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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
<i>Religion in Scotland.—The Editor</i> - - - - -	353
<i>"Was it Possible for Jesus Christ to Sin?"—J. T. Lloyd</i>	354
<i>Missionary Difficulties.—Mimmermus</i> - - - - -	356
<i>The Relativity of Knowledge.—Keridon</i> - - - - -	357
<i>Pathological Piety.—C. Harpur</i> - - - - -	358
<i>Found Wanting.—C. Clayton Dove</i> - - - - -	361
<i>Book Chat.—George Underwood</i> - - - - -	363
<i>Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.</i>	

Views and Opinions.

Religion in Scotland.

The Rev. R. McCleod, Moderator of the Free Church Assembly, is not satisfied with the state of religion in Scotland, and we see no reason why he should be. For when he looks at Scotland as it was and Scotland as it is one can almost imagine him imitating the ancient Roman, and, covering his head with his mantle, leave the world with a departing gesture of dignified despair—that is, if parsons were Romans, and dignity possible with a profession that sinks lower in the public estimation year by year. It is said that a people usually get the government they deserve, but it is hard to believe that the Scottish people deserved the religion that ruled them for so long. A religion that made laughter a crime, and healthy happiness a sure pathway to damnation, seems too great an affliction for any people to deserve. True, there may have been compensating features. Commenting on Mr. Lloyd George's promise to the soldiers that once the war was over England would become a land for heroes to live in, a caustic critic remarked that only heroes were equal to the task. And it may well be that Scotch religion had something to do with strengthening the national character—only the very sturdiest could stand it. The weaker ones would die under the infliction or would be driven to emigration. Orthodox Scotch religion was such a fearsome thing that a bare account of it to-day reads like a caricature. It makes one sympathize with the view of a Liverpool preacher that whisky was the one thing that helped to keep the humanity of the Scottish people alive. To get drunk was in its way a vindication of the freedom of man. Scotch religion made the publican a better emblem of humanization than the minister.

* * *

A Black Outlook.

To return to the Moderator. The *Glasgow Evening Times* of May 24 reports that gentleman as having said:—

Most alarming of all was the growing indifference found among the rising generation to everything religious. The hard-earned money of the artisan and labouring man, even of the factory girl, found its way to the pockets of rum-sellers and the managers of picture-house and theatrical performances. The whole time that could be spared by hundreds of thousands of people in our cities, towns and villages was spent

in pleasure-seeking of some kind or other. When the larger churches were having fragmentary congregations, those that should be filling them were found lounging on the grassy slopes of our city parks or listening with intense appreciation to the oratorical effusions of those who made a boast of being Atheists.

One can imagine the tears in the eyes and the despair in the voice of the Moderator as he drew up this indictment. I do not know how much Scotland is at present spending on drink, but I am certain that the ratio to earnings is not greater than it was when it still held to its old religion, and when the ministry raised no protest against its being spent. And so one is driven to the conclusion that it is not really the amount spent on drink that is deprecated but the diminished sum that is being given to religion. That people should spend on drink might be overlooked, but that they should not give to the Church is quite inexcusable. Or, if the Scottish people desire their "hard earned money" to be spent on drink, why not give it to some of the missionary societies? For by opening up intercourse with the "heathen" there is set up a fairly active trade in gin and rum, and so the distillers are benefited without the home traders being injured. At any rate a Moderator of the Free Church cannot be expected to see without protest the money of the people going into the hands of the publicans when it might be put into the collection plate.

* * *

Unrest.

Apart from this question of drink, which is wildly exaggerated, it is plain that the Moderator's chief complaint is that the artisan, the labourer and even the factory girl are giving themselves up to enjoyment instead of attending church. Worse than that, the churches have but fragmentary congregations while people are lounging on the grassy slopes of the parks or listening "with intense appreciation" to those who boast of being Atheists—and in Scotland, too. But, quite seriously, is there anything to be deprecated in the desire of the working classes for enjoyment by anyone who has a serious interest in the social problem? In spite of all the trouble caused by the industrial unrest of the last few years there is one feature that anyone who looks at the matter from the right point of view will welcome. This is that the mass of the people are no longer content to go through life as mere hewers of wood and drawers of water. The best feature of the labour disputes, perhaps the only feature that redeems the grim situation, is the demand now being made that the welfare of millions of men and women shall be considered from some higher standpoint than that of providing a profitable return on other people's investments. If Ruskin was right when he said that the only real capital of a country is the men and women it produces, it is clearly that capital which we should have in mind when we are considering whether the nation is getting a fair return for its investments or not. For it is the men and women and children of the present generation that society is investing in mines, and machinery, and agriculture, and shipping, and in a thousand and one other things. And the real question is what kind of a

return are we getting for our investments there? Everything else is of quite subsidiary importance.

* * *

Religion and the People.

But it is quite untrue that the "whole" time of the working classes is being spent in "pleasure seeking" and that all their spare money goes on that or on drink. If that were the case, and provided they were attending Church at the same time, the Moderator and his kind would not complain. I say that because the churches remained silent when the working classes were more ignorant, more drunken, and much worse generally than they are to-day. They only began to complain when the people began to neglect them and their teachings. So far as my own knowledge of the history of the working classes is concerned, and so far as my personal experience extends, there never was a time when they were taking so serious an interest in social questions, or when they devoted so much time to the study of important questions. The most hopeful sign of the times is that the younger generation is taking the work of self-education very much to heart, and while there is still room for great improvement there is every reason for encouragement in the progress that is being made. Naturally, this is leading to unrest, but all life is unrest. The only state in which there is an absence of unrest is death. Unrest is quite a good thing; all that is needed is that it shall be intelligent and informed unrest, the unrest that springs from an ideal of something worthy of attainment, with a determination to achieve success. Moreover, to say that the working classes are spending their time badly is as much a condemnation of the Churches as it is of the people blamed. Ruskin once said that the worst thing ever said of the clergy was that in many places they were the only friends the poor people had. For it meant, he added, that the Churches had performed their work of moral instructors so badly they had failed to impress upon the "leaders" of society the duty they owed to the people at large. And he might also have added that they never wished to do so. Their work was to teach the working classes how to bear themselves towards their "betters," to teach them to be patient under affliction, to be obedient to commands, and to look forward to their recompense in the world to come. And to be just to both the clergy and the governing classes they never grudged the working people the most unlimited happiness, and the fullest measure of enjoyment—in the world to come.

* * *

Between the Devil and the Deep Sea.

The real ground of complaint is that the people are slipping beyond the control of the Churches, and once that becomes an accomplished and irretrievable fact what is to become of the position of the Churches? It is not really the financial contributions of the working classes that the Churches are afraid of losing. The Churches have never been kept going on the pence of the working man. Their financial strength has resulted from the contributions of the better off classes, and it would be paying them but a poor compliment to assume that they did not feel they were getting value for their money. The business of the Churches has been to keep the "lower classes" in order, and so long as they can continue to do this they will continue to receive support. But suppose they fail to do this, for how long will financial interests of the country continue to subsidise the Churches? Will they keep on paying for a "dope" that does not dope, or for a teaching that does not control? One would think that it will not be for long. Thus all the Churches are at present between the devil and the deep sea. If they encourage the working classes in their unrest they lose the support of the class with the money bags. If they

denounce the working class they lose their adherence and their influence with them is shattered. And, once more, they are faced with a loss of the financial support after which their souls hanker. For it is certain that they who are the backbone of the Churches will not continue to subsidise an instrument that has lost its ability to do the work for which it was chiefly valued.

A Hopeless Outlook. * * *

One ought not to bid good-bye to the Moderator without noticing the usual illustration of Christian slander in associating those who listen with "appreciative interest" to Atheists with those who spend their money with "rum sellers" and devote themselves to the gratification of the idlest of pleasures. (It is worth noting that it is again the fact that the working man is seeking pleasure that is condemnable. So long as the pleasures sought are those of yachting, motoring, golfing, etc., there is, apparently, no harm done.) I wonder whether the Moderator seriously believes that it is people who are not concerned with anything but rum and picture palaces who are interested in the speeches of Atheist orators. I should hardly have thought so, and certainly my experience does not bear out the assumption. But perhaps the Moderator's experience of Atheists is larger than mine. The gratifying fact is that Atheist orators are being listened to appreciatively, and in Scotland, too. Well may the Moderator feel distressed. He is discovering the truth of Lincoln's opinion that while you may fool all the people some of the time, and some of the people all the time, you cannot fool all the people all the time. The people have been fooled, all of them for a very considerable period. A great many are still being fooled, but the number of those who can no longer be fooled grows steadily larger. And the Moderator feels annoyed. Naturally. No one likes to feel the ground slipping from under his feet. And it is hard for any professional trickster to feel that the old tricks no longer delude, the old patter no longer attracts. Worse still, the ordinary trickster can hope to get some new tricks, to invent some new patter. The Moderator's bag of tricks are known. They are described in official documents, and to openly discard them is too dangerous to be attempted. What is to be done it is rather hard to say. There is the industrial world, the world of science, or of literature in which one might essay an adventure in search of a living. But the profession of a theologian does not fit one for either useful or intellectually respectable labour.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

"Was it Possible for Jesus Christ to Sin?"

It has been truly said that the most fatal attack on Christianity is an accurate and unprejudiced statement of it. Such a statement is never made by an orthodox theologian, for he is fully aware that intellectually Christianity, faithfully explained, is wholly indefensible. The same remark applies to Jesus Christ as conceived by the Church. In the Correspondence Column of the *British Weekly* for May 26, the Rev. Professor David Smith, D.D., endeavours to answer the question asked by "E. G. H.," "Was it possible for Jesus Christ to sin?" Of course, the Church has always stoutly advocated the absolute sinlessness of the Redeemer, but it has held at least two different theories concerning it. As Dr. Smith affirms, "it never occurred to the earliest theologians to question his true deity; they rather denied his true humanity." The Doketes, for example, while firmly asserting his divinity rejected his humanity, regarding it as a phantasm or illusion. Some of them went so far as to

deny the reality of the virgin birth and the crucifixion. At any rate in the early Church the emphasis was always laid upon the deity rather than on the humanity of Jesus Christ, and consequently his sinlessness was expressed thus: *non potuit peccare*; "He was not able to sin." As the Professor puts it:—

It was impossible for him to sin. For God cannot sin, and if Christ was very God, then he could not sin, and to allow that he could have sinned were a denial of his deity.

Those who denied the reality of the virgin birth and of the crucifixion are thus described:—

They distinguished between the human Jesus and the Divine Christ, teaching that these were never truly united: the Divine Christ descended on the human Jesus at his baptism and left him at the crucifixion, and it was the former that wrought miracles and the latter that suffered and died.

According to Dr. Smith that was the view held by Cerinthus, which cannot be regarded as very dangerously heretical; and yet Eusebius tells us, in his *Ecclesiastical History* (p. 103), that when St. John and Cerinthus accidentally met in the public bath of Ephesus, the apostle "leaped out of the place and fled from the door, not enduring to be under the same roof with him, and exhorted those with him to do the same, saying, 'Let us flee, lest the bath fall in, as long as Cerinthus, that enemy of the truth, is within.'"

Now on the assumption that Jesus Christ was God there was much to be urged in defence of the heresy of Doketism. We learn that whilst God cannot be tempted with evil, Christ is presented as one who can be "touched with the feeling of our infirmities and hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet was without sin." The Doketes explained that difference between God and the Saviour, not by denying the deity of the latter, but by declaring that it was the human Jesus and not the Divine Christ that was tempted. Erelong the Church rejected Doketism but continued to teach that Christ could not have sinned. But if Christ had a true human nature on what ground was it impossible for him to sin? The Professor says:—

In the fourth century another attempt was made by Apollinarius to establish his necessary sinlessness. The theory was that his humanity was identical with ours save at one point. There was in him no "reasonable soul," no human mind. Its place was taken in him by the Divine Logos or Word (*cf. St. John i. 14*), and since the mind is the seat of the will, and it is the will that sins by consenting to temptation, it was therefore impossible for him to sin.

Soon this theory also had its day and ceased to be. Other theories arose which, like the former ones, were hurled as rubbish into the void. After a time the Church came to the conclusion that it was no longer possible to maintain the proposition *non potuit peccare*, "he was not able to sin," and then launched another proposition, *potuit non peccare*, "he was able not to sin." Before criticizing this proposition we must allow the Professor to state it in his own words:—

What is the Scriptural affirmation? It is not merely that our Lord was the Eternal Son of God, but that he was the Eternal Son of God *made man*. This is the transcendent miracle of grace, that he humbled himself, and made himself one with us in all our human limitations and infirmities. The incarnate Redeemer was the Second Adam. He stood where the First Adam stood at his creation, fought his battle over again, and conquered where he had been defeated. The First Adam "was able to sin," and he sinned because he disobeyed; the Second Adam, too, "was able to sin," but he became obedient "even unto death" (*Phil. ii. 8*).

Such is the standardized doctrine of Christ maintained by the orthodox Church. Is it true? Can its truth be formally demonstrated or verified? The first obser-

vation that we feel compelled to make is that it concerns matters about which absolutely no knowledge is obtainable on any terms. The Church's claim is that it is duly founded on the teaching of a Divinely inspired and infallible Book, but science has already forced that Book from its unnaturally exalted position down to the level of ordinary human and fallible documents. The alleged source of all theological knowledge so far from being the first and noblest science has been degraded and placed in the same dishonoured rank as metaphysics. God and Christ are as baseless myths as Osiris and Horus, or Zeus and Dionysus. Theology was a house built upon the sand, and the winds of criticism blew and smote upon it and it has fallen with a terrific crash. It is true that men like Professor Smith speak and write as if nothing had happened. They have innumerable Bible texts at their fingers' ends, by glibly quoting which they vainly imagine that they finally settle all the puzzling problems of life. In reality they are living in a fool's paradise, and are as yet unaware of their comical position.

Clergymen like Dean Inge realize the significance of the situation, and though still speaking of mystical faith as penetrating to the greatest heights of all, they solemnly warn their more orthodox brethren that certain "facts have ceased to be integral parts" of that faith. The Dean of St. Paul's, in an address at a special meeting of the Congregational Union, very courageously reminded his audience that such facts formed the skeleton in the theological cupboard, and that it would do them no harm "to pull the skeleton out of the cupboard and have a good look at it." The mischief of orthodox theology is that its exponents are blind believers and seem to have no sense whatever of the nature and value of evidence. Indeed, not a few of them naively admit that, in the legal meaning of the word, they possess no evidence at all. They believe in God because it gives them a weird sort of pleasure to do so, and the blinder the belief the deeper the pleasure. In fact, they experience weird seizures when the belief is intense, and act as if they were beside themselves. They love Christ because he is the creation of their own fancy, made in their own image but unnaturally magnified. Loving him is only another way of loving themselves. They regard him as being what they desire to become. They call him sinless because sinlessness is their ideal.

Professor Smith never condescends to argue points with his correspondents. He contents himself with supplying them with either the very words, or faithful paraphrases of the Bible. His only reason for believing in the deity of Christ is that he imagines he finds it in the Bible, and the only proof of his sinlessness is the assertion of it in the New Testament. To Renan, a greater man than the Professor, the Gospel Jesus was by no means sinless, while in the estimation of later critics he never existed at all. Our own opinion is that, if he ever lived, it is utterly impossible to learn from the New Testament what he was really like. What is absolutely undeniable on any ground of reason is that the Gospel Jesus never lived, and that it is a wholly hopeless, as well as useless, task to ascertain anything about his character, work, and teaching.

J. T. LLOYD.

Where is the evidence that the person called Jesus Christ is the begotten son of God? The case admits not of evidence either to our senses or to our mental faculties: neither has God given to man any talent by which such a thing is comprehensible. It cannot, therefore, be an object for faith to act upon, for faith is nothing more than an assent the mind gives to something it sees cause to believe is fact. But priests, preachers and fanatics, put imagination in the place of faith, and it is the nature of the imagination to believe without evidence.—*Thomas Paine*.

Missionary Difficulties.

Broad ideas are hated by partial ideas; that is, in fact, the struggle of progress.
—Victor Hugo.

Exeter Hall holds us in mortal submission to missionaries, who (Livingstone always excepted) are perfect nuisances, and leave every place worse than they found it.
—Charles Dickens.

It used to be alleged against John Bull that he had no tact in dealing with other races. He trampled on the things he could not understand. Even in Ireland he called the Roman Catholic religion "a heathenish superstition," and behaved accordingly. In the East, he epitomized his sentiments concerning Oriental faiths by regarding all Aryans as "niggers." Of late years John has altered his attitude a little, and tried to make amends.

A certain liveliness is now being shown in religious circles concerning the question of the reinstatement in the Lord's vineyard of the German missionaries. The yellow journalists were dead against the proposition, and suggested, urbanely, that Teutonic missionaries have been actuated by other motives than purely theological ones. According to these high authorities, which a short time since regarded all Germans as "blank Atheists," every Teutonic missionary who preaches Christ and Him Crucified is a stumbling-block and a rock of offence. These be brave and patriotic words, but they raise the far more important question: "Are missions doing the good they are credited with?"

China, for example, is a corner of the Lord's vineyard which yields practically no crop, but consumes an amount of labour which might far more profitably be expended elsewhere. There are circumstances which take that enormous country out of the category of ordinary mission fields. It is only from the John Bullish point of view that the Chinese can be called barbarians. They have a civilization which was old while as yet our forefathers were painted savages. They have native religions of their own, and, rightly or wrongly, they have an antipathy to foreign ideas. It is we who, in their eyes, are the barbarians, and, truth to tell, what with the quarrels and animosities of the many Christian sects who seek to make converts, and the divergence that so obviously exists between our precept and our practice, the spectacle offered by European civilization cannot be a very edifying one.

Left to herself China would have none of us nor of the Christian Bible. We happen, however, to be the stronger Power, so we secure a measure of toleration for missionaries which all classes of Chinese view with undisguised contempt. Perhaps we could better understand their attitude if the positions were reversed. That is to say, if the Chinese were able by naval and military force to extort terms for their almond-eyed and pig-tailed missionaries to preach Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism among ourselves. In some places the missionary is a civilizing agency, that is to say, he introduces Western social habits. That character he does not possess in China. He has nothing but Christianity to offer the people in various contradictory versions. Not only do they conflict with each other, but they all run counter to the most cherished and ingrained ideas of Chinese society. To the Chinaman the highest of all virtues is filial piety, and in his eyes some of the most familiar texts of the Christian Bible must appear shocking and immoral. We ought really to look at these things from a Chinese point of view. It is not pleasant to think what fate might befall Chinese missionaries with their unfamiliar rites and doctrines if they were imposed by bayonets and batons upon the sturdy population of our Black Country, or upon the impulsive Catholics of Ireland.

What it costs to convert a Chinaman in blood and treasure we do not know, but it is very certain that missionary societies expend upon a hopelessly barren soil like China an amount of energy and money which might be used to far better purpose in remedying social shortcomings at home among men and women, who, destitute of the morality of Confucius, stand in as much need of reclamation as the almond-eyed race whom we pretend to pity.

Some time ago, it was gravely calculated that the mission harvest, on the most favourable computation, amounted to the very modest figures of two Chinese per missionary per year, and that even so, the quality and reputation of the converts was open to distressing suspicion. The renegade heathen Chinese has a confirmed habit of twining his spiritual studies to material account, and is even said to frequent mission stations, and even to succeed in being converted in turn by all the missionaries, Anglican, Roman Catholic, Wesleyan, Presbyterian, and other varieties, in return for being provided with money and rice. The unfortunate sequel to this rule of conduct is, that one wily scoundrel figures as half a dozen converts to Christianity, and a bad Chinaman is transformed into a worse Christian.

Unquestionably, the matter of missionaries will have to be duly considered, and as Jews are looked upon in Christian quarters with hardly less benevolent regard than is the Chinaman, we must be interested in seeing what public opinion determines. The missionary question with Jews, that is to say, missions to them, has never been even a comedy. It has been the most rollicking of farces, compared with which *Charley's Aunt* is a perfect tragedy. Although enormous sums of money are spent yearly, it is not a danger to Judaism, and is never likely to be. There may be Jews who have become Christians from wholly conscientious motives, but few people have met such persons. Some of these converts become missionaries in turn. It is an easy method of earning money, if not an honest one.

When the body of the Jew was taken and burnt alive in order to save his soul, those who perpetrated the cruelty were, at least, straightforward in their objects. They acted as other savages had acted to them, and as, we fear, many religious folk would act to-day to those who differ, though the former be not Chinamen and the latter remain Europeans. In the light of history it is strange that any self-respecting Jew should change his own religion for Christianity. Jewish theology is simple in comparison with Christian theology. One God is more credible, or less incredible, than a divine Syndicate with a Devil and a Virgin Mother of God on the Board of Directors. Further, Christians have persecuted Jews for centuries. They have shed their blood like rivers, and heaped upon them every insult, from the ravishment of their women to the fastening on them of an ignominious gaberdine, and penning them in Ghettos. Every Jew has a perfect right to loathe the religion of Christ. To their honour the Jews do not dissemble their love. There is a society in England for the conversion of the Jews to Christianity. It has an income of about fifty thousand pounds a year, and the number of its converts appears to be so small that every one of them, on the average, costs the society a year's income.

The whole question of missionary enterprise requires reconsideration. The matter cannot be evaded much longer by men who may be called Christians, who may even be ordained to the Christian ministry, but who most certainly have never been converted to civilization.

MIMNERMUS.

To discuss the true principles of morality, men have no need of theology, revelation, or of God.—D'Holbach.

The Relativity of Knowledge.

III.

SPACE.

WE will first consider how sensuous space—the space of the senses—as distinct from that of the reason, becomes a constituent of knowledge.

It is very questionable whether knowledge ever consists wholly of the one element—re-cognition—which we have just been considering. From the start re-cognition is allied with spatial factors, with which it coalesces or fuses into a homogeneous whole. The child's recognized objects are usually not in contact with it, or with each other; a gap intervenes. This interval is probably the first sensuous indication of space. These gaps vary in length, and the child slowly learns the fact through its muscular system. Now, a recognized object becomes "known" only when its position, relative to some fixed spot or place, is registered in the mind in such a manner as to be easily revived as a whole, including the recognized object as well as the object of reference. Thus a knowledge of space is essentially a relativity—a relation of distance between the position of an object and that of some other object.

The child's knowledge of space begins with the home. It first learns the spatial relations between the objects which form the contents of its rooms and those between the rooms themselves. As it begins to make excursions into the region outside, the house itself acts as the spot of reference. The hedge, the garden, the brook, the road, the field, the trees, all become objects of knowledge when their respective positions in reference to the house are duly registered in its mind. Moreover, that it is a thing of three dimensions is fully impressed from the first. The position of a particular tree must involve the sub-element of direction, that is to say, whether it is to the right or to the left of the door, or straight in front of it, or on top of the hedge. And when the child extends its acquaintance from the immediate environment of its home to embrace the country around, with its roads, rivers, hills, villages, and towns, every object within it becomes knowledge when its distance from some place of reference is so registered in the mind that both positions are revived simultaneously and separated by the "intervals" as when actually seen.

It might be well at the start to mention that I am not oblivious of the fact that in the animal world spatial positions and directions are, in some mysterious way, perfectly known to instinct without any individual experience at all. Migratory birds find their way to distant climes—abodes which they have never seen—and insects find untaught the proper, though most obscure, places in which to lay their eggs or find their food.

The best way to understand the meaning of space as known to reason is to ascertain what it means to the various senses concerned. Rational space is obviously the outcome of the sensuous.

Firstly, and fundamentally, space is that in which movement is possible; it is that in which you can move your arms or walk about, and so change the position of your body or its limbs. That, primarily, is space. It is essentially a relativity; for movement means displacement from one position to another—a withdrawal from the first and an approach to the second. Absolute motion is a contradiction in terms.

Secondly, it is that which separates visible objects from one another and from the eye; it is the visual interval between objects.

Thirdly, it is that which is occupied by objects or "cubic extension."

The first meaning is implied in the muscular system. A muscle is an organ intended specially to effect

motion, which would be a contradiction in fact if there be no room in which to execute it. As we have just said, movement implies space, and muscle implies movement. The second meaning is likewise implied in the retinal surface, on which images of objects appear separate and discrete points. The third is, in a similar way, implied in the sense of touch, which simply means that space at the touched point is occupied. Hence, that which is occupied by objects, that which forms intervals between them, and that in which they may move, is space as attested by the sense of touch, of sight, and of movement respectively.

Another sense, that of hearing, contributes its quota to making the impression of sight more exact and knowable. In the case of sight, a landscape, with all its varying distances from the eye, is projected on a flat surface, and gives directly no indication of depth. This distance the mind learns to infer from minute differences between the images of the two eyes. In this task the muscles are aided by the ear, since a familiar sound varies in loudness with the distance of its source from the organ. Indeed, taste and smell involve spatial elements, but not in so palpable a manner as they are in the others. Thus space is associated with the cognitions of every sense.

Is it a matter of wonder, then, to find space elements invariably forming an integral part of every type of knowledge met with in the discharge of duties in all spheres and pursuits of social life? Just reflect: every article, every commodity, every object is situated, placed, or lodged somewhere (a shelf, a drawer, or some resting place), the relation of which to some other position in space (the house, the room, etc.), must be known to enable one to discharge his daily routine of duties.

The business knowledge of a shop or store keeper, essentially means a mental registration of the relative positions of the places where the articles in stock are kept. And the same is more or less true of every avocation in life.

In learning geography from the study of maps we are generally concerned with that which lies outside our experience, and so we get a fictitious knowledge of space; but it is only an artificial extension of that of sight—the visual interval. On the map, objects are represented by words and positions, by dots and lines, whose relative dispositions on the paper correspond more or less faithfully to those of the actual objects; and thus the mind gets an image of the world indirectly through the miniature picture of the cartographer.

In astronomy we are again dealing with realities; but the objects are so far removed that tactual space can be conceived only by an effort of the imaginative reason. In the stars, with their intervals, we have a fine display of visual space; and in the motion of the planets we likewise get knowledge of the muscular sense of motion exemplified on a scale of colossal grandeur.

But in no department of thought does space play a more paramount or essential role than in the science of mathematics. In geometry we have space cut up into ideal shapes and figures, such as circles, triangles, parallelograms, squares, etc. These are all imaginary abstractions, or ideals, for the purpose of comparing the magnitudes of the lines and areas of the different figures. No one but an Einstein ever dreamt of treating them as actualities. Every demonstration begins with "Let AB be a straight line," or some such; and it matters nothing to the proof whether it is or not, as long as it is supposed to be one. Again, in the science of numbers, arithmetic, algebra, trigonometry, etc., it plays a more essential role still, for it is their very foundation. The unit—a delimited portion of space—is "the cornerstone of the building."

Of all the devices which civilized man has con-

ceived and embodied, not one has excelled in point of ingenuity the conception of the use of the unit. Even the device of the alphabet must take a "lower seat" in comparison. It has virtually endowed man with supernatural powers in the discovery of forces, in the establishment of theories, and in the construction of the million million things which contribute to make up the civilized world. This miracle is performed by enabling man to compare magnitudes which are far apart, and which often would be forever impossible to bring together and place side by side for comparison. With the device of the unit the relative magnitudes are easily ascertained and compared. But the unit, even when its object is to measure time or force, is *spatial* in character or in application. The unit of time is so much displacement on the face of a time-piece and before you can use your unit of weight you must have a pair of scales to make it spatially visible. Thus, in all cases, every number, quantity, or magnitude is spatial at bottom and is thus, in the most emphatic sense of the word, a "relativity"; for every numerical quantity is relative to the size of the unit adopted to measure it.

This is now called by the Einsteins "measured space," and is declared to be the only real space, as if it came into "being" in the act of measuring it! These "latter-day" Gnostics talk about "the relativity of motion," apparently oblivious of the fact that relativity is an essential part of its meaning and so choose to confound the relativity of consciousness with that of knowledge. The important bearing of the foregoing and subsequent discussions upon the Einstein stunt will be fully considered elsewhere.

KERIDON.

Pathological Piety.

[The following excerpts from the *Life of the Blessed Henry Suso* (1300-1365), translated by T. F. Knox, 1865, published 1913, with an introduction by Dean Inge, illustrate one of the methods by which a consciousness of religion has been kept alive in certain cases, and accepted as proofs of piety by the people.]

Page 17.—He (Suso) thrust the style into the flesh above his heart, drawing it backwards and forwards, up and down, until he had inscribed the name of Jesus on his heart. The blood flowed plenteously out of his flesh from the sharp stabs, but this was so ravishing a sight to him from the ardour of his love that he cared little for the pain.....The letters were about the breadth of a smooth stalk of corn, and the length of a joint of the little finger.....At every beat of his heart the Name moved with it.

Page 28.—For two years (after a vision had told him he was too fond of fruit) he ate no more fruit. Next year the fruit crop failed, so that the convent was without fruit. The servitor (Suso) having now after many combats gained the mastery over himself, and wishing to be no longer singular at table about fruit, besought Almighty God to supply the whole convent with it. When it was morning, an unknown person arrived with a large quantity of new pennies for the convent, and desired that fresh apples might be bought up everywhere with them. This was done.¹

Page 28.—It is the custom in Swabia for the young men to go out in their folly on New Year's Night and beg for May wreaths; that is, they recite pretty verses and do all they can to make their sweethearts give them garlands. The thought came to his young and loving heart that he too would go on that same night to his Eternal Love and beg a May wreath. Accordingly,

¹Suso ate no apples while he could eat them without hurting anyone, but as soon as they were scarce, he and his convent monopolized all the apples in the district! O kindly and benevolent Religion.—C. H.

before break of day, he went to the image of the most pure Mother which represents her holding in her arms her gentle child....." So let my soul receive to-day, as a New Year's gift, some special grace or some new light from thy fair hand, my own sweet love O Divine Wisdom." And he never went away with his prayer ungranted.

Page 45.—For thirty years he never broke silence at table except once when he was returning from a chapter with many other brothers, and they ate on board ship (on Lake Constance?).

Page 46, Chapter XVII.—To bring his body into subjection to his spirit.....he secretly caused an undergarment to be made for him, and in the undergarment he had strips of leather fixt, into which 150 brass nails, pointed and filed sharp, were driven, and the points of the nails were always turned towards the flesh. He had this garment made very tight, and so arranged as to go round him and fasten in front, and it reached up to his navel. Now in summer, when it was hot, and he was very tired and ill from his journeyings, he would sometimes, as he lay thus in bonds, and tormented also by noxious insects, cry aloud and give way to fretfulness. "Alas, gentle God, what a dying is this! When a man is killed by murderers, it is soon over, but I lie dying here under the cruel insects, and yet cannot die".....He bound a part of his girdle round his throat, and made out of it two leather loops, into which he put his hands, and then locked his arms into them with two padlocks and placed the keys on a plank beside his bed, where they remained until he rose for matins and unlocked himself. His arms were thus stretched upwards, and fastened one on each side of his throat, and he made the fastenings so secure that even if his cell had been on fire about him he could not have helped himself. This practice he continued until his hands and arms had become almost tremulous from the strain, and then he devised something else (leather gloves covered with tacks, to tear him if he scratched himself in sleep).

Chapter XVIII.—He made a wooden cross, "in length about a man's span," with thirty nails and seven needles in it. He wore it on his back, and took two "disciplines" a day with it. A discipline consisted in striking the cross to drive the nails in. When he had been "too indulgent with himself" he took a third discipline. For instance, once "he had been so much off his guard as to take into his hands the hands of two maidens, who were sitting beside him in a public assembly, tho' without any bad intention." He took thirty disciplines for this "inordinate pleasure."

Page 53.—After scourging himself with a leather thong fitted with three pointed brass tacks on both sides, he rubbed vinegar and salt into the wounds. Once when he was doing this on St. Benedict's feast, "the day on which he was born into this miserable world," the scourge opened a vein; the arm swelled and turned so blue it scared him. "Now, at this very time there was in a certain castle a holy maiden named Anna, praying, who seemed to herself to be carried in a vision to the spot where he was taking the discipline." She seemed to intercept the blow on *her* arm, which was long black-waled and painful.

Page 56.—He slept eight years on a bench with all the above mentioned nail-belts, etc. "Throughout all these (25) years he never took a bath, either a water or a sweating bath, and this he did to mortify his comfort-seeking body." "For a long time he only ate once a day, both in summer and winter, and he not only fasted from meat but also from fish and eggs..... He strove to attain such a high degree of purity that he could neither scratch nor touch any part of his body, save only his hands and feet."

Chapter XX.—He also allowed himself very little drink, and became so thirsty that "when he stood in choir at compline, and the holy water was sprinkled

around, he would gape wide towards the sprinkling brush, in hope that a little water might fall on his dried-up tongue." The Virgin came to him in a vision, and said, "I will give thee to drink of that healthful drink which flows from my heart." "When he had well drunk there remained something in his mouth like a little soft lump. It was white, and of the nature of manna, and he kept it in his mouth for a long time as a voucher for the truth of what had taken place."

Page 64.—He left off these extreme austerities in his fortieth year, with God's leave.

Page 76.—When he ate meat for the first time after many years a "monstrous hellish figure drove an auger into his mouth, and his chin and teeth swelled so he could not eat for three days."

Page 78.—He suffered for ten years from a conviction that he must be damned.

Page 97.—He was nearly murdered by people who thought he was bribed by the Jews to poison the wells.

Page 127, Chapter XXXV.—The letters he exchanged with his "spiritual daughter," Elizabeth Staglin.

Page 155.—A woman whom he led to God went back to her evil life, and said he was the father of her child. He provided for the child, because the true father would not.²

Page 177, Chapter XCIII.—A certain nun "had steadfastly fixt her heart upon a perishable affection, of a kind which is called Sponsiden." Suso could not persuade her to break it off, so he prayed God to do it, and took a "discipline." Then on the nun's back grew "a hump which made her look hideous, and thus necessity obliged her to give up what she had refused to renounce for God."

Another "young beautiful noble maiden" was in the same "devil's net," and refused to see Suso. He took note when she went out with the other young sisters into a field to pick flax, and "stole after them, and went round the field, and thus managed to come gently up to her." But she cried angrily, "Sir monk, what mean you by coming out here to me?"

C. HARPUR.

[Acid Drops.

The Christian Evidence Society contributed its mite to the settlement of the industrial unrest. In a circular letter, signed by a number of clergymen, it declares that if people loved the Lord their God with all their heart and their neighbour as themselves disputes would be well nigh impossible. The signatories forget that there would still be the opportunity for disputing as to when people were loving their God. And there have been far more quarrels over that than over anything in history. Anyway, the Christian Evidence winds up its contribution by inviting donations to its funds, and we are giving it this advertisement free, gratis, for nothing.

At one of the meetings of the Grimsby Education Authority Mr. A. E. Suter, a headmaster and local secretary of the N. U. T., moved that the scripture examination be abolished in elementary schools. We are sorry that Mr. Suter was not logical enough to move the abolition of the teaching. To sanction the teaching and yet protest against the examination is neither courageous nor logical. So long as the teaching is there those who pay for it have a clear right to see how it is done. We expect that Mr. Suter really does see the uselessness of religious instruction in the schools, if not its injustice,

² I expect he was the father. A man whose visions were so realistic, and who so often kissed "Heavenly Wisdom" in them, might easily indulge in a physical embrace and believe quite sincerely it had been a spiritual bliss granted by the Virgin Mary.—C. H.

but does not care to run the risk of being branded as an advocate of secular education. And yet if the teachers had the courage to say outright what they thought of the matter it would give a considerable impetus to the establishment of a better system of education. But moral courage still remains one of the rarest things on earth.

The Mayor, speaking against the resolution, said that religious instruction was the foundation of a child's life. And that is just nonsense. There are thousands of children who are brought up without any religion at all and who are none the worse for it, and there are many more thousands who are taught a religion which the mayor would consider no religion at all. Finally, those who are taught the religion in which the mayor believes, whatever that may happen to be, we are quite prepared to say are none the better for it. It is these kinds of ponderous commonplaces which show what little reflective power most people bring to bear upon such a subject as religion.

English universities do some very strange things. The University of London has granted a degree of Doctor of Science to the Prince of Wales. The University of Oxford, it will be remembered, granted an honorary degree to General Booth the First, and it also expelled the poet Shelley. English education is a wonderful thing.

We see it reported in the Press that Archdeacon Wakeford, late of Lincoln, has determined to devote himself to the Foreign Mission field. We hope that the natives will be duly appreciative of the blessing in store for them.

Comedy often lurks in unsuspected places. In connection with the Oberammergau Passion Play it is stated that Anton Lang, who used to portray the character of Christ in pre-war days, is now too old and too fat, and Otilie Bauer, who formerly took the part of the Virgin Mary, is now a married lady with a family.

At Chatham, Margaret Penfold was fined forty shillings for telling fortunes. No hard-hearted magistrates ever fine the dear clergy, yet they tell folk where they will spend eternity—and receive money for the job.

Lord Ashfield says that "one of the greatest allies Bolshevism has to-day is decayed teeth." Dear! Dear! So many people in the "upper circles" have false teeth and decayed intelligence.

In an article in the *Weekly Dispatch* General Booth sighs "for a little of the spirit of the Franciscan Fathers—chastity, poverty, and humility." Most of the members of the Salvation Army will not fail to recognize that the last two virtues are expected from them.

The following is from an Indian paper, the *Janmabhumi*, and is entitled "The Lord's Prayer."

Our Lord which art in London,
Hallowed be thy name!
Thy Kingdom expand,
Thy will be done in India as nowhere else in the
Empire.
Give me this day my daily orders and my
limitless power.
Forgive me my sins as I never forgive them
that trespass against me,
Lead me not into democracy
But deliver me from Ghauri
For thine and never ours is the Kingdom and the
Glory for ever and ever. Amen.

[With apologies to Jesus who has been recently put to bed in a safe corner.]

Doesn't sound very promising material for the missionary societies.

The famous elm on Harrow Hill, under which Byron wrote one of his poems, has just been uprooted. The vicar, the Rev. F. W. Joyce, is offering portions of the wood for sale to assist the local church funds. The vicar does not appear to be overburdened with sensibility. If Christianity be true, poor Byron is having an awful time in Hades, and it is only adding insult to injury to so exploit his name to assist a Church with which he had no concern.

The clergy decry science, but thanks to science the death-rate from fevers is now the lowest in the history of England and the lowest of any country in the world. Dr. W. Hunter, of the London Fever Hospital, states that the five principal fevers, typhus, typhoid, cholera, small-pox, and scarlet fever, were now almost completely under control, and the first four were on the point of extinction. From diphtheria the death-rate used to be one in two, but had now fallen to four per cent. Have all the clergy of Europe done anything to compare with this?

The late Mr. F. Lederer, of Worthing, a prominent Spiritualist, who left £50,000, gave instructions in his will that flowers were to be put on his grave "for ever and ever." Presumably, the relatives selected immortelles, but "for ever" is a tall order.

Providence was too busy watching the fall of the sparrows to prevent the death of Alice Little, aged 19 months, who fell on a gas-ring at her home in Holloway and was burned to death.

The Rev. S. Mossop, speaking at Essex Hall, London, outlined a plan for keeping young people in the Churches. He advocated public dancing and a dramatic circle in connection with places of worship. What Secularists these Christians are!

Canon Horsley, who has just resigned the living of Detling owing to considerations of age, was for many years rector of St. Peter's Church, Walworth. He once said that in his parish of 13,000 people he was the only one to own a bath. The rule was to wash the body when it was born and when it died. Walworth, be it remembered, is part of London, the largest city in the richest Empire in the world. What a comment on Christian civilization!

The Astronomer Royal has become a Vice-President of the British and Foreign Bible Society. Perhaps he will now—following a commission of cardinals which sat in 1633—repudiate the heretical assertions of Copernicus and of Galileo, and revert to the astronomy of the book of "God."

Mr. C. H. Moody, organist of Ripon Cathedral, severely criticized Church music in a lecture at St. Martin's Church, London, and he spoke of some of the tunes as "crimes." He might have added that the letterpress of the hymns is more objectionable than the music.

A chicken with two bodies but only one head has been hatched at Linsdale, Bucks. Defenders of the Benevolent Design Argument kindly note.

An advertisement of a London charity states that 7,000 homeless children are dependent upon the society. Yet the hymn says "there's a friend of little children, up above the bright, blue sky."

We hope that Mr. Edward Clodd was reported wrongly in a recent issue of the *Hull Daily News*, which reports some sentences from a lecture of his on Spiritualism. Anyway, we are a little puzzled by his remarking that Spiritualism "is materialistic at the core." It is no more

so than Christianity is when it comes to deal with a future life. And the scorn which he pours on "Raymond" having had whisky and cigars in the next world really belongs to the conception of people living at all after death. If they live again there is nothing more ridiculous in their having whisky than in their having water, or in their having cigars more than in their having grapes. We dislike this attack on Spiritualism as being "low," with the implication that there is something higher in other conceptions of a future life. It is the idea of a future life that is in itself ridiculous. Grant that and nothing else matters.

But the particular remark attributed to Mr. Clodd is "It was a well-known fact that when a man gave up the belief in God he took to believing in ghosts." We are fain to believe that Mr. Clodd is wrongly quoted, although some of the utterances of these "reverent" unbelievers are almost as startling. But we have always understood that Mr. Clodd does not himself believe in God, and in that case he could hardly have said what was attributed to him.

For the rest we suggest to Mr. Clodd that the time has come to cease treating Spiritualism as consisting in nothing else than the tricks of conjurers and frauds. That view is all very well for those who do not really know what Spiritualism is and who write for a public equally ill-informed. But to claim that that is the whole of Spiritualism is to play into the hands of Spiritualists by putting forward as an explanation of the facts a theory that simply does not fit the facts. That the Spiritualistic theory of a future life is wrong we have not the slightest doubt. As we have said more than once, Spiritualists are in this matter in the same position as our ancestors were in relation to demonic possession and insanity. But the truth came not by way of declaring that the exorcists were all frauds and the insane all fools, but by showing the real nature of the facts. And considering the very extensive literature on abnormal psychology that is now available there is little excuse for a man sticking to an explanation that belongs to the days of more than half a century since. One may be out of date in Freethought as well as in theology.

How some of our clerical guides do rise to the needs of the moment! "Without presuming to judge the merits of the strike one is compelled to admit that the new stewards have risen to the full height of the occasion with the spirit of the British Tommy of the trenches."—Extract from daily wireless from Rev. Dr. R. J. Campbell, on board the *Aquitania*, to the *Evening News*. Without presuming to adjudicate between the Free and the Established Churches, one is compelled to admit that the Rev. Doctor has risen to the writing of Carmeese with the true spirit of the journalist in the gutter.—*Daily Herald*.

Worth Consideration.

It is a fact that well within the reach of every one of our readers there is another person—a man or a woman—who would gladly become a subscriber to the *Freethinker* if he, or she, only knew of its existence. There is only one way in which these people can know of its existence, and that is by *you* introducing it to them.

This is a plan by which much help can be given the cause at a minimum expenditure of trouble.

The *Freethinker* is not a commercial concern. It does not make money, it does not exist to make money. It exists to promote the interests of a great cause, and to that end editor, contributors, and readers, are members of a "Great Company." The above suggestion indicates a way in which *everyone* may lend a hand.

—We want to secure that neglected neighbour. The sooner his name is on the subscribers' list—either at this office, or at some local newsagent's—the better.

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.

H. BURGERS (Johannesburg).—Thanks for compliment. We should very much like to see Freethinkers in South Africa more closely organized. We have many readers and perhaps this may suggest to some of them the desirability of forming a society there. A branch of the N. S. S. would be quite possible there.

J. STEVENS (Johannesburg).—Please send, if not too much trouble. They will be very useful. Giving away copies of the paper when read often secures new readers. Glad to hear that Captain Latham is well. Please give him our regards when you again see him.

C. NEWTON.—See "Sugar Plums."
"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—O. Nicolaysen (Bloomfontein), 5s.

E. T.—Mr. J. M. Robertson's *Pagan Christs* (Rationalist Press) would probably give you all you require. The same firm would be pleased to supply you with a list of works published by them.

W. GOUDIE.—Nothing seems to cure some people of their faith in the missionary movement abroad. It is good business for such of the clergy as cannot get on at home, but bad for everyone else. The movement is a fine blend of stupidity, egotism, and knavery.

H. E. LATIMER VOIGHT.—The Josephus passage is in Book 18, chapter iv. of the *Antiquities*. It is given up by practically every writer of repute.

INDEPENDENT.—Thanks. We have already made the request you advise, but will repeat it.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

We are pleased to see that the case of Mr. Hunt, to which we referred in this column in our issue of May 15, has been made the subject of a question to the Home Secretary. Mr. Hunt, it will be remembered, wrote for some Communistic literature which he had seen advertised. His letter was seized by the police and a copy of it was sent to his employers. The result was that he received his discharge and has since been out of employment. The Home Secretary replied to the question that he knew nothing of the matter but would make enquiries. We are not very sanguine of the result, for we suppose the police will deny having sent the letter on, and the Home Secretary will say that the police have no instruc-

tions to act in that way. And as miracles are excluded now from theology, we shall be left with the impression that they only occur in government departments, that letters take to themselves wings and find their way to quarters where it suits the authorities for them to arrive.

The whole business is simply infamous, and lends colour to the belief that the government is engaged in a regular, if underhand, campaign against opinion. Whether Communism is good or bad, it has a right to expression. And for the government to suppress any opinion which it may find inconvenient or undesirable is to bid good-bye to the only kind of freedom that really matters. We were almost alone in warning people while the war was on that we should have to pay a very heavy price for it when it was over, and we are sorry to see our prophecy working out to the letter. The country is, in the matter of genuine freedom, worse than it has been for several generations. Mr. Shortt admits that letters are opened in the post office whenever he thinks it desirable, and that introduces one of the worst features of Tzarism as part of our official practice.

Mr. C. Newton, of 12 Fenton Street, Blackpool, would like to enter into communication with Freethinkers in that town with a view to the formation of a Branch of the N. S. S. There should be good chances of propaganda there during the summer months.

We congratulate the *Evening News* on having the courage to announce the appointment of Sir Robert Stout as a Privy Councillor, he is already Chief Justice of New Zealand, as an "Atheist Chief Justice," and to point out that he is an avowed Atheist. Most of our papers would have discovered that he was a Rationalist, or an Agnostic, or a Reverent Unbeliever, even if they had had the honesty to mention it at all.

The first "Ramble" of the Manchester Branch will take place to-day (June 5). Those who intend joining the excursion are asked to meet at Piccadilly in time for the 1.15 car for Staleybridge. The excursion will be to Staleybrushes, and tea will be provided at North Britain Farm at 4.30.

Mr. George Whitehead will commence his provincial open-air lecturing, on behalf of the N. S. S., on June 13 at Swansea. He will afterwards visit the Rhondda Valley and district. He is being sent down at the cost of the Executive, and friends and Branches in the Rhondda district who would like him to visit should write at once to Mr. E. Davies, 13 Clara Street, Ton Pentre, near Pontypridd.

Found Wanting.

A Study in Catholicism.

III.

(Concluded from page 343.)

IN Germany, the fatherland of Protestantism, the Catholics hold the balance between the conservatives and the radicals, and they for long possessed the favour of the Emperor by assisting him to vote large sums for his warlike preparations, being thus, in no slight measure, responsible for the horrible disaster which he has brought upon the world. In France, the Catholics were so hostile and traitorous to the Government that the Church had to be disestablished and the religious orders dispersed. But the party has never ceased to use all sorts of base means for the recovery of its lost advantages. To win over certain of their opponents, or to set them at strife with the rest, they have recently canonized Joan of Arc, and paraded her as a patriotic fetish. The cynicism of this action baffles

description, for it was the Church herself that murdered the Maid of Orleans. As Lamartine says, the Bishop of Beauvais was the Caiaphus of that Calvary. "Evêque je meurs par vous," cried Jeanne, as she saw the wretch standing by at her torment (*Jeanne d'Arc*, c. 38). The war has afforded them an opportunity of further exploiting the national patriotism by making a merit of the fact that several thousands of priests have figured among the millions of men called up to defend the land, as if it were something extraordinary for them to do what everybody else did, or as if heroism were less to be expected from them than from the rest, truly a poor compliment to their order. This cant of patriotism is peculiarly offensive because they are notorious for putting their Church before their country. One of them said in the pulpit at the beginning of the war that France ought to be trodden under foot. He was prosecuted, but the Court of Appeal declared him amenable only to "public contempt." The writer of the article previously quoted from *The Daily Mail Year Book*, 1909, says that the Catholic Church plays "a part made up of sedulous intrigue and propaganda designed to obtain for Rome the sympathies of the reactionary elements in all the countries of Europe." This merely repeats the well-known fact that Catholicism is the greatest support of Conservatism. This reason is not far to seek. If people once get the idea of making improvements, there is no knowing when they will stop, or what they may take it into their heads to change. On the contrary, if there is no spring-cleaning your own cupboard will not be disturbed. Catholicism needs the high even more than the lowly, and it wins the high by making the lowly submissive to itself. Good Father Timothée, in the work of 1904 previously quoted, says that property owners may let to women of evil life, but that they ought not to take in "Socialist lecturers" (t. I., p. 653).

A few years ago a series of Lenten Addresses on Socialism was delivered in Dublin by a priest, and reported at great length in the weekly *Freeman*. One of the evils of the system under discussion, said he, is that if it prevailed "there would be no ladies and gentlemen." Guicciardine, the great historian, accuses the priests of "using their spiritual only as an instrument of their temporal authority," of "fomenting wars among Christians," of "employing all arts and snares to scrape money together," and of "making new laws against the people." He adds that they were aided in this course "by the faculty they have of gratifying princes" (*Hist.* B.4). As to the second of these charges, that of "fomenting wars among Christians," it looks very much as if the present conflict was a case in point. Catholicism is paramount in Austria, and has much power in Germany. In France upon the contrary it has lost its hold, but it would be likely to get this back if the country unhappily succumbed to the hordes of Germany and Austria. Hence, the war offered the Catholic party an excellent chance of victory and revenge. They did not create the state of things that led to the struggle, but no one who knows their policy will be disposed to doubt that they used their influence to render the struggle inevitable, possibly whilst feigning to appease it. The late Pope was a fanatic, and cherished a grudge against France. He died soon after the outbreak of hostilities, and is said to have expressed great sorrow at the catastrophe. If this grief were sincere, it may well have been caused by regret for the responsibility of his minions in the horrible affair.

Of course, any such complicity as this would be stoutly denied by the persons concerned, but as Antony Tyrell, a Jesuit father, says in a letter preserved by Samuel Harsnet, sometime Archbishop of York, "It is a general conceit with all priests that they may deny anything the confessions of which would turn to the

dishonour of their Church or its administrators" (*Popish Impostures*, 1604, Appen. 246-256). Catholicism makes the State the slave of the Church. In 1876 the Bishop of Boston declared that, "The State has no right to exercise the work of education, for in doing so it assumes obligations which belong to the Church." A Vicar General preaching at New York in 1888 said, "He who is willing to take his faith but not his politics from St. Peter is no true Catholic." Pope Gelasius taught that, "priests, in virtue of their spiritual power, are superior to kings; firstly because kings are consecrated by priests and priests cannot be consecrated by kings, and secondly, because priests are accountable to God for the actions of their temporal sovereign" (Fisher's *Medieval Empire*, Vol. I., p. 38).

Someone or other has said that force is the best guard of liberty, and certainly this is true in the case of those who understand by liberty the freedom to do whatever they like. To such liberty Catholicism aspires, and political power is indispensable for the purpose. By it she all but rooted out Protestantism in the Latin countries. The Albigenses and the Waldenses before the Reformation, and the Huguenots after this event, were ruthlessly slaughtered, to say nothing of the innumerable victims of the Inquisition, most of whom perished for a tendency rather than for a creed. This policy of extermination was highly successful, because by it the dissident elements were prevented from establishing themselves under the organizations necessary to preserve their influence and to ensure its perpetuity. Rome still congratulates herself upon her achievements in this line. In 1896, a paper edited by a papal house-prelate contained the following passage: "Be ye blessed, ye flaming piles, through which some few, and those but wretches, were suppressed, whilst every time hundreds and hundreds of souls got saved from the abyss of error, and perhaps of eternal damnation." Even a person naturally so benevolent as Cardinal Manning did not hesitate to say, in 1876, with reference to Spanish Protestantism, that where there is religious unity the State should not scruple to preserve it by persecution (Brooks, *Toleration*, London, 1887). There is, we fear, a tendency at the present day to overlook the real character of Catholicism, or to think that the system had changed with the times. We are all very apt to associate the material progress of the last hundred years with a corresponding moral development, and to think that because mankind has been clever enough to find out so many things for its comfort, it must also have been wise enough to diminish its vices and increase its virtues, as if the telephone had any connection with justice, or the X-rays with purity. The war has exposed this delusion in the most graphic and terrible way. We have seen venerable cities sacked and burned; old men ruthlessly slain; children mutilated, and women dishonoured; and all these abominations wrought by a people long endowed with the highest privileges of social life. Verily let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. Again, before the war broke out, we were always hearing that such an event was quite impossible in Western Europe, but it arrived, and arrived in proportions hitherto unknown. Such is the fate attending a vain confidence in the stability of civilization, and a foolish disregard of the dangers before it. Let those who oppose Catholicism take this lesson to heart. There is another one, too, that they might learn at the same time. The war and its horrors are mainly due to the corruption of public opinion in Germany through the false system of national rights and duties taught unceasingly by schoolmasters, professors, and ministers of religion, acting as agents of the central authority. This prepared the people for the coming struggle, and for the cruel fashion they should wage it. In like manner, Catholicism once spread abroad the belief that persecu-

tion is just, and beneficial, and for anything we can see, it may do this again, unless it be found out and thwarted. One thing is certain, before such examples none can deny that any sort of doctrines, however bad, may triumph in this world provided they be industriously inculcated. There is little doubt that owing to the measures taken by the priests to keep their people in darkness, the great majority of Catholics are perfectly sincere in the faith they profess. This is more than can be said for many of the hierarchy. It is a well-known fact that before ever the Reformation occurred there were priests, prelates, and even popes who laughed heartily at what they taught. This was one of the things which scandalized Martin Luther. He mentions in his *Table Talk* that the celebrants used to gabble through the Mass, and that when one was fain to say it reverently, the others would ask him, Why he had withheld the child so long from its mother? Pope Julius III., a man of bad origin, and worse life, who attained office in 1550, was one day disappointed at table by the absence of a peacock, his favourite dish, and vented his wrath in a foul oath. A Cardinal present having remonstrated, the pope replied, "If God could be so angry for an apple as to turn our first father out of Paradise, why should it not be lawful for me, who am his vicar to be in a passion for a peacock, since a peacock is much more than an apple" (J. Zuingerus, in tractu *Historico Theologico de festo Corporis Christi*, p. 146). When someone reproached the late Cardinal Fischer with having led his sheep badly, he replied, "Yes, but I have shorn them well" (*La Lanterne*, xvi. 10-13). The priests of to-day are not less intelligent than those of the past, and unlike their predecessors before the Reformation they need not trouble to invent doubts, owing to the prodigality of the supply already at hand. This makes it incredible that the bulk of them should be honest in their profession. It is true that the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, and that the best way to believe anything is to wish to believe it. Hence many have so stifled their doubts and juggled with their scruples that in the end they have attained a calm sense of assurance. But no one can sacrifice truth habitually without spoiling his conscience; and he who spoils his conscience is a bad guide for the consciences of other people. Falsehood is the besetting sin of the priestly mind. Once, however, begin by lying and there is no end to it. The priests have imposed their false doctrines upon the people so long that they dare not change them for fear lest the people should find out that they have been mistaught, and thus come to despise their teachers, and to refuse them credit in the future. It is a true word of prophecy, "This is the condemnation that light is come into the world and men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil." If the Catholic laity were but allowed to read as they would, and to exercise their own judgment on matters of faith, Catholicism must either undergo beneficial transformation, or else vanish entirely. At present it is an unsightly anachronism, preserved only by the fear and ignorance which an organized band of deceivers fosters for its own low purposes. In this way the system is a font of moral corruption, a bulwark of superstition, and a perpetual obstacle to the march of the human intellect.

C. CLAYTON DOVE.

A disinterested love of facts, without any regard to the bearing which those facts may have on one's hopes or fears or destiny, is a rare quality in all ages, and it had been very rare indeed since the ancient days of Greece and Rome. It means the scientific spirit.—J. B. Bury.

All revolutions are the utterance of some one long-felt truth in the minds of men.—Carlyle.

Book Chat.

Most of my readers must have noticed the curious attraction which the idea of a religion has, not only for the average unthinking man, but also for those who boast of the freedom of their thought. Somewhile ago, a friend of mine, a Freethinker of quite an original turn of mind, tried to bring us over to his creed, which he amiably called, the religion of kindness. Another man will talk to you, in the way of vague enthusiasm, of a religion of the open mind; and it is not possible to walk very far along the road of thought before you are invited to embrace some form of the religion of good conduct. So absurdly irrational is human nature that there are people who will try to persuade you to believe that Atheism is nothing but religious irreligion. But if it be that, it is no more absurd than evolutionary religion, which we hear so much of nowadays. If you are wise, however, you will always be on your guard when you come across this word "religion," especially when it is used by so-called advanced thinkers. With them it invariably stands for a complex of emotions. They abstract from it all that is definite, wrap it up in the cotton wool of rhetoric and then protest that what they offer us is a solid fact of human nature. Indeed, it is one of the sign-manuals of your invertebrate thinker.

Our age is not only provided with a new religion once a week, but we are also presented with the bibles of these new religions. Mr. H. G. Wells has been amusing the intelligently cynical readers of the *Sunday Times* by telling them that what we want is a new collection of *Holy Writ*. The Hebrew one is out of date. The *Book of Job* may be fine drama, the *Song of Solomon* a glorious hymn of passion, *Ecclesiastes* a manual of wisdom, but they have not the authentic note which you find in Lincoln's Gettysburg address and Henley's *Out of the night that covers me*. Mr. Wells' settlings of the canonical books and apocrypha of his new Bible is a good example of the unwisdom of mixing up ethics with æsthetics. We sigh in vain for the earlier Wells who used to give us splendid fantastic yarns, and stories of real life seen through a romantic temperament. What a drop there is from *The Time-Machine* and *Tono-Bungay* to the solemn vapourings of an amateur sociologist in a weekly newspaper!

Zoroaster, Buddha, Confucius, Jesus, Mahomet, Comte, Tolstoi, Nietzsche, all these, we are told, contributed to the religious thought of the world. They have had their day and ceased to be. They were but broken lights of the One. The latest "broken light" is Walt Whitman, who is proclaimed the *Prophet of the New Era* by Mr. Will Hayes in an enthusiastic, if a little over-strained, study of the poet's message to humanity.—(C. W. Daniel, 4s. 6d. net). The book is well worth the study of those (and I trust they are not a few) who have come to see in Whitman a symbol of a resurrected humanity. He did not, seemingly, put forth his *Leaves of Grass* as the bible of the new era, and from one passage, in which he says: "I charge you for ever neglect those who would expound me," it would appear that he felt that his poems were strong enough to carry their own message through the emotions aroused without extraneous help. However that may be, he was not a rigidly consistent thinker, and in spite of his antipathy to expositors he would, no doubt, have taken kindly to Mr. Will Hayes, although, I take it, he would not have read without an amused and good-humoured smile his expositor's parallel of the career of the poet of democracy and that of the Jesus of the Gospels. A religion of brotherhood and comradeship is harmless enough; but you may have these emotions and share them with others without pretending that they constitute a religion. For my part, I think you will get more out of Whitman if you disregard his so-called ethical message. If you let the sweeping rhythms, the healthy and all-embracing emotions have their way with your heart, you will be a better man for it. You will come thereby nearer to Whitman than any of his expounders.

There is a fund of common sense in the advice once given by an experienced, if rather cynical, critic of our

literature. "My dear boy," he said to an ingenuous young amateur, "Whenever you are tempted to take up a new book that everybody is talking about, go right back and read an old one." Those of us who have wasted our precious time over the niggling analysis of emotional states, the dull transcriptions of every-day life, the platitudinous cackle of our modern realists in fiction, of a Mr. Beresford or a Mr. Bennett, and have turned to Fielding or Emily Brontë or Hawthorne, must have felt like a man who steps out of a stuffy room into the invigorating night air. I would not go so far as to say that it is better to give the widest berth to contemporary books, but I do say that if a reader's taste is generously nourished on the old ones, an infallible standard of literary judgment will be set up. It seems certain to me that he will not be so likely to mistake Zane Grey for Jack London, Mr. H. Wales for Mr. H. G. Wells, or Mr. James Stephens for Mr. James Joyce.

These not very original reflections were suggested to me by a new series just issued by the Cambridge University Press, and entitled "Cambridge Plain Texts." The texts are rightly called "plain" because the little books are printed from clear and beautiful type, without any immodest and unnecessary introductory flourishes, and none of those explanatory notes which so often discourage a healthy interest in letters. I have before me five of these booklets, which vary from 64 to 100 pages, the paper covers making them light to carry and just suited to slip in your letter-case. The price is 1s. net.

Let me assume that you are accustomed to find intellectual and emotional delight in the company of the great Elizabethans and Jacobean. Then you are pretty certain to be curious about the work and personality of John Donne (1573-1631), even if you do not happen to share Foote's enthusiasm (and mine) for this poet, sensualist and divine, the richest and subtlest intellect of the age.

You have here two of his nobly impressive and learned sermons (Nos xv. and lxvi.), on a subject which touches all men, the great subject of death. If you cannot share his belief that this, our last enemy, shall be destroyed, if you cannot exclaim with him *Credo Resurrectionem*, at any rate, when you have pondered over these two sermons you will be caught up by his eloquence, captivated by his lucid intellect, and drawn towards him as a man. If, as it may be, you know nothing of him, you cannot do better than read Izak Walton's moving biography, one of the loveliest bits of prose in the language.

If brevity, point and simplicity in a prose-style are commendable to you, if you prefer a blend of shrewd, homely sagacity and sly, quaint humour, you may amuse yourself with fourteen of the best chapters from *The Holy State* of the witty-wise, if not always wisely-witty, Thomas Fuller (1608-1661). It is said the lively Barrow (another of Foote's favourites) wrote his remarks on wit with Fuller's pages open before him. No one was a better hand at an "odd similitude," a "pat allusion to a known story" and the "forging of apposite tales."

It may be, however, that an elaborate, ordered and dignified prose-style attracts you. If so, you can give your mind to some of the "Idler" essays of Dr. Johnson. Or, if you share my tastes, you will prefer the easy elegance of the incomparable Oliver Goldsmith, whose prose I would recommend every beginner to study carefully. You have him here at his best in his comedy *The Good Natured Man*.

GEORGE UNDERWOOD.

Nature is an endless combination and repetition of a very few laws. She hums the old, well-known air through innumerable variations.—Emerson.

The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.
—Milton.

Correspondence.

DR. LYTTTELTON'S CHALLENGE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Mr. Arch says, in reference to his comment on my first question, "let this pass." I might, perhaps, be willing to let it pass if I could understand it, but as I can't, and my only object is to learn, I may be permitted to hark back to it. He says he plumps for the second of the three alternative positions possible about the Universe, viz., "to assume that we shall never know how it came into being." That is a correct statement of (2). But if anyone "plumps for" a theory can he go on to say half of it is a lie? That is what Mr. Arch has done. The statement makes two affirmations (a) that the Universe came into being (b) how, we shall never know. Mr. Arch cancels (a) as being utter nonsense. That leaves the statement for which he "plumps" truncated: "we shall never know." Know what? Till something is supplied in place of the lopped limb the sentence cannot even be called nonsense, for it is not a sentence at all, and this is the result of Mr. Arch's enthusiastic support of it! I am reminded of the elephant which sat on the partridge's eggs for fear they should not be hatched. If Mr. Arch won't allow that the Universe ever came into being, my challenge remains for any who think it did. For him it may be restated quite simply if he will first tell us if he thinks the Universe exists. I can only deal with one more point: Mr. Arch's answer to the question about the character of Jesus. I addressed the challenge to anyone who thinks the character "noble." Mr. Arch replies that the character is not perfect, as recorded. I never said it was, nor does his contention touch the question, which is as follows: An immense majority of those who have read the Bible story agree that Jesus' character is noble: I might say the noblest ever recorded (I am certain that many of your readers think so). Is it not, then, rather difficult, for those who agree so far, to select the one principle of conduct which Jesus not only practised with the utmost thoroughness but incessantly taught, and toss it aside with contempt as an exploded superstition? If Mr. Arch replies that he doesn't believe that Jesus ever existed any more than that the Universe ever came into being, I should, of course, word my challenge differently.

E. LYTTTELTON.

SIR,—Theists generally—and the admirably tempered Dr. Lyttelton is no exception—seem to resemble those parvenus who resent any reference to their ancestry and take especial care to disguise family and class affinities. Of what avail it is for Dr. Lyttelton to appeal to this or that well-known scientist when science has prospered and proved itself by steadily refusing as part of its equipment the key which religion has offered? The fetish of primitive religious thought, "God," is now the surd of metaphysics, but it is an irrelevancy in any department of science. Dr. Lyttelton's mode of putting his question is determined by a theological bias. May I also point out that in seeking a solution of the origin of the Universe he is leaping away from the normal processes of investigation and observation by which genuine knowledge, physical and mathematical, has been slowly and painfully acquired and accumulated. Is he not in a hurry; can he not be faithful to the genuine results of rationality? Doubtless he imagines a great ethical system hinges upon the theistic view of the Universe. He cites Jesus (of Nazareth?), of whom he has little precise knowledge, and lamely urges that his Hebrew type of piety argues for the rationality of the Hebrew type of theology! Nothing easier, *vide* Ingersoll, Bradlaugh and Foote, to reverse the argument or to demonstrate, from the variant theologies that have tormented the human race, that there are either many gods or none, or that Jesus took his theology as he took his Jewish features from the natural environment. Whatever be the possibilities of a solution, history does not encourage us to look to religion for a suitable contribution. The problem has to be studied in the light of science, physical, chemical, mathematical and psychological, with all the philosophical conscientiousness we can exercise. The reference to the dictum of a physiologist about "fatigue beginning in the mind" can be made to look quite whimsical when one

reads a nerve food advertisement that it "ensures increased mental vigour." Mind is never emancipated apart from a highly specialized material organ—see some recent remarkably illuminating articles in your journal—so that it is, frankly, absurd to suppose, as Dr. Lyttelton quite genially does, that matter is a function of mind, since matter in every conceivable form exists apart from the specialized function we call mind. There is no ground for the inference on analogy from the functions of the cerebrum in animals to the presence of an all-creative mind in a God with a God-like brain. E. T. K.

"SCOTCHMEN."

SIR,—Mr. Phipson gave three different spellings regarding which he claimed Scotsmen were "unco' touchy." These were "Mac," "Mc." and "M'." It is the last of the three I ask information about and your printer has made my letter nonsensical. Where in Scotland has Mr. Phipson come across "M" and an apostrophe as an abbreviation for Mac? DAVID MACCONNELL.

THE HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS.

SIR,—Laying aside the question of my "jumbled lot of statements" (which, after all, are "Gospel truths") and my "very loose thinking" (where was it?) let us get on with our muttons. Anyone who has made even a superficial study of the Resurrection story in the New Testament and then has turned to the various commentators, will have seen to what desperate straits Christians are put to harmonize the accounts. It is needless, I think, at this time of the day to say that every attempt to reconcile the conflicting statements has been fully debated in hundreds of books, and if there had been the slightest chance of vindicating the Gospels and proving the Resurrection we should have heard it proclaimed from the house tops. "Unorthodox" seems to me to imply that his theory of "successive visits to the tomb at different times by different persons, etc.," has never been thought of before, whereas it is as old as the hills, and one reason why we do not hear much about it now is that most apologists are not exactly sure that it really does make "the difficulties vanish away like snow in the sun." "Unorthodox" should catch his hare and cook it before saying he has eaten it. In the first place do the Gospels in any way whatever suggest that they are recounting "different visits at different times, etc.?" Can anyone read Mark, for instance, and say that the account therein looks like a *fifth* visit? It is a perfectly sober and clear recital of the event as the writer knew it or had heard it, from the beginning. The same can be said of all the Evangelists. To prove this let us go into details and see whether the "difficulties vanish like snow in the sun." "Unorthodox" says that the *first* visit was by Mary Magdalene and the other Mary "in the end of the Sabbath." Here he stops and conveniently misses out "as it began to dawn....." which may or not mean about 6 p.m., but which just as likely means about the time of sunrise the *next* morning. If it does not mean this, will he tell us what it does mean? In any case, as he throws overboard the A.V. when it suits his purpose I might add here that Dr. Weymouth, in the *New Testament in Modern Speech*, translates it, "After the Sabbath in the early dawn....." so here we have a pretty problem which I invite "Unorthodox" to solve—what is the time that Matthew means to indicate? Is the "early dawn" of Matthew really *before* the "when it was yet dark" of John? I say it is not, and it is merely cool assumption to say it is. However, on this presumed *first* visit an earthquake (which nobody else knows anything at all about) comes along and "the angel of the Lord" rolls back "the stone from the door" and sits upon it. On the presumed *second* visit Mary Magdalene sees "the stone taken away from the sepulchre." And on the presumed *third* visit she sees Peter go into the sepulchre, so the stone must have been away from its mouth. On the presumed *fourth* visit the women found "the stone rolled away from the sepulchre"—so it is pretty evident that the stone was rolled away. Now would you believe it, after all these visits, when they all went again to the sepulchre—the presumed *fifth* visit—the women actually said among themselves, "Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?" Could anything be funnier? Does "Unorthodox" seriously mean to tell us

they would have actually said anything so silly had this been their *fifth* visit? Perhaps this happens to be, however, one of the difficulties the snow of which has not melted in the sun. But there is something still funnier. In John we are told a wonderful story of Nicodemus bringing a hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes "to Jesus by night" and wrapping his body "in linen clothes with the spices." Then follow the presumed *three* visits of the women when they discover the empty tomb—and as far as we can tell the disappearance of the hefty weight of spices. (I do wish "Unorthodox" would tell us what became of it.) Now after these *three* visits, though the women knew perfectly well that Jesus had "risen"—in fact Mary had spoken to him, though it is true she at first thought it was the gardener—on their *fourth* visit they came "bringing the spices which they had prepared"! What in the world did they bring the spices for? Will "Unorthodox" tell us? It could not have been to embalm or anoint Jesus with, as he had disappeared and they knew he had disappeared. So much for the presumed *fourth* visit. When we turn to the presumed *fifth* visit, in Mark, we find that the spices are mentioned again, the women had brought spices "that they might come and anoint him." It does not actually say that they took the spices again to the tomb, but one is bound to infer that they did or why is it specially mentioned? I want a clear answer to this. "Unorthodox" says "The fourth (visit) was by the women of Luke..... These came after Mary had gone away....." Will he give us chapter and verse for this last statement? He also says "their number would be five or more." Again chapter and verse are wanted. One more point before leaving these "different visits at different times, etc." No one knows who wrote Mark in the form we have it, but it is *supposed* that the writer got details from Peter. Now, is it feasible that Peter would have started with the *fifth* visit in narrating the stupendous events of the Resurrection—missing out all his own wonderful adventures given by the other Gospel writers and even excluding his own encounter with Jesus? Does the story of Peter give us any inkling of such bashful modesty on his part? I could ask a dozen other questions on these "different visits, etc.," but there is no need. The theory is simply a bare-faced assumption without a particle of evidence to support it. I will briefly touch upon the other points. I say briefly, how can one deal with the various appearances of Jesus in four or five lines and then say, like "Unorthodox," that there are no contradictions? Really, he seems to think I haven't got my Bibles in front of me, or if I have, I can't read them. Matthew shows us as clear as the noonday sun that Jesus met his disciples in Galilee. Luke says he met them in Jerusalem, had some broiled fish with them, and after a few of the usual exhortations about repentance (which no doubt the disciples needed), Jesus was "carried up into heaven." There is not a word about Galilee and I invite "Unorthodox" to explain the contradiction and tell us when, according to Luke, Jesus went to Galilee. And while he is dealing with Luke tell us also why this writer knows nothing about the appearance of Jesus to Mary Magdalene? Nor does Paul, who actually gives us the statement that Jesus first appeared to Peter, thus contradicting the four Gospels. Paul also says that Jesus appeared to the twelve—I want the name of the twelfth disciple. Another appearance was to "above five hundred at once." Well, the total number of the faithful *after* the Ascension is given as a hundred and twenty in Acts. Will "Unorthodox" tell us where were the five hundred and Jesus, and explain the contradiction with the number given in Acts? Lastly, there is the question of whether "all the apostles, please, Mr. Cutner," were finally convinced of the resurrection. Now, I wish to say this question is quite immaterial to me, "at Jerusalem" or elsewhere. All I had to do was to point out a contradiction, and to get over it "Unorthodox" resorted to a well-exploited trick. Whenever a Christian comes up against something he does not like in the Bible he either says it means the opposite, or it is a beautiful Oriental way of putting it not understood by Western minds, or it is a "faulty" translation. In this instance, the last is resorted to and we are referred, for Matt. xxviii. 17, to "Dr. Young's version," which gives "even those who doubted." To "Unorthodox's" one authority I will oppose *four*. (1) The A.V., "but some doubted." (2) The R.V., "but some doubted." (3) Dr. Weymouth's N.T.

in *Modern Speech*, "Yet some doubted." (4) Canon Farrar in his *Life of Christ*. He gives the actual three Greek words which he says "can only mean 'but some doubted.'" I trust by this time the snow instead of melting in the sun is not freezing too hard. But if the difficulties have not quite vanished away, I can assure "Unorthodox" there really are, when he has done with the above, "heaps more."
H. CUTNER.

THEOLOGY EXPLAINS NOTHING.

If we would believe the adherents of religion, nothing could be explicable in the world without it; nature would be a continual enigma; it would be impossible for man to comprehend himself. But, at the bottom, what does this religion explain to us? The more we examine it, the more we find that theological notions are fit but to perplex all our ideas; they change all into mysteries; they explain to us difficult things by impossible things. Is it, then, explaining things to attribute them to unknown agencies, to invisible powers, to immaterial causes? Is it really enlightening the human mind when, in its embarrassment, it is directed to the "depths of the treasures of divine wisdom," upon which they tell us it is in vain to turn our bold regards? Can the divine nature, which we know nothing about, make us understand man's nature, which we find so difficult to explain?

Ask a Christian philosopher what is the origin of the world. He will answer that God created the universe. What is God? We do not know anything about it. What is it to create? We have no idea of it. What is the cause of pestilences, famines, wars, sterility, inundations, earthquakes? It is God's wrath. What remedies can prevent these calamities? Prayers, sacrifices, processions, offerings, ceremonies, are, we are told, the true means to disarm Celestial fury. But why is heaven angry? Because men are wicked. Why are men wicked? Because their nature is corrupt.

What is the hidden principle of the actions and of the motions of the human body? It is the soul. What is a soul? It is a spirit. What is a spirit? It is a substance which has neither form, colour, expansion, nor parts. How can we conceive of such a substance? How can it move a body? We know nothing about it. Have brutes souls? The Carthusian assures you that they are machines. But we do not see them act, feel, and think in a manner which resembles that of men? This is a pure illusion, you say. But why do you deprive the brutes of souls, which, without understanding it, you attribute to men? It is that the souls of the brutes would embarrass our theologians, who, content with the power of frightening and damning the immortal souls of men, do not take the same interest in damning those of the brutes. Such are the puerile solutions which philosophy, always guided by the leading-strings of theology, was obliged to bring forth to explain the problems of the physical and moral world.

—Jean Meslier.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

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Secularism declares that theology is condemned by reason as superstitious, and by experience as mischievous, and assails it as the historic enemy of Progress.

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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 post card.

LONDON.
INDOOR.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Johnson's Dancing Academy, 241 Marylebone Road, near Edgware Road) : 7.30, Discussion : "Secularism v. Christianity." Mr. Ernest Dales and the Rev. Father McNabb.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C. 2) : 11, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., "Art and Morality."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand) : 3.15, Mr. G. Whitehead, "The Menace of Christianity."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Regents Park) : 6, Mr. A. D. McLaren, "Did Jesus Christ Really Live?"

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park) : 3.15, and 6.15, Mr. E. Burke, Lectures.

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