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These are very familiar considerations, and they involve well-established principles. It is the more remarkable that it is not more generally seen how strongly they militate against the theory of survival beyond death.

* * *

Pain and Progress.

The whole point of the argument here rests on the fact that our feelings and affections, no less than our physical structure, have direct, and, so far as we can see, exclusive reference to our environment here, and cannot have an application to an environment elsewhere. In any other environment save the present one, or, what comes to the same thing, in an environment different from the present one, human qualities would be without meaning or value. Take as an illustration of this the sense of imperfection or of dissatisfaction with existing conditions. This, we are told, seeing that every function has an application somewhere, is an indication that some day there will be a state of existence where that feeling of dissatisfaction will be removed, and as that certainly cannot occur in the life of the individual here, we are warranted in assuming that there is another state of existence in which the desire for perfection will be gratified. A wilder assumption could not be made. What, after all, is the sense of imperfection or the desire for better conditions? Reduced to its lowest terms, it is no more than a manifestation of the operation of natural selection in its simplest form. As we mount in the animal scale the mechanisms by which this avoidance of the injurious and the pursuit of the beneficial is accomplished become more and more elaborate. The highest form begins when we reach an animal that is capable of appreciating a future, and which, therefore, acts to a considerable extent under the impulse of the presentation of prospective pleasures and pains. Thus, in proportion as man becomes socialized, and is capable of creating for himself and his fellows an ideal environment, the imperfections, the shortcomings, of the existing one jar upon him, and so excites the desire for improvement. But from the lowest form to the highest, from the avoidance by one of the lower organisms of a dangerous object, to the shrinking of man from unpleasant feelings and the desire to arouse pleasant ones, we have exactly the same class of phenomena. And if many of our leading writers possessed the capacity for *thinking* scientifically, instead of exercising the mere talent for loading their minds with undigested scientific facts, there would be no need for the point to be stressed here. The necessity illustrates the truth that while the number of people with a knowledge of scientific facts have increased enormously, the scientific thinker is as rare as ever.

* * *

Can We Reach an Equilibrium?

Now this feeling of dissatisfaction has no possible reference to any other environment than the present one, or, at most, to one that is substantially similar to the one we know. When a man steps on my corn, the natural sequentia is the desire to have the foot removed. If I am a "mere materialist" I may see no more than the desire to get rid of an unpleasant sensa-

Views and Opinions.

This Life and the Next.¹

Immanuel Kant said of those who chafed against the limitations of the understanding that they were like a bird protesting against the resistance the atmosphere offered to its flight, ignorant all the time that it was to that very resistance it owed its power to lift itself from the ground. One might well apply the same comment to one argument in favour of a future life, which, in spite of its being so generally used, indicates a radical misconception of the nature of human feeling and affection. This argument proceeds on the assumption that if life is not prolonged beyond the grave, both character and affection are little better than a mockery, and, as this must not be admitted, the conclusion is that we have in affection, and in the nature of the human feelings, one of those sure "intimations of immortality" which only the dull Materialist ignores. On the contrary, I think it can be clearly shown that the religionist, in arguing in this manner, like Kant's bird, is complaining at the very conditions which make the things he professes to value of consequence. We may commence the proof of this with the simple fact that neither animal organs, nor functions, are developed in *vacuo* or at random, but always in relation to a certain definite set of conditions. This is so well understood that scientists have not the slightest hesitation in concluding from an examination of a particular structure the kind of environment to which it belonged. And in the same way, if we take the human body, we may deal with it from exactly the same point of view. Thus, the size and weight of the body bear a direct relation to the mass of the earth. If the earth's mass was ten times what it is, we should be crushed beneath the weight of our own bodies. If it were one-tenth of what it is we might find it a matter of some skill to retain a comfortable position on the surface of the sphere. Modify the constituents of the atmosphere beyond a certain point, and life would become impossible. Raise or lower the temperature beyond a certain degree, and we have the same result. The organs of respiration and digestion, the amount of muscular strength normally developed, have all direct reference to the conditions of life as they now exist.

¹ Previous "Views and Opinions" on the subject of "Immortality" appeared in the *Freethinker* for October 24, 31, and November 14.

tion. But if I am full of "mystical" longings, I may see in the desire to get rid of the pressure on my corn the longing for another world, in which either corns or careless people do not exist. And I quite fail to see that that argument would be more absurd than the one that is gravely propounded, namely, that because we are dissatisfied with certain things here, and have an ideal of a better state, therefore, there must be a future state in which that ideal will be realised. The truth is, of course, that just as the pain of my trodden corn causes me to react against the cause of it, so the unpleasant feelings aroused by certain things in the social environment give the condition of social improvement. So long as development continues, so long must this sense of imperfection exist. And if there is another life, and if development continues there as it does here, then those who inherit it will have the same feeling of discomfort there that they have here. There will be the same sense of dissatisfaction, the same desire for something different from that which actually exists. A state of existence in which this feeling did not exist would be a condition in which absolute equilibrium had been reached, and absolute equilibrium is only another term for absolute stagnation. So that the argument of the religionist amounts to the assertion that in order to obtain complete moral satisfaction with life, we must live again under such conditions as will make conscious satisfaction of any sort a sheer impossibility.

* * *

Character and Environment.

To take the same principle in relation to a few other things. Mr. F. S. Schiller argues at some length (*Humanism*, pp. 253-4) that without immortality character is lost at death, and "you deny the basis of the moral order." But character, like everything else, is something that is developed in relation to a specific set of circumstances. In this case it is an expression of certain relations, actual or ideal, to one's fellows. A man must be strong, steady, honest, reliable, loyal, in relation to something or someone. And it is equally clear what the circumstances are in relation to which these qualities have meaning. They are developed in relation to a certain set of social conditions, and in the absence of those conditions would have neither meaning nor value. And to argue that because the conditions here prevent the realization of a perfect character, therefore there must be another state of existence where the conditions are so far different that they will permit the development of what is impossible here, is to assume, in the interests of character, a state where character will be of no value whatever. Thus, the qualities which we praise in human nature, and which we consider of value, are only good in view of the existence of a certain set of conditions. Consequently, if we consider the next life as providing opportunities for the development of character, we must think of it as being similar to this one. And if we think of it as being similar to this one, the reason for its existence disappears. All that can be gained by life in the next world may as easily be gained by life here. If, on the other hand, the conditions of life in some assumed other world are different from those obtaining here, we shall be altogether out of place. We shall no more fit it than a bird could live in the sea or a fish in the air.

* * *

Affection and a Future Life.

This dependence of the value of human qualities upon the prevalence of a definite set of conditions is far more intimate than any religionist ever admits. Constantly we find believers dwelling upon the blow to human affection by death, and the joy of reunion in a state where death has no place. Human affection, we are repeatedly told, is a mockery if life ends at the grave. And the use made of this argument by men

like Sir Arthur Conan Doyle offers a most depressing example of the lack of the most elementary scientific thinking among the general public and their leaders. Now, I have no wish to either deny that death does bring grief, or to minimize the grief that is experienced. On the contrary, my point is that it is from the grief associated with death—necessarily associated with it—that our deepest affections spring, and that in the absence of death life would lose its value. Here the analogy of Kant's bird strictly applies. To begin with, birth and death offer the living paradox that while apparently the negation of each other, they are strictly complementary facts. Birth is the other side of death; death is the necessary consequence of birth; the significance of the cradle is to be found in the grave; the grave finds its justification in the cradle. On these two complementary facts all human affection centres. In a world where death did not occur affection would wither and love would be without meaning. The ordinary relations between human beings prove this. Assume that of two persons one is by some chance protected against sickness, accident, and death. He will then be as the believer in immortality assumes we shall all be in the next life. The other one is more normally constituted. He may at any time meet with a fatal accident, he may be overtaken by disease, and sooner or later he will certainly die. To which of the two will our affections most certainly turn? Decidedly, we should feel not very active interest in the first. Why should we? His security is assured, and when one has all eternity before him the need for anxiety is gone. Inevitably our concern and our affection would gather round the second. That is as certain as anything can well be. Or should parents doubt this, let them ask themselves whether with a son in France during the late war, would they have thought about him with the same yearning affection had they known that he was absolutely secure against sickness, wounds, and death? The love of parent does not rest upon a conviction of immortality, but upon a knowledge of certain mortality. We are concerned, not about the things of which we are certain, but about those of which we are doubtful. That we should like more of a thing we have is really the condition of our liking that much of it we possess. That death is the king of terrors is only a fiction born of a fear-stricken and ignorant theology. That death is the occasion of great grief is plain, but that it forms the groundwork of our deepest affections is certain, and that love would wither in the arid atmosphere of perpetual existence is not less certain. Life, in short, is set in a framework of death. It is death that gives an emotional background to the future. It defines life, conditions it, and gives it meaning and value. Religion has filled the world with the *fear* of death; it is left for scientific Freethought to provide us with an *understanding* of its presence, and so detect its true place in the pageant of life.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Death of Wisdom.

THIS is the knowledge that consoles the wise
In face of death, which is to him the end:
That life goes on, that human powers extend,
That new thoughts grow and hopes undreamed of rise
Where still the race, with ever-youthful eyes,
Looks forward to the triumphs that attend;
That what he guessed, all men shall comprehend;
That nothing he has loved and lived for dies.

In Nature and in Time he puts his trust.
Loving, as one who owed them all, his kind,
He pays the debt that sad or glad he must
With wisdom, neither falsely buoyed nor blind
To nature's justice. So is all resigned,
Body and soul together, to the dust.

H. TRUCKELL.

The New Jesus.

As is well known, Canon Barnes has renounced two Christian doctrines which the Church has always regarded as fundamental, so fundamental, indeed, that without them there could be no Christian religion. In his sermon before the last meeting of the British Association at Cardiff, Canon Barnes frankly admitted that, looked at in the light of modern science, the doctrine of the Fall is no longer believable. No golden age lies behind us in the far distant past, the Genesis story of the commencement of human life in the happy surroundings of an Eden being wholly unhistorical. But with the story of the Fall must also disappear the doctrine of the Atonement, and this also the Canon has been consistent and manly enough to discard. The query naturally arises, what of Christianity is there left after tearing off these two dogmas? Surely, such theological terms as restoration, recovery, regeneration, renewal, and redemption are now utterly unintelligible, and should be relinquished. The whole phraseology of the Christian Gospel pre-supposes some "initial catastrophe" in the early history of the human race, for the redressing of which Jesus, the Son of God, came into the world. Now, if there never was an Adam, in whose unhappy fall all humanity fell, and if Christ's death was not a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, what becomes of the Christian religion, which hitherto has always signified salvation through the merits of the Cross? Furthermore, if a clergyman gives up Christianity as defined and understood in all the ages by the orthodox Church, and particularly as embodied in the Articles of Faith which he himself has signed, on what ground can he remain in holy orders and preach? Having abandoned Christianity, is he entitled to call himself a Christian minister?

Canon Barnes still occupies the pulpit, but does not preach the old Gospel. From the pulpit of St. Paul's Cathedral, he discoursed the other Sunday evening on "The Manhood and Message of Christ." His chosen text was Luke ix., 20: "Jesus said unto them, But who say ye that I am? And Peter, answering, said, The Christ of God." He referred to the large number of letters and pamphlets which his Cardiff sermon had brought him, most of which were evidently antagonistic. He said:—

There are, apparently, many who even think that if the Genesis story of the Fall be denied, it is equivalent to asserting that sin does not exist. Now, surely, we know that sin exists. In this time of bitterness and licence that has followed the war, its power is simply terrible. And surely, also, no man can at any time bring himself to face the judgment of his own conscience, and not feel the need of God's forgiveness.

The reverend gentleman does not seem to realize that the sense of sin against God is an inheritance from the theologians, and is experienced only by those who are directly or indirectly under priestly influence. Evils of various kinds, alas, have always been more or less rampant in this world; but they usually spring from ignorance and carelessness, not from a corrupt nature. The Canon declares that the craving for God's abiding and sustaining presence is strong within us; but this again is true only of those who have had a religious training, or who are in the habit of attending church. There are millions in Great Britain alone who have never had such a craving, or "supreme moments" in which they know that they were made for the possession and enjoyment of eternal life. Eternal life is an imaginary gift of a purely imaginary person to people who have no idea what it is. "We can only get the gift of eternal life from the Lord Jesus Christ"; but the Lord Jesus Christ is himself the creation of the Church.

Faith in him is of no avail whatever, except emotionally to lull to mental sleep those who have it.

Canon Barnes calls upon us to put aside theories about Jesus "by which men bemuse themselves"; but is he not aware that what he offers his hearers is a theory of his own, fully as unsusceptible of verification as any other theory? If Jesus, the carpenter of Nazareth, who was described as poor and persecuted, and who died in ignominy, ever lived at all, it is but the merest theory to claim that he "has transformed and is transforming the world." So far as we can see, the world has not been transformed yet, nor is it being transformed by any super-human agency. Whatever transformation may have taken place in the past must be interpreted as the outcome of the world's own enterprise. Surely, to think of Jesus, not as a son of God, but as *the* son of God, is but to theorize concerning him. The Canon says that "to be sure that Jesus was indeed the Son of God, to know for certain that his revelation of God was true, we need solely to live as in his presence." The meaning of that statement is that Jesus is to Christians just exactly what they believe him to be. To a Unitarian he is a very different being from what he is to a Trinitarian. This proves that nobody can "see him as he is." We maintain that the Gospel Jesus is as legendary a being as Theseus or Hercules.

The Canon supplies a *resume* of the life of Jesus as told in the Gospels. He admits that the story of the Virgin birth is, "scholars tell us, a late addition to the original record," and that "neither St. Mark, St. Luke, nor St. John refers to it." He also assures us that we need not trouble ourselves by any discussions as to its historicity; but does he accept any of the Gospel miracles as credible? If he does, we contend that it is quite as easy to believe in the Virgin birth as in the raising of the dead. If he does not, how does he know that any portion of the Gospel narrative can reasonably be taken as true? Can he prove that the teaching attributed to Jesus is actually his? There were no stenographers then to take down verbatim reports of his utterances. His disciples are represented as unlettered, ignorant men; and it is admitted by New Testament scholars that the substance of the Gospels existed orally long before it was embodied in written documents. From the Pauline epistles no one would infer that Jesus had been a teacher at all; and it is undeniable that the bulk of the sayings ascribed to him had been in existence for several centuries before his time. But even on the assumption that the teaching found in the Gospels did come from Jesus himself, is it not a fact that scarcely any two divines interpret it alike, or think that it ought to be carried out literally in social life? The Canon affirms that "Jesus taught men that when they died their souls live on"; but is not also true that he taught that both soul and body can be destroyed for ever, and that he urged his disciples to fear those who had the power to destroy them? The reverend gentleman avers that Jesus' "supreme goodness and infinite love drew men to him"; but that is the very opposite of true. All through his life the authorities and the educated classes were bitterly opposed to him, and though at first the common people heard him gladly, yet, later on, even they became his enemies. Was he not "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief"? Even as the story is related in the Gospels, it is clear that his own nation shut its door against him, and ultimately destroyed him.

Coming to his death, we discover how literally true St. John's words are: "He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not." This evangelist believed in his Deity, and on that account his language is all the more significant when he says: "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not." This fully

explains his crucifixion; but Canon Barnes offers a radically different explanation:—

It was necessary, to save mankind, that a perfectly good man should suffer the last dread ordeal of a violent death. Innocent suffering alone could redeem the world. Evil is such that it can only be overcome when good men suffer because they are good. And so Jesus said: "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." He foresaw that the Cross would bring men unto him when he said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"; and that they might come through all succeeding ages and be saved by his blood, he went up to Jerusalem.

The orthodox doctrine of the Atonement finds no expression in that extract; but what the passage does teach is fully as irrational and false as that great dogma. Jesus died, not to save the world, but because his enemies made it impossible for him to live any longer. He was simply murdered, and his blood has no redeeming efficacy. The Canon knows as well we do that mankind have not been saved by the innocent suffering on the Cross. The fact is incontrovertible that the Cross has not succeeded in drawing all men to Christ. At present the human trend is distinctly away from him. This is the wail of all the Churches at the present time. Christ is not the irresistible drawing power which he himself predicted he would be.

And yet Canon Barnes believes that he rose again from the dead. He accepts the "banal, brute fact," against which act Dean Inge solemnly warns his fellow-Christians. "To me," he says, "it is not incredible that the Victor over sin was the Victor over death"; but in our judgment both victories are equally unreal. It is perfectly true that the Christian Gospel has been preached for nineteen centuries; but to-day people turn deaf ears to it in greater numbers than ever before. They are at last beginning to realize that it is an exploded superstition. There are far sweeter names than that of Jesus in the world now. In the crucible of modern knowledge mediæval credulity is melting clean away, and life is being clothed with a new dignity and significance. The fate of all Pagan Saviour-Gods is at last overtaking the Christian.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Story of the "Freethinker."

The religion of the English is a quotation; their Church is a doll; and any examination is interdicted with screams of terror.—Emerson.

THE story of the *Freethinker* is one of the publishing romances of the newspaper world. The year 1881 was an eventful one. Two things happened which thrilled the world. Amid the northern snows the Czar Alexander was killed, and, away in the Great Republic of the West, President Garfield met with a similar fate. During that same year, although comparatively few people were thrilled by the news, Charles Bradlaugh, the intrepid leader of British Freethought, was thrown out of the House of Commons during a struggle so fierce that the muscles of his arms were ruptured, and his clothes torn to ribbons. For all that, he was as cool and self-possessed as he was on the day when he handed the presidential hammer of the National Secular Society to his successor, George William Foote, the first editor of the *Freethinker*, which was founded the same year.

Indeed, it was the infamous treatment of Bradlaugh by the orthodox bigots that caused Foote's militancy, and thus created the *Freethinker*. He has told us that he was until then practically ignorant of the spirit of persecution, and with the generous enthusiasm of youth, he imagined that the period of combat had ended, and that Freethinkers had nothing else to do but to devote themselves to purely constructive work.

He was rudely disillusioned by the logic of facts. The illusions of youth were dispelled by the insults levelled at Bradlaugh; by the disgraceful scenes in the House of Commons; by continuous and crippling litigation; by the attacks on Mrs. Besant, when ruffians struck her and threw lime at her. It was then that Foote recognized that it was not an academic debate, but war to the bitter end. He drew his sword, threw away his scabbard, and strode to the side of Bradlaugh.

Like the brave Spartan that he was, Foote drew the enemies' spears to his own breast. The advent of the *Freethinker* created a furore in advanced circles, for the new periodical was "a thunderous engine of revolt." Orthodoxy was inclined to dismiss it with a sneer or a light laugh. But it was not to be sneered or laughed down, and soon it was seen that the editor knew his business. There were brains and enterprise in its pages, and it began to be talked about. Its avowed policy was waging war against superstition in general, and the Christian superstition in particular. Published at a popular price, edited in a lively style, it succeeded from the first.

The orthodox became alarmed, and spent thousands of pounds trying to suppress the *Freethinker*. Three times was the editor tried for blasphemy, and he was sentenced to a year's imprisonment, as an ordinary criminal, by a Roman Catholic judge. "Thank you, my lord, your sentence is worthy of your creed," he said to the judge who tried him. His sacrifice did not go unchallenged, for the petition of release was signed by almost everybody of intellectual eminence in England, the honoured name of Herbert Spencer heading the list of signatures. The Home Secretary was adamant, and the sentence was served. During that Homeric struggle the Freethought party increased in numbers and influence, and since then there has been no looking back.

Probably, no journal in the world has had so loyal a staff as the *Freethinker*, and this has been one of the things that contributed to its success. The capital at command was a drop in a bucket, but the enthusiasm of the writers was as boundless as the ocean. Merely to recite the names of the contributors is to mention some of the best-known names in the Freethought movement. Indeed, the services of the *Freethinker* can hardly be over-estimated. It kindled a new spirit in intellectual circles, popularized Secular propaganda, and gave the apostles of liberty a feeling of actuality and power. For nearly forty years it has stood for Liberty of Thought, the proudest possession of civilized man. Forty years? Half an old man's life, and the whole of a young man's. During those years Freethought has progressed more rapidly than during any preceding half-century.

The canvas of 1881, the year in which the *Freethinker* saw the light, was crowded with men and women of strong personality. It seems so long ago that many are but clouded memories now. Gone are most of the familiar faces, but through the clouds appear the features of our old comrades-in-arms. Frederick J. Gould, Arthur B. Moss, and William Heaford, three of the staunchest veterans who ever wore the uniform of the Army of Human Liberation.

For sixteen years the pages of the *Freethinker* were enriched by the scholarly and original contributions of Joseph Wheeler, the sub-editor. A journalist, he belonged to a profession of which not even the leisure is leisurely. The gentlest and most lovable of Bohemians, he carried a weight of learning easily. His frail body harboured an indomitable spirit. Away from his beloved books, he was whimsical, cross, kind, and amusing. We all loved him, and wondered "one small head could carry all he knew." The acquisition of knowledge occupied all his time. He haunted the booksellers' shops, and was a constant visitor to the

Farringdon Road bookstalls. "Kind-hearted Joe," said Footc, laughingly, "he can't bear to see a book in the wet." He bought books almost daily, and assimilated their contents. Into the pages of the *Freethinker* he put all this enormous knowledge. A modest scholar, he did his duty through a very stormy period. His memory shines with a spotless and concentrated lustre.

The contributors pass, but the old journal remains. The *Freethinker* is now nearly forty years old, and, under its present editor, is more alive, more active, more full of ideas, and more widely circulated than at any period of its long, eventful, and useful history.

MIMNERMUS.

Secular Morality.

It is often said that Atheism leads to immorality, because it destroys the belief in a personal God and a personal existence after death. And to speak against what is called "Law and Order," or government by violence, is commonly supposed still further to invite license and social chaos. Hence Atheists and Anarchists, the radical, religious, and political heretics of the day, are regarded as wishful to escape the wholesome restraints of the Church and State in order that they may be free to gratify their unbridled desires without the fear of an angry God or an offended policeman. But there are a few thinkers who know that there can be no God but a bad one, and no Government by violence but an unjust one. The idea of the atonement—that the innocent should suffer for the guilty—is absurdly immoral. And that we may enjoy a heaven which we do not deserve, and for which we are not morally prepared, is both immoral and impossible. The Christian religion is therefore immoral, and our present Government by violence is unjust. But most people do not know this. They are so stupid as to believe that the innocent should suffer for the guilty, and that the minority should be forcibly ruled by the majority. And such persons think that to deny the truth of the Christian religion or the justice of "law and order"—statute law and enforced order—is to encourage immorality.

Of course, the general abandonment of the current religious and political faith would destroy our current moral code, but it would result in the general acceptance of a much better one.

To cease to believe in a God is to abolish the idea that conscience is the voice of a God. To cease to believe in the supernatural origin of man is to abandon the notion that conscience is innate. To cease to believe that the vote of the majority is the decision of a God, and that a statute law is right because it is a statute law, is to destroy allegiance to the politicians in power, who, with their menials, are called the State. In short, to abandon our religious and political delusions is to come to see that there is no such thing as abstract right and wrong; is to see that we have to learn what is right and wrong just as we learn to talk and walk—by observation and experiment. Thus, Atheists and Anarchists actually do destroy our current standard of morality. But they set up another standard, far more correct and satisfactory. They necessarily result in the true idea that whatever is for the real happiness of the individual in his social relations with other individuals is right, and whatever is against that happiness is wrong. All that round of conduct that now goes by the name of piety—duties to God—will be seen to be not only useless, but wrong.

It is now thought right to waste the products of industry in great buildings for the worship of a bad God, and forcibly tax everybody for the support of this worship. It is now thought right to attend this wor-

ship and waste valuable time listening to baseless speculations, in singing meaningless hymns, and in humiliating prayers and prostrations. But some day all this will be seen to be wrong.

It is now thought right forcibly to close places of amusement, instruction, and useful labour on Sunday because it is God's day, and should be devoted entirely to indolence and worship. Some day it will seem right that we should play, rest, or work on Sunday just as on other days, because one day cannot be morally different from another day, and because all this piety is injurious, mentally and morally.

It is now thought right forcibly to tax some persons for the education of children in a way of which they do not approve. And it is thought criminal in any way to avoid paying such taxes. But some day it will be thought a virtue to disregard a statute law which one considers unjust. The time will come when a man will be looked on as a hero who goes to work on idle land wherever he may find it, because he does not believe in our infamous land laws, which rob the industrious worker for the benefit of the privileged idler; just as we now look upon those who violated the statute laws against helping a slave to escape. And it is for us, radical heretics, to work for the destruction of the current moral standard and the setting up of a more righteous one.

And in doing this we must be particularly careful to let people see that our new morality is much better than the old one, by our own personal example. If a Christian goes wrong, almost everyone says: "That does not prove that Christianity is not good." But if a Freethinker goes wrong, they say: "There, you see the result of abandoning the faith of our fathers." If our form of government by violence produces economic monsters and unscrupulous bravos, nearly everybody says: "That only goes to show that under the most glorious possible Government there will be greedy and wicked men." But if a social reformer drinks too much beer, or fails to pay his debts, or is slovenly in his habits, they say: "There you are. That is what comes of trying to destroy 'law and order.' He is an Anarchist." A strong necessity is therefore laid upon us of the new morality to lead clean lives. I have a strong belief in the bath tub. A daily bath is much better than morning prayers. And no matter how truer our beliefs may be than others, the people will never accept them at hands with dirty finger nails. An unwashed people will always be oppressed by those who use the mighty moral potency of soap and water. So, too, no Secularist should allow it to be said of him that he does not pay his just debts, or that in any way he robs his neighbour. Let those who "praise God from whom all blessings flow" be guilty of every kind of shady business allowed by law, by way of demonstrating the purifying influence of their religious and political beliefs. Leave plutocracy to the pious and cheating to the Churchmen. If doctrines have any influence on action, the word of a Secularist should be better than the oath of a Christian.

Above all, let our home life be pure and sweet in every sense. The new morality looks with abhorrence upon women who prostitute themselves in "holy" matrimony for great wealth, and upon the men who thus buy them. We believe that marriages contracted for any reason but because the man and woman love and respect each other are against the happiness of the world. We regard the brutalities, deceptions, and humiliations that are imposed upon wives, owing to the slavish position in which the priests and politicians have placed them, as hateful and demoralizing.

It is hard to make people understand that the idea of a God makes true morality impossible, that religion degrades the human race, and that the arbitrary enactments of both Church and State fill every home with a poisonous miasma, except in those rare cases where love

laughs at enactments, but it is true; and some day the people will know it as they now know their alphabet.

It is hard to make people understand that when we seek to destroy religious faiths we are not trying to destroy restraints meant to keep men from doing wrong, but that we are trying to knock off the imaginary gyves that prevent them from doing right. And that when we try to break the authoritative power of Church and State, we are not seeking a way for vice to flourish, but to give virtue a chance to grow. But so it is.

The lives of Bradlaugh, Ingersoll, Paine, and Shelley were so free from blemish that though they were denounced as infidels and disturbers of the peace, no act of immorality could be proved against them. Would Bruno have a monument to-day if he had been a bad man as well as an infidel? These men should be examples for us, and in these days, when saints spend millions to corrupt elections and legislators, when pious Christians control nearly all the big monopolies, when burglars are worshippers and murderers are devout, when the clergy themselves are often by no means stainless, it should not be too difficult for us, Secularists, to show that without a God and without the fear of hell or the hope of heaven we know how to deal justly and to love mercy and to keep ourselves unspotted from the world.

G. O. W.

Martin Harvey and Sunday-schools.

MR. MARTIN HARVEY has earned a place amongst our foremost players. Lovers of Dickens are grateful to him for popularizing "A Tale of Two Cities" in the world-known play, "The Only Way." How far this play has influenced Mr. Harvey's outlook on present-day events is a little problem for psychologists. When a man has lost his head—in imagination—through one revolution, the prospect of another or even the bare mention of the word cannot be alluring. We have some recollection of Mr. Harvey publishing a letter covering a page of a newspaper for the purpose of solving the Irish question. The demanding of certified sales of newspaper was not troubling Carmelite at the time; and chancing upon the wrong paper appears a reasonable explanation of why Mr. Harvey failed.

In a recent issue of the *Sunday Chronicle*, Mr. Harvey holds forth—in what purposes to be an interview—upon "Class War Sunday-schools," "A Menace to Children," "A Conspiracy against the Nation."

The article is served up with a half-tone of the eminent actor, without make-up. The portrait is not fascinating. A better accompaniment would have been his portrait as Sidney Carton, with eyes lit up with the beatific vision so well pictured by Dickens. The article itself shows the impossibility of maintaining the tragic all the week, including Sundays. Mr. Harvey declares there are twenty-three proletarian schools in the kingdom, where thousands of children have revolutionary doctrines poured into them every Sunday.

"The people who are out to promulgate these theories have shown nothing short of Satanic ingenuity in getting at the youngsters. It is horrible." He once asked a lady in a northern town whether they assembled after the children had been to Sunday-school. "Sunday-schools?" she said, with a sniff of disdain. "They don't go to any other school; they come here."

This is truly shocking, so soon after the war. How proletarian parents can forget the comforts religion has showered on them during the industrial struggle of the last hundred years; how they have dared to cast off that Christ-like humility so consonant with their happiness makes one fearful of their salvation. But are they all proletarians? Mr. Harvey says he spoke to a lady con-

nected with one of these schools, and she answered with a sniff of disdain. Now, a common person, we all know, can sniff, but to sniff with disdain is an accomplishment of your Lady Sneerwell's. The lady would have made us shudder had she been depicted as a vendor of haddocks, who gesticulated with a cruel-looking fish knife the while she sniffed.

Information upon the particular Satanic ingenuity used to get at the youngsters is not forthcoming, but if it turns out to be a Punch and Judy show we should not be startled that thousands of children packed twenty-three schools.

"The service is conducted like a sort of political meeting, the children and the grown-ups forming one class." "There is a song, the president's address—a class-war speech—and questions are invited from youthful revolutionaries." If a "sort of a political meeting" has a resemblance to a nigger minstrel show, again the Satanic ingenuity must be admitted, and the result unmarvelled at.

"The inevitable collection is, of course, included," continues Mr. Harvey; "and after Sunday songs the President says, 'Good afternoon, children,' and the children reply, 'Good afternoon, comrade.'"

The "inevitable collection" might be forgiven, because money—worse luck—is needful for the furtherance of any cause or entertainment. Even Mr. Harvey does not make it a regular practice to grant free admission to his plays every night in the week, to say nothing of matinees; but the other—the "Good afternoon, comrade"—is clearly to any impartial mind a case for Scotland Yard. Sunday-school children, versed in the inspired prophets, would politely reply, "Go up, thou bald-head."

After giving two rather crude but harmless verses, described by Mr. Harvey as "poisonous," he quotes the following from the composer of the song-book:—"These songs breathe the spirit of revolution, and we are certain, as the children grow up who have been taught these songs, they will be found in the front rank of labour." What a dangerous doctrine! We all know that the front rank of Labour means the benches on which sit the Bishops in the House of Lords.

Mr. Harvey asks, "What are the clergy doing to allow so many thousands of *their* children to be attracted to these schools?" and he follows it up by giving them some advice. The clergy will probably fail to see any novelty in this advice. In the art of procuring children and moulding their minds, the clergy have nothing to learn from the stage. The stage itself is but a reflex of this moulding. English playgoers are actually astounded in these days to hear a simple Free-thought question pass the footlights. The clergy will pass Mr. Harvey's heckling question by—quite meekly and quite wisely—but they are not inactive. Look at the Church Lads' Brigade, to which boys are attracted by angelic ingenuity—by bugles, drums, uniforms, and camp-life. Between the pictures the cinemas are handed over for speeches given by gentlemen of the cloth calling for recruits. When the boys are shepherded into the brigade, the ceremony of confirmation is the next business, and the response is sheep-like.

Mr. Harvey is a fund of comedy, both as a religious proselyte and an anti-alien crusader, but the lesson we draw is that Freethinkers must drop that bashful attitude of leaving their children to the tender regard of the parsons. Make young Freethinkers of them. Leaving them until they are old enough to work out speculative problems for themselves is a comfortable phrase. It saves many a Freethinking parent from a little courageous activity. It is the line of least resistance, and it suits the enemy admirably. For any to take that line and call himself a Freethinker is to confess "his bones are marrowless; his blood is cold." To the "best of causes" he is a dead weight.

H. IRVING.

Acid Drops.

Sir William Treloar headed a deputation to the Middlesex County Council the other day asking for permission for the National Sunday League to use the Tottenham Palace on Sundays. The permission was refused, Sir Herbert Neild remarking that any proposal to allow Sunday entertainments was retrograde. We should very much like to know how that gentleman spends his Sundays. Does he go to church three times, or spend the time in prayer? A little information on that point would be interesting. But why did the National Sunday League ask the Council for permission? If the hall can be obtained, the proper course is to tell the Council to go to the devil. They have no power to prohibit, providing certain precautions are taken. If there is any large hall proprietor who will let us his hall for a Sunday, we will undertake to arrange a concert and deliver a lecture, and the Council will not prevent it.

One of the members of the Council, a Labour member, Mr. Culley, said they could not have a better world if Sunday were turned into a day of frivolity. At which, says the *Daily News*, there was "loud applause." We hope that the Labour Party are proud of this particular representative of the Stone Age. Mr. Culley evidently thinks he is not frivolous; he is not, he is simply ridiculous. He has not developed enough to be frivolous, but nature at his birth took care he should be absurd. Mr. Culley said those who fell in the war died fighting for a better world. Mr. Culley ought to know that those who fell in the war played games and held concerts on Sunday. And as there was no objection from pious men of Mr. Culley's type to men killing each other on Sunday, or working at making munitions on Sunday, we see no reason why men and women should not attend a healthy entertainment on Sunday. Certainly the returned soldiers see no reason why they should not.

One gets a little tired of this cant about what the soldiers died for. If we are to listen to the politicians, they died to make the country freer. Is it freer? If we listen to the parsons, they died to make us more mindful of God. Are we? If we listen to others, they died to end war. Is it ended? Why, the walls are placarded with advertisements for men to join the army, as offering the best life of all for young men, and we have a bigger army than ever, with a people more brutalized than they have been for several generations. And really we hardly think any of the soldiers died to allow Mr. Culley to air his absurdities about Sunday. Mr. Culley doubtless believes that Jesus died for him even if the soldiers did not. But then Jesus died for Mr. Culley before he had a chance of seeing him. And that is an excuse, if not a justification.

The *Evening News* says of the decision of the Middlesex County Council that the Councillors ought to wear the hats of 1660, presumably as the brains they cover belong to that period rather than to ours. But if they are going to dress in accordance with the ideas they are championing, they should wear paint and feathers or skins. For the idea of sacred days belongs to savagery. It is at the same level as lucky stones and the like. And if the *Evening News* is really desirous of getting that kind of a superstition out of the heads of the people, they should join us in our endeavours to get them to take a reasonable view of the world. After all, there is nothing more irrational in believing in taboo days than there is in praying to a national Mumbo-Jumbo for fine weather, or for success in war, or for a good harvest. And the *Evening News* has been quite a long while in waking up to the absurdity of the British Sunday. But we are glad to see that our pegging away is influencing even the Harmsworth press. Although it would never do to attribute the work of the *Freethinker*.

Dr. Talbot, Bishop of Winchester, in a pastoral letter, says he owes his holiday he has spent in Switzerland to anonymous friends. The prophet Elijah was still more fortunate, for he owed his food to ravens—who were also anonymous.

It was one of life's little ironies that a newspaper screed of the Rev. Vale Owen on the "next world" should have faced a bold advertisement, "Revolution in Gas Ovens."

Memorial services for those who fell in the war were held throughout the country on a recent Sunday. It was done merely to attract congregations, for the clergy themselves were exempted from military service during the war.

Mr. Lloyd's article in our last issue on Dean Inge and his two classes of fact reminds one of Gibbon's superb satire on the absence of contemporary evidence as to the Christian miracles. Noting that the extant documentary evidence for the miracles associated with the life of Jesus is weakest exactly where it ought to be strongest, he says:—

But how shall we excuse the inattention of the pagan and philosophic world to those evidences which were presented by the hands of Omnipotence, not to their reason, but to their senses? During the age of Christ, of his apostles, and of their first disciples, the doctrine which they preached was confirmed by innumerable prodigies. The lame walked, the blind saw, the dead were raised, demons were expelled, and the laws of nature were frequently suspended for the benefit of the Church. But the sages of Greece and Rome turned aside from the awful spectacle, and, pursuing the ordinary occupations of life and study, appeared unconscious of any alteration in the moral or physical government of the world. Under the reign of Tiberius, the whole earth, or, at least, a celebrated province of the Roman Empire, was involved in a preternatural darkness of three hours. Even this miraculous event, which ought to have excited the wonder, the curiosity, and the devotion of mankind, passed without notice in an age of science and history. It happened during the lifetime of Seneca and the elder Pliny, who must have experienced the immediate effects, or received the earliest intelligence of the prodigy. Each of these philosophers, in a laborious work, has recorded all the great phenomena of nature—earthquakes, meteors, comets, and eclipses—which his indefatigable curiosity could collect. Both the one and the other have omitted to mention the greatest phenomenon to which the mortal eye has been witness since the creation of the globe.

To comment on that would be an impertinence.

In truth, the whole question of the miraculous has undergone a change within modern times. It is no longer a question of historical justification, in the sense of producing evidence for the birth and death of, say, Julius Cæsar. All the evidence in the world would not be proof that a man two thousand years ago was raised from the dead, it would only prove that two thousand years ago people believed it occurred. But then one can produce heaps of evidence of that kind, that only two hundred years ago witches were flying round on broomsticks and turning the milk sour. Still, that does not make us believe at that date old women were playing these pranks. For we realize that it is not a question of evidence, but one of culture stages. At one stage of development the miraculous is as natural as sunrise. It is part of the normal sequence of events. At another stage it is impossible and inconceivable, not really because evidence has been produced against it, but because our knowledge has made it impossible for us to accept it. And that is really the complete reply to the stories that are believed in by Christians concerning the miracles of Jesus. We do not hesitate to believe them because we have not evidence enough to prove them to be true; we reject them because we know they could not have occurred. We have to judge the world, not through the eyes of the people of two thousand years ago, but in the light of the knowledge of to-day. And the Christian story is condemned by that knowledge as certainly as though the New Testament Jesus had been under the close observation of a committee of scientific experts from the moment of his birth till his death.

We think we were about the only journal in Britain that warned people to be careful in subscribing to the Prince of Wales' Fund when the war began. All others seemed afraid to say anything against any move that was made in the name of carrying on the war. It will be remem-

bered that the Fund, which eventually reached six and a half millions, was raised for the avowed purpose of relieving *civil* distress caused by the war. We now see it is announced that the Fund is practically exhausted, and that it has been mainly expended in relieving the families of soldiers and sailors. Now, we are not in the least objecting to these being relieved; on the contrary, we believe that their welfare should be a first charge on the nation's resources. It is a gross scandal for it to be otherwise. But we do say that the nation has no right to shelve its responsibilities, and use for the purpose of relieving the families of soldiers and sailors moneys that were raised for an entirely different purpose. In ordinary affairs we should give such conduct a very ugly name.

While we are on the subject of funds, we see from the *Evening News* of November 13 that the profits made by the Navy and Army Canteen Boards during the war amounted to seven millions. We are under the impression that the prices charged by the other canteens that were run by the different religious organizations during the war were the same as those charged in the Service canteens. And, if that is so, it puts the philanthropy of these institutions in quite an interesting light, particularly as huge sums were collected for them to help in purchasing the stock and materials. We have always said that there is no business in the country that pays quite so well as that of religious philanthropy.

Quite recently the Council of the League of Nations passed a resolution in favour of prohibiting the use of poison gas in warfare. All will remember the detestation expressed by our own Government when Germany used it during the war. The genuineness of the indignation and the degree to which our own Government is willing to assist the League may be seen in the fact that the War Office is appointing a committee of experts with instructions to forward "the development to the utmost extent of both the offensive and defensive aspects of chemical warfare." And, of necessity, other countries will follow suit. They will all protest against it in public, and utilize it in private. And that is all that has come of Mr. Asquith's war to end war and of Mr. Lloyd George's "Never again." The world seems to have forgotten nothing and to have learned nothing from the war. We are back again with the old absurdity that the only way to prevent war is for everybody to get ready for it. And when it does come, we shall have the still further absurdity of discussing which one of the belligerents caused it. That is what all these centuries of Christianity has given the world.

The clergy do not all sell matches in their spare time in order to add to their starvation salaries. The late Rev. H. A. Cumberlege, of Woking, left £13,364.

The Rev. James Adderley says that "the best thing about the modern Christians is that they do not set out to combat science." Just so! But they have a distressing habit of pretending that the talking snake in "Genesis," the air ascent of Jesus, and other fables are to be considered as real scientific knowledge. Which, as old Euclid would say, is absurd.

The Baptists are endeavouring to raise £250,000 for improving the salaries of their ministers. Although Baptists, like other Christians, profess to love their enemies, it has taken them many generations to understand that they have a duty to their own friends.

At Brighton recently a number of unemployed attended the Parish Church, and asked the Vicar to offer prayers for work, as they did for men on active service during the war. The Vicar hoped that they would not disturb the service, and advised that pressure should be brought to bear upon the Government. Evidently the Vicar has much more faith in the Government than he has in the power of God to find work for the men.

Yet the clergy did pray for the success of soldiers during the war, and they will tell you that our victory was largely

due to the help that God gave us. Even Mr. Bottomley says that, and he certainly knows as much of the will of God as does any of the Bishops. And if God can help us to win a war, he might help us to find work. It is not very useful to appeal to employers to take on ex-Service men, as does Earl Haig and the Prince of Wales. That only leaves matters where they were, although it looks well enough as an advertisement. If an employer takes on an ex-soldier without wanting men, he is almost certain to put off a man that he is already employing, and that leaves the unemployed question just where it was. It is a cheap way of the country keeping its word in the letter and breaking it in the spirit. What is really wanted is work for all. And that is just where God comes in. It is exactly the job for omnipotence. For the Deity who could create the world out of nothing ought to be able to find work for the unemployed without displacing those already employed. All the same, we admire the Vicar's cuteness in not risking it.

A Spiritualist at Ashton was fined £50 for telling fortunes. The evidence went to show that he was visited by thirty women in the course of a week—four of them police women. The accused said he believed what he told them, and before the meetings he said a short prayer asking God to help him speak the truth. The magistrate said he was determined to put down such practices. And yet every day that same magistrate will have people in front of him who call on God to help them speak the truth, and he faces it without winking—outwardly. And on Sunday he will probably go to church and listen to someone telling the fortunes of people as to what will occur to them in the next world. It seems to depend upon the kind of humbug that one practices, and where one practices it.

Some records for fasting stand at present as follow:—

Jesus Christ	...	...	...	40 days
Dr. A. Hoffman	...	...	...	62 days
Dr. Tanner	...	...	...	40 days
Dr. Sriscom	...	...	...	31 days
Signor Succi	...	...	...	45 days
Alexander Jaques	...	...	...	50 days
Signor Merlate	...	...	...	50 days
Auguste Christensen	...	...	...	35 days
Alderman MacSwiney	...	...	...	73 days

All except the first on the list fasted under observation.

Blind.

"SPARE a few coppers, sir—
Be kind—
One day of all the many days,
Remember the blind."

With quickened sense, and eager mind
Alive to every passing sound,
By State, and man forgot,
Behind a cloud of impenetrable darkness,
All day long he sits,
And makes his piteous appeal
For charity!
And in a mournful monotone
At intervals he reads
From the raised letters of the "Holy Book"
Of one who had compassion on the poor,
And caused the blind to see.

Carnations bloom in Oxford Street,
And roses red and white—
For a few shillings you can buy
A bunch of living light.

God who caused a film
To veil his eyes,
And blotted out flowers, and trees,
And changing skies,
Is Merciful.

He cannot see
The blind, uncomprehending stare
Of the "sighted"
Christian passer-by.

PERCY ALLOTT.

"Freethinker" Sustentation Fund.

THE subscriptions to the Sustentation Fund are still coming along well, and we are approaching the point when the £1,000 looks as though it will be realized. If this is done before Christmas, it will be a record sum in a record time. It will depend to a considerable extent on how soon those who intend to send carry out their intention.

True to his promise, "Medical" encloses his cheque for £25, which was promised to make up the first £500. It seems we were in error in putting "Medical" on the list of promises for £50. It should have been £45, as £5 out of the £50 was sent along with the offer to subscribe. However, our friend is keeping to the £50 as announced, and writes that he hopes to have to send the remaining £25 at an early date. Mr. J. B. Middleton, who promised £10 on the completion of the first £500, and £10 if the £1,000 was raised, also sends his cheque for the first half, "with every good wish for the cause." The list of promises has been readjusted accordingly, but the promptitude with which our friends carry out their promises should act as a spur to others. "Ex-Soldier" also promises a subscription of £1, and others promise to "come again" before the Fund closes. If it can be done, we feel with Macbeth that it were better it were done quickly, and we have still five weeks to the end of the year.

The following is a complete list of subscriptions and promises up to date:—

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

Previously acknowledged, £494 5s. 4d. "Medical," £25; J. B. Middleton, £10; Jersey, £1; Mrs. E. Taylor, £1; V. Massey Crosse, £1 1s.; Greevz Fysher, £1; J. E. English (second subscription), 5s.; A. Whitwell, £1 3s.; R. Moore, £1; A. E. Stringer, £2 2s.; O. A. P., 2s. 6d.; A. Rumbold, 4s.; C. Buchanan, £1; W. Hill, 2s. 6d.; A. Unsworth, 10s.; Marion Unsworth, 10s.; J. McGlashan, £2; H. Grod, £1; J. Higgins, £2; D. Seddon, £1; R. J. Wilson, 2s. 6d.; T. Grimley, 2s. 6d.; W. Turner, 2s. 6d.; T. J. Thurlow, 3s.

Total, £547 5s. 10d.

PROMISED, provided the total sum raised reaches £1,000, including the amounts promised:—"Medical," £25; "In Memory of the late Sir Hiram Maxim," £50; Mr. J. B. Middleton, £10; "A Friend," £100; A. W. Coleman, £6; "Working Journalist," £3; X. Y. Z., £10; J. Morton, 10s.; R. Proctor, £1; National Secular Society, £25; F. Collins, 10s.; H. Black, £1 1s.; T. Sharpe, £1 1s.; Mr. and Mrs. S. Clowes, £1 1s.; J. Breese, £3; "Ex-Soldier," £1.

Total promises, £238 3s.

Correction.—"Freda Cox" in our last issue should have been Fred Cox.

To Correspondents.

THE Editor will be obliged if Mr. Evacustes A. Phipson will be good enough to forward his address as soon as possible. He has unfortunately mislaid it.

E. E. BUTNER.—What a person finds satisfying will depend upon what he is looking for, and also upon his personal inclinations. For ourselves, we should say that the first thing is to find out what is true. When that is settled, and if one makes that the prime motive, it will not be long before satisfaction will follow.

A CORRESPONDENT, in reference to a recent reply on the subject of Father Lambert's criticism of Ingersoll, reminds us of Ingersoll's remarks, "I never thought this reply unanswerable. I have read but little of it, but that little is poor and puerile." In that judgment we quite agree.

G. H. MURPHY.—We are all inclined at times to feel a little down-hearted at the enormous forces against us, and at the tenacity with which people cling to their superstitions. But it is when we compare things as they are now with what they were, say, a hundred years ago, that one feels encour-

aged. Our work *does* tell, sometimes in directions where we least expect it.

A. MACLEOD.—Yours is the right kind of spirit. Faint hearts are but of little use in a cause that has so much against it, and so little to offer in the shape of worldly inducement.

OSCAR BRACHT.—Received and allocated as desired. There is really no need for foreign agents to charge an extravagant price for the *Freethinker*. It can be sent all over the world for 15s. per year. It can be sent to the Antipodes for half the postage that is charged for sending it through the post in England. We note your compliment as to the sanity of our position.

E. A. STRINGER.—Sorry your paper went astray. We are forwarding you another copy of that date. Thanks for cheque. We have every expectation that the Fund will reach the total named.

MRS. L. GAIR.—We are obliged for further list of subscriptions. If all worked as hard, we should see things, at which our friend the enemy would not be exactly pleased.

J. H. ENGLISH.—Thanks for further donation towards the Fund before it closes.

L. MCHUGH.—Received, and shall appear.

H. BAYFORD.—Glad you enjoyed the meetings. We have no inclination whatever to tone down our "message." You may rest quite easy on that score. And, more than ever, these are not the times for half-hearted speaking. That does but encourage the enemy, and weaken one's friends.

EX-SOLDIER.—Dr. Foote's *Plain Home Talk* is probably the book about which you are inquiring.

A. RUMBOLD.—Thanks. If each one does what he or she can, we have no right to expect, nor do we ask for, more.

A. UNSWORTH.—There is no need to apologize. Many, like yourself, have not yet sent, not from lack of interest, but simply because—well, because they have not yet sent. There is a deal of human nature in even Freethinkers.

MR. J. MCGLASHAN writes, in forwarding cheque to Fund, "I have myself a pretty tough job, but I am thinking yours is a bit worse. Your troubles will soon be over." We hope that our friend's prophecy will be realized. We should not be at all upset to find things a little easier for a time than they have been during the past five years. But we are so used to it by now, that, if things were to get easy, we might find ourselves looking round for trouble—just to keep our hands in.

MR. C. BUCHANAN thinks it regrettable that we should have to carry on our work in "an atmosphere of financial trouble." But that is really nothing new. And when advanced movements are wealthy, they will probably not be worth the carrying on. There is a certain purifying element in movements that are not wealthy. They are at least preserved from self-seekers.

G. O. WARREN.—Thanks. We are very glad to have the copy. *The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London. E.C. 4.*

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

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

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

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

All Cheques and Postal Orders should be crossed "London, City and Midland Bank, Clerkenwell Branch."

Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

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

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

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.

Some men assert that Christianity has taught mankind the value of freedom. It certainly has not been the advocate of free thought; and what is freedom worth if the mind is to be enslaved?—Robert G. Ingersoll.

I ought to go honest and vital, and speak the rude truth in all ways.—Emerson.

Sugar Plums.

To-day (November 21) Mr. Cohen lectures at 2.30 and 6 in the White Palace, Pontypridd. Good meetings are anticipated, and Mr. Cohen will be pleased to renew his acquaintance with the Freethinkers of the district.

There was a very fine meeting at the Leicester Secular Hall on Sunday last. The hall was well filled, including the gallery, and Mr. Cohen's lecture was followed with the closest attention throughout. Mr. Sydney Gimson occupied the chair. One pleasing feature of the meeting was the number of young men present. That, by the way, has been one of the features of our meetings for some time past. It looks as though these were discovering that there are no short cuts to the millennium, and that we cannot win our way there by strikes, by war, or by dependence upon politicians. In the long run we shall have to *think* our way into a better social state, and the path to accurate thinking is certainly made easier and the more profitably by clearing the intellectually cramping influence of Christianity out of the way. It is to be hoped that the young men of the country realize this. At any rate, it is not our fault if they do not.

Next Sunday (November 28) Mr. Cohen lectures in the Fulham Town Hall, Fulham Road, at 7.30, on "The Benefits of Unbelief." There will be a pianoforte recital before the lecture. This is an experiment in a new district, and we hope to have the help of all who are able to assist in making it a success. Some very neat slips announcing the meeting have been prepared, and may be had at either the N. S. S. or the *Freethinker* office. Their judicious distribution will help considerably.

One of our subscribers in Italy, Sir Walter Strickland, appears to be having continuous trouble in getting his copies of the *Freethinker* through. He complains, and apparently with justice, that his letters are being intercepted in the same way, either by our own or by the Italian Government. For some time he was unable to get a single copy of this paper through. We worried the postal authorities here, and they, naturally, disclaimed responsibility, and blamed the Italians. Anyway, the result of our complaints was that the paper was delivered with fair regularity for some time. Now the trouble seems to have commenced again, and we are again on the war-path. A censorship of the post appears to be one of the legacies which our war for freedom has left us. We are not surprised, and, as our readers will remember, we warned them all along that the freedom that was sacrificed, ostensibly in the interest of the war, would not be easily regained. And unfortunately there are few who appear to have any genuine regard for real freedom nowadays.

The West Ham Branch is holding its first social this season at the Metropolitan Music Academy, Earlam Hall, Forest Gate, on Saturday evening, December 4, at seven. There will be songs, dances, and games, and all Freethinkers and their friends will be welcome. We hope that all who can will support the social activities of the Branch. We are pleased to hear from the Secretary that the Sunday evening lectures this season have been quite successful, but there are still some vacant seats for Freethinkers, or, better still, for Christians. No Freethinker would object to making room for a Christian on such an occasion.

We were delighted to notice in the *Sunday Times* of the 7th inst. an article by Mr. Eden Phillpotts on the Matrimonial Causes Bill, which, as our own readers will know, represents a growing demand for divorce on equal terms and for the extension of its grounds. Mr. Phillpotts notes the misrepresentation due to prejudice, misunderstanding and confusion of all the real issues due to apathy, and religious conservatism. The women fear it. Yet it is a charter of liberty for all women, giving them the powers they have been too long denied, and enabling them to secure freedom from cruel fetters.....Unless a woman is

unfaithful, or deserts her husband, drinks, or becomes permanently insane, the Bill leaves her wholly unaffected. "Yet there are those who unthinkingly oppose these clean and reasonable provisions. But the intelligent women may be brought to see the necessity for this humane reform; it is religion that blocks the way. The amazing point is this: that those who are willing to see thousands of their neighbours suffer thus, claim their religion directs them; that out of respect to a contract, which need not in reality be dependent upon the Church at all, the sufferers must seek no salvation from their life-destroying disabilities. Church and Law are involved, and the Law gradually awakens to the gravity of the situation. It may be supposed to support the Bill, save where religion interposes. The bulk of lawyers, however, are for it, and appear conscious that with 2,500 divorce cases on the roll for the present term, and the recent exposures of that wholesale perjury which our existing, disgusting statutes encourage, the time has certainly come to clean this thing. Can we not, then, remind Churchmen that as the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath, so all expositions uttered by the Founder of their faith were spoken for the passing present needs of humanity, and not as written upon stone from which subsequent generations have no right of appeal? A thousand other assurances of the inspired writers are daily whistled down the wind by the changed conditions of modern life; and with good or ill grace it has to be received that man cannot, and never did, starkly model every detail of his life and his social relations upon the Oriental teachings of the Gospels. Then why hold sacrosanct this outworn pronouncement upon the most vital of all human covenants? Only mediæval minds can longer support the archaic attitude of unequal laws between men and women; and one may still hope that, recognising a golden chance to display that breadth and charity she claims, the advanced party of the Church will not oppose a flinty spirit of unreason to this most merciful Bill. Let the establishment not lose the substance of a real victory, while cleaving to the shadow of a writ that can no longer run where men and women desire to advance in the ways of moral evolution to a nobler relationship upon a foundation equally steadfast for both. The Bill protects marriage; and it is those who oppose the evolution of morals and seek to keep the tight hand of supernaturalism upon our spiritual advance who would finally destroy its spiritual significance and drive a ration generation to discard the religious rite altogether."

We are pleased to learn that there was a good audience at the Friars Hall on Sunday last to listen to Mr. A. B. Moss. The address was listened to with great appreciation, and it was evident that the lecturer was in his best form. We hope that these meetings will go on improving, and that our friends will do their best to that end. If the meetings receive sufficient support, and the hall is available, they may be continued in the New Year. Friars Hall is next to the *Evening News* office, and so is quite easy to locate.

Superfluous Cargo.

WHEN a ship is sinking, the first thing a captain commands his able-bodied seamen to do is to lighten the vessel by flinging overboard all superfluous cargo. The old and worn-out ship called *Christianity* has been in a sinking condition for years, and now the chief dignitaries of the Church, who stand in the position of captain and mates, are giving orders to lighten the vessel by throwing overboard as much of the worn-out and useless cargo as possible. Canon Barnes says they can well dispense with the old story of the Fall of Man and the dogma founded upon it. They can also get rid of the story of "the flood," which they know has no historic foundation, and is a positive hindrance to the acceptance of the Bible as a God-inspired word. Further, the story of the "confusion of tongues" at the Tower of Babel, which nobody outside a lunatic asylum believes as the method by which all the languages and dialects of mankind originated. That story, therefore, may be safely consigned to the bottom

of the sea. The lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, which, although alike unhistoric, may be retained for a little while longer, as affording useful lessons, not only of the antiquity of the Jewish race, but of their extraordinary commercial instincts and their successful bargaining with the great God Jahveh, for, as James Thomson (B.V.) said years ago in his *Story of a Famous Old Jewish Firm* (1866):—

The Jews have always been excellent traders, keen to scent wealth, subtle to track it, unwearied to pursue it, strong to seize it, tenacious to hold it; and the most keen, subtle, untiring, strong, and tenacious of them all was this Jah.

And while capitalism prevails in Europe as the most workable economic system we may be sure the Christians will retain this story as a distinct feature of God's early dealings with his faithful children. The story of the bondage of the children of Israel in Egypt, and of their ultimate exodus by means of a magical passage on dry land through the Red Sea, and all the dreadful plagues endured by the poor and unoffending Egyptians, because this Jewish God had so hardened the heart of Pharaoh that he would not let the children of Israel go. This, of course, may be put aside as doubtful cargo, to be retained while there are a large number of credulous Christians willing to believe such fairy tales; while the story of Moses, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders going up into a mountain and seeing the God of Israel in all his glory may be retained as an allegory, although it is in direct contradiction of the first chapter of John, verse 18, which says, "No man hath seen God at any time." Among other stories of the Bible that Christians will be willing to part with as inspired truths are the stories of Balaam and his talkative donkey; Samson and the invincible jawbone of an ass, with which he polished off a thousand people while they waited; the vengeance of the Israelites upon the Midianites, slaying every man of them, and all the married women also, but preserving the maidens for a brutal and lustful horde of soldiers (Numbers xxxi., 6 to 18); also the story of Jonah, who converted a whale's stomach into a prayer meeting house until the whale got sick of him and deposited him safely on land; all these stories Christians have been willing to fling overboard whenever Freethinkers have been near at hand ready to laugh such stupid legends to scorn. But when we come to "the New Testament," the Christians cry "Halt!" They are not prepared to apply the critical method to the absurd stories of the Gospels. If, however, they are willing to give up the doctrine of the Fall, how can they logically hold on to the doctrine of the Atonement. If the first man did not fall in the Garden of Eden, what need was there for Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, to come down on earth four thousand years later to die to blot out the sins of mankind? As Thomas Paine well said, "The story of the Fall of Man is the prologue of a drama of which the Atonement is the epilogue." Do away with the first, and the second is unnecessary. Besides, if Jesus did die to blot out the sins of mankind, are all mankind saved? And if not, why not? And if they are not, then the mission of Christ was a failure! Further, what intelligent Christian really believes in the Virgin birth of Jesus; believes that he had two fathers, Joseph and the Holy Ghost? And yet the genealogy of Jesus is traced back to David, through Joseph, the husband of Mary, when, as a matter of fact, Joseph was no blood relation at all, if the Holy Ghost was really the father (see Matthew i., 1 to 16)? And what intelligent Christian believes in the miracles of the New Testament? The story of Jesus feeding five thousand hungry people on five loaves and two fishes, and taking up in fragments more than would have recomposed the loaves and fishes over a half-dozen times? And why cannot Jesus perform similar miracles to-day, when there are hundreds of thousands of

ex-soldiers who came home from France on the promise of houses "worthy of heroes" and "work for all," and now find themselves, their wives, and children on the verge of starvation? Or the story of two blind men who received their sight by Jesus merely touching their eyes, and why cannot he perform a similar operation on thousands of young men who lost their sight in the great war? And what about the two men who were possessed of devils, and Jesus turned them out; and the poor devils took possession of the bodies of a number of swine who were feeding close by, and whose constitutions were so disturbed that they "ran furiously down a steep pit into the sea and were drowned"—the pigs, not the devils? What became of them the Lord alone knows (see Matthew ix., 28 to 32). The story of Jesus walking upon the sea in troubled waters requires a good deal of Christian faith to believe, without prayer and fasting; Peter was unable to imitate his master in this respect, and no other Christian appears to have attempted the feat without the aid of special boots or other mechanical appliances (see Matthew xv., 25 to 30). Or what do Christians think of the story of Jesus curing a lunatic by driving a devil out of him, and how is it that Christian clergymen and other believers do not suggest to the medical officers of some of our asylums in London and the provinces to try the same kind of treatment upon their patients in the twentieth century? And what do Christians think of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead by calling him out of the grave "with a loud voice," although the body of Lazarus was so far decomposed that Martha, his sister, said, "By this time he stinketh, for he hath been dead four days" (see John xi., 29)? Then, of course, there is the greatest miracle of all, that of Jesus raising himself from the dead, and ascending straight up through the clouds to a place called heaven—which nobody has ever been able to locate since—without the aid of wings, or any mechanical contrivance, wrought by man. How many Christians really believe in such a story? But if the Christians are going to throw overboard all the stories that are incredible that they find within the covers of the Holy Scriptures, where are they going to stop? And are they only going to accept such teachings of Jesus as they find practicable in these days of hard and dry utilitarianism? I am well aware that there are some good teachings attributed to Jesus which no Freethinker would try to destroy or deride; but most of the good teachings did not originate with Christ, and most of those that appear to be original are either impracticable or harmful, or both. What rests? How long can Christianity survive under the mere shadow of the name of Christ, and him crucified? As our old friend G. W. Foote used to say: "Hundreds of the clergy live on the Cross, because they had not the courage to act on the square." Though Canon Barnes admits that the old story of the "Fall of Man" is untenable, and that to the biologist man was cousin to the apes, in his latest deliverance at the Church Conference at Southend, he claimed as a Christian that "our sense of divine communion was too splendid to be denied, and it joined too closely to our worship of Jesus for us to deem him a mere accident in human evolution." But evolution does not admit of any supernatural interference with the processes of natural forces; and if Jesus, therefore, was produced naturally by the ordinary processes of nature, it does away once and for all with the idea of the miraculous conception and with his alleged divinity also. And thus the old structure of the Christian creed tumbles to pieces. But though we, as Freethinkers, know that Christianity is condemned alike by science, by history, and common sense multitudes of poor credulous Christians will cling on to the old faith as tenaciously as ever, and it will still be our duty to hammer away at these crumbling creeds until the last remnant of belief in them has vanished from the minds of men. For many years past Chris-

tianity has been nothing more nor less than an organized hypocrisy. Many of the clergy are wise enough to know that the doctrines of the Church are absolutely untenable, but they have not sufficient courage to say so. To most of them the Church affords an assured and comfortable living, and if we could prove, as many of us believe we can, that Christianity is condemned in the light of science, history, and the cultivated reason of mankind, thousands of priests and parsons and laymen would still cling on to it—indeed, they could not afford to abandon it—there is so much money invested in it, so many interests involved in it, that it would mean material and moral ruin to thousands if they gave it up. But the doom of the creeds has been pronounced; and the day of judgment will assuredly come. Indeed, as the great Freethought poet, Shelley, finely says:—

Fear not the tyrants will rule for ever,
Or the priests of the evil faith;
They stand on the brink of that raging river,
Whose waves they have tainted with death.

It is fed from the depths of a thousand dells,
Around them it foams and rages and swells;
And their swords and their sceptres I floating see,
Like wrecks on the surge of eternity.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

The Historical Jesus and Mythical Christ.

Older Freethinkers will well recall the slashing onslaught made on the Christian superstition by the late Gerald Massey. By arrangements with his daughter, who holds the copyright of his works, we purpose republishing at an early date the most striking of his anti-Christian essays. Meanwhile, we feel certain that our readers will appreciate having the opportunity of reading those portions of the essay on *The Historical Jesus and the Mythical Christ*. It will serve to whet their appetite for the complete work when it appears.

I LECTURED upon the subject of Jesus many years ago. At that time I did not know how we had been misled, or that the "Christian scheme" (as it is aptly called) in the New Testament is a fraud, founded on a fable in the Old!

I then accepted the Canonical Gospels as containing a veritable human history, and assumed, as others do, that the history proved itself. Finding that Jesus, or Jehoshua Ben-Pandira, was an historical character, known to the Talmud, I made the common mistake of supposing that this proved the personal existence of the Jesus found portrayed in the Canonical Gospels. But after you have heard my story, and weighed the evidence now for the first time collected and presented to the public, you will not wonder that I should have changed my views, or that I should be impelled to tell the truth to others, as it now appears to myself; although I am only able to summarize here, in the briefest manner possible, a few of the facts that I have dealt with exhaustively elsewhere.

The personal existence of Jesus as Jehoshua Ben-Pandira can be established beyond a doubt. One account affirms that, according to a genuine Jewish tradition, "that man (who is not to be named) was a disciple of Jehoshua Ben-Perachia." It also says, "He was born in the fourth year of the reign of the Jewish King Alexander Jannæus, notwithstanding the assertions of his followers that he was born in the reign of Herod." That would be more than a century earlier than the date of birth assigned to the Jesus of the Gospels! But it can be further shown that Jehoshua Ben-Pandira may have been born considerably earlier even than the year 102 B.C., although the point is not of much consequence here. Jehoshua, son of Perachia, was a president of the Sanhedrin—the fifth, reckoning from Ezra as the first: one of those

who in the line of descent received and transmitted the oral law, as it was said, direct from Sinai. There could not be two of that name. This Ben-Perachia had begun to teach as a Rabbi in the year 154 B.C. We may therefore reckon that he was *not born* later than 180-170 B.C., and that it could hardly be later than 100 B.C. when he went down into Egypt with his pupil. For it is related that he fled there in consequence of a persecution of the Rabbis, feasibly conjectured to refer to the civil war in which the Pharisees revolted against King Alexander Jannæus, and consequently about 105 B.C. If we put the age of his pupil, Jehoshua Ben-Pandira, at fifteen years, that will give us an approximate date, extracted without pressure, which shows that Jehoshua Ben-Pandira may have been born about the year 120 B.C. But twenty years are a matter of little moment here.

According to the Babylonian Gemara to the Mishna of Tract "Shabbath," this Jehoshua, the son of Pandira and Stada, was stoned to death as a wizard, in the city of Lud, or Lydda, and afterwards crucified by being hanged on a tree, on the eve of the Passover. This is the manner of death assigned to Jesus in the Book of Acts. The Gemara says there exists a tradition that on the rest-day before the Sabbath they crucified Jehoshua, on the rest-day of the Passah (the day before the Passover). The year of his death, however, is not given in that account; but there are reasons for thinking it could not have been much earlier nor later than 70 B.C., because this Jewish King Jannæus reigned from the year 106 to 79 B.C. He was succeeded in the government by his widow Salomè, whom the Greeks called Alexandra, and who reigned for some nine years. Now the traditions, especially of the first "Toledoth Jehoshua," relate that the Queen of Jannæus, and the mother of Hyrcanus, who must therefore be Salomè, in spite of her being called by another name, showed favour to Jehoshua and his teaching; that she was a witness of his wonderful works and powers of healing, and tried to save him from the hands of his sacerdotal enemies, because he was related to her; but that during her reign, which ended in the year 71 B.C., he was put to death. The Jewish writers and Rabbis with whom I have talked always deny the identity of the Talmudic Jehoshua and the Jesus of the Gospels. "This," observes Rabbi Jechiels, "which has been related of Jehoshua Ben-Perachia and his pupil, contains not reference whatever to him whom the Christians honour as God!" Another Rabbi, Selman Zevi, produced ten reasons for concluding that the Jehoshua of the Talmud was *not* he who was afterwards called Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus of Nazareth (and of the Canonical Gospels) was unknown to Justus, to the Jew of Celsus, and to Josephus, the supposed reference to him by the latter being an undoubted forgery.

The "blasphemous writings of the Jews about Jesus," as Justin Martyr calls them, always refer to Jehoshua Ben-Pandira, and not to the Jesus of the Gospels. It is Ben-Pandira they mean when they say they have another and a truer account of the birth and life, the wonder-working and death of Jehoshua, or Jesus. This repudiation is perfectly honest and soundly based. The only Jesus known to the Jews was Jehoshua Ben-Pandira, who had learnt the arts of magic in Egypt, and who was put to death by them as a sorcerer. This was likewise the only Jesus known to Celsus, the writer of the *True Logos*, a work which the Christians managed to get rid of bodily, with so many other of the anti-Christian evidences.

Celsus observes that he was not a pure Word, not a true Logos, but a man who had learned the arts of sorcery in Egypt. So, in the Clementines, it is in the character of Ben-Pandira that Jesus is said to rise again as the magician. But here is the conclusive fact: The Jews know nothing of Jesus, the Christ of the Gospels,

as an historical character; and when the Christians of the fourth century trace his pedigree, by the hand of Epiphanius, they are forced to derive their Jesus from Pandira! Epiphanius gives the genealogy of the Canonical Jesus in this wise:—

Jacob, called Pandira, Mary—Joseph—Cleopas, Jesus.

This proves that in the fourth century the pedigree of Jesus was traced to Pandira, the father of that Jehoshua who was the pupil of Ben-Perachia, and who became one of the magicians in Egypt, and who was crucified as a magician on the eve of the Passover by the Jews, in the time of Queen Alexandra, who had ceased to reign in the year 70 B.C.—the Jesus, therefore, who lived and died more than a century too soon.

* * * *

When the true tradition of Ben-Pandira is recovered, it shows that he was the sole historical Jesus who was hung on a tree by the Jews, not crucified in the Roman fashion, and authenticates the claim now to be made on behalf of the astronomical allegory to the dispensational Jesus, the Kronian Christ, the mythical Messiah of the Canonical Gospels, and the Jesus of Paul, who was not the carnalized Christ. For I hold that the Jesus of the "other Gospel," according to the Apostles Cephas and James, who was utterly repudiated by Paul, was none other than Ben-Pandira, the Nazarene, of whom James was a follower, according to a comment on him found in the Book Abodazaura. Anyway, there are two Jesuses, or Jesus and the Christ, one of whom is repudiated by Paul.

* * * *

So much for the historic Jesus. And now for the mythical Christ. Here we can tread on firmer ground.

The mythical Messiah was always born of a Virgin Mother—a factor unknown in natural phenomena, and one that cannot be historical, one that can only be explained by means of the Mythos, and those conditions of primitive sociology which are mirrored in mythology and preserved in theology. The virgin mother had been represented in Egypt by the maiden Queen, Mut-em-ua, the future mother of Amenhept III., some 16 centuries B.C., who impersonated the eternal virgin that produced the eternal child.

Four consecutive scenes reproduced in my book are found portrayed upon the innermost walls of the *Holy of Holies* in the Temple of Luxor, which was built by Amenhept III., a Pharaoh of the 17th dynasty. The first scene on the left hand shows the God Taht, the Lunar Mercury, the Annunciator of the Gods, in the act of hailing the Virgin Queen, and announcing to her that she is to give birth to the coming Son. In the next scene the God Kneph (in conjunction with Hathor) gives the new life. This is the Holy Ghost or Spirit that causes the Immaculate Conception, Kneph being the Spirit by name in Egyptian. The natural effects are made apparent in the virgin's swelling form.

Next the mother is seated on the midwife's stool, and the new-born child is supported in the hands of one of the nurses. The fourth scene is that of the Adoration. Here the child is enthroned, receiving homage from the Gods and gifts from men. Behind the deity Kneph, on the right, three spirits—the Three Magi, or Kings of the Legend, are kneeling and offering presents with their right hand, and life with their left. The child thus announced, incarnated, born, and worshipped, was the Pharaonic representative of the Aten Sun in Egypt, the God Adon of Syria, and Hebrew Adonai; the child-Christ of the Aten Cult; the miraculous conception of the ever-virgin mother, personated by Mut-em-ua, as mother of the "only one," and representative of the divine mother of the youthful Sun-God.

These scenes, which were mythical in Egypt, have been copied or reproduced as historical in the Canonical Gospels, where they stand like four corner-stones to the

Historic Structure, and prove that the foundations are mythical.

* * * *

The birth of Christ is astronomical. The birthday is determined by the full moon of Easter. This can only occur once every 19 years, as we have it illustrated by the Epact or Golden Number of the Prayer Book. Understand me! Jesus, the Christ, can only have a birthday, or resurrection, once in 19 years, in accordance with the Metonic Cycle, because his parents are the sun and moon; and those appear in the earliest known representation of the Man upon the Cross. This proves the astronomical and non-human nature of the birth itself, which is identical with that of the full moon of Easter in Egypt.

Casini, the French Astronomer, has demonstrated the fact that the date assigned for the birth of Christ is an Astronomical epoch in which the middle conjunction of the moon with the sun happened on March 24, at half-past one o'clock in the morning, at the meridian of Jerusalem, the very day of the middle equinox. The following day (the 25th) was the day of the Incarnation, according to Augustine, but the date of the Birth, according to Clement Alexander. For two birthdays are assigned to Jesus by the Christian Fathers, one at the Winter Solstice, the other at the Vernal Equinox. These, which cannot both be historical, are based on the two birthdays of the double Horus in Egypt. Plutarch tells us that Isis was delivered of Horus, the child, about the time of the winter Solstice, and that the festival of the second or adult Horus followed the Vernal Equinox. Hence the Solstice and spring Equinox were both assigned to the one birth of Jesus by the Christolators; and again, that which is impossible as human history is the natural fact in relation to the two Horuses, the dual form of the Solar God in Egypt.

* * * *

Plutarch also tells us how the Mithraic Cult had been particularly established in Rome about the year 70 B.C. And Mithras was fabled as having been born in a cave. Wherever Mithras was worshipped the cave was consecrated as his birth place. The cave can be identified, and the birth of the Messiah in that cave, no matter under what name he was born, can be definitely dated. The "Cave of Mithras" was the birthplace of the Sun in the Winter Solstice, when this occurred on December 25 in the sign of the Sea-Goat, with the Vernal Equinox in the sign of the Ram. Now the Akkadian name of the tenth month, that of the Sea-Goat, which answers roughly to our December, the tenth by name, is *Abba Uddu*, that is, the "Cave of Light"; the cave of re-birth for the Sun in the lowest depth of the Solstice, figured as the Cave of Light. This cave was continued as the birthplace of the Christ. You will find it in all the Gospels of the Infancy, and Justin Martyr says, "Christ was born in the Stable, and afterwards took refuge in the Cave." He likewise vouches for the fact that Christ was born on the same day that the Sun was re-born in *Stabulo Augiæ*, or, in the Stable of Augias. Now the cleansing of this Stable was the sixth labour of Herakles, his first being in the sign of the Lion; and Justin was right; the Stable and Cave are both figured in the same Celestial Sign. But mark this! The Cave was the birthplace of the Solar Messiah from the year 2410 to 255 B.C.; at which latter date the Solstice passed out of the Sea-Goat into the sign of the Archer; and no Messiah, whether called Mithras, Adon, Tammuz, Horus, or Christ, could have been born in the Cave of *Abba Uddu* or the Stable of Augias on December 25 after the year 255 B.C., therefore, Justin had nothing but the Mithraic tradition of the by-gone birthday to prove the birth of the Historical Christ 255 years later!

GERALD MASSEY.

(To be continued.)

Correspondence.

HUMAN FREEDOM.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Mr. Jamson, long ago, has put the question how I answer the dilemma that on the Theistic theory "God gave man freedom to wreck his life, without the judgment to avoid disaster"?

I traverse the latter assertion. Blunders are one thing, sin another. Sin means a choice of evil, knowing it to be evil; and it is followed by remorse, which is a conviction of responsibility; and by that I mean that man not only admits, but cannot help admitting, to himself after a wrong choice that he need not have made it.

Atheists tend to ignore certain universal, or nearly universal, facts of moral consciousness, and herein they are unscientific. They have to account for all the facts, if possible. Remorse, or what Shelley called self-contempt, is partially explained by Theism, but wholly unexplained by Atheism. We hold that it is the feeling of the soul dying by being cut off from the source of its life, that brings with it a sense of shame, which means responsibility. In other words, God gave judgment to men along with freedom; not a power of foreseeing results, but a knowledge of the difference between good and evil. Possibly if man could foresee all the results of sin, he would abstain from sinful actions, though I doubt it. If he did abstain, while still wishing to commit them, he would be guilty of rebellion against law. It is a question of choice and desire.

Blunders, on the other hand, concern only the outward actions, not the thoughts, of the heart; and it is very hard to say that outward actions *per se* cause the wreckage of human life. They may lead to suffering, but suffering, rightly understood, is a good, not an evil. All the evil in the world that man is responsible for is due to man preferring it to good, with his eyes open.

My opponent also assumes there is no after life. I assume the opposite. He says, too, that freedom is unthinkable. It may be; but, none the less, our consciousness asserts it as a fact.

E. LYTTLETON.

SENSATIONS AND REALITY.

SIR,—Your issue of November 7 contains an interesting article on "Agnosticism" by G. O. W. In it occurs the following passage:—

Modern science declares that we have no sources of information but the five senses, and with these senses, aided by the most accurate, delicate, and powerful instruments, scientists have explored the universe far enough to know that whatever other worlds there may be they are substantially like our world, and the more they explore the further they get from finding a God or a soul, so that we are justified in asserting that the non-existence of either has been scientifically demonstrated.

"Modern science declares," it is here stated, "that we have no sources of information but the five senses." I have a difficulty in seeing this, and I would be obliged if G. O. W. would clear up my difficulty. Take any material object, say, an apple. It has certain sense-qualities, as colour, taste, smell, etc. Corresponding to these qualities we have certain senses, as sight, taste, smell, etc. But no particular sense can perceive the objects of any other sense. Sight cannot perceive a taste, taste cannot perceive a smell. It is only when by an act of thought I transcend or rise above sense that I am able to grasp the object as a unity or whole of incommensurable or diverse qualities. Is this correct? If so, have we not here, as another source of knowledge than sense, a higher order of reality, namely, supersensible reality? The question is important; because if it is through some supersensible reality in me that I perceive an object, it must surely be through that same form of reality that the object exists. The object here chosen for illustration is an apple, but it might equally well be the whole material universe. Would not the theistic implication in that case be obvious?

A. MCA.

What is it we heartily wish of each other? Is it to be pleased and flattered? No, but to be convicted and exposed, to be shamed out of our nonsense of all kinds, and made men of, instead of ghosts and phantoms.—Emerson.

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.

FRIARS HALL (236 Blackfriars Road): 7, Mr. W. H. Thresh, "Should a Parent Tell?"

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Johnson's Dancing Academy, 241 Marylebone Road, near Edgware Road): 7.30, Mr. Samuels, "Bible Truths."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH, N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, off Kentish Town Road, N.W.): 7.30, Mr. Joseph H. Van Biene, "When We are Civilized."

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