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Views and Opinions.

Secular Education.

Principles with politicians are almost as common as grapes on thistles. Living intellectually from hand to mouth, great questions and fundamental issues are viewed from the standpoint of immediate loss or gain rather than from that of clear conviction or far-reaching principle. Occasionally a man of a different stamp shows up in the political world, but he is almost invariably a failure. And the failure may be more of a compliment than it appears. Bearing this in mind, it is not surprising that the Government should contemplate another attempt at a settlement of the question of religion in the schools—and, as usual, on the wrong lines. In this respect the party in power are no better and no worse than preceding Governments. Many have tried, and all have failed. And yet the solution of the problem has been in sight all the time. All that was needed was courage and principle. The justice of what is known as Secular Education is very generally admitted. Leading politicians have, time after time, publicly stated it to be the only logical and just policy—and have then turned their backs upon it, sacrificing the permanent interests of the nation to the clamour of sects and the fear of an adverse vote. In a quite respectable manner we shudder at the stories of the wicked heathens of antiquity who sacrificed the bodies of their children to their gods. But with far less excuse we sacrifice the minds of our own children to the fetish of sect, and gloss over the injustice and the cruelty with the name of religious duty.

* * *

Putting Back the Clock.

Undeterred by previous failures, the Government is attempting yet another "deal" with the Churches. Our dual system of education gives us two classes of schools. There are those that belong to the State, and there are those that belong to the Churches and Chapels. The former are, of course, wholly supported by the nation. The latter draw the major part of their revenues from the State, and supply the buildings themselves. Now Mr. Fisher proposes that the State shall—in order to get a unified system of education—take over the control of these schools, and in return give what is known as definite and denominational religious instruction (a quite illogical distinction, since all religion is definite and

denominational) either through the teachers or by some system of "right of entry." The main reason for this appears to be that, if the State were to supply all the required schools, it would cost about thirty millions, and we cannot afford it. We can afford seven millions a day for war; we can increase our military expenditure five-fold, even on a peace footing; but we cannot afford five days of war cost in order to put the education of the country on a sound footing. And yet it is just possible that a little greater readiness to make sacrifices for the cause of education might make it less necessary to make sacrifices for the purpose of waging war. Yet for the latter purpose no sacrifice is too great; when it comes to promoting the cause of education, we prefer to save our pockets, and hand over the children to the care of the priest.

* * *

Parents and Public Opinion.

In some quarters it is suggested that the Government will not proceed with its attempt when it sees how much opposition it is likely to arouse. Personally, we hope that will not be the case. The cause of real progress will be best furthered by the Government doing its best to satisfy its pious supporters, and so driving some people to consider the whole question from the standpoint of justice. For, after all, parents have no real interest in taking advantage of the innocence and ignorance of their own children. When they do so, it is only because they have relied on the guidance of certain self-elected guides; and the more this question is brought before the notice of the public, the greater the number who will come to see, not alone the injustice of compelling by law everyone in the country to help to maintain a system of religion with which they disagree, but who will also perceive that they are doing their children an ill service in forcing upon them as true doctrines that are most probably altogether false. And there are really more people in favour of the policy of Secular Education than the average politician is inclined to believe. The largest assemblage of working men in this country, the Trades Union Congress, year after year passed an overwhelming vote in favour of Secular Education. And the rest of the people have never had the question put squarely before them. If that were done, we feel sure that the response would cause some folk to open their eyes. Even some of our Labour leaders might then find it pay them to be quite open on the subject.

* * *

Religion and the State.

As it is, and whether Mr. Fisher follows up his proposals or not, the question is likely to give rise to an even larger issue than that of Secular Education. The question that is looming behind is that of the relation of religion to the modern State. In the first place, as we repeatedly warned the readers of this journal, the Government has been for some time conducting a number of back-stair intrigues with representatives of the various Churches, with the desire of arriving at some sort of agreement between them, and it is assumed that if they

agree no one else matters. (We admit that the Christian *ought* to live in a world by himself, the difficulty is at present to persuade him that this is not the case.) Mr. Fisher's proposal is the first fruit of that agreement. The second is that some of the leading Nonconformists, having sold the principle of the independence of religion from State patronage all along, are now prepared to still further demonstrate their lack of principle by going in for a still closer alliance of religion with the State. Thus, at the Congregational Union the other day, the Rev. Dr. Garvie hoped that Secular Education would not be the last word (it should be the last and only word where Nonconformists are concerned) in education, and hoped that Nonconformists would not be so suspicious of alliance with the State. He reminded his hearers that the Pilgrim Fathers aimed at founding a State in which religion should be the dominant factor, and that is evidently Dr. Garvie's ideal to-day. And when we bear in mind the declaration of the Archbishop of York, cited in our last week's issue, that the Church would never be content until the local education authorities were more concerned with religious than with Secular Education, it is quite evident that if we are going to establish the State on anything like a basis of justice, we shall have to be ready to face the whole question of the place of religion therein. And if the revival of the education controversy does that it will be a veritable blessing in disguise. It is always good when men and women are driven to reconsider their actions and their conclusions in the light of first principles. For, in the long run, consistent sanity in action is the product of persistent sanity in thinking. The wise man may not be always just; the fool never is.

* * *

A Question of Principle.

After all, there are only three positions with any pretence to reason. The one is that the Church shall rule the State; the second is that the State shall rule the Church; and the third that the State shall stand apart from all religion, leaving that to whoever is concerned with it. The condemnation of the first two methods is writ large wherever one turns. Both spell persecution, and both are ultimately ineffective against the steady development of thought. For neither can tolerate diversity of opinion in a sphere where teaching must be authoritative or nothing. We are consequently left with the third as the only permanently possible one. And it is the one which would receive the support of all Nonconformists if they were animated by any principle in their opposition to the State Church. But they are not. Dr. Garvie was quite correct when he said that the Pilgrim Fathers were inspired by the ideal of founding a State in which religion should be a dominant factor. But the Pilgrim Fathers did not really believe in the separation of religion from the State. What they were really aiming at was to prevent the State teaching a religion in which they did not believe. When the opportunity offered, they showed themselves as intolerant as the Episcopalians, and their descendants have never since lacked intolerance in dealing with their religious opponents. If the Nonconformists really believed in the State standing aloof from religion they would see that this must hold as well as of religion in the school as it does of religion in the Church of the adult. But they have never, with rare exceptions, taken this position. In 1870, when the Education Act became law, they sold all principle in order to get a form of religion with which they agreed, taught at the public expense. And since then they have betrayed no higher conception of principle in the matter. Their outcry to-day is not against the State teaching any religion, but only against it teaching a religion with which they disagree.

A Call to Action.

But whether the Government pushes its proposals to an issue or not, we are quite certain that their having made the attempt to fasten still tighter the tentacles of the Church round the nation's schools may become the occasion for concentrating attention on the need for clearing the clergy out of the schools, once for all. Free-thinkers all over the country can see that the matter is brought forward on all possible occasions; they can keep it to the front in all their trade and Labour organizations; they can make the justice of our position clear in letters to the press. Above all, they can make it a rule to at once withdraw their children from religious instruction in all schools. If they not only do this, but can induce all who do not, for various reasons, believe in the State teaching religion, the number of those who are opposed to the present iniquitous system would be found large enough to make the continuance of the system ridiculous. It is simply monstrous that year after year the people of this country should permit education to be obstructed in the interest of a number of religious sects whose only concern is to provide patrons for themselves. The real aim of the Churches is well expressed by the Archbishop of York. The authorities are to be more concerned with turning the children out good Christians than good citizens. And the reply to that insolence is that the State shall have no hand or part in the debauching of the child mind, but shall concentrate on and confine its attention to what is its real concern—that of turning out from its schools boys and girls whose minds and bodies shall have been so trained as to enable them to play an intelligent and useful part in social life.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Pulpit Arrogance.

THE Rev. R. F. Horton, M.A., D.D., has held the pastorate of the Lyndhurst Road Congregational Church, Hampstead, for the space of forty years. He began his ministry in the glamour of a remarkably brilliant scholastic career at Oxford, and for some years his sermons were strongly tinged with modern Biblical criticism. In 1887 he startled the Nonconformist orthodox camp by the publication of an advanced work on the Inspiration of the Bible. Endowed with a highly emotional temperament, however, the scholar gradually disappeared, submerged in a sea of devout feelings. There is in his character a significant and interesting combination of humility and egotism. The egotism is often in full evidence. It will be remembered how he grossly misrepresented Bois-Raymond, Vogt, Buchner, and Baar, "perhaps four of the greatest men of science in the nineteenth century in Germany," when he audaciously asserted that they came to "the recognition of spirit as the author of consciousness," which was not true of one of them, and atrociously false of Buchner and Vogt. His attack on Professor Haeckel was disgracefully ferocious. He said that "men who have no belief in God and immortality sink to the level of the brutes," and then charged Haeckel with being "anxious to sweep us into this barbarism under the name of progress." He asserted that in those who accept Haeckel's theories "the soul is shrunk, the mind is warped, the very body must carry its marks of degradation." Some dozen years ago he fell foul of some young Congregational ministers who did not share his views on Christ, and about the same time he violently denounced Mr. R. Roberts, of Bradford, because he had the audacity, though no longer in charge of any recognized Church, to use, or allow to be used, the title "Rev."

It is with Dr. Horton's unjust treatment of science generally, and of Darwinism in particular, that the present article is more immediately concerned. On the first Sunday in the current month he chose as the subject of his Monthly Lecture the question, "Can men love one another?" He stated the problem thus:—

How can we get men to love one another? How can the city of life be built upon the roots of love? This question has become peculiarly pressing at the present moment, because we are living in days of disorder and disintegration, days also in which the enmity and the revenge and the bitterness still survive after the War. The question comes to us—and some men grow almost cynical in their treatment of it—are men capable even of loving? Is it conceivable that nations should ever love one another?.....Must there not always be the scorn and dislike which characterize the relations of classes? And, above all, in industry and in commerce, is it conceivable that men would ever cease to be rivals, would pass from the attitude of competition into the attitude of co-operation? Is it conceivable that employers and employed would ever realize a common interest and seek each other's good rather than their own? "Is it not necessary," men say cynically, "that this world should consist of strife, rivalry, enmity—that love is impossible?".....There is certainly something in the attitude of men to one another that is most disconcerting, and never was it more noticeable than to-day. The fund of hatred in the human heart seems incalculable, and if a pessimist wishes to make out a case he has abundant material to work upon.

Observe that the problem is thus stated by an ordained servant of the so-called reigning Christ, and the statement, dreadfully humiliating though it ought to be to the minister of an omnipotent Saviour, is presented as the justification of a virulent assault upon Spencer's synthetic philosophy and Darwinism. These two, which are really but one, have dominated human thought for the last sixty years, and they have persistently and successfully stood in the way of the triumph of the Cross. Think of it. The implied admission of this ambassador of the crucified, risen, and glorified Redeemer is that for the last sixty years Herbert Spencer and Charles Darwin have been more than a match for his Divine Master. This famous Hampstead pastor expresses his conviction, as he has a perfect right to do, that the Spencerian and Darwinian conception of the world "is enough to ruin man"; and cherishing this conviction concerning it he is fully entitled to repudiate it as "a ruinous doctrine." There was a time when I vehemently condemned and rejected it myself for the same reason. But Dr. Horton has not even the shadow of a right to give his congregation a woefully distorted and utterly misleading version of it, and then angrily fling it overboard, in the name of science. According to the lecture under review, which is published in the *Christian World Pulpit* for May 12, the synthetic philosophy, if put into practice, "would produce the pitiable chaos and ruin of modern life"; and precisely the same result would follow the full acceptance of Darwinism. He seriously suggests to us that there is quite enough in this Atheistic conception of the universe "to account for the War, for our class enmities, and for our personal selfishness." He has the temerity coolly to assure us that "for the last sixty years biology and political economy have worked hand in hand to convince the intelligence of mankind that the fundamental principle of life upon earth is a ceaseless struggle for existence, for survival—a struggle between species and species, a struggle between individual and individual." Weighted with this deplorable misconception he oracularly declares:—

The Darwinian theory of Nature no longer holds the field. It is recognized now as a very partial statement arrived at by the undue emphasis of a certain set of

facts. It is well admitted now by scientific men and by other thinkers that so large a part of the field of fact has been overlooked in the Darwinian stress of thought that practically it is a misstatement, a misconception. The nightmare of Darwinism is passing away.

This extract reminds me of an incident that occurred more than thirty years ago. A literary critic, who was not in the habit of going to church, related how his wife persuaded him to accompany her, one Sunday evening, to hear the vicar of the parish. It so happened that, on that occasion, the sermon was a profoundly ignorant attack on the works of Herbert Spencer, and my friend was thoroughly disgusted. As my friend was proceeding to the station next morning, the vicar saw him, crossed the street to him, shook him cordially by the hand, and heartily congratulated him on his attendance at church the previous evening. My friend said: "Since you have referred to the matter, will you pardon me if I ask you a question?" "Certainly," replied the vicar. "Well, now, have you read the works of Herbert Spencer?" "No; I have not read them, nor do I intend ever to read such wicked productions." My friend's last retort was, "Do you really think it is right to denounce books you have never read?" "Good morning to you." One feels inclined to ask Dr. Horton if he has deliberately and without prejudice read and examined Darwin's works, for therein is to be found the most effective refutation of the reverend gentleman's erroneous account of their teaching. It is perfectly true that the struggle for existence is not the only factor in the evolution and variation of species; but curiously enough, Darwin never said that it is. On the contrary, he states distinctly that cruel and relentless strife is not Nature's law, but consolidation of interest and mutual aid. Prince Kropotkin, who is an Atheist and Materialist, published a large volume, eighteen years ago, entitled *Mutual Aid*, in which he generously admits that Darwin never regarded the bitter struggle for the means of existence "among animals belonging to the same species" as the only feature, and seldom even "as the dominant characteristic of struggle for life, and the main factor of evolution" (vii.). Kropotkin informs us that at a Russian Congress of Naturalists in January, 1880, the celebrated zoologist, Professor Kessler, delivered a lecture in which he maintained that "beside the law of Mutual Struggle there is in Nature the law of Mutual Aid, which, for the success of the struggle for life, and especially for the progressive evolution of species, is far more important than the law of mutual contest" (x.). Then, on the same introductory page, the Prince significantly adds:—

This suggestion—which was, in reality nothing but a further development of the ideas expressed by Darwin in the *Descent of Man*—seemed to be so correct and of so great an importance, that since I became acquainted with it in 1883, I began to collect materials for further developing the idea, which Kessler had only cursorily sketched in his lecture, but had not lived to develop.

The principle of mutual aid among animals is most clearly laid down by Darwin, and not only formally laid down, but duly emphasized as of vital importance. "It is certain," he observes, "that associated animals have a feeling of love for each other, which is not felt by non-social adult animals" (*The Descent of Man*, p. 155). Of the practical exemplification of the love among animals he supplies numerous most interesting examples. As Professor Delage says: "Feelings of sympathy and pity are sometimes expressed very clearly by animals. Darwin states that monkeys, male and female, always adopt the orphaned progeny of their kindred and care for them very solicitously, and that ravens and pelicans have been known to feed their blind fellows (*Theories of Evolution*, p. 344). (To be concluded.) J. T. LLOYD.

Mr. Facing-Both-Ways.

II.

Not for delections sweet,
Not the cushion and the slipper, not the peaceful and the
studious,
Not the riches safe and palling, not for us the tame
enjoyment,

Pioneers! O Pioneers! —Walt Whitman.

MR. WELLS is an extraordinary Rationalist, for he has been guilty of some very questionable posturing in matters of religion. Recall his tenderness towards the Christian superstition, and then call to mind his jibes and sneers at unbelievers who have progressed beyond the Theism which he professes. His jibes at Atheists and Agnostics have always been bitter, but they are more venomous since he found "God," or "God" found him. Maybe, they found each other. And the mutual recognition of two such notoriety has been an event of newspaper importance. For, like so many folk in similar condition, Mr. Wells has proceeded to make himself a public nuisance. One of his pastimes, since his conversion, has been the hurling of insults at his former associates, and, curiously, his jibes have taken the familiar form of the stock arguments of Christian Evidence lecturers. Presumably, Mr. Wells' conversion has depressed his levity, for the process reminds us of how Edward Gibbon, the historian, learnt Greek "at the cost of many tears and not a little blood."

As a popular novelist, Mr. Wells has a numerous following, not so large as that of Miss Ethel Dell, or the late lamented Mr. Charles Garvice, but still respectable in point of numbers. Therefore, it would be unwise to ignore him altogether. What needs comment is his rehashing of the stale objections which have done so much service in countless pulpits, particularly when he says, in *God the Invisible King* that:—

Without God the service of man is no better than a hobby or a sentimentalism or an hypocrisy in the undisciplined prison of the mortal life.

Since this fatuous utterance, Mr. Wells has gone out of his way to taunt Freethinkers with their lack of philanthropic work, and with having no charitable and educational institutions in connection with their movement. He added, further, that the "professed Atheists and Agnostics" he has known "have been careful and comfortable people—and just a little self-righteous." Nor is this a passing phase with Mr. Wells, for in his *Mankind in the Making*, written nearly twenty years before, he made the amazing statement that the man most likely to insist on children, even his own children, being taught religion was the "downright Atheist." And then he went on with exquisite courtesy to describe the "downright Atheist" as:—

the man who believes sensual pleasure is all that there is of pleasure, and virtue no more than a hood to check the impetuosity of youth until discretion is acquired, the man who believes there is nothing else in the world but hard material fact, and who has as much respect for truth and religion as he has for stable manure.

Why does Mr. Wells write in this strain? Is it to curry favour with Christians? Or is it to express his animosity upon men more candid and courageous than himself? Such remarks show clearly that Mr. Wells knows very little of the movement with which he was for a few months allied.

Freethought is not associated with wealthy capitalists. Its members are comparatively few and scattered, and it has no rich endowments to lessen the current cost of a national propaganda. Still, the Freethought Party does manage to relieve its necessitous members, and the Freethinkers' Benevolent Fund is well supported, and is,

probably, the only fund of its kind which is administered without a farthing of expense. Until a short time ago it was not possible to bequeath money for Freethought purposes with any real prospect of the trust being carried into effect, as it was in the power of the next-of-kin to invalidate the legacy on the ground that it was illegal. The celebrated Bowman Case decisions have altered this, but Freethought was robbed heavily before this memorable legal victory.

Let Mr. Wells ponder the case of Stephen Girard, the famous American Freethinker. At his death he left large bequests to charities, the principal being a munificent endowment of an orphanage. By express provision in his will, no clergyman was to have any connection with the college, or even to be admitted as a visitor; but the staff of the institution was required to instruct the pupils in secular morality, and leave them to adopt their own religious opinions. This will has been most shamefully perverted, for the officials are all Christians, and, in order to keep to the letter of the law, only laymen are so employed. In this instance the "hypocrisy" does not appear to be on the side of the Freethinker.

Does Mr. Wells know that Florence Nightingale, "the lady with the lamp," who ministered to thousands of soldiers in the Crimea, was a heretic? Has Mr. Wells never heard of Walt Whitman, the infidel, who spent four years of his life in attending the war-hospitals during the American Civil War, and who wrecked his superb constitution by his untiring devotion to his fellows? And what of Robert Owen, who not only built the first infant schools, and improved the dwellings of his work-people, but sought to construct the ideal society of the future? Mr. Wells ought to have heard of University College School, which was founded by Freethinkers to further the principles of secular education. Even the activities of Mr. H. S. Salt, and the Humanitarian League, which did so much magnificent work in so many humanistic directions for a quarter of a century, should be sufficient to silence Mr. Wells in his campaign of insult and calumny.

Shelley, the Atheist poet, was a thorough humanitarian. To help the needy and to relieve the sick seemed to him a simple duty, which he carried out cheerfully. He inquired personally into the circumstances of his charities, visited the sick in their homes, and kept a list of poor persons whom he assisted. At Marlow he contracted acute ophthalmia whilst visiting the afflicted lace-makers in their cottages. So practical was Shelley that he even went to the length of attending a London hospital in order to acquire medical knowledge that should prove of service to the sick he visited. Is this an example of Freethought "sentimentalism" or "hypocrisy"?

Mr. Wells is guilty of the worst form of cant. As a Socialist, he ought to know that charity is very good in its way, but what the world wants is justice. If the world were run on fair and reasonable lines, there would be no occasion for philanthropy. If, however, belief in "god" is necessary to make men humanitarians, how comes it that the votes of the god-believing bishops in the House of Lords is a shameful record? Scores of measures for the bettering of the condition of the workers have been opposed by these men. Nothing but self-interest excites their action. None of these spiritual lords voted for the abolition of the flogging of women in prison, or for the abolition of the lash in the Army and Navy. But Mr. Wells never accused the Bishops of "hypocrisy," nor compared them to "stable manure." By attempting to discredit Rationalism, he shields, in a measure, his newly-found "god" from the searchlights of criticism.

Like Mr. Facing-both-Ways, Mr. Wells has a taste for taking things easily. He likes to patronize new ideas without losing the real advantages arising from friendliness towards the old ones. He prefers to enter the arena when the fighting is nearly over, and to share in the victories won by better men than himself. Kid-glove reformers like Mr. Wells have never been wanting when all danger is over. Their function is to insult the fighters, and to enjoy the fruits of victory. It is doubtful, however, if such camp-followers are ever admired by the real fighters on either side.

MIMNERMUS.

Prehistoric Christianity.

Under the title "Prehistoric Christianity," I propose to briefly consider the theory, put forward by Ernest Unterman in "The World's Revolutions," that the earliest Christians were in reality engaged in a revolutionary movement for the economic emancipation of the labouring classes. A movement by which they were also to bring about better social conditions for all classes.

In the early part of the chapter on "The Christian Proletariat," Unterman discusses the preparation for a national revolution on the part of the Jews, in order to show that the Christian movement was an expansion and internationalisation of the Jewish movement.

That working-class movements took place within the Jewish nation, just as they took place within other ancient nations, I do not wish to dispute. But why are we informed that "the ancestral traditions of the Jews were inseparably connected with the worship of one god. It was this that distinguished them from all the nations of antiquity"? (pp. 57-58). Surely Unterman is aware that there is no justification for the theory that the Jews went through a special religious evolution, very superior to that of all other ancient nations. We get too much of this pandering to current religious prejudices from Marxians who so often write as if they had come to put everybody right on all matters sociological.

However, the following, from Unterman's "The World's Revolutions," will present the reader with an idea of the theory concerning the Christian revolutionary movement:

"It was into this atmosphere full of revolutionary forebodings that Jesus, the son of Joseph of Nazareth, a direct descendant of David, was born. The boy grew up in the traditions of his people. He was wide-awake and took a special interest in the study of the history of his people.

Through his family connections he came into close touch with men and women who knew the secrets of the priesthood. He heard and saw many things which opened his eyes about the methods by which the priests hoodwinked the people. He learned many of the tricks which the ignorant regarded as the expression of some occult power. And his deeply religious and generous mind became convinced that a true god must be greater than the god of the Jews.

When he grew older he became acquainted with the secret revolutionary organizations in Palestine. The ideas of the international revolution had been gradually disseminated from friend to friend by Jews who had been in touch with the proletariat in

Italy. Jesus, the son of a carpenter, and himself working at this trade, fell readily in with those ideas. His whole heart was with his class, and his fiery soul was soon aglow with enthusiasm and zeal to establish an international brotherhood of the working-class which should create the conditions for peace on earth and good-will to all men regardless of classes and nationalities." (pp. 62-63).

"Jesus was the chosen head of the propaganda committee, which consisted of twelve organizers, besides him, one for each Jewish tribe. The remainder of the organization remained under cover, but the chairman of the locals were known to the initiated, who had to identify themselves by a secret password and sign." (p. 68).

"In the scriptural account the twelve tribal organizers appear as the disciples of Jesus, who is supposed to have picked them up by chance and selected them for this work on his own intuitional recognition of their worth. But it is sufficient to point out that Jesus, with his family connections and knowledge of religious secrets, could have found many men of the gens of Aaron to assist him, if it had simply been a question of a new religion. Instead, his so-called disciples were men of the working-class, without any religious training evidently one for each tribe." (pp. 68-69).

This is myth-making with a vengeance. What a beautiful Sunday School lesson, and from a Marxian too! Mr. Unterman forms a conception of what he thinks the revolutionary Jesus must have been, and then proceeds to outline the doings of his Jesus, by selecting from the New Testament such incidental items as suit his purpose. A method which is on a par with that of the Unitarian who believes Jesus to have been an ideal man and proceeds to write his biography, by selecting the good and rejecting the bad portions of the New Testament, which are supposed to refer to the life and sayings of Jesus.

The fact that, in the New Testament, there is accumulated around the name Jesus more material of a mythological than of a reliable nature is ignored by both alike.

No objection can be made to an endeavour to trace in history a movement which the student believes did possibly take place; but, why try to engraft the movement, if it should be proved to have been historic, on the name "Jesus" which in the Christian documents stands for more myth than reality. There is nothing to be gained by trying to affiliate the modern proletarian movement with the mythic name "Jesus," which has been so much manipulated, in the interests of religious dogma, by the historic Christian churches—there is much to be lost.

It is, of course, quite probable that the Prehistoric Christian sects (if one may call them such), which ultimately emerged into the light of history as the Christian Church, were not entirely of a religious nature. They consisted very largely of members of the poorer class; and, indeed, one sect carried the name of "the poor."

As J. M. Robertson says:—"the first properly historical as distinct from the 'scriptural' notices of the Church at Jerusalem tell of a quasi-Christian sect there, known as Ebionites, or Ebionim, a Hebrew word which signified simply 'the poor.'" (Short History of Christianity, p. 6).

This gives some justification for the belief that the earliest sects of the Christian movement were partly political and economic, especially when we remember that the Messianic hope was at one time political as much as religious, if not more so. (See Robertson, as above, p. 10; also, "The Temple Dictionary of the Bible," art. "Messiah.")

There is also the fact that so many historians—I need only mention—J. M. Robertson, Lecky, and Mosheim—agree that, when the early Christian sects became more and more prominent, they were looked upon with suspicion by the Roman authorities, not on religious but on political grounds.

But, I am not so much concerned with proving that the prehistoric Christians were revolutionary proletarians, as with pointing out the danger of Religion to a movement which seeks to reorganise society.

There seems little room for doubt that the earliest sects, which ultimately became swallowed up by the historic Christian Church, were largely religious. A fact admitted by Unterman, when he says: "If, in their aims and agitation, they could have laid more stress on the economic and political features and less on the religious ones, the class-character of their movement and its democratic and communistic spirit might have lived unscathed through it all" ("The World's Revolutions," p. 75).

If the obscure Christians were working-class reformers, it seems evident that they soon became overladen with myth, mysticism, and religious fanaticism; and, if they met under cover of secret religious societies for the purpose of discussing their political propaganda, and avoiding the arm of the State, their religion did much to bring about their doom.

The majority of the poor and lowly would find it much more easy to give themselves up to religious emotionalism, and mystic ceremonies, than to work out a plan of propaganda for social reform.

Consequently, religious doctrines would become more and more important, and the way would be paved for the rich members of society to enter the Christian movement, and manipulate its religious side, until its proletarian social aspirations were effectually effaced.

As Christianity emerged into historic significance, wealth and power gradually came to work hand in hand. "Emperor Constantine realized this in the year 312, six years after his accession to the throne. With great skill he availed himself of the schisms between the Christians to win the wealthy and influential priests to his side, and thus to get control of the entire organisation." (Unterman, "The World's Revolutions," p. 77.)

It seems clear, therefore, that if Christianity prior to what is known as historic Christianity, were a revolutionary movement for the social betterment of the masses, the outstanding lesson is, that religion is fatal to social improvement, unless kept in subjection. A lesson for many modern labour leaders.

Thus is Freethought propaganda justified. Christian myth, doctrine, and history must still be criticised.

E. EGERTON STAFFORD.

Acid Drops.

It is quite evident that the Churches are resolved to capture the social movements if it is at all possible. The various Churches are being drawn closer together in view of the common danger of a democracy growing up apart from their control, and huge sums of money are being spent on literature of a propagandist character. Every week brings us numerous illustrations of this, and it should make those who are really seriously and intelligently interested in social questions think a little. For when it is a matter of seeing that the people have enough religion, money is always forthcoming. Whatever may be the house shortage, there must be no shortage in religion. The concern of certain people that religion shall be forthcoming is in itself a lesson in sociology, if they would only read it aright.

One booklet that has reached us lately is *The Christian Industrial Fellowship*, in which, along with lamentations concerning the hostility of Trades Unions to the Churches, there are made claims so extravagant that they almost defy treatment. The Church is the friend of the people, they never apparently had any other friend, and all the good that has been done is due to the Church. The curious thing is that, with a Church so full of concern for the welfare of the people, there should ever have grown up the evils it professes to have abolished, or so widespread an opinion to the contrary should ever have gained ground. It is curious, too, that these claims are mostly concerned with long-ago events, about which the majority of people have very little reliable information, and concerning which the Churches have helped to popularize wholly misleading accounts. Thus we are told that the Church, in the person of Simon Langton, fought for Magna Charta, "which established the rights of the common people." Magna Charta did nothing of the kind. It gave feudalism a legal status, which it never had before. The barons had no more concern for the rights of the common people than they had for those of the Chinese Empire. And when the Church fought the King, it was not on behalf of the people, but on behalf of their own ecclesiastical and feudal rights. We defy anyone to prove to the contrary. That the opposite opinion is circulated among working-class readers is evidence of the dependence that is placed on their not knowing any better.

Impudence is a marked ecclesiastical trait, and it comes out very strongly in such claims as the Church "set its face against serfdom" (when it held on to its privileges long after they had been abandoned by others), that the Church revived education (when it stamped out the education of the old world, and left the people without education until the Government was forced to take it in hand), and, lastly, in citing "that sturdy champion of the working classes, John Ball" (when it was the Church itself which brought his revolt to ruin). We can only repeat that those responsible for the production of this type of literature must have a great confidence in the want of knowledge of those who read it. As a matter of fact, tyranny has never had a more obedient and useful servant than the Christian Church. And it is surely significant that every revolt, from the days of John Ball down to the Russian revolution, has always felt that it had to break the power of the Church if the people were to be really freed.

The Bishop of Barking declares that people have too much leisure, and pursue pleasure too vigorously. Perhaps the reverend gentleman sighs for the "good old times" when people had little leisure, and were compelled to worship the Man of Sorrows whether they liked it or not.

Father Bernard Vaughan complains that we are not English enough. He need not press the matter too closely. Jesus Christ and his mamma were not very English; and Papa, at Rome, is an Italian.

Roman Catholics are past masters in the use of press propaganda. A letter in the papers, concerning a Joan of

If thou derive pleasure from the good thou hast done, and be grieved for the evil which thou hast committed, thou art a true believer.—Mohammed.

Arc pageant, suggested that it would afford "an opportunity for spectators to show honour to our gallant Ally in the person of her great woman-warrior and saint." There is no mention that Joan of Arc was burnt to death as a "sorceress" with the connivance of the Great Lying Church; nor that a tribute to a Catholic "saint" is not necessarily a tribute to Republican France.

At Willesden Court a witness pleasantly said, "I had to use my walking-stick on the prisoner to calm him." It reminds us of the infliction of the ten plagues on the unhappy Egyptians in order to "calm" old Pharaoh.

The clergy in North-East Yorkshire have been praying for fine weather as the continued rain is threatening injury to the crops. As usual, they waited for the weather to be near a change before attempting the experiment. Now we suggest that every January the clergy should offer up a prayer for the kind of weather they want during the whole of the year. The Lord would then know how to arrange things. But it must be very annoying when he has arranged for a spell of wet or dry to revive North-East Yorkshire, or from Stoke cum Pogis that the weather that is being sent is not the sort that is wanted.

One hundred and forty-two churches and chapels in Birmingham have signed a protest against games being permitted in the parks on Sunday. That is not surprising. No man in business likes to see opposition firms open out, although no man in business would have the impudence to demand that the other man should be prevented opening. But then, business men are not parsons, and so are modest in their demands. The protest says: "We cannot ignore the probable effect which the proposed change will have upon religious worship." That is the case in a nutshell. The clergy are afraid that if opportunities are given for rational enjoyment on Sunday, people will stay away from church. We know they will. At present parents send their children to church and chapel to get them out of the way. But if Johnny can go and play football, and Mary can play tennis, how long will they go to church? And what will the parson do then? Well, if the worst comes to the worst, they can open shops for the supply of materials for playing the games they cannot stop.

The *Daily Mirror* suggests that the proposed demolition of nineteen City churches is the work of "highbrow" cultured persons. It is nothing of the kind, for it is proposed by a Commission appointed by the Bishop of London. The Commissioners' motive is simply to sell ecclesiastical property at present inflated prices.

The Bishop of Woolwich left £5,351. It is a beggarly sum for a bishop to leave, but it is far more than the vast majority of the people of his diocese will ever see.

Two or three weeks ago we were commenting on the, to us, horrible phrase "enemy children" as used by some of the papers. We feel sure that this does not represent the feelings of the mass of English people, and that this is not so is proven by the attempts that are being made in this country to provide these innocent little sufferers from the ravages of war. As our readers are probably aware, some of the municipalities in the country have volunteered to take so many of the children for a time and feed and educate them till the conditions abroad improve. And we are also sure that the last persons to raise objection to this course would be the soldiers who fought in the various campaigns. Generally speaking, they fought the War without bitterness, and they are not likely to cherish bitterness towards their late enemy now that the War is over.

At Bexhill there is a disused camp where once British soldiers were trained, and it was proposed that some of the starving children from the late enemy countries, mostly Austrian, should be brought there. The proposal received opposition—not, be it said, from soldiers—on the ground

that it would be "a public danger." As usual, the talk came from those civilians, who, remaining behind, were full of bloodthirsty cravings, which were to be satisfied by the sacrifice of other people. And the rector of Bexhill declared that "the presence of children from a late enemy country would make it more difficult to bring people back to the Christian and charitable frame of mind which one desires." It is not surprising that the official preacher of Christianity should talk in this strain. There never was a piece of brutality that did not find religious sanction—and there never will be. But we decline to believe that the sight of distressed children, no matter who their parents may have been, can have any other effect on normal men and women than that of softening their feelings and helping to bury those savage passions which the War evoked. We don't envy the character of the rector of Bexhill and those of his flock who agree with him. For the man who can see destitute children without having his feelings softened has to go a long way before he can claim to be called civilized. Really we don't believe that the rector and his flock are as bad as they think they are. It is only their religion which encourages them to give themselves so outrageous a character.

Now the War is over the Baptists have decided that they are willing to meet German Baptists. There is nothing very heroic about that resolution, for the Government would not have permitted them to meet during the War; and during the War the Churches were, like the business world, supporting the stupid notion that never again, or nearly never again, would Germans be met in terms of friendship. One could excuse this with the Government. If the War was to be kept going hatred had to be kept alive, and the only way in which this could be done was by painting the "enemy" country as a nation of scoundrels. We saw this in the case of the Boers, as our fathers saw it in the case of the Russians, the French, and others. On this feeling the Churches might have exercised some sort of a check. And had they done so, the world might have been in a much better state than it is at present.

Gipsy Smith, the evangelist, still uses his military title of "Captain" which he had conferred on him whilst he was an Army chaplain. His military career, however, consisted of fights with "the Devil," and not the Germans.

The Rev. John A. Hutton, of Glasgow, informs us in the *Christian World* for May 6, that he goes to church because he is a minister, professionally charged with the function of conducting religious services therein; or, in other words, because his livelihood is dependent upon his doing so. Apart from that, he says he would go to church for two reasons, namely, because his father went before him, and in order and in the hope that his children after him shall go. "I go to church," he says, "in the last push of the inquiry, because I want to go; just as, in the last push of the inquiry, one who stays away, stays away. I like it. He does not like it." If this is true, why and on what ground does he sit in judgment upon non-church goers? Why does he speak of them as if they were inferior to himself? The truth is that people go to church because of a vague belief that God requires it at their hands, and that he will reward them for going and punish them for staying away; and it is because of the decay of this superstitious belief that church attendance is rapidly becoming a thing of the past.

Dr. G. H. Morrison, of Glasgow, "thinks he sees signs of a great revival coming." Because people are praying and looking and longing he feels sure that "God has something coming on the wings of the wind." Curiously enough he adds that "wars and revivals have been strangely conjoined in history." So they have, and there has always been as much, or as little, of God in the one as in the other. So far, it is a revival of Spiritualism, not of Christianity, that has followed the World War. The Churches have not gained, but lost heavily, by it. There have been many revivals in the Churches, and others may come; but it is an incontrovertible fact that, despite them all in the past, religion has been gradually, but surely, losing its hold upon the popular mind, while science has been triumphing in all directions.

In a review of Mottelay's *Life of Sir Hiram Maxim*, the *Athenæum* remarks: "Apart from his inventions, Sir Hiram does not exist in Mr. Mottelay's pages." And yet the great inventor was as explosive in his expression of Freethought as any man, and no biography can be regarded as satisfactory which omits this side of his character.

Marshal Foch, who is a good and docile Catholic, is being exploited by his co-religionists. He attended the Joan of Arc festival at Orleans. The priests of the Great Lying Church know the sweet uses of advertisement.

"How these Christians love one another!" In a leader on Sunday observance, an evening paper says that "we are beginning to disengage Sunday from that acidulated version of the Jewish Sabbath which was invented by the Puritans." It almost seems as if the article was written by an "acidulated" Catholic.

We are glad to see the *Daily Herald* following our lead in advocating games in the public parks, etc., on Sunday. It is simply monstrous that the people should be shut out of their own playgrounds on Sunday in obedience to the whims of a mob of sectarian faddists. Now that the *Herald* has summoned up the courage to attack that aspect of British piety, we may hope to find it a little more outspoken on matters of religion. There is more harm done to the cause of progress than many imagine by playing to the religious gallery in the way that many Labour leaders do. The great thing needed to-day is to put the Christian in his proper place. And the only way to do this is to make him realize that he is only one of a sect, and not the whole of the nation. When he has learned this lesson, he will cease the absurd game of trying to regulate the life of the nation in accordance with his religious beliefs. And then there will be a greater measure of freedom in the country, not only in relation to Sunday, but also with many other things.

From the *Leeds Mercury* we see that the clergy at Carlton, in Cleveland, have revived the old ceremony of blessing the flocks and crops. And yet there are people who think that religion is dead! One can only wonder at the state of mind that can believe the ceremony has any effect on the multiplication of sheep or the fruitfulness of the earth. If we read of a tribe of savages who marched behind their medicine-man round a field in order to get a good harvest, we should smile. We wonder if anyone can tell us the difference in the two cases?

The Rev. James Smith, at a meeting of Scots parsons at Aberdeen, spoke of the evils attending modern marriage. "Too many people," he declared, "enter the marriage state without the blessing of the Church." No blessing, no bawbees. "Aye, there's the rub!"

Addressing the House of Lords on the Divorce Bill, the Duke of Northumberland said that "It is no light thing to get rid of Christianity between four o'clock and dinner time." He need have had no fear, for the Bench of Bishops do not sit in the Upper Chamber for their health.

The sympathies of the Churches are so entirely democratic nowadays that it is hard to explain why H.R.H. Princess Louise is so occupied opening bazaars and other necessary evils associated with the national religion. Perhaps, after all, it is not love of democracy but love of hypocrisy.

From the *Glasgow Herald* we see that the convener of the United Free Church Foreign Mission Committee is alarmed about the present position of Foreign Missions. The cause is the usual one—want of money. Some distressing stories of what missionaries in India are driven to are given. Thus one missionary writes that he can only go away once a year on holiday to the hills, "usually for a month," and then he has to ride third-class, and with natives. Money is so scarce that they will have to dismiss many native evangelists, etc.

We would suggest that, instead of dismissing the native evangelists, they send the English ones home; they are more expensive than the native ones; and we should then see how long Missions would live in the absence of the army of Europeans who, on the advertising strength of a mere handful of sincere but misguided men and women, are getting a far better living in India on the Cross than they would at home on the square.

The clergy are fond of exploiting famous people. On the centenary of Florence Nightingale's birth the Dean of Westminster gave an address. He did not say that, if there is truth in the Church's teaching, Florence Nightingale has gone to the place so often mentioned in sermons. For she was a heretic, and the Dean should know it too.

The ruined Church of St. Peter's at Bradwell-on-Sea, built in the seventh century, has been restored, and will be reopened by the Bishop of Chelmsford. When it is reopened, the nonsense of the seventh century will again be taught within its walls.

The Bishop of Birmingham addressed a meeting of Members of Parliament on the subject of the disabilities which prevent parsons from sitting in the House of Commons. The experience of having the clergy in the House of Lords ought to make one doubtful of their value as legislators.

Since the founder of the Christian religion was sold up for thirty shillings the Churches named after him have consolidated their financial position. Some slight idea of the wealth of the Church of England may be gathered from the fact that the site value of nineteen City of London churches, proposed to be demolished, is placed at £1,695,620, without reckoning the value of the parsonage sites. For the site of one church in Lombard Street a bank has offered £500,000. And the truthful Bishop of London says that the clergy of the Anglican Church, which possesses all this wealth, are "starving."

The Bishop of Barking declares that "there is no excuse for amusement on Sunday." The Bishop forgets that ordinary folk, unlike the clergy, work six days a week, and that Sunday is the only day of real leisure.

The late Rev. Stephen Gladstone was the son of the famous Prime Minister, and the Bishop of Exeter is also a prime-minister's son. Both, when young, were appointed to family livings by their fathers, not as Premiers, but as landowners. Yet the dear clergy like people to think that they are appointed to their sacred positions by the Holy Ghost. "O the sorry trade!"

Writing of "Joan of Arc" in the columns of a London newspaper, a leader-writer said that in the fifteenth century "life was a quiet pilgrimage." Was it, indeed? A man can travel across Europe nowadays with no more formidable weapon than an umbrella. In the days of the "quiet pilgrimage" a man had need to make his will before he started without a sword.

How You Can Help.

GET your newsagent to display a copy of this journal in a prominent position.

Show or hand your own copy of the paper to a friend who is not acquainted with it. It is surprising the number of new readers that can be made in this way.

If you do not file your copy, leave it in train or tram-car when read.

Send us on the name of anyone to whom you think that specimen copies of the *Freethinker* would be acceptable. We will see that they get them all right.

Send us any suggestions you have to offer as to the way in which our circulation may be increased.

To Correspondents.

- A. DUNCAN.—Thanks. Hope to use later.
- T. DAVIDSON.—We are well acquainted with Dr. Jung's work, which, along with that of the Freudian school in general, promises to be epoch-marking in the history of psychology. It is likely to revolutionize many ideas in regard to our mental life.
- W. H. PRICE.—Thanks for cuttings, which will be useful. At the moment any sort of nonsense that is labelled spirit communications goes down with the press. It is, in our opinion, sheer "spoof," and we should not be surprised to find that many of these spirit communications are written to our order. Something on the lines of "From Our Own Correspondent," or "We are informed on high authority." And all newspaper men know the value of those expressions. But so long as there are fools, nothing will prevent knaves taking advantage of their folly.
- N. S. S. GENERAL FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—G. Rayoff, 10s. 6d.
- H. S. BRITTON.—Sorry we cannot tell you anything about a Free-thought Esperantist Society. Perhaps one of our readers will be able to say if any such society still exists. We are afraid we could not afford much space for an advocacy of Esperanto in these columns.
- G. ROBERTSON.—Next week.
- G. A. WEDDING.—As you say, the article on the Chinese reads much like an advertisement for Missionary funds. They are moving heaven and earth at present to get in funds, and where that is concerned truth is of small account. We have no knowledge of *The Credentials of Christianity*. Have never come across the work.
- W. J. Y.—We cannot agree with you. Relief from taxation is a form of subsidy, and we have a strong objection to the State subsidizing opinion.
- R. H. NISBET.—Coriat's *Abnormal Pathology* (Rider) and Hart's *Psychology and Insanity* (Cambridge Press) will probably give you what you need.
- W. AINSLEY.—The Act of 1870 gives the parent or guardian the right to withdraw a child from religious instruction. All required is a note to the head teacher to that effect.
- F. BETTS.—Mr. Thorn's book on Richard Jeffries is in hand, and we hope to publish shortly.
- F. GOULDIN.—Pleased to have the congratulations of one of the "Old Guard."
- The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.*
- The National Secular Society's office is at 67 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.*
- When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, giving as long notice as possible*
- Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.*
- Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, and not to the Editor.*
- All Cheques and Postal Orders should be crossed "London, City and Midland Bank, Clerkenwell Branch."*
- Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.*
- Friends who send us newspapers would enhance the favour by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.*
- The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 15s.; half year, 7s. 6d.; three months, 3s. 9d.*

The plan is this: Life feeds on life. Justice does not always triumph. Innocence is not a perfect shield. There is my trouble; there is my trouble. No matter, now, whether you agree with me or not; I beg of you to be honest and fair with me in your thought as I am toward you in mine. That is my trouble. I hope, as devoutly as you, that there is a Power somewhere in this universe that will finally bring everything as it should be. I take a little consolation in the "perhaps"—in the guess that this is only one scene of a great drama, and that when the curtain rises on the fifth act, if I live that long, I may see the coherence and the relation of things.—Robert G. Ingersoll at the Unitarian dinner, 1891.

Sugar Plums.

We must take this method of acknowledging the many letters of congratulation we have received on the *Freethinker* entering its fortieth year of publication. It is pleasing to record that some of our correspondents have made up their minds to see that we get some birthday presents in the shape of new readers. We can only say that no birthday present would suit us better.

Delegates to the N. S. S. Conference at Birmingham will note they are to proceed to the Cobden Hotel, where a reception will be held at 7 o'clock. On Sunday the business meetings will be at 10.30 and 2.30. In addition to delegates, we are hoping to see a good muster of friends. Delegates to the Conference are invited by the Birmingham Branch to be their guests at tea. We beg to thank the local friends in advance in the name of the Conference.

We hope that Birmingham friends will see to it that Christians are made acquainted with the meeting at the Repertory Theatre this evening (May 23). There is a good list of speakers, and admission is free. An advertisement of the meeting will be found on the back page of this issue.

The West Ham Branch commences its open-air lecturing to-day (May 23), with Mr. W. H. Thresh as the speaker. East End Freethinkers will please note. It is encouraging to those responsible for the meetings to make a good start. It sets a standard for the rest of the season. The meetings are held outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, and commence at 7.

We are asked to announce that there will be a two days' discussion at the Caxton Hall on June 4 and 5, at 7.30 on each day, on Modern Religious Thought. Among the speakers will be Mr. Harry Snell, who is acting as Secretary, Mr. F. J. Gould, Prof. Carpenter, Dr. Jacks, and others. Prof. Gilbert Murray will preside. Admission is free, and there will be a general discussion following each of the opening papers. The meetings will be, no doubt, interesting enough, but whether they will come to grips with religion remains to be seen. Generally the subject is handled too timidly, and with too much deference to established superstition for much to follow. Our opinion is that the only good religion is a dead one. Religions are fast approaching that desirable condition, and it is idle to keep the name alive when the thing itself has lost all vitality.

FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

Even by Freethinkers the essential immorality of many Christian doctrines does not seem to be duly considered. Take, for instance, that of the forgiveness of sins, which is used as one of the chief inducements to embrace Christianity. Yet this is a purely unethical and anti-moral principle, for only a coward would seek to shirk the due penalty of his crimes, nor accept pardon unless he had made as complete reparation as possible, though even that would not atone for them. Moreover, this pardon must be freely given by the actual victim of his aggression or cruelty, and that, too, as a pure act of grace, for no one is bound to forgive an injury (although he may do so), but no forgiveness by a third party is valid, and especially if an imaginary God, who has been in no way affected.—E. A. Phipson.

Our mechanical and materializing theology, with its insane license of affirmation about God, its insane license of affirmation about a future state, is really the result of the poverty and inanition of our minds. It is because we cannot trace God in history that we stay the craving of our minds with a fancy account of him, made up by the putting scattered expressions of the Bible together, and taking them literally; it is because we have such a scanty sense of the life of humanity, that we proceed in the like manner in our scheme of a future state.—Matthew Arnold.

Christian Pretensions.

It is the common practice among religious people to ascribe to religion paramount importance in the moulding and development of human character, both nationally and individually. That is to say, both as regards nations and individuals, the religionist is convinced—or at any rate asserts—that their moral and ethical standing depends upon their religion or lack of religion. It is true the religionist conveniently ignores that all supporters of religion are not agreed as to which form of religion yields the best ethical and moral results. In this country, of course, the palm of excellence is accorded to Christianity. It is natural that people who are at least nominally Christian should consider Christianity as the most admirable form of religion. They would doubtless feel constrained to forsake Christianity if they thought otherwise. It is not, however, noticeable that the adherents of other religions are altogether unanimous in recognizing the transcending merits of Christianity. Nor are Christians themselves—as is sufficiently notorious—of one mind as to which brand of Christianity should be preferred. The Roman Catholic swears by *his* Church and his Pope, and all the other Christian sects are each confident that their particular little conception of truth and ethics and morality is of divine origin, and that their religious path is the only safe road on which to travel to heaven. They may perchance admit the possibility of heaven being reached by some other avenue than the one which they offer, but each maintains that their's is the only reliable brand of salvation.

The Christian sects differ on many points, as is well known. They all agree on one point. They all say that Christianity is the only true form of religion—the full and final revelation of God to mankind. Though it is not very apparent why direct revelation should be supposed to have come to an abrupt close nineteen hundred years ago. When we consider the long period of the gestation of Christianity; when we regard the large expanse of time during which, as religious people allege, God was slowly revealing his will to mankind and gradually bringing them to a knowledge of the truth, cautiously preparing the human mind for the fuller comprehension of his purpose, how can believers in God assert or assume that all has been consummated, and that in the realm of faith and morals we have no more to learn? According to the Christian who endeavours to amalgamate the findings of science with his religious beliefs, the universe—or at least this globe of ours—has been slowly prepared by the wisdom of God, slowly prepared throughout infinite ages for Christ, in whom the promise of the ages has been fulfilled. But the world having waited so long on God for what it *does* know of his divine will and purpose (which is remarkably little, after all), the odds are that it has a good deal longer to wait before everything is revealed.

Were it possible to believe in revelation at all, it should seem only reasonable to suppose that revelation must be gradual and progressive, and can never come to an end until we possess all truth. If I were a believer in God and in divine revelation, I should infer that God is daily unfolding truth to our view. In no other way can the idea of revelation be reconciled with the fact that mankind is continually discovering new truths. This, however, is a rational conception of revelation, and as such is completely destructive of its supernatural character. To say that revelation is gradual and progressive is merely to state that man is finding out things as time goes on. To assume divine revelation to account for what man believes in the sphere of religion or accepts

in the realm of morals, is to give a supernatural interpretation to the natural development of human mentality, and this is quite superfluous. There is no reason for supposing that God—if there is a God—ever revealed anything to mankind—not even in the domain of morals, which, in the opinion of the religionist, is God's last preserve. Religionists would persuade us that we should not know what is right or what is wrong were it not that God has told us. But it is not necessary to believe that God ever told anybody that murder or lust or hatred or revenge is wrong, any more than it is necessary to believe that God told man that fire burns or water drowns, or that if he falls over a precipice he will be killed. Man has found out the one set of facts as he has found out the other set, through painful experience and at a terrible cost of human suffering.

There is no necessity to postulate revelation to account for anything we know. If any Christian can point to anything—whether on the moral or the material plane—that has not been discovered by man himself, it will be time enough to think there is something in the claim for revelation. Failing such instance being forthcoming, we may take leave to say in the famous phrase of Laplace that there is no need for such an hypothesis.

The world has suffered much from the folly of religion in one form or another, and this country has had its share in the general suffering. All religion is folly. As Mr. Weller senior, of immortal memory, might have said, "All religion is wanity," and the particular "wanity" of this country in the religious line is Christianity. The Christian is absurdly vain and prejudiced about his religion. *His* religion, of course, has been divinely revealed. As has been remarked above, they all say that. It is a noteworthy and highly significant circumstance that Christianity does not think fit to depend upon its intrinsic worth, upon its beauty, or upon its truth, to commend itself to the acceptance of humanity. It has all along attempted to foist itself on mankind as emanating from God, and all its priests have claimed to be the representatives of God. Yet can any unprejudiced thinker doubt the only form of religion that can possibly survive must be a religion that puts forward no supernatural pretensions whatever, and makes no claim to divine origin, but is content to commend itself to the allegiance of mankind by reason of its truth, by reason of its beauty, by reason of its intrinsic worth. Christianity is not a world-religion *now*, and one may safely prophesy will never be a world-religion, precisely because it fails in these particulars, because it must needs pretend to divine authority in order to obtain credence.

That no divine revelation was necessary in the case of the Buddhist religion, the Mohammedan religion, the Egyptian religion, the Persian religion, the Babylonian religion—that no divine revelation was necessary in the case of any one of these the Christian is quite ready to admit. So with all other religions save his own. The absurdity of the pretensions of all these religions is quite apparent to him. He smiles at their alleged miracles, and at the claims put forward on their behalf by the respective hierophants of each. The Roman Catholic who reverently accepts all the myths and legends that have woven themselves into his Church's history evinces strong incredulity if a Mussulman comes along and asks him to believe that the Koran was written with a quill plucked from the wing of the Archangel Gabriel. Yet the adherents of each of the religions just mentioned were quite as confident in their beliefs as the Christian is in his, and with just as much—or as little—reason. What the Christian utterly fails to perceive is that the dogmas, doctrines, and miracles of Christianity will no more stand critical analysis than will those of any of the

other religions he repudiates in such scornful and superior fashion, and to which he attaches the epithet false.

Broadly speaking, the mental attitude of the average Christian may be expressed thus: He does not believe in Christianity because it is true, he believes Christianity is true because it happens to be his religion. The average Christian does not really reject other religions because they are false—though he calls them false—he rejects them because they are alien to him and to his nationality; because, in fact, he was not born that way. He never dreams of regarding Christianity in the light he would critically shed on all other forms of supernaturalism. It is idle to speak of impartiality in this connection, because the believer in one religion never *can* regard other religions impartially. It seems absolutely impossible for a Christian to divest himself of prejudice and be neutral for five minutes when it is a question of judging Christianity. Thus, what is fanaticism in the adherent of another religion becomes commendable—or at least excusable—zeal when a Christian is involved, and what would be superstitious worship of inanimate objects in the member of an alien creed becomes in a fellow-worshipper merely a due reverence for sacred things. So do we allow ourselves to be hounded as we go through life, and thus do we delight in throwing dust in our own eyes.

GEORGE SCOTT.

Tarsius.

THE latest volume of the *Proceedings* of the Zoological Society of London contains an account of a meeting held last autumn, at which a discussion took place on "The Zoological Position and Affinities of Tarsius."

The discussion was opened by Dr. A. Smith Woodward, F.R.S., who declared Tarsius was technically a lemur. It was a nocturnal animal about the size of an English squirrel, possessing exceptionally large eyes, and was found in the forests of the Philippines and the Indo-Malayan region. It differed from the lemurs in having a face and tail resembling those of a monkey. Apart from its enlarged eyes and highly-specialized jumping feet, it might be regarded as belonging to the earliest Tertiary period—the Eocene. Its ancestors, whose bones have been found in both the Old and New Worlds, had skulls essentially identical with the skull of Tarsius. It was one of those solitary links between groups of animals welcomed by zoologists as a "living fossil." A survey of all known fragments of Eocene lemurs suggests that they were generalized forms, from which both modern lemurs and anthropoids may have arisen.

Professor G. Elliot Smith thought that the Primates consist of three divergent phyla, viz., the Lemuroidea, the Tarsiodea, and the Anthropeida. Tarsius not a lemur, and not a monkey, but must be put together with its Eocene relatives into an intermediate phylum. The ancestors of Tarsius parted from the Lemurs, possibly, so far back as in Cretaceous times. They fell out of the running, because of an extreme specialization of vision and limbs. They were spared from extinction by adopting safe nocturnal habits. Man, on the other hand, also starting from a Tarsioid ancestor, was able to survive and win in the race, through nimbleness of mind, and by retaining a primitive and generalized structure of limbs.

Parapithecus and Propliopithecus, two important fossils, lately found in early Oligocene deposits in the Egyptian Fayum, retain many primitive traits which help to establish the Tarsioid ancestry of the apes.

Parapithecus is a survival from an earlier period, and, from its presence we infer, that real monkeys must have existed in the Eocene era. On the other hand, Propliopithecus was a real tailless ape.

Professor Elliot Smith thought that, probably, about the close of the Cretaceous period, the Lemurs and Tarsioids were differentiated from an ancestral primate in North America. From these Tarsioids true ancestral monkeys sprung in Eocene times. Some went to South America and became the ancestors of the modern New World monkeys, others reached the Old World in company with the ancestors of the Lemurs and Tarsius. During the migration, these primitive monkeys were transformed into modern Old World monkeys. The tailless apes, he believed, arose from the tailed Old World monkeys very soon after their arrival in this hemisphere.

Professor J. P. Hill's contribution to the discussion includes a fine plate, showing the fœtus of Tarsius, as well as other illustrations of the placenta. His contribution is very technical, and confirms Professor Hubrecht's well-known work on the embryology of Tarsius.

In summing up, Professor Hill says that, as shown by its placentation, Tarsius is clearly on the line which leads to the Anthropoids. It is a true "Half-ape," intermediate between Lemurs and Monkeys, but approaching much more closely to the latter than to the former.

Professor J. T. Cunningham, M.A., F.Z.S., also dealt with the embryological aspect of the question. He thought that in its development it showed more kinship with man than with either monkeys or apes.

Professor F. Wood-Jones, D.Sc., M.B., the instigator of the discussion, said he had carefully compared all published accounts of the anatomy of Tarsius. He had also dissected specimens of Tarsius itself, and had been allowed to carefully examine the work of other anatomists on this animal.

He then gave a very extended list of characters in which Man and Tarsius agree, but in which they differ from monkeys and anthropoid apes. He thought that Tarsius was a true monkey, the most primitive of all the non-lemurine Primates. The human skull shows a great number of features in which a condition of basal mammalian primitiveness is retained, that offer a marked contrast to the same parts in all monkeys and apes. In the base of the human skull, and upon the sides of the brain case, the bones articulate in an order which is that characteristic of the primitive mammal. The nasal bones, the "metopic" suture, the jugal bone, the pterygoid plate, the teeth, etc., all tell the same story—that the human skull is built upon remarkably primitive mammalian lines. The skeleton, the muscles, the great arteries which arise from the arch of the aorta and the kidney, differ from that typical of Old World monkeys and anthropoid apes. Tarsius, like man, shows primitive cranial architecture; his kidney is formed on human lines, his aortic arch is arranged as in man, and, in a word, he shares with man the basal mammalian simplicity of the Primate group. He lingers to-day, a specialized primitive Primate, nearer akin to man than any other animal known to the zoologist.

The Superintendent of the Zoo, Mr. R. Pocock, then told how a few years ago, from a study of the external characters of Tarsius, he was led to take it out of the Lemurs, and include it in the Haplorrhini, a group which contains man, the anthropoid apes, and monkeys.

Dr. P. Chalmers Mitchell, in criticising Professor Wood-Jones' formidable list, thought that characters should be judged instead of counted. He still adhered to the orthodox opinions regarding man's ancestry.

Professor MacBride, the Chairman, in summing up, said that all were now agreed that Tarsius was more nearly allied to the higher Primates than to the Lemurs. Professor Wood-Jones' assertion, that certain characters were absent from monkeys, seemed to rest largely on our imperfect knowledge of the anatomy of the Primates. He believed the older view, that man sprung from a Simian stock, was true.

HENRY SPENCE.

The Hunter's Gate.

It is changed days with me I feel since I used to scorn the elements and despise fatigue. It is more difficult to keep on feeling young than my friend Optimist would have me believe. You know the fellow, who slaps you on the shoulder, rattling all your old dry bones, and telling you to cheer up! adding that most original observation—a man is just as old as he feels, which, if true, may mean that I am getting on towards my first century, but, thanks to a good initial outfit, still running. I was shown some group photographs just now of fine young soldier lads, all grinning, as they always seem to be. It would seem that the best way to feel young—and *die* young—is to be a soldier in such times as some of us have just survived. I am a mere pessimistic civilian. The smile that impresses me, in war time, is the smile that won't come off—the fleshless fixed eternal elongated mocking smile of the death's head and crossbones—the smile that kings' diplomatists and statesmen so often scatter in plenty o'er a smiling land and read their history in a nation's —. Like the martial youth, my father's sword calls me forth to the field, but I am later more impressed by my father's wooden leg!

To change the mood, and bury these with other skeletons of the human household, let me relate, however, how the ancient trusty bike—a velocipede for a philosopher—I set out one sunny breezy but chilly Sunday in the April just past—set out in search of a soul, of my own soul; or, at least, of fresh fields and pastures new. It is a matter of small importance that the soul—as it surely must—should perish with the body; but one had better be dead than outliving the natural soul of man.

Dear mother mine! how well I remember your pious lines:—

The loss of time is much,
The loss of truth is more;
The loss of Christ is such
That nothing can restore,

or, that oft-quoted couplet of yours:—

For while the lamp holds on to burn
The greatest sinner may return;

or, your story of the wicked horseman who met sudden death and of whom it was said—by some mysterious voice:—

Betwixt the saddle and the ground
Mercy was sought and mercy found.

The last moment of Time was not, but the first instapt of Eternity too late to save the immortal soul. Shade of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, and the fearful Bunyan, how exact—and exacting!

Memory at the moment also recalls the thrilling tale of the baby in the eagle's eyry and the bold sailor who scaled the cliffs and rescued the bairn—"Blin', blin', maun they be," said the pious old lady, "Wha see not the hand of God in this thing!" The dear old body did not, and I am quite sure would have righteously refused to see that if God inspired the good he permitted the evil. It is the fate of Almighty God to be eternally and unchangeably fixed and impotent in this balance of good and evil—and there we must leave him, for who can scale the heavens to rescue God?

Such the stories, but I was seeking the scenes of early youth where by pebbled stream and tangled wood might be caught fleeting glimpses of the fairy boy himself—a breath at least of his honour, beauty, truth, and inspiration. Some ten miles on the way, however, a strong headwind prevailing I was forced to turn aside and seek a nearer and similar if alien paradise. A roadway leading up and over a sylvan eminence seemed promising but ended abruptly on the terrifying brink of a hundred feet or so of perpendicular quarry cliff—what daring dardy men to climb and rend those ancient dizzy walls of rock—to-day all still and silent, almost sinister, in their Sunday quietude. Retreating over some stony fields I came upon the kind of haven I sought—a lone and pleasant dell, yet too rude for cultivation, a rivulet for water, twigs for a fire, solitude for muse and meditation, all complete—save that I had not yet found my fairy boy—but surely he would rejoin me here.....

If it were not for the unknown and the unexpected life would be drearier than it is. Micawber was a true philosopher when he kept hoping something would turn up. Here was a spot, for me unknown, unnamed; already beautiful in the early breath of spring: the corner of a wood; riven fragments of rock clothed with moss and ivy, bracken, and last year's leaves, a stone dyke innocent of mortar but laced with creeping roots of ivy and topped with rustling green, the rude stony brae whereon I sat, and where, under ash and thorn, there grew the gentle primrose and wild violet, and the queenly hyacinth. Beyond were wild and shaggy hills; near at hand an expanse of gnarled whins, their bushy tops a mass of golden bloom; the tender emerald grass below whereon reposed or grazed and strayed the sheep and lambs.

After lunch, and while the sun was shining on the green lawn between the wood and the whinny knowes, I loitered there, much at leisure, peace, and content, tasting at will those moments of fugitive but supreme felicity. On one side the yellow whin, the rough green field, the snow-white lambs; on the other rose the rich and royal woodland to the mansion that I felt was hidden there. The grey trunks of the trees contrasted with the green and swarming verdure below—or, rather, brown and grey and green mingled in a subtle haze that was now the one and now the other—an elusive yet ever-pleasing mist of beauty and enchantment. Surely the lost souls wander here, and here they may be found! Yet, alarming thought, what if one should die here suddenly, be posted missing, while the body lay unknown, undiscovered, unburied, wearing at last that latest smile—the man who laughed. The thought was there, the possibility present, both unendurable:—

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires;
Even from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,—
Even in our ashes live their wonted fires.

There was, too, that other thought of a night spent in this unfrequented spot, a night of darkness and howling storm, and, added to the physical discomfort, the terrors of the imagination. Such is the power of old custom and lingering superstition that here the silly sheep is braver than the man. (It is, of course, a matter of adaptation and habitat.)

There is, it would seem, in heaven or earth no such thing as complete content, and one would not remain always even in Paradise; as, quite early in the afternoon, I started for home again, *via* the hunter's gate. There were one or two similar gates hung here and there, for the convenience of my lord and lady when a-hunting they would go. After all, those high-spirited, sport-loving gentry of ours help to redeem the drabness of life, and so in their honour I have named this hollow, and this account of it, The Hunter's Gate—the sense

may be weak, but the sound is nice. The fairy boy must have inspired the senses, for the way out was a happy scramble, and charming as an old romance. There were rocky copse and moor and hill, shaggy with thorn and whin and bracken, with here and there the rude soil riven in virgin cultivation. At length, through slaps and gates and stiles, I find myself in the woods of Dundonald and of my Lord Montgomery, a trespasser, but a lord also, and unafraid. The young larches in the avenue were the soul of beauty in the exquisite perfection of their new, pale, feathery, tufted green. The roadway was just now below me; mounted once more, the wind in my back, I sped easily and quickly homeward, overtaking the dust-clouds on the wings of the wind. My soul, retrieved, reconciled, accompanied me. I have hastened to record the day's delights lest, as it may, it should leave me again.

ANDREW MILLAR.

Progress.

If God really existed, it would be necessary to abolish him.

—Bakunin.

HAVE you ever watched a mettled horse being broken? Roped to a stake, it prances and tosses its mane, and dashes round and round in an eternal circle. High-spirited, with distended nostrils and flowing mane, proudly it rushes, omnipotent, it would seem, a monarch of its breed, Pegasus about to spring into the empyrean. Poor creature! perhaps (if it can think—and who knows?) it fondly dreams that it is treading the path of progress; but the tug of the rope, the cut of the whip, and the shout of the horse-breaker —? What of that! Mankind is but that horse; yet whereas there the rope, the whip, the man are realities, with us the rope is but a dream-tangle of hopes and fears, the whip but a tyrannical creed, and the man is but man's virtues anthropomorphized into a deity.

But the eternal round is there. What progress have we made? Because we rely more on electric bulbs than the light of a thousand stars, have we progressed? Because we travel 150 miles in an hour by aeroplane instead of taking a week on foot, are we nearer the solution of the problem of existence? Primitive man killed his enemies with stones and cudgels, and we, who kill our fellow-men with asphyxiating gas and Flammenwerfers, and write books telling everyone else why we did it, are we more moral, more ethereal?

We have been catechized by a thousand creeds. We have evolved a God out of the thousand-and-one gods who have gone before. What use have these things been to us?

There is as much suffering, as much poverty, as much crime, as much hatred, as much hopelessness in the world to-day as ever there was. And for these so many things shall we not thank him to whom we are taught to pray for our daily bread? He has grown virtuous with the virtues of man. But, if he has scattered blessings on mankind, there have been more tares than good seed in his basket. To this vicious circle we are confined by the most Christian of attributes, the fear of God. To break it down, we must abolish God; cast him into the outer darkness, and let him (or at least his paid votaries) gnash their teeth for the good old days when they waxed fat on the offerings of a deluded race. But man—ah, the glorious prospect of a godless world, a world of Man for men: the eternal and immutable cast into the wave of perpetual flux that shall overwhelm them and their memory, and they shall be no more. That day, and if we do not see it those who follow us will, a pæan of victory shall leap from the throats of all, shall rend the highest heaven where the

gods that never were held their phantasmal parliament. Man shall be free at last. He shall taste of the freedom that is impossible while there exists the vestige of an idea of God. He shall that day be master of himself, not the slave of an inherited belief in a thing that never was nor ever could have been. And on that day the march of Progress shall begin. Now it is impossible, for the Progress of man cannot be while all progress is the sole attribute of God. That day, man will be Man, the conqueror of circumstance, not the image of an unrealizable Irreality.

But what shall we say of those who, prostrating themselves before the High Altar of some ineffable "Thing-in-Itself," prate of the Dignity and Freedom of Man? Can one be free and serve? Is Progress possible while staring the world in the face stands the notice "Thus far and no further"? The Rousseaus and the Tolstois are sublime contradictions—purveyors of beautiful impossibilities. The worship of God is the negation of Freedom. Do not, as many have done, mistake freedom for license. Freedom is the gate to Progress; it is the unshackling of extraneous restrictions, not of the control of oneself. They tell us that religion has put the brake on license. What is religious morality? Merely license curbed by superstition. The fact that Atheists are moral has been an unfailing source of wonder to the thinking "true believer." G. K. Chesterton has voiced this amazement in this stanza from *The Song of the Strange Ascetic*:—

Now who that runs can read it,
The riddle that I write,
Of why this poor old sinner,
Should sin without delight —? —?
But I, I cannot read it
(Although I run and run),
Of them that do not have the faith,
And will not have the fun.

Perhaps if a second Leo the Isaurian should arise he would find more images to break to-day than he did in the Byzantine Empire, but the image most dear to the heart of the Christian is the image of the immoral Materialist. Alas, that it too should be broken! But the day of the emancipation of man has dawned; the briars that block the way to Progress are being cut down, and soon the sun of the full day shall shine on an earth where man stands forth the master of himself and the master of the world.

H. C. MELLOR.

Correspondence.

FREETHINKERS AND THE MARRIAGE LAWS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The passage of Lord Buckmaster's Matrimonial Causes Bill through the House of Lords cannot have been without interest for Freethinkers; but I wonder if they realize the danger ahead for all who stand outside the Churches if marriage and the family—the last strongholds of the Church—be left to be manipulated by them for political ends.

Already there is evidence enough that they are making headway with the women, and, unless the Divorce Laws reformers can counteract their pernicious influence and the misrepresentations of the objects and the aims of the Bill, the women's vote may soon be a serious weapon in the hands of the Church on more issues than the Divorce Law Reform.

Many hints have already been thrown out by the bishops and clergy on the powers granted by the Enabling Bill and the possibility of putting them into operation. When the Enabling Bill was pushed through, it would seem that the Nonconformists, Rationalists, Freethinkers, Ethicists, etc., entirely overlooked the object of the Bill, which was to increase the power of the Church.

The attitude of the Church to divorce and divorced persons is well known; but the Archbishop of Canterbury's

amendment to the Bill before the House of Lords, forbidding the re-marriage of any divorced person (innocent or guilty) in any church or chapel of the Church of England, has been a surprise to a large number of people. The Bill as it stands permits individual clergy a free choice—they can perform or refuse to perform such a ceremony; and Lord Buckmaster, in his anxiety not to offend "the conscience of any man in Holy Orders," was willing to accept an amendment "providing that the re-marriage of the guilty person cannot take place in the church." The bishops pressed the wider claim, and lost the amendment by a majority of one.

Through its representatives in the House of Lords the Church has tried to enforce its views of marriage on citizens who do not belong to it. In this country the Church and State are one, and the civil law is paramount; and the Lord Chancellor remarked that—

if the deliberate view of the leaders of the Church in this country were that their religious convictions made it necessary for them to visit with public censure a member of their Church, a priest in Holy Orders who, in obedience to what he regarded as the dictates of his conscience and acted within the declared limits of the policy of the legislature, I say, if the view taken of their religion by the leaders of their Church rendered a conclusion so melancholy and so much to be regretted indispensable, I, for one, think that there are many who at this moment are profound believers and supporters of the policy of Establishment who would find it necessary to reconsider the basis upon which their belief depends.

The bishops, beaten in the House of Lords, are carrying the war into the House of Commons, where a powerful committee (Sir Edward Carson as chairman) is organizing resistance to the Bill when it comes down.

The struggle promises to be fierce; the Church is in fighting force, and its adherents are noisy. Hundreds of thousands of sufferers under the existing iniquitous Divorce Law who have been waiting for years, and whose hopes have been stimulated by the action of the House of Lords, are mostly inarticulate. Shall we leave them to the tender mercies of the Churches, who insist upon ruling their lives by a much-disputed text of Scripture, or shall we help them to relief, and in so doing heal an open sore in the life of the community.

M. L. SEATON-TIEDEMAN, Secretary,
The Divorce Law Reform Union,
55-56 Chancery Lane W.C.2.

THE CARE OF GOD.

SIR.—In Aurora Mardiganian's book, *The Auction of Souls*, she states that one of the Armenian women, forced to march across the desert, crazed by suffering, began shouting, "God must be gone mad, mad!" Hundreds of other women, similarly half demented, took up the cry, to the great amusement of the Turkish soldiers, who jeered, "See, these Christians admit that their own God is crazy." On another occasion, when a mother was watching her two little daughters drowning, they shouted, "Look there; two more Christians whom their Christ has forgotten." Can we say otherwise when, even in this supreme persecution of all history, "the Lord is so (un)mindful of his own"?

E. A. PHIPSON.

KINDNESS OR FORCE?

SIR.—It is difficult in a general way to find a more powerful and logical reasoner than Major Warren. But he has opinions he holds with the same tenacity and illogicality as a religious person does the faith taught him in his infancy. I regret the fact, but I cannot close my eyes to it, that everything in this world related to social, political, or religious freedom, depends on actual or potential physical force. But for the French revolutions where would the expression of Freethought be possible to-day? What, if it is a fact that Russian workers are suffering more than they did under the Czars bitter physic, must precede a cure. Certainly the clock of progress has not been put back by the Russian revolution. Those fairly well acquainted with Russian history will question any possibility of things being worse than they were under the Czars.

The action of the self-styled loyalists of Ulster ought to show those who talk as if nothing would make them fight,

what they have to expect if that idea is carried out. Those who prefer peace to violence brought into existence the system of counting heads instead of breaking them. All right says the oppressors, that will suit us a treat, unless—the country goes against us. Freethinkers, above all others, believe in the force of reason. But the determination of enemies, to use force against them unscrupulously, forces them to see the reason of force. But with Freethinkers it would be a last resource.

A. J. MARRIOTT.

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BETWEEN

Rev. the Hon. EDWARD LYTTTELTON, D.D.
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