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Views and Opinions.

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Spiritualism and Spiritualists.

In his *Science and a Future Life*, Dr. Hyslop, while giving a general support to the spiritualistic theory, admits that the "fundamental point" in which the assumed "control" fails to establish itself is its inability to give facts which will prove the identity of the supposed communicating spirit. "It may," he says, "invent incidents to stimulate this effect, but it fails in anything but guessing, chance coincidence, fishing, and response to suggestion." Anyone with experience of mediums will endorse this, and if the person to whom the communications are given were to remain perfectly silent while the medium is talking, sitting in perfect quietude, without any physical contact with the medium, the failure to give exact information would be more striking than it is. And Dr. Hyslop adds that—

There is such an enormous mass of phenomena that is undoubtedly the result of secondary personality, and so many more that are explicable by it, that the medium who gives evidence of the supernatural is very rare.....The layman is not aware of the tremendous difficulties involved in the quantity and quality of the matter that is produced and producible by secondary personality, that can neither be attributed to spirits nor demands explanation by fraud.

I can quite agree with Dr. Hyslop in this, and also when he says that a secondary personality can no more inculcate a medium with fraud than can a somnambulist or dreamer. I have tried to make it plain that it is on this point that the ordinary critic of spiritualism goes so woefully astray. But in this matter the uninformed character of his criticism is quite equalled by the want of knowledge of the majority of spiritualists whose conviction of the truth of Spiritualism rests upon exactly the kind of evidence which, in truth, proves nothing of the kind. It is quite certain that if the mass of spiritualists were aware that the phenomena with which they are familiar in their own homes are explainable on the lines above indicated, and that the messages which they receive, and which are really independent of the medium's normal consciousness, were no more than an illustration of those automatisms which belong to the dissociated state, the number of professing spiritualists would not be greater than the believers in a flat earth.

Mrs. Piper and Her "Control."

I may take to illustrate this the case of the celebrated medium, Mrs. Piper, and her "control," Dr. Phinuit, who figured so largely in Sir Oliver Lodge's experience. According to the account given by Dr. Phinuit he was, when on earth, a doctor, born about 1790 in Marseilles. He studied medicine there and also at "Metz, in Germany." He married but left no children. One would have thought that in this case it might have been possible to have established some proof of his actual existence. But although invited over and over again to prove his identity, he has never been able to do so. On the other hand, his knowledge of French appears to be limited to a few common phrases; he does not know the Latin or French names of the few drugs he prescribed through Mrs. Piper, and when pressed he became uncertain as to whether he was really born at Marseilles, or whether his name might not be Alæen instead of Phinuit—this latter was the result of a suggestion from Dr. Hodgson. It is not surprising that Dr. Hyslop comes to the conclusion that Dr. Phinuit must be treated as a creation of Mrs. Piper's secondary consciousness, particularly as the knowledge of French and of drugs displayed does not appear beyond the medium's capacity. And Sir Oliver Lodge, with a very evident desire to find Dr. Phinuit a genuine existence, is yet forced to conclude that he "may or may not be a phase of Mrs. Piper's existence" (*The Survival of Man*, 5th ed., p. 262). It is something to have got so far. It is an advance to have got the fact of these spirits being no more than a product of the medium as a recognized possibility. From a possibility we may advance to a probability, and then to a certainty. That is the normal way of development from superstition to science. We have seen the same thing in the case of witchcraft, where we had first the genuineness of witches asserted, then a discussion as to fraud *versus* delusion, and finally, the establishment of its real nature in terms of nervous derangement and the play of the social environment.

* * *

The Building of a Spirit.

The important thing to note is that once this secondary personality has shown itself, it can be watched in the act of elaboration. Thus, in one of Janet's cases, the subject, making no claim whatever to be a discarnate spirit, accepted the name of "Blanche" from the operator. After that it acted as though the name belonged to her, building up a character from hints and suggestions supplied. Again, Ribot in his *Diseases of Memory* gives us the case of a servant girl who every evening fancied herself to be a bishop, of a poor servant who imagined himself to be a millionaire, and in each case the normal and the abnormal personality were quite independent of each other. Those who have attended many circles must have also come across Irish spirits who lived up to the medium's conception of the way in which Irishmen lived and talked, or of sailors who were never seen out of a cheap magazine or off the stage of a theatre. Some years ago there were quite a large number of Red Indian controls. Why there should be a surplus

of Red Indian spirits ready to communicate it is difficult to see, but when we remember that modern Spiritualism came to this country from America the mystery begins to approach solution. The creation of these stage characters received an amusing illustration in the case of Mrs. Piper, who not only received a communication from George Eliot, but also from *Adam Bede*. Novelists have often been complimented in creating characters that live, but Marian Evens is the first who has ever created one that has come back again from the next world to deliver a message.

Automatic Writing. * * *

A word or two needs to be said on the subject of automatic writing and kindred phenomena. Automatic writing is one of the commonest accompaniments of dissociation, and, indeed, in an elementary form is so common that it appears in connection with those who would hardly deserve to be called abnormal. A great many people with a pencil in their fingers if they allow their hand to rest on a piece of paper will commence to make marks with the pencil without their being very much alive to what they are doing. And a little practice will enable them to write sentences with as much detachment as a regular performer on the piano will run through a tune while his mind is consciously engaged in some disconnected mental operation. And as the abnormal is never more than an extension of the normal, we may see here one of the simplest indications of dissociation. It is also noticeable that those who are advanced in the art of automatic writing have all, so far as the recorded cases go, commenced by very tentative efforts, advancing from a mere undecipherable scrawl to regular and related sentences. Mrs. Verrall, a lady of whose honesty there is not, I think, the least question, tells us that before she took to automatic writing she had for long indulged in crystal gazing, and had published a series of observations on her experience. She was thus in the habit of tapping her unconscious self, that reservoir of buried memories and experiences. She commenced her efforts at automatic writing by sitting regularly with a pencil between her fingers. For some time nothing happened beyond the fact that she would unconsciously trace some words of the book she was reading. Then she began to write sentences in Latin, at first without any general sense, but more connectedly as she proceeded. She followed this up by writing in Greek and Latin, being well acquainted with both languages. But in no case was there anything written that could be said to be outside the range of her knowledge, past or present. And that is the case with all dependable cases of automatic writing with which I am acquainted. The more complete the investigation is the more definite becomes the evidence that the writer is simply tapping the store of past experiences which he or she possesses.

Crystal Gazing. * * *

Crystal gazing comes under the same general head. Here, again, we normally practise it in the species of mental abstraction by the aid of which we attempt to recover some forgotten episode. But a single example from Dr. Coriat's *Abnormal Psychology* must suffice here. He says:—

One day I had occasion to refer to some notes which I had made in the course of preparation for a certain technical paper. Prolonged search failed to discover these notes, although I distinctly remembered having made these notes on a particular kind of blue paper. It then occurred to me that perhaps it would be interesting to see if by means of crystal gazing I could find any trace of the lost notes. The result was distinctly interesting and successful. I distinctly saw myself in the crystal, sitting at my desk, and caught myself in the act of tearing up these particular notes in connection with some other data which I had

finished using, and throwing the pieces into the waste-paper basket. A search in the basket discovered the lost and torn notes, which I was able to piece together. Now the tearing of these notes was evidently an absent-minded act; and yet an act which was fully preserved in the unconscious and later fully reproduced through the technical device of crystal gazing.

There is no need to elaborate. I am only outlining a subject, not exhausting it. I have said enough to show that there is not the slightest need to assume the action of departed spirits to account for what meets us in Spiritualistic circles. Mental pathologists have for long been familiar with the genuine part of what occurs, and for the rest, the exposure of the many acts of deliberate trickery is enough. I will only add here that those who wish to read a convincing and detailed account of the evolution of a medium would do well to study closely a most illuminating chapter in C. G. Jung's *Analytic Psychology*, where in the course of about one hundred pages he describes both the development and decay of a medium under the title of "The Psychology and Pathology of so-called Occult Phenomena."¹

* * *

Next week I will bring these notes to a conclusion by considering some general points in connection with the subject we have been discussing.

(To be Concluded.)

CHAPMAN COHEN.

"The Religion of the Sensible Man."

SUCH is the title of a remarkable article by the Rev. W. M'Neil Biggam in the August number of the *Red Triangle*, a Y.M.C.A. magazine published at Stevenson, Scotland. The purpose of the article is to effectively discredit the arguments advanced by Mr. David Alec Wilson in a book entitled *The faith of all Sensible People*. Personally, we dislike such pretentious titles for books and articles, because the only reasonable inference is that their authors regard all who reject their views as being the very opposite of sensible people, whereas the truth is that all sorts of religions have been and are being professed by people who, in other aspects, must be pronounced highly sensible. The point to be determined is not whether the people who hold a certain faith are sensible, but rather whether the faith itself deserves, on logical and ethical grounds, to be called reasonable. It cannot be denied that among professing Christians there are multitudes of eminently sensible people; but that does by no means demonstrate the rationality of Christianity. What Mr. Wilson's religious convictions are we do not know; but surely Mr. Biggam has no right to condemn him because his book is "filled with quotations from Confucius and Mohammed, Aristotle and Goethe, Spinoza and Bismarck, Huxley and Nietzsche," or because "through many rambling and incoherent pages he contends that the greatest minds concur on the main issues." Whether those pages are "rambling and incoherent" or not, is it not an indisputable fact that the greatest minds of the world do concur on the main issues? Does Mr. Biggam really deny this?

¹ The literature bearing on this subject is very great, but I would suggest to those who have a desire to follow the subject further the following. First read a valuable little work by Dr. Hart, *The Psychology of Insanity*, published by the Cambridge University Press. Then, not necessarily in the order named, *Abnormal Psychology*, by I. Coriat; *Multiple Personality*, by Boris Sidis; *The Psychology of Suggestion*, same author; *The Newer Spiritualism*, by F. Podmore; *Freud's Psychopathology of Every-day Life*; *Freud's Theories of the Neuroses*, by Dr. E. Hitschmann; *Papers on Psycho-Analysis*, by Dr. Jones; *The Freudian Wish*, by E. B. Holt, and *Spiritualism and the New Psychology*, by Dr. Millais Culpin.

Let us examine a few points. Mr. Wilson has spent a quarter of a century as a civil servant in the East, and Mr. Biggam somewhat arrogantly charges him with "over-readily assuming his competence through contact with Eastern thought to reduce all religions to a common denominator." Has the reverend gentleman forgotten that the late poet-preacher of Scotland, George Matheson, attempted to do the same from the purely Christian standpoint? Coming to the actual teaching of so-called European Pantheism, as condensed in Mr. Wilson's book, we find the following sentence quoted: "God and Nature are one living reality, and so the voice of Nature is the voice of God." Thus, the idea of God as a personal being, filling and transcending the Universe, is eliminated, and the words God and Nature become synonymous, and may be used interchangeably, as for example, in George Meredith's poetry. Now, if the term God, and other terms connected with or suggested by it, must be retained, a retention of which we strongly disapprove, then, "these are simply names for the same unalterable thing." We can fully understand the position of a man, brought up and educated in the West, who, after spending his prime in close touch with Eastern thought, was irresistibly driven to that vague attitude, but we are bound to add that it is an emotional rather than a scientific attitude. And yet, if God and Nature signify exactly the same thing, supernaturalism, in all its aspects, is severely excluded, and Pantheism and Naturalism are but two names for precisely the same thing. But why not be satisfied with the second name, stripped of all superstitious connotations forced upon it by the theologians?

At this point Mr. Biggam adopts an offensively supercilious tone. Because Mr. Wilson retains the terms God, Fate, Providence, the Will of God, though carefully identifying them with Nature, the reverend gentleman, with his usual politeness, dubs his system "this pretentious transcendental Naturalism," and says:—

We are not so bereft of Wisdom as to let go the substance of supernatural religion—with its revelation of a personal God who has revealed himself to, and is concerned with redeeming love's concern for the children of men—in order to grasp the insubstantial shadow of a hybrid Pantheism which identifies God with the world, and reduces the immortal hope to a mere dream of the imagination. Assuredly it is not that which is going to bring us the light of peace of which we crave. From beginning to end of this book, which claims to embody and set forth "the faith of all sensible people," there is not one solitary mention of the name of Jesus Christ!

This, then, is the great crime of which the book is guilty, the utter ignoring of Christianity. Mr. Wilson follows the example of the mass of the people in leaving it utterly alone. It is a dying superstition unworthy of one solitary mention. The immortal hope has lost its hold upon and charm for the multitudes. As far back as 1844 poor John Sterling, whose whole life of thirty-eight years had been but one sad unbroken struggle against the ravages of disease, lay dying on the heights of Ventnor, one of the loveliest spots on earth, and writing for the last time to his dearest friend, Carlyle, he said:—

I tread the common road into the great darkness, without any thought of fear, and without very much hope. *Certainly, indeed, I have none* (the italics are ours).

Even the hope of immortality is now well-nigh entirely lost, as we are frequently informed by the religious leaders of the day.

There is no sign of Christian charity in Mr. Biggam's article. Mr. Wilson's book is characterized as an "incoherent congeries of quotations" from Pagan religions, among which there is not one from "the

Jewish and Christian Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, except from the Book of Job." Then Mr. Biggam excels himself thus:—

In summing up this supremely momentous matter of a religion for all enlightened and sensible people, the Christian faith is apparently not to be regarded as a factor at all. That fact alone suffices to reveal the prejudiced perversity of the writer's attitude. Must it not be candidly said that the man who sets out to discuss the subject of a universal religion, without even the slightest or most casual mention of Jesus Christ, is both intellectually and morally incompetent to make any real contribution to such a theme? One might as well talk about daylight, and ignore the presence of the noon-day sun in mid-heaven.

This last sentence is the peerless gem of the article, and it clearly proves the complete incapacity of the writer to adjudicate on the relative values of different religions.

Carlyle in his famous *Life of John Sterling* (p. 10) sternly assures us that "religion is not a doubt; that it is a certainty—or else a mockery and a horror." For neither Sterling nor yet Carlyle was religion a certainty, but a mockery and a horror, and such it was to most of the men and women of that period. To-day, it is much less of a certainty, and very much more of a hypocrisy and a horror than it was then. Its official champions still declare that the knowledge, assurance and certainty for which mankind unspeakably long may be had through faith in Jesus Christ; but they are radically mistaken. Mr. Biggam frankly admits that it is not "a merely intellectual certainty," but the "intuitive perceptiveness of faith." The reverend gentleman forgets, however, that faith is not knowledge, and that the certainty felt when faith is specially strong is not the certainty of knowledge, but an emotional certainty engendered by a vivid imagination possessed at no time by more than an infinitesimally small number of professing Christians. What is acknowledged as a fact now is, not only that religious certainty is unobtainable, but that faith in Christ has become practically non-existent. Even Dr. Horton, in his last Monthly Lecture, admits that the spiritual sense is a thing of the past, and affirms that "the supreme need of man to-day is the recovery" of this lost sense. But why has the spiritual sense been lost? Simply because it never was a natural human sense, but an artificial sense artificially begotten, a child of belief merely, whose life was wholly dependent on that of its parent. And it can only be brought back to life when belief is reborn, an event which is becoming more and more unlikely. Dr. Horton agrees with those who maintain that Christianity has not changed the world, and that socially, nationally and internationally it has been a failure; and when this failure is described by great writers like Lord Bryce, and by weary sceptics who turn away from Christianity, he confesses that at times he is almost silenced. And yet he tells us that he has his answer, though not a satisfying answer, which when stated simply amounts to nothing more than a falling back upon the natural process of evolution and utilizing it as the chief factor in the uplifting of humanity.

Our conviction is that the sensible man needs no religion at all, in any widely accepted sense of the term. Buddhism and Confucianism, in their primitive purity, were not religions but philosophies of life. The same thing is true of Secularism. It is pure Idealism in the natural sphere. It is given unto us, by the emergence of Reason, to guide the process of evolution, and make it the great realizer of the highest Idealism.

J. T. LLOYD.

Try every art of legal thieving;
No matter—stick to sound believing.—Burns.

"On the Side of the Angels."

This mystery of vending spiritual gifts is nothing but a trade.
—Jonathan Swift.

Not a fantastical fool of them all shall flout me out of my calling.
—Shakespeare.

THE completion of the magnificent biography of Benjamin Disraeli, by Mr. G. E. Buckle, recalls a personality that is as attractive as Browning's *Bishop Blougram*. The most piquant pages in the life-story of the great statesman concern his religious opinions, and Freethinkers can hardly fail to be amused at the descriptions of the wily Oriental as a Churchman "on the side of the angels." Like that naughty old man-of-the-world, Lord Melbourne, Disraeli might plausibly have disclaimed being a pillar of the Church by saying: "I am a buttress. I prop it up outside." To Disraeli the Church of England was simply a national and social tradition which blended civil authority with ecclesiastical influence. As to Freethought, he considered it has its uses: "Man brings to the study of oracles more learning and more criticism than of yore; and it is well that it should be so." In describing the critical theologians as "Atheists in domino," he wasted a good epithet, but there is no mistaking the meaning. In one of his novels he spoke even more plainly in describing the Church of England as "Parliamentary Christianity." Concerning Church appointments, which the clergy so like their congregations to think are the direct action of the Holy Spirit, it is refreshing to find Disraeli writing in 1875 to Lord Salisbury, who was supposed to represent the High Church Party in the Cabinet: "Can you suggest a good High Church dean who is not a damned fool and won't make himself ridiculous?" Disraeli's attitude in theological matters was always that of the old Turkish statesmen: "After us, the deluge!" He thought that the Church of England might be useful as a social and political force, but his own personal beliefs were comprised in a thin, attenuated Theism, which would scarce have shocked Voltaire himself, and have earned the approbation of Rousseau.

Disraeli was a cynic, although a genial one. Recall his remark on reaching the coveted position of Prime Minister, which he had desired so long: "I have climbed to the top of the greasy pole." One can scarcely imagine Gladstone putting the matter in this light-hearted way. Disraeli has been accused of the gentle art of flattery, and, doubtless, in the presence of Royalty, he laid it on with a trowel. His sugary compliment, "We authors, your Majesty," addressed to Queen Victoria, is a case in point. When he offered his condolences on the death of Prince Albert he became almost as dithyrambic as Tennyson, who was the salaried court minstrel, or, as Swinburne would have said, "a linnet on the wrist of a queen."

Most interesting is the account of Disraeli's relations to Queen Victoria, and his gradual progress from her aversion to her affection. In one of the letters the Queen told him that "by rising early, taking cold shower-baths every day, and being frequently in the air, she had almost come to defy catching cold." The conversation is very intimate for Royal table-talk. With Gladstone the Queen did not get on well. "He talks to me as if I were a public meeting," was the truly feminine objection. That was, however, a defect of Gladstone's quality. He has been known to have chatted genially to a deputation of hard-headed Radical politicians (mostly Freethinkers) on the value of hymns in divine worship, and the proper position for a church organ. Disraeli was incapable of such obtuseness. Recall how he fascinated Matthew Arnold, one of the most sensitive of men, and one who differed from Disraeli on so many points. There is nothing more illuminating than the account of

Disraeli's conversation with Arnold, and we have the record in a spontaneous and contemporaneous letter from Matthew Arnold to his mother. Being reminded that he had met Arnold years before, Disraeli said:—

Ah, yes, I remember. At that time I had a great respect for the name you bore, but you yourself were little known. Now you are well-known. You have made a reputation, but you will go further yet. You have a great future before you, and you deserve it.

This was a real compliment coming from a master of many phrases. Arnold referred to Disraeli's abandonment of politics:—

Yes, he replied, one does not settle these things for one's self, and politics and literature are both very attractive; still, in the one, one's work lasts, and in the other it doesn't. He went on to say that he had given up literature because he was not one of those people who can do two things at once, but that he admired most the men like Cicero, who could.

The truth is that Disraeli had imagination, and plenty of it. The son of that fine old scholar Isaac Disraeli, Benjamin had "ink in his blood," and was a born writer. He was a master of words, and, whilst his wit was racial, he was much influenced by such stylists as Pope, Swift, and Voltaire. Of his happy and ready expression a good example is his repartee to the crowd at his early Marylebone election. "On what do you stand?" "My head!" Or his remark on the Radical member of Parliament who said he took his stand on "progress." "It occurred to me that progress was a slippery thing to stand on." His witty description of the Roman Catholic hostess who received her guests "with extreme unction" reminds one of Byron's barbed shafts. How excellent, too, is his account of a political opponent as "the conjurer who advances to the edge of the platform, and for hours draws yards of red tape from his mouth." Then there are his happy phrases, such as "Batavian grace," "superior person," "the hansom, the gondola of London," "the critics, the men who have failed," and "little words in great capitals." In his youth Disraeli was a great admirer of wise old Michel de Montaigne, one of those authors, he says, who "give a spring to the mind," and he never forgot the teaching of the great Frenchman.

MIMNERMUS.

Some Recent Church Conferences.

WITHIN the past two months practically all the Protestant bodies in England have been holding conferences to declare their attitude to particular doctrines, or to re-state the fundamentals of their faith. It is impossible here to deal with all of them, nor is it advisable to do so. They merely afford additional evidence of what is already clear to nearly all who have any opinions on the subject of organized religion—that Protestant Christianity is in a state of collapse. The only noteworthy feature of the recent meetings is the prominence given by our well-informed Press to the "unorthodox" views of eminent ecclesiastics concerning doctrines which every educated man to-day rejects, and which have formed no part of Europe's real intellectual equipment at any time during the past half century.

"Dean raises a storm," "Dean's bombshell," and similar headings adorned the columns of our newspapers on August 15. The Dean is Dr. Hastings Rashdall, of Carlisle, and the storm is the statement made at the Modern Churchmen's Conference that Jesus Christ never claimed divinity for himself, that he was not ahead of his contemporaries in scientific knowledge, and that he entertained expectations about the future which history had not verified. At the same

conference Dr. Foakes Jackson expressed doubt whether the Liberal Christianity of Anglican ecclesiastics was likely to endure. However eloquent they might be, they were preaching something entirely alien from what was once meant by Christianity. Canon Barnes, who is a doctor of science, told the delegates that the New Testament writers thought the earth was the centre of the universe, but we knew it to be a minor planet in a solar system which was of itself not of special importance. The Rev. Nowell C. Smith, headmaster of Sherborne College, is, according to his own statement, possessed with an incurable sceptical spirit. He gave evidence of this by declaring that, in his opinion, "the Jesus of popular belief was largely a mythological figure."

The Wesleyan Conference at Middlesbrough issued a pastoral letter on the present social, moral and religious condition of the people, which should be read side by side with the speeches at the Modern Churchmen's Conference. There is, says the pastoral letter, reason for encouragement in the remarkable awakening of the social conscience and the bankruptcy of materialism. "There is a demand for first-hand knowledge of spiritual things," and Methodists are urged to supply this demand.

But to the student of religious conditions in England to-day the comments of the daily Press are far more enlightening than any of the speeches made at recent conferences. They showed a real capacity for appreciating ideas. The *Daily Telegraph* takes first prize in this contest. In a leading article (August 11) that very representative organ of public opinion showed the progressive nature of Protestant Christianity, and its own devotion to the scientific spirit of the age. Charles Darwin, it assures us, was "a sound Christian and a convinced Darwinian at one and the same time." The late G. W. Foote's pamphlet, *Darwin on God*, shows conclusively that Darwin was not even a Theist, let alone a Christian. Only this week, reading Romanes' *Mental Evolution in Animals*, which contains a chapter on "Instinct" by Darwin, I was struck with the master-piece of satire in the concluding paragraph of the latter:—

It may not be logical, but to my imagination, it is far more satisfactory to look at the young cuckoo far more satisfactory to look at the young cuckoo ejecting its foster-brothers, ants making slaves, the larvæ of the Ichneumonidae feeding within the live bodies of their prey, cats playing with mice, otters and cormorants with living fish, not as instincts specially given by the Creator, but as very small parts of one general law leading to the advancement of all organic bodies—Multiply, vary, let the strongest Live and the weakest Die.

A. D. McLAREN.

To place anything in God, or to derive anything from God, is nothing more than to withdraw it from the test of reason, to institute it as indubitable, unassailable, sacred, without rendering an account *why*. Hence self-delusion, if not wicked, insidious design, is at the root of all efforts to establish morality, right, on theology. Where we are in earnest about the right we need no incitement or support from above. We need no Christian rule of political right; we need only one which is rational, just, human. The right, the true, the good, has always its ground of sacredness in itself, in its equality. Where man is in earnest about ethics, they have in themselves the validity of a divine power. If morality has no foundation in itself, there is no inherent necessity for morality; morality is then surrendered to the groundless arbitrariness of religion.—*Feuerbach*.

The religions of this world are numerous and various, but the priesthood is the same in all places, a fact which doubtless goes to prove that it is of origin divine.

—*Voltaire*.

The Myth of Jesus.

VIII.

(Continued from page 533.)

The common Hebrew offering was the paschal lamb; therefore Christ is envisaged as the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world. In the paintings of the catacombs it is as a lamb that the Saviour of the world is oftenest represented.—*Grant Allen*, "The Idea of God," 1903, p. 137.

Profound researches have shown that almost everything in Christianity not brought from the Gospel is but the baggage removed from the mysteries of paganism in the hostile camp.....Christianity at first brought so little change into the inner and social life, that it remains uncertain whether a great number of people in the fourth and fifth centuries were pagans or Christians.—*Renan*, "Studies in Religious History," 1893, pp. 41-2.

THE symbol of the Cross was not made sacred by the death of Jesus on the Cross. It was a sacred sign from the earliest historical times. Christ himself, according to the Gospels, appeals to his hearers, again and again, to "take up the cross, and follow me" (Mark x. 21) declaring: "He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me" (Matt. x. 38). It will be noted that Jesus does not say *my* cross; he refers to it as the cross, or his cross. How could he speak of my cross, seeing that he had not yet suffered on the cross? No! he speaks of it as a symbol already in existence with a well-known religious significance.

What does Paul mean when he says, "I have been crucified with Christ?" (Gal. ii. 20). And again: "From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus" (Gal. vi. 17). Nobody has ever suggested that Paul was really crucified, as Canon Cheyne, commenting upon this passage remarks: "The crucifixion of Jesus is of slight interest to Paul as a mere historical event."¹ The fact is that Paul no more thought of his expression being taken literally than a Salvation Army preacher expects to be taken literally when he exhorts his hearers to be washed in the blood of the Lamb.

We have no detailed account of what took place at the Mysteries, only scraps and hints from writers like Apuleius, the early Christian apologists and historians, and what are supposed to be scenes, or tableaux, from the Mysteries on wall paintings and vases. The secrets were closely guarded and only disclosed to the initiated, and even among the initiated there were lower and higher circles. Two young Acarnanians who witnessed the Mysteries of Eleusis and betrayed themselves by asking questions, which showed they had not been initiated, were formally tried for sacrilege and put to death.² However, we know that at Eleusis the initiates were shown a sacred drama or mystery-play enacted by the priests; and afterwards—

the initiates took part in wanderings in dark passages and over obstacles and difficulties, which were supposed to give them an idea of the sufferings of the uninitiated dead in the next world, and that they were then restored to upper air in a blaze of brilliant light, were shown the mysterious objects brought with such care from Eleusis to Athens and back again, were given a glimpse of the beatitudes awaiting the dead who had been initiated in their lifetime, and were at the same time instructed in certain mysterious phrases or formulas which it seems fair to conclude they were to treasure as pass-words through the realms of Hades.³

There were other Mysteries besides those of Eleusis; there were those of Dionysos, Demeter, Mithra, Persephone, Iacchos, Orpheus, and others. The most competent authorities who have studied the subject consider that they were all concerned with purification

¹ *Encyclopædia Biblica*. Article, "Cross."

² *Iegge*, *Forerunners and Rivals of Christianity*, vol. i. p. 41.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 39-41.

from sin and teaching as to rewards and punishments in a future life, the same two main principles emphasized by Christianity.

However, one piece of evidence of a very important kind has survived. Epiphanius, a father of the Church of the fourth century, wrote a work entitled the *Panarion*, a history of eighty sects and heresies. This work has been very much bowdlerized and "emended," for Epiphanius was too fond of letting the cat out of the bag. The passage we are about to quote was cut out of, or suppressed, in all the manuscripts up to the year A.D. 1304, the earliest manuscript known. But M. Dindorf discovered an unused manuscript of the *Panarion* in St. Mark's library, Venice, dated A.D. 1057, nearly 250 years older. In this Epiphanius, after declaring how many things in the past and present bear witness to the birth of Christ, cites a case in point, as follows:—

For instance, at Alexandria, in the Koreion, as it is called—an immense temple—that is to say, the precinct of the Virgin; after they have kept all-night vigil with songs and music, chanting to their idol, when the vigil is over, at cock-crow, they descend with lights into an underground crypt, and carry up a wooden image lying naked on a litter, with the seal of the cross made in gold on its forehead, and on either hand two similar seals, and on both knees two others, all five seals being similarly made in gold. And they carry round the image itself, circum-ambulating seven times the innermost temple, to the accompaniment of pipes, tabors, and hymns; and with merry-making they carry it down again underground. And if they are asked the meaning of this mystery, they answer and say: "To-day, at this hour, the maiden (Kore)—that is, the Virgin—gave birth to the æon."

Mr. Mead, from whose work, *Did Jesus Live 100 B.C.?* the above quotation is taken, observes:—

Here we have a definite statement that one of the most widespread mystic festivals of the ancients was connected with a rite of "resurrection," and that in Egypt the one who was "raised from the dead," and returned from the underworld of Hades, was sealed with five mystic crosses on forehead, hands and knees (? feet).

It seems to us that we have here the germ of the Crucifixion myth. This was the crucified one; not because he had been nailed to a cross, but because he was sealed with the sign of the cross, and in the process of turning myth into history, the five marks of the cross are converted into the five wounds caused by the nails and spear. In the light of this extract from the *Panarion* the declaration of Paul that he had been crucified with Christ, and bore the marks of the Lord upon his body, becomes perfectly clear. It means that he had become an initiate in the mysteries and bore the mystic seal of the cross on his body. And if, as Professor Drews and J. M. Robertson give good reasons for believing, there was a Jewish cult, or worship, of Joshua (Jesus) long before the Christian era, then most probably there was a Mystery connected with it, for the Jews were well acquainted with the myth of the dying and resurrected god Tammuz, for Ezekiel (viii. 14) declares that he saw the women seated in the Temple weeping for the dead god previous to his resurrection.

Dr. E. Carpenter points out that "Dionysus, then a prominent figure in the Mysteries, was called Eleutherios, *The Deliverer*," and cites Professor Gilbert Murray as saying that "the deepest and most sacred mystery" of Orphism was "a belief in the sacrifice of Dionysus himself, and the purification of man by his blood."⁴

W. MANN.

(To be Continued.)

Rewriting History.

THE invasion of Palestine by Vespasian in A.D. 68, and the destruction of Jerusalem by his son Titus in A.D. 70, after a six months' siege, are events curiously retold in a little work entitled *Vindicta Salvatoris*, written by an unknown author early in the Dark Ages, and published by Tischendorf in his *Evangelica Apocrypha* (Edition, Leipzig, 1876). The story opens when "Titus (b. A.D. 40) was ruler under Tiberius (d. A.D. 37) in Equitania in the city of Libia which is called Burgidalla."¹ Both the emperor and the governor were then grievously afflicted, the former, with leprosy, the latter, with cancer. To the port named comes a vessel from Judæa, which greatly surprises the inhabitants, who had never before witnessed such an occurrence. The principal person on this ship is Nathan, son of Naum, an Ishmaelite, sent by the Jews to Tiberius with their pact, but driven to Burgidalla by the north wind. Him Titus asks for advice touching his infirmity. Nathan avows ignorance, and says what a misfortune it is that Titus had not been acquainted with a certain worker of miracles lately put to death in Judæa, but raised from the dead made manifest to his disciples, and taken up to heaven. This he avouches as the truth, adding: "I have seen with my eyes, and all the house of Israel." Titus in great wrath declares that instead of being killed this wonderous healer should have been sent to cure him and the emperor, and expresses much sorrow at not having seen him. Thereupon the cancer falls from his nose, and he is healed completely, and all the sick present at the time are likewise restored. Titus is duly baptised by Nathan, and then sends word to Vespasian, ordering him to come at once with an army. Vespasian brings 5,000 men, and all embark for Jerusalem. They surround the whole kingdom of the Jews, and begin "sending them to perdition."

The kings of the country become greatly alarmed, and the head monarch, Archelaus (*deposed* A.D. 6), commits suicide. His son with the other three and the notables takes refuge in Jerusalem, which is besieged by Titus and Vespasian for seven years. The inhabitants are reduced to eating earth, and the soldiers, losing all hope, finally kill one another to the number of twelve thousand. The kings, having no means to dispose of the corpses, hand over the keys of the city and their own persons to Titus and Vespasian, asking that judgment should be pronounced upon them for their part in the Crucifixion. Titus and Vespasian deal severely with the vanquished. Some are stoned, and some hung upside down and pierced with lances; whilst others are divided into four parts, like the garments at the Cross, and others, because of having sold Christ for thirty pieces of silver, are sold in thirties for one piece of silver. Pilate is arrested and put in prison under a guard of four centurions. They now inform Tiberius and ask him to send them a certain Velosianus. He sends him with the order to despatch one of the disciples to cure his leprosy, promising to be baptized if healed, and to give his healer the half of his empire. After a sea voyage of one year and seven days Velosianus reaches Jerusalem. He interviews Nicodemus and Veronica, the woman who had suffered from the issue of blood, and severely reprimands Pilate. Next he makes inquiries for a likeness of Christ, and extorts from Veronica, by threats and

¹ This is the true rendering of *in civitate Libiæ quæ dicitur Burgidalla*, for later we find *ad portum Libiæ civitatis*. Equitania must be Aquitania, and Burgidalla Burdigala, the present Bordeaux. How the writer derived the alternative name is hard to say. The work declares that a ship going from Palestine to Rome was carried away to Libia by the north wind! This is a singular way of reaching Bordeaux from the Mediterranean, but a very apt one for attaining Libia Propria, the part of North Africa next to Egypt.

⁴ Edward Carpenter, *Pagan and Christian Creeds*, pp. 65, 206.

torments, one that she kept in a clean linen cloth and worshipped daily. Having adored this, he packs it carefully, and sails back, accompanied by all the disciples, and the faithful Veronica, who could not bear to be separated from her treasure. On reaching the Tiber, after a year's voyage, he leaves the vessel for "the city called Rome," where he appears before Tiberius and makes a full report. Tiberius asks after the likeness. Velosianus produces it from his cloak. The emperor adores it and is straightway healed, together with all the sick in his presence. He gives thanks and is baptized by Nathan.

C. CLAYTON DOVE.

Acid Drops.

Bailie Ferguson, of Motherwell, does not mind people stealing papers provided they do it on Sunday. In fact, he regards it as quite a creditable performance. In the case of one man who was charged with stealing papers from several shops on Sunday morning, he said that he would not convict, and gave as his reason that the people who owned the papers ought to protect them, and he would not convict anyone for taking all the papers that came to Motherwell on Sunday. We should think that the Secretary of State for Scotland might well consider whether so pious a gentleman as Bailie Ferguson should any longer be entrusted with the administration of justice. The Bailie's proper office is in a Kirk, and he should stick to it.

During a considerable part of this month the correspondence columns of the *Yorkshire Post* have been turned to account by both the modernists and their opponents. In the issue of August 15 the Rev. R. G. F. Waddington, of Bradford, says that Canon Barnes "bound himself at his ordination by the most solemn vows that it is possible for a man to make to believe and teach the Bible as it stands." But "solemn vows" mean different things to different people, and particularly so in the exalted profession of Anglican Christianity.

In Nottingham on Sunday last a number of the churches were closed owing to an outbreak of smallpox in the town. So much for the demands of religion in the face of a natural necessity. God is the Lord of all and can protect those who believe in him—when he pleases. All the same his followers nowadays do not believe in running unnecessary risks.

A Press Bureau of the Church of England has been established in Westminster. Perhaps we shall get some clear figures relating to the resources of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. Perhaps not!

Love is said to laugh at locksmiths, and it may be said to smile at religions. At a wedding at Hadersleben, on the Danish frontier, a woman, formerly of the Lutheran faith, was married in a Roman Catholic church to a Siberian Mohammedan, who had been a Russian prisoner of war.

It was stated at the annual meeting of the British Medical Association that there are over 40,000 doctors in the kingdom. There are also 50,000 "soul-doctors" in the country. Most doctors have to work day and night; many parsons work one day a week!

A daily paper describes parsons as "remote from life," and as failing to realize that their ideas "do not interest the great mass of the people." The humour of the position is that there are 50,000 parsons in this country, and they are in a favourable position to impart their out-of-date ideas to the rising generation.

The Rev. H. E. Wynn, M.A., writing in the *Challenge* (July 29) says that a reason sometimes given for the dearth

of candidates for holy orders is: "God may not now be calling men in the same numbers to the ministry." This highly ingenious explanation, we believe, represents the fact and deserves more consideration than it has hitherto received. God may see the fitness of things in the present state of the Anglican Church more clearly than some of his licensed counsellors.

"Religious instruction is not so attractive, naturally, as games, and it is to be feared that little will be done with Sunday-school scholars if they are aware that a game of cricket or football is in progress near at hand." This is an extract from a recent manifesto on Sunday games, signed by the Bishop of Willesden and a number of representative clergy and Free Church ministers in north-west London. It is a frank admission that religion nowadays cannot compete with secular attractions, unless it is favoured with rules and regulations putting special constraints on its rivals. We commend this express comparison between religion and cricket, in the matter of attractiveness, to the notice of the toiling masses whose only day of recreation is Sunday.

Speaking at a Labour meeting at Leyton, Mr. J. H. Thomas, M.P., said: "I should deplore the future of the Labour movement if I was called upon to assume that we look upon the Bible along with beer as a necessary evil." Perhaps Mr. Thomas is unaware that many people regard the Bible as an unnecessary evil, and that they consider spiritual intoxication to be as bad as spirituous intoxication.

Mr. W. Walters Butler, chairman of the firm of brewers, Mitchells and Butlers, speaking at the annual meeting on August 18, bitterly resented the "un-Christian-like" manner in which a section of the Church attacked "the trade." Some churches, he said, have excluded from office persons actively engaged in the trade. "One must not be surprised if we continue to read of the decreasing attendances at our churches, chapels, and Sunday-schools, for no church worthy of the name can be expected to thrive upon the foundations of such teachings." The dwindling congregations, then, are not due to the revolt of the masses against a false and corrupt system. We should like to know whether Mr. Butler would also apply the term "un-Christian-like" to the maintenance of blasphemy laws on the statute book, and to the exemption of churches from payment of rates and taxes.

The attitude of the churches to the trade, however, can hardly be said to be one of consistent opposition. In this respect it is very different from their attitude to secular education, and to all efforts to make marriage a purely civil contract, and to provide reasonable facilities for divorce. The fight against the churches and their unjust privileges is by no means over, and it will not be carried to victory by any body of men whose antagonism is based upon a particular set of economic interests.

Some of the clergy do not appear to be overworked. Giving evidence at a Commission appointed by the Bishop of Chelmsford, the rector of Markshall stated that since 1912 there had been one wedding and one funeral in his parish. There were forty-five people in his charge.

The Rev. J. Marchant, Secretary of the National Birth Rate Commission, has been made a Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire. Titles are cheap now. Were they ever anything else?

Crops of vegetables have been grown in the old cemetery of the Church of the Ascension, Bayswater. As the cemetery is consecrated ground, the vegetables should be "consecrated" also, and command good prices.

Sitting as Vacation Judge, Mr. Justice Branson made absolute the decree nisi in 158 divorce petitions in one day. This is not a compliment to the clergy who frown at divorcees.

Mr. Arnold Malabar, of Sheffield, is the first Englishman to enter the Sangha, or Buddhist Order, in Ceylon as a fully-ordained monk. Henceforth he will be known, within the Order, as the Samanera Matunda. The *Times of Ceylon* (July 8) publishes a two-column report of an interview which the Samanera granted to its representative. The new convert is described as "above the average height and of fine physique, an imposing looking figure in his flowing yellow robes." He declares that he did not originally go to Ceylon with the intention of studying the Buddhist religion:—

Before the war I had ceased to be a Christian; but with the outbreak of hostilities—when priests who had taught "Peace on earth and good will towards men" became nothing but Recruiting Sergeants—I realized more forcibly than ever that a religion so incapable of meeting an emergency could be ultimately of little use to an earnest seeker.

Canon Barnes, speaking at the Modern Churchmen's Congress, said that the inhabitants of other planets may be religious beings like ourselves. We wonder if they, too, are suffering from a dearth of candidates for holy orders. We should welcome the suggestion of all our own parsons being conveyed to Mars, or any other planet, to supply the deficiency. We should, however, insist on no return tickets being issued.

"Big rectories and vicarages are an intolerable burden," writes the Rev. J. H. White, of Burlescombe, Devon, and he suggests they might be used as lunatic asylums. An unkind critic might add that, in that case, the new tenants would resemble their predecessors.

Recent mails have brought to this office some hundreds of Press cuttings containing references to various aspects of religious life in the United States. Viewed as a whole, and making allowance for newspaper exaggeration, they are nauseous reading even to those who welcome the break-up of organized Christianity. Advertisement, sensation, and superstition appears to be the slogan of a large percentage of the American churches to-day. The Rev. A. W. Carlson, of Thorburn, said that he used the moving picture films and had a special publicity man in his congregation. The Rev. W. H. Tope, of Lamon Avenue Church, uses a system of big signs and posters and local newspaper advertising. The Rev. Dr. J. R. Straton, of Calvary Baptist Church, N.Y., in a sermon preached in July, condemned Jack Dempsey as a "draft dodger" amid loud applause which lasted a minute. "The congregation laughed when the minister compared the recent prize fight to a carbuncle which had broken out. It laughed again when he spoke of the profanity he heard at the fight. If America goes to hell, he declared, she'll exceed the speed limit on the way." Mrs. Carmelo Fasso, of N.Y., has devoted to the honour of the Virgin, as a thank-offering for the safe return of her son from the war, a candle eleven feet high and eighteen inches in diameter, which will be kept burning for two and a half years. In the Church of St. Anne, Chicago, a cure-working relic, brought from Beaupré Quebec, has been on view during the annual novena (nine days' devotion), and thousands of afflicted men and women have visited it and declared themselves cured.

This is a small selection from a large number of similar items. But warning voices of the mental effect on the national life of professionally bolstering up a worn-out religious creed, are not wanting. A writer in the *Tribune*, Chicago, says that the American people, and particularly the children, are the victims of "perverted thinking." "Our educational methods, moral and theological conceptions, penal codes, pathological practice and standards of culture are ancestral theories and perversions that tend to destroy sound reasoning." Professor Einstein who has just returned to Berlin after a visit to the States, declares that America is poor in intellect. The impression made upon him by the excitement of so many people over a theory of which they certainly understood nothing, he describes as ridiculous. "I found it comic. But at the same time it was interesting to watch them at play."

What a comment on the intellectual life in "a land of unlimited possibilities!" The correspondent who sends the cutting from which the above paragraph is taken, has written upon it, "True." But the greater part of the censure applies to every country where the Christian creed prevails. What of ourselves? Do not our own "ancestral theories" stalk like ghosts through nearly every department of the national life, and do we not hear periodically of a "progressive revelation," not only from doctors of divinity but from doctors of science?

John Meier, writing in the *Tribune*, Chicago (June 27), gives some harrowing details of recent lynchings of negroes at Alexandria, Springfield, and East St. Louis. He adds very pertinently:—

The United States protested with all its might against the atrocities of Belgium; but are the atrocities committed against the negro in this land of the Stars and Stripes any different? Why visit the Belgian atrocities with fire and sword and tolerate them in our own land?

Yet Dr. Charles D. Williams, Bishop of Michigan, is reported by the *Christian World* as having declared recently that there is to-day in all the churches of America "an atmosphere of high courage, a determination to proclaim the Christian message whatever be the consequences, financial and otherwise." This occurs in a religious journal dated August 18, 1921.

The Rev. Father Bernard Vaughan, preaching in Farm Street Church recently, said that "there are no penitents to-day, sinners are on strike." He spoke of magazines and novels that urge our two millions of women in excess of the male population "to find lovers and experience all the joys of life." This is made the text for the usual warnings and moralizings. We should much like to have definite particulars of the English magazines and novels that advise their readers to adopt the policy denounced by Father Vaughan. Most of the Roman Catholic priests in England have been endowed by Providence with keen business instincts, and in this age of commercialism and advertising men like Father Vaughan are an undoubted asset to their Church. They know the British public and the spiritual stimulants that suit its taste.

Father Degan is another reverend gentleman who has been displaying his wide knowledge of the contrivances used by the opposite sex to excite the passions of men. He finds that "translucent stockings" and "gossamer blouses" especially prompt men to wicked thoughts, and urges a "national purity campaign" to combat the prevailing sensuality.

How many of these social cults so bitterly complained of are indirectly due to the conventions of the Churches and their false moral sanctions? The morality of the average clergyman is not higher than that of the average member of other professional classes, nor is the religion of the gauze-clad female very different from that of other women of equal education. The chances are that the one who enjoys "the sins of society" will be forgiven and make an excellent candidate for heaven. "A young whore an old saint" is a very old saying, and, significantly, has its equivalent in nearly all the languages of Christendom.

The Rev. H. Maldwyn Hughes, D.D., preaching his farewell sermon recently at the Wesleyan Methodist Church, Clapham, said that while he could not agree with the theology of certain well-known hymns, and certainly could not use their language, he yet had no hesitation in singing them, nor could he sing them without being thrilled. There is a world of meaning in this attitude to out-worn religious ideas. It is the same attitude that finds a "spiritual value" in Genesis after geology and biology have said their last word to date. Protestants are never tired of railing at the superstition of Roman Catholic adoration of images. What else but idolatry is the singing of hymns which do not reflect one's religious ideas?

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.

C. T. SHAW.—Sorry to hear that the bigots are doing what they can to achieve their usual end. Will you please explain more fully what you mean by note concerning cards?

STANLEY MAPES.—Pleased to find that you so much enjoy *Theism or Atheism*. You are right about the misprint.

W. OWEN.—Mr. Cohen has booked October 16 for Glasgow.

F. C. HOLDEN.—We are obliged for securing agent in Salt Lake. Will send on paper. Can you not send on a sketch on the subject you name?

H. COLLINS.—Quite an excellent letter, and we hope that the editor will give it the place it deserves. It is a pity that so many papers are so fearful of offending their Christian readers. And yet their readers are not all Christians, not by a great number.

S. PULMAN.—Thanks for good wishes. It is rather difficult at times to draw the line at what articles shall be admitted and what excluded. In this respect an editor's lot is not a happy one, and readers must bear that difficulty in mind.

R. R.—It is one of the superstitions set afloat by Protestants that the Reformation was a movement of light and liberty. It was nothing of the kind, but decidedly and consciously retrogressive. The quotation from Luther which you require will be found on page 249 of Professor Karl Pearson's *Ethic of Freethought*.

R. ERNST.—We agree with you as to the force with which Gerald Massey presents the case against Christianity. We can imagine no greater surprise to a Christian than a first reading of the facts contained in the *Historical Jesus and Mythical Christ*.

J. AITKEN.—We have forwarded your letter to Miss Prewett.

F. BECKER.—Pleased to have your high appreciation of Volney's *Ruins*. It is really a work that all should read. We are hoping to follow it with Meslier's *Good Sense*, Lamettrie's *Man a Machine*, and, perhaps, a new edition of the *System of Nature*, and others.

A. G. BARKER writes: "Can any of your readers put me in the way of obtaining *The Poor Man's Guardian*? Am prepared to give a good price in hard cash, or would exchange my immortal soul for a complete set."

R. G. HASTIE.—The matter is now under consideration. A volume of "Views and Opinions" will be published as soon as circumstances permit.

We have received a letter addressed to "Mr. Alfred H. Palmer," c/o this office. As we do not know anyone of that name perhaps the sender will tell us where we are to return. The letter bears the Paris postmark.

E. HAINING.—Sorry, we cannot give you any particulars. We are sending on extra copy of the paper.

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

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Sugar Plums.

The Secular Society, Limited, is issuing this week a new work by Mr. Walter Mann entitled *Modern Materialism; A Candid Examination*. We shall review the book at length in the immediate future, and at present we only desire to say that the work is an exhaustive one and is calculated to do valuable service to the Freethought cause. Every Freethinker will find a useful storehouse of facts, and the numerous authorities given make it a very serviceable guide for such as have any desire to pursue the subject further by an extended course of reading. The book is published by the Pioneer Press in two styles—in paper covers at 2s., and in cloth at 3s. 6d., postage 2d. At that price most printers and publishers will wonder how it is done. The reply is, of course, that it is published for propaganda and not for profit.

Mr. Cohen will reply to the articles of Dr. Lyttelton criticizing his *Theism or Atheism* so soon as he has cleared off the ones dealing with Spiritualism; that will be the issue for September 4. To reply before would mean to occupy space that is required for other articles, and, as usual, we have a number of contributions clamouring for insertion. And the reply will be none the worse for a week's delay.

The recent prolonged correspondence in the *Times* on our young men and their future was by no means devoid of interest to Freethinkers, despite the customary English proneness to moralize. The recent Church conferences have also supplied abundant evidence of the anxiety of the various religious organizations to secure as large a measure of control as possible over the rising generation. Reading between the lines one could see fairly clearly that the various speakers realize that the Young England of to-day would resent some of the doctrines taught in the name of religion half a century ago, or even more recently. Yet at that time those doctrines were at least taught in good faith. To-day, when they are found to be untenable, they are "rationalized" and declared to have a "spiritual value," however contemptible they may be in all other respects. Are we Secularists making the most of our opportunities in regard to Young England and its attitude to the current religious creeds? It is essential that we should leave no stone unturned to seek out young men and women of ability and enlist them in our cause.

Some while ago we commended a booklet of detached thoughts and fancies published by the author, Mr. S. C. Musgrave, of Lowsville, West Virginia, U.S.A., under the title of *Pebbles and Pansies*. We praised his enthusiasm and whole-hearted love of truth, while suggesting that his outlook would be widened if he did more reading, and the expression of his thoughts strengthened by the avoidance of meaningless alliteration. In another pamphlet of his, *Pebbles Only*, which is now before us, he refers to our criticism of his style as not suited to our sober English taste, and avers that his "inability to accomplish that end is not likely to result in remorse." We are sorry that he is unable to distinguish mannerism from style. If we had been guilty of a paragraph like the one we give below, we should think seriously of consulting a psycho-analytic specialist. We quote it as an example of the base uses to which our language may be put:—

All normal hearts and thinking minds must certainly admire the patience, humility, grandeur and greatness of Darwin. For the crime of having studied, laboured and demonstrated his name was spewed from thousand of leering lips as a snaky, slimy thing. The vituperation of verbose vultures, the lousy lies of lazy livered libertines, the contempt of colossal crawfishes, the gab of greasy ganders, the bigotry of boisterous beef-bolters, never drew from the learned and loving Darwin one word of revenge or scorn.

We do not know if our West Virginian scourger of Philistines is aware of his condition, but he seems to be suffering from intermittent verbal diarrhoea, a disease which plays the very devil with the critical constitution, as witness Mr. Musgrave's ascription of elegance to

Shelley—"this elegant poet," and his reference to the "most profound and most logical *Life of Jesus*" by Renan. In normal critical health our aphorist would have felt at once that *elegance* is a quality no more to be associated with Shelley than with Æschylus, and he would have known the *Vie de Jésus* for what it really is—a charming piece of sentimental fiction.

We continue to receive letters congratulating us on our issue of Volney's *Ruins of Empires*, which is selling much better than we had expected. The success of the work has revived our long-felt desire to re-issue as many as possible of the outstanding Freethought works of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, many of which have never been surpassed for their strength and clarity of expression. To do this would require a considerable capital, and that is a commodity that we are altogether without. In the case of Volney its publication was made possible by the generosity of Sir Walter Strickland who was good enough to advance the funds necessary for publication, the money to be repaid from sales. And, to be quite frank, we mention this so as to encourage others to the same end. We are quite ready to undertake all that is necessary on our part. We can give any amount of work, but "Providence" has effectually prevented our giving more than work. But it is a shame that so many outstanding Freethought works should be lost to the present generation because of the necessary funds for their production.

We note in this connection that Messrs. Heinemann have just issued six more volumes in their complete issue of the Greek and Latin classics—text and translation. This issue was only made possible by the wealth and public spirit of Mr. J. Loeb, who provided the financial guarantee for the undertaking. He has placed the whole world of letters under an obligation by his generous conduct. What we now want to see is some wealthy Freethinker who will act with equal public spirit with regard to Freethought literature. And the sum required to set the scheme well under way would not be so very large either.

The general committee appointed to arrange the ceremonies in connection with the dedication of the birthplace of Robert G. Ingersoll on August 11, the anniversary of his birth, sent an invitation to Mr. Cohen to be present. Though it was impossible for him to attend the ceremonies, he hopes that the function was an unqualified success. The dedication of Ingersoll's birthplace in Dresden, N.Y., is a worthy method of commemorating one of the greatest names in our calendar of great men.

Theism or Atheism?

II.

THE first notice of Mr. Cohen's book ended with the remark that in speaking as he does in his preface of love and brotherhood, he let a cat, or rather *the* cat out of the bag. We now have to ask: What cat, and what bag? It will be convenient to consider this question as if it were addressed not only to the author of the book, but to all the readers of it who presumably approved of it; that is, the "Freethinkers" generally, and especially those of them who strongly agree with his lofty estimate of love and brotherhood as elements in the conduct of life.

The introduction of these two great words is by far the clearest intimation given since this discussion began that in spite of a certain amount of jangling we Theists and Atheists are in the same boat. Fundamentally we acknowledge one great and paramount claim, that whatever else is uncertain we are really trying to honour one another and to behave towards each other as brothers.

Now it is one thing to acknowledge a principle of conduct, another to fulfil it consistently in action. It

must be, and evidently is, extremely hard for a thoroughly convinced Atheist to treat a Theist as a brother and not as a worm; that is to say, if the Atheist is the sort of man I believe him to be at his best, *viz.*, one honestly convinced that in flinging away his belief in God he has been ridding himself of a paralysing bondage to an imaginary being about whom everything is unintelligible, except that much cruelty is ascribed to him by his votaries, and a wanton disregard of man's true welfare. Moreover, these votaries, these Theists, have at all times included in their ranks a large proportion of human knaves, humbugs, self seekers and rascals of every hue, and as soon as an Atheist tries to point out some of these glaring facts he is met with a storm of abuse or, what is more damning still, with a contemptuous silence. He may be pardoned for believing that if Christianity and Theism with it were swept off the earth human life would be purged of a gigantic and pestiferous sham.

But the question arises when things are so, what are the claims of brotherhood? Are all the mass of professing Theists, etc., to be relegated to a limbo of impossible people impervious to reason, or are they to be dealt with as brothers? Clearly we should agree, the latter. No Atheist can profess brotherhood and exclude some eighty per cent. of his fellow-creatures. So we assume that the Freethinkers in denouncing the Theists are treating them as they would wish to be treated themselves. But this is surely impossible. They are giving tit for tat no doubt, but supposing the "tit" was found to be supremely exasperating, is the "tat" any less so? And is it ever brotherly treatment of a fellow-man to exasperate him? If it is, then the word means two things at once, and we must find another which means only one, or all further discussion is impossible.

The Atheist might say in self-defence: "Yes, but you forget that the Christians have been guilty of the most intolerable hypocrisy. They have insulted us by preaching that their God is going to consign us to everlasting torture for not believing the same things as they do, and then when public opinion would not have it any longer, they quietly shift their ground, and disown their principles, showing either that they never believed them, or if they did they are abandoning them for no good reason."

But that does not go far towards meeting the particular problem that has arisen. Granted that the Atheist believes this indictment to be strictly true and that such replies as have been made to it are meaningless, does he act like a brother by continuing to rail? or as one who loves his fellow-men?

Only if he really believes that you can convert a man from a gross and deep-seated superstition by telling him he is a hopeless fool, knave and humbug all in one, and is bound to come to a bad end. But this is exactly what the Atheist has been complaining of in the Theist as not only exasperating but morally wrong. Where are we then?

It is tantalizing to find that in Mr. Cohen's book this action of Freethinkers is nowhere explained. In trying to understand it the best I can get at is this.

An Atheist is confronted by the fact that a huge majority of his fellow-countrymen profess a belief in God the Maker of the Universe. Many of these are convinced that they can get into communication with God; that in so doing they are in touch with a life higher than that which we know on earth, and that as they trust Him they are helped to a better course of conduct on earth and are filled with a hope of being with Him and becoming more like Him hereafter, for He is to them the source of all that we know as good. For reasons which appeal to the Atheist as irresistible he is impelled to eradicate this belief from as many hearts as possible. The best motive that can be ascribed to him is that he is sure that the principles of

the Theist are such as to work real harm in the world. But the difficulty to an onlooker is that the ethical principles of Christianity—the most acceptable form of Theism—are those of love and brotherhood, the very principles which commend themselves most strongly to the Atheist. Nor is this statement impugned by the appalling short-comings of Christians in moral achievement because it is impossible to prove that the principles, which they vainly try to practise, actually make them do wrong. Thus Christ taught brotherly love. All Christians acknowledge the claim of His precepts; all fall short, in varying degrees, of His standard. Why then should Atheists who also believe in brotherly love, try to undermine the authority of Him who taught what they believe and try to practise? For it must be pointed out that among the thousands who reject the *doctrines* of Christianity the "Free-thinkers" are the only ones who attack the *ethical teaching* as well, for this is what they do when they deny all authority to Christ. Most men of their persuasion try to keep the moral teaching while deriding the doctrines (about God, Heaven, Hell, etc.)—a more intelligible position, though I think wholly untenable.

The other great difficulty to the onlooker has been mentioned, *viz.*, the notion that A by sneering at B's principles can best get him to renounce them. How can this be? especially when B's principles are largely the same as A's, when they constrain A to act as a brother, to show sympathy and understanding towards B? What must B infer from this? Why, that the two groups at the bottom of their hearts desire the same beautiful thing, concord; but both have been terribly to blame in trampling on their own true beliefs without knowing, and have girded themselves for battle instead of breathing peace and goodwill. E. LYTELTON.

The Characteristics of Life.

As the phenomenon of life is intimately associated with the principle of energy it would be well at the start to devote a few lines to recording its main characteristics.

Energy is a term which sums up the source of all phenomena. Probably its most unique trait is that if it be estimated in consistent units there is every reason for believing that its sum total in the Universe would be found invariably and always represented by the same number. In other words, the energy of the Universe is a "physical constant." It always consists of two factors, *viz.*, a force (or a capacity to exert force) and a displacement. These may be called its physical and spatial parts, respectively. Again, it may assume one of two forms, usually denoted as kinetic and static. In the kinetic form its "force" is wholly potential as momentum, which is merely a name for a capacity to exert force if the moving mass meets with resistance. And the spatial factor is the continuous displacement involved in motion. In the static form the force is inherent in the substance, as an impulse urging it to move in a straight line towards or away from some other portion or portions of matter, or to deflect it from a straight line if already moving in some other direction, the space element being the distance between the two masses, which are thus mutually made to approach or to part asunder.

It should be noted, in passing, that there is a radical difference between these two types of "force." That due to momentum is a capacity to make *other* bodies move, and that only when they intercept the path of its motion; whereas an impulse or urge tends to set in motion the mass in which urge is inherent—that is, its *own* mass. For example, the weight of a stone moves its own mass only in the act of falling, but the falling body will tend to set in motion whatever happens to be in its way. A projectile hurled from the cannon tends

to set in motion whatever lies in its path. In the same way, the missile itself is sent out of the bore by the aggregate bombardment due to the momenta of the liberated molecules; whereas the particles themselves were set in motion by the mutually repellent impulses inherent in the constituents of the charge.

But the most noted characteristic of energy is its tendency to alternation of form: from molar to molecular; from vibratory to radiant (*i.e.*, from matter to ether); and from static to kinetic; or in the reverse order, as the case may be. The activities of the Universe consist in these alternations.

Now, energy is said to be "stored" or "accumulated" when the spatial factor increases either as speed or as displacement, *i.e.*, kinetically or statically. Likewise, it is said to be dissipated or spent when it passes from molar to molecular, or from matter to ether, *i.e.*, from a vibratory to a radiant form.

Anything that possesses or acquires, in consequence of some *delimitation of space*, a degree of individuality, and also some amount of permanence, is conceived by the mind as a "thing," as an entity. (Possibly, these are the essentials of all entities.) Now, Nature exhibits two notable examples of such entities of energy, which may be aptly called "kinetic systems" and "static processes." These are entirely antithetical in character, but each has an amount of permanent individuality. In the first, the mass involved is always the same, and its energy is constant; but the mass is always in motion, which of necessity must be of the harmonic order. The solar system furnishes the most noted and obvious example of this type. Probably all molecules and atoms are similar systems.

In the "static process" every item is reversed. The substance of which the entity consists is ever changing, is in a state of flow, and is, therefore, never the same, while its energy, instead of being a constant, is always being stored or dissipated. Its only permanency is its form and relative position in space. A river, a water-fall, a well, or, better still, a flame or a fire, would be physical examples of this type of entity. But it is in living creatures that Nature exhibits this order in endless variety and perfection.

These static processes are necessarily associated with a storing or a release of energy; or, as it will be convenient to describe it, with "the rise or fall of potential." A cataract, a water-spout, or the whole river is *kept in being* by a fall of potential. Should that become impossible, the river would soon become a lake or a swamp. Inanimate Nature, however, does not furnish us with an impressive example of the opposite or up-lifting process—not that it does not exist, but because it is unseen. When water evaporates, that is, is converted into a gaseous substance, gets diffused through the air, and reaches the higher regions of the atmosphere, energy is put into it, or is at a higher potential. But, as steam is invisible, the process, though on a most gigantic scale, eludes our view. We are made aware of it only when it is reversed in cloud, rain, and river. And as water in the form of rain is a prime essential of all vital phenomena, it is obviously the most important process in Nature. It is hardly necessary to add that the energy used in this up-lifting is derived from the sun.

This double process is, as we shall see, a prototype of that which is ever in progress in the world of living phenomena. It essentially consists of an up-lifting and a down-letting—of a storing and a dissipation of energy. The vegetable kingdom is mainly devoted to its storing, the *leaf* being the factory which Nature evolved specially for the task. Its sole function is to convert the lifeless into living substance. The animal kingdom, on the other hand, corresponds to cloud, rain, and river, in which energy is released; for though the living process in the animal body involves a higher

lifting than is effected in the plant world, it is only for immediate dissipation.

The resemblance between the process of evaporation and condensation and that which takes place in living forms, though helpful, has only the analogy of an archetype—of a crude primitive pattern, but in a flame (or fire) we have a perfect analogue of at least half the process—the release and dissipation of energy. For they are both not merely chemical reactions, but the same identical chemical process, *viz.*, that of oxidation, and an oxidation of even the same substances.

In order to realize how complete is the correspondence between the two phenomena—that of life and of the flame—we must describe the physical process in some detail. And when it is seen what a multitude of contrivances, expedients, and devices (to wit, the entire animal body) Nature has elaborated solely to provide combustible material and available oxygen to burn it, it will be unnecessary, I trust, to enlarge upon the extent to which the living process is one of burning, and in which a redistribution of energy is a first essential, whatever it may involve besides.

Now, first of all, let us recall what a flame is, then we can see how completely it is paralleled by the process of life. We will note only its essential features. To begin with, it occupies a definite portion of space, which, though usually movable as a whole, is relatively fixed. A candle or lamp may be moved about, or from room to room, but the flame itself is fixed, relatively, to the wick or burner. Through this space a stream of matter continuously flows containing stored energy which is liberated as it passes through the spot, having the phenomena denoted by the term "flame" as its result, which, on account of its permanence, fixity, and more or less definite size and shape, acquires some amount of the distinctiveness and individuality possessed by discrete objects.

What concerns us now, mainly, if not solely, in our study of animate Nature, is to know the conditions which must obtain to result in the release of energy as involved in the flame phenomenon. It is only then we can know the character and magnitude of the task which Nature had to perform in order to evolve an organism of the compound or animal type, or understand the meaning of her doings. The conditions that must be fulfilled for its occurrence are these:

(1) The medium in which it occurs must be in accord with the nature of the phenomenon. In the case of a flame or fire it must be gaseous—the air.

(2) The substance which parts with its energy to produce the phenomenon must be in a state to do so with readiness, *i.e.*, its energy must be available, and its supply must, in reality, be *quite continuous*, however intermittently you may feed the fire.

(3) The element oxygen, separation from which endows the substance with its energy, must also be present in a readily available form.

And lastly:

(4) The condition of re-union (igniting temperature) must also be an actuality. When all these conditions exist a flame or fire is a necessary result.

But the cardinal or vital point which converts the process into a kind of entity is the fact that the liberated energy (as heat) of the portion which is actually undergoing change (*i.e.*, burning) is just sufficient to act as the necessary exciting cause to the incoming portion. This fact is the linkage which unites the "changed" with the "unchanged" into an indissoluble series, and gives the flame (or fire), though consisting of a continuously moving stream, its continuity and permanence. If there is a break in the flow of the "feeding" substance, or a "miss" in the exciting "link" the flame dies.

(To be Concluded.)

KERIDON.

An Unhistorical Saviour-God.

GOOD FRIDAY.

ON the back of a donkey there is something like a cross. Christian superstition says it was impressed upon the one that Jesus rode into Jerusalem. Since then it has been transferred to the whole species, and every ass is a proof of Christianity.

A similar proof is the cross upon the buns that are eaten on Good Friday. Christians fancy it has something to do with the crucifixion of their Saviour. But in reality it has no such connection. Sacred cakes were eaten at the same time of the year by the ancients. Bryant says that "one species of sacred bread which used to be offered to the gods was of great antiquity, and called *Boun*." Hesychius, according to Brand, speaks of the *Boun*, and describes it as a kind of cake with a representation of two horns. Diogenes Laertius says it was made of fine flour and honey. It seems to have been known to the Egyptians. Jeremiah refers to the cakes offered by Jewish women to an Egyptian goddess. "We only retain the name and form of the *Boun*," says Hutchinson in his *History of Northumberland*; "the sacred uses are no more." The Romans prepared sweetbread for their feasts held at seedtime, when they invoked the gods for a prosperous year. It has been suggested by Sir Henry Ellis, Brand's editor, that the form of the cross on buns in England is a relic of Popery; people who could not sign their names made—as such people still make—the mark of a cross instead, and this mark may have been made by the common folk upon their Good Friday buns. But it is well known now that the cross is a pre-Christian sign. It was symbolic of fertility, and would naturally be used in the springtime.

Easter eggs, in the same way, have as much relation to the man in the moon as they have to Jesus Christ. Every animal springs from an ovum, and birds obviously so. Eggs were therefore used to symbolise generation and fecundity. Pliny, in his *Natural History*, alludes to the young people amongst the Romans painting eggs red, and playing with them. The Jews are thought to have borrowed the use of eggs at the Passover from the Egyptians. Afterwards the Christians made the egg a symbol of the resurrection; as it were, the life beyond life. The Paschal egg of the Jews, the Easter egg of the Christians, and the Spring egg of the Pagans, all mean the same thing at bottom. The dormant life of nature manifests itself at this season, as the time comes when the chick bursts through the shell.

What rational connection can there possibly be between buns and the Crucifixion? How can a couple of baker's dabs across a plat of sweet dough have anything to do with the death of Jesus Christ? How could the eating of these productions—mainly by children—suggest the Passion of the Son of God? The fact is that nearly all Christian observances are meaningless, or at least puzzling, until we go beyond Christianity, and question the older Paganism, for an explanation. The Christian Church adopted the Pagan rites, festivals, and celebrations, and associated them arbitrarily with episodes in the pretended history of its alleged Founder. The Crucifixion, for instance, was located on the Friday before the Passover in order that the whole drama of the death, burial, and resurrection of the Messiah might be transacted during that sacred period. There is not the slightest historical evidence that Jesus was executed on that particular Friday, and Jewish writers have pointed out that the chronological, as well as the other details of the story show considerable ignorance of the religious and political life of the people of Israel.

It is extraordinary that Christians do not ask themselves why the death-day of Jesus is always a Friday,

and why that Friday shifts from year to year. Supposing an anniversary falls one year on a Friday, it would fall the next year on a Thursday. But that never happens in the case of the anniversary of the death of Jesus. But if the day *never* varies, the week *always* varies. Now why is this? If Jesus really died on a particular afternoon in a specified year, his death-day ought to be celebrated with absolute precision. Of course the day of the week would vary from year to year, because of that odd day in the calendar; but the date—that is to say, the day of the month—would always be the same. If it was the thirty-first of March one year, it would be the thirty-first of March every other year. But the death-day of Jesus changes its date annually. And this very fact suggests that Christians are not celebrating an historical event, but are really celebrating a fictional occurrence.

Would it not be very strange if we had to make an elaborate calculation every year to decide when we ought to observe the birthday of William Shakespeare? Would it not be stranger still if the calculation turned upon the phases of the moon and the position of the sun in the zodiac? But that is how the death-day of Jesus is determined annually. It cannot fall *before* the spring equinox, and it falls as soon *after* as the full moon allows. Clearly, therefore, the celebration points back to ancient sun and moon worship, both of which are artfully conciliated in this shifting chronology.

The very name of Good Friday is a proof that it has nothing whatever to do with the death of Jesus or anybody else. Christians say that Jesus was an innocent victim, that the Jews murdered him, and that his crucifixion was the most awful crime ever committed in this world. Yet they call the pretended anniversary of that event *Good* Friday. They ought to call it *Bad* Friday or *Black* Friday.

If the Christian God, or even a third part of him, really died on this day, Freethinkers might well call it *Good* Friday. But why should Christians do so?

Of course it may be replied that Jesus died to save us from hell and secure us a place in heaven—whether he has done so or not, for it has generally been taught that most human beings go to the Devil's house at the finish. But if this is a reason for calling the day *Good* Friday, the Christians should stop hating or despising the Jews, and love them with all their hearts. Judas Iscariot himself ought to be held in the highest affection; indeed, the most magnificent monument on earth ought to be erected to his memory; for it was he who pushed Jesus on to his crucifixion, and thus established the first emigration to the New Jerusalem.

So much for the Christians. As for the Freethinkers, they may speak of Good Friday with a clear heart, and enjoy themselves upon it without misgiving. It is a part of the great Spring festival, when the year is really new-born, and the sun really begins to shine, and the perennial life of Mother Earth bursts forth with fresh magic, and the days lengthen, and the air grows sweet, and the promise of summer is everywhere, and all things seem to gladden and rejoice.

(The late) G. W. FORTÉ.

(To be Continued.)

Correspondence.

THE CULT OF RESEARCH.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—“Mimnermus” either is Mr. Stephen Paget of the Research Defence Society, or copies the words of that gentleman verbatim as an expression of his own opinion. The paragraphs in your last week's issue, in which he deals with antitoxin, Malta fever, “keeping tubercle out of the nation's milkjug,” etc., are very familiar to readers of the Research Defence literature. If “Mimnermus” and Mr. Paget are one, the concealment of the truth upon these matters is due to the acknowledged policy of boy-

cott adopted by that Society; if, however, “Mimnermus” has merely obtained all the information he possesses from Mr. Paget (who is so far an inspired prophet that he reports debates that never took place and works many other literary miracles), a few facts will be useful to him. Whether you will lend your columns to their publication is another matter. Anti-vivisection, having an unassailable scientific position, is most safely opposed by boycott. Nevertheless, I venture to make appeal to your sense of fair play.

The alleged triumphs of diphtheria antitoxin are due to the artificial lessening of the case death-rate by increasing the “cases,” including those which in earlier times would never have been reckoned in. By this remarkable method the case death-rate in Japan, for instance, “fell” in seven year periods, from 55 to 32 per cent. In reality, the deaths had risen from 16,571 to 36,656. The “cases” in our own London hospitals, which were 10,777 in the five year period before antitoxin, rose to 29,058 in the succeeding five years, and to an even higher figure afterwards. Now, however, even the case death-rate, in spite of all this statistical jugglery, is persistently rising.

The fact that children still die of diphtheria is blandly ignored by the determined, fact-suppressing “Research” worshipper. Surely everybody must have heard of many such deaths during the last few years! No god has ever been worshipped as blindly, as besottedly, as cringingly as is modern Medical Research. Its high priests forbid that the facts should be faced. That is why few know that the number of deaths from diphtheria, per million of the population, rose 25 per cent in the 15 years after the introduction of antitoxin, as compared with the 15 years before.

The story of Malta fever is longer but more interesting. It cannot be dealt with in a letter. Never was a “fake” more completely exposed than the claim that it was banished by the forbidding of goats' milk. That it was due to special conditions affecting the soldiers, the sailors, and the civil population, respectively, is proved by the enormous difference in their ratio of disease, and the trouble in each case was found and remedied—another factor, as usual, being given the credit.

Smallpox is vanishing in proportion as vaccination vanishes; typhus, plague and cholera have gone already, without the Research god's holy rite of inoculation. During the war typhoid was got rid of by calling it different names, and tetanus by the addition of “local tetanus” cases, after the manner of the antitoxin juggle. It would need chapters to expose all the monstrous claims that “Mimnermus” makes in a few airy sentences. Incidentally, it is noteworthy that he acclaims as apparently wonderful the fact that doctors should “fight” disease at all, which of course they are paid to do. Nobody is wonderful who does anything that he is paid to do.

As to the clergy, surely most of them are on the side of “Mimnermus”! The voice of the Research Defence Society is the voice that usually speaks from the pulpit. The god “Research” has almost ousted the Christian God, and is already acquiring a Scripture, to the contribution of which the *Freethinker* apparently aspires.

There are three rules which must be obeyed in the ritual of Research worship. (1) The worshipper must approach the throne blindfold; (2) Heretics must at all costs be silenced; (3) A constant supply of victims must be obtained for the sacrificial altar. BEATRICE E. KIDD.

[Editorially, the *Freethinker* has never given any support to vivisection. We do not necessarily endorse all the views of our contributors.]

CHRISTIAN AND SECULAR HAPPINESS.

DOES HOMER NOD?

SIR,—A claimed virtue of the Freethinker is that he is at all times willing to face facts. Which may be quite true, but even he is apt to overlook a fact in his argument. Thus Mr. Lloyd, in the issue of August 14, comparing Secular and Christian constancy and enthusiasm, says there is a time when the Christian has “no blissful visions,” that with the Secularist it is different, with his different grip and outlook on things. Alas it is not so. There is an oft recurring period when the Freethinker gets “fed up” with Freethought, when he has few or no visions, joys, or enthusiasms—not that he gravitates towards religion again, but simply is like the man in the

well-known lines, like every man, including the poor Christian, of each of whom it might be said:—

Once in the flight of ages past
There lived a man, and who was he?
Reader, where'er thy lot is cast,
That man resembled thee.
The bounding pulse, the languid limb,
The clinging spirits rise and fall,
We know that they were felt by him,
For they were felt by all.

Is not our argument that we are a' John Tamson's bairns? And, alas, Mr. Editor, even I am that man! Even you, sir, and all your brilliant staff, of which I am proud to be a lesser luminary, yet longing to be a god, or at least a millionaire!

To be serious again in a serious and important matter. The goodness and joy felt by the Christian he ascribes to God. For the same, felt, perhaps, even more frequently and more thrillingly, the Secularist has a different, certainly a more logical explanation. In both the satisfaction in the sense of doing, or of being, good, and in the vision and hope of better things, whence and why these may come, are the parallel causes of parallel states of mind. *Ceteris paribus*, the Freethinker hath no pre-eminence over the Christian; yea, they have all one breath; and while all go to one place, and all are of the dust and turn to dust again, it is pleasant to think we all try to make the best of this life, though so many only succeed in making the worst of it for themselves and others.

A. M.

Obituary.

It is with the very deepest regret that we have to record the death of Harry Lewis Fincken, son of Mr. and Mrs. Fincken, well known for their long and unflinching devotion to the Freethought cause. Born in 1880 Harry Lewis Fincken may be described as a Freethinker from his earliest years, and, with his parents, was a very familiar figure at all London gatherings. So soon as his schooldays were over his adventurous spirit led him to win his parents' consent to joining the Navy, and in achieving this he came into conflict with official religion. One of the questions on the papers that had to be filled was, "What religion?" The answer was "None." He was informed that one must have some religion in the Navy, he might join the Army, or as his father summed it up, he could not join the Navy till he became a liar. Eventually, his desire for the sea being so strong, he permitted himself to be described as "Church of England" on his papers, although he took it as curious that his first ship should be the "Northampton"—the name of the constituency for which his idol, Charles Bradlaugh, had been the member.

His progress in his favourite career was in all respects satisfactory, but the description of himself as "C. of E." rankled, and unknown to all he set to work to have it removed. An application was made to his captain, and was followed by his appearance before a Board of Officers. His application was that the words "Church of England" should be erased and "Atheist" put in their place. In the end the captain said, "I am sorry to see a man of your intelligence making such an application, but you are entitled to have it granted." The alteration was made accordingly, and the official religious falsehood expunged. It was a long and stubborn fight, but determination won in the end.

For some years Mr. Fincken, Jnr., had been suffering from tuberculosis, and the devoted care of wife and parents failed to hold the enemy at bay. The disease made a more or less steady advance, and for a year before his death he was practically confined to his bed.

The cremation took place on August 17 at Golder's Green, the service being conducted by Mr. A. D. McLaren in the presence of his family and a number of London friends.

Mr. Fincken leaves behind him a wife and son, and his character as a Freethinker may be gauged from almost his last words: "Don't let the Church get hold of my boy."

We venture to express, both on our behalf and on behalf of the numerous London friends of the Fincken family, the sincerest sympathy with them in their bereavement.

They have lost a son of sterling character, and the Freethought cause a devoted and unwavering supporter.

C. C.

It is with sincere regret that I have to record the death of Mrs. Baird, a life-long adherent of the Freethought movement in Glasgow. She was the daughter of Mr. Wright, one of the leading spirits in the Glasgow Secular Society sixty years ago, an outstanding man who was assiduous in carrying on the work in times when to do so called for heroic qualities. Mrs. Baird was unswerving in her loyalty to Secularism. She was a devoted daughter, sister and wife, and a pattern to all who knew her. Her presence at the meetings, covering a period of fully sixty years, will be missed. She was buried in the Glasgow Necropolis on the 15th inst., the undersigned saying a few words of tribute and respect at the funeral.

THOS. ROBERTSON.

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.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand) : 6.15, Mr. R. H. Rosetti, A Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Regent's Park) : 6, Mr. E. Burke, A Lecture.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park) : 3.15, Mr. R. H. Rosetti, A Lecture; 6.15, Mr. Corrigan.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY.—Ramble to Caterham and Godstone. Conducted by Mr. F. M. Overy. Train from Charing Cross to Caterham, 10.25, London Bridge, 10.33 (S.E. & C. Rly.), fare 3s. Tea at Godstone.

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