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Views and Opinions.

The "Sawbath."

When complaints are made that the clergy of the country show a lack of unanimity among themselves, it should be borne in mind that there are two subjects on which they do manifest a very fair measure of agreement. One is the need for parsons to be paid better salaries, and if people desire clergymen, there seems no reason why they should not be paid a living wage. One cannot expect a clergyman to trust in the Lord to feed him. Trust in the Lord is a very good gospel for laymen, but the professional must be credited with a better knowledge as to the value of the recommendation. The other topic on which the clergy display a considerable amount of unity is the proper observance of the "Sabbath." And it will be observed that both these are questions which have a direct economic interest. For what a clergyman means by the proper observance of Sunday is really a better church attendance. It would not satisfy him if all the people refrained from labour and healthy amusement on Sunday and spent the day in prayer in their homes. That would leave him without any obvious reason for his own existence. Sabbath observance means Church attendance. Church attendance means an increase in the status, and, therefore, in the power and emoluments of the clergy. It therefore follows that the real interest of the clergy in the Sunday question is a professional or economic one. There is as much a demand for protection as any that is made by an avowedly commercial concern. They say that theirs is a "key industry," and they demand that the Government shall do what it can to protect it from the competition of those other occupations which threaten their well being. It is well to get that fact well home. Until we do we are not in a position to properly estimate the true inwardness of the outcry for the preservation of the "Sabbath."

* * *

An Heritage from Barbarism.

Nowadays, however, the demand for the protection of this particular industry is camouflaged under the demand for the preservation of a day of rest. Modern Christianity is no more honest on this question than it is on any other, and what the Christians want, and what they say they want are different things. Really, the "Sabbath" is not, and never was intended for a day of rest. In its origin it is no more than a taboo

day, cessation from labour being no more than one of the many taboos which savage religion sets up, and which Christianity—here as elsewhere the embodiment of savage superstitions—continues. Our Christian "Sunday" is really the continuation of the Jewish "Sabbath," and the Jewish Sabbath was the continuation of the Chaldean day of Saturn, a day on which as little as possible was done because anything attempted on that day was almost certain to turn out disastrously. It was not a day of rest, it was merely a day of cessation from labour, and the distinction is of vital importance. The special form of our English Sunday—certainly one of the most depressing and most demoralizing of all human institutions—dates from Puritan times, and to assume that the Puritans were animated in their Sabbatarian campaign by the desire to secure the working man a day of rest is simply grotesque. And it is quite as absurd to assume that the clergy of to-day have that end in view. One need only take the zeal with which the clergy have always resisted the invasion of the "sanctity of the Sabbath," and their entire indifference to all the struggles that have gone on to secure to the working man a proper amount of leisure, to see the absurdity of such an assumption. The clergy could stand unmoved the people working long hours in mines and factories for six days a week. They could stand them working under all sorts of unhealthy conditions. They could witness, without protest, the growth of that vilest of all vile things, the slaughter of little children under the English factory system. What they could not stand was the desecration of the Sabbath, for that touched their own particular interests. And the factory owners, with all their sins, never touched the Sabbath. They knew too well the value of religion for keeping the people content to offend its ministers.

* * *

What is a Day of Rest?

As a Christian institution Sunday has not given a day of rest. In any profitable sense of the word, "rest" is not secured by a mere cessation from labour. Healthy rest is really change of occupation. There are few people so strong that they can afford to do nothing. One of the greatest faults of our prison system is that of not seeing that the whole of a prisoner's time is fully occupied. And one result of that has been a weakening of the intellectual impulse for good, a further depreciation of the man as a social asset, and the final consequence that he usually leaves prison rather worse than when he entered it. And the average man, although not a criminal, simply cannot afford to spend his day of rest in the manner our Sabbatarians would have him spend it. To spend it healthily he should have free access to all places of amusement, recreation, and exercise. He should get that encouragement from his earlier years. There is no greater scandal in all our large centres of population than the fact that the many thousands of public recreation grounds are closed to the young for one seventh of their lives. No boy nor girl was ever yet demoralized by a cricket field or a recreation ground. Many a one has been demoralized by Sunday-school

or Bible class, and a still larger number by having nothing better to do than hang about the streets to the annoyance of others and to the injury of themselves. And bad as the case is to-day it was still worse for those who lived before us. Let anyone reflect upon the fact that for three hundred years we have had our young people growing up, shut off from all those healthy sports which do really give them something of a moral education. And for adults, on the "day of rest" the choice was that of the church or the public house—spiritual or spirituous intoxication. There is small cause for wonder that one consequence of the stamping out of the old Sunday sports was an increase in "filthy tipplings and drunkenness," to cite the "Declaration Concerning Lawful Sports to be used on Sundays." For generations, to be merry on Sunday and to be criminal were interchangeable expressions. On other days the streets and public spaces will be alive with children and young people enjoying themselves in their several ways, but even to-day, in this hypocritical England of ours, that feature is sadly wanting on our "day of rest." We do not to-day sacrifice children at the altar of Baal, but we do sacrifice their young lives to a savage fetich, and so help to unfit them for a healthy career when they reach a later stage of life.

* * *

The Economic Motive.

There is no other single question that so clearly exhibits the demoralizing character of the Christian Churches as this question of Sunday. Their real aim is neither to make men and women better nor to secure them rest. They have only one aim, and that is to keep them properly and miserably religious. All Christians cannot reach the supreme degree of miserable happiness of John Calvin, of whom it is said that he was never known to smile, but the clergy have done their best, and it is simply monstrous that to-day we should have so many local bodies declining to permit the facilities that already exist for healthy enjoyment to be used. And it adds to one's feeling of positive disgust that on many of the Councils that so act there should be found Labour representatives who thus allow themselves to be made the cats-paw of a body of men whose only aim is a purely professional one. For it is to be noted that these are candid enough to tell us that if picture palaces are open on Sunday, and if the playing fields are also free to the young, people will not attend the Churches. Well, I do not believe they will. But it is strange for the clergy to assert it. They must have a profound faith in the stupidity of their public to so openly express themselves. Otherwise it might strike them that if the attractions of the Christian religion are not strong enough to withstand a cinema or a game of football, or a concert, it must, indeed, be time that sensible men and women gave it up. What they are really saying is that the only way to get people to come to Church is to make it impossible for them to go anywhere else. Make the day of rest so intolerably dull that even a sermon preached by the ordinary parson will appear as something interesting, even exciting, by comparison. It is the apotheosis of dullness, the canonizing of demoralization.

* * *

Playing to the Clergy.

Mr. Bernard Shaw said the other day that if Sunday performances were allowed in theatres, those engaged would soon be working seven days a week for six day's pay. Mr. Shaw was simply talking rubbish, and not for the first time when he has had to deal with a religious issue. There is no "taboo" about either the Saturday or the Thursday half holiday, but that has been secured. There is no "taboo" about either the eight or ten hour day, and that also has been made secure. And it would, indeed, be strange

if the only day on which labour is quite unable to protect itself without the help of the clergy is Sunday. And one would like to know what there is to prevent the legislature making it compulsory on all theatres and places of amusement to close one day during the week. Whether they know it or not, those who talk about a seven day working week are simply making themselves the mouthpiece of one of the most sinister interests in the country. We have often pointed out that effects do not always die when the conditions that gave rise to them have passed away, and it would seem that the clergy have made themselves so feared in the past, that even to-day there are not many who have the courage to really stand up to this ancient bogey and defy it. They must placate it by talk of the value of true religion, or some other meaningless drivel, even when challenging some of its pretensions. For there is really no question of a day of rest. The need for a certain amount of rest and recreation for all is to-day so obvious, and so universally admitted as hardly to be worth discussing. But to secure a day of real rest is one thing. To revive and re-establish, or even to preserve, the English Sunday is quite another matter.

* * *

What We Owe to the "Sabbath."

The secularizing of Sunday is really part of the general process of the secularizing of life. And the one can no more be prevented from ultimate triumph than the other. We owe this "Sabbath," with its dreariness and dinginess, and mind and moral destroying influences, to that Puritanism which always trumpets its own value, but which no country has ever been able to stand for long. It was at its zenith during the building up of some of the most depressing features of our industrial and commercial life, and it has bequeathed to us that measure of cant and hypocrisy which has made English religion a bye-word. To a community, with the religious heredity that we have, brutally materialized by a form of religion that has claimed to control our lives, the means of regeneration lies, to a very considerable extent, in music, in literature, in art, in the fullest encouragement to pursue all healthful recreations. It is against these influences that our national religion has really fought. It closed our museums, our art galleries, our concert rooms, and our libraries. It kept closed for thirty generations all avenues of healthy recreation on the one day when the mass of the people could have used them. It cries out to-day against drink, after having for nearly a dozen generations left the people nothing but drink in which to find five minutes of feverish enjoyment. Let us by all means see to it that the conditions of life are such that no man need sacrifice the whole of his time to the mere necessity of gaining the means of subsistence. There cannot be too many avenues of escape from mere mechanical drudgery. But the kind of rest aimed at by our Sabbatarians and their supporters becomes but another opportunity for national demoralization.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

A man that tells me my opinions are absurd or ridiculous, impertinent or unreasonable, because they differ from his, seems to intend a quarrel instead of a dispute, and calls me a fool or madman with a little more circumstance, though, perhaps, I pass for one as well in my senses as he, as pertinent in talk, as prudent in life; yet these are common civilities, in religious argument, of sufficient and conceited men, who talk much of right reason, and mean always their own; and make their private imagination the measure of general truth. But such language determines all between us, and the dispute comes to end in three words at last, which it might as well have ended in at first, that he is in the right, and I am in the wrong.—*Sir William Temple.*

The Bankruptcy of the Supernatural.

It is a notorious fact that the pulpit generally is guilty of misrepresenting history to an alarming extent, especially in its relation to Christianity. It never loses an opportunity of belittling pre-Christian civilization, or of overestimating the benefits conferred upon the world by the advent of Christianity. The Rev. George Shillito, M.A., of Hope Church, Oldham, recently preached a sermon entitled "The New Earth and the Old Devil," which appeared in the *Christian World Pulpit* for February 9, and which is, one is delighted to find, a happy exception to the usual rule. It has three texts, taken from the Book of Revelation; "I saw a new earth," xxxi. 1; "The old serpent, he that is called the Devil and Satan, the deciever of the whole world," xii. 9; "And the dragon waxed wroth with the woman, and went away to make war with the rest of her seed, which keep the commandment of God, and hold the testimony of Jesus." Mr. Shillito candidly admits that the writer of Revelation exaggerates when he characterizes the world of the first century as "inhuman, a world not fit for man." According to him the Church itself was in a woefully corrupt state. The writer, probably the Apostle John, sympathized with the Jerusalem Church in its bitter opposition to Paulinism which at the close of the first century was rapidly gaining ground. Paul's silence on the life and teaching of Jesus, his concentration on his sacrificial and all meritorious death, and his pagan conception of the Lord's Supper were extremely offensive to the Pillar Apostles with whom John was in substantial agreement. Indeed, many critics are of opinion that the reference, in the second chapter, to "them which call themselves apostles, and they are not," is a thinly veiled attack on Paul, whose apostleship was looked upon with grave suspicion by the Jerusalem school. So to St. John, or rather to the school largely formed by him, the world was almost hopelessly corrupt, "a world in which the small and great, the rich and the poor, the free and the bound accept the mark of the beast"; it is a world "dominated by that Babylon 'which hath made all the nations to drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication'; it is a world that does not repent of its murders, its sorceries, its fornications, and its thefts." On this Mr. Shillito's comment is as follows:—

We know, of course, that this is but a partial view of the life of the first century of our era. As a matter of fact, not even Nero could corrupt the whole Roman world. Noble heathen, not far from the kingdom, and looking for it, walked the streets of those great cities, and outside the corrupted circles of politics, fashion, and wealth, there still survived the old noble types of Roman virtue and Eastern passion and aspiration.

Up to this point we have no serious fault to find with Mr. Shillito's treatment of the subject. And he has serene confidence in the future. But he is a thorough-going supernaturalist. He firmly believes in both God and the Devil, although the facts of life afford him no data, no clues. To prophetic eyes, a new earth, a new moral and social order in this world, is clearly visible, but Mr. Shillito contends that something else ought to be equally visible. He says:—

The dreamer must never forget the Devil. If he sees the new earth, he must see also the old serpent. To win the one, which is a different thing from seeing it, he must bind the other.....The dreamers of to-day—strong, hopeful, bustling, and certain—forget the Devil, just as Salisbury, in another sphere, of course, forgot Goschen. They forget evil because they have forgotten the only power that can overcome evil.....The dreamers of to-day do not arrive.

They do not see the Devil, they do not see the fact of sin, as the mightiest reality in the universe save one, the one thing that man cannot dominate alone. Here, without God, without God in Christ, the dreamer can do nothing, and that dour, practical, no-nonsense sort of man can do less than nothing.

The first observation suggested by that extract is that Mr. Shillito forgets something too, namely, the fully attested fact of the colossal impotence of the Christian Church. If Christianity is true, why is it that the new earth is still a thing we must expect in the future, instead of being a grand reality? The clergy claim to be God's instruments to drive out the Devil and bring in the new earth; but for the last nineteen centuries they have ignominiously failed to do either. Had they been what they profess to be, the new earth would have been here during the whole of that long period. The preacher tells us that "here without God, without God in Christ, the dreamer can do nothing," but he forgets that here with God, with God in Christ for nineteen hundred years, the clergy have done nothing and less than nothing towards accomplishing the moral and social redemption of the world. Is it God's fault or theirs, or is it because the Devil is the greatest force in the world? On Mr. Shillito's own showing sin is the mightiest reality in the universe, since even God in Christ is powerless to destroy it. But the reverend gentleman tells us we must not forget the Devil. Why? The only intelligible answer is that the presence of the old serpent in the world alone explains God's failure, which means that the former is more powerful than the latter. Again, on Mr. Shillito's own showing, God in Christ stands before us as a completely defeated Sovereign.

Who, then, are the dreamers? Not the Secularists, who believe that the world can be set right without the aid of supernaturalism, but the Theologians of all schools, who teach that God in Christ is the only one who can save the world, though for some unknown reason he does not see fit to do so. Does Mr. Shillito really think that such a view is complimentary to God in Christ? I am not afraid to express the conviction that it is the Secularists who pay God the most handsome compliment by disbelieving in his very existence. What is the use of holding on to a God who never does anything, or in a God who is admittedly weaker and less efficient than the Devil? Of course, we deny the existence of the Devil as well as that of God. We confidently challenge the reverend gentleman to adduce one scrap of evidence that there exists "a central power of evil, disseminating itself in a thousand lusts and passions." We are quite aware that selfishness, greed, lust, tyranny, and bloodthirstiness are damnable evils; but are they not our own, part of our inheritance from our evolutionary past? Certainly, they are not communicated to us, or engendered within us, by some central power of evil, whether personal or impersonal. They are rather moods of the beast which cling to us still, and of which we can rid ourselves only by educating ourselves on true lines and acquiring practical wisdom. Even Tennyson, though regarded as a Christian, was right on this point. What he calls upon us to do is to

Arise and fly
The reeling Fawn, the sensual feast,
Move upward, working out the beast,
And let the ape and tiger die.

Mr. Shillito is convinced that we cannot do that without supernatural assistance. He says:—

I should not be loyal to the inspiration of the Apocalypse, if I did not proclaim its almost ecstatic conviction of a power that masters evil, and fulfils the vision—every vision—of good hope seen by the prophet. There is the old evil, and it challenges the City of God, but it can be destroyed. There is an old Devil, but there is an eternal Saviour.

That is nothing but cheap rhetoric, indulged in by

every pulpit in Christendom, and it often proves highly soothing to the hearers. To them it not infrequently ministers great consolation, and is the

Sweet, silent rhetoric of persuading eyes

as well as of the eloquent tongue. The only fault with it is that it is not true. That proclamation has been made by all the clergy ever since the Church was formed; but evil still stalks about unashamed and undismayed. The power that can remove it, so ardently believed in and relied on by the writer of the Apocalypse and Mr. Shillito, has never yet had its reality triumphantly demonstrated. Therefore, we advocate the dismissal of the supernatural as a dream that has never come true, substituting for it the natural which has never yet had its innings. Let the Divine go that the Human may come into its own. J. T. LLOYD.

Who are the Blasphemers?

I for one think it abominable that any man in modern England should be prosecuted for blasphemy.

—G. K. Chesterton.

A more troublesome or disagreeable business (than a trial for blasphemy) can never be inflicted upon me.

—Lord Chief Justice Coleridge.

The world would be astonished if it knew how great a proportion of its brightest ornaments are complete sceptics in religion.

—John Stuart Mill.

THE editorial article of a fortnight since reminds us very forcibly that blasphemy is an offence against the Christian religion. Freethinkers are bound in honour and principle to watch all such proceedings with jealous eyes, but it is curious that the ordinary press and public tolerates so mediæval a thing as a blasphemy prosecution. Must we conclude that, alter all, Liberals and Socialists are not interested in any liberty but that outside of their own country, and that it is only Irishmen, Belgians, Hindoos, or South Sea Islanders, whose freedom is worth defending?

When George William Foote was on trial for blasphemy before Lord Chief Justice Coleridge, he asked a very pertinent question. Why, he said, should the blasphemers who wrote for the classes be petted by society, and the blasphemers who wrote for the masses be cast into the wilderness. He then quoted telling passages from such world-famous writers as Byron, Shelley, Swinburne, Matthew Arnold, John Stuart Mill, Huxley, Herbert Spencer, and others, and urged upon the jury that the only real difference between the passages quoted and the incriminated parts of his own writing consisted in the different prices at which they were published.

Lord Coleridge, in summing up, had to admit that there was much in this plea. His own words were: "They (the passages) do appear to me to be open to exactly the same charge and the same grounds of observation that Mr. Foote's publications are." Yet the apparent paradox remains that all the later prosecutions for blasphemy have been directed against poor men and not against any other. Swinburne, Matthew Arnold, and the other "blasphemers" were never proceeded against, although their offence was "gross as a mountain, open, palpable." In poem after poem, Swinburne treated the fundamentals of the Christian religion with fearful derision, and Matthew Arnold did not hesitate, with a polite smile, to compare the Christian Trinity with "three Lord Shaftesburys." Even popular ministers have occasionally "let themselves go," and the Rev. R. J. Campbell, in one of his famous City Temple sermons, thus apostrophized "God":—

What do you mean by your marvellous love? You have plenty, and we are starving! You can see and we are blind! You have omnipotence and we are

crushed by pitiless fate! And what about that hell of your's? Ought you not to be in it for awhile yourself? Bah! you are contemptible, you King of Kings and Lord of Lords, if you have nothing more to say than that you will accept our penitence and remit our tortures when we are dead if only we believe! I would rather trust my own humanity than such a divinity as you.

If that is not "blasphemy," what is? We do not object to it, but what about the police? Is "blasphemy" to be suppressed with an iron hand at the street corners, and is it to be permitted in leading places of worship?

In the famous trial of the "eighties," George Foote argued further that it was absurd to declare that Christianity was any longer part and parcel of the law of England. As Jews had been admitted to Parliament, the plea was a sound one. And the Lord Chief Justice Coleridge supported this argument in his masterly summing up in what was then hoped would be the last prosecution for liberty of speech in matters of religion. It is, therefore, humiliating to think that the day of religious persecution is not past, and that any persons in authority should permit the revival of a cruel law which ought to have been erased long ago from the Statute Book of a civilized country.

MIMNERMUS.

The Origin of Christianity.

VI.

(Continued from page 107.)

The glory of Rome is to have attempted to solve the problem of human society without theocracy, without supernatural dogma.....The triumph of Christianity was the extinction of civil life for a thousand years.....The stroke of genius of the Renaissance has been to return to the Roman law, which is essentially the laic law—to return to philosophy, science, true art, and reason outside of all revelation.—Renan "Marcus-Aurellus" pp. 336-337.

THAT the adoration of the Virgin Mary was derived from the worship of the Goddess Isis is capable of absolute proof. As Sir James Frazer observes, no wonder that at a time when traditional faiths were shaken, and when men's minds were disquieted:—

The serene figure of Isis with her spiritual calm, her gracious promise of immortality, should have appeared to many like a star in a stormy sky, and should have roused in their breasts a rapture of devotion not unlike that which was paid in the Middle Ages to the Virgin Mary. Indeed, her stately ritual, with its shaven and tonsured priests, its matins and vespers, its tinkling music, its baptism and aspersions of holy water, its solemn processions, its jewelled images of the Mother of God, presented many points of similarity to the pomps and ceremonies of Catholicism. The resemblance need not be purely accidental. Ancient Egypt may have contributed its share to the gorgeous symbolism of the Catholic Church as well as to the pale abstractions of her theology. Certainly in art the figure of Isis suckling the infant Horus is so like that of the Madonna and child that it has sometimes received the adoration of ignorant Christians. And to Isis in her later character of patroness of mariners the Virgin Mary, perhaps, owes her beautiful epithet of *Stella Maris*, "Star of the Sea," under which she is adored by tempest-tossed sailors.¹

Mr. C. W. King, in his learned work *The Gnostics and their Remains*, tells us that: "The 'Black Virgins' so highly revered in certain French cathedrals during the long night of the Middle Ages, proved, when at last examined critically, basalt figures of Isis" (p. 71, note). Mr. Legge says that the worship of the Virgin which was introduced into the Catholic Church,

¹ Frazer, *Adonis, Attis, Ostris*, pp. 285-6.

"enabled the devotees of Isis to continue unchecked their worship of the mother goddess by merely changing the name of the object of their adoration, and Professor Drexler gives a long list of the statues of Isis which thereafter were used, sometimes with unaltered attributes, as those of the Virgin Mary."² He also adds: "Professor Bury, who thinks the action of the earlier faith upon the later in this respect undeniable, would also attribute the tonsure of the Catholic priesthood to a reminiscence of the shaven crowns of the initiates of Isis, to which we may, perhaps, add the covering of women's heads in churches."³

As to the popularity of the worship of the goddess Isis in the Roman Empire, before the era of Christianity, there is abundant evidence. Sharpe says that along with the obelisks, the statues and the gold carried to Rome when Egypt was conquered by Augustus and became a Roman province, 30 B.C., went many Egyptian superstitions, and by many they were as much valued:—

Horace tells us that the beggar at the corner of the street in Rome would then ask the passers by for alms in the name of the holy Osiris; and Juvenal says, that the painters of that city almost lived upon the goddess Isis, such was the popularity of that most winning form of worship, which is still continued there in the pictures of the Virgin Mary with the infant Jesus in her arms.⁴

The same historian also observes that the Emperor Domitian, giving way to public opinion,—

built in Rome a temple to Serapis, and another to Isis. Holy water was then brought from the Nile for the use of the votaries in the temple of Isis in the Campus Martius; and a college of priests was maintained there with a splendour worthy of the Roman capital. The wealthy Romans wore upon their fingers gems engraved with the head of Hor-pi-krot, or *Horus the child*, called by them Harpocrates.⁵

Sharpe also states that the Emperor Commodus actually "had his head shaved as a priest of Isis, that he might more properly carry an Anubis-staff in the sacred processions in honour of the goddess."⁶

So little was there to distinguish between the worship of Serapis and the worship of Christ that when the Roman Emperor Hadrian visited Egypt in the year A.D., 124, writing to his friend Servianus, from Alexandria, he declares: "Those who worship Serapis are Christians, and those who call themselves bishops of Christ are vowed to Serapis."

CHRISTMAS A PAGAN FESTIVAL.

It is well-known that Christian scholars disagree as to the date of the birth of Christ. The Rev. Dr. Giles observes:—

Not only do we date our time from the exact year in which Christ is said to have been born, but our ecclesiastical calendar has determined with scrupulous minuteness the day, and almost the hour, at which every particular of Christ's wonderful life is stated to have happened. All this is implicitly believed by millions, yet all these things are among the most uncertain and shadowy that history has recorded. We have no clue to either the day or the time of year, or even the year itself, in which Christ was born.⁷

The Rev. R. Robinson, in his *History and Mystery of Good Friday*, declares: "There are more than one hundred and thirty opinions concerning the years of his nativity, and the day of it has been placed by men of equal learning in every month of the year. There is a like variety of opinions concerning the time of his

crucifixion." The learned ecclesiastical historian Mosheim admits that, "The year in which it happened has not hitherto been fixed with certainty, notwithstanding the deep and laborious researches of the learned on that matter."⁸ Gieseler, the best and most impartial ecclesiastical historian, declares that, "The day of birth cannot be determined."⁹ Haydn, in his *Dictionary of Dates* (Ed., 1892), under the article "Christmas," observes, it is "a festival in commemoration of the nativity of Christ, the exact time of which is quite unknown."

Perhaps the believer, after relinquishing the year of the nativity, thinks he can still retain the festival of Christmas as the authentic time of the year when Christ was born. He is mistaken, as there is more diversity of opinion—if that is possible—upon this point than upon the other. A Christian journal dealing with this matter, after stating that it is certain the event did not happen on the 25th of December, goes on:—

Matthew begins to say, "Now when Jesus was born," but when was that? Lightfoot says it was in September, Newcombe in October, Paulus in March, Gieseler in February, Clinton in spring, Lardner and Robinson in autumn, Strong in August. Those who have studied the matter have lost themselves all over the almanac for their pains; but, at any rate, not a student amongst them imagines it possible that the shepherds and their flocks were freezing by night out of doors in December. As to the date, certainly the popular date is incorrect by at least four years.¹⁰

As a matter of fact, the Gospels give no clue as to the date of the Nativity, and the early Christians having no birthday for their Saviour, they appropriated the birthday of the ancient pagan gods. Christmas Day, the 25th of December, was the birthday of the Sun-gods, and most appropriately so, for after that date the days begin to lengthen, the light increases, the darkness decreases; the Sun of life, gathering strength from day to day, goes forth conquering and to conquer, symbolizing to the ancients the triumph of the powers of light over the powers of darkness, the eternal warfare of Ormuz and Ahriman. The very name the worshippers of Mithra gave the day, *Natalis Solis Invicta*, or "Birthday of the Victorious Sun," reveals the symbolism by which the processes of nature are turned to the uses of religion. The historian Gibbon says, "The Romans, as ignorant as their brethren of the real date of his (Christ's) birth, fixed the solemn festival to the 25th of December, the Brumalia, or winter solstice, when the pagans annually celebrated the birth of the sun."¹¹

W. MANN.

(To be Continued.)

"The Public School."

GRIM prison chalked with regulations drastic,
Echoing with swish of stick, and dark with frown
Of many a learned ass, in trailing gown,
Whose antedeluvian notions, dull, monastic,
Were droned in dreary formulæ inelastic;
Primeval savagery often won the crown,
Enthusiasm's fire was slowly smothered down
Where pedagogy smiled the smile sarcastic.

Huge make-believe of Spartan education!
Here prejudice was cautiously instilled,
Enquiry checked and speculation killed
By Jesuit sophistry of "confirmation";
Quick genius pined amid the execration
Of class-bound priest and bully of the field.

D. V. T.

¹ Legge, *Forerunners and Rivals of Christianity*, Vol. I., p. 85.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. I., p. 86.

³ Sharpe, *Egyptian Mythology and Egyptian Christianity*, pp. 85-86.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 86-87.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

⁶ Rev. Dr. Giles, *Christian Records*, p. 194.

⁷ Mosheim, *Ecclesiastical History*, p. 16; Ed. 1884.

⁸ Gieseler, *Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. I., p. 54.

⁹ *The Christian Commonwealth*, December 10, 1891.

¹¹ Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Chap. xxii.

Mind: A Hieroglyph Deciphered by Animal Instinct.

As every term descriptive of mental states, processes, or products is in origin and nature a metaphor, however completely its material roots have, through selective usage and long custom, vanished from sight, I need offer no apology for comparing the elemental contents of consciousness to the characters, signs, and figures of a hieroglyph or a cuneiform script. Moreover, I claim for the term not only that it is opposite but that it is as literally correct a description as a metaphor or a simile can well be.

And I hardly think there is any need to offer here a disclaimer and solemnly assure the reader that no attempt is being made to "explain" consciousness: as it is an ultimate category, it is not susceptible of one. Even the indisputable fact that Nature evolved neural substance in an ascending series of complex organizations to act as medium for her progressive awakening, is *not* an explanation in the accepted meaning of the term. The object of this article is not to explain, but to deny and protest.

The modern Gnostic or Metaphysician, like his ancient prototype, oracularly assumes or declares that mind is a self-existent and self-deciphered something, wholly independent of body though somehow entangled with it and enthralled in consequence. He differs from his primitive ancestors only in the names he gives to his "revelations." The ancient oracles resolved mind into a cluster of entities or personalities, whereas, according to the latest metaphysical declarations, mind is a system of "mental structures" which "always precede bodily structures"! And it is to be further borne in mind, that it is the *gnostic*, he his assumed title what it may, who always mints the coin of superstition and fixes the credal currency of his age, by which the minds of its youth are debauched and befogged, and superstition's endless thrall over man is maintained, no apology need be offered for this protest.

Now, if there be a fact, more outstanding in obviousness than another, it is this, that Nature's awakening into consciousness was as much a *device*—a means to an end—as the evolution of muscular tissue or secretive gland. Unless the animal mind be viewed under this instrumental aspect, it is as meaningless as an undeciphered hieroglyph or a cuneiform script; for it gets its *whole* and *sole* meaning in the structure and the aims of the body: its *immediate* meaning is found in the muscular system through which it serves the organism as a whole and enables it to realize its final ends. To those who build upon the evidence of the senses and the verdict of reason, Mind, instead of being an independent unity with a self-contained meaning, is, on the contrary, only a cluster of heterogeneous elements which acquire any meaning at all, only by being merged as integral parts of the organism. Disconnect them from it, and they are as purposeless as a waterwheel detached from its mill.

It is the gearing of the mental elements with the material, in the mechanism of the body, which imparts to each of them all the meaning it possesses. Has hunger any meaning whatsoever apart from a digestive system and the necessity of eating; or animal fear, apart from the possibility of becoming a diet to appease the hunger of another? And what is true of hunger and fear is equally true of its entire elemental contents.

Mind, in psychic isolation, is a blank—a non-significant cipher—a zero.

The ultimate elements of consciousness consist of sense-impressions and organic feelings. In themselves and undeciphered that are mere "blobs and daubs" of sensation and nothing more. The only characteristic they have in common is "consciousness"—being

something "mental" as distinguished from "material." Among themselves they are as heterogeneous as it is possible to imagine. They differ from each other in the most absolute manner, even when they represent or "translate" the very same form of energy as in the sensations of light and heat. What can be more unlike than the warmth of a fire and the sight of a snow capped mountain, and yet they are both psychic "translations" of the same radiant energy.

But the Nature which devised the psychic glyph also provided a system in which it finds its meaning. Moreover, in the animal world, it has permanently registered that meaning in the nervous system of the organism and *the registration of it is known as instinct.*

A living object has two ends or aims—one proximate and one ultimate—*viz.*, to prolong its own life and to perpetuate its species. These aims are common to both forms of life—plant and animal alike.

The animal, however, differs fundamentally from the plant in the fact that it has perpetually to move about in search for food, *i.e.*, of fuel to feed its "fire of life."

This one characteristic difference has driven the two forms further and further apart until now they are as wide as the poles asunder.

This extra want—this necessity for incessant locomotion—called into being two correlated "structures"—the mental and the muscular, with their allied secretive organs, or briefly—"mind and muscle."

These two characteristics, as every one knows, are both conspicuous in the vegetal world by their joint absence. Where there was no use for them, they were not evolved.

Now there is nothing more palpably obvious in sentient life than that mind and muscle are correlates, answering to each other as "lock and key." The wards of a lock find their meaning in those of the key and *vice versa*. A key without a lock is meaningless, and a lock without a key is useless. Such exactly is the reciprocal relation between the psychic and the muscular systems in the animal body. They have been evolved to act in unison as the wings of a bird.

This fact will be at once obvious if we bear in mind that the muscular system is a store of static energy which is ready at any moment to assume the kinetic form in bodily movements, and likewise that the various elemental factors of mind or consciousness act as psychic "valves" to deal out this energy as required to effect the movements that are necessary to keep the fire of life burning as long as possible in its own body-grate, and to "kindle" another similar to it before its own dies out.

To act thus as a regulating valve, each psychic element must be at one and the same time an effect and a cause. For example, hunger as a feeling of want, as a sign that the fire of life is burning low, is an effect; but as a stimulus to seek food to replenish it, it assumes the aspect of cause, though we are not oblivious of the fact that it is the concomitant neural process that discharges the impulse which compels the muscle to perform its movements.

Now a summary anatomy of mind on the principle of fundamental functions will resolve its entire contents into three groups of sensations or sense-impressions: (1) Those that goad; (2) Those that guide; (3) Those that guard or check, the necessary movements to achieve its two organic ends.

(1) The first group will include all organic sensations such as hunger and thirst; feelings like those due to heat, cold, illness, or any traumatic condition of the body, each characterized by a consciousness of *pain in some degree of intensity*, from a subliminal discomfort to a most excruciating agony. These, one and all, find their meaning in their capacity or power of stimulating the muscles to activity. Disconnect these feelings from the muscular system and they will be as meaningless as the signs and symbols of the Egyptian hiero-

glyphics before the Rosetta stone was discovered—a truth that is absolutely confirmed by the fact that they drop, one by one, out of consciousness as their allied organs cease to function through age or disease.

(2) The second group will include touch, sight, and sound; the senses of *recognition* and *location* of objects in space. These, likewise, find their sole meaning in directing and controlling bodily movements in pursuit of the same ends.

(3) The third group consists of the senses of taste and smell, the sentinel senses guarding the entrance to the alimentary tract; and they, likewise, find meaning in the fact that the quality of *agreeable* and *disagreeable*, with which they are characterized, has the power of maintaining, quickening, or inhibiting the muscular activities involved in eating, drinking, or swallowing.

All this is true, not only of that section of mind which is concerned with the prolongation of life, it is equally true of that related to the perpetuation of the species. Sex love finds its whole meaning in the genital systems, and mother-love is similarly deciphered in the maternal activities and the mammary glands, the sole end of which is the protection and nutrition of offspring.

Thus, the whole of mind, as manifested in the animal world, instead of being a something which contains its own solution, as the Gnostic oracles declare, finds the only meaning it has in the muscular and glandular activities of the body.

It will be observed that in the foregoing I have constantly used the term "mind" and not nerve, though the physical linkage denoted by instinct is between muscle and nerve. I have done so deliberately, to emphasize my conviction that mind is not a superfluity in the animal economy as some would have us believe, something which the creature could dispense with and still live its life unaltered.

I know that such a contention can be plausibly argued; this article, however, is not the place to discuss the point and offer my reason for rejecting it.

I see no reason for objecting to the term "epiphenomenon" as descriptive of mind, provided it is not made to connote something wholly superfluous.

All that we have said in respect of the animal mind is equally true of man's. There are only two points of difference. Firstly, that in the vast majority of cases their meaning is learnt by the *individual's own experience* instead of being registered on the nervous system as inborn instincts. And secondly, that the animal is not aware of the meaning. It acts on it, but is not conscious of its purposive significance.

The creature eats, drinks, fights, flees, hides, and procreates, but it is wholly oblivious of "why" it does any of them.

Its organic sensations acquire meaning in the fact that they act as impulses, and its sense-impressions in the fact that they act as guides to its movements, but the whole drama is a sort of somnambulistic show enacted in a state of semi-wakefulness.

How man has super-imposed upon Nature's instinctive decipherment of feeling and sense, a genetic explanation, *i.e.*, how human reason has traced each sense-impression *backwards* to its physical origin, as instinct deciphered it *forwardly* in purposive action, may be exemplified in another article. KERIDON.

Equality is thought by many people to be a mere speculative chimera which it is impossible to reduce to practice. But if the abuse of it be inevitable, does it not follow that we ought to try at least to mitigate it. It is precisely because the force of things tends to destroy equality that the force of legislation must always tend to maintain it—*Rousseau*.

Acid Drops.

Some time ago we called attention to the fact that the New Zealand legislature was passing a measure which declared it to be an offence subject to fine or imprisonment for any one to assert that people lawfully married were not truly married. This was aimed at the clergy, who have been making themselves busy saying that a civil marriage is no marriage at all. Now it is quite certain that if any priest or parson said that two persons who had gone through the civil ceremony of marriage were not married, he would be open to an action for libel. And it seems difficult to justify the same statement because instead of two persons being named specially, all who have gone through the civil ceremony are included in the indictment. It is a piece of impertinence for any parson to declare illegal what is legally passed and is part of the law of the land. But neither good taste towards opponents, nor courtesy in discussing differences are a necessary part of the clerical equipment.

The clergy promise to defy the law and make martyrs of themselves if needs be. We hope that if they persist in their slanderous speech the government will not hesitate to put the law into operation. The sight of a number of clergymen going to gaol because the law forbids them to insult and slander a number of respectable men and women will not be without its educational influence.

The *Church Times*, commenting on the above, says, "In three hundred years the principle of religious toleration has resulted in an immense mass of indifference to religion. If we are, as seems not unlikely, to have a taste of persecution, it may prove no bad medicine." It is, of course, quite in the usual run of things that persecution will stiffen conviction, even when it is of the obstinate variety. But we quite agree that indifference to religion and toleration have gone hand in hand. One is, indeed, only the reverse of the other. We do not see how anyone who sincerely believes in orthodox Christianity, who is convinced that the immortal welfare of people depends upon their having right beliefs about God, can tolerate unbelief or the unbeliever. It has always seemed to us that if Christianity be true, persecution is the most sacred of duties. The heretic is a moral plague spot, a centre of infection, and his removal is an act of social sanitation. People can only tolerate differences of opinion about religion when they are convinced, more or less, that it matters little what opinions are held. That is why all the great religionists were intolerant, more or less, and all the weak-kneed ones inclined to let things drift.

The "starving" clergy are still suffering. Bishop Taylor-Smith is on a tour in Egypt, Palestine, and the Mediterranean.

Professor Keith, speaking at the Royal Anthropological Institute, said that "seventy cases of people with noticeable tails are known to science. Every one of mankind has an inner tail, but only about one in a million has an outward tail. Man lost his outward tail when he began to walk upright." Yet tens of thousands of clergy still teach that the story of Adam and Eve and the talking snake is nothing but the truth.

The Abbe Moraux, the French astronomer, states that he believes the world to be 500,000,000 years old. The Abbe also believes but does not state that Adam was the first man.

The late Rev. T. W. Windlay, of Easthorpe, Southwell, Notts, left £10,483; the Rev. J. F. Bright, of Oxford, left £59,412.

The Rev. Alexander MacRae asked the Blairgowrie Presbytery what it thought of the mentality of those

people who must have their Sunday papers? We have no doubt as to the opinion of the Blairgowrie Presbytery of such horrible people, but it might be as well to get the opinion of some unbiased person of the mentality of the people who must have their Sunday sermon? The mentality of a man who goes to church Sunday after Sunday, listens to a teaching which none of us ever attempts to put into practice, and pretends to believe in a lot of things which no one outside the lunatic asylum can possibly credit, will be a fine study for the alienist of the future. So far we can see a distinct use in men like the Rev. A. MacRae.

The Vicar of Milford, near Godalming, Surrey, has been chiding his parishioners for their lack of generous financial support. A recent offertory consisted of a shilling and a halfpenny, the silver coin being contributed by a stranger. At Walton-on-the-Hill, a brace-button in the church offertory has aroused the bile of the rector.

Christians prate of "brotherhood" and "democracy," but the inequalities of wealth are as marked in Christian as in other countries. Recently, two pearl necklaces were sold for £14,000 at Christie's Sale Rooms, London, and a Roumanian postage stamp realized £420. Side by side with this is the plain fact that a million people are out of work.

An American reader sends us the following:—

William, the son of God-fearing and truthful parents, thus addressed his mother in the first flush of his disappointment when the mother confirmed his discovery that there was no Santa Claus: "You fooled me about Easter Bunnies; and you fooled me about Santa Claus: I bet you're fooling me, too, about that Bible stuff."

The Bishop of St. Albans says that we should be thankful that the war has left us with a consciousness that things are not right with the world. But many of us did not need a war to make that fact apparent, and it is indicative of the intelligence of the clergy that a war should be required to enable them to realize that all was not right with the world. No clearer proof could be supplied of the truth of the statement that one of the things wrong with the world is the presence of the Black Army and its teachings.

The Bishop of London and other ecclesiastics will have it that the clergy of the Church of England are "starving." Hence the Rev. J. Kingdon, a Congregationalist minister of Rochester, must be congratulated on having the courage to join the Anglican Church and share its crusts and rags.

The Church insists that the marriage-contract is "sacred" and cannot be broken. There are over 50,000 men separated from their wives in the United Kingdom, and in addition there are 6,500 divorced men. Quite clearly the voice of "God" is not the voice of the people.

There is an agitation on foot to get a fixed date for Easter, which is popularly supposed to be the anniversary of the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Of course, it is nothing of the kind, and the fact of Easter being a movable holiday gives the game away. Historic events occur on definite dates, and their anniversaries are on fixed dates likewise. But Easter does not represent the anniversary of anything connected with a man. It is an astronomical festival, and its date is settled by the phases of the moon. And the part of Christianity that deals with Easter is, most emphatically, moonshine.

Donkeys are not to be allowed on the sands at Broadstairs. The Sand Missions are to be continued. We wonder if this is another instance of religious monopoly having gained its own way?

There is a woman who is aiming at becoming a Rabbi. Now if that comes off we wonder what will happen to the

prayer in which pious Jews thank God that they were not born women?

We have said many times that we can quite appreciate the complaint of those members of the clergy who find themselves in receipt of a salary that is inadequate to the bringing up of a family under decent conditions. But this only applies to a minority of the clergy, and one cannot but reflect upon the fact that they have always been the mouthpiece of the teaching "Blessed be ye poor." And the unregenerate man is apt to wonder why, if the poor are really blessed, the clergy resent providence favouring them with this blessing? Perhaps, the clergy would reply, We said, "Blessed be ye poor, not be poor." And there is a world of difference in the implications of the two words.

A man presented himself at Westminster Cathedral the other day and said he was the Archangel Gabriel. Because Father Wood did not believe him, he struck the priest in the eye, and was afterwards, by the order of the police court magistrate, sent to the infirmary as insane. We consider that Father Wood got off very lightly. In earlier days we should have read that the Father was struck down dead for refusing to believe in a celestial messenger. But one can imagine what will happen if ever that much talked of second coming of Jesus materializes. He will be lugged off to a police court, at the request of Christians, and will probably spend the rest of his earthly sojourn in an asylum. The business of being a messenger from God is a decidedly risky game nowadays.

At Newington Brewster Sessions the other day Canon Durell said that the convictions for drunkenness for Newington was 71,000 for 1920. The Chairman queried the figures, and after consulting with his supporters, the Canon said he thought the figures were for the whole of London. But a police inspector said they were the figures for the whole of the country. We would advise the Canon to stick to theology where accuracy is not so important, and where there are no impertinent people to enquire into the correctness of any figures that may be given.

The Dean of Worcester says that "prejudice and not principle is keeping women out of Church of England pulpits." That is not true. Those who object to women occupying the pulpit are acting in accordance with the whole policy and teaching of the Christian Church. It is, of course, ridiculous for a mental nonentity such as the Bishop of London to stand above a woman preacher such as Miss Maude Royden, but in this case he is standing for a principle that is thoroughly Christian. We expect that women will force their way into the pulpits in the end, but that will be because the age is against the principle of sexual inequality and is learning to treat with contempt the barbarous regulations of the Christian Churches.

Love.

UPON my lips two lips are pressed,
And blend the dreams of my unrest
With music sweeter than has flown
From phantom lips that I have known,
To make into a magic tune,
The magic music of the moon;
And two eyes, filled with girlish love,
Weave a flashing net above
The image of my brooding years,
The well of all my wasted tears;
And two hands, livelier than those
That oftentimes with fatal blows
Have smashed the world to pieces, dart
Through secret places of my heart,
And ravish with disastrous scars,
And crush 'tween ten relentless bars
The petals of the perfect rose:
For bright hair brighter than a flame
Has writ in fire a living name.

GEO. W. MURPHY.

C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

February 27, Friars Hall; March 6, Swansea; March 13, Leicester; March 20, Stratford Town Hall; March 27, Leeds.

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.

F. ROSK (Bloemfontein).—Many thanks for what you are doing on behalf of the paper. It is quite a pity that all our friends in South Africa cannot be brought into touch with one another. It is good of you to say that in your opinion a £10,000 Fund would not exceed the value of the *Freethinker* to mankind. The appreciation of such as yourself is of great encouragement.

A. M. FISHER (Capetown).—We have had the same brand of lunatic here in London preaching on the millions that will never die. It makes one almost despair of human sanity. And where do these people get the money for getting expensive halls, etc.? One would almost fancy that some wealthy folk must be providing funds for the purpose of bebauching the human mind.

ATHOS ZENO.—*Freethought* in New York received, and shall appear as soon as possible. Mr. Cohen has had several requests to visit the United States, and may do so one day. It is mainly a question of finding time for the trip.

C. F. BUDGE.—We do not think there is anything illegal in the notice being so displayed. It is a question of propriety, and must be decided by those responsible.

R. G. MILLER (Victoria).—Received. We are sending you the *Freethinker* as requested, and have also handed the balance of your money order to Messrs. Watts and Co.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

The friends who worked to make Mr. Cohen's meeting at Ton Pentre on Sunday last deserve to be congratulated on the result. They were probably the largest Freethought meetings ever held in the Rhondda valley. In the afternoon the large hall was well filled, and in the evening every seat and every foot of floor space was crowded. Many were unable to get in at all. There was also a large sale of literature, every pamphlet and book being sold, and numbers clamouring for more. A pleasing aspect of the meeting was the large number of ladies present, and they appeared to enjoy the lectures no less than the men. There were a number of questions at the close of each lecture, and Mr. Cohen's final summing up in the evening brought the proceedings to a close with a burst of enthusiastic applause from the audience. Altogether a great day.

Mr. Cohen lectures to-day (February 27) in the Friars Hall, Blackfriars Bridge Road, at 7 o'clock. His subject is "Why Men Believe in God." This is the last time that Mr. Cohen will be able to lecture in this hall during the present season, although the hall has been engaged for the whole of March. For the rest of the season, with the exception of March 20, when he is speaking at the Town Hall, Stratford, he will be engaged in the provinces.

We judge from our correspondence that Mr. Thorne's monograph on Richard Jefferies has been the means of sending a good many to reading, or re-reading that author. If so, we feel sure that Mr. Thorne will feel compensated for the work he put into the booklet. It forms an admirable introduction to the reading of one of the most interesting of the writers of the latter portion of the nineteenth century.

Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner writes in reply to Mr. E. Holyoake Marsh's letter in last week's *Freethinker*:—

It is a strange and sad experience to see how petty malice and jealousies endure even thirty years after a man's death. Mr. Robertson *knew* my father, and knowing him, loved and honoured him. Mr. Holyoake Marsh did not know him, and is so inspired with personal animosity that after all these years he can still desire by innuendo to injure him in the eyes of men. I have no desire to enter upon any rivalry of recrimination. Mr. G. J. Holyoake did his share of public service, and for that deserves that men should remember him with gratitude. If they cannot at the same time feel grateful for my father's incomparably greater services, that does not make his services less or diminish the advantages we derive from them.

Both the *Bible Handbook* and Volney's *Ruins of Empires* are now being machined, so that with reasonable good fortune we may hope to have them on sale in the course of a few weeks. The *Handbook* is in constant demand, and *The Ruins* will be welcomed by a large number, both for its historical importance and literary interest. Next to Paine's *Age of Reason* it was one of the most important books of the period in the attack on Christianity. It took a much wider survey of the subject than did *The Age of Reason*, being largely an essay in comparative mythology and natural morality.

We are pleased to see from some American papers to hand that Paine appears to be coming into his own with the American public. The *New York American*, in two of its recent issues, has some very laudatory comments on Paine, apropos of his birthday, dwelling upon the nobility of his character and the greatness of his services to the American and the French people. For these offences, together with his attacks on Christianity, the British public have never forgiven him. We are said not to be good haters. Not raging ones, perhaps, but the persistent hatred shown to the great Freethinkers of a century since shows that for cold-blooded persistent animosity we can hold our own easily enough.

Glasgow friends will please note that to-day (February 27) Mr. Robert Parker will lecture for the local N. S. S. Branch in the Shop Assistants' Hall, 297 Argyle Street, at 12 noon, on "Robert Burns, Poet and Humanist." Admission is free, with the usual opportunity for visitors to contribute towards the expenses of the meeting.

The Birmingham Branch is holding its Annual Dinner this year at the Crown Hotel on Saturday evening, February 26. We have no doubt there will be the usual good attendance and the experience of an enjoyable time. In spite of the increased difficulties in the way of local propaganda, the Branch has extended its work during the year, and Mr. Partridge, the Secretary of the Branch, reports an increased membership. But the season ends with a deficit to date of £15. That is very good, all things considered, but the Branch is inviting contributions to wipe off this loss, and to prepare for a still bigger campaign next season. There should be no difficulty in local friends, and others, seeing that this amount is forthcoming.

A Sociological Study of Religion.

VIII.

(Continued from page 118.)

AND because of the dependence of religious forms upon political ones, political graduations of rank are generally reproduced in the theology of a community. Professor Loria quotes from Sieber's *Essai Sur La Civilization Economique Primitive*, as follows:—

Primitive religions reveal a celestial pantheon fashioned in imitation of the existing social order. In the world beyond, the masses of the population are composed of the shades of men, while the aristocracy is made up of demi-gods, above whom again stands the sovereign, represented by the supreme god. In some states of Asia the people recognize one god even as they obey one king, and just as they can ask nothing of the king except through the medium of satraps and ministers, so they can demand nothing from their god except through intermediaries or demi-gods. In China, likewise, a celestial hierarchy exists which is the exact reproduction of the earthly hierarchy, and all the privileges of the upper classes are carried over intact into heaven.....

"We might compare our modern concept of God," remarks Loria, "with the idea of the constitutional monarch or the president of a republic; while the god of the Middle Ages may be likened to the absolute monarch." In this connection, it is interesting to note that the mediæval Crusaders termed themselves "vassals of God," whilst in despotic military empires such as Assyria and Babylonia, sacrifice to the gods was regarded as a tribute paid by man to the gods.

"Under the Roman Empire the principle of delegated authority could be invoked," says Carpenter, *Comparative Religion*, "to explain the unity of the Godhead above inferior agencies; in the heavenly order there was but one sovereign, though there were many functionaries."

Blodget, in *The Chinese Worship of Heaven and Earth*, in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, xx, p. 58 ff., says of the worship of the Chinese Empire, "The ancient ritual carefully graded the rite of sacrifice from viceroys of provinces down to the humblest district superintendent who offered to the spirits of his district, hills, lakes, and grains." And "these spirits" were "ranged in feudal order," even as the society was graded in feudal strata.

If we turn to India, with its self-contained village communities, we find localization of worship. Henry Whitehead, bishop of Madras, in his *The Village Deities of Southern India*, declared that fully four-fifths of the people of the Dravidian races, whilst nominally accepting the spiritual guidance of the Brahmins, are to this day practically given over to the worship of their local deities. In the estimation of these people, Siva and Vishnu may be more dignified beings, but the village deity is regarded as being more intimately concerned with the prosperity of the village.

And, finally, modern Christianity provides another example of the dependence of religious forms on political ones. It was with the growth of the national sentiment that the real decline of the Roman Catholic faith began. Previous to the birth of the nation states there had been much dissatisfaction with Rome, which crystallized from time to time in such outbursts of heresy as that represented by the Albigenses or the Lollards; yet the papal authority was always reestablished. But when the village-economy, and village-isolation of the early Middle Ages gave place to the national-economy, and powerful centralized political organs were developed, the new national spirit which accompanied this change was intolerant of the overlordship of Rome, and in most of those countries which achieved national unity Protestantism was at length

successful. And those states, such as Holland and England, whose national existence was for a time precarious, were most enthusiastically Protestant.¹

If, then, religion is determined in its nature by the general civilization of which it forms a part, the interesting question immediately presents itself: Will we ever arrive at a civilization which is so inimical to religious beliefs that they will die out? The writer has no hesitation in answering in the affirmative. Nor does he base his belief simply on the effects to be worked by education (as Renan, among others, has done). It seems to him that, apart altogether from whatever effects the dissemination of knowledge may or may not have, the whole trend of social development is making for the destruction of religious beliefs, if by religion is meant belief in a supernatural power that consciously rules the universe and shapes man's destiny. Supernaturalism is incompatible with modern thought and life, and is even more incompatible with modern industrial methods. The new methods introduced by the extensive application of mechanical processes to industry have been carefully investigated by Paul Lafargue and Professor Veblen, the latter having happily named it, "The cultural incidence of the machine process."

"The labour of the mechanical factory," says Lafargue (*Social and Philosophical Studies*),—

puts the wage-worker in touch with terrible natural forces unknown to the peasant, but instead of being mastered by them, he controls them. The gigantic mechanism of iron and steel which fills the factory, which makes him move like an automaton, which sometimes clutches him, mutilates him, bruises him, does not engender in him a superstitious terror as the thunder does in the peasant, but leaves him unmoved, for he knows that the limbs of the mechanical monster were fashioned and mounted by his comrades, and that he has but to push a lever to set it in motion or stop it. The machine, in spite of its miraculous power and productiveness, has no mystery for him. The labourer in the electric works, who has but to turn a crank on a dial to send miles of motive power to tramways or light to the lamps of a city, has but to say, like the God of Genesis, "Let there be light," and there is light.....He would be greatly surprised if one were to come and tell him that a certain God might, if he chose, stop the machine and extinguish the lights when the electricity had been turned on; he would reply that this anarchistic God would be simply a misplaced gearing or a broken wire, and that it would be easy for him to seek and find this disturbing God. The practice of the modern workshop teaches the wage-worker scientific determinism, without his needing to pass through the theoretical study of the sciences.

Professor Veblen gives an equally clear exposition of this idea in his *The Theory of Business Enterprise*. "The machine process pervades the modern life and dominates it in a mechanical sense," he says.

Its dominance is seen in the enforcement of precise measurements and adjustment and the reduction of all manner of things, purposes and acts, necessities, conveniences, and amenities of life, to standard units.....Mechanically speaking, the machine is not his (the worker's) to do with as his fancy may suggest.....If he takes to myth-making and personifies the machine, or the process, and imputes purpose and benevolence to the mechanical appliances, after the manner of current nursery tales and pulpit oratory, he is sure to go wrong.....The machine process throws out anthropomorphic habits of thought.....The machine technology rests on a knowledge of impersonal, material cause and effect.....It inculcates

¹ A careful study of this theory would show that even such exceptions to this rule as Spain do not disprove it. In such cases the general tendency was vitiated by exceptional influences, as in Spain the long and bitter semi-religious wars with the Moors which preceded the establishment of Spanish integrity; the interest that the ruler, with his wide-spread possessions, had in preserving friendship with the Pope, etc.

thinking in terms of opaque, impersonal cause and effect, to the neglect of those norms of validity that rest on usage and on conventional standards handed down by usage.....Its scheme of knowledge and of inference is based on the laws of material causation, not on those of immemorial custom, authenticity, or authoritative enactment. Its metaphysical basis is the law of cause and effect.

And again, in his *Theory of the Leisure Class*,—

The workman's office is becoming more and more exclusively that of discretion and supervision in a process of mechanical, dispassionate sequences. So long as the individual is the chief and typical prime mover in the process; so long as the obtrusive feature of the industrial process is the dexterity and force of the individual handicraftsman; so long the habit of interpreting phenomena in terms of personal motive and propensity suffers no such considerable and consistent derangement through facts as lead to its elimination. But under the later developed industrial processes, when the prime movers and the contrivances through which they work are of an impersonal, non-individual character, the grounds of generalization habitually present in the workman's mind and the point of view from which he habitually apprehends phenomena is an enforced cognizance of matter of fact sequence. The results, so far as concerns the workman's life of faith, is a proclivity to undevout scepticism.

And Professor Henderson, of Chicago University, is reported to have said in a recent lecture that religion is losing its hold on the business world because business men associate religion with miracle, and miracle is foreign to the business habit of thought.

W. H. MORRIS.

(To be concluded.)

Christian Science and Sex.

It might be interesting to see if some of the more fundamental doctrines of Christian Science can be explained as the intellectualization of psychoerotic states and attitudes. My own past observation impels me to seek the interpretation of all mystical philosophies of like tendencies in terms of the emotional conflict over sex. Intensified sexual impulses are often accompanied by an equally intense and often inefficient urge to exclude the physiological aspects of sex from consciousness. Thus it often happens that nymphomania or erotomania manifests itself to the rest of the world as erotophobia. When this becomes formulated according to various degrees of intensity and with varying cultural development, we find a great variety of resulting metaphysical theory and theological morality. Let us restate a little of Christian Science doctrine just to see if it lends itself to explanation from this viewpoint; that is, in terms of the internal erotic conflict.

First let us remember that Mrs. Mary Moss-Baker-Glover-Patterson-Eddy had more husbands than she had children. This is some evidence of her having been afflicted by sexuotional conflicts. Without the satisfaction of the biological impulse for progeny, she became afflicted with the compensatory psychological urge to become the "mother" of all who are "born of truth and love." God "is the universal father and mother of man," perhaps because bisexual impulses in herself required the projection of these dual qualities into her God. She discoursed glibly about "the womanhood as well as the manhood of God," probably because with this concept she could achieve a needed compensation for her feeling of inferiority, due to her femininity. This compensation consisted in identifying herself with God, in the rôle of being his feminine part.

Though differently expressed and perhaps differ-

ently theorized about, she yet laid claim to the same perfectionism asserted by Mormons and the free lovers among the Bible Communists of Oneida. Sin is but "an error of mortal mind," and Mrs. Eddy having come to a realizing sense thereof, to her all "evil is unreal." That is to say, all her own "shameful" past had to be pushed out of consciousness; had to be treated as unreal, in order to neutralize her feelings of shame, of inferiority. Of course, one who needed such a psychological remedy for a feeling of depression had to abolish "the erring testimony of mortal sense" so that she could receive into consciousness no evidence of her own sin. She could not commit an unreality, which alone is sin. Those who are excessively burdened by the feeling of their own sinful flesh tend to find compensations in rising above the flesh, in identifying themselves with the supernatural generally, or with God. So they argue that God, being the "all in all," one like Mrs. Eddy is herself a part of God, and how could she, a part of God, commit any sin so long as she rejects the "erroneous belief" that "evil is real"? No. She is "no longer obliged to sin." To such persons all is pure, even though to unspiritual vision it may still seem both real and evil. Having herself experienced that "spiritual birth" which "opens to the enraptured understanding" many things, she readily discovered (perhaps with the help of her many husbands) that lust is "always wrong" unless the physiological factors can be excluded from consciousness. Then we can oppose to the "material sense of love" a purely psychological eroticism, that is a "spiritual law of love" and "spiritual love" with "spiritual oneness" with God or anyone else in the universe, either dead or alive.

Thus through Christian Science ideals will "the attraction between the sexes be perpetual, bringing sweet changes and renewal." So it can be described if we succeed in excluding from consciousness all the physical sexuality, and enjoy approximately the continuous ebb and flow of ecstasy due to erotomania. Since the "material sense of love" is but an "error of mortal mind," it follows that all erotic love is wholly psychological, that is, spiritual. If it is unceasing, as in extreme erotomania, then we can say that God is love and love is all there is of God. It follows that celibacy is nearer right than marriage, because normal marital relations tend to dilute the psychosexual ecstasy. Now generation "rests on no sexual basis." In all climes and times, neurotics have found their way to celestial exaltation, through spiritual connubiality, heavenly bridegrooms, and offspring begotten by ghosts. Mrs. Eddy had experienced the pains of parturition at least once, but under the inhibiting compulsion of her neurosis she could exclude even that from memory and consciousness, and she may have believed herself to have begotten her child on no sexual basis. The psychiatrist can give her a sympathete understanding if he cannot agree with her. When the "spiritual creation is discerned and the union of male and female apprehended as in the Apocalypse," then will marriage be abolished. In the meantime those of us who continue to suffer from the error of mortal mind that sex is real and some of its lusts are wholesome will continue to mate on a physical instead of a purely psychoerotic basis. "But to force the consciousness of scientific being before it is understood is impossible." So Mary Moss-Baker-Glover-Patterson-Eddy leaves us to our physical illusions and refuses to disclose any more of her vagaries on the spiritual process of begetting offspring, which "rests on no sexual basis," perhaps because such exposure might reveal too much of the psychoerotic mystery of bisexual attributes of God in herself.

Eddyism proves the correctness of Father Noyes of the Oneida Community when he concluded that a celibate church is a woman's church. Christian

Science with its feminine predisposition to celibacy has seventy-two percent. of women in its following. For many more wholesome women in other churches, a virile pastor and the glorification and sanctification of heterosexuality as expressed in conventional, parsonized marriage, constitute the lure. Not so in a church that discredits marriage. Here we should expect to find a haven for the victims of inhibitions against normal heterosexual relations, who wish to make a virtue of their misfortune. Those whose impulses tend toward perversion and inhibition need a compensation and thus find it in the "spiritualization" and glorification of the resultant psychoerotic states that are alleged to rest on no physical basis.

Here, as always, the development is the same: From some abnormal sex tendencies through sexual allegories to a firm belief that all lust is evil. Hence celibacy, spiritual love, eternity of sex attraction through piety, and finally the overthrow of the reason upon the subject of the mania as shown in the illusions about the spiritual generation of flesh and blood offspring which "rests on no sexual basis." This belief that some day either men or women will beget human offspring without the help of the other sex, is an oft recurring symptom of psychoneurosis. Its most distinguished victim was probably Auguste Comte. Recently I saw a letter from a male physician—not yet confined in an asylum, but asserting that soon men without the aid of women would propagate the human species. So the male homosexual may formulate the logical outcome of this conflict. The late William T. Stead assured me that he had seen (but only with his spiritual eyes of course) children begotten without a fleshly father. Every asylum has its inmates who have sufficiently imperative emotional needs to enable or compel them to create in the objective world what others cannot see there, or to enable or compel them to ignore and deny objective realities that most of the rest of us have to admit the reality of, both in our theories of life as well as by our conduct.

For the few the denial, for a part or all of the time, of some or all of the objective realities is made possible by such a relatively complete obsession by the erotic ecstasy that it excludes from consciousness, at least for a time, both its sexual origin and the related objective realities. Under this obsessing erotic ecstasy, the sensations derived from objectives do not register in consciousness, or only so faintly that all seems unreal. "The testimony of mortal sense" is weakened or abolished. As the state of erotic ecstasy approaches continuity with relatively small variations of intensity it is readily formulated in: "the attraction between the sexes is perpetual." But since the physical causes of this attraction are (because of shameful experiences) excluded from consciousness, the material sense of love is also abolished. Yet we are here. If now you unite with our consciousness of existence the theories necessitated by the erotic inhibitions we come logically to the conclusion that human beings can be begotten on some other basis than that of sexual methods of reproduction. For all those who need that sort of theory, I should think it is just the sort of theory they need. Obviously there are many such persons. Hence Christian Science and its popularity. There is one "error of mortal mind" that Mrs. M. M. B. G. P. Eddy did not abolish either in herself or her followers, and that is an adipose belief in dollars as real substance.—*New York Medical Journal*. (Reprinted from the *New York Truthseeker*.)

THEODORE SCHROEDER.

To say that a blind custom of obedience should be a surer obligation than duty taught and understood—is to affirm that a blind man may tread surer by a guide, than a seeing man can by a light.—*Francis Bacon*.

Theosophy.¹

II.

(Concluded from page 124.)

IN order to account for the imperfection of individual lives Theosophy resorts to the ancient doctrine of Reincarnation. Thus pandering to the unhappy desire for personal perfection, and failing to realize that it is better for each man to strive to give of his best to society in the practical affairs of every day life rather than spend his energy in trying to mould some fantastic "astral body" for a place in a chimerical other-world. Better for men, who think it necessary to strive for the attainment of an ideal, to realize that the only ideals possible of attainment are such as can be worked out under the changing conditions of human life as known to us, rather than conceive of ideals which have to be projected into an imaginary other-world with hypothetical conditions.

Ideals conceived of in terms of the possible conditions of human life may be useful and inspiring to many. While ideals conceived of in terms of other-worldism are likely to induce pathological states of mind at variance with the normal habits and conditions of human beings.

This is so, in spite of the fact that all other-worlds are thought of and imagined in anthropomorphic fashion, as the processes of thought and imagination are prone to run riot in the effort to get away from all the conditions of this world.

The Theosophical process of getting to heaven, and idea of heaven present excellent illustrations of the disastrous effect, upon the mind, of the belief that there must be another world, or more, in which to work out human perfection, whatever that may be.

According to Theosophy, man passes, after death, in his astral body to the desire world or purgatory. Here he loses his freedom to the extent in which he is held prisoner by his desires.

In the majority of cases the astral body rearranges itself, and, consequently, the man finds himself enclosed within a series of astral shells, and these he has to work off by overcoming his desires in the order of their coarseness.

When "the astral body has been cast off, the man passes into the heaven-world" (p. 34), except that some of the fortunate who are "in the know" have no need to go through this long process of shelling their astral bodies. They remain free and do useful work in the astral world.

Those who reach the "Heaven-world" are to enjoy the wildest delights ever conceived by the mystic in a state of ecstasy, unless it be those of the mystic under the influence of sexualism:—

The heaven-portion of the mental world is filled with discarnate human beings, who work out into mental and moral powers the good experiences they have garnered in their earthly lives. Here, the religious devotee is seen, rapt in adoring contemplation of the Divine Form he loved on earth, for God reveals Himself in any form dear to the human heart; here, the musician fills the air with melodious sounds, cultivating his capacity into higher power; here, all that love are in close touch with their beloved, and love gains new strength and depth by fullest expression; here, the artists of form and colour work out splendid conceptions in plastic material, responsive to their thoughts; here, philanthropists shape great schemes for human helping, architects of plans to be wrought out when they return to earth. Every high activity followed on earth, every noble thought and aspiration, here grow into flowers, flowers which contain within themselves the seeds which shall later be sown on earth" (p. 39).

¹ The quotations are from *Theosophy*, by Annie Besant (*The People's Books*—Jack).

Unfortunately, the seeds either never reach the earth, or take a long time to bring forth flowers. The earth ought long ago to have been transformed into a paradise if the workings of heavenly influences were of any avail.

The old theory that one must be very devout in order to appreciate the blessings of religion and get at its "inner meaning," plays its part in Theosophy. And, indeed, we may agree with Mrs. Besant that one *must* be very devout in order to be gulled by the following educated nonsense.

Speaking of the "Holy Communion," Mrs. Besant says, "any clairvoyant, watching the ceremony will see a blazing out of light, following the words of consecration, the light flashing out through the church and bathing the worshipper, and being appropriated and drawn in by the really devoted" (p. 42).

I call this educated nonsense because it is given as if it were quite a normal occurrence for flashes of light to bathe the worshipper and be absorbed by the devout during a Holy Communion service, and for this to be seen by the clairvoyant.

That the clairvoyant does see this, and more, I am not going to dispute, any more than I should dispute that a man in a bad state of intoxication sees more than other people see at the time. But, then, the clairvoyant is, or should be, a case for the pathologist, and readers of Mrs. Besant's popular work on *Theosophy* should have it made clear to them that the whole business of "seeing things" is, in this case, one of abnormal subjectivity. It can be gone through by anyone whose brain has reached the required pathological state.

The following words on morality come with a sense of relief in the book under discussion:—

No suffering is ever voluntarily borne except as a road to a deeper and more lasting joy. None seek aimless suffering; it is endured only as a means to an end" (p. 43).

Every human being living in Society is related inevitably, by the mere fact of his being there, to all around him, and this makes him the centre of a web of obligations, of duties; to give to each related person his due is to be a "good" man, and a source of social unity; to refuse to any his due is to be a "bad" man, and source of social disunity" (p. 46).

But the ethical teaching of Theosophy is vitiated by its theology, as when we are informed that, "the scientist will say: that which helps forward evolution is Right; that which hinders it is Wrong. The religionist will say: that which is according to the divine Will is Right; that which is against it is Wrong. Both are expressing exactly the same idea, for the divine Will is evolution" (p. 44).

When an author talks of helping or hindering the process of evolution, and when he introduces ethical terms and talks of "right" evolution and "wrong" evolution, he is—well, he is not talking science.

We may talk of the evolution of "right" and of "wrong," but the process of evolution is neither right nor wrong, as far as scientific thought is concerned. Everything which happens in the universe has its place in the process of evolution, is part of that process, and there is no such thing as helping forward or going against evolution.

Evolution includes what we conceive to be retrogression, as well as what we conceive to be progression. But Mrs. Besant desires to make "evolution" equate with "divine Will," and allows her ethics to become bog-foundered in her theology.

As in ethics, so in the spheres of art and literature, the theology of Theosophy has a vitiating effect.

The Theosophist very highly estimates the value of art and literature in life, but Mrs. Besant simply plunges into talking religious cant when she tells us that "art is unthinkable without religion" (p. 50).

There is no necessary connection between art and

religion, and the implication that the Atheist is not capable of desiring the beautiful, or of appreciating the best that is to be found in art and literature is but another instance of falsification of facts in the interest of religious propaganda.

On the side of emotion, it is the desire for a fuller and richer appreciation of whatever is beautiful in nature that makes many feel the joy of being free from what to them are the stultifying influences of religious art. And if the canvass of the Theosophical artist is to be filled with Bodiless Devas, Archangels, Angelic hosts, and a picture of the Logos, many of us prefer to remain without Theosophy.

E. EGERTON STAFFORD.

Correspondence.

CAN WE FOLLOW JESUS?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In Mr. Worsnop's first letter we were told that the Ethical Teaching of Jesus, which was, of course, based upon "Love one another," would, if followed everywhere by everybody, turn this world into Paradise. When I pointed out that in one of his clearest teachings Jesus told us that to be his disciple you must *hate* your parents, Mr. Worsnop tells me that Jesus didn't mean it in my sense but in the sense of a soldier going out to fight. Now I happened to be a soldier and a volunteer myself, and I can say that so far as I am concerned, far from hating my parents in any sense at all, I loved them all the more. The fact is that, so soon as one begins to examine the wonderful teaching of Jesus, it is found to be in such a confused state that Christians nearly fall over one another to repudiate it. It never means what it clearly says but is generally a "difficult" text, or it is told with such beautiful Oriental "imagery" that it always means the opposite, or there is the difficulty of translations, or there is the interpretations (as above) which, like the flowers that bloom in the spring, have nothing to do with the case. Mr. Worsnop gets quite hot over it. Do I mean to say, he asks very indignantly, that Jesus could possibly have told us to hate our parents? One would really imagine that it was I that made the accusation. Not only was it Jesus who said it (and the translation is perfect), but the Gospels show that he had very little love for his mother or his brethren at all. In fact, Jesus went the absolute limit in his terrible attack on home life. He said: "I am come to set a man at variance against his father and the daughter against her mother, etc," and "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me." And as for those who left their parents and wives and children and houses, they would be repaid "an hundredfold" here, and "in the world to come eternal life." And this is the sort of rant which will make this world into a Paradise! When Jesus said that all who came before him were "thieves and robbers," Mr. Worsnop tells us he also said he was "the door of the sheep," as if that excused it. Or, if Jesus meant that his teaching was the only true teaching and that all who differed from him were as dangerous as thieves and robbers, I feel that the Christian Deity only made matters worse. It remains for other people to decide as to which teaching is the best for humanity, and it hardly becomes even a God to boast about his as being the best when there is so much competition about. Why, on Mr. Worsnop's own showing, those dear old ladies, Gladstone and Salisbury, both rejected the "hate your parents" teaching. Mr. Worsnop is very hurt that I should give these very difficult texts when there are so many others, say by St. Paul, which are much more easily defended. But if I had dragged in Paul and some of his difficult texts, he would have been still more hurt and would have made a big point that Paul wasn't Jesus and that I really could not tackle Jesus. Incidentally, Mr. Worsnop says nothing about the great amount of cursing Jesus indulged in against all those who differed from him, which he ought to have cited as proof positive that, though it is very easy to say "Love one another," it is very difficult to put it into practice even though one

may be the only son of God. Mr. Worsnop wants me to oblige him with the Ethical Teaching of Freethought, this, mark you, though he has been connected with our movement for thirty years! Does he really wish us to believe that in all that period he has never come across a single work dealing with ethics from the Freethought point of view? Any of our catalogues will give him the names of a dozen such works and I send him to them. One more point. I was glad to see that Mr. Worsnop did not try to explain away the "I came not to bring peace but a sword" text in one of his other letters. Generally it is cited as a beautiful Oriental way of showing Jesus was the only true "Prince of Peace." Well, in Poland and Russia in the last two or three years there have been some of the most terrible massacres of Jews in all their history by Mr. Worsnop's "mates," or if he prefers it "brothers in Christ." I can see him standing amidst the smouldering ruins and the dead bodies of men, women, and children (and in some districts every Jewess between the ages of eight and seventy have been violated first and then killed) and complacently saying to any survivors, "You see what comes of not accepting Jesus, who said, 'I came not to bring peace but a sword.' He knew you would not follow his teaching and here is the result, one long trail of blood through the generations that have gone to the present time. You have only yourselves to blame." O, beautiful religion!

H. CUTNER.

BRADLAUGH'S LIFE.

SIR,—Charles Bradlaugh being dead yet speaketh:—

Your duty lies not in petty personal strife, but in the diffusion of the great and mighty truths for which our predecessors have risked stake and dungeon. Your duty is not to take part in disputes whether John or Thomas is the better leader, but rather so to live as to need no leaders. A public man's life is composed of strange phases. If successful, he wins his success with hard struggling. As he struggles, the little great ones before him, who envy him his hope, block up his path. His ignorance is exposed, his incapability made manifest; and then when he has won the victory and made a place and standing, each envious, cowardly caviller, who dares not meet him face to face, stabs him with base innuendo in the back. I do not envy any statesman's character in the hands of his political antagonists, still less do I envy when I hear him dissected behind his back by his pseudo friends.—*Charles Bradlaugh, "National Reformer,"* February 28, 1863.

EDITH M. VANCE.

DR. LYTTLETON'S REPLY.

SIR,—I acknowledge Dr. Lyttelton's letter, and wish to say, surely philosophy has needlessly complicated the question of good and evil; is it not simply that we call good what is beneficial to us, and evil what is harmful, and do we not find this out from *experience*, not *intuition*? I should like to refer to one other matter, on noting that Dr. Lyttelton withdraws his illustration about Trotsky because he thinks Mr. Cohen had the better of him. What about that Lord Roberts' illustration, and Mr. Cohen's reply to it in December 19 issue? (Paragraph 2, "Acid Drops.") May I say again, that when I asked Dr. Lyttelton how he knows that the conviction of God's existence is reliable, I didn't want another instance of the conviction, but a reply to the question. W. JAMESON.

The most accomplished way of using books at present is twofold: either, first, to serve them as some men do lords, learn their titles exactly, and then brag of their acquaintance; or, secondly, which is indeed the choicer, the profounder and politer method, to get a thorough insight into the index, by which the whole book is governed and turned, like fishes by the tail. For to enter the palace of learning by the great gate requires an expense of time and forms; therefore men of much haste and little ceremony are content to get in by the back-door. For the arts are all in a flying march, and therefore more easily subdued by attacking them in the rear. Thus physicians discover the state of the body by consulting only what comes from behind. Thus men catch knowledge by throwing their wit on the posteriors of a book, as boys do sparrows, with flinging salt upon their tails. Thus human life is best understood by the wise man's rule of always regarding the end.—*Swift.*

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

FRIARS HALL (236 Blackfriars Road, four doors south of Blackfriars Bridge): 7, Mr. C. Cohen, "Why Men Believe in God."

FULHAM BRANCH N. S. S. ("Gowers," 153 Lillie Road, Fulham): 7, Monthly Meeting; Mr. E. Steele, "Individualism."

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Johnson's Dancing Academy, 241 Marylebone Road, near Edgware Road): 7.30, Social Gathering—Music and Dancing.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH, N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, off Kentish Town Road, N.W.): 7.30, Mr. T. N. Thaker, "Christian Missionaries in India and England."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W. 9): 7, Miss Nina Boyle, "Tyrannies—Past and Future."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C. 2): 11, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., "Industry as a Public Service."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Stratford Engineers' Institute, 167 Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7, Mr. Henry Spence, B.Sc., "Education and Heredity."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

ASSOCIATION OF ENGINEERING AND SHIPBUILDING DRAUGHTSMEN (Merseyside Branch): Thursday, March 3, C. C. Stevenson, Esq., "The Dreyfus Affair."

GLASGOW BRANCH N. S. S. (Shop Assistants' Hall, 297 Argyle Street): 12 noon, Mr. Robert Parker, "Robert Burns, Poet and Humanist." (Silver Collection.)

LEEDS BRANCH N. S. S. (Youngman's Rooms, 19 Lowerhead Row, Leeds): 6.30, "M.D.," "Socialism and Science."

SEVERAL Gentlemen who have had Suits from us recently have written to say their incomes have subsequently greatly increased, and our silent local M.P., who was also supplied, has since been said to have narrowly escaped acquiring the title of Speaker! These events may be unconnected, but we can assure you all the garments themselves are twin brothers to the very best.—MACCONNELL & MABB, New Street, Bakewell.

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