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Views and Opinions.

War and a World-Soul.

In dealing with the relations of mind and body, I specially left on one side a theory that was championed by the late Professor William James, and which, in one form or another, finds many advocates. In his Ingersoll lecture on "Human Immortality" Professor James replies to the statement that we only know thought as a function of the brain by admitting the fact, but offering a different explanation of it. Function, he says, may be of more than one kind. It may be productive, as when it represents the properties of things in combination. It may be liberative, as when a spring releases the thing it holds down. It may be permissive, or transmissive, as when a piece of coloured glass determines the hue of the light that reaches the eye. If, then, he goes on to argue, we *assume* that the function of the brain in relation to consciousness is neither liberative, nor productive, but permissive, we may accept the position that thought is a function of the brain without surrendering the belief in survival. In this case it all depends upon how much we assume. First, we must assume that there is a real world of consciousness "behind the veil." Second, we must assume that the brain stands to this real world in the same relation that a stained glass window does to the world of light, and that just as the light is individualised as green, or red, or blue, so the "world-soul" is individualised by the human organism. Finally, we must assume that the destruction of the individual organism does not at all affect this individualised consciousness, which is exactly equal to assuming that the coloured light which pours on the Church floor through the stained glass windows would continue *after* the windows had been smashed. If we assume these things then, says Professor James, we may believe that consciousness "might in ways unknown to us, continue still." Quite so. One need only assume enough to prove anything. Anyone can get the omelette out of the hat—provided he has been

careful to place it there before the performance opened.

* * *

A Fantastic Theory.

Now I do not wish to labour the point, but there is no justification for giving to the word function, particularly when we are dealing with a question of biology, these varied meanings. As I have said, in biology the function of an organ is the activities of the organ. And in any case the function of a thing must be concerned with its essential characteristics. To call anything that a thing does its function is an abuse of language. The function of a penknife is to cut, but because I happen to use it for the purpose of knocking in a tack, it would be absurd to speak of that as one of its functions. Of course, the only reason Professor James has for elaborating these varied meanings is to find room for his conception of a world soul. Having assumed its existence, he must find some way of bringing it into practice, and that is done in the way indicated. If we ask what are the facts upon which the existence of a world soul is assumed, the reply is there are none. Its sole justification is that if it is accepted it will enable one to go on believing in a theory of the individual soul, which is discredited in all directions. The curious thing is that while the believer in survival demands the most rigid demonstration of the truth of the theory that mind is the function of a definite organic structure, he is ready to accept without the slightest evidence whatever a theory so fantastic as a "world-soul" Surely if the fact that the neurological theory of mental phenomena lacks complete demonstration is good enough ground for its rejection, it is sheer insanity to accept a theory on behalf of which not a single shred of evidence is offered. At least we know that mind is never found apart from a nervous system. But a sea of consciousness "behind the veil" is a species of rubbish better fitted for the columns of a Sunday newspaper than for a serious philosophical essay.

* * *

The Condition of Survival.

But suppose we were to grant this theory of a world soul. Even then we should be as far off as ever from proving survival. Survival after death means—it is necessary to emphasise the point—the survival of individual consciousness and personality. And that cannot occur if all that happens is that the portion of the world soul known as me, at death returns to and is merged in the sea of consciousness from which it comes. As well talk of the individuality of the raindrop being preserved after it returns to the sea from which it originated. One might as well speak of my body continuing to

exist because its constituents assume a hundred and one different forms in nature after it has disintegrated. Whether man is essentially mind or essentially matter, it is at least certain that he must continue as an individual if he is to survive death. Those who throw themselves into ecstasies over the reunion of friends in the next world cannot have in mind the reunion of certain unorganised quantities of oxygen, nitrogen, carbon, phosphorus, sodium, etc. It is not a chemical immortality they have in mind, but a perpetuation of individualities. And on that point Professor James' theory falls to pieces. For whether the human individuality is the expression of the physical structure, or whether it is individualised by passing through the physical structure, the animal organism is the individualising medium. On either theory it is the body that determines the individuality that exists, just as the stained glass determines the colour of the rays that fall upon the ground. As the glass individualises the light, so the body individualises the assumed world soul. And as the breaking of the glass puts an end to the coloured rays, so the breaking of the organism puts an end to the individuality. We destroy the possibility of survival as surely on Professor James' theory as we do on that of the most materialistic hypothesis that was ever propounded.

* * *

No Use for the "Soul."

In what has been said it is by no means implied that the neurological theory can, in the present state of knowledge, claim to answer every question that may be asked, or solve every problem that presents itself. All that can be claimed is that it contradicts no known facts, and it covers the facts as no other theory does. At least the materialistic method is the only one that has so far yielded anything in the shape of positive results. Other methods have been tried and found barren, not because those who tried them were wanting in ability, but simply on account of the methods themselves. And it is not without significance that Professor McDougall, in the opening of a work written to champion the belief in a soul, is forced to say of the present attitude of scientific workers:

It is matter of common knowledge that science has given its verdict against the soul, has declared that the soul, as a thing, or being, or substance, or mode of existence, or activity, different from, distinguishable from, or in any sense or degree independent, of the body is a mere survival from primitive culture, one of the many relics of savage superstition, that obstinately persist amongst us in defiance of the clear teachings of modern science. The greater part of the philosophic world also, mainly owing to the influence of the natural sciences, has arrived at the same conclusion. In short, it cannot be denied that, as William James told us at Oxford three years ago, "souls are out of fashion."

And if a thing so widely advertised as the soul is going out of fashion, the reasons for its disuse must be very strong indeed.

* * *

Psychology and Science.

At any rate, the truth of the statement is undeniable. The whole position of the science of psychology is proof of this. What the Greeks meant by the word was plain. It was a discourse about the soul. And for a very long time it continued to mean that. People wrote elaborate

treatises on the soul, and the less they knew about it the more voluminous their writings. Indeed, there is no limit to the number of books one might write on a subject concerning which nothing is known. On such a subject one can begin anywhere, even if it carries with it the disadvantage of ending nowhere. In the seventeenth century, Descartes, Spinoza, Hobbes, and Locke marked out between them a saner and more profitable method of investigation. Since the time of these heretics the tendency has been ever growing in the direction of giving the world a thoroughly deterministic psychology, and one that should establish a causal relation between physical and psychical processes. To-day the expression, "No psychosis without neurosis" is an accepted scientific maxim. There is not a scientific man in the world who when he is faced with a case of mental derangement does not look for the accompanying physical state. And thus it has come about that while we still retain the name of psychology, we mean by it something entirely different from that which was meant by those who first used the term. A modern text book of psychology simply leaves the soul out of account. It has no use for it as a fact, and it can do without the name. We have to-day universally accepted a psychology without a soul. And the meaning of that is that investigators find it possible to deal with the whole world of mental phenomena as problems in neural dynamics. The revolution is complete for all save those who are bent, like the devotees of an exiled king, on doing homage to the shade of a monarch ruling over a non-existent territory.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Soul.

ALL the divines take the existence of the soul for granted. The belief in it is so ancient and so universally held that they do not think it worth their while to critically examine it. Plato believed in the pre-existence of the soul, and regarded its embodiment in matter as punishment for some sin committed by it in its heavenly estate. Philo held the same view, emphasizing the notion that while in the flesh the soul is in a prison. The Buddha advocated the no-soul theory, emphasizing the unity of man. In Christianity, of course, man's duality is a fundamental doctrine. The Gospel Jesus treats soul and body as two different entities which can be separately destroyed. As to the origin and nature of the soul, conflicting theories have had their champions in different ages. Tertullian, one of the greatest of Church fathers, held the view that nothing exists that is not of a physical nature. The soul, like the body, is material, but of a much finer species than the body. "Souls are generated from souls in the same way and at the same time as bodies from bodies." This theory is known as Traducianism. Towards this theory Augustine had a strong leaning, but being afraid of the materialism involved in it as taught by Tertullian, he ultimately adopted Creationism, though he was never able to teach it with any degree of enthusiasm. The Schoolmen generally were Creationists, Aquinas being of

opinion that man has two souls, the sensitive soul which he has in common with the animals, which is propagated physically like the body, and the intellectual soul, which is immediately created for every man. But whatever may be the 'accepted theory as to the origin of the soul, its existence is taken for granted by all theologians.

In the "Christian World Pulpit" for January 26, there is a sermon on the soul, delivered in St. Paul's Cathedral by the Rev. E. E. Seyzinger, M.A., of the Society of the Resurrection, the first part of which deals with the nature of the soul. The reverend gentleman argues in such a way as to suggest that he does not regard every man as the possessor of a soul. He must meet a man, shake hands with him, and make him talk about the things that interest him most, before he can tell whether he has a soul or not. "It is in this, to put it roughly," he says, "that you and I come to know one another as possessing body, mind, and spirit." I am deeply convinced that Mr. Seyzinger is radically mistaken. Trichotomy is a metaphysical hypothesis, not a practical discovery. Intercourse with a man only reveals what kind of a man he is, not that he is divided into two, three, or four parts. The preacher quotes Dr. Moberley's definition of the soul, which is as follows:—

Spirit is the meaning of the body; the body is the utterance of the spirit. The body is not, therefore, an unfortunate condescension, an accidental but regrettable necessity. However gross it may be, apart from its naked meaning, yet as a vehicle it has its true function. It rises to the full dignity of that which it expresses. Nay, it no longer merely expresses; in its true essence already it may be said to be spirit.

The modern term for soul is "personality," and personality or spirit, we are assured, "is God's gift to us." In other words, soul, spirit, or personality is a distinct entity, created and breathed into us by God. The body, too, though hopelessly vile, is worthy of respect. We have no right to think lightly of it, because it shares in the soul's spiritual nature. It has been hallowed by the Incarnation. It has been caught up into Christ's redemptive work. But the body, though deserving of honour, is not the man; it merely expresses the man. "Personality is the total representation of the whole man. It is the invisible, and it shows itself through the visible." To a congregation of believers such stuff may be highly acceptable, but it is utterly unscientific, being wholly unsusceptible of proof. Mr. Seyzinger does not even attempt to verify his statements, but contents himself with mere dogmatism. We have no knowledge whatever of soul, spirit, or personality as an entity distinct from the body. Ghost and spirit mean breath. In Latin *spiritus animus* and *anima* are simply breath or wind. The three Greek words, *psyché*, *pnéuma*, and *thymos*, are respectively wind, breath, and smoke or vapour. That is to say, ghost, spirit, and soul are not real.

With the real meaning of those words in mind let us see how the belief in ghost or spirit as an entity arose. Tylor, Spencer, and others ascribe its origin to the dream experiences of primitive man, or rather, to primitive man's explanation of his dream experiences. While asleep in his hut or in the open air he dreamed that he visited places many miles away from his home, and met and had extra-

ordinary transactions with all sorts of people, some of whom he knew had died long before. When he awoke in the morning his friends told him that he did not leave his bed for a moment during the night. In course of time he learned that most of those he met in his dream were at the same time sound asleep like himself, and never left their beds. To primitive man, therefore, the supreme riddle was how to account for the varied experiences that befell him in dreams, how he could travel about with such ease and comfort, do so many marvellous things, and how other people, strangers as well as friends, the dead as well as the living, could join him and co-operate with him in feats of incredible strength, agility, and skill. According to the illustrious thinkers already mentioned, primitive man could see but one interpretation of the mystery. Whenever he gazed on any sheet of clear water, another, the exact image of himself, stared him in the face; and when he walked in the sunshine another seemed to walk at his side, before or behind him. From so startling a phenomenon the only inference he could draw was that, in some inexplicable sense, he was two in one, or had a double. Now, this shadow, or this double, which sometimes accompanied him on his journeys, or confronted him in pool or lake, by day, was it not this mysterious something or someone that went out of him by night and took part in those strange experiences which he had while he slumbered on his couch? At any rate, that is how the belief in soul, ghost, or spirit is supposed to have originated in the human mind. It came as an inference from experiences which, in a state of entire ignorance of the cause and nature of dreams, seemed to admit of no other plausible interpretation. To primitive man, in his ignorance, his dreams were fully as real as his waking experiences. Sir Everard im Thurn informs us, in his interesting book, "The Indians of Guiana," that "one morning, when it was important for me to get away from camp on the Essequibo River, at which I had been detained for some days by the illness of some of my Indian companions, I found that one of the invalids, a young Macusi, though better in health, was so enraged against me that he refused to stir, for he declared that, with great want of consideration for his weak health, I had taken him out during the night and had made him haul the canoe up a series of difficult cataracts. Nothing could persuade him that this was a dream, and it was some time before he was so far pacified as to throw himself sulkily into the bottom of the canoe." At the same time they were suffering from a great scarcity of food, and hunger, as usual, had the effect of producing vivid dreams. Several times the men declared in the morning that absent men, whom they named, had come during the night and had beaten, or otherwise maltreated them, and they insisted on much rubbing of the bruised parts of their bodies. In the middle of one night Sir Everard was awakened by an Arawak named Sam, the captain or head man of the Indians who were with him, only to be told the bewildering words, "George speak me very bad, boss; you cut his bits." Now "bits" are fourpenny pieces, the units in which among Creols and semi-civilized Indians, calculation of money, and consequently of wages, is made, and to cut bits means to reduce wages. "So Captain Sam, having dreamed that

his subordinate George had spoken insolently to him, the former, with a fine sense of the dignity of his office, now insisted that the culprit should be punished in real life." Now, the belief in the soul, or personality, which dwells *in* the body but is not of it, owes its origin to that vivid sense of the reality of dreams which Sir Everard so graphically describes.

Such being the case, the doctrine of the immortality of the soul necessarily falls to the ground, and one can see how foolish is the ordinary pulpit talk about the "transcendent worth of the soul." How stupendously silly it is to say that "the body is the least thing about us," or that "man is a spirit who happens in his present state to have a physical body." All we know is that mind, soul, spirit, or ghost is not known to exist anywhere apart from matter. As Hugh Elliot says, "mind is a name for certain elementary and associative processes occurring in the nervous system."

J. T. LLOYD.

A Gentle Revolutionary.

The distance, and as it were the space around man, grows with the strength of his intellectual vision and insight; his world becomes profounder; new stars, new dogmas, and notions are ever coming into view.

—Nietzsche.

THE true lives of men and women are seldom written. Biographers are too prone to whitewash their subjects, to assign motives, to conjecture feelings, and even to edit letters. Autobiographies, such as those by Benvenuto Cellini, or Jean Jacques Rousseau, are little likely to be written, and less likely to be published, in these squeamish days when the "Book of Common Prayer" and even the "Holy Bible" are bowdlerized by anæmic clergymen. Indeed, it used to be said that the only lives worth reading were those of actors and actresses, because no one ever supposed them to be respectable, and so their biographers did not greatly object to telling the truth about them. Times have changed again. To-day, players are now more respectable, or at least more respected, than clergymen. And the average biography has become as dull as ditch-water, and almost as obnoxious.

These drawbacks are all absent from Mr. F. J. Gould's fine monograph on *Auguste Comte*, which is of interest alike from the human and the literary standpoints. This is the very first time that August Comte's extraordinary life-story has been told in English, and it could not have been entrusted to better hands than those of Mr. Gould. For he has the closest and most intimate knowledge of the Positive Philosophy, and he possesses the widest possible human sympathies. The dullest reader cannot read any of Mr. Gould's fascinating books without being attracted by his great knowledge, his infallible taste, his exquisite style, and, above all, his broad humanity. And in this book on Auguste Comte he has put all his qualities, and produced a volume which should be treasured, not only as a record of a great seminal thinker, but also as a human document of quite unusual interest.

"You shall see things as they are," said John Ruskin, and Mr. Gould might have taken this as a command when he was writing the personal life of the great French philosopher. For Auguste Comte was quite Gallic in his outlook on life, and most English writers would have hesitated to tell the story of his career with candour and completeness. To his honour, Mr. Gould sets down everything, and paints the complete portrait of a man without reservations, which is

not so easy as it seems. Even Thackeray found such a task too difficult, and the pathetic preface to *Pendennis* shows where the great nineteenth century writer admired, but was unable to follow, the frankness of Henry Fielding.

In Mr. Gould's fascinating pages the ordinary reader will find for the first time in English the full story of Comte's unhappy marriage and his extraordinary love for Clothilde de Vaux. Referring to the philosopher's marriage, Mr. Gould says frankly:—

We feel, all through the sad story, that Auguste, who pursued science and philosophy with extraordinary ardour and passion, had so concentrated his thought upon this quest that he had but casual attention and a mere mechanism of instinct left for the sex-relation. Thus tragically linked, these two natures within one form—the masterly philosophic genius and the almost absent-minded child in sex—traversed the strange years, until in middle life, Comte awoke to a vision of true womanhood, and thenalas!

Auguste Comte had genius, intellect, and vision. Yet splendid gifts, even such as these, bring to their possessor no more than what they are; neither to the baby a silver spoon in its mouth, nor to age comfort and peace. The vision splendid which illuminated Comte's life will never cease to baffle the keenest and tenderest scrutiny. Here was a poor boy, inordinately sensitive, the son of a hard worked clerk, who devoured knowledge. During seven years he carried off prizes for Latin and mathematics, racing through algebra, the method of Newton, the system of Lagrange, trigonometry, conic sections, and the rest. At the Polytechnic, Auguste's companions called him "the Thinker." He paid the bitter price of being a pioneer. Poverty and domestic worries drove him to insanity, and even to attempted suicide. And yet, from this welter of suffering, emerged his idea of the Religion of Humanity, which has immortalized his name, and conferred a lasting benefit on his fellow men.

It would be a labour of love to transcribe in full Mr. Gould's life story of the great French philosopher, who has been hailed as "the voice of the Nineteenth Century," but space forbids. In the later pages the biographical facts are interwoven cleverly with details of the Positive Philosophy, to the exposition of which this amazing Frenchman devoted his life. If Comte's genius reached the stars, his feet were always on the solid earth. One has only to read Mr. Gould's absorbing pages to realize fully that Auguste Comte looked beyond the tumult and the shoutings of modern industrialism to the peace of a renovated society of the future. He was a gentle revolutionary. The tone and temper of Comte is always that of Prospero at the end of the *Tempest*, mild, mellow, and reflective. So true is it that:—

Spirits are not finely touched
But to fine issues.

MIMNERMUS.

TRUTH AND ERROR.

We need not fear any sinister consequences, from the subversion of error, and introducing as much truth into the mind as we can possibly accumulate. All those notions by which we are accustomed to ascribe to anything a value which it does not really possess, should be eradicated without mercy; and truth, a sound and just estimate of things, which is not less favourable to zeal or activity, should be earnestly and incessantly cultivated.—*Godwin*.

The Catholic Church filled the world with the true knowledge of the one true devil. It filled the air with malicious phantoms, crowded innocent sleep with leering fiends, and gave the world to the domination of witches and wizards, spirits and spooks, goblins and ghosts, and butchered and burned thousands for the commission of impossible crimes.—*R. G. Ingersoll*.

The Origin of Christianity.

IV.

(Continued from page 69.)

All the religions of antiquity seemed to resuscitate themselves so as to precede Jesus and claim him as one of their adepts.—Renan, "Marcus Aurelius," p. 131.

There is hardly a great and fruitful idea in the Jewish or Christian systems which has not its analogy in Egyptian faith. The development of one God into a Trinity; the incarnation of the mediating Deity in a Virgin and without a father; his conflict and his momentary defeat by the powers of darkness; his partial victory (for the enemy is not destroyed); his resurrection and reign over an eternal kingdom with his justified saints; his distinction from and yet identity with the uncreate, incomprehensible Father, whose form is unknown and who dwelleth not in temples made with hands—all these theological conceptions pervade the oldest religion of Egypt. It is enough to have lifted the veil and shown the scene of many a future contest.—Professor Mahaffy, "Prolegomena to Ancient History," p. 416.

On the walls of the ancient Temple of Luxor in Egypt, says Sharpe the Egyptologist, may be seen a series of sculptures depicting the miraculous birth of a king:—

First, the god Thot, with the head of an ibis, and with his ink and pen-case in his left hand, as the messenger of the gods, like the Mercury of the Greeks, tells the maiden queen Mautmes that she is to give birth to a son, who is to be king Amunothph III. Secondly, the god Kneph, *the spirit*, with a ram's head and the goddess Athor, with the sun and cow's horns upon her head, both take hold of the queen by her hands and put into her mouth the character for life, which is to be the life of the coming child.

In the third scene the nurse—

holds up the baby over which is written the name of Amunothph III. He holds his finger to his mouth to mark his infancy; he has not yet learned to speak. Lastly, the several gods or priests attend in adoration upon their knees to present their gifts to this wonderful child, who is seated in the midst of them and is receiving their homage. In this picture we have the Annunciation, the Conception, the Birth, and the Adoration as described in the first and second chapters of Luke's Gospel: and as we have historical assurance that the chapters in Matthew's Gospel, which contain the miraculous Birth of Jesus, are an after addition not in the earliest manuscripts, it seems probable that these two poetical chapters in Luke may also be unhistorical, and be borrowed from the Egyptian accounts of the miraculous birth of their kings.¹

Another god whose worship was widely spread throughout western Asia was that of Attis. Like Adonis, says Sir James Frazer, "his death and resurrection were annually mourned and rejoiced at a festival in spring.....His birth, like that of many other heroes, is said to have been miraculous."² He was said to have been born of a Virgin, and like Adonis slain by a boar. According to another account, he inflicted the wound upon himself and bled to death under a pine tree.

The Festival of Attis was celebrated at the vernal equinox, like our Easter. On the twenty-second of March, a pine tree was cut in the woods and brought into the sanctuary. The trunk was swathed like a corpse with woollen bands and decked with violets, which were said to have sprung from the blood of Attis. The second day, says Frazer:—

Witnessed the mourning for Attis over an effigy of him which was afterwards buried. The image thus laid in the sepulchre was probably the same which had hung upon the tree. Throughout the period of mourning the worshippers fasted from bread, nominally because Cybele had done so in her grief for the death of Attis, but really, perhaps, for the same reason

which induced the women of Harran to abstain from eating anything ground in a mill while they wept for Tammuz. To partake of bread or flour at such a season might have been deemed a wanton profanation of the bruised and broken body of the god. Or the fast may possibly have been a preparation for a sacramental meal. But when night had fallen, the sorrow of the worshippers was turned to joy. For suddenly a light shone in the darkness: the tomb was opened: the god had risen from the dead: and as the priest touched the lips of the weeping mourners with balm, he softly whispered in their ears the glad tidings of salvation. On the morrow, the twenty-fifth day of March, the divine resurrection was celebrated with a wild outburst of glee, which at Rome, and probably elsewhere, took the form of a carnival. It was the Festival of Joy (*Hilaria*).³

Like Christ, Attis was believed to have been born of a Virgin, to have met with an untimely death. To have been buried and mourned by his worshippers, and to have risen from the tomb upon the third day.

Sir James Frazer remarks on "the essential similarity" of the worship of Adonis, Attis, and Osiris. "All three were believed to have died and risen again from the dead; and the divine death and resurrection of all three were dramatically represented at annual festivals, which their worshippers celebrated with alternate transports of sorrow and joy, of weeping and exultation."⁴ And, as we have seen, the worship of Osiris in Egypt and Adonis in Syria and Babylonia reach back for many thousands of years before our era, and probably the worship of the phrygian Attis was equally antique.

Of a similar kind to these worships were the sacred mysteries of Eleusis and Dionysus, as practised by the Greeks, in which "the initiates were shown a sacred drama, like the mystery-plays of the Middle Ages, acted by the priests of the cult."⁵ They also—

took part in wanderings in dark passages and over obstacles and difficulties which were supposed to give them an idea of the sufferings of the uninitiated dead in the next world, and that they were then restored to upper air in a blaze of brilliant light; were shown the mysterious objects brought with such care from Eleusis to Athens and back again; were given a glimpse of the beatitudes awaiting the dead who had been initiated in their lifetime, and were at the same time instructed in certain mysterious phrases or formulas which it seems fair to conclude they were to treasure as pass-words through the realms of Hades.⁶

The purpose of these Greek mysteries was the cleansing, or absolution from sin, and the revelation, or teachings of a future life after death. The mysteries of Eleusis were founded or reduced to order in the sixth century B.C.⁷

As Dr. Carpenter, in his *Pagan and Christian Creeds*, remarks, in reference to the belief in a Saviour God, long before the time of Christ:—

It is not necessary to dwell on the subject any further in order to persuade the reader that the doctrine was "in the air" at the time of the advent of Christianity. Even Dionysus, then a prominent figure in the "Mysteries," was called Eleutherios, *The Deliverer*. But it may be of interest to trace the same doctrine among the *pre-Christian* sects of Gnostics. The Gnostics, says Professor Murray,⁸ "are still commonly thought of as a body of Christian heretics. In reality there were Gnostic sects scattered over the Hellenistic world before Christianity as well as after. They must have been established in Antioch and probably in Tarsus well before the days of Paul or Apollos. Their Saviour, like the Jewish Messiah, was established in men's minds before the Saviour of the

¹ Frazer, *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, pp. 169-170.

² Frazer, *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, p. 319.

³ Legge, *Forerunners and Rivals of Christianity*, 1915; Vol. I., p. 39.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. I., pp. 40-41.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. I., p. 43.

⁶ *Four Stages of Greek Religion*, p. 143.

¹ Sharpe, *Egyptian Mythology and Egyptian Christianity*, 1863; pp. 18-19.

² Frazer, *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, 1906; p. 163.

Christians. 'If we look close,' says Professor Bousset, 'the result emerges with great clearness that the figure of the Redeemer as such did not wait for Christianity to force its way into the religion of Gnosis, but was already present under various forms'

And yet, if you pick up an orthodox ecclesiastical history of Christianity, you will find the Gnostics described as offshoots from Christianity; heretics who broke away from the primitive true faith!

(To be Continued.) W. MANN.

Nicodemus.

NICODEMUS was a very questionable character as regards moral courage. He seems to have been a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin, or Supreme Court; one of the rulers of the people in the time of Christ. The teaching of the Galilean Freethinker got hold of him and disturbed his peace of mind. There seems to have been something so natural and earnest about Jesus that he disturbed the mental and moral equanimity of a good many persons in easy circumstances, who might have gone on very well satisfied with themselves but for him. The Gospel stories say that a number of the rulers of the Jews believed in Jesus but were afraid to face public opinion and avow their beliefs.

Nicodemus was so much interested in the teaching of the brave carpenter that he sought him out, and under cover of night talked with him. He never became an open disciple but he seems to have been much impressed by the good Anarchist-Communist, and if Jesus had been successful in winning the majority of the people to his doctrines Nicodemus would probably have been one of the first of the "respectables" to avow his discipleship. I have no doubt that he passed many a painful hour about his timidity, often wishing that circumstances were such that he could openly avow his sympathy with Jesus. But he never could quite make up his mind to run the risk of sacrificing his position and prospects for his honest convictions.

Now, nobody hates Nicodemus, but nobody loves him. Some persons defend him, but nobody praises him, because for the life of us we cannot work up any enthusiasm over a man who calculates what the effect on his purse and place will be if he acts the true and manly part, and for fear of consequences stands back while others do the fighting.

Nicodemus has, therefore become the name for those who inwardly love truth and justice, and who give money in secret to promote them, but will not openly espouse them until the storm that new truth always arouses blows over.

I do not question the right of any man to do as he thinks best in such a case. Every person has a right to do as he pleases and take the consequences, and Nicodemus will discover that his timid course has its consequences just as the bolder course has. I do not question the right of people to conceal their true opinions, or modify their conduct in accordance with safe "strategy," but I must confess that I have no admiration for a Nicodemus.

Is it very glorious for Nicodemus to lie low while some other men are taking all the risk and abuse, and passing through all the dark hours that assail everybody who blazes a new way through the wilderness of superstition? Here is an advanced thinker with whom I quite agree in opinion. He is doing his best to help on society towards freedom and happiness. He gets abused and kicked by the very people for whose welfare he is working.

Now I agree with all that he says, and I am sure that he is working in the right way, but I cannot bring myself to stand by his side and openly support him. I would do so were it not that it would damage my

social position and prospects. So I go to him secretly and say: "Go on, my dear fellow; you are doing splendidly, and I glory in your pluck. Here's some money to help you, but I really can't do anything openly. It's not business, you know, and I don't amount to much in the reforming line anyhow. And besides, we have to use strategy sometimes, don't you see?" This is better than if I said and did nothing. No doubt it is a comfort to a brave and outspoken man to know that he has secret friends and helpers. But I am sure that I should be prouder and more at peace with myself if I came out boldly, saying: "My proper place is openly by the side of this man with whom I agree."

Consider how these Nicodemuses retard the growth of an informed and correct public opinion. It must be so. Men follow each other to a large extent, and every man who speaks right out, over his own name and in his own proper person, does more to create public opinion than forty men who work by stealth and strategy. When we are willing to suffer for our opinions, people will listen to them and believe in them if they are really true.

Think how much longer it will take to achieve religious and social freedom because there are so many advanced thinkers who are too prudent, too strategic, too cowardly—whatever you choose to call it—to march openly in the ranks of progress! I know from personal acquaintance with them, that if parsons would say in the pulpit what they say to each other in private the Church would soon be liberalized. But these very men who freely express their doubts among themselves are afraid of each other in the pulpit.

I know editors, professional men, mechanics, who are quite radical on the social question, but they keep their opinions very closely to themselves. The fact is that the parsonages and newspaper offices and public schools are harbouring nobody knows how many Freethinkers, Socialists and Anarchists to-day, but they are like "Brer Rabbit"—they lie low.

I really believe that a majority of the people in the Church are unbelievers, to a greater or less extent. And I think, too, that a majority of the people in all lands are dissatisfied with the present organization of society. In this country I think that a large number of people are thoroughly disgusted with our politics, and the only reason why they keen on voting and trying to get things done by statute law is because they don't see how they can otherwise be done.

I think that a large majority of the people in the world to-day are dissatisfied with both their Church and their State. They think their Church more or less a hunbug and their State a tyrant, but they are too dense to think these things thoroughly out, and too timid to act upon their honest doubts and convictions. Now it seems to me that each of us owes it to himself and his fellow-men to think as clearly as he can, and to live up to and speak out his honest convictions. This waiting till things are carried by vote and then acquiescing in them, simply means waiting till a few good, brave men have suffered martyrdom for the sake of creating a collective sentiment that will make it safe for you to do what you think is right. But surely this sheep-like way of doing things only because others do them is foolish, and may be almost wicked. It seems to me that an honest man should ask himself only one question: Is this thing right? If so, I will do it, even if I have to go hungry for it.

To state it in this way makes it sound very heroic, but when you consider that those who wish to do right are often in the majority you will see that no great heroism is involved. Most parsons are doubters about at least some articles of their creed, but a small minority of narrow-minded sectaries whip them into the straight and narrow way of orthodoxy by sheer force of noise and concerted action. But if each

doubting parson or priest would boldly preach his doubts and why he doubts and what he really believes, there would soon be no such thing as orthodoxy or authority in the Church. Most men hate injustice, yet see it going on all round them and say never a word of protest for fear of personal harm to themselves. They know that millions of honest workers are starving for lack of employment, through no fault of their own. They know that thousands of girls have to buy life at the cost of virtue because the privilege of earning a decent living is denied to them. They know that idle landlords and usurers live on the fat of the land, and that parsons and priests are very apt to be overfed and lazy, and, as a class, are owned, body and soul by the plutocrats. They know all this, and yet prefer to maintain a strategic silence.

But what is life good for if it is not to be used for the betterment of the conditions of life? When a poisonous Church and a felonious State benumb the minds and starve the bodies of the people as ours do, it seems to me to require almost more courage to remain silent than to speak. If I believed in ghosts I should think that every Nicodemus would be haunted by the shades of those who are daily murdered by our unjust conditions of society; because, you see, a Nicodemus is not ignorant like so many others. He knows the truth, but he is wily, he is cautious; he hopes to help to save the world and his own respectability at the same time. But he cannot. All that Nicodemus saves in respectability he loses in moral fibre and self-respect.

What business has a man to eat, drink and be merry while others hunger and mourn unnecessarily, and never lift voice nor finger to stay the evil?

I tell you that the sad and perilous times in which we now live call for men and women who will not see an abuse or injustice without openly protesting against it; who will not discover a new truth without boldly proclaiming it. Why not be such men and women? What is there to fear? I tell you there is no danger in abandoning the strategy of Nicodemus if only every Nicodemus would brace himself to it, because those who wish to act honestly and rightly are really in the majority.

G. O. W.

Acid Drops.

A meeting was held the other day at the Haymarket Theatre to discuss the Sunday opening of theatres. After a great deal of discussion by clergymen and others, including the representatives of the Lord's Day Observance Society, a resolution against Sunday opening was carried. Mr. Arthur Bouchier spoke against the resolution, and in a subsequent letter to the press rightly called the meeting a sham. A sham it was bound to be, considering the nature of the gathering.

Mr. George Bernard Shaw, who seemed more anxious to say something that should attract attention than to get to the heart of the matter, said that it would pay playwrights and theatre owners to have theatres open, but strongly advised wage earners to protest against it being done, as it would mean robbing them of their day of rest. Mr. Shaw must know that the opposition to Sunday opening has nothing whatever to do with the desire for a day of rest. From the point of view of playwrights and theatre owners Sunday would be a much better day for business than Monday, and the way to secure a day of rest for those connected with the stage would be to close the theatres on Monday. But if that were proposed, Mr. Shaw must know that all those who now cry out against Sunday opening on the hypocritical pretence that a day's rest in seven is necessary to all, would oppose it just as bitterly if the Monday's rest were guaranteed by law. After all, the main part of the case for Sunday opening rests precisely on the fact that it is a day on which ordinary business is suspended. It is the day on which every endeavour should be made to open every establishment which provides rational enjoyment and entertain-

ment. It is a pity that Mr. Shaw should so readily give his aid to bolstering up an irrational and demoralizing sabbatarianism.

The *Church Times* talks of the overwhelming opposition to stage plays on Sunday. But if the opposition is really overwhelming why show such fear of its being done? And why object to the abolition of all laws against Sunday amusements? The people do not want plays on Sunday. Good, then they will show the same by staying away. And if they stay away the managers, if they open for gain, as the *Church Times* say they do, will soon close. If they remain open they will show they are public benefactors. That seems to us the logic of the situation, and it is a pity that the audience was not treated to a dose of devastating common sense such as Mr. Shaw could have given it, but which one can never depend upon his handing out.

The truth is that Sunday regulations have never at any time had the support of the "overwhelming" number of the people. They have never been more than the expression of the activity of a minority of bigots who were in deadly earnest. Sunday laws are always dependent upon the police, the "day of the Lord" hangs upon the goodwill of the police-court magistrate. That this is so is shown by the fact that Christians dare not leave the matter to the judgment of the people. For no one wishes to compel Christians to be happy on Sunday; all that is asked is an opportunity for those who wish to enjoy themselves. But that Christians dare not permit. For happiness is far more contagious than misery, laughter more infective than prayers, a good play more attractive than a sermon. So the only policy for the Christian is that of suppression. Do not let us tolerate healthy enjoyment if we can prevent it, and if our people never taste it they will never know what they have missed. That seems to be the philosophy of the situation.

From an American paper dated January 6 we see that in Boston a sculptor was fined for carving a statue on Sunday. We suppose that Mr. Shaw would conclude that the authorities were quite right in their action. We have no doubt they would say they were safeguarding the day of rest.

After taking Holy Communion at a church at Anerley, a woman slipped and broke her thigh, the accident resulting in death. Evidently Providence was too busy watching the sparrows and counting the hairs of other people's heads to worry over such a trifle.

The Brotherhood Church, Southend-on-Sea, has somewhat novel services. A series of addresses on "Man and Religion" started with lectures on "Ethicism" and "Mohammedanism." If the Church ever reaches the subject of "Mormonism," there should be a crowded house.

Our "pastors and masters." Formerly vicar of Hatfield, near Leominster, A. V. I. Bickerstaff was the co-respondent in a divorce case. The Rev. F. D. Hodder, curate of St. John's and St. Olave's Church, Southwark, was remanded on a charge of assaulting a boy. The Rev. A. L. Panchand, rector of Throcking, is appealing against a fine of £10, and costs, for stealing goods from a shop. The Rev. G. Kyle, of Mount Vernon, Ill, has confessed to a £50,000 theft.

We are glad to see the following in the *Positivist Review* for January. It is from the pen of a native of the country, Mr. Har Dayal:—

In one respect, India may be said to be riper for rationalism than any other country in the world (except China). Indian thought has rejected the fatal and fatuous aberrations of Monotheism, that most dangerous form of superstition. Indian philosophers are divided into pantheists and atheists, but we have no thinkers, who have fallen into the pit of Semitic Monotheism. It is true that some modern sects like the Sikhs, the Brahmas and the Aryas have accepted Hebraic Monotheism, but this is

only a recent phenomenon. As the Indian philosophers deliberately left the masses to wallow in the mire of polytheism, demonolatry and fetichism, Monotheism naturally won an easy victory in North-Western India, when it appeared on the field in the noble simplicity of the Moslem faith. But Indian Monotheism is different in spirit from the creed of Islam. The Indian theists cling to the doctrines of Karma and Reincarnation, and thus deny God's moral providence. They also lean towards Pantheism, even while they profess pure Theism. It may be asserted that Theism has been very uncongenial to the Indian mind. More than 2,500 years ago, Kapila announced his rejection of the theory of the existence of God, and his teaching has been crystallised in the well-known aphorism "isvaro asiddhah" ("God has not been proved"). Buddha and Mahavira popularised this doctrine, and the two great atheistic world-religions, Jainism and Buddhism, were promulgated in India. Atheism was thus raised to the dignity of a religious truth by the Jainist and Buddhist missionaries. Pantheism, too, is really more akin to Atheism than to Semitic Theism. If Positivism is presented to India, it will have no difficulty in sweeping away the idol-worship and fetichism of the popular religion, as Theism is not a formidable rival in that country. Atheism is not a term of reproach even in orthodox circles to-day, as the Sankhyas philosophers are recognized as orthodox Hindus; yet they are avowed Atheists. There is no traditional bias or sanction in favour of Theism among the Indians. Half the battle has already been won.

If the natives can escape the temporizing and compromising spirit which is the bane of thought in this country, it will make its advance the more rapid and the more permanent. And there is a considerable basis of Freethinking in Indian thought for the present day reformers to work upon. We are glad to say that we have a considerable number of readers in India.

Our pastors and masters! At Leeds the Rev. G. C. Dunning, of Horsforth, was committed for trial on a charge of indecency. The elopement of the Rev. C. Densel with a choir-girl has provided New York with a big sensation.

A clerical appeal for funds contains the statement that "most of the beneficed clergy and all the 6,000 unbeneficed clergy are in deplorable straits." How dreadful that is may be seen by consulting Crockford's *Clerical Directory*. For instance, fifty-five parsons in the City of London divide among them £45,000 a year, with parsonages.

American Methodist parsons are protesting against the portrayal of clergymen as "effeminate fools" on the films. The Methodists say that Roman Catholic priests would not tolerate such treatment. Which is a proof that the Methodist Pussyfoots never see Continental comic papers, nor read European literature.

The Bishops intend to concentrate on the subject of clerical poverty to the exclusion of every other object. So says the Central Church Fund report. Perhaps they will start with the truly awful salaries of "Canterbury" £15,000, "York" £10,000, "London" £10,000.

After finding God when so many are losing him, it is only natural that Mr. Bottomley should proceed to enlighten us as to what are the functions of religion and religious organizations. So we are pleased to learn that in his opinion the whole duty of the Church in political matters is to promulgate "those great underlying moral and spiritual principles which should lie at the root of our national policy." That is very enlightening, if only one knew what they were. And, also, one would like to know in virtue of what endowment the Church is in a better position to teach these principles—whatever they are—than is Mr. Bottomley himself, or anyone else. We beg to observe that it is the duty of the Church to teach religion. All the rest is a mere side-show. Mr. Bottomley would be doing better work if he told the Church that the day for it to assume a power, or the possession of knowledge not possessed by other people, is gone. But if he

said that he would not be writing articles for Sunday illustrated papers. Papers that claim a million circulation cannot afford to tell their readers the plain truth. There is never a million people ready to take it—not in this country.

Father Crowther, of Matlock, has introduced into his Sunday services a "question box," by means of which he allows his congregation to ask him questions which he replies to in the pulpit. Fortunately for the reverend father, Roman Catholics are a docile and submissive race.

Mr. Hilaire Belloc sees in the present position in Ireland "the persecution of a Catholic people because they are Catholic" and "the outcome of an almost insane religious hatred." And, all the time, the dear Catholic Cardinals are out of breath running with the hare and riding with the hounds. Mr. Belloc, who is something of a strategist, should be able to see this.

The Bishop of London recently complained that, although strangers had no difficulty in finding public-houses in London, the whereabouts of the churches were unknown. A stranger, however, might be excused for preferring the society of a smart barmaid to the dull companionship of a parson he had never been introduced to.

High prices are extending to clerical millinery. A correspondent of the *Church Times* writes, "It is possible to provide a set of vestments of one of the traditional English shapes in a cheap material for about £6, including apparels, but not, I imagine, for less." Fancy "God's vice-regents" wearing "cheap material." It is a matter "too deep for tears."

"Bad music is far worse than measles," declares Sir H. P. Allen. We hope that Salvation and Church Army bandsmen will note this.

In the casual ward of Luton, Beds., workhouse, a Roman Catholic monk has been discovered who has been living as a tramp. There is nothing surprising in this circumstance. The Christian religion is said to have been founded by a tramp.

General Booth is organizing a band of Salvation Army musicians to make a world-tour. Many thousands of people have wished his bands at Jericho for years past.

"As a Christian I take life to be a love affair between oneself and God," says Father Bernard Vaughan, who is old enough to know better, and, as in affairs of the heart, two's company, and three is none, there's no room for a priest at all.

Writing on "Freedom" in a daily paper, a pious correspondent asserted that he had "but one master, and that not a human one." Perhaps he worked for a limited company.

The *Christian World* cites from the *Southampton Times* an article which states that there has been going on of late years a great decline in attendance at religious services on the ocean going liners. Twenty years ago, it is said that sixty per cent. of the first-class passengers attended Divine service. Since then it has gone on steadily falling, and it is now not more than fifteen per cent. We are not given the figures for the other passengers, but perhaps it does not matter so far as the second and steerage are concerned. Now it would be interesting if the writer of the article could show that the loss of life has increased as the prayers have declined. If not, irreverent folk will be inclined to ask what is there to worry about? And is there any more reason for praying at sea than there is for praying on shore? We fancy the truth is that whether on shore or at sea people are beginning to realize that "God" is a negligible quantity.

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

February 6, Friars Hall; February 20, Workman's Hall, Ton Pentre; February 27, Friars Hall; March 6, Swansea; March 13, Leicester; March 20, Stratford Town Hall.

To Correspondents.

Those Subscribers who receive their copy of the "Freethinker" in a GREEN WRAPPER will please take it that the renewal of their subscription is due. They will also oblige, if they do not want us to continue sending the paper, by notifying us to that effect.

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MR. T. UNDERWOOD writes from Stoke-on-Trent that the shop at which he is in the habit of getting his *Freethinker* formerly supplied him only. Now the agent takes eleven copies weekly. That is good news, and we presume is the result of displaying the paper. Other newsagents please copy.

W. J.—We don't at all agree with you that people generally act in accordance with their convictions. They do not. Nor do we think we are wrong in saying that people shrink from calling themselves Atheists from fear of public opinion. We know of many, both public personages and private individuals, who are afraid to let their Freethought become known, and above all to let it be known that they are Atheists. We thought that experience was pretty common.

A. DAWSON.—Certainly some great changes would result if parsons tried to act up to New Testament teaching, whether for the better or the worse is a matter of opinion. Our own opinion is it would be for the worse. The aim of the New Testament is not a social one.

T. SHARP.—Received. Many Thanks.

H. S. H.—The book is published by Cecil Palmer. Price 7s. 6d.

E. A. PHIPSON.—Many thanks. Please keep it up.

A. G. STENHOUSE.—Next week.

The "Freethinker" is supplied to the trade on sale or return. Any difficulty in securing copies should be at once reported to the office.

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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.

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Sugar Plums.

To-day (February 6), Mr. Cohen opens the new course of lectures at the Friars Hall, 236 Blackfriars Bridge Road. His subject is the "Physiology of Faith," and admission is free. These meetings are gradually growing in favour, and we hope that all our readers will continue their kindly efforts in making them as widely known as possible. The meeting will commence at 7.

It is pleasing to record that there was again a good audience at the Friars Hall on Sunday last to listen to Mr. McLaren's lecture on his experiences in Germany. Mr. A. B. Moss officiated as Chairman, and the interest of the audience was held throughout by the lecturer. It is quite probable that these meetings will be continued throughout the whole of March, which will then bring the London season to a close.

There were quite a number of friends from Huddersfield at Mr. Cohen's recent lecture at Barnsley, and a lady friend suggested that it would be well to organize the movement in that town. We think it quite a good idea, and if all our readers in Huddersfield and neighbourhood would write to Mrs. Taylor, 164 Scar Lane, Milnsbridge, near Huddersfield, a meeting might be arranged and something definite accomplished.

Our valued contributor, Mr. Andrew Millar, who has a surprisingly sure command of gracious and emotional prose-style, has just published a small book of poems entitled *Reveries and Rhymes* (Stevenson, John Yuill, 121 New Street, 1s. 6d. net.). It contains some charmingly ingenuous snatches of melody in the traditional manner; little songs that seem to crave the assistance of a musical setting to enforce, as it were, the emotional undercurrent. We give one as a sample, believing, as we do, that quotation is always more effective than vague eulogy or censure. It is called *The Pagan Day*.

Out of the East there comes the dawn,
Pearl and sapphire, silver and gold,
And cloudy splendours rolled:
Soft as the eye of nymph or fawn.
Lighting at morn the wood and wold,
And the emerald lawn,
Cometh the silent-sandalled dawn.

Out of the zenith cometh noon,
Islands and seas of blue and grey;
And the lord of the day
Godlike smiles from his throne immune,
While all things own his sovereign sway:
And man needs not to pray
To the god of the glowing noon.

Out of the West there cometh night:
Crimson robes of the dreamy eve
The cloudy shadows weave
Soothing, and sweet, and restful quiet.
Lingering, lessening, loving light,
Taking its smiling leave,
Bidding to all, Good night, good night.

It will be noted by the lover of poetry that Mr. Millar is one of the few nowadays who can sing the old songs, the old time simple melodies which come from the heart and go straight there. What we have come now to ask of a lyric poet is a somewhat deeper emotion, a subtler intellectual equipment and a vastly greater command of rhythmical form. Mr. Millar, in the main, harks back not to Shelley and Keats and Coleridge but to the minor poets of the early nineteenth century. Yet there is one solitary experiment in this little collection which indicates that he does not find the new spirit and the spirit of artistic freedom alien to his poetic temperament. It is an exercise in free rhythm called *The Wanderer*, of which we give the closing lines.

Not my feet alone
Have borne me
To the brink of furthest things:
On pinions swift
The fancy flies;
I follow last,
Or musing, mark its course
From pole to pole;
From unbeginning
Never ending time.
Yet all of space and time
The present place,
The present moment holds,
Ephemeral, eternal,
Parochial, universal,
Here,
Now,
I.

Mr. Millar has not quite succeeded in getting clear of the fetters of rhymes, but if he is not indisposed to take our

advice he will, perhaps, cultivate his creative talent on these lines.

We notice that the poem *Man and Nature* is made up of three stanzas, two of which are taken from Thomson's *City of Dreadful Night*, the third evidently added by Mr. Millar. This is the sort of thing we are not disposed to tolerate. Thomson we admire and Mr. Millar we also admire, but a fusion of the two in this curious way is not much to one's taste, even if the fusion were more perfect.

To-day (February 6) Mr. Lloyd lectures in the Elysium, Swansea, at 7 o'clock, on the subject of "The Marvels of Penguin Island." We assume that this refers to the famous Freethinking novel by Anatole France. At any rate, the lecture is certain to be interesting, and we hope to hear that the hall is crowded. Admission is to be free on this occasion, and there is, therefore, a good opportunity for Freethinkers to introduce their Christian friends to a Freethought meeting.

We were unable, owing to want of space to say anything of Mr. Cohen's recent lecture in Birmingham. We now hear from Mr. Partridge that the meeting was unusually successful. The audience was the largest that has yet been seen in the theatre, and there was a large sale of literature. We need only add that Mr. Clifford Williams, who occupied the chair, managed to extract from the audience an unusually large number of questions. So all ended well.

We chronicled last week that one of the friends who had been good enough to advance, as a loan, £50 towards the purchase of a Linotype machine, had cancelled the debt as a mark of his appreciation of the success of the Sustentation Fund. We have now to announce that another old friend of the paper has acted in a similar manner with regard to his loan of a like amount. He does not desire his name to be mentioned, so we have to announce the fact in this way. This reduces the debt on the machine by £100, and we thank the two friends for what they have done.

What is a poor author to do with one who writes in this strain? It is addressed, "To the author of *Theism or Atheism*."

You brute! There are millions of people in this country who innocently believe in the existence of a God. None of them who read your last production can avoid having that belief weakened, if not destroyed. With a calculated cruelty that almost defies characterization you track down the gods of these people and scatter their fragments to the four winds. And not satisfied with destroying the greater gods, you deliberately devote the latter portion of your book to wiping out of existence all the half gods, in the worship of whom so many have found comfort. And I should not be surprised but that you take pride in this wholesale, this monumental slaughter! Since the days of Herod no greater massacre has taken place. You have left the innocent believer in deity with nothing on which to lean, nothing to which he may address his prayers. And as if to add to your villainy, you have written in a manner that leaves no room for misunderstanding, no opportunity for not seeing the frightful deadliness of your calculated attack. Why did you do it?—Yours in wonder, STANLEY H. PARSONS.

But perhaps, after all, Mr. Parsons does not mean exactly what he says.

A lecturing visit to Glasgow takes a large slice out of a working week. It means two day's travelling and one day's lecturing, and on arrival home on the Monday evening too late to do any work. This must be our apology for holding over some letters, and paragraphic matter until the next issue of the *Freethinker*. Apart from this inconvenience, Mr. Cohen's visit to Glasgow was both enjoyable and successful. The hall was full in the afternoon, crowded in the evening, an unusually high fire of questions, and a good sale of literature. A striking feature of the meeting was the large proportion of ladies and young men. So the results were quite satisfactory.

A Sociological Study of Religion.

V.

(Continued from page 75.)

RETURNING to the ancient civilizations, we find that in the Babylon of Hammurabi, the temples with their large possessions were the centre of business life. The priests loaned money like banks, dealt in merchandise, and controlled extensive lands. As in Mediæval Europe, the schools were generally connected with the temples.

If now we go to India, we find the same phenomenon—a powerful, virile religion, closely associated with government and various forms of necessary social activity. In his essay on *Hinduism*, in the *Ency. Brit.*, Professor H. Julius Eggeling says that although it was not until later times that the net-work of class divisions was established,—

the caste system is undoubtedly coincident with the rise of Brahmanism and may even be said to be the very essence of it. The cardinal principle which underlies the system of the castes is the preservation of purity of person and purity of religious beliefs and ceremonial usages.....When the fair-coloured Aryan immigrants came in contact with and drove back or subdued the dark-skinned races that occupied the northern plains—doubtless the ancestors of the modern Dravidian people—the preservation of their racial type and hereditary order of things would naturally become to them a matter of serious concern.....The problem that now lay before the successful invaders was how to deal with the indigenous people, probably vastly outnumbering them, without losing their racial identity. They dealt with them in the way the white races usually deal with the coloured race—they kept them socially apart.....With them it was not only to keep the Indian race apart from all social intercourse with themselves, but to shut them out from all participation in any higher matters, and especially in their own religious conventions and ceremonial practices.....They deliberately set up artificial barriers in order to prevent their own traditional modes of worship from being contaminated with the obnoxious practices of the servile race.

Coming to the Celtic religion, we find that according to Cæsar, the Gaulish Druids (*i.e.*, priests), were the teachers of the country, and the judges in public and private disputes, being empowered to award penalties and damages.

Among the ancient Greeks, we learn that religion was but little connected with institutions serving necessary social needs, and never became a great power as, say, the Mediæval Catholic Church did. Among the practically minded Romans, with their very fine family life, religion was largely a family affair, and did not require a priestly caste for its existence. "The institutions of Rome, legal as well as religious, all point to the household as the original unit of organization.....Domestic religion then was not merely independent of the religion of the community: it was prior to it, and is both its historical and logical origin." (*The Religion of Ancient Rome*, Cyril Bailey). Later the State established its own counterpart of the household and rustic cults and adapted to its own use the ideas which they involved. Also, it evolved new and "abstract notions, foreign to the life of the independent country households, but vital to the life of an organized community."

The one fact that comes out clearly from a study of religion, as I think the above examples show,¹ is that

¹ If any of my readers wish for an example from modern society, they cannot do better than read chapters 3-5 of Volume III. of Buckle's *History of Civilization*, which shows how the Calvinistic faith, being identified with the more democratic movement in Scotland, came to be firmly established, and to wield an immense influence after the success of the political movement.

every virile religious system is closely associated with certain forms of social activity necessary to the continued existence of communal life; and one is forced to suspect that it is by thus identifying themselves with institutions or activities essential to social life, that sacerdotal systems succeed in maintaining themselves long after the ignorance and fear of natural phenomena, in which they had their birth, have passed away.

There is a fairly simple method of testing the accuracy of this hypothesis: if religion is an efflorescence on the main social growth; if, in civilized or semi-civilized communities it is a survival from a more ignorant and rude age, and if it draws its vitality from the real social growth, it should be rigidly determined in its content and social characteristics by the general character of the social milieu.

Let us see if this is indeed the case.

In this investigation we cannot, of course, hope to do more than establish the fact that in general characteristics a religious system corresponds to the civilization in which it has its being. It is not proposed to attempt to show that every small detail of ritual, every insignificant sacrament, and every trivial and evanescent religious ceremony is the product of the economic and political conditions of existence of the worshippers.

Drop a stone into a pool of water, and a series of circles will radiate out, and, so long as their progress is not impeded by a solid object, will expand in strict accordance with a certain physical law—a law of their own being, one might say. But a stone comes in their path, and the circles are broken; or a cluster of bull-rushes intervenes, and the circles are distorted; or they reach the solid edge of the pool, and recoil on themselves. There is some analogy between these phenomena, and the development of opinions. Even as the nature of the circles is determined by the nature of the medium into which the stone is thrown, so a man's ideology is pre-determined by the society into which he is born. Plato could not have written *Das Kapital*, nor Socrates the *Synthetic Philosophy*; nor could Marx have developed the Pythagorean philosophy, nor Spencer gravely discussed the nature of angels in 358 articles—as Thomas Aquinas did. And neither could the "Angelic Doctor" have developed the Darwinian theory of natural selection. But having (under the influence of the intellectual and moral stimulus of the social heredity impressed upon them), seized hold of certain general conceptions, great thinkers possess a limited power of self-abstraction, to a certain extent their ideas seem to develop in accordance with intellectual laws which are independent of physical conditions of existence—even as the circles in the pool expand automatically—and although a change in the economic or political structure of their society, accompanied as it invariably is by ideological change, reacts upon them, it does not work out its full modification through them. It is through the disciples of the thinker that the full influence produced by a change in the material basis of social life makes itself felt upon the "school." Biased by the change in social structure, they do not accept the master's ideas in full; but select certain of them which they develop still further, modify certain others, and reject a number in their entirety. And so are produced the "neo" philosophies; to be in their turn modified out of existence.

Perhaps an example will make my meaning clearer. There is little doubt that Herbert Spencer's exaggerated individualism was the product of his emotional nature, and was merely *justified* by the reasoning processes by which he appeared to arrive at his conclusions. In Spencer's early days the State was still undemocratically controlled, and was still the instrument of autocratic or class government. Naturally, therefore, a lover of personal liberty, such as Spencer, was automatically opposed to the enlarging of its

powers of interference with the individual. To-day, the State is the embodiment of the whole nation—at least, so far as the nation bothers its head about such matters, and goes to the trouble to exercise the franchise—and accordingly, in progressive thinkers, the old suspicion and fear of State activity has been supplanted by a demand that it should use its power to give the individual citizen a greater measure of liberty and happiness. And, without doubt, were Herbert Spencer alive to-day, he would be the first to declare that many of his sociological ideas should be cast upon the scrap-heap of time: indeed, a man of his emotional nature would probably be a Socialist.²

The development of theologies are governed by the same laws as those which govern the development of philosophies. Both are amenable so far as fundamentals are concerned to the stress of changes in the social organization; both are also slightly affected by incidental forces. If then, the reader will bear in mind that the small, non-essential matters of ceremonial usage, etc., are only accidental to the growth of religious systems, and are not, therefore, deeply-rooted in the social environment which produces and controls the fundamental body of ideas, it can, I believe, be demonstrated that religious evolution follows on economic and political evolution; that changes in theology merely reflect changes in social organization; and that religion only survives from age to age by continually modifying itself to a changing environment.

The occupations of a community which are of fundamental importance may be grouped under two categories, economic and political; and of these the former are indubitably the more potent determinants of social evolution. In the writer's opinion, economic evolution ultimately determines the structural forms of all social institutions. But, to avoid the controversial question of economic determinism, we will treat economic and political forms as of independent origin and existence, and will not endeavour to resolve the one into the other. Yet, the stage of economic evolution at which a social group has arrived being more influential in deciding the cultural condition of that group than is the stage of political evolution, we will investigate the correlations of economics and religions first, and the inter-relations of political and religious forms second.³

"As the inquirer casts his eye over the manifold varieties of the world's faiths, he sees that they are always conditioned by the stage of social culture out of which they emerge," says Dr. J. Estlin Carpenter, *Comparative Religion*.

The hunter who lives by the chase, and must range over large areas for means of support; the pastoral

² Of course, since the days when Spencer was a name to conjure with in Sociology, the trustification of industry has proceeded apace, so that now we have "financial republics of joint-stock enterprise" which "manage public utilities on a scale so great that their efforts are comparable only to the affairs of a first-class State or federation of States." For society, therefore, to refuse to express its will through the democratic state, *i.e.*, the community organized, would be to abdicate in favour of a new oligarchy of "captains of industry," and "masters of force" in the industrial world, whose rule would undoubtedly be less pleasant to mankind than the rule of even the worst and most inefficient bureaucracy that ever troubled Spencer in his sociological nightmares.

³ Whether the reader accepts the theory of economic determinism or not, a little consideration of the facts will suffice to convince him that the economic factor is of greater potency in determining cultural forms than is the political factor. Compare, for example, the general social conditions and culture of England, Germany, and the U.S.A., and it will be found that, spite the differences in the forms of government which obtained in each of these countries (prior to 1914), their civilizations were practically identical. And each of these countries had arrived at the same stage of economic development, the trustification of industry. On the other hand, compare Japan, still with many survivals of the political forms of feudalism, with China, also still emerging from feudalism, but not undergone the industrial evolution that Japan has. The civilizations are profoundly different.

herdsman who has acquired the art of breeding cattle and sheep, and slowly moves from one set of feeding-grounds to another; the agriculturist who has learned to rely on the co-operation of earth and sky in the annual round, have each their own way of expressing their view of the Powers on which they depend.

Among the examples which he cites is that of the Finns.

The Finnic races looked out on a land of forest and water, of mists and winds. The spirits were ranged beneath rulers who were figured in human form. The huntsman prayed with vow and sacrifice to the aged Tapio, the god of the woods and wild animals. Kekri watched over the increase of the herd, while Hillervo protected them on the summer pastures. The grains and herbs—of less importance to tribes only imperfectly agricultural—were ascribed to the care of Pellervoinen, who falls into the background and receives but little veneration.

Professor Loria, in his *Economic Foundations of Society*, makes a lengthy examination of the dependence of religious forms on economic forms.

.....relations between mankind and the God-head..... reproduces in a mystical manner the actual economic relations prevailing between men and man during different historical periods. Thus, during the pagan epoch, when labour's dependence upon property had its origin in a brutal subjugation of the many by the few, the relation between mankind and the Divinity was likewise derived from a primitive conquest, supposed to have been effected by the triumphant gods over all humanity and symbolized in the victory of the gods over the Titans. During the Middle Ages, on the other hand, when the relation between property and labour assumed a patriarchal character, the relationship between man and God was likewise rehabilitated in similar guise; and in the legends of this period we find the Redeemer represented in the garb of a feudal lord with the Apostles as his vassals and mankind as his serfs.

And to-day, of course, so far as religion touches the popular imagination, the relations between man and God have again been modified with the change in the social system that the capitalist regime has introduced, and the deity is a kind of celestial employer, crediting his employees with so much future bliss for good actions, and inflicting penalties upon them for remissness in executing his orders—as the mundane employer imposes fines upon his servants who are late arriving at work.

".....In view of the indispensability of food to man, and of the uncertainty of the supply in times before the domestication of animals," says Professor Jevons in *Comparative Religion*,—

it seems conceivable that food, or rather edible plants and animals, may not only have been sacred, but may have been the earliest and only gods.....The regularly recurring rites recur annually in spring and autumn; and though they may have come to be practised annually before plants and animals were domesticated, there is no doubt that in the historical religions they are the rites which accompany the spring festivals associated with the sowing, and the autumn festivals associated with the ingathering of the crops. The domestication of plants and the advent of cereal deities did much towards the creation of a religious calendar; and the worship of the sun, moon and stars was that which led to the scientific calendar.

And again Carpenter says,—

Among settled communities which live by tillage, the succession of the crops from year to year acquires immense importance. Earth and sky, the sun, the rain, and time itself in the background, are all contributory powers, but attention is fastened upon the spirit of the grains. The Iroquois look on the spirits of corn, squashes, and of beans, as three sisters, who are known collectively as "Our Life" or "Our Supporters." In central America each class of food-plants had its corresponding spirit, which presided over its germination, nourishment, and growth. This

was called the *mama* or "mother" of the plant; in Peru there was a cocoa-mother, a potato-mother, a maize-mother, just as in India the cotton-spirit is worshipped as "cotton-mother." A "maize-mother," made of the finest stalks, was renewed at each harvest that the seed might preserve its vitality. The figure, richly clothed, was ceremoniously installed and watched over for three nights. Sacrifice was solemnly offered, and the interpreter inquired, "Maize-mother, canst thou live till next year?" If the spirit answered affirmatively, the figure remained for a twelve-month; if no reply was vouchsafed, it was taken away and burnt and a fresh one was consecrated. In Mexico maize was a much more important food than in Peru, and the maize-deity acquired in consequence a much higher rank. She became a great harvest goddess. Temple and altar were dedicated to her; spring and summer festivals were celebrated in her honour; and a youthful victim was slain, whose vitality might enter the soil and recruit her exhausted energies.....The worship of Osiris spread throughout Egypt, and its various phases have given rise to many interpretations of his origin and nature. Recent studies have converged upon the view that he was primarily a vegetation deity. In the festival of sowing, small images of the god formed out of sand or vegetable earth and corn, with yellow faces and green cheek-bones, were solemnly buried, those of the preceding year being removed. On the temple wall of his chamber at Philae stalks of corn were depicted springing from his dead body, while a priest poured water on them from a pitcher.

Possibly, as Professor Breasted suggests, "The great river and the fertile soil he refreshes, and the green life which he brings forth—all these the Egyptians thought of together as a single god, Osiris, the imperishable life of the earth, which revives and fades every year with the changes of the seasons."

W. H. MORRIS.

(To be continued.)

On the Idea of Infinity.

THE idea of Infinity is indirectly one of the heirlooms left us from the Middle Ages. In order to have a basis for their absolutism the schoolmen deliberately transferred Euclid's famous postulate about parallel straight lines to his axioms, and it is only quite recently that geometrical analysis has shown Euclidian space to be purely a creature of the imagination. Having got their infinite space, infinity was speedily applied to moral qualities, and we have a God of infinite goodness, wisdom and the like, though the idea of infinity does not apply to qualities. Foolish as Christians are, they do not talk about infinite colour, and the most muddle-headed of them, if he would try honestly to think for himself, would see that all these inflated notions are quite without meaning. The idea of the infinite properly belongs to space and matter. Applied to moral qualities it is taken loosely to mean a large quantity of them as well as something without beginning and without end.

The idea was originally applied to the space and matter that originated it, and there are people even now who believe that the idea of infinite space is a necessity of human thought and then jump from this assumption to the no less arbitrary one that it is a necessary truth of nature. The argument is as follows: However great space or for that matter a thing is, we can always imagine it still bigger; therefore, space is infinite. If the argument be true of space, then it must also be true of the matter that originated in the idea of space, and Haeckel accepted this. But matter is manifestly *not* infinite in quantity; he therefore assumes it to be so in extension. I may observe that our idea of infinitely extended space being completely taken from the impressions matter causes us, for we are shut up in it

and should cease to exist in a perfect vacuum—the assumed and perfectly imaginary space without matter—if our idea of infinitely extended matter is a contradiction in terms, that of infinite space is so, too. It is said, if you get to the end of your space you must imagine another space for it to exist in, and so *ad infinitum*. I do not see this. If you got to the end of space and matter you would cease to exist. The pagan idea of chaos and the cosmos is, therefore, far more in accordance with common sense than infinite space with matter, somehow suspended in it. When savages first invented chairs they perceived they could move them about in the air. Thus the air became to them space and the chair matter that moved about in it, and modern Sciologists have never quite got rid of this crude illogical idea. The only justifiable statement is not that space or space and matter are infinite, but that however great they may be we can always imagine them still greater: but the fact that we can imagine a thing or think that it is indispensable to our reason to imagine it is no proof at all of its actual existence. Given Euclidian space, which is a mere assumption, we must imagine a straight line to be infinite, but this is a contradiction in terms, for the longer a perfectly straight line is the less possible is it for the two ends to meet. And the amusing thing is that all these high faluting deductions are deduced from lines all of which are parts of closed curves, the only sort of lines we can draw upon an oblate spheroid. In fact, as sciatics long ago perceived, the only infinite lines are closed curves, an infinite straight line being a contradiction in terms: and it results from this that space and infinity have nothing whatever to do with one another. The following simple reasoning will show how untenable the idea of infinite matter and, therefore, also of infinite space really is, space being only the ghost of matter in our own very imperfect minds. Suppose we have a horizontal line a few feet from the ground. This will subtend a certain angle. The further it is removed from its first position the smaller the angle becomes, and if infinitely far away the angle must be infinitely small. In other words, the infinitely great implies the infinitely small. But the atom was never infinitely divisible. And now that according to science at a certain stage of subdivision it turns into electrons, which are something quite different to the atomic world that engendered in us the idea of infinitely extended matter, the whole idea falls to the ground. Let us, however, accept with Sir Robert Ball, the slipshod idea that because our telescopes seem to penetrate a good long way into space, therefore it is infinite. In this case the assumption negatives itself. For let us assume that the ray, the straight line our telescopes carry us along, in comparison to the next stage along the road to infinity is as the million millionth part of a millimeter to that ray, that and the next stage to the next one and so on, we have to admit a space so enormous that the part we can gauge is practically nil, and in presence of such vastness our observations and "laws" collapse altogether, except as hand to mouth generalizations to help us to explain the little our cheese mite capacities are capable of perceiving, and that this bugbear of the imagination that reduces all our generalizations to rules for the use and manipulation of the parish pump, is the inevitable and certain deduction of science I do not believe. For it to be so, science must prove that if the laws are true as far as our telescopes carry, they must be for space indefinitely far beyond their reach—a difficult generalization to establish. On the other hand, our experience proves that matter tends everywhere to the spherical form. As the idea of space is only the ghost of matter in our minds, it is, therefore, far more reasonable, as W. K. Clifford professed himself inclined to do, to imagine space spherical instead of Euclidian, in which case, it would not be infinite.

W. W. STRICKLAND.

The Brighter Side.

THERE is seldom a better article in the *Freethinker* than that by Frances Prewett in the issue of January 2, setting forth the darker side of our world outlook at the present day. The facts she quotes are unfortunately undeniable: and the present article is not written with the intention of questioning them, but merely as a corrective of that pessimism which inclines to look only on the darker side. I do not suppose Frances Prewett is a pessimist; a vigorous intelligence is rarely so. But her article overlooks one of the factors in the racial situation which is not to be ignored. I refer to the intensification of the critical spirit, which has, I think, quite kept pace with the intensification of the non-critical, reactionary, and repressive movement. True it is that the reactionaries hold the upper hand; but when was it otherwise? They are, as ever, the more powerful party, being on the whole the "Haves" as against the "Have-nots." But on the other hand, are the "Have-nots" as tranquil, as loyal, and as stagnant as they used to be? Is it not rather the fact that this very growth of the critical spirit has called forth the vigorous reactionary movements of to-day, movements which are, I believe, defeating their own objects by their very severity and ugliness? If there never was a more rampant reign of militarism in the world, there was never a more convinced and enthusiastic body of opinion on the side of peace and sanity. If freedom is vanishing from the earth, the love of freedom is proportionately increasing; and I am not sure that this change is entirely for the worse. A comparatively free people, careless of its privileges, is more likely ultimately to lose them than a repressed people, full of unrest, is likely to submit in the end to the yoke. The common people everywhere are aware, dimly through their ignorance, that this is not the best of all possible social worlds. And as the rulers of the world lead us deeper into the mire, discontent will spread even into the more conservative minds among the sufferers.

As regards the religious world, surely we have reason for abundant hopes. The clergy themselves, of all kinds, are confessedly aware of their failing power; they cannot hide it; the hungry pews look up and are not fed. Everywhere one meets with expressions of scepticism and disillusionment; everywhere one may come across genuine Freethinkers. They are in the minority, greatly in the minority, but they are on the increase, and they are the product of a process that cannot well be stopped, the percolation of knowledge through the human mass. Real orthodoxy is practically dead. Most of the clergy are unorthodox; and means and canons of the Church who are eugenists, evolutionists, and Freethinkers, are beginning to tell their brethren to wake up and admit facts. The age of faith will not return; and when the opiate of otherworldliness has once lost its effect, the racial mind is at least likely to turn towards the improvement of our one and actual life.

So far for the grounds of hope. But, suppose we admit the worst? There remains the refuge of humour. Rabelais, in an age of bloody faith, seeing through the vast human folly, took for motto his famous line, "laughter is the characteristic of man." For the Freethinker in the age of reaction there is always that refuge. Let him but meet with one of like mind, and he will prove it again. "Rire, c'est le propre de l'homme."

Again, on a higher plane, there is the comfort of what Haeckel called "our monistic faith." In the same issue of January 2 appeared an article on Olive Schreiner, illustrative of what I mean. Let the world go how it may, we who feel ourselves but an incident, an "unconsidered trifle" in the limitless universe of

time and change, can afford a detached patience. If humanity succeeds, good; if it fails, it will pass, and other experiments of the cosmos will come after it, and strange new worlds become conscious of themselves again. There was no beginning, and there will be no end to the all-making energy of the worlds. Such is our comfort, if our little globe fall short of our ideal. One thing is certain; the law, the necessity, that pervades all things ensures to our race such development as it is capable of reaching. Let that suffice us. But meantime, as regards the follies and delusions of our day, let each of us deny them, proudly and unflinchingly: "Ich bin der Geist, der stets verneint!"

H. TRUCKELL.

Correspondence.

CHRISTIANITY AND LIFE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I do not think Mr. Worsnop has materially advanced his cause. He asks: "How can we place implicit confidence in human intelligence?" Well, will Mr. Worsnop kindly supply us with one instance (one will do) of so-called Divine Intelligence? Am I to take the account of the Creations in the Bible as an exhibition of Divine Intelligence? Or, must I wait until I "go west" before being assured of its truth or otherwise; or, must I become a "fool," as St. Paul advises, and know nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified? And, surely, the Christian world has fairly absorbed the "wisdom of God" which Jesus so aptly said was only revealed to babes and sucklings. So, I ask again for an instance (concrete) of Divine Intelligence. Mr. Worsnop once more advises us to "wait and see" before expressing a definite opinion upon the matter: that is, wait until we are dead. Well, we have had some so-called information from the "other side" during the last few years, and I would certainly like to know what Mr. Worsnop thinks about it. Much of it, in my humble opinion, was of the earth, earthy. Man, says Mr. Worsnop, is merely a child. Well, I grant that "some" men are children; and it is an amazing psychological fact that some people, like Peter Pan, never grow up. What's to be done? Well, Sir, keep on publishing the *Freethinker*. May its sale increase by thousands. So far as mankind has gone, up to the present, I am bound to say with Swinburne: "Glory to Man in the highest, for Man is the Master of things."

JOHN BREESE.

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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. Chapman Cohen, "The Physiology of Faith."

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

NORTH LONDON BRANCH, N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, off Kentish Town Road, N.W.): 7.30, Mr. E. B. Turner, F.R.C.S., "Venereal Diseases: Dangers, Prevention, and Cure."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W. 9): 7, Mr. L. Brandes, "Do All Men Believe?"

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C. 2): 11, John A. Hobson, M.A., "The Distrust of Intellectualism."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Stratford Engineers' Institute, 167 Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7, Mr. W. H. Thresh, "The Fossil Remains of Man."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

ASSOCIATION OF ENGINEERING AND SHIPBUILDING DRAUGHTSMEN (Merseyside Branch): Thursday, February 10, J. Hamilton, Esq., "Schools of Political Economy."

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Baths Hall, Green Lane, Small Heath): 7, Mr. C. Clifford Williams, "Does Death End All?"

GLASGOW BRANCH N. S. S. (Shop Assistants' Hall, 297 Argyle Street): 12 noon, Councillor E. S. Ratcliffe, "Unemployment."

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

SWANSEA AND DISTRICT BRANCH N. S. S. (The "Elysium," High Street, Swansea): 7, Mr. J. T. Lloyd, "The Marvels of Penguin Island."

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