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Views and Opinions.

An Anniversary.

There is a sense in which a writer must always be writing about himself, since all he writes is an expression of himself, and those "discerning readers," whom old Ben Jonson declared to be "mighty few," will often be able to detect the scribe beneath the scribble. Apart from this aspect of the matter, I do not think I have ever written an article about myself, and if I break through that most admirable reticence for once I cannot be accused of always thrusting myself on my readers. I can plead a first offence, and my excuse for committing it is that I am this week celebrating an anniversary—that of my existence as a public advocate of avowed Freethought. I delivered my first Freethought lecture from a definite Freethought platform in the early part of October, 1890, so that I have now completed thirty years of service in the Freethought cause. Thirty years of lecturing and twenty-three years as a regular contributor to the journal I have now the honour of editing. One cannot count on giving many times thirty years' service to any cause, and while it is just possible that I may complete another thirty years of work in the Freethought camp, it is not very likely—particularly if I go on working at my present rate. Still, while I live I work, because while I work I live. Freethought was a labour of love with me at the beginning, and, if I know myself, it will be that at the end.

Looking Backward.

The other day I received a letter from far-off Australia, and that letter was, indeed, the immediate cause of my writing these notes. It was from one whom I have known and respected for over twenty years, and he asked me whether, looking at the present state of the world, I did not feel that I had largely wasted my time. Well, we all feel at times that the world is not going forward quite so rapidly as we would wish, and one can quite appreciate that with some there will be occasionally a very keen sense of disappointment at the results of their labours. But I am evidently not built that way. I had the good fortune to be born at a time when the doctrine of evolution was exerting a very strong formative influence on young minds, and I knew that systems of thought are not built up in a day, nor that they pass away with the waning of a moon.

The man who starts preaching new ideas is talking in a foreign language to the majority of those who listen; he must accustom their ears to the sounds of the new word-combinations before they can attend to the sense of the message. In this respect the vendor of old notions and established superstitions has an enormous advantage over the Freethinker. There is no mental strain on the part of those who listen, no new form of intellectual adaptation is needed, everything is as usual. That is why, I expect, people can honestly say that they find a religious service 'restful.' It is as restful as a funeral, and it has all the quietness of mental death. The reformer has a harder task. In the truest sense of the word he is an agitator; and very few people like to be agitated. He disturbs things, and that is an unforgivable offence. Says Bagehot, the greatest pain that humanity suffers from is the pain of a new idea, and while pain may be inevitable it is never welcome. The man who makes up his mind to go about scattering new ideas is looking for trouble, and there are always plenty to see that he finds it.

* * *

The Past and the Present.

Added to this, I had always a lively sense of the historic power of religion. Behind us there lie at least many centuries of Christian rule, in itself one of the most depressing tyrannies that has preyed upon the human mind. And beyond that there stretched unnumbered generations of religious rule, the influence of which has become embedded in our customs, our institutions, our language, and in our very thought. And therefore we who take up the fight against superstition, with anything like a fair sense of the nature of the forces against us, are debarred from expecting a rapid change in the mental habits that govern the majority of people. It is enough for us to note that the change is taking place, and that the rate of movement tends to increase with the passing of each generation. We have moved farther in the direction of a reasoned Freethought during the past twenty-five years than our predecessors had done in the preceding century, and they had done more in that century than had been done in the previous three or four. So I set out with no extravagant hopes, but with a lively sense of all that the fight meant, with a keen appreciation of the strength of human stupidity, and helped considerably, I think, by a sense of humour. Perhaps it was this last which saved me from all the empty talk about the profound nature of religious beliefs, or the respect due to the fantastic absurdities that go to make up the Christian creed. To me they were never profound, they were simply silly. The perception of the absurdity of religious doctrines is the ultimate test of a genuine liberation. An adequate sense of humour would kill all the gods in the world—perhaps that is the reason their official representatives affect such an air of owl-like solemnity.

* * *

Beginning the Fight.

It will be thought curious by some that I should have commenced my work as an advocate of militant Freethought at the invitation of a Christian Evidence

lecturer. But it was so. Walking over Victoria Park one Sunday afternoon, I ventured on some comments concerning the conduct of a meeting. I was very young at the time, and what I said seemed to "take on." But I had no intention of attacking religion there; it was merely a plea for fair play. It was at the invitation of the lecturer that I offered some set opposition, and at the invitation of the local branch that I lectured from its platform soon afterwards, and I have been doing the same work ever since. I trust that that Christian lecturer is satisfied with the result of his invitation. Perhaps it was what is called "Providential." In a very little time I was lecturing all over the country, and I think I established something like a record in delivering no less than 285 lectures in the course of a single year between Plymouth and Aberdeen. I had a number of curious and interesting experiences, into which I have now no time to enter, but they all helped to show me that of all the work that one could take up with that of a Freethought advocate was of most value to the world. In 1897 I wrote my first article for the *Freethinker*. Mr. Foote had asked me on several occasions to contribute, but I was always diffident in the matter of rushing into print.—I knew quite enough of the subjects in which I was interested to realize how much there was to learn. Had I been of the type that imagines good work can be done by merely reading up a subject, and then writing a more or less readable re-hash of the result, I should have written more readily. Fortunately, I was never a mere book maker, and was not bitten with the desire to see myself in print. So for some time I declined the invitation. Then, when the late J. M. Wheeler died, I promised an "occasional" article. That occasional article has continued regularly till now. In twenty-three years there has been only one issue of the paper that was without an article from me. It has been very pleasant work, congenial, and, I have every reason to believe, helpful to many. Its late editor always gave his contributors a fairly free hand, and its present one has aimed at following so wise an example. The *Freethinker* is one of those publications that has helped to make history, and it is pleasing to think that one has been in it.

* * *

The Fight of Fights.

I made the choice of my life's work thirty years ago, and I have never regretted it. I had, at the time, the offer from those at the head of a large educational institute of becoming a lecturer on popular scientific and similar subjects, but declined. It was not that the work was not important in its way, but by that time I was beginning to see the importance of direct Freethought work, and the other task was being done by very competent hands. Indeed, the work of popularising science was being done so well, and so often by clergymen and professing Christians, that it could no longer be argued that in doing it one was carrying out definite Freethought work. Scientific teachings no longer smelt of heresy or suggested heresy, and it was more than ever essential for one who really wished to fight superstition to meet the altered policy of the Churches with a direct attack on its beliefs and teachings. Another reason was that I was not really attracted by the platform, and do not think that I am now. I was anxious to see certain ideas gain ground, and the platform or the Press, or, for that matter, any other method that presented itself, was to be welcomed and used. And I do not think that anyone who knows me can accuse me of ever using the platform as a method of making money. As all know, I have never made payment a condition of service, and I think I can truthfully say that I have never written or spoken for money. I do not mean by that that I have not received money for both speaking and writing—not having acquired the capacity for living on air, and there being

no secular ravens available to feed Freethought workers, that was inevitable. But I do not think that many have ever done more work without payment than I have, and I am certain that none has enjoyed the doing of it more. The work has never been done with any sense of sacrifice, but rather with a sense of self-realization. Self-sacrifice in such a connection is quite a misnomer.

* * *

The Best of Causes.

And now at the end of thirty years' work I can answer the letter which suggested these notes by saying with the utmost confidence that, far from feeling that my time has been wasted, if I had to commence all over again, and with a knowledge of what lay before me, I should unhesitatingly make the same choice. I have done the work I loved in the way I wished, and I do not see how that could be improved on. True, there have been times when I have wished that the road was a little smoother, and also that the rate of progress could be quicker, but these feelings have been no more than momentary. I have made scores—perhaps I might say hundreds—of good friends all over the country, and how real that friendship is the severe struggle of the war period has fully demonstrated. I have often been asked for advice by those who had some ambition of becoming Freethought speakers, and, while I have never advised them to become such (in the last resort it is a matter on which each must decide for himself), I have always replied that to anyone who is not aiming at gain, popularity, or position, there is no work in the world that will ultimately yield so much pure satisfaction, or that will keep a man's mental life so healthy and clean. The work of Freethought carries with it at once the impersonal character of a scientific investigation, and the enthusiasm which comes from the consciousness that one is working to promote principles that are at the very foundation of human progress. It brings with it the inspiration of a great tradition and the dynamic of an imperishable principle. More popular causes than that of Freethought one may easily find, but hardly one that will yield greater satisfaction to a well-balanced and healthy intelligence.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Hostility to Religion.

By religion in this article is exclusively meant Christian supernaturalism. The present writer never uses the term in any other sense. That the world is strongly opposed to religion as thus defined is a fact beyond dispute. That the world is becoming more strongly opposed to it year after year is also an equally incontestable fact. This is evidenced by the theological controversies now going on in the daily Press, as well as by the growing neglect of religion among the masses. There are only two worlds in existence, the religious and the irreligious; and the irreligious world is by far the more extensive one. Naturally, the defenders of religion are considerably flustered as they contemplate so alarming a situation. At the annual meetings of the Northamptonshire Baptist Association, recently held at Olney, the Rev. R. C. Law delivered a sermon entitled "The Hostile World: The Victorious Faith," which appeared in the *Christian World Pulpit* for September 15. Mr. Law does not entertain a friendly feeling towards toleration. This hostile world he defines as "the spirit of alienation from God," "human society or individual lives organized without God," "the spirit of unbelief that would dethrone God and debase man." Then comes the crowning definition:—

It is the spirit that seeks to change the creature from its truly glorious position of God's servant to the idolatrous place of supremacy. It is the source

of all sin, idolatry, godlessness, and every evil under heaven.

How proud and self-satisfied the preacher must have felt after he had delivered himself of that momentous statement. He is *in* that incorrigibly wicked world, alas, but, thank God, not *of* it. He is able, while in it, to look down upon and despise it. He lays to his soul the flattering unction of grand superiority to it.

We are told that this world of evil men and women existed when Christ was here, and that he fought and defeated it; but in spite of that defeat, and of the fact that its conqueror has sat as reigning monarch ever since, the same wicked old world still wags; and the only crown it has put upon the head of the alleged victor is one of thorns. This is the most extraordinary world-conquest of which we have ever heard. With the existing unbelieving situation staring him in the face, the preacher has the audacity to say of the world in its-relation to the Cross:—

It crucified Jesus, but the Cross is the abiding witness of its complete overthrow.....Always in his life, in his death, in his resurrection, and now in his exaltation, Jesus was and is the mighty victor over all the powers of the world, sin, and death. The serpent bruised his heel, but he bruised its head, and really his people confront a fatally stricken foe.

Is not that the sheerest piffle that ever dropped from a man's lips? A world utterly defeated, fatally wounded, still lives and reigns, shutting God out of its life, rejecting Christ, emptying churches and chapels, and setting up Reason as moral arbiter in all social relationships. Yes, the so-called "conquered world" is the ruling factor in modern life. More than that, the difference between the Church and the world is purely nominal. The Church, in all its sections, is supported by the workers of the world, though they seldom darken its doors. They support it unconsciously by filling the pockets of the middle class with the requisite cash. It is a fallacy to suppose that the Church is kept going by the people who actually attend it. Its funds come indirectly from wage-earners, who in reality carry their employers on their backs. Now, as any intelligent observer well knows, Church-goers are almost entirely well dressed, white-handed, successful business people, who have intimate commercial transactions with the non-religious men of the world, and it would only be possible by a miracle to tell the difference between them, the only discernible difference, as often pointed out by Ruskin, being in favour of the non-religious. Professing Christians love the world and its things quite as ardently, and pursue them quite as eagerly as their non-professing neighbours. Mr. Law says that "the Christian's conquest of the world consists, not as does the worldling's, in winning from it its prizes and treasures, but in keeping its spirit out of his soul"; but in making such a statement he is simply playing to the religious gallery. Of course, the reverend gentleman gives his blessing to the successful Christian merchant, who, in keen competition with other merchants, wins a fortune, *provided he contributes generously to the funds of the Church.* The following is the pietistic wording of it: "If he can win the world's riches to the glory of God and use them so, let him. If he can't, let him in God's name renounce them." So we see that in the Church the end sanctifies the means.

As to evil, Mr. Law cannot but be aware that it is pretty evenly divided between the Church and the world; and yet, judging by his discourse, he ascribes all evil to the world. "It is the source," he asserts, "of all sin, idolatry, godlessness, and every evil under heaven." It is true that he admits the presence of evil in the Church, but he explains the fact by declaring it

to be the result of the entrance of the world into the Church, an event which occurs with amazing ease and frequency. The true explanation, however, is to be found in the fact that the Church's claims for itself are absolutely false. Mr. Law defines the distinctive glory of the Church thus:—

Really our Churches, whatever else they are, are meant supremely to be the home of the supernatural, the body of the Divine, Spiritual, Eternal Christ, the servants and vehicles of the Holy Spirit, beautiful oases of faith in the world's deserts of unbelief. Are they? If not, our first and insistent care must be, by prayer and faith, to mount the heights that will make them so. But are we mounting those heights? Do we even want to do so? If we don't, then let us write Ichabod over our portals, for our *distinctive* glory is departed, and we become simply one of the very many institutions of this world for improvement, entertainment, discussion, or social intercourse.

Mr. Law is mistaken. The distinctive glory of the Church cannot have departed, because it was never present. It never had any reality other than that of a myth. The Church never was the home of the supernatural, never was the body of a Divine, Spiritual, Eternal Christ, or a beautiful oasis in a desert of unbelief; and it is the discovery of this simple fact that accounts for its present impotence. It is the *belief* in its supernatural origin and character that has largely departed; and it is departing solely because it has not once been justified by historical facts. The world, therefore, has always been and is hostile, not to a reality, but to what it believes to be a stupendous sham, not to that which has been an unmixed blessing, but to that which has been very largely a curse, to mankind. Unbelievers do not hate believers, but only their beliefs; and consequently they do not persecute believers, as believers generally persecute them.

Persecution is indulged in only by fanatics, by blind but intensely real believers. Old-fashioned persecution is rarely resorted to nowadays, because of the scarcity of old-fashioned believers. They to whom the supernatural was a tremendous reality were bound to be persecutors, nor can we legitimately condemn them for being such. What deserves condemnation is the superstition that enslaved them, the supernatural beliefs that filled their hearts with cruelty camouflaged as justice and pity. Present-day Christians, as a class, are less cruel because they are so much less fervent and intense, or because their religion means so much less to them than it did to their ancestors; and with the intenseness of belief equally disappears power. In any case, Secularists attack not Christians, but Christianity; not Church members, but the Church as an essentially, though in many instances unconsciously, fraudulent institution. To Secularists the supernatural, being non-existent, is a bugbear to be got rid of as quickly as possible, in order that the natural may have free course and shine in the fulness of its glory. The unbelieving world is not nearly so black as the preacher paints it, nor is the believing Church nearly so white.

J. T. LLOYD.

Voltaire's task, however, was never directly political, but spiritual—to shake the foundations of that religious system which professed to be founded on the revelation of Christ. Was he not right? If we find ourselves walking amidst a generation of cruel and unjust and darkened spirits, we may be assured that it is their beliefs on what they deem highest that have made them so. There is no counting with certainty on the justice of men who are capable of fashioning and worshipping an unjust divinity, nor on their humanity so long as they incorporate inhuman motives in their most sacred dogmas, nor on their reasonableness while they rigorously decline to accept reason as a test of truth.—*John Morley.*

Barnes' Boomerang.

The creed of Christendom is gradually melting away, like a northern iceberg floating into southern seas.—*G. W. Foote.*

Science has substituted for the craven retrospective habit of mind, induced by a mythical descent from perfection due to sin, the outlook of an ascent towards higher ends, a perpetual growth unlimited by the laws of nature or of life.—*Prof. R. Soddy, of Oxford.*

CHARLES BRADLAUGH, who was, in his own characteristic way, a keen critic and theologian, declared that religions did not die, but they changed; and Christianity itself was undergoing a transformation. This alteration has been taking place so quietly that it appears to have been wrought with the complete unconsciousness of clergy and congregations alike.

Recently, Canon Barnes, of Westminster, preached a sermon before some members of the British Association, and stated that belief in evolution forces believers to regard the story of Adam and Eve, Paradise and the Fall, as incredible. Speaking subsequently at Westminster Abbey, Canon Barnes said no bishop, Nonconformist divine, or scientist of note had come forward to deny explicitly that man is descended from a lower form of life, or to assert that the Fall is an historical fact.

Canon Barnes does not say so, but a general admission of the truth of Evolution sweeps away at once the old Jewish Bible legends which Christians have been accustomed to consider a sufficient explanation of all things. The legend of a fallen race at once disappears, and with it goes the myth of the talking snake, and all other strange and monstrous explanations that were necessary to harmonize the theological theory set forth. With it also goes the Bible-worship which, like so many other idolatries, has served to enchain and cramp the human intellect. The Jewish Bible must descend from its lofty pedestal and take its rank on the bookshelves among the sacred books of other and older nations.

Canon Barnes' pronouncement is the bulletin of a famous victory—for the Freethinkers. Since Charles Darwin's death, the clergy, who formerly denounced him with the whole extensive vocabulary of theological abhorrence, have hypocritically claimed him as one of their flock. They buried this black sheep in the sacred precincts of Westminster Abbey, and now many of the clergy calmly pretend that the teaching of evolution is wholly in accord with that of the Church, the Bible, and the Prayer Book, as by law established. Only two religious bodies have been quite honest in this matter. Poles asunder in so many respects, the Roman Catholic Church and the Salvation Army have remained faithful to ignorance. On no condition will these two worthy Christian bodies part with Eve and the apple, Adam and the talking snake. Roman Catholics and Salvationists alike believe that Darwin and his brilliant colleagues are suffering the torments of the damned. These uncultured folk no more believe in evolution than they understand the alphabet of science.

In fact, General Booth the Second voiced the view of these intellectual babes and sucklings in the *London Times*, and got snubbed severely for his pains. An Anglican clergyman cruelly remarked that the General had been too busy "saving souls" to have any time for reading science primers. Yet, out-of-date and unpopular though Booth's opinions may be, his position is an honest one, even if it be mistaken. Canon Barnes, Dean Inge, and the numerous other popular Anglican preachers are merely pandering to the better-read and better-schooled occupants of the pews. Neither Canon Barnes, nor the other parsons, who pretend to reconcile the teachings of science with the old-fashioned dogmas of Christianity, can explain satis-

factorily how their present opinions square with the solemn vows which they took on consecration:—"I believe all the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testament," and "I will be diligent in reading of the Holy Scriptures, and in such studies as help to the knowledge of the same, laying aside the study of the world and the flesh."

Remember, the Christian Bible is not an ordinary book. It is stamped as "God's" word by Act of Parliament; it is forced (including the story of Adam and Eve and the talking snake) into the hands of children at schools; it is used as a fetish for swearing upon in courts of law. Men and women have been robbed of their children in its name, and excluded from public positions. And people are still liable at law, to penalties for bringing it in "disbelief and contempt."

Yet it is as plain as a pikestaff that science is forcing the Church into a dangerous position, and the clergy are in desperate plight. At present, it is true, the process is confined to the tall stories of "Genesis" and the unseemly portions of "The Psalms," but, before long, the same process will be extended to the New Testament. When it is completed, the Christian religion will be a thing of shreds and patches. Then the Jewish-Christian Bible will take its proper place beside the other sacred books of the East, and the clergy will have to look for honest employment. The eviction of Adam and Eve and David is but the beginning of the end of Christianity.

MIMNERMUS.

Science and the Occult.

XII.

(Continued from Page 597.)

Spiritualism has been defended on the ground that it gives consolation to those who have lost near relatives or friends. But it is difficult seriously to argue that a great superstition should be left untouched, merely because the truth is unpleasant to a few individuals. For the higher type of mind, truth itself is an ideal at which we must always aim, whether its implications are or are not agreeable to us....If life is easier when lying on a soft bed of superstition, it is higher and more admirable when based upon the harder rock of truth. Superstition may be a luxury; but truth is a bracing tonic which makes luxury unnecessary.—*Hugh Elliot. "Modern Spiritualism." "The Quarterly Review,"* January, 1920, pp. 98-99.

UPON the arrival of Mr. Dodge and Dr. Sparhawk at Orizaba, whence they had been directed by Mrs. Piper's "controls," after their unsuccessful search of Puebla, Dr. Hodgson asks the spirit of George Pelham to direct them to the place where Connor was being kept prisoner. To which George Pelham replies, "I assure you, Hodgson, old boy, that not a stone will be left unturned by us on our side." The spirit then asks for information about the other man with Mr. Dodge, and is informed that it is Dr. Sparhawk, who is helping in the search. Although Dr. Sparhawk had come from Burlington expressly to aid in the search and had helped Mr. Dodge to ransack Puebla, it never seems to have occurred to Dr. Hodgson that if the spirit had to seek for information from him about one of the leading investigators of the mystery that it was not much use relying on the same spirit for information about the missing Connor. But Dr. Hodgson had long passed the point of criticizing the communications of the spirits. He had the bit between his teeth, and was blind to all precaution.

Under the guidance of Mrs. Piper, Mr. Dodge and Dr. Sparhawk examined all the public and private buildings in Orizaba in which it was thought Connor might be incarcerated, but all to no purpose. They did not find the slightest clue to the young man's whereabouts, and so Dr. Sparhawk started for home, leaving Mr. Dodge to pursue his investigations a little farther.

Dr. Hodgson was greatly disappointed, but he never lost faith in Mrs. Piper or her "controls." "After Dr. Sparhawk's arrival in Boston, he met Dr. Hodgson, and both went out to see Mrs. Piper. Then occurred another wonderful 'sitting.' Mrs. Piper immediately transferred the scene of operations from Orizaba back to the city of Puebla. She described a point on the hill of Guadalupe, outside and to the north of Puebla, from which the hill and building in which Dean Bridgman Connor was confined could be seen by looking across and beyond the city towards a range of snow-capped mountains. It was a vivid and accurate description of the place. Mr. Dodge came back soon after, and in the course of some 'sittings' with Mrs. Piper she reiterated her description of the scene and place near Puebla where Dean Bridgman Connor was held in captivity."

It is at this point that Mr. Philpott, the author of the book from which I have quoted, appears on the scene. Mr. Philpott was a journalist on the staff of the *Boston Globe*, of which Mr. A. A. Fowle was managing editor. Mr. Dodge was the Burlington correspondent for the *Boston Globe*, and had explained to the editor, in some detail, the strange hunt for Connor, though very little had appeared in the paper relative to the matter.

Mr. Philpott had had some success in finding people who had "mysteriously disappeared," which was probably the reason that the editor called Mr. Philpott into his room one afternoon in November, 1896, explained what he knew of the case, and asked his opinion upon it. At first the whole thing appeared so strange and bizarre that he knew not what to think of it. The idea of being guided in a search for a missing man by a medium struck him as rather novel, if not ludicrous. Naturally, as a journalist, he could see "the value of such a story as a sensation. What a story it would make if that young man could be found under the clairvoyant guidance of Mrs. Piper and rescued from his enforced captivity! It was certainly worth a try, and I made up my mind to undertake it." In one instance he had been successful in tracing a woman, after the detectives had given up the case, who had mysteriously disappeared from Boston, and was supposed to be dead, and that case did not look nearly so promising at the start as the case of Connor, in which all he had to do was to carry "out the instructions of a celebrated and reliable medium. There was something both weird and alluring in the "job." It would mark a new era in newspaper and detective work—if successful." Mr. Philpott decided to take up the case.

Mr. Philpott's first step was to call upon Mrs. Piper at her home on Arlington Heights, about eight miles from Boston. He describes her as

a comely, well-built, and healthy-looking woman of middle age, above the medium height, with brownish hair and a rather good-natured and matronly cast of countenance. She looked like a well-to-do woman, without any particularly marked characteristics, either intellectual or otherwise. I had rather expected to find a different type of woman, somebody that would show more evidence of nerves. This woman looked as cold and phlegmatic as a German *hausfrau*. She evidently never had bothered herself with metaphysical or any other kind of questions of a vague or abstract character. Somehow she reminded me of a nurse I had seen in a hospital at one time—a calm, self-possessed woman.¹

Mr. Philpott asked her if she remembered anything that happened while she was in the trance state. No, she did not, although she had made efforts to do so. When asked about Dean Bridgman Connor, she professed ignorance of the matter, but after a while she seemed to think that she had heard something about

the case. Mr. Philpott observes: "I felt at the time that she manifested an ingenuous assumption of ignorance about some things with which it seemed to me she should be somewhat familiar."

Mr. Dodge, upon his return from his fruitless search, told Mr. Philpott all he had done in Mexico, gave him all the information he possessed, and held several "sittings" with Mrs. Piper, during which she reiterated her statement that Connor was in the vicinity of Puebla. He also gave him a description of the locality, made up from Mrs. Piper's writings, "a description," says Mr. Philpott, "so definite and clear it left very little for me to do except go down to Puebla, locate the building in which the young man was confined, and have him released." Armed with this, and a letter of introduction from Richard Olney, the Secretary of State, to the diplomatic and consular officers of the United States in Mexico, Mr. Philpott started on his mission. So confident was he that his trip would be a short and successful one that he took little luggage.

Arrived at Puebla, Mr. Philpott lost no time in carrying out his instructions. He made his way through the park to the Zaragoza statue, an equestrian monument erected to commemorate the victory of the Mexican army, under General Zaragoza, over the French on May 5, 1862. Everything was found to correspond with Mrs. Piper's description. There was the hill at the rear of the monument which he was instructed to climb until he could see over the back of the horse on the monument, which gave a magnificent view of the snow-capped mountains of Popocatepetl and Iztaccihuatl, twenty miles distant. In the foreground, at a distance of seven or eight miles, ran the Cholula Valley, cut of which rose a hill upon which appeared a building or group of buildings. Here again the reality agreed perfectly with Mrs. Piper's description, so accurately in fact, says Mr. Philpott, that "I marvelled over the fact that Mrs. Piper could have described this scene when she was some four thousand miles away." This proof of Mrs. Piper's accuracy inspired Mr. Philpott with the utmost confidence that the remaining portion of her instructions would be realized. Then on the morrow all he had to do was to ride out to the building on the hill, which was undoubtedly the institution controlled by the infamous Dr. Cintz, and demand the release of Dean Bridgman Connor.

So next day he set out for the building on the hill, only to find, to his intense perplexity and disappointment that the building seen was the Cathedral of Los Remedios, one of the most ancient and most venerated buildings in Mexico. It was in charge of a native and his wife, the clergymen living in the village near by. The hill itself turned out to be an immense Aztec pyramid, the largest in Mexico. The cathedral itself was erected by the Spaniards in place of the Aztec temple with which it had been crowned, "to prove that the church erected on the very pinnacle of the Aztec religion was the church triumphant, and also to commemorate the frightful massacre of the inhabitants which occurred here.

As Mr. Philpott observes:—

The cathedral is historic, and is kept open for pilgrims and visitors.....It is needless to say there was no Dean Bridgman Connor within the sacred precincts of the cathedral, nor any such person as Dr. Cintz. No such person would be tolerated in the building, as far as living there was concerned, for the natives are exceedingly jealous of their places of worship. A place of worship is sacred ground to them in no ordinary sense. It would be considered sacrilege to keep such a person as Dean Bridgman Connor in the place. Yet this was the only building on a distinct eminence in the vicinity.²

Mr. Philpott did not know at this time that it was

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

² *Ibid.*, p. 60.

³ Philpott, *The Search of Dean Bridgman Connor*, pp. 94-95.

during the visit of Mr. Dodge and Dr. Sparhawk to Puebla in the preceding November that the monument to General Zaragoza had been unveiled, the city being given up to a three days' fête, with such rejoicings as had never been witnessed before. He did not know that they had been present at the dedication of the monument, which made a deep impression upon all who witnessed it. It is clear that Mrs. Piper gained all her knowledge of the locality from the two visitors who had been there, who had, no doubt, also discussed the possibility or probability of Connor being confined in the building seen in the distance. They themselves did not go out to investigate the building; therefore they did not know it was a cathedral, and consequently Mrs. Piper did not know, or she would not have located the missing man there.

The discovery of the cathedral came as a great shock to Mr. Philpott. He says:—"I was dazed for the moment after being shown about the cathedral by the native woman, and after I went out I stood for a long time in silence looking over the immense wall which surrounded the paved plaza on the top of the pyramid, and revolving in my mind what course to pursue next." For the first time a doubt as to Mrs. Piper's marvellous powers obtruded itself, for, as he himself remarks:—"It must be borne in mind that the finding of Dean Bridgman Connor, important as that was, was in a sense incidental to the proving of the truth of Mrs. Piper's remarkable trance statements." W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

Freethought and Buddhism.

It is all folly.—*Dean Swift.*

The gift of truth is above all other gifts.—*Buddhist saying.*

I.—THE GOD IDEA.

I DO not believe in labels, and therefore profess myself neither Buddhist nor Freethinker, but in the case of two so kindred cults, any misrepresentation of one by the other, however slight, is regrettable, and this occurs, no doubt unintentionally, on page 247 of the *Freethinker* for Aug. 29. Mr. Lloyd says: "Primitive Buddhism had no doctrine of immortality," and "that Materialism is the dominant philosophy in China to-day which recognises neither God nor a future state." This implies that modern Buddhism has a doctrine of immortality. Immortality and its opposite, as I shall point out directly, are ambiguous terms, and even in answering a fool according to his folly were better dropped.

The two great non-sacrificial religions of China both ignore the idea of God completely, *i.e.*, Buddhism, at least in its uncorrupted form, and Confucianism. Buddhists, however, expressly deny that they are materialists, and in China the belief in one religion does not exclude, as in the West, the belief in another one. "We are all Buddhists in China," a Chinese said to me one day in Penang. Buddhism, however, which, unlike the long fiddle-faced Western creeds, does not exclude wit and humour, or even fun and banter, altogether excludes the idea of a personal God, and forbids any sort of praying to any sort of god as idolatry.

In the "little piggy" parable, and the story, "You may go further and fare worse," even Brummer, the semi-personal form of the most negative conception of Deity ever imagined by the human mind, Brummer—even Brummer has no temple or worshippers—is made fun of in the most amusing and merciless manner. Anyone at all practically conversant with genuine Buddhism knows that practical Atheism is the root and foundation of the cult. Though this is a digression, I may observe that, even in the case of modern Hindus, the

word God means something nowadays so totally distinct from what it does to Jews, Christians, or even Mohammedans that any generalizing as to any sort of necessary connection between our idea of God and religion seems quite out of place. Vedantists often, or generally, on attainment consider themselves God. True, I have known more than one half-crazy Protestant that thought as much and said so. But with Hindus in general the term God may be applied to almost anything: To smallpox, stones, trees, serpents, English officers, or even the late King Edward VII. It means little more than Your Excellency or Right Dishonourable. By modern pious Hindus the actual idols are looked upon largely as useful aids to concentration and auto-suggestion, and the God idea is certainly very often an object half of reverence and half of ridicule.

To return to Buddhism. "The gift of truth is above all other gifts, and its cult is not furthered by any sort of misstatements of fact, from mistaken ideas of policy.

Now, first of all, the Godless creed of Buddhism began more than 500 years before that of Christ. Moreover, it spread with rapidity all over India, and then through the most populous and ancient civilizations; above all, in the extreme east, Central and Northern Asia, and extended as far as Alexandria, in Egypt, and the Balkans—the Bohemians, Albyenies, and other Christian heretics being in great part inspired by it. Not only this, but for more than 1,000 years it retained its hold on the whole of India and Ceylon, both before the arrival of the Mohammedans, the Portuguese, and the English, not only densely populated, but prosperous, rich, and happy. On the other hand, Christianity began more than 500 years later, and diffused itself almost exclusively in Europe—the ravelled sleeve of Asia—a small continent thinly populated, and mainly by semi-savages. If we turn to modern times and to merely counting heads, with China not less than 400 million, believers in the essentially Atheist religion of the real or imaginary Buddha must number over half a milliard. It is not fair, however, merely to count heads, genuine Buddhism being based exclusively on reason and common sense; those Buddhists who have given a wrench to their reason in order to embroider over it superstitions similar to the Christian ones are in spite of this fundamentally, by the force of circumstances, inherently Buddhist, because in practical life they are forced to rely upon and believe in common sense and reason. Just the opposite is the case with Christians. In order to believe their insane doctrines they are forced to give the lie to their reason and common sense. In practical life, however, they are forced to rely upon and believe in the latter. Consequently they are all of them more or less mere nominal believers; practically they have to be believers in reason and common sense, and thus implicitly deny their Christianity.

But, setting aside the question of truth and honesty, and turning to that of tactics and expediency, it appears to me again that honesty is far and away the best policy. Christianity breaks down altogether without a personal Deity. How much better policy it would be, then, instead of dogmatically asserting the false statement that religion and the idea of God are indissolubly united, to appeal to the Christians as follows:—"My poor imbecile Christian brothers, if your sick souls cannot get along without 'religion,' do not forget that it is only your own deplorable superstition and other similar sacrificial ones that depend upon a Deity. The idea of God, indeed, and sacrificial religion may always go together, but only because the idea of Gods and sacrificial religions both spring directly from the grossest forms of cannibalism. If, I say, your sick souls cannot do without a religion, why not espouse one which at any rate does not require the belief in a Deity whose dupes are ordered to perfect one another by suffering, by war, torture, and acts of

mutual cruelty, because the superstition itself is merely a modification of primeval cannibalism, and merely a pretext to enjoy the sentiments, where it is not possible to practice the bloody rites themselves even at the present day. If you cannot get along without a religion, reflect that that does not in the least commit you to believe in a Deity which is at best your own virtues, but generally your virtues or vices, or both writ large, for the vast majority of really good and religious people believe in a culture which ignores or denies the idea of Deity altogether."

Genoa, September 9, 1920. W. W. STRICKLAND.
(To be concluded.)

Acid Drops.

The Christian conscience is one of the most curious things in the world, and the British variety of it the most hypocritical and humbugging. An objection is made in the *Times* against the money being raised for the restoration of Westminster Abbey by anything so wicked as a ball. At least the dancers will not be dressed, or rather undressed—as David was when he danced before the Lord. But the strange thing is that the Church of England has three and a half millions invested in war bonds, and no one raises a protest against the Church taking money that is a tax upon the whole of the people. It is money made out of the war; if the Church had meant anything by its talk it should have at least the decency to lend the money free of interest. Making money out of a dance is certainly as commendable as making money out of war.

The Congregational Union has decided to expunge from its marriage service the promise to obey. We do not suppose that it will make much difference either way, so far as practice is concerned. Its retention was in no sense a guarantee that the woman would obey. It was chiefly interesting as showing what the religious conception of the nature of woman was, and is. Man is the superior animal, and woman is born to obey him. That is the Christian doctrine, and the one for which the Churches have always stood.

A Church organist at Colchester was charged with stealing apples. She may console herself with the reflection that it was apples that landed our first parents in trouble.

Mr. C. R. W. Nevinson has drawn a poster advertising Mr. Maugham's play, "The Unknown," but the Underground Railway authorities refuse to permit its appearance. The poster depicts Christ, but perhaps Mr. Nevinson makes him look too cheerful, or perhaps it is that he looks more depressing than usual. Anyway, the poster is banned. Mr. Nevinson says that he meant to depict the truth "that faith will in the end triumph over any form of scientific reasoning or doubt." Mr. Nevinson will not mind us saying that that strikes us as very stupid. If he had said that faith will triumph over science for a time we should have been inclined to agree with him. But that it should triumph "in the end" is simply inconceivable. In the end faith has to give way to facts. And it always does so. What emerges is another form of faith based upon facts or upon a compromise with them. But "in the end"! Mr. Nevinson must try again.

The dead hand is a great factor in the perpetuation of superstition. The late Miss Emily Maynard, of Westbourne Terrace, London, left £10,000 to the Church of England Board of Finance, £5,000 each to the Church Army, Bible Women's Mission, the Society for Propagation of the Gospel, and the Church Zenana Missionary Society. Another unmarried woman, Miss Louisa Milne, of St. Leonards, left £1,000 to the Scottish National Bible Society.

Professor Frederick Soddy, the eminent Oxford scientist, asked what Britain would be like in ten years if she

had the wit to apply profits to constructive uses of the uttermost powers of science. It is, indeed, a pointed question. It beggars the imagination to think what would happen if Science had at command even the resources of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, whose millions are spent in perpetuating barbarism.

The Nonconformist journalists have been laying the flattery on with a trowel concerning the Pilgrim Fathers, who were rather assertive and opinionated men. This reminds us of the fine jest of Joseph Choate, the witty American Ambassador, that: "I have always admired the Pilgrim Fathers, but I have an even greater admiration for the Pilgrim Mothers. They had to live with the Pilgrim Fathers."

The following is sent us by a Vancouver correspondent, who unfortunately omits to append the name of the paper from which the clipping is taken. However, we print it as it appears:—

William Rogers, Thirtieth Avenue and St. Catherine's Street, threw a wrench into the legal machinery of Magistrate Shaw's Court to-day when he announced that he did not propose to be sworn on the Bible.

"Have you religious scruples?" asked the magistrate.

"I have," replied Rogers.

"What are they?" queried the Bench.

The witness said he did not believe the Bible was true.

"That seems to me to be rather a lack of religious scruples," was the retort.

City Prosecutor McKay remarked that he had never seen an affirmation refused.

Magistrate Shaw—I have, and I do not think this man is entitled to give evidence. He expresses no belief, and the ruling is that no infidel can be a competent witness in Canada.

Rogers said that forty years of personal experience and prayer had taught him that the Bible was not true.

"But you believe in God?" said Mr. McKay.

"I hope," replied the witness, "I hope there is a better God than the God of the Bible."

"If Mr. Macdonald, who is appearing for the defence, will agree to my taking this man's statement as I would take that of a child of tender years, I will do so," said the Court, "but I do not feel that he should be allowed to give evidence under an affirmation."

Mr. D. A. Macdonald objected to the witness, and he was stood aside pending the bringing of authorities by Mr. McKay in support of the admission of his evidence.

Rogers, according to documentary evidence which was put in before adjournment of the case until Friday was taken, claimed that the Swift Canadian Company had sold him bacon which was of less than invoice weight, the amount involved being about one pound in a piece of some seven pounds weight.

We do not know if the law in Vancouver is what Magistrate Shaw—who appears to be a peculiarly bigoted specimen of the Jack-in-office—says it is, but, if he is correct, the sooner Vancouver brings itself into line with the civilized world the better. It may be well within the experience of Magistrate Shaw that his religious acquaintances need a God to keep them from telling a lie, and that even the deity cannot always make them speak the truth, but we can assure him and others that the ordinary Free-thinker can well dispense with such an aid for cripples.

We see from the *Bolton Evening News* that Father Leslie Walker is of opinion that the reason why Christianity is losing its hold on the people is because the Churches are at war with one another. That is all nonsense. Christians have always been at war with one another. That never made Christians doubt their faith; it had rather the contrary effect. The more they fought about it, the more they loved it. People never do mind fighting about anything they value. The trouble about the Churches to-day is that so many do not think Christianity worth fighting for. Belief in Christianity is dying, and the plea of some of the clergy for reunion is no more than a recognition of the fact that if they do not hang together they will soon hang separately.

The Rev. W. M. Tatham, vicar of Camley, was fined at Doncaster for cruelty to geese which were crowded in a basket sent to market. The influence of the Holy Spirit is not traceable in this case.

Those starving clergy keep on leaving wealth when they go to Heaven—or the other place. The Rev. W. Maddison, Vicar of Gosforth, left £6,141.

Judge Rutherford, of New York, president of the International Bible Students' Association, has been preaching at the Albert Hall, London. He contends that the world has come to an end, and the millennium will shortly start. Millions of Christians now living will never die. The Judge will upset the Undertakers' Union.

"Too many of my d—d apples" was a parent's apology for his son's absence from school at Farnham. That was also the reason for Adam and Eve's expulsion from Eden—if Canon Barnes will permit us to mention it.

A request that the Rev. B. Cornford, of Southsea, be deprived of his living has been made to the Bishop of Winchester by a local branch of a trade union. The reverend gentleman will mention that trade union in his prayers.

The *Daily Telegraph* has been publishing a series of articles on West Africa, and a recent one deals with the missionaries. The writers say that a great majority of administrators will support them in saying that, "first, it is useless to offer Christianity to the Moslem in place of his own belief, and, secondly, that Mohammedanism is far more easy of assimilation by the pagan than is Christianity." One doctor and missionary combined, said to be a "very honest person" (quite a suspicious distinction in this connection), confessed that after a year's work he had only made one convert, "but I don't trust him." That is a very common attitude towards converts, and in many cases people refuse to employ them because they cannot be trusted. It is common in South Africa and elsewhere to see the notice, "No missionary need apply."

A Jesuit quoted by the writers said that while Christianity eradicates certain vices from the native systems, it develops the extremely unpleasant qualities of lying and stealing. The same person said that it would take 300 years before a Christianized native community would show the same belief in the efficacy of Christianity which is often to be found in the depraved of our own colour. That is certainly a testimony to the fine influence of Christianity on the native African. Finally, here is an example of the quality of converts, taken from the experience of the writers:—

One of your correspondents had a very faithful clerk, who hailed from Cape Coast Castle. To use a colloquialism, he was a treasure. His wife having presented him with a little son, he was asked whether he would like it baptized by the Church of England Missionary Society clergyman. He hummed and hawed a little, and then said: "Well, sir, the fact is I was baptized a Wesleyan, but I always attend the Roman Catholic services; and on the whole I think it would be just as well if my boy were baptized by a Mallam" (a Mohammedan priest). Such a case is by no means exceptional; in fact, it is common; but it must not be taken as representing anything derogatory either to the good faith or the self-sacrifice of those who believe they have had a call and respond thereto.

Perhaps not. But it does speak volumes as to the truthfulness of the stories that are sent home, and in virtue of which large sums are collected. The truth is that there is no greater imposture in the world than the foreign missionary movement. Often it is a mere cover for trading and for exploiting native labour. And it is not without its significance that so many of our merchant princes support these missions and are quite convinced that England is entrusted by Providence with the task of carrying the gospel to the heathen.

We said last week that the real cure for the "Jewish question" was to teach each side to forget its religion. What we said has just received illustration by the action of Hungary, which has decided that only a restricted number of Jews are to be permitted to attend the Universities. That was one of the regulations in Holy Russia, under the Czar, which added the further infamy of permitting Jewish girls to live outside the pale provided they registered themselves as prostitutes. Hungary, one of the petty new

States that the Allies have set up, is evidently determined to show that Czarism, expelled from Russia, may find a home elsewhere.

If only we could take all the priests and rabbis, mollahs and medicine men, confine them on some island, and forbid all intercourse with the civilized world, we should have gone a long way towards seeing the end of our troubles.

The Roman Catholics in New Zealand are still at it in their opposition to the proposed amendment of the marriage law in that country. Archbishop O'Shea now declares that it makes it a penal offence to teach the Catholic doctrine of marriage. The amendment does nothing of the kind. It simply prohibits the Catholics declaring other marriages invalid. The Catholic is fighting, not for the preservation of his own form of marriage, which is not threatened, but for the liberty to declare other people's forms, in this case the form decreed by the State, as of no account. He is asking for legal permission to play the bully and the slanderer.

But that is the typical Christian all over. He is never content with liberty to follow his own inclinations, unless it embraces the liberty of interfering with other people. He is, for example, not content with the liberty to attend church on Sunday, what he wants is the power to interfere with other people who do not wish to go. And when he is not allowed to shut up the shops of other people, because he does not wish to buy, and to stop amusements because he does not wish to play, he at once declares that Christians are being persecuted, and that Christian liberty is being interfered with. In fact, all over the world, and in every age, if the Christian is given his head he becomes a public nuisance and a moral absurdity. If people only had a sense of humour, they would laugh this ridiculous creature out of existence. But our Christian upbringing has so dulled that saving grace that the hardest thing in the world is to get people to divest themselves of a depressing solemnity when dealing with this ridiculous creed.

The *Church Times* thinks the film may be of great use in reconstructing ecclesiastical history. We presume that our pious contemporary means "constructing" ecclesiastical history, since there is precious little of that commodity that has not been manufactured to order. It would, however, be rather interesting to see depicted on the film a council of Churchmen deciding how to manufacture the number of spurious documents that go to make up the Christian annuals, or a body of priests arranging for an *auto da fé*, or the Christian method of determining whether a woman was a witch, or the condemnation of Galileo by the Church for teaching the movement of the earth. We should much like to see a faithful reproduction on the screen of Christian history. But what we are more likely to have is a continuance of the Christian lie up to date, the noble and self-sacrificing Christian, the ignoble and selfish non-Christian, etc. All that the screen presents to the master-liars of history is the opportunity to add to their record.

The Rev. B. R. Clutterbuck, vicar of Talbot, says that his favourite hobby is "sawing wood." In this respect he may be said to be imitating the Founder of the Christian Religion.

The Rev. G. I. James, Vicar of Christ Church, Bridlington, died suddenly while preparing to officiate at "holy communion." At Sudbury, Stationmaster Nibloc fell dead on his way to church. John Swift, of New Barnet, committed suicide after reading the Bible. It must be exciting to be a Christian nowadays.

A very cute man is the Vicar of West Wycombe. He asked his parishioners to contribute lumps of coal for the harvest thanksgiving. We imagine that the vicarage is short of firing, or else the price of coal has determined the departure from the ordinary course.

Special.

On the death of our late editor, when I became formally responsible for the future of this journal, I said that I had two objects in view. The first was the preservation of the paper. That, thanks to the cordial help of the readers, has been so far accomplished, and, short of a quite unexpected disaster, I am under no anxiety on that head, so far as continued existence is concerned.

The second purpose was to make the *Freethinker* financially self-supporting. That has been a much harder task, and, owing to the prolongation of war conditions, is not yet accomplished. Still, I am hopeful, even here. The war that was to end war must itself end some day, and normal conditions must come again. The world cannot always continue in a state of fever, any more than can an individual. And, in spite of the recurring deficits, some progress has been made towards this end. It must be remembered that under the old conditions the paper only just paid its way, and that it was found necessary to raise an annual honorarium to pay the editor something for his trouble. Now, with an increased cost of production which amounts to over £20 per week, we have come within six or seven pounds per week of paying our way, and that certainly is an advance, and a promise of easier times ahead—one day. I can, therefore, say with justice that of the two objects, one is accomplished, and the other bids fair to materialize.

Now, the relations between the *Freethinker* and its readers are not of the kind that normally exist between a paper and its readers; they are of a much more friendly and personal nature. And for that reason I feel that it is only just to inform them of another step that has been taken to realize purpose No. 2.

The rapid and apparently unceasing rise in the cost of printing, even before the war was over, led us to look round as to methods of retrenchment. And after full consideration it was decided that a Linotype machine should be installed, which would not only reduce the cost of wages to compositors, but would also allow a greater output at a reduced cost. It meant, of course, a considerable outlay, but the situation had to be faced unless one made a large subsidy a perpetuity, and quite abandoned the idea of making the paper pay its way. This would have been a very timid policy, and so, after some delay—one orders things and patiently waits their arrival—the machine was installed, and the last three issues of the paper have been wholly machine set. I think all will agree that it has not suffered in appearance.

The expenditure has been—for a business wholly without capital—considerable. The machine and its installation, etc., has cost about £1,100. (The present price of a Linotype is about £1,250, so from that point of view we have a very good asset.) I have had to borrow the whole of that sum, and have so spread the loan that anyone may have his money returned on giving an agreed notice. The money has been borrowed at a very moderate rate of interest, and I am greatly indebted to those who have come forward so readily. My share of the business is the added responsibility, but a little more or less of that will not matter.

It is also proposed to establish, as soon as possible, a sinking fund, so that the debt will be paid off in a given number of years, and at the end of that time the whole of the advantage secured by the machine will be available to meet expenses. Until then we shall at least have the machinery for a larger output without an increase in the wages bill. And that is certainly something nowadays.

I think, then, it may safely be said that we have taken a very considerable step towards putting the *Freethinker* on a more satisfactory basis. For the

present, and until the price of paper and other expenses fall a little, we must face the present weekly deficit, but I think we may take it that this new move will have stopped its growing larger. I live in hopes that I shall see realized the second of the objects I set myself. And if I do not see it, I can console myself with the reflection that I have made it the more possible for my successor.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Our Sustentation Fund.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

Previously acknowledged, £218 10s. 3d. M. T. S., £3; C. H. Pugh, £1 1s.; J. M. Cartney, £1; Mr. and Mrs. R. H. Rosetti, 2s. 6d.; Mr. and Mrs. Gorrie, £1; P. M., 2s.; S. G. H., 5s.; W. A. Elvidge, 10s.; R. J. Clerk, 5s.; G. Wallace, £1; G. Smith, £1; S. W. Soper, 5s.; E. Langridge, 5s.; "A Grateful Freethinker, No. 2," 8s. 3d.; R. B. Harrison, 5s.; A. Goodman, £1; T. Dunbar, 5s.; E. Snelling, £1; "Apoxyomenos, £5; H. Tucker, 10s.; Mrs. Ralston, 10s.; E. A. H., 5s.; "Mac," 4s.; S. M. Gimson, £2 2s.; J. Wills, £5; S. Hicks, £1; J. W. Wearing, 2s. 6d.; J. Harrison, £1 1s.; H. Good, £1; "Science," 5s.; F. S. Keebles, 2s.; F. H. H., 2s. 6d.; H. B., 2s. 6d.; J. Ralston, 2s. 6d.; P. M., 2s.; C. Rudd, £2 2s.; J. Williams, £1 1s.; F. Collins, £1; P. and J. P., 10s.; J. D. L., £1; Miss A. M. Baker, £1; J. and J. Crompton, £5.

Per A. Vanderhout—F. Howell, 5s.; F. Holderworth, 2s. 6d.; "Friend," 3s.; H. Stanton, 10s.; V. Smith, 10s.; V. Collins, 10s.; D. Aberdeen, 5s.; M. Ettinger, 5s.; R. K. Gunn, 5s.; A. Vanderhout, 10s.

Total, £263 9s. 6d.

The "Christian" Peacemakers.

Among the signatories of a manifesto entitled "War—A Call to Christians" were seven clergymen and other well-known Christians, some of whom supported "the holy war to end all war." The Editor of *Common Sense* appended the following footnote:—"Do the signatories realize that we (the British Empire) are already busily engaged in at least ten wars, mostly for the purpose of acquiring other people's territory or coercing peoples who want to govern themselves?"

They have preached the doctrine of hate
'Neath banner of Christian love;
They have pillaged, and burnt, and lied,
For a mythical Heav'n above.

They have scourged, and tortured, and slain,
In the name of the Lamb who died;
With the sword they have carved a cross,
And the innocent crucified.

In a deluge of blood and tears,
The sins of the world they have laved;
With thumbscrew and gallows, and rack,
The soul of the heretic saved.

In the blood of ten million men
Is written the love of *their* God—
In terror, starvation, and death,
The might of His chastening rod.

They have murdered, and lied in vain,
For the people *know* that they lied;
Now they preach the Gospel of Peace,
To the world they have crucified.

The laughter of Judas and Cain—
For of such are their Christian peers;
Shall mock their blood-stained rites and creeds,
Through the swirl of the wasted years.

PERCY ALLOTT

To Correspondents.

M. T. S.—It is pleasant to have the thanks of a contributor to the Fund for the "pleasure of having the chance of helping." "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver."

W. ELVIDGE.—We hope we shall never make the blunder of estimating anyone's interest by the size of his subscription. There is a perennial truth in the "widow's mite."

MR. AND MRS. GORRIE.—Pleased to have the support of two twenty years' readers of the paper.

BENEVOLENT FUND N. S. S.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—R. B. Harrison, 2s. 6d.

W. H. MORRIS.—MSS. to hand. Mr. Cohen will write you soon, but we shall not be able to commence publication of the "Sociological Study of Religion" for some weeks. There are some articles that we have had standing by so long that we blush every time we look at them, and live in hourly expectation of their authors coming round to the office with an axe.

J. O. TRESON.—We have nothing in print at the moment that would be of use to you. Mr. Cohen's *Foreign Missions*, published a few years ago, might have been of help, but that is out of print, and the author has not a copy in his possession that he could send you.

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

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

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Friends who send us newspapers would enhance the favour by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—

The United Kingdom.—One year, 17s. 6d.; half year, 8s. 9d.; three months, 4s. 6d.

Foreign and Colonial.—One year, 15s.; half year, 7s. 6d.; three months, 3s. 9d.

Sugar Plums.

Some of our friends have not been long in taking up the challenge thrown down by "Medical" in last week's paper. By Monday's post we received a promise of a further £50, "in memory of the late Sir Hiram Maxim," if the £1,000 is reached, including promises, and Mr. J. B. Middleton writes: "I am very much impressed with the letter of 'Medical,' and am quite prepared to forward £10 should the fund reach £490; also, if your readers show their grit and make it £990, I will forward another £10, making my contribution £25 in all. It is up to your readers to do their part." As we said last week, the matter is quite in the hands of our readers. We quite believe that if the suggestion is acted on it should see the end of the financial trouble. We will do our best to push it if enough of our friends appear to desire that we should do so.

We cannot quote this week from the many kindly letters we have received from contributors, but we cannot forbear the following from that staunch old friend of the movement, Mr. Sidney Gimson. He writes: "I believe I have had every number of the *Freethinker* since it started. I still possess the famous Christmas number which brought about the prosecution of Mr. Foote and others, and I can truthfully say that I have never enjoyed it better than I do now, under your direction. Good luck to you!" And that we consider high praise indeed.

Friends in the Manchester district will please note that Mr. Lloyd visits Failsworth to-day (October 3). He will lecture in the afternoon at 2.45, and in the evening at 6.30. The meeting-place is the Secular Hall, Pole Lane, Failsworth. We hope to hear that the hall is crowded on both occasions.

Mr. Cohen had two capital meetings on Sunday last at Llanelly and Swansea. Llanelly was quite new ground, there never having been a Freethought lecture before in that very chapelly town. It was the more pleasing to note the appreciative manner in which the address was received, and the admirable order that was maintained under the very persuasive chairmanship of Mr. Neft. The sale of literature was also an indication of interest in Freethought in the place. A noticeable feature of the meeting was the number of young men and ladies. We shall expect good things from Llanelly in the future.

Before leaving Llanelly Mr. Cohen paid a visit to Mr. Dan Griffiths, who was unfortunately laid up with an attack of influenza, and then went on to Swansea, arriving there in time for the meeting in the Elysium. Wisely, the branch had taken the larger hall, and the move was justified by the audience. Mr. Warner occupied the chair with distinction, and the lecture was followed with the keenest zest by the audience. If only the right man would come forward there is in South Wales good ground for almost constant employment. But the right man cannot be made; the society can only keep its eyes open for him when he arrives. But it is a matter in which the N. S. S. Executive would cheerfully co-operate if the opportunity presents itself.

Next week (October 10) Mr. Cohen visits Glasgow. He will lecture at Paisley on the Monday evening, and at Falkirk on the Tuesday. We cannot give further particulars at the time of writing, but they will appear in our next issue.

One of our readers informs us that at a meeting of the Executive of the National Amalgamated Furnishing Trades Association it was decided to send a resolution in favour of secular education to the Minister of Education. This, we believe, is in pursuance of a vote of the whole Association in favour of the same policy. We shall be glad to hear of other organisations that have adopted a similar line of action. It is a matter that goes deeper into the roots of reform than most people think, and until the working classes of this country pay attention to securing a sound system of education their best ideals will certainly lack realization.

Freethought and Neo-Malthusianism.

SOME recent letters to the *Freethinker* have contained assurances that there is an intimate connection between Freethought and Neo-Malthusianism. Well-known Freethinkers have been quoted in support of this contention, and it is possible that readers of this paper will draw the conclusion that an acceptance of the Neo-Malthusian doctrines is an essential qualification in supporters of the Freethought movement. To forestall such a deduction, I hasten to give an emphatic denial to the original statement that there is any link between the two. I shall attempt to prove the contrary—that they are poles apart. A Freethinker is one who has an ardent and unquenchable desire for truth, which he or she loves supremely as the means of human development and happiness. A Neo-Malthusian merely follows a certain course, which he judges to be expedient. Freethought is a principle extending throughout all the ramifications of life; Neo-Malthusianism is one of the many make-shifts to which man is driven to attain one of his ends.

The great Rationalists of past ages were concerned with the freedom of the human mind and the disinterested love of truth, which is destined to lead

mankind to higher levels of thought, feeling, and action. Their noble work throughout the centuries does not reach its final consummation in the subjection of womanhood. It tends rather to render her more completely mistress of herself. Freethinkers are doing the worst possible disservice to their cause by associating it with such a temporary masculine expedient as Neo-Malthusian practices. No modern organisation can hope to advance if it lack the support of earnest, intelligent women; but if Freethought be indissolubly coupled with degrading the supreme function of womanhood to the uses of sense, then the fine spiritual women will stand aside from the Freethought movement. It may be quite true that many well-known male Freethinkers spent much time in advocating the reduction of the population by artificial means; but their authority has no weight with woman, for man cannot unfold to woman the truths of her own nature. He can but dimly reflect the light she gives him, and he naturally lacks faith in what his own consciousness does not report to him of human sensation and emotion.

As a woman Freethinker, I am concerned with the defence of woman's integrity. It is not generally realised by men that feminine physiology pre-supposes a feminine psychology. Since her organism is more complex, and her totality of function is larger than man's, it follows that the physical difference carries with it psychical facts of which the corporeal phenomena are but symbols and signs. She possesses an over-life of consciousness, emotion, and sympathy of which man can only be a spectator. As he does not share it, he is sceptical of its profound realities. Each phase of woman's deeper experiences transcends his capacity for feeling and knowing, and therefore he is here, whatever his intellectual power and pride elsewhere may be, a little child to be led and taught.

Woman is not characteristically sensual, as man is, but affectional, and will subordinate sense in herself to love, allowing it as a vehicle, but not as a principal. That spirituality is the attribute of the maiden in the first dawning of love must be recognised by most men who possess any insight in these matters. She regards the super-sensual love-union as the one important fact, taking little thought for the material side till she is brought to it by her lover. The union of hearts is wedlock to her. As her nature blossoms out under the influence of love, she feels the need to give herself, and looks through her lavish feeling and emotion to maternity as its ultimatum. The fully conscious woman who has never known maternity thinks of it as the sum and crown of her love. What is an end ardently desired by man is only a means to her and quite overlooked in view of the end. In woman preparation for maternity is not only physical, but also emotional and affectional. Rightly to fulfil her sacred mission, she must live in the clearest thought she is capable of, and preserve her utmost integrity, both of which are of infinite significance in the building up of a fine humanity. One of my opponents challenges my statement that the use of contraceptives tends to a coarsening of the finer nature. The injury done to woman's deep interior self cannot be accurately gauged by her external behaviour towards man. The few fine children in any generation are born from free mothers, who brought a complete selfhood to bear on the artistic task of moulding a human being. Integrity of soul, as well as of body, is needed for that illustrious work, and he who persuades woman to divorce function from use, and thus impair the unity of her being, not only wrongs the individual woman, but, like robber bees, steals from the golden stores which should feed posterity. He is faithless to that divine call, "Keep the young generation in hail," and wrests to his own use what should be reserved for the child.

Let the fundamental truth of woman's position in relation to man be once realised, and Neo-Malthusian practices will be condemned as the profane prostitution of the sacred artistic maternal capacity of the feminine to the demands of man's sense. Had man but insight and capacity to appreciate woman at her true worth, he would treasure her as the pure minister of his happiness. He would give her freedom to fulfil her rightful destiny—"in love, the absolute mistress of its rites; in maternity, the free glad artist; in society, the creator of the spiritual feminine good; and in moral and spiritual progress, an indispensable leader." From women thus freed would be born the finer sort of men, the poets, artists and seers who would regenerate society. But the average man disbelieves in the love that lives in the spirit, and only expresses itself through the senses in accordance with the purest emotions and purposes. He degrades the love-relations because he seeks them as an end and not as a means, and treats the nobler standard as a woman's dream. Hence the world is peopled with men of the baser sort, in whom selfish passions still predominate.

It is because the pure springs of life have been so muddied that the martyrdom of man has been prolonged for ages. The conditions of permanence in any civilization depend on the honour paid to woman and the reverence for maternity. "Motherhood," said G. W. Foote, "is the most sacred fact in existence, and the origin of all culture and morality." Empires and civilizations have fallen because they have failed to recognise this fact. In Egypt, Greece, and Rome, woman never reached her highest and truest self. The courtesan was given higher social status than the mother. The most intellectual women accepted a sceptre whose very touch polluted the sources of life in the nation. Under these circumstances, genius, science, art, philosophy, generalship, statesmanship could not save these civilizations. Will modern States learn no lesson from their downfall? It seems not, for women are not only being more fully exploited in the economic sphere, but as increased scientific knowledge provides more subtle means, in her sexual life also.

The Gods alone

Remember everlastingly; they strike
Remorselessly, and ever like for like.
By their great memories the Gods are known.

Is it possible that "those firm laws which we name Gods" will fail to operate in Western civilizations? The evils under which we now labour—the monstrous system of exploitation with its attendant horrors of prostitution, prisons, workhouses, lunatic asylums, reformatories, and its crowning hell of war—are due to the exclusive play of the masculine qualities of acquisition, lust of fame, and love of sensual pleasures. Intense economic pressure has driven man to Neo-Malthusian practices, and thus human beings render themselves neuter by way of accommodation to a debasing environment.

But as you will; we'll sit contentedly,
And eat our pot of honey on the grave.

What a contrast this is to Freethought, which, by liberating the minds of men and women, and thus generating a "divine discontent," rouses them to transform the environment, instead of submitting to it! For men alone, the task is too heavy. The stone of Sisyphus rolls ever down again. It can only be accomplished with the aid of such women as Shelley's wife.

And what art thou? I know, but dare not speak:
Time may interpret to his silent years.
Yet in the paleness of thy thoughtful cheek,
And in the light thine ample forehead wears,
And in thy gentle speech, a prophecy
Is whispered, to subdue my fondest fears:
And, through thine eyes, even in thy soul I see
A lamp of vestal fire burning internally.

FRANCES PREWETT.

A Searcher for Truth.

IN a recent article I remarked that I was more interested in what the intelligent layman has to say for the theological interpretation of the universe than in the more or less professionally biased prelections and treatises of the clerical apologist.—As a rule, the cleric says just what we would expect him to say on the subject. How the ordinary fairly well-read man or woman regards the case for the supernatural is of vastly greater importance, for upon this depends ultimately the perpetuation or destruction of clericalism itself.

Another volume embodying the views of a non-clerical believer in the reality of mind and purpose in nature has come my way. The book is written by J. Horton, and is published by Williams and Norgate. It is entitled *My Search for Truth, and What I Found*; and the writer makes it plain that in his search for truth he has managed to get rid of all his earlier dogmatic beliefs. He was brought up in an unusually strict doctrinal fashion, and believed in conditional immortality. He had reached middle age before the blow fell which shook him out of the complacent orthodoxy of the sect in which he had been reared. This blow was the death of his son at the age of nineteen. It was not, however, the mere death of his son that broke down his own narrow religious creed, but the terrible fact that his son had not died a baptised believer, and as a consequence (if the father's creed were true) must be lost for all eternity. A devastating thought for a parent to entertain! Who would be responsible for bringing anyone at all into the world if he really believed in his heart that such damnable doctrines had any truth in them?

But nature gives the lie to religious beliefs, and revolts against them, and one is glad to find that with Mr. Horton human nature and human love proved stronger than his accursed religious creed, and that the former impelled him to discard the latter. As he truly says, we can, in our religious views, ruthlessly and thoughtlessly condemn people and nations to oblivion who are personally nothing to us, but we cannot show this indifference when it concerns one who is dearer to us than life itself. We are brought to a standstill then at once. The upshot of being thus brought face to face with all that was implied in his creed was that Mr. Horton determined to think things out for himself, to search the Scriptures in the light of his own reason, and to put on one side the teaching which had been instilled into him from his childhood. This course would doubtless have led him inevitably to the acceptance of Secularism pure and simple had he carried it out comprehensively. As, however, we leave him at the finish with faith in God and Christ—though minus all religious dogma—it is evident that the disillusioning process failed of completeness.

On commencing his examination of the grounds of his religious faith, he bought a new Bible, giving both versions in parallel columns, and read it through twice with the utmost care, marking every passage which appeared to him as beautiful and good. He tells us he was surprised to find what a small total these passages made as compared with the bulk of the book. We can well believe that anyone who has grown up in the notion that the Bible is the word of God must be dismayed on discovering how little a searching analysis yields to justify such a conclusion.

It has been indicated above that Mr. Horton, in his search for truth, while jettisoning quite a cargo of dogma, did not altogether clear his mind of theological assumptions. We find him asserting that the existence of God "is a fact demonstrated and proved on every

hand beyond the possibility of a doubt." This is simply to say the thing which is not; and is a very foolish utterance to come from anyone who professes to be a seeker after truth. Mr. Horton, after mature consideration, may *believe* in the existence of God, but to maintain that it is a demonstrated and proved fact is the height of absurdity. The problem of Theism is not just so easy as that, otherwise there would be no Atheists. Where is the demonstration and the proof? Our author produces none.

Mr. Horton is good enough to apologize for some of us who are infidels as regards deity. It is, he says, the God of religion we deny, not the God of the universe. Denial of God's existence is an evil resulting from wrong teachings concerning him. Now, of course, there is a sense in which this is profoundly true. We Atheists do not necessarily deny the God of the universe; we know nothing whatever about him. We are not aware of deity except as a mental concept, and the human mind has not yet evolved any presentation of a supreme being that can successfully run the gauntlet of human criticism. It is certainly the case that we reject human teachings concerning God, but what else is there to consider? Human definitions and justifications of deity are all we have to discuss. Take these away, and what is there left? It is all very well to say that the trouble has been caused by wrong teachings regarding God. When the right teachings about God come along, how are we to recognise them? It is the intellect of man that ultimately decides whether any given teaching concerning God is wrong or right. How is the decision given? Precisely in accordance with the stage of mental development reached by those who are considering the matter. The believer in deity merely ascribes to his God such attributes as he thinks a decent God should possess. Conceptions of deity that satisfied almost the entire population of Europe a few centuries ago are unhesitatingly repudiated to-day by all those who can boast even a modicum of culture. Men like Mr. Horton will urge that it is man's idea of God that changes, not God that changes. Quite so; but where is the evidence that God is anything more than an idea.

With some of what Mr. Horton says we can find ourselves in hearty agreement. For instance, when he admits man can never harm God by sinning: "We can only wrong ourselves and our fellow men." He concedes that the consequences of all actions are natural results, and are not to be considered as rewards or punishments. His admission that according to the accident of birth, so as a rule will be a man's belief, whether it be Jewish, Pagan, or Christian, followed by the remark that the various religious systems all serve their purpose until man really begins to think for himself, brings him into line with much that has been said by other Freethinkers on the subject. Our principal objection to Mr. Horton is that, though he goes far, he does not go far enough; and while parading his renunciation of dogma he can be very dogmatic himself. One utterance of this type has already been cited. Here is another passage: "Man positively knows that there is a greater mind than his own displayed in the universe, and he as positively knows his own to be of the same subtle nature." This is the very thing that man does *not* know.

But it is in relation to the question of design that Mr. Horton goes farthest astray. He has never really cleared his mind before considering it. He is lost in wondering contemplation of the glorious works of God, which speak of limitless power and perfection, and of beauty, melody, and love. He appears not to have heard of the shark and the tiger, of cancer and tuberculosis, and the other tiffbits of benevolence so lavishly

and impartially distributed by the great designer. He does not seem to know any more than anybody else about the exact end for which God has devised his plans, but he is confident that the works of God are all fully equal to the end for which they were ordained. Which may possibly be the case, but what is the object of the universe? Who can tell?

To say, as he does, that wherever God's works are marred man is the culprit is a gross and inexcusable misinterpretation of the facts. Man is certainly responsible for much that is evil in the world, but there are a thousands ills in nature for which man cannot by any stretch of language be held liable. The non-Theistic observer of nature does not require to blame anyone for these evils, but he justly resents the imputation of guilt to the human race for their occurrence. Of the evil in the universe man is one of the victims; we must seek elsewhere for its author. GEORGE SCOTT.

Tolerance.

Awake, arise, or be forever fallen!—Milton, "Paradise Lost."

DID you ever feel a cold shiver run down your backbone when, on being introduced to a stranger, and on holding out the right hand of friendship, you have been answered with a frigid bow and a look that turned your nose blue? You know you are being tolerated, and, if you have any self-respect, you make your exit from the company with a haste that exceeds the speed limit. And yet you can bear the toleration that our pseudo-Christian Government grants you. I say "pseudo-Christian" advisedly, for a Christian who holds steadfastly and rigidly to his creed is in duty bound to tolerate nothing but the true faith.

You not only accept tolerance, but you call the granting of it a great victory for Freethought. You consider you have done something noteworthy, something even noble. Wherein lies the nobility in accepting crumbs from the table of the powerful? Wherein lies the noteworthiness of shrivelling up like the cast-off skin of a serpent when Christianity says (in its secret councils), "Oh, we can allow these fellows to exist; they can't do us any harm." That's your mighty victory, your rout of the forces of organized religion.

What substantial reality can you point to as the result of your fighting? Bradlaugh's parliamentary excursions? How many of us are ever likely to be in a position to make use of that *privilege*? The right to affirm in a court of law? This is at least something, but what about the *Blasphemy Laws*? Have you had a word deleted from these? Not a word. You may have reached a period in which they are connived at, but this will pass—if the Church ever becomes strong enough to open both its eyes wide. We are too isolated. British Freethinkers are satisfied with thinking insularly instead of internationally. We have set up a sort of Monroe Doctrine of our own, and our freethinking has been whittled down into a thinking of ourselves.

Do you think that by attacking Churchmen in this island of ours, we are overthrowing Religion? We would be making far more progress if we tried to turn Buddhism into the original channels that Gautama planned for it, that is to say, turned it to its original Atheism. If you overthrew Christianity to-morrow, you would only be beginning the battle. That is only the artillery preparation. Be optimistic by all means, but don't be a fool. And don't forget that more harm can be done to religion from within than from without. Jowett and Colenso stirred the inner circles of the English Church more than Bradlaugh, and while we must

go on preparing the soil, the great debacle of Christianity will be brought about by a great internal pressure, by the doubt that must eventually settle on the minds of the leaders of the faithful.

How is this going to be brought about? I could give a very good *Utopian* solution. I might say that the day will come when Churchmen look facts honestly in the face, and, knowing the truth, speak it. But I'm not entirely a fool. It's all a matter of bread and butter. The downfall of Christianity will be brought about by economic pressure. Christianity will fall when the ministers of the Gospel, these "servants of the congregation," are paid with the thanks of the sheep who breathe in the wind that their teachers exhale. "And must we remain dormant until that day?" you ask. Certainly not. If you await in quiescence that day, it shall never dawn.

De l'audace, encore de l'audace, et toujours de l'audace. That must be our war-cry. Can't say it, thou victorious one? But until these words have become deeds, you must be satisfied with toleration. You will feed fat on the deeds of the past likely enough. "Look what So-and-so did. That was a great deed." That's the modern spirit: the spirit of brooding on the past. To conquer you must forget: *become unhistorical*. Only out of forgetfulness can come forth action. Continual dreaming of past victories breeds inertia, torpidness, lukewarmness, and eventually apostacy. If you use the past as a guide for the future, you must at some period come to believe in the final victory of organized religion. But, oh reader of the riddles in the sands, are we but the backwash of an eternal flux, but a late growth of the withering tree of evolution? Are we but Epigoni? Our deeds must answer these questions. If we carry on the development of time-worn ideas and actions, are we anything but an offshoot of a dying species? "Little we see in Nature that is ours." Our ideas are musty, moth-caten old thoughts, and our age is like a smoky twilight in the Black Country.

Why should it be thus? Is there no one amongst us with a new idea that shall so light up our age that future generations shall look upon us, not as the "Twilight of Humanity," but as the "Dawn of the Free Man." But the *noli me tangere* of religion is blighting the prospects of progress. And the arch-enemy is the acceptance of tolerance. It is the waiving of the inherent right of mankind to its supreme patrimony. We have not yet reached the high ideal set up by the great Puritan, Milton, in his "Areopagitica": "Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience above all liberties." He demanded a right; we accept joyfully a winking at the law. Oh, poor degenerate race, is this your victory? See your position in its true perspective. Only by the knowledge of your true standpoint in reference to the world can you spur yourself on to the effort that must be made before you can shake yourself free of the heavy bonds that fetter you.

There is a great fight before us; a great victory to be won; a glorious reward to be secured. Oh, band of brothers, let us go forward boldly to this most difficult assault.

H. C. MELLOR.

Throughout Germany, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the mountebank was held in cool contempt. If kicked or beaten, the only redress accorded him by law was permission to cuff his assailant's shadow projected on a wall. I have this from Mr. Lea, and know nothing as to its truth; but when I see the Rev. D. Twackbible stoutly assailing the shadow of some scientific truth that obscures his dogma it is natural to think of the mountebank.—"Nuggets and Dust." *Dod Grile.*

Correspondence.

CLARITY AND CONFUSION IN FREETHOUGHT. TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—As the Christian is apt to mix up Atheism with vice, so it seems to me, does the Freethinker incline to confuse religion with delusion. In each case a fortuitous connection is mistaken for a necessary one, the frequency of the connection in the one case and violent antipathy to Freethought in the other leading to the impression that the connection is natural and inevitable. The fact that the connection between religion and delusion is extensive and of venerable age does not prove it necessary or natural, or, at any rate, it does not prove it logical or inevitable. Delusion itself is widespread and of venerable age, but we all, religionist and anti-religionist alike, hope delusion is not, therefore, unavoidable. The connection between religion and delusion is an observed one; that between Atheism and vice is deduced by inference. This gives them a totally different method of origin, but, granted that the deduction and inference are sound, sober, and accurate, it proves nothing in either case as to whether the connection is a necessary one or not.

The process by which the Christian arrives at the conclusion that there is a necessary connection between Atheism and vice is not susceptible of efficient exposition within the limits of a letter. He first assumes Atheists to be persons who not only reject the God idea, but who have *no theory whatever* as to man's relation to or co-operation with the moral forces in the universe. And for this assumption, Freethinkers have, indeed, given him some grounds, for the majority of Atheists, even to-day, deny that in the universe, minus man, there are any moral forces at all. Then, and as a second stage, he argues that anyone who recognizes no forces in nature (and no Gods outside nature) tending to subdue the tiger in one's fellow-man must, naturally, be driven by the instinct of self-preservation to seek to circumvent his fellow-men and obtain ascendancy over them by any and every means available. Thus, on grounds which might perhaps support a belief in "possible connection, in the very long run, between absence of cosmo-moral theory and decay of social impulses," he builds up the totally unjustified doctrine, "necessary connection between Atheism and vice."

But I cannot see that you, on the other hand, are much more fortunate in your analysis of the complex growth called the Christian religion. For in your article on Professor Huxley the only constituent elements of that weird development you can find to mention are God, angels, miracles, virgin birth, resurrection, sacraments, and the divinity of Jesus. What about world synthesis, which, however bungled, does exist in Christianity? What about the attempt to transcend the particular time, place, and circumstance of any action in favour of principle and of the longer view? However defectively, however fantastically, and with whatever imaginary heavens and future lives this is mixed up it certainly appears to me to be an integral part of Christianity. What about the doctrine of the change of heart? If it is true, it is important. What about righteousness or the endeavour to anticipate and live by a code of conduct superior to any at which the world, as such, has yet arrived? What about the injunction to love one's enemies? And what about the systematic culture of the emotions and impulses, thoughts and mental attitude, vision and introspection? What about artistic and symbolical ceremony and histrionic, musical, and rhetorical presentation devoted to such culture, the functions miscalled "worship" and "services," but which some Eastern faiths speak of as "meditations" and "religious exercises"? To hear one's fellow-Westerners talk one would think that the critical faculties are worthy of systematic training, but the conclusions arrived at by criticism are not worthy of systematic impressment. What about fellowship and communion, common council and collaboration? Are these things good in business, in policy, and in family life, but unnecessary or harmful among those of a common conviction in regard to the basic philosophy of life? Are conduct, duty, and mental attitude to be for ever under the dominion of critical processes which, though quite proper for the *discovery* of truth, are as little fitted for its incorporation into one's life, action, and impulses as is the garden fork, which digs the potatoes, for the eating of them?

In conclusion, I put it to you that (a) the Christian's assumption, "necessary connection between Atheism and vice," is not justified; that (b) the Freethinker's description of religion as a matter of nothing more than Gods, angels, miracles, virgin births, sacraments, and God-men is equally unjustifiable; and that (c) both these unjustified assumptions have underneath them a substratum of truth about as thick as the shadow of a cobweb.

ROBERT HARDING.

WOMEN AS SAVIOURS.

SIR,—Although married doctors, along with married clergymen and schoolmasters, head the list for family limitation, "E. T. K." writes: "I believe that the weight of such modern medical opinion as is conscientiously concerned with social well-being distinctly favours the Prewett ideal." Up to £10, I shall give £1 to the *Freethinker* Sustainment Fund for every medical authority who is not a keen religionist and yet has declared contraception to be directly injurious in any way to married couples who are parents.

B. DUNLOP, M.B.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Johnson's Dancing Academy, 241 Marylebone Road, near Edgware Road): 7, Social Gathering—Music and Dancing.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH, N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, Kentish Town): 7.30, Mr. A. D. McLaren, "The Constructive Side of Freethought."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W. 9): 7, Mr. T. F. Palmer, "The Antiquity of Man."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C. 2): Joseph McCabe, "Theology and Evolution."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Stratford Engineers' Institute, 107 Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7, Mr. A. B. Moss, "The Man Who Took the Wrong Turning."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

ASSOCIATION OF ENGINEERING AND SHIPBUILDING DRAUGHTSMEN (Merseyside Branch): Thursday, October 7, "Patent Law," A. Abbey (to be read and explained by A. J. Davies).

FAIRSWORTH SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Sunday-school, Pole Lane, Fairsworth): Mr. J. T. Lloyd, 2.45, "Religion and Morals in the Light of Science"; 6.30, "Dream Life and Real Life."

GLASGOW BRANCH N. S. S. (Committee Rooms, 83 Ingram Street): 12 noon, Arrangements for Lectures and Dance. Holders of tickets for latter are requested to report sales, as we must know the number for which we are to provide.

LEEDS BRANCH N. S. S. (Youngman's Rooms, 19 Lowerhead Row, Leeds): Every Sunday at 6.30.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. W. H. Thresh, "The Record of the Rocks."

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