to flout and gibe at those who cannot agree with him. And when he sentimentalizes upon "god," he attains to altitudes, as it were, of virgin snows, of beautiful nonsense, where no man since has tried to set foot. "God" to Mr. Wells is a moral maid-of-all-work, who plays Juliet to his own Romeo. "The rest is silence."

Mr. Wells should know the Freethought position with regard to the Christian superstition, for he once professed and called himself a Rationalist. Yet he has but imperfectly assimilated the works of the critics, and writes as if he were a youthful Unitarian minister, and not as a sober historian. Dogmas which have been professed by Christians for nearly twenty centuries are tossed lightly aside like worn-out gloves. He dismisses the adoration of the Virgin as lightly and cavalierly as

the sulphurous and tormenting flames of Hell, and the bereft believer might well exclaim with Macduff, in Shakespeare's play: "What! All my little chickens and their dam at one fell swoop." Then, with the pen that wrote *Love and Mrs. Lewisham*, Mr. Wells proceeds to write a very pleasing novelette of "the old, old story."

Having invented a brand-new "God" of his own, Mr. Wells must, of course, have a brand-new Jesus, which is very different from the "clean, combed and sleek" figure in the Orthodox art. Mr. Wells's Christ is not even a white man, but a "lean and strenuous personality" who "wandered about the dusty, sun-bit country of Judæa, living upon casual gifts of food." As Mr. Wells warms to his subject, he gets as hectic as any preacher. For instance, he tells us that this Oriental is "a great teacher"

who was to liberate the intense realization of the righteousness and unchallengeable oneness of God and of man's moral obligation to God.

Indeed, Mr. Wells is "intoxicated with the exuberance of his own verbosity," to use Disraeli's famous phrase:

As when we dwell upon a word we know,
Repeating till the word we know so well,
Becomes a wonder, and we know not why.

He "unpacks his heart with words," as the following rhapsody on Christ's teaching will show:—

He (Jesus) was like some terrible moral huntsman digging mankind out of the snug burrows in which they had lived hitherto. In the white blaze of this kingdom of his there was to be no property, no privilege, no pride and precedence; no motive indeed and no reward but love. Is it any wonder that men were dazzled and blinded and cried out against him?—Is it any wonder that to this day this Galilean is too much for our small hearts?

And the publication which contains this beautiful nonsense has a full-page faked picture of the "crucifixion" of Mr. Wells' hero, which was considered so excellent that it was repeated as a cover design to induce people to buy the book.

The work from which Mr. Wells' extracts are taken is supposed to be a sober history on scientific lines. They are, perhaps, as good examples as exist, outside of such effusions as those of the Bishop of London and other clerical writers, of those masterly collocations of words which sound nobly but convey little meaning. The words are innocent enough, but, as arranged, their effect is one of simple stupefaction. But is it not hard on the half-educated public that Mr. Wells should impose his unctuous periods in the guise of sober history? The British public will reinforce its prejudices with this fluent bombast, especially when it remembers that Mr. Wells was once a Rationalist. "To take him (Jesus) seriously," says Mr. Wells, "was to essay an incredible happiness." Indeed! "The fact," says Bernard Shaw, "that a believer is happier than a sceptic is no more to the point than the fact that a drunken man is happier than a sober one. The happiness of credulity is a cheap and dangerous quality of happiness, and by no means a necessity of life." Mr. Wells has a talent for writing fiction, but he should not call his work "history."

MIMNERMUS.

Also in the matter of religion, the training of a samurai boy was peculiar; he was educated to revere the ancient gods and the spirits of his ancestors; he was well schooled in the Chinese ethics; and he was taught something of Buddhist philosophy and faith. But he was likewise taught that hope of heaven and fear of hell were for the ignorant only; and that the superior man should be influenced in his conduct by nothing more selfish than the love of right for its own sake, and the recognition of duty as a universal law.—*Lafcadio Hearn*, "Kokoro."

Spiritualism.

X.

THE MISSES BEAUCHAMP.

In the spring of 1898 a young lady consulted a celebrated American psychologist on account of the severe neurasthenia from which she was suffering. Aged 23, she was a student in a New England college, and her mental and nervous condition had a pronounced effect upon her physical health. Easily tired and suffering from persistent sleeplessness and headache, she presented an example of what her physician (Dr. Morton Prince) called a pronounced neurasthenic of the extreme type. In temperament she proved to be rather a difficult person with whom to deal. With an excessive, almost morbid, conscientiousness, she combined so great a pride and reserve that an intimate investigation of her case seemed to be an arduous task. At first the treatment that she received appeared to be of little use. Methods usually successful with such patients proved of small avail with her, and hypnotism was at last resorted to. She was found to be an excellent subject, and passed easily into the somnambulistic state, the result of this method of treatment being at the time quite successful. But one day, when in the hypnotic state, the physician mentioned something which she had said when previously under somnambulism, and to his surprise she denied all knowledge of it. Wishing to test her honesty, he awakened her, and, after again putting her to sleep, found to his astonishment that she now admitted what she had previously denied. It was then seen that entirely distinct personalities were developing, and so it was decided to name them as they appeared. Miss Beauchamp herself was called B.I., her hypnotic state B.II., and the third personality B.III. During the hypnotic experiments, Dr. Prince had noticed that both B.II. and B.III. were continually rubbing their eyes as if to get them open, and the movements were so violent that force had sometimes to be employed in order to restrain them. When questioned, B.III. insisted on her right to see, but this was at first prevented, since it was rightly feared that once visual associations were added to those already existing in the mental life, an independent personality would be produced. Such indeed was actually the case. One day when Miss Beauchamp was sitting in a drowsy abstraction by the window at home, B.III. took control, rubbed her eyes violently and opened them. From that moment she became an independent personality, and whilst remaining in the same condition she wrote a triumphant letter to her physician. "My dear Dr. Prince," she wrote, "rejoice with me and be exceeding glad, for I am on the top of the heap at last!" Later on this personality became known as Sally Beauchamp, a name chosen by herself for fun, the surname of which Dr. Prince, in his study of the case, has adopted for the whole series. Sally is a person utterly unlike the "real" Miss Beauchamp. Impulsive and wayward as a child, she, at the same time, enjoys excellent health, fatigue and pain being quite unknown. Miss Beauchamp, on the other hand, was of a serious character, studious and religiously minded; but Sally detested all these things. It is true that she

can read and write fairly well, but knows nothing of French nor the other foreign languages with which Miss Beauchamp is acquainted, nor, according to her own account, does she ever sleep. One of her chief amusements consisted in annoying and terrifying the "real" Miss Beauchamp. For example, when B.I. was particularly tired and wanted a rest, Sally would assume control, take a long ride into the country, and then wake up B.I., after having arranged that she should have no money wherewith to return. Another trick was to undo the needlework upon which Miss Beauchamp used to be engaged, winding it round herself and the furniture and then waking B.I. and enjoying the jest. But of all the jokes she played on Miss Beauchamp that of making her lie was the most mortifying. Whilst Miss Beauchamp remained in her first personality, Sally succeeded in willing her to tell lies in the most barefaced fashion. Although Miss Beauchamp was perfectly well aware what she was doing, she was unable to help herself. Again, there were few things Miss Beauchamp disliked more than being undignified. Sally was aware of this, and used to delight in making her sit with her feet on the mantelpiece and in forcing her to smoke cigarettes, a habit which B.I. cordially detested. During the treatment, Sally explained to Dr. Prince how she used to perform these tricks on B.I., and how she loved worrying and tormenting "her," as she was accustomed to call the "real" Miss Beauchamp.

The sufferer herself was keenly conscious of her unfortunate state. Seeing merely the results, and not being acquainted with the personality of Sally as was her physician, she felt herself unable to account for her miserable experiences. "I do really think that, like those poor people of old, I must be possessed by devils," she once wrote. "it is as though I were filled with the spirit of mischief incarnate." Such a solution is one which it is probable that the majority of spiritists would adopt. Here we have a secondary personality which lives in order to annoy the primary personality which it hates. Such a condition is well-suited for the devil possession theory, although, unfortunately for the spiritists, such a solution is usually passed over with a smile by competent psychologists. In the case of Miss, or rather the Misses Beauchamp, a "fourth" personality was later developed. Her main work seemed to be to accomplish her own ends with little care as to the effects which resulted from her actions. Sally dubbed her "the Idiot," and she was henceforth known by that name. Seemingly robust in her physical constitution, she was capable of great physical and also mental effort, and it is a remarkable fact that although Sally knew what she did, she appeared not to be cognizant of what she *thought*. How the hunt for the real Miss Beauchamp continued; how Sally hypnotised B.IV. and fought for control, and how at last the personalities became fused, cannot be dealt with here. Those who wish to work through the case may do so in Dr. Prince's own work, "The Dissociation of a Personality," where every stage is treated in great detail.

Whatever theory we may adopt in order to explain multiple personality, there seems little need to select that held by spiritists until we know

far more about subconscious psychology. Dr. Schofield, in his recent book, "Modern Spiritism," attempts to distinguish between multiple personality and "possession" in a curious manner. In speaking of alternating personalities, he says: "I do not call them cases of possession, inasmuch as nothing evil is manifest" (p. 122). That this extraordinary statement should be made by a Harley Street physician would not be credible did we not know that he was intimately connected with that remarkable body, the Prophecy Investigation Society. Then Dr. Schofield is also the author of works bearing such edifying titles as "God over All" and "The Lord's Coming," so perhaps his knowledge of God is greater than his acquaintance with spiritism. However that may be, he appears not even able to get his names right. Thus he speaks of Dr. Lappuis when he means Lapponi; Feilden when he means Feilding; and for such well-known names as Eeden, L. P. Jacks, Selbit, Dupond, and Kardec, he writes Eder, H. P. Jacks, Sebil, Dupont, and Cardec! In the last case he seems to imagine that Cardec and Kardec are two different people, as both are given a separate entry in the index, whilst the whole book is a revelation into the mind of a religious anti-spiritist. Anti-christ is to this worthy physician "a sort of master-medium" (p. 228), and he gives several cases of Christian ladies and gentlemen who became possessed by devils and who, when entranced, poured forth the most hideous obscenities and blasphemies. It is true that cases like this do occur in such persons as "the pious Quaker" (p. 121), or the "quiet maiden lady full of good works" (p. 119), who apparently became possessed of an evil spirit in Bayswater. How Dr. Schofield accounts for these good religious people being infested by demons I know not, but perhaps if he would pay less attention to the Bible and more to the Freudian system he might discover an excellent reason.

In the example of multiple personality that we have been considering it is quite clear that the spiritistic hypothesis is really not necessary. If the public knew more of these cases, less faith would be put in the utterances of the trance mediums, and more knowledge would be gained for science if such persons passed more readily under medical control.

E. J. D.

Acid Drops.

The Archbishop of York, as reported in the *Times* of April 30, says that it would be useless to proceed with efforts to settle the education difficulty unless "local education authorities were willing to show that they were not less but more concerned with the teaching of religion in the schools than they were with the teaching of secular education." That is at least frank, and we hope that all concerned will take due notice of the utterance. It means, what we have often pointed out, that the concern of the clergy is not for education as ordinarily understood, but for the breeding of Church members. The talk of education is a mere blind, a pretence to mask their real object. To this there is only one honest reply, and that is to sweep all religion out of the schools, as we do in India, as is done in some of our colonies, as is done in France, Portugal, and elsewhere. It is monstrous that, when the adults are so generally throwing off the control of these medicine-men, that these same adults should permit them to maintain their hold on children.

The monthly conference of clergy and Nonconformist ministers, held at Smethwick, passed a resolution welcoming "the suggestions of Mr. Fisher with regard to the giving of denominational religious teaching in provided and non-provided schools. There is nothing to object to in this resolution so far as the clergy are concerned; but the Nonconformists profess to believe in the non-interference of the State in matters of religion, and their vote illustrates how little the vast majority of Christians can be trusted where the interests of their religion are concerned. As a matter of fact, had the Nonconformists of this country been true to their avowed principles, Secular Education would by now have been an accomplished fact. But they sold their position in 1870, and they have been selling it ever since.

Perhaps the explanation is that Nonconformists never did believe in the separation of religion from the State. All they ever meant by it was that the State should not teach a religion in which *they* had no belief. They have never shown themselves backward in availing themselves of State help, financial and otherwise, and are to-day more on the grab than ever. It was in opposing the religion of the other man that they were led to enunciate a principle which meant more than they intended, and, in its working, educated some Nonconformists to a degree of liberalism that threatened to become unpleasant in its operation. But how little of real principle there is in even the best may be seen when we take a man like Dr. Clifford, who, while heading a passive resistance movement which is based upon an objection to pay rates in support of a religion in which *he* does not believe, can yet be found taking, in his own church, relief from the payment of rates, and so compelling *all* to pay towards the upkeep of a church to which many have a profound objection.

At Adlington, the minister of the Congregational Church resigned his post and "abruptly" left the town. As he has since been arrested for attempting to obtain money under false pretences, there appears to be nothing remarkable in either his resignation or his departure. But we are not sure that all the clergy might not be justly charged with the same offence, although their method of obtaining money under false pretences has the sanction of custom behind it.

There is a move to sell nineteen of the City churches, and devote the proceeds to fitting out churches elsewhere. We were not aware that there was a church shortage anywhere, certainly there is no place where they are complaining of overcrowding. The incomes of some of the City churches, with their congregations of half a dozen or a dozen, has long been a scandal; but we suggest that instead of being pulled down they might, until the housing shortage is overcome, be put to some more useful purpose than that of being used to build more churches. Meanwhile, if the churches were utilized to provide sleeping accommodation for all who need it, many would benefit. That would not be quite a new use but it would be appreciated.

The Church is making desperate efforts to capture the working-man. At a Haggerston church a 'bus driver was permitted to read the lessons. It is too late. The intelligent Democracy no longer goes to petticoated priests for advice. It has had too much.

There is no mistaking Lord Hugh Cecil's genuine interest in the League of Nations. And it is, therefore, not surprising that he is "profoundly disappointed" at the Church's attitude towards it. The only room for surprise is that he should have expected the Church to have acted differently. The Church follows the powers that be, and it is evident to us that the powers that be never intended the League of Nations to be more than a mere cover for their own schemes of aggrandizement. Mr. Balfour said in the House of Commons that it was only the Peace Conference under another name, and the Peace Conference is a combination of conquerors and nothing more. The French officials openly derided the League, and our own threw cold water upon it. Poland is a member of the League, and it is one of its articles that any

member of the League making war shall be held responsible to the rest. Yet when Poland declares war on Russia, all the other Governments decline to say a word in the way of protest, and King George sends the Polish President a letter of congratulation. The Churches *could* help materially to bring about a real League of Nations if they would. But they will act as they have always acted—supply the necessary moral cloak for the dishonesty and chicanery of the secular powers. Lord Hugh Cecil should come out of the crowd and seek honest company.

The destruction of all military aerodromes is being proceeded with. That seemed quite hopeful, but on looking closer we found that it referred only to Germany. And yet *we* won the War. So we note in the Peace Treaty, that was not a Treaty, and does not make Peace, that military drill is prohibited in schools—in Germany. And the army is to be greatly reduced—in Germany. But *we* won the War; and why on earth is Germany to get all the benefits? If we won the War, to rid ourselves of the menace of militarism, why should we go on enlarging our armies, and building up fleets of military aeroplanes, etc. Did we win the War or did Germany? And in the name of common sense what was it that we did win? Did we merely win the freedom to get ready for the next war? And was that worth all the suffering through which the world passed?

On May 10, Sir Philip Sassoon asked the First Commissioner of Works why all State Palaces, etc., that are open to the public on weekdays cannot also be opened to the public on Sundays? Commenting on this, the *Evening News* says: "We must be thankful that we are beginning to disengage Sunday, the Christian holiday, from that acidulated version of the Jewish Sabbath which was invented three hundred years ago by the English and Scottish Puritans." We wonder when Sunday became a *Christian* holiday? We should have imagined that even the Northcliffe Press would have been aware that Sunday was, as the name shows, a Pagan holiday, and a day of gladness. But what was there in the Christian use of the day to make it a day of gladness? We agree that nothing could have been more profoundly immoral than the Puritan Sabbath; but the gloom and the immorality was implicit in Christianity all along. And when the people had become sufficiently removed from the influence of Paganism, there was the savage taboo-day of the Jewish Bible for them to use as a means of developing the lower and poorer view.

During the raids a Church in Garlick Hill, E.C., had its windows injured by a bomb, but that was all the damage done to the church or its worshippers. It is now proposed that every year a sermon should be delivered thanking God for so mercifully preserving the church and its people. Nothing will, of course, be said of the larger number of people whom God did not preserve. It looks as though Christians were so pleased to be able to think that God did something somewhere for someone that anything will do. For ourselves, before thanking God for the preservation of these folk we should like to know something about them. There may be more good nature than judgment about this preservation.

The Synod of the Primitive Methodist Churches of Hull and district report a decrease of membership which one of the speakers at the gathering described as "gigantic." The newspaper heads its report with "Serious Figures for Hull." But we quite fail to see the suitability of the heading. Undertakers might as well head a decrease in the deaths with "serious figures for Undertakers." The decrease is serious for the clergy, but we expect that all the rest of the people will bear up under the news. We suggest, as a compensation to all who are upset by the news that the Freethinkers in Hull should inaugurate a Freethought propaganda. We shall be pleased to help.

In Belfast also, Christianity seems to be in a bad way. At a meeting of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church, the Rev. J. W. Gibson handed in a "disquieting" report. The prayer-meeting was decaying, and one Presbytery reported it as

quite dead. "The importance of the family altar had been brought before the people, but it would appear that in very few homes had it been set up, or rather in the majority of homes it had been relegated to the limbo of the past. There was a good deal of Sabbath desecration in the form of pleasure-seeking and social visiting." That is awful. That people should be given to pleasure-seeking and social visiting on the "Sabbath," marks a depth of degradation hard to conceive. No wonder there is revolution in Ireland! There is only one gleam of hope in the situation. The suggestion that the parks should be open for games on the Sabbath was "happily" unsuccessful. "Happily" is quite a good word there. It is the only connection in which the Church will tolerate the thought of pleasure in connection with Sunday.

The Ven. E. E. Holms, Archdeacon of London, advances cogent arguments against Spiritualism in a sermon which appeared in the *Church Times* for May 7. He is reminded of stories that were told when the whole thing was held up to ridicule. For example:—

At a social *seance* Dean Pigou asked a medium to summon St. Paul from the dead, and when he appeared (quite irrespective apparently of his own wishes!) he, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, was unable to write his name in Hebrew; he who had lived at Corinth could not write his name in Greek; he who had spent long years at Rome could not be persuaded by the medium to write his name in Latin; and so on, and so on.

It is easy enough to make fun of the phenomena of Spiritualism without taking the trouble to study and understand their psychological significance; but to us the claims of Spiritualism are not one whit more absurd than the claims made by the Archdeacon himself. Without a single shred of evidence he treats the following three blind assertions as if they were verified facts: The continuity of life after death; the continuity of interest between the inhabitants of the two worlds; and the continuity of intercourse between the living and the dead. From such a doctrine Spiritualism springs quite naturally, being nothing but a practical illustration of the groundlessness of the belief.

The *Daily Chronicle* has what is, on the whole, some sensible comments on Lord Buckmaster's Divorce Bill now before the House of Lords, but it blunders sadly in one instance. The Archbishop of Canterbury moved that no clergyman of the Church of England should be compelled to re-marry a divorced person. The proposal was lost, and the *Chronicle* adds, "no one should be forced to marry divorced persons if he conscientiously objects to do so." But that is quite wrong. In this respect the clergyman is a State functionary—a registrar of marriages, in fact—and he can no more claim exemption from the duties of his position than any other registrar can claim exemption from his. If the Church of England wants exemption from certain duties, it should separate itself from the State and be done with it. But it is hard to get into a clergyman's head a proper sense of right or justice, and it is simply monstrous for the clergy to brand as adulterous a marriage which the State declares to be perfectly legal. The truth of the matter is that the clergy feel the marriage ceremony to be slipping from their control, and they don't like it.

The influence of the Church on this question of marriage and divorce may well be taken as symptomatic of its influence on life in general. It did not make marriage better, but surrounded it with a certain suggestiveness of uncleanness. And it has stupidly fought against every attempt to place the marriage contract upon a reasonable basis, and so help to elevate and dignify it. So, again, with its attitude towards illegitimacy. It clearly did not stop the birth of the illegitimate, and we question whether during the whole of its history the Church has ever diminished the number of illegitimate children by a single birth. What it did was to split its bigotry on the children. It made them legally outlaws, and it created a public opinion which, while it wreaked its bigotry on the woman, often the least sinful of the two, permitted the man to escape scot-free. In morals the his-

tory of the Church might be summed up as a history of accommodation, hesitation, and ultimate demoralization. We repeat, not for the last time, the Christian Church is not merely an intellectually debasing force, it is also a morally debasing one. It has debauched mankind in both directions.

At last it is coming, but we are not surprised. From being an amalgamation of all the villainies, we are now beginning to be told that the Bolsheviks are true Christians—which from our point of view is anything but a compliment. Mr. St. John Catchpool, who has been engaged in Quaker relief work in Russia since 1916, says that Soviet Russia has made more progress in "practical Christianity" than has been made elsewhere. By that he means education, child welfare, maternity care, and housing. He also says that the popularity of the Soviet Government is due to the people realizing that its programme is Christianity in practice. So there is a chance for the Bishop of London and Mr. Stephen Graham to once more revive their colossal stupidity concerning the religious pre-eminence of the Russian people.

At a meeting of the Lord's Day Observance Society, the Bishop of Barking thanked the London County Council for prohibiting Sunday games in the parks, and the Middlesex County Council for stopping Sunday cinema shows. Is it not perfectly clear where the opposition to reasonable relaxation on Sunday comes from? "Clericalism is the enemy!"

Mr. Bruce Glaisher says that the right kind of fraternity considers neither nationality, religion, nor colour, because it is based on the Fatherhood of God. It is a pity that some of these would-be reformers seem incapable of straight thinking whenever the name of religion is introduced. If they are not muddle-headed before that "blessed word" appears, they are certain to be so afterwards. What, for example, is Mr. Glaisher going to do with these people who do not believe in the fatherhood of God? Are they to stand outside the bounds of fraternity? In that case Mr. Glaisher will find his Socialism robbed of nearly all its sturdiest brains. And is not the Fatherhood of God itself a dogma of religion? How, then, can fraternity be above considering it? The childish incapacity of such comments as those of Mr. Glaisher's are staggering. And while people are befooled by such phrases one need not be surprised at their being so easily befooled by the professional politician.

Leopards do not change their spots, and priests are the same the world over. An attempt is being made by the High Church party in the American Episcopal Church to add fifty-three Black Letter Saints to the Calendar; to introduce the confessional; to substitute the Eucharist for Communion; and other reactionary measures. This, be it remembered, is taking place in the great Republic of the West, and not a four-foot-by-six Balkan state.

The Right Rev. the Bishop of Lewes left estate to the value of £58,176. He will go to the place so often mentioned in sermons.

Christians in this country, particularly those of the High Church variety, are seriously concerned to release the Christians of the East from the rule of Mohammedans. It may be taken as a mere coincidence, or as an indication that the Lord loves those who follow him so faithfully as do the Christians of this country, that Mesopotamia should possess oilfields which, as the *Daily Express* explains, will double the oil supply of the British Empire, and must therefore be kept in British hands. Thus do all things make for righteousness. Had we been less Christian, and less concerned about the future of the Christians of the East, these oilfields might have remained in Moslem hands, and the dividends drawn by followers of the Prophet. But our religious unselfishness has placed these fields in our hands, and will enable us, to again follow the *Express*, to have "an adequate supply of oil in case of another war." Verily there is nothing that pays like a wise piety, and those who place their trust in the Lord shall not find that trust misplaced.

To Correspondents.

T. N.—What you describe as "rational conduct" seems to us to involve a fallacy. Any conduct is rational which is well adapted to secure the end aimed at. If I desire the death of a man, it is "rational" to give him poison, but irrational to feed him on chocolate cream. If I desire his wellbeing, it is equally irrational to give him the poison and rational to give him the chocolate cream. If, therefore, it was possible to secure the suppression of heresy by killing certain heretics, the Church was acting rationally in killing them. If the means were ill calculated to achieve the end, the Church was acting so far irrationally. In other words, conduct may be rational, or rationalistic, without its being right conduct. The fault of the Catholic Church is not that it condemned reason—it did not; but it reasoned wrongly, it assumed false premises, and so came to faulty conclusions, or its conclusions did not follow from the premises assumed. Its condemnation of certain forms of reasoning—with which you and we would agree—was based upon the assumption that they were examples of wrong reasoning. And consequently the issue is not that "we" believe in reason and the Catholic Church does not, but that we differ from it on some of the grounds above indicated. And it is useless misstating an opponent's position if we have any desire to convert him.

W. S. LAWSON.—As we do not believe in a Devil, we cannot well attribute the origin of any form of religion to him. But if there were a Devil, and if he is as malevolent as religious folk would have us believe, we cannot imagine him living up to his part in a better way than by inventing a religion or two with which to plague mankind.

H. MASON.—We are pleased to hear that you found *Determinism or Free-Will?* so useful in discussion with your friends. We cannot hope to realize your wish that the work should sell by the hundreds of thousand, but we are content that the demand for the book is as steady as it is gratifying.

J. GREENWOOD.—Sorry that we did not get the notice of your meeting at Failsworth in time for use in last week's issue. We trust that Mr. Gould had the large meetings he so well deserves.

H. M. CARDLE (Glasgow).—You are quite wrong in supposing that *all* we are attacking is religion. The attack on religion is only a means to an end, and the end is to liberate the human mind from false views of life that are preventing men and women attacking the evils of life in the intelligent way in which they should be attacked. If religion were not in the way, we should waste no time in opposing it. For the rest, we do not see that Freethinkers are of necessity committed to any special social or political theory. There will always be room for honest difference there.

W. J.—The only comment that we feel called upon to make is that the standpoint of the writer of the paragraph is wholly wrong. There is no more a "modern temper" which consents to wrong than there was an ancient one, so long as we use the expression as characteristic of a whole people. The modern temper, in its best expression, is a desire to understand the conditions of wrong; and that means the cultivation of a spirit which, instead of exhausting itself in stupid fulminations against wrong, seeks to remove it by destroying the causes of its existence. The talk about the doctrine of grace is sheer verbiage. It can only appeal to those who have been used to accepting certain words without asking what they mean, or whether they mean anything useful.

C. B.—Thanks for cuttings. Very useful.

H. IRVING.—Pleased to have your appreciation of the Spencer articles. Would have made them longer, but was afraid of wearying readers. The depreciation of Spencer is largely a fashion, and will pass.

H. CAIRNEY.—We are glad to learn that you have secured three new readers. Hope that a few hundred of our readers will follow your excellent example.

H. C. MELLOR.—Shall be pleased to see you at the Conference. We are hoping to see representatives from all Branches of the N. S. S. It is only once a year, and all should make an effort to be there.

J. A. REID.—We see the review, but have not yet had time to read the work. Hope to do so shortly.

A. G. HANN.—Any letter sent to this office will be duly forwarded to its destination. The resemblance is, as you say, striking.

We must apologise for holding over a number of replies to letters until next week. We have been unusually busy during the past few days.

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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, 15s.; half year, 7s. 6d.; three months, 3s. 9d.

Sugar Plums.

Miss Vance asks us to say that such of the arrangements for the Whit-Sunday Conference at Birmingham as are in the capable hands of Mr. James Partridge, the Birmingham Secretary, are now complete, and he awaits only the names of those who wish for accommodation, and the class of accommodation they require, and for how long.

Mr. Partridge would also like to know who will partake of the mid-day Conference lunch (3s. 6d.), or be present at the Excursion on Whit-Monday to Stratford-on-Avon. The return fare from Birmingham to Stratford is 6s. 3d., but those journeying home southwards will be able to proceed from Stratford, thus saving the return fare to Birmingham. Mr. Partridge's address is: 245 Shenstone Road, Rotton Park, Birmingham.

On arrival at Birmingham on the Saturday, delegates and friends are advised to proceed straight to the Cobden Hotel, where a reception will take place at 7 p.m. We hope there will be a good muster of delegates and friends, and that all Branches will be represented. There should be a goodly number from the Midlands and the near North.

We should be pleased to receive the help of our readers in distributing the slips we have had printed advertising the *Freethinker*. They make a very effective form of advertising, and our limited means will not permit us to indulge in very expensive methods. We are, too, striving to make an appeal for a Sustentation Fund unnecessary this year. But for the steadily rising cost of production, we should have done this anyway, now that the price of the paper has been raised. As it stands, we can do it, if those interested will only unite in an endeavour to secure us another thousand readers. And we are quite sure that can be done. We must all know at least one person who would become a regular reader if he or she were only made aware of its existence. We are doing all we can at this end to make the paper quite self-supporting, and we are only asking others to do their part so far as it is possible.

Some of our readers may wish to help, but may not care for the method of personal canvas. We, therefore, make the following proposal which we will keep open for one month from date. On hearing from any of our present subscribers, we will send the *Freethinker* for thirteen weeks to the address of anyone who is not at present a reader of this paper, post paid for 2s. 9d. We feel sure that when anyone who is sympathetically inclined towards Freethought has read this paper for thirteen weeks he will take it in afterwards on his own account. This will enable some of our friends to lend a hand with the minimum of trouble to themselves.

Religion and the Labour Problem.

Many people do not see the connection between these two things, but there is a vital and necessary connection. For if there be a God who rules men and things by His arbitrary will, it is an impertinence to attempt to abolish poverty, because it is according to His will. But if there be no such God, then we know that poverty is caused by men and may be removed by men. If there be a God who answers prayers, the remedy for social injustice is to pray. But if there be no such God, the remedy is to think and act.

If men go to heaven when they die, and if heaven is a place in which everybody will be made perfectly happy, then there is no need to struggle against poverty in this world, because a few years of trouble, or even degradation, in this world are of no consequence when compared with an eternity of happiness that must be ours by simply following the directions of the clergy. But if there be no such heaven, then it becomes a matter of the first importance that we make our condition as happy as possible in this world, which is the only one of which we are certain. I maintain that there is no God who rules men and things by His arbitrary will and who answers prayers, and that there is no heaven of everlasting bliss to which we are to be wafted after death. And I maintain this not only because I think that these religious beliefs are erroneous, but because I know that they are most potent to make men docile and submissive to the most degrading conditions imposed on them. I feel sure that the doctrine that obedience to rulers and contentment in poverty are according to the will of God, and the doctrine that the poor and the oppressed will be compensated in heaven are the chief causes of slums, prisons, lunatic asylums, poor-houses and the sexual prostitution of men and women. All political tyranny is backed up and made possible by belief in an arbitrary God, and all poverty is endured because of the belief that after death everlasting happiness and wealth await us. Two conditions are necessary to human happiness: personal freedom and general wealth. But we never can be free as long as we believe that it is the will of an infinite heavenly ruler that we should submit to a finite earthly ruler, whether he gets upon the throne by hereditary succession or by the votes of a majority; and wealth will never be justly, and therefore, generally, distributed as long as most of the people believe that because they are poor in this world they will be rich in the world to come.

The apostle Paul says that political rulers are ordained by God and must be obeyed, from the King to the constable, from the President to the policeman. He says that you must pay your taxes and behave yourself sweetly when the politicians force you to do things you don't like, and that if you are refractory "the minister of God" will use his sword, and will not use it "in vain." He says that the sword-bearer is God's minister, and that he carries a sword because he is an "avenger for wrath." He is for the purpose of visiting God's wrath upon all persons who do not like to pay duties to enrich dishonest manufacturers or taxes to swell the bloated incomes of overbearing officials.

The apostle Peter says that we should submit ourselves to every law of man, to the King who is

"supreme," and to rulers placed over us by God. Christ himself recites a parable about a rich man who went to hell because he was rich, and a poor man who went to heaven because he was poor. Rich Christians are told by the clergy that the surest way for *them* to get to heaven is by being rich, but they use this parable to console the poor with the idea that the surest way for *them* to get to heaven is by being poor. And this idea is confirmed by the saying of Christ: "Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." The mystery of the universe—its whence, its why and its whither—has so far proved impenetrable, and I deny the right of anybody to call that mystery, God. It is unfair to call the unknown by any other name, or to speak of it as "He" or "the Father." The word "God" has always meant a person who does things in answer to prayer; hence, a person who bears some special relation to individuals, as distinct from other entities. And when the word ceases to have that meaning it should be dropped. Men used to speak of Jupiter when they believed in an imaginary person of that name, but when they ceased to believe that there was any such person they ceased to use the name. Those who now believe in Jehovah speak of Jehovah, but the great majority of Christians have ceased to believe in the small and disgraceful deity of the Old Testament, and have ceased to use his name. I claim that it is impossible to prove that *any* being exists who can do, or ever does, anything outside of the regular processes of Nature, and therefore that the word "God," which has always meant such a being, should be dropped.

I would have no objection to the current use of the word "God" if that use were harmless, but it is very far from that. It is a word that every despot conjures with to keep the people in ignorance and subjection. It is a word that crafty politicians use in carrying out their schemes of bribery and plunder. I have no doubt that our present saintly Prime Minister and his Christian colleagues feel that it is both right and expedient to have people believe that God swayed the last general election, when as a matter of plain fact it was empty promises, specious lies and money that did the trick.

The same thing applies to the word "Heaven." It is impossible to show that there is any such place, and the word is used as a bribe to the poor to keep them quiet under injustice. I do not see how there can be a life after death, but if there is it will not be any better because we are poor and undeveloped in this world, and therefore immortality should be a reason rather for discontent among the poor than for submission to injustice.

As an Atheist I object to a god who is for every tyrannical ruler and against the rebels that he imprisons, tortures and slays; who is for the idle landlord and usurer and against the workers; who is for the purse-proud prelate and against the people; who is for the boodle politician and against the taxpayers; who is for the vested interests of the few and against the happiness of the many; who is for the white exploiter and against the simple coloured man; who is for the rich profiteer and against the petty burglar and pickpocket. If I am told there is no such god as this, I reply that there is, or there is none. The god of every Christian creed is the god of the rulers, the god of the idle rich. There never has been any other god known to the world. This is the god that the Church now worships and always

has worshipped. There are forces in Nature that we do not yet understand, and therefore should not name. But they can only help us as we learn what they are and how to use them. It is therefore neither our duty nor our privilege to pray, nor can any good be thus achieved. It is for us to observe, to think, and to examine the pretensions of the privileged. It is for us to understand that there is no God to raise our wages, and no Heaven to compensate us for our poverty and all the misery it entails in this world.

G. O. WARREN.

The Wild Lone Glen.

I wonder how many Glasgow Freethinkers are aware of the existence of the Hyndog Glen (Dalry, Ayrshire), that guides the waters of the Rye round and under the green and lonely Baidland Hill. I saw it for the first time, after long anticipation, just the other Sunday. As I entered the village the church bells were just ceasing to sound in my unresponsive ear. An odd belated man or maiden was hurrying to the synagogue. Little children were to be seen with bibles in their hands, and one saw how it was, how it came to be, and how it out-stayed its true era, this most absurd unnecessary faith. Later some well-dressed folk formed a ring in the street, and sang doleful ditties for the benefit of the unsaved and for the exercise of their pious zeal. Well pleased they were with themselves as they lifted their eyes and raised their voices on the poor lost passer by. The look was serious appealing minatory, perhaps merely conceited, for those good folk of that obscure hamlet felt *they* were distinctly "It." "Thou shalt have no other god but ours, ours is the one and only true god!" Such a gauntlet the godless one had to run on his way to and from the wild and lonely glen. But here (if it is not a mere conceit of mine) was the true sermon and the oldest religion, those of nature and of fact, an eerie, lonely, vast and precipitous ravine, with tree and moss covered slopes that seemed towering to the skies, and far below the tortuous river in cascade pool and rapid, the noise of many waters mingled in one low, sweet, haunting monotone; the trees old and unmolested on those inaccessible slopes and beetling crags; and peering over, as from the leaning tower of Pisa, one felt creepy, uneasy and afraid. There had been, and would be, great avalanches of rock and soil and tree and turf, in one swift burial blent, to be slowly worn and borne away by the eternal stream. How long had this river been cradled here? Earliest recorded history was but of yesterday by comparison: and yet we are so proud of our tiny speck of time, so puffed up with its importance, so dressed in our little brief authority, so prone to petty prejudices and dismal dogmatisms: even the sot is serious and harangues the taproom bar on the life and death issues of the paddock or the football pitch. But here in the wild and lonely glen are no hurry, fret and fever, but the slow and dignified, patient, causal, rational operations of the hand of time. Slowly, naturally, the trees grew; slowly they were clad in rustling ivy; slowly raised those lofty slopes; slowly worn, and wearing still, the channel of the river far below. The water drips and cascades from dank and shaggy places. Great blocks and dykes of trap rock show here and there. At the foot of one huge fragment

of the volcanic ages, in the middle of the glen, the ancient and the modern, the stern and gentle, met in exquisite and harmonious contrast, the one pale primrose of that place and misty day in March. The copious waters gushed and boiled between innumerable and fantastic boulders, and poured in many a linn, that scooped out many a pool, rivalling the famous Falls of Leny in the remoter north. Scrambling back from a precipitous ledge and seeking the smooth velvety knolls without, I suddenly foregathered with a strange being in some convention-defying dress. I am extremely well-bred, and I did not look the least surprised or curious, besides I had been taught to wonder at nothing! But I thought: Is he some harmless out-patient of workhouse or asylum? Closer inspection of the man belied the rimless hat and dungaree suit of the greybeard Sunday-breaker. Here was a sage, with look and voice and mien of command and intelligence. I learned afterwards I had met a famous local geologist. "Why," I said, as I stumbled into view, "this is a huge, a vast place; I came out to look for two friends, but one might miss an army here!" The sage smiled in a quick, pleased way, and asked, "Have you never been up before?" and added some directions which would give me a better view of the glen. Half a mile further up I came to the little "fisher's brig," composed of some crazy woodwork resting on iron girders, which in turn rested on two upended boulders; a most picturesque and, save for the woodwork, a time and vandal-defying structure. The ravine continues, less wide and deep, but how far amid those lonely moors and hills:—

I cannot tell, I never knew,
It may be I shall never know;
For life is short and rivers long,
But rarely we may rove among
Those ivied trees and mossy stones,
So eloquent of old by-gones—
Poor olden ghosts of pensive brow
That haunt the ever-living now,
That list with us the hushing song
The river sings so low and long—
Oh, silent hosts! oh, backward view!
And futures we can only trow.

It was as yet early in the afternoon, and I was very happy and had still some pagan rites to perform. Being yet too cold for bathing in the altogether, I compromised by bathing my feet in the shallows and airing them on the clean grey pebbles. For old memory or pastime or merely to keep my hand in, I tried to light a fire behind a huge and kindly boulder. I struck all my matches but one, and still determined, rearranged the twigs and dried bracken with the utmost care and skill, applied the last match—and succeeded. No, God of heaven, no! The twigs blazed a little and went out. I was quite huffed and humiliated; but philosophy came to my aid, and I was soon gay again, and had a lovely walk to my good friend's house in Dalry, thence over the hill in the dusk, tired, refreshed, recreated. Dalry has many quaint idyllic nooks and walks, and for the more robust and energetic there is a plenitude of hill and moor and glen. I trust some of my Glasgow friends will take the hint and look up this lovely place at the Fair holidays.

ANDREW MILLAR.

The Fourth Age.

VI. FOR WHAT?

THE general advance was marked by morning barrages. If they were not from our sector, they were either on our right or on our left. Infantry men will tell you of the excruciating time experienced during the few minutes previous to going over the top. The activity of the artillery previous to this time is also a great strain; a barrage may and did provoke a counter-barrage from the enemy. But all activity previous to the scheduled time is somewhat similar in nature to that of strewing the decks of the old wooden walls with sand when fighting had not enlisted the service of decadent science. For the student who loves to find the hand of God in everything it is presumed that it is paralyzed at this time. Furthermore, when I was quite raw, and had not been "in action," a peculiar experience thrust itself upon me. Readers of War history in the "high falutin" style would be led to believe, urged, not a little, by that song "Just Before the Battle Mother," that the thoughts of those just about to engage would turn to higher things. I record it here of our battery, that on one occasion the subject, previous to going into action was that of illicit relations with another man's wife. I have no superior nose in this matter, but I set this down, knowing that at the same time as this not very illuminating argument took place, some youthful soldier may have been engaged in prayer. For what evidence we have to the contrary, one may be as efficacious as the other.

A barrage would start from our guns about half-past four—swarms of our aeroplanes would be over the enemy lines observing, and the air would be filled with fury and rumble. As the hour advanced the range would be lifted and the rate of fire slackened. Towards seven or eight o'clock all guns would cease. About nine or ten, the prisoners would come down. They all looked pale, nervous and frightened—having missed death in the advance, they were still uncertain of their fate. From our own men there was no display of hatred towards them; I remember one of them who wanted a khaki tunic so that he could go back to fight his own countrymen. Another, meek, and looking as though he took a plate round at a church or Chapel, showed me a photograph of himself, his wife, and three children. It did not need this to convince me of the utter stupidity of war, even supposing that I had not been nourished by any other reading than *John Bull* or the *Continental Daily Mail*. There were old French peasant women nearer the Front than the editors or owners of either of these two papers, and in the next great war to end war, consoling to us or not, *everybody* will be in it. Shall we touch our hats to science here? Science that is impotent to bring down high prices—science that has almost sold itself bag and baggage to Capitalism—science that brought about ripped and torn bodies to provide operating material at the rear for—science. One would think that the Christian God's eyes would have dropped out with weeping at the spectacle. Science had almost solved the secret of perpetual motion. Given a nation led by Northcliffes and Bottomleys, and decadent science at the helm, the map of humanity can be rolled up and put away.

During one of these mornings we were looking out and around, and we saw a little German chap, very young, going towards the line with an officer and an N.C.O. Evidently he was going to show them a "booby trap" or the location of a mine. "There's a sporty action," cried our Major; "they're going to put him back; he's too young to keep." Of course, God was a sport—made in the image of his maker—our manly Major.

After these morning barrages, there was the advance—over the hill to a new position. Passing the "Guards," there were bodies lying on stretchers. The dust from the traffic had settled on the faces, and only by the blinking of eyelids could we tell whether they were alive or dead. Soldiers walking down—with faces and arms roughly bandaged—they would ask us for water—and water was precious, although the smell of chloride of lime in it made one feel sick. Who could refuse such a request? Then rain

began to fall heavily. We pushed on, and rested by the wayside. I sat down, and in the gutter opposite lay one of our own dead. The water was running up against his head, and running round, lower down, back again into the ditch. I remember it now as a dream—but God the "Sport" does not fit in the scheme of things.

It is a delicate matter to decide whether poets or artists are the greatest liars. Readers no doubt have seen pictures of the Artillery galloping into action—they are not in the least like the real thing. If you fall off your horse, you will be squashed; if you fall off the gun-limber or ammunition-waggon, the same fate awaits you. Probably the enemy has observed you, and sends a welcome over; probably it is raining. To draw in a field almost flat, and shelled at the same time, and then be told that you are stopping there, is about the last stage in the journey downwards in the life of a soldier. From a decent bed to planks and blankets, from this to the icy cold and tropic heat of canvas, and from that to a hole in the ground, is the descent to hell. Brutalization of the mind, torture of the body—through this means your perfect soldier is produced. Nothing matters. Small wonder that many wished for a "Blighty" wound; small wonder that soldiers on leave resented the grinning faces of women and the air of indifference displayed in England—and London in particular, where herding together of crowds has given them the herd-mind, fit material for their herd-minded masters, clerical and capitalistic. But this is only destructive criticism; the reaction to it all is to come. Men who have been forced to holes in the ground have lost their terror of life and death. It follows that the only weapon left to tyrants is that of physical starvation—on a small scale—on a large scale. The booby faces of clerics are not in the picture. Their slobbering tales of hell and judgment may be effective with the aged, but to men who have descended lower than animals—one would pay blackbeetles a compliment by even smiling at their childishness. And the soldier cavemen will be asking: All that for what?

WILLIAM REPTON.

National Secular Society.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

REPERTORY THEATRE, STATION STREET, BIRMINGHAM.

WHIT-SUNDAY, MAY 23, 1920.

Agenda.

1. Minutes of last Conference.
2. Executive's Annual Report.
3. Financial Report.
4. Election of President.
Motion by Bethnal Green, Manchester, and West Ham Branches:—
"That Mr. C. Cohen be re-elected President of the N.S.S."
5. Election of Secretary.
Motion by the Executive:—
"That Miss E. M. Vance be re-elected General Secretary."
6. Election of Treasurer:—
Motion by the Bethnal Green Branch:—
"That Mr. C. G. Quinton be elected Treasurer."
7. Election of Auditor.
Motion by the Executive:—
"That Messrs. H. Theobald and Co. (Incorporated Accountants), be appointed Auditors."
- 8.—Nominations for Executive.
Scotland—Mr. James Neate, nominated by Glasgow Branch.
Wales—Mr. J. T. Lloyd, nominated by Swansea Branch.
N.E. Group—Mr. C. H. Kelf, nominated by Newcastle Branch.
Mr. A. B. Moss, nominated by South Shields Branch.

N.W. Group—Miss Pitcher and Mr. R. H. Rosetti, nominated by Liverpool and Manchester Branches.

Midland Group—Mr. F. E. Willis and Mr. T. G. Dobson, nominated by Birmingham Branch.

South London—Mr. S. Samuels, nominated by South London Branch.

North London—Miss K. B. Kough, nominated by North London Branch.

East London—Mr. H. Silverstein, nominated by Bethnal Green and West Ham Branches.

9. Motions by Manchester Branch :—

(a) "That this Conference strongly protests against the continuance of religious instruction in State-supported schools as an infringement of the principle of religious equality, and demands its abolition in all schools wholly or partly subsidised by the State."

(b) "That the time has now arrived for the National Secular Society to devote special attention to the Secular training of children, and with that end in view, steps should be taken to acquire or maintain suitable schools."

10. Motion by Mr. F. E. Willis :—

"That this Conference notes the frantic attempts made by the various Christian Churches to exert an influence over the Labour bodies throughout the country, and desires to warn those concerned of the danger of closing their eyes to the tactics of those who have hitherto shown themselves the strongest guardians of vested interests and the bitterest opponents of enlightenment and democracy."

11. Motion by South Shields Branch :—

"That this Conference protests against the Poor Law Regulation that in certain cases makes instruction in religious belief a condition of granting outdoor relief for children, and demands that the official regulation be limited to securing the moral and physical welfare of the child."

12. Motion by Glasgow Branch :—

"That the Executive be instructed to consider the advisability of appointing an Organiser at an early date."

13. Motions by Birmingham Branch :—

(a) "That future Annual Conferences of the National Secular Society be held at a sea-side town."

(b) "That a literature propaganda be instituted and the Executive be instructed to have printed, for free distribution, leaflets and pamphlets, the matter for same to be made up of suitable extracts from the works of Freethought writers, past and present."

14. Motion by the Executive :—

"That, bearing in mind the increase in rates and taxes all over the country, this Conference is of opinion that the time has arrived when churches and chapels should no longer be relieved from the payment of rates, thus casting a burden upon the rest of the community; and urges upon Freethinkers to induce their representatives on public bodies to protest against the continuance of this injustice."

15. Motion by Mr. R. H. Rosetti :—

"That this Conference desires to emphasise the moral breakdown of Christianity as evidenced in the European War, and regrets that the various Powers engaged in so disastrous a conflict have not seen their way to agree upon a measure of national disarmament as the only way of preventing similar outbreaks in the future."

16. Motion by Mr. A. B. Moss :—

"That the time has now arrived for the abolition of all religious Oaths in Courts of Law and other institutions, and the substitution of a simple form of affirmation without any enquiry into the religious belief of the affirmer."

17. Motions by W. Heaford :—

(a) "That this Conference considers it desirable that the National Secular Society should be represented at the International Freethought Congress at Prague in September, 1920, and instructs the Executive to appoint one or more of its members to attend for the purpose, not only of conveying to the Freethinkers of Czecho-Slavonia the cordial sympathy of this Society with their work, but of signifying an active participa-

tion in the emancipating labours of the International Freethought Federation at Brussels."

(b) "That the Executive be instructed to draw up from time to time an official statement of the Society's attitude towards the more important developments of public policy, and that steps be taken to obtain due publicity in the public press and kindred and sympathetic organisations."

(c) "That a report of the proceedings of this Conference and of the formal decisions made on the several items in the Agenda be published in "The Freethinker," or, failing that, be communicated by circular to the several branches for the information of the members within three weeks of the date of the Conference."

18. Motion by the Executive :—

"That this Conference while recognising with pleasure the recent developments which have moved in the direction of establishing an equality between the sexes, a principle that has been adopted and advocated by the N.S.S. during the whole of its history, desires to urge upon all Freethinkers the necessity for an active Freethought propaganda among women in order to circumvent the strenuous efforts of the Churches to retain the services of women on behalf of an institution that, more than any other, has consistently made for their subjection and political degradation."

The Conference will sit at the Repertory Theatre. Morning Session, 10.30 to 12.30; afternoon session at 2.30. Delegates will be required to produce their credentials at the doors. Members, the current card of membership. Only members of the Society are entitled to be present. A public meeting will be held at 7 p.m. at the Repertory Theatre. Luncheon for delegates and visitors at the Cobden Hotel, Corporation Street, at 1 p.m. Tickets 3/6 each.

By order of the Executive,

C. COHEN, *President.*

E. M. VANCE, *Secretary.*

Correspondence.

"W. J.'s" THREE "QUESTIONS."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Your correspondent, "W. J.," invites me to comment on his three "questions," which I passed over in the Appendix to *The Parson and the Atheist*. He summarizes them now, but they turn out to be not questions but statements: and I do not see how I can comment on them to any purpose as they simply affirm certain things which are discussed in the book from beginning to end. Take the first :—

"Religion is, in origin, a *mistaken interpretation* of the universe by primitive ignorance." But that is the very contention against which I wrote. It is a statement of the point at issue; not a new argument or a new fact. If anyone persuades himself that he is an Atheist, he is bound to hold that the contrary opinion is believed by ignorant people: that is by "primitive ignorance" in old days; by modern ignorance nowadays. My comment on this contention has all along been that it is over-bold to dub men like Newton, Pascal, Butler, Kelvin, and a host of other intellectual giants of modern times—ignoramuses. I cannot conceive how anyone with the slightest modesty in his composition can be so amazingly arrogant. "W. J." may believe that Plato, St. Paul, and St. Augustine were all ignorant men of a "primitive" sort: but what he has to face are the modern leaders of Theistic opinion all over the world. He affirms, I gather, that they are more stupid than Plato because they have not the excuse of "primitiveness." My only comment on this affirmation is that I cannot imagine how it can be made.

The next: "Christian apologetics are irrelevant to the point that Christianity is *untrue*." Certainly some are, as they don't profess to deal with that subject. But a great many apologetics deal with the particular charge directly. Christians think them relevant and unanswerable: non-Christians think them irrelevant. But nearly the whole discussion in your columns is concerned with this issue. "W. J." simply re-states the position which the other side deny. There is no fresh argument to discuss.

As to the third point or "question" concerning Mr. Cohen's article on p. 69, I have not the book by me just now, but will look up the passage and write again.

I hope some of your readers will procure a little book called *The Mystery of Pain*, by James Hinton, published by Kegan Paul. Any who wish for a rare intellectual treat should ask for *Man and his Dwelling-place*, by the same very vigorous thinker: not an ignoramus at all!—published by Smith Elder & Co.

E. LYTELTON.

BOOKS IN LIBRARIES.

SIR,—There is one way of bringing Freethought works before readers which seems to be neglected at present. The librarians of libraries (especially Municipal ones supported by the rates) have often, at my instigation, purchased Freethought works for circulation amongst their readers. Workers who reside in districts where there are Public Libraries should write to, or better still interview, the Librarians, asking them to purchase the works of Ingersoll, Holyoake, Foote, yourself, etc.

Personally, I have found my suggestions not tabooed, as would perhaps be anticipated, but, on the other hand, have resulted in many Freethought works being brought before and read by the public, who would otherwise have never heard of them. In most public libraries it is open to readers to suggest works to the librarians that they think are worth adding to the libraries; and this is a grand opportunity, at present much missed by our workers I believe, of getting our books purchased and placed before the public. In one Library alone I have been the means of introducing at least fifty Freethought works in this manner.

H. RICHARD WRIGHT.

SPIRITUALISM AND SIR OLIVER.

SIR,—I know "comparisons are odious," but I should like to point out, lest we forget, that Michael Faraday, who worked in the same realm of science as Sir Oliver, whose eyes were the first that ever looked on electro-magnetic rotation, who was the first to extract dyes from coal-tar, listen to him, in 1853 he writes:—

I have not been at work except in turning the tables on the table turners; what a weak, credulous, incredulous, unbelieving, superstitious, bold, frightened; what a ridiculous world ours is: how full of inconstancies, contradictions, and absurdities it is; I declare that taking the average of many minds that have recently come before me (and apart from that spirit which God has placed in each) and accepting for a moment that average as a standard, I should far prefer the obedience, affection, and instinct of a dog before it.

And Michael was a Christian of the Sandemanean variety.

JOHN F. AUST.

KINDNESS OR FORCE.

SIR,—Mr. Rona Mayo objects to my preference for kindness to violence. Can he cite one single case of any good being achieved by violence? It is useless to talk of the Russian Revolution until the actual facts are known. Many people assert and believe that the Russian workers are now undergoing greater deprivation and tyranny than they did under their former rulers. If a Republic were set up by violence in Ireland, I presume the new rulers there would use violence to maintain their power. If so, they have no logical ground of complaint against the present rulers for using violence to maintain *their* power.

We have recently had a perfect orgy of violence in Europe. Can anybody assert that any good has been achieved thereby? Has it not rather "put back the clock of progress at least fifty years" as stated by "Ignotus" in his "Sheep and Socialists"?

G. O. WARREN.

ADVERTISING IN THE FREETHINKER.

SIR,—When giving suggestions as to how to advance the interests of the dear old paper, you seem to miss one very

important method. I refer to advertising in your columns, and giving support to those who do this. It should be better known that the *Freethinker* is an astonishingly good medium to advertise in. I am sure there must be Atheists in every business, and it is surprising they should advertise in mostly any paper save their very own.

It is my intention to develop a Mail Order Department, and an advertisement of ours may be offered regularly every week in future.

D. MACCONNELL.

[We have often felt surprised that Freethinkers are not more alive to the value of a paper such as the *Freethinker* as an advertising medium. The *Freethinker* is read with a *personal* interest, and that alone has a decided commercial value.—ED.]

ON DEATH.

I have often thought upon death, and I find it the least of all evils. All that which is past is as a dream; and he that hopes or depends upon time coming, dreams waking. So much of our life as we have discovered is already dead; and all those hours which we share, even from the breasts of our mothers, until we return to our grandmother the earth, are part of our dying days, whereof even this is one, and those that succeed are of the same nature, for we die daily; and as others have given place to us, so we must in the end give way to others. Physicians in the name of death include all sorrow, anguish, disease, calamity, or whatsoever can fall in the life of man, either grievous or unwelcome. But these things are familiar unto us, and we suffer them every hour; therefore we die daily, and I am older since I affirmed it. I know many wise men that fear to die; for the change is bitter, and flesh would refuse to prove it: besides the expectation brings terror, and that exceeds the evil. But I do not believe that any man fears to be dead, but only the stroke of death.—*Lord Bacon*.

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, Right Hon. John M. Robertson, "Intellectual Morals."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Stratford Engineers' Institute, 167 Romford Road, E.): 7, Mr. H. Spence, B.Sc., "The Story of Creation."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 6.15, Mr. E. Burke, A Lecture.

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

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Mr. Samuels; 3.15, Messrs. Dales, Ratcliffe, and Baker. Every Wednesday, 6.30, Mr. Saphin.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

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