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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
<i>The Expansion of Man.—The Editor</i> - - - - -	609
<i>"The Kingship of Christ."—J. T. Lloyd</i> - - - - -	610
<i>Shakespeare and the People.—Mimnermus</i> - - - - -	612
<i>The Myth of Jesus.—W. Mann</i> - - - - -	613
<i>Modern Art and Revolution.—G. E. Fussell</i> - - - - -	614
<i>Theism or Atheism?—The Hon. E. Lyttelton</i> - - - - -	618
<i>Shaker Celibacy and Religion.—Theodore Schroeder</i> - - - - -	619
<i>From a Notebook.—C. de B.</i> - - - - -	620
<i>Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.</i>	

Views and Opinions.

The Expansion of Man.

There have been many definitions of man. The theologian has defined him as a religious animal, the anthropologist as a tool-using animal, and there is Carlyle's definition of him as a clothes-wearing animal. These all present aspects of man that are more or less instructive, and if I venture to add one more to the list and call him an expanding animal, it will not, I think, prove the least instructive or the least interesting of the batch. For one of the characteristics of man, the one in virtue of which he is most clearly marked off from the rest of the animal world, is precisely this quality of expansion. And by that I do not mean the mere covering of a larger part of the earth's surface; that would be to imitate our shallow-pated imperialists, who count a people great because of the extent of territory they command, forgetting that in the absence of other things the more numerous a people are the more worthless they become, and the graver the danger to the rest of the world. What I mean by the expansion of man is the capacity that human nature possesses for a development of interest and feeling which express themselves over an ever-widening area, and embrace a growing circle of objects without any alteration in its fundamental qualities. Like one of the lower organisms throwing out feelers in search of sustenance, human nature is continually groping after wider knowledge and greater comfort. And from that point of view humanity as a whole may well be likened to a huge organism struggling blindly after it knows not exactly what, and yet something that it is bound to secure as the one condition that makes life worth living.

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The Community of Man.

This principle of expansion holds good in science, in ethics, in sociology, and even in religion. And it follows from the very conditions of animal existence. The essential condition of life is adaptation to environment, and by the very fact of its own growth the adaptation of humanity to its special environment is secured by an enlargement of ideas and feelings which corresponds to ever-enlarging boundaries. Nature, in fact, never works by the destruction of old organs and the production of new ones, but by adapting the old structure to new conditions. Whether we are dealing with actual organs or with functions this holds

good. There is an enlightening of the intelligence controlling the old instincts, a truer perception of the nature of human interests, a breaking down of established barriers of caste, sect or nation that stand in the way of a new development, and that is about all. From the group to the tribe, from the tribe to the nation, from the nation to the race, we see this principle of expansion constantly expressing itself. It does not stop at the human race. One very marked effect of the growth of the conception of evolution has been to link man more closely than ever to the animal world, and has led to a rational claim of kinship with the whole of the animal world. In spite of retrogressive steps here and there the world is being knit into one. Even the present series of disasters from which the world is suffering is only serving to drive home the lesson that the welfare of humanity must be considered as a whole if the part is to reap any substantial benefit. A genuine independence is only possible on the condition of the development of a rational interdependence.

* * *

Man and Morals.

The growth of the moral sense will well illustrate what has been said. We have created nothing that is fundamentally new. The same impulses that animated our ancestors animate us. They sought the gratification of their own pleasures, the realization of their own desires, and so do we. The difference here is not one of aim or motive, but of method. Nature, incredibly wasteful in mere material, is penurious to a degree in general ideas. One or two simple ideas may be drawn from the groundwork of the apparently endless variations of the animal kingdom. And so with morals. A few very simple ideas serve here. The basic principle of all animated life is self-preservation. But note what occurs. Man is a member of a group, in any case, of a family. And this means that his thoughts are never wholly occupied with self to the exclusion of others, which is only another way of saying that his consciousness of self is large enough to embrace others. So it happens that, quite apart from the purely intellectual perception of ways and means, causes and consequences, man's moral growth consists in an enlargement of moral feeling and the application of moral principles over a widening area. "Thou shalt not steal" meant little more to primitive humanity than that stealing was forbidden to members of the tribe. And even now there is little condemnation attaching to a white man stealing from a black one living in another country. But the conception of right and wrong as co-extensive with the whole of humanity is growing, which is only another way of saying that as man has developed his experience is teaching him to regard every other man as possessing the same rights that he himself claims, and is bringing him nearer the conception of humanity as an organic whole, with the possibility of securing a general co-operation against the organic and inorganic enemies of the race.

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The Dissipation of Deity.

In religion we have the same state of things. Much of the talk that one hears about the purification of

religion is sheer verbiage, but often it does indicate the application of those feelings hitherto associated with religion over a wider area. Originally the domain of a deity is limited to the tribe which worships him, and his work is to keep that little piece of the world in order. But as tribes are reduced in number by conquest and amalgamation the gods follow the same path, and their concern becomes co-extensive with the larger whole. But what religious ideas gain in extension they lose in definiteness and efficiency. There can be no question that the religious ideas of primitive man are far more definite, the work of the gods far more positive than is the case with civilized mankind. The savage has some difficulty in finding a corner of the world that is beyond the control of the gods. Civilized mankind is hard put to it to explain what they do or why they do it. This, however, is only one side of the process. Looked at closely this "enlargement of God," to use an expression of a French writer, is only another aspect of human knowledge and feeling. It is, as a consequence of man's own development, that the gods become what they are to-day. Civilization humanizes the gods as it wipes out primitive peoples. A better acquaintance with the character of natural processes makes interference with them by deity inconceivable. The conception of god becomes enlarged until it ceases to touch life at any perceptible point. This physical world of ours, science teaches us, begins in vapour and ends in solidity. The gods we have been taught to worship began as solid existences, and are gradually being reduced to imperceptible vapour.

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Man and the Herd.

Sociology enforces the same lesson. There can be no question that the factor of combination is a very valuable one so far as the struggle for existence operates between tribes. The welfare of each is best achieved through the welfare of all. The self of each is buried so that it may rise in a stronger and more serviceable form. And it is precisely for want of appreciation of this principle that the world is as it is to-day. Undoubtedly the war has put back the thoughts of many to a stage out of which some of us thought we had finally emerged, and our statesmen, with a complete lack of scientific training, are writing and speaking as though the doctrine of evolution had never been heard of, and quietly assuming that one nation can really grow stronger by assuming supremacy over other nations, or by preventing them becoming strong. We said often enough during the struggle that it required little intelligence to carry on a war—skillful appeals to the lower passions of men under the guise of a lofty patriotism are enough. War, once started, carries itself along and manages to justify itself by its own failures. But it does take both intelligence and courage to conduct peace. Father Vaughan to the contrary, it was never the vital problem to kill Germans; the vital problem was living with them, and that had to be faced when all the fighting was over. And the problem of Germany is the problem of the world as a whole—the problem of how the peoples of the world are to live together. And that is one which can be solved only in terms of the conception of humanity as a world-wide organism instead of the militarist ideal of a number of independent organisms with mutually destructive activities.

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The Imperialism of Man.

To sum up. From the earliest time we may picture man as an organism which is continually expanding as a condition of its own growth. It is this that does, in fact, mark man off from the rest of the animal world. An animal community remains the same generation after generation. If its existence conflicts with the existence of another species, or even variety, there is

no assimilation, but a destruction of one or the other. The problem here is purely physical and biological. In man we are less concerned with biological than with psychological growth. Man's nature is, in short, fashioned with respect to a dual application. The one is his own preservation as an individual organism. The other is towards the group of which he is an individual part. It is this which really warrants us in speaking of a human society as an organism—not merely because the parts work together, but because they cannot be understood out of relation to each other—and there is no hope for humanity out of this line of development. It is this fact which more than anything else is gradually breaking down those barriers of nationality and race that have hitherto kept peoples apart. If this process continues, well and good; but there is no reversing the evolutionary process. Either the process continues or civilization will end in disaster. We have had enough and to spare of the imperialism of this or that group of nations. The welfare of the race depends upon our ability to displace it with the ideal of the Imperialism of Humanity.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

"The Kingship of Christ."

SUCH is the title of an ably written article by Professor Shailer Mathews, of Chicago, which appeared in the *Christian World Pulpit* for September 14. It deserves notice not because of any originality it displays, but for its clever statement of an obvious fallacy. Professor Mathews endeavours to convince his readers that Christianity triumphed over Paganism by reason of its intrinsic merits. He tells us that Julian strove to substitute philosophy for Christianity, but that as he lay dying he exclaimed, "O, Galilean, thou hast conquered." One is amazed to find a scholar offering a gross fable as a veritable fact. Surely, as Gibbon well says, "The calumnies of Gregory, and the legends of more recent saints, may now be *silently* despised." Julian did not die in the belief that his mission had been a failure. Among his dying words are these:—

I die without remorse, as I have lived without guilt. I am pleased to reflect on the innocence of my private life, and I can affirm, with confidence, that the supreme authority, that emanation of the Divine Power, has been preserved in my hands pure and immaculate. Detesting the corrupt and destructive maxims of despotism, I have considered the happiness of the people as the end of government.

It is well known that Julian was brought up in the Christian faith; that it was the dark, bloody deeds of Christians that first shook his belief in it and drove him to Paganism; that he was a Pagan for some time without avowing it; and that it was only when he became sole emperor in 361 he resolved to do his utmost to re-introduce the Pagan religion. The truth is that during his brief reign of a year and eight months he achieved a most wonderful success. Had he lived as long as his uncle, Constantine the Great, the defeat of Christianity might have been complete and final.

It is perfectly true that "when the final count was taken Christ had conquered the philosophers," but that fact by no means proves Christ's superiority to all other Saviour-Gods. Christianity won Europe simply because of the fine capacity for adaptation which it possessed and freely practised. Whatever in Paganism it could not borrow and assimilate it suppressed by brute force. This, however, is a point that must be reserved for the next article, which will discuss Mithraism in its relation to Christianity.

Professor Mathews indulges in statements of the most astounding nature. When he says that Christ "conquered the philosophers," what he seems to mean is that Christ *captured* the philosophers, and irresistibly

drafted them as his messengers, which is almost wholly untrue. While many Christian teachers were Greeks, especially in the early Church, and while Christianity was doubtless very largely a Greek religion, it is not legitimate to assert that it ever adopted the old spirit of scientific inquiry and criticism which was so characteristic of Greek philosophy. It is disingenuous to claim that "Greek thought re-expressed for a Greek world the truths of Christianity and gave to the faith of the apostles the protective covering of intellectual beliefs," and that "Christ appropriated Greek learning." Why, Justinian closed the schools of philosophy at Athens; and the Rev. Baden Powell informs us that "the fifth century of the Christian era witnessed an almost total extinction of the sciences in Alexandria." Philosophers were persecuted if they attempted to engage in teaching. And yet Professor Mathews has the audacity to write thus:—

Jesus Christ has become increasingly the master of education. He can never be its enemy or its victim. As civilization develops powers it demands a moral control deep-seated in the hearts and minds of men and women. No such control is possible except through education. And no such education as is needed is possible except that which is controlled by the ideals and spirit of Jesus Christ. Pagan lands may have learning, but Christian lands can have true wisdom.

Here are a few more extravagant assertions:—

Until very recent years the initiative for most educational movements has come from the Church, whether one looks at the universities of the Middle Ages or the common schools and colleges of the American colonies. Real leaders of Christianity have always been afraid of ignorance. They have never felt enmity between knowledge and faith in Jesus Christ. They have taught men to study the word and works of God. The Christianity which has failed has been the Christianity which has refused to go on with developing knowledge. Again and again has the Church condemned that which seemed to its narrow vision opposed to Christian truth; but many times has it also come to see that increased knowledge of the universe and of human life has been new vindication of the faith it cherishes in the Christ it worships.

Poor China and Japan as well as all other Pagan countries can never attain to true wisdom. They are doomed to be the homes of practical fools to the end of time, unless they repent and accept Christianity. And yet we are assured by those who know that in China, for example, there are to be seen homes in which peace, order, sweetness, light and happiness dwell, and that Chinese social life generally compares most favourably with that of the most Christian country under the sun. In spite of all this the Chinese, being Pagans, cannot have true wisdom. Prejudice cannot touch a lower depth of degradation.

There is no historical foundation whatever for the contention that in the Middle Ages the Church befriended education, as such. Most of the schools were for the teaching of theology. If any teacher advanced any idea which was regarded as irreconcilable with some Church dogma he was tried, condemned, and, unless he recanted, sentenced to silence or death. Has Professor Mathews forgotten the cases of Peter Abelard, Arnold of Brescia, Servetus, Roger Bacon, and hosts of others, who, being genuine educators, got under the ban of the Church? Of secular knowledge, as such, the Church has never been an advocate. In the *Evening Standard* for September 15, Father Bernard Vaughan contended that "the so-called scientific mind of to-day starts out pre-occupied with prejudices, passion and ignorance," because it denies creation, miracles, and the supernatural. Father Vaughan and Professor Mathews are as far apart as the poles, but without a doubt the former is a more reliable repre-

sentative of the spirit of the Church in all ages than the latter. The only knowledge approved of and recommended by the Ecclesiastical Councils has been Christian knowledge, or that Secular knowledge which can be harmonized with the former. In reality this is Professor Mathews's position, for he stoutly maintains that Christ must control education. "If our new knowledge," he says, "is not to be a dragon destroying its offspring, it must produce personalities governed and controlled by Christ." He evidently has the world-war in his mind, but he forgets that the war was waged by people who profess to be governed and controlled by Christ. They professed it while the war was in progress, and they assert it now.

We now approach the conclusion of the whole matter. Many of the Professor's statements are only too true. Nothing can be truer than that "information may or may not be a blessing." Knowledge may be, and often is, put to a bad use. The present vast knowledge of chemistry was responsible for not a few of the worst horrors of the late war. The truth of this cannot but be admitted. The remedy, according to the Professor, consists in all knowledge being governed and controlled by Christ. This is how he expresses it:—

Information and technical skill, if used by men and women whose hearts are untouched by the ideals of Jesus, will throw any country and the world itself into hideous conflict. He (Christ) must appropriate and use modern culture as he appropriated and used Greek culture.

Touching that last sentence what occurs to one is that if Christ's appropriation and use of modern culture will bear no better result than in the case of the Greek culture, he will show his wisdom by leaving culture alone altogether. What is called Greek culture in the early Church caused nothing but heart-breaking trouble. It filled the young Christian communions with thorny and endless disputes about the nature of God, the person of Christ, and the Trinity, which did not admit of any satisfactory and final settlement. Be that as it may, the question that confronts us is, if Christ really exists and is what theology describes him, why has he not always governed and controlled culture so as to achieve the most desirable results? The Professor wisely says that "if Jesus Christ is to conquer the world, or, much better, if Jesus Christ is to transform the world, he must first of all transform the people who are going to make the world." That is an exceedingly reasonable statement; but why does he not transform the world? Why is the world still in need of regeneration? There is only one answer, *because he cannot*, and the only explanation of his inability is his non-existence, except as an empty conception of theology. As Dr. Horton has just discovered, the only hope of the world lies in the painfully slow process of evolution which, if we were only in true earnest, we could do much to hasten. The supreme obstacle is the Church, which still pins its faith in the alleged kingship of Christ, obstinately refusing to listen to the unmistakable testimony of history as to the practical uselessness of such faith. J. T. LLOYD.

We must suppose that the Creator wishes to diminish wickedness as much as possible, for otherwise he would inflict useless suffering. Yet we have to suppose that he inflicts punishments—infinite and eternal according to the most logical theologians—in such a way that the reforming influence is a minimum and the suffering a maximum. If a human ruler admitted that the punishments inflicted by his laws had very little deterrent effect, but argued as a set-off that he kept the greatest part of his subjects in perpetual confinement and incessant torture, we should certainly say that, whether by his misfortune or fault, he had a very ill-regulated kingdom.—*Leslie Stephen, "The Science of Ethics."*

Shakespeare and the People.

To hear all naked truths,
And to envisage circumstance, all calm;
That is the top of sovereignty. —Keats.

WAS Shakespeare a Tory or a Democrat? Numberless critics have attempted an answer to this interesting question, but in nearly every case, according to their own political learnings. Bernard Shaw, in the strange company of the *Daily Mail*, shares the opinion that Shakespeare was a hidebound reactionary in politics, and many Socialists have echoed the same views with the faithfulness of gramophones.

Other men, other views. Professor Dowden had doubts whether he should label Shakespeare "Liberal" or "Conservative," and the poet, Swinburne, found that the author of *Hamlet* was a Democrat. On the other hand, Lord Morley considers Shakespeare was a Feudalist, and to Mr. William Archer he was an aristocrat. Mr. Frank Harris finds that he was a gentleman, whilst the Conservative press always hail the great dramatist as a "sound Tory." Amid this babel of voices the plays and poems of Shakespeare provide the only key to the Master's political sympathies, and the evidence contained in them should make clear what Shakespeare really thought and felt.

Shakespeare, as revealed in his works, was above party feeling, and did not find ill alone in the meanest of his fellow creatures. Shakespeare lived, it is well to recall, at a time when the monarch might claim divine right without being laughed at. He wrote in days when Democracy in its modern sense was as unknown as the aeroplane or the submarine. Shakespeare's detachment from the theological turmoil of the spacious days in which he played and wrote ought, in themselves, to supply a guarantee that he could suspend his judgment in matters political, no less than religious. Shakespeare has many messages for his countrymen, but few more valuable or more opportune than that party is a natural bane. That message is implicit, and to discerning readers, explicit, in his works, beyond cavil and dispute. There is no need of tearing text from context in the plays, and fathering the views of his puppets on Shakespeare himself. As well might we make Shakespeare a murderer because he was the author of *Macbeth*, or a lunatic because he wrote *King Lear*.

Sir Sidney Lee, to whose untiring industry in Shakespearean scholarship we owe so much, points out that the Master often states both sides of a question by various utterances placed in the mouths of his characters. This is a distinguishing mark of his mind, for it is few men who can do this, and still fewer poets. It was this extraordinary power of holding the scales firmly that caused John Ruskin to say that Shakespeare was not only unknowable, but inconceivable. The angry utterances put into the mouth of a man-hater like Timon of Athens, or the bitter outbursts of Coriolanus, do not prove that Shakespeare himself was hostile to the people. Nor do they make Shakespeare inferior to Milton as a poet, because Milton was a fiery Republican, whilst Shakespeare introduces kings, queens, and princes, among his puppets.

The truth is that Shakespeare stood for no class. He is the poet of all, rich and poor alike. He cannot legitimately be made to support the people against the aristocrat, the sovereign against the citizen. All may learn from him; the monarch the necessity of good government; the people that the kingly state is not always to be envied. The statesman may learn that popular verdicts are unstable, and the agitator that order and contentment are essential to a country's prosperity. Shakespeare did think about political

matters. He had opinions, but in him the artist was always stronger than the politician.

Shakespeare was quite democratic in his treatment of women in his plays. Indeed, he was far in front of his contemporaries in this respect, for he depicts women as being in every way the equals of men. The brilliant and witty Beatrice is more than a match for the smart Benedick, and Emilia holds her own against the villainous Iago. In the play of *Macbeth* it is the lady who has the master mind, and her husband is as clay in her hands. What comradeship, too, there is between Cæsar and his wife, and Brutus and Portia. What tribute there is in the welcome given by Coriolanus to his wife, quite in "the high Roman way." As Ingersoll well says, "Shakespeare has done more for women than all the other dramatists of the world."

Consider, too, Shakespeare's broad view of men. As in the case of Shylock, the Master rose superior to religious prejudices, so, in the case of Othello, he ignored prejudices concerning race. He had, too, a democratic dislike of men who "having before gored the gentle bosom of peace with pillage and robbery, make wars their bulwark." "How soon mightiness turns to misery" could be taken as a motto for all Shakespeare's historical plays. "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown" is Shakespeare's as well as Henry the Fourth's comment. Does not Richard the Second put a mine of experience in brief space when he says:

Sometimes am I king
Then treason makes me wish myself a beggar,
And so I am; then crushing penury
Persuades me I was better when a king.

Shakespeare's political aloofness is shown in the words:—

Whiles I am a beggar, I will rail,
And say there is no sin but to be rich,
And being rich my virtue then shall be
To say there is no vice but beggary.

What searching criticism is in the passage:—

How quickly Nature falls into revolt
When gold becomes her object.

A similar idea is in the following:—

Plate sin with gold,
And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks;
Arm it in rags, a pigmy's straw doth pierce it.

These words, if written to-day, would be regarded as democratic. Three centuries ago, when the people had few rights, Shakespeare held the balance steady. The quality of justice was as little strained in him as the quality of mercy. The profound and intimate knowledge of mankind which went to the making of his matchless genius was not unmingled with pity. He was great and good enough to say, "There is no darkness but ignorance." Shakespeare stands, not for Toryism, nor for Radicalism, but for Humanity, which existed before all party and political shibboleths, and will survive them all.

MIMNERMUS.

During the long Middle Ages the evolution idea made no advance. Finally it began to retrogress, when Greek natural philosophy shared in the general suppression of the rationalistic movement of thought of Arabic origin. Later the hard and fast conceptions and definitions of species, developed in the rapid rise of systematic Botany and Zoology, were grafted upon the Mosaic account of the Creation, establishing a Special Creation theory for the origin of each species. Later still, when it was discovered in Paleontology that species of different kinds had succeeded each other in time, the "Special" theory was again remodelled to cover a succession of creations extending down almost to the present day. Thus an ecclesiastical dogma developed into a pseudo-scientific theory full of inconsistencies but stoutly maintained by leading zoologists and botanists.—H. F. Osborn, "From the Greeks to Darwin."

The Myth of Jesus.

XI.

(Concluded from page 602.)

It is an idle notion that by any kind of operation we could restore a natural and harmonious picture of a life and a human being from sources of information which, like the Gospels, have been adapted to suit a super-natural being, and distorted, moreover, by parties whose conceptions and interests conflicted with each other..... Every endeavour of the most recent delineators of the life of Jesus, however grandiloquently they may have come forward, and pretended to be enabled by our actual sources of information to depict a human development, a natural germination and growth of insight, a gradual expansion of Jesus' horizon—from the absence of all proof in the records.....discloses the true character of their essays as apologetic artifices devoid of all historical value.—D. F. Strauss, "The Old Faith and the New," 1874; pp. 87-88.

PROFESSOR DREWS notices the remarkable fact,—

that the ostensibly earliest Christian writings lay so little stress on the words of Jesus that Clement, James, *The Teaching of the Apostles*, etc., quote the words of the Lord without expressly describing them as sayings of Jesus; that Paul himself seems to know nothing of them, since, as we saw, there is not a single clear case of his referring to sayings of Jesus, even where the similarity of idea ought to have reminded him of them, or the context should have actually compelled him to quote the authority of the master for his views. How is it that, if Weiss is right, the words of Jesus played hardly any part in the early days of Christianity?¹

Because, the idea of ascribing these "Sayings of the Lord" to an actual historical person was the concept of a later period. The average Christian believes that the teachings and beliefs of the New Testament came as something absolutely new and original to the Jewish and Gentile world. As a matter of fact there was nothing revealed by Christianity that was unknown to the world ages before the Christian era. As the great Hebrew scholar, Emanuel Deutsch, pointed out:—

Such terms as "Redemption," "Baptism," "Faith," "Salvation," "Regeneration," "Son of Man," "Son of God," "Kingdom of Heaven," were not, as we are apt to think, invented by Christianity, but were household words of Talmudical Judaism.²

Even the claim made for the originality of the moral teachings of Christianity, once so vehemently defended, is now abandoned; Christian scholars now admit that the moral teachings of the New Testament were well known long before our era. The Rev. W. O. E. Oesterley, in the introduction to *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, a Jewish work composed, he says, between the years 135 and 104 before Christ, after pointing out parallel passages in this work with the New Testament, observes: "Some people may be inclined to ask where the originality of Christ's ethical teaching comes in if before Him there existed Jewish teachers whose ethical teaching appears to be on a level with that of the Gospel." Undoubtedly they will, and the reverend gentleman supplies the following diplomatic answer:—

The originality of Christ's teaching, which is abundantly clear from the Gospel records, did not prevent Him from incorporating into His teaching much that was good in what earlier teachers had taught. To speak of the influence of earlier writings upon Christ is incorrect, because there could be no scope for such influence to be exercised upon One in whom was all knowledge and understanding; but that does not mean to say that Christ would not have utilized the writings and teachings of others, especially if (as was very probably the case) a know-

ledge of the contents of such writings was current among the people. This should be borne in mind in reading the following extracts, chosen from a number of similar import, which reveal an astonishingly high ethical standard in the pre-Christian parts of our book.³

As we do not believe that Christ, or anybody else, did possess "all knowledge and understanding," this explanation will not avail, and the fact remains that he incorporated "into His teaching much that was good in what earlier teachers had taught," and that these teachings "reveal an astonishingly high ethical standard in the pre-Christian parts of our book." As this work is published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge at the popular price of half-a-crown, being one of "a series of Texts important for the Study of Christian Origins," edited by the Rev. W. O. E. Oesterley and the Rev. Canon G. H. Box, Canon Charles being responsible for the translation, it indicates a disposition to realize facts hitherto ignored or denied by the official representatives of Christianity.

That there was a pre-Christian cult of Jesus among the Jews before Christianity is upheld by many competent writers. Professor W. B. Smith devotes a section of his *Ecce Deus* to a consideration of "Jesus the Lord," in which he points out that "The Lord" means the Jewish God Jehovah. Professor Drews has a chapter in his work *The Christ Myth* on "Jesus as Cult-God" in Jewish sects; Mr. J. M. Robertson devotes a section of his work *Pagan Christs* to a consideration of "The pre-Christian Jesus-God."

"According to this," says Professor Drews:—

Jesus (Joshua) was originally a divinity, a mediator, and God of Healing of those pre-Christian Jewish sectaries, with reference to whom we are obliged to describe the Judaism of the time—as regards certain of its tendencies, that is—as a syncretic religion. "The Revelation of John" also appears to be a Christian redaction of an original Jewish work which in all likelihood belonged to a pre-Christian cult of Jesus. The God Jesus which appears in it has nothing to do with the Christian Jesus. Moreover, its whole range of ideas is so foreign, even to ancient Judaism, that it can be explained only by the influence of heathen religions upon the Jewish. It is exactly the same with the so-called "Doctrine of the Twelve Apostles." This, too, displays a Jewish foundation, and speaks of a Jesus in the context of the words of the supper, who is in no wise the same as the Christian Redeemer. It is comprehensible that the later Christians did all they could in order to draw the veil of forgetfulness over these things. Nevertheless, Smith has succeeded in his book, *The Pre-Christian Jesus*, in showing clear evidences, even in the New Testament, of a cult of an old God Jesus.⁴

The evidence upon this point, continues Professor Drews:—

is above all supported by the circumstance that even at the earliest commencement of the Christian propaganda we meet with the name of Jesus used in such a manner as to point to a long history of that name. For it is employed from the beginning in the driving out of evil spirits, a fact that would be quite incomprehensible if its bearer had been merely a man. Now we know from the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles that it was not only the disciples of the Jesus of the Gospels, but also others even in his lifetime (*i.e.*, even in the first commencement of the Christian propaganda), healed diseases, and drove out evil spirits in the name of Jesus. From this it is to be concluded that the magic of names was associated from of old with the conception of a divine healer and protector, and that Jesus, like Marduk, was a name for this God of Healing.⁵

Drews cites from a magic-papyrus, found and published by Wesseley, the incantation, "I exhort thee

¹ Drews, *The Witnesses to the Historicity of Jesus*, 1912; pp. 252-3.

² Deutsch, *Literary Remains*, p. 26.

³ *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, 1917; pp. 20-21.

⁴ Drews, *The Christ Myth*, p. 62.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

by Jesus the God of the Hebrews." The words are found in an ostensibly "Hebrew Logos" of that papyrus, the tone of which is quite ancient, moreover, shows no trace of Christian influence, and is ascribed by the transcriber to "The Pure," under which name, according to Dieterich, the Essenes or Therapeutes are to be understood.⁶ Now, no Christian would speak of "Jesus, the God of the Hebrews." He would say "Jesus the Son of God," so there must evidently have been a belief in a God Jesus, and it was round this mystical God that the stories in the New Testament crystallized.

The Gnostics and the so-called heretics, who were the first Christians, maintained that Jesus was not a man of flesh and blood, but only had the appearance of a man, and as they were the first in the field they ought to know most about it. The story in the four Gospels is a later growth; they were not composed until the middle of the second century, neither were they written in Palestine, or in Hebrew, or Aramaic, the language of Palestine. They were written by foreign Jews, or descendants of Jews, in the Greek language, which was certainly unknown in Galilee among the working-class population from which the disciples were said to have been chosen.

Josephus, the historian of that time, tells us that the learning of Greek was not encouraged, and that he himself only learned it while he was in captivity at Rome. Moreover, the Gospel writers betray an ignorance of the geography, the manners and customs of Palestine, and the historical characters they are dealing with, which stamps them as strangers to the country.

The story of Jesus, his virgin birth, his expiatory death and resurrection, had been told, not only of one, but of many previous gods; as Renan remarked, the originators of Christianity seem to have swept the gutters of antiquity for their material. The Gospel writers were utterly uncritical and superstitious; they record the casting out of devils from men, the resurrection of a putrefied corpse, the cure of leprosy, walking on water, the magical multiplication of food, and many other impossibilities which are enough of themselves to condemn the Gospels as historical documents. We have no hesitation in declaring the story of Jesus to be a pure Myth.

W. MANN.

Modern Art and Revolution.

ART is, humanly speaking, an expression of disappointment. Man when he has fulfilled the necessities of providing food, shelter, and clothing, and has appeased the appetite of sex hunger will find something lacking in the make-up of the universe. Even the delirium of the most potent love leaves him with a sense of failure. He cannot find in the material universe the exact counterpart of the ideal which is contained in his thoughts, and it is in the endeavour to express the difference between the real and the ideal that art takes its place.

Naturally, in the course of evolution the human ideal changes. In no two successive historical ages have ideal conceptions remained identical; even as man's power to deal with the physical has changed, so have his mental conceptions and attributes changed. The expression of the difference between the real and the ideal, which is art, has according varied throughout the ages.

It is unnecessary to labour this point. To-day is a time of change, not only in ideals of art, but in every direction. The fragments of a system only remain after the cataclysm of the war, and although the various modes of art had shown a tendency to speeding

up their evolution before the war, the process has been much more marked since. This is merely a significant indication that man's ideals are in a state of flux. In the Victorian age ideals were fixed, and the difference between the physical and man's conception of what the physical might be was expressed in a static conventional manner. It is only necessary to examine the products of those artists who may be called the relics of the Victorian age to confirm this. When, however, the more modern painter's work—and it is in the realm of pictorial art that changes are most immediately apparent—is examined, it is easy to see that art is no longer static and conventional, but dynamic, filled with a new vitality.

It must be admitted that the artist's perceptions of the physical are more complete than the ordinary man's, which is tantamount to saying that the artist's ideals are more developed. It is only when the artistic product has become familiar to the average person that he takes to himself the ideal conception of which this art is the representation. That is, of course, the convention of the artist; he is the man who leads the way in the evolution of ideals.

It is unnecessary, perhaps, to say that the first impression which is made upon an ordinary man when he is brought into contact with a new system which is an expression of a recently evolved ideal, is one of shock. He is brought into contact, through pictorial representation, with a method of perception which he has not realized before. He is forced to look upon that part of the physical world which is represented in a new way, a way with which he is unfamiliar, and which at first gaze appears to him palpably absurd. That is the reason for the hilarious reception which some of our modern painters receive. Much benefit, however, is derived by the average mind from this source of disturbance. Even though the artist's work is received with laughter, it stimulates thought. A normal individual while he is laughing cannot help but wonder whether there is something in it, and the next time he looks at the object represented, will be inclined to see it in the way in which it was depicted by the artist. Thus his idea of the object is changed by the extension of his perception of it, and his ideal concept advances on the road of evolution.

One of the greatest crimes with which the modern artist is charged is lack of reverence. Possibly the artists themselves are proud to be irreverent, since that is probably the most constructive mental attitude that any man could adopt. Reverence, usually—although not always—is based upon fear, and it is very fortunate that the artistic temperament is not one which is easily intimidated—in other words, the artist has the courage of his convictions.

A striking example of this sort of irreverence can, of course, be cited in Epstein's Christ, although it is quite certain that Epstein himself had no thought of irreverence when he was producing the work. It is much more likely that he was really consumed with pity for this being who dared to have higher ideals than ordinary men, because, in fact, he was a part of the evolutionary process. Epstein probably had before his success the same sort of pity for himself, except that his artistic pride probably restrained him from over-weening self-pity.

At the same time, however, the usual complaint against modern art is that it deals too much in ugliness, it is too fond of the grotesque, the bizarre, or even the incomprehensible. All these complaints are perfectly justified from a conventional point of view. The exhibition of the Friday Club at the Mansard Gallery was a good example of the sort of work against which these epithets could be levelled. Edward Wadsworth's studies of the nude are certainly not beautiful, but at the same time they present some sort of grace of attitude and curves even in ugliness which has not

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

been noticed before, and it may, perhaps, be that the modern artist's leaning to crudeness of expression and realism is the outcome of a desire to point out that the physical as it has been dealt with has not been adequate, it has merely been stultified. By emphasizing this point the realist may induce contemporary society to aim at something different, thus once more standing in the vanguard of progress and stimulating the evolution of ideals.

Parallel with the artist's desire to advance is that of the social reformer. He also is irreverent; he also has ideal conceptions which are not as yet understood by the vast majority, but which are nevertheless capable of artistic interpretation, and by that means, of propagation. That is why the thought of revolution appeals so strongly to the adolescent who is consumed by the fire of ideals.

G. E. FUSSELL.

Acid Drops.

One of our Manchester readers asks us whether we can tell him how to hold a Christian when he starts wriggling. After careful consideration we feel constrained to give it up. And, really, we do not see what a Christian is to do except wriggle. If he faces the real point at issue he must soon give up his beliefs. The only way to escape this is to evade what is the essential question and discuss something else. If the Freethinker says that certain Christian beliefs are not true the Christian points out that a great many Freethinkers are blackguards. He argues about the character of the objector when he should be discussing the reasonableness of the resurrection. If he is asked for proof of the resurrection he replies with a story of the comfort he derives from religion. It is not merely the common or garden order of Christian who wriggles in this way, the big ones do it, but more elaborately. In short, we only know one way of preventing a fish wriggling on a hook, and that is not to hook him. And the only way to stop a Christian wriggling is not to hook him.

The Bishop of Woolwich has again been lecturing the porters at the Borough Market, and, as the *Church Times* carefully explains, he stood upon a barrow to do it—not a portable pulpit, mark you, but a common costermonger's barrow. Could one ask for a clearer proof that Christianity is the friend of democracy, or better evidence of the existence of a dare-devil spirit of reform on the part of the Bishop? No Freethought speaker would ever have condescended to address an open-air meeting from anything so common as a barrow. Nothing less than an elaborately built and upholstered platform, or the floor of a Rolls-Royce would have suited him. It was a wonderful sight! A Bishop on a barrow! And he ended in the cart.

A member of the Bishop's audience asked him why, if there was a God, he did not arrange this world differently? And I am afraid that the Bishop's reply was an illustration of what we have just said about Christians wriggling. He said that the evils around us were the evils of society, and God would not coerce man. He would not compel man to do right or prevent him doing wrong. But that was not a reply to the question asked, it was only repeating it in another form. It is quite obvious that God does nothing, that he does not force men to do right or prevent them doing wrong. And what the questioner wanted to know was, Why? If a decent man saw another doing wrong and could prevent him he would do so. And we do force people to do right when we can. No one thinks this a wrong thing to do, and if it is right with us why would it be wrong with God? Anyway, if God does nothing, it may probably occur to some of the market porters who listen to the Bishop that, between a God who does nothing and a God who does not exist there is not a very great deal of difference. And, perhaps, it may strike some that, while a Bishop on a barrow is a very impressive sight, a Bishop with a capacity for accurate reasoning would be still more impressive. But then, perhaps, he would not long be a Bishop.

The *Daily Chronicle* informs its readers that there is a judge in Washington who believes in Church as an alternative to gaol. Five young men who were charged with stealing motor car supplies were offered the alternative of a year's hard labour, or attending Church regularly for a year. They have chosen the Church. We suppose it is, on the whole, preferable, but suppose they alter their minds. Will the judge permit them to do half and half? And does the judge really think that attending Church for a whole year is such a terrible thing that it will for evermore stop these young men from stealing? If he does, it is not very complimentary to the Church, anyway.

Nottingham Corporation has refused to allow the public baths in the city to be used by the Latter Day Saints for baptismal purposes. How these religious people hate one another!

According to the report of the British and Foreign Bible Society the Bible is now published in 538 languages. The result is that from Bermondsey to Bongo Bongo Land folk are invited to believe that the yarn of Jonah and the Whale is gospel truth.

The Rev. J. F. Hewitt, in a letter to the *Guardian* (September 2) on the Modern Churchmen's Conference, says that Dr. Hastings Rashdall has allowed himself to be led into "unfounded theories," which are interesting to the student but "were never intended to reach the uninitiated." Such statements as Dr. Rashdall's, he thinks, "lessen seriously the impact of the Church's teaching on the present generation." The utterance is characteristic of the ecclesiastical mind and the intellectual ideals which it has always fostered. Mr. Hewitt is not concerned to discuss the truth or falsehood of Dr. Rashdall's statements, and appears to regard "unfounded" and "contrary" to the Church's traditions "as equivalent terms." The idea of an initiated and an uninitiated class in the community is also beautifully consistent with all the traditions of organized religion; but, unfortunately for the Church, what its office-holders intend nowadays is not a matter of such fundamental importance to the public as it used to be. Theories which interest the student interest the man in the street as well, and this interest will increase, despite the protests of the professional soul-saver.

For several weeks a somewhat hefty controversy raged in the *Yorkshire Post* on the subject of "Bible Teaching and the Higher Criticism." The Rev. W. B. Graham censures the attitude of "the hopeless reactionaries who, however unconsciously, are doing their best to destroy Christian faith by making it dependent on a literary acceptance of everything, however crude, set forth in the Old Testament." Mr. H. Drummond pleads that "an expurgated edition of the Bible would be safer for inexperienced minds." Another correspondent asks why men like Canon Barnes and some others remain in the Church and accept her emoluments. Now Canon Barnes, being an evolutionist, would reply that his conduct is merely response to environment and indicates superb vitality.

Mr. Frank Crane, in the *Century*, asks, "Suppose when you go to your room to-night, you should find God sitting there?" Well, it would only be one more proof of the existence of God, and surely we have more than enough of them already. To sit in a particular locality, however, would be a real achievement for a being who is everywhere. We venture the opinion that the position imagined by Mr. Crane would cause more distress to the average Christian, and particularly to the clergy, than to the Freethinker.

According to the *World's Work* the first English juvenile library was established at Nottingham in 1882, and since then special reading-rooms for children have been provided in other parts of England. The question of children's books crops up in our Press every now and then, and provides the usual text for homiletics. The "penny dreadful" used to be the butt of attack. This product,

however, was quite as moral as the unnatural piety of most children's books published in England, and far more exciting.

It is one of life's little ironies that a Nonconformist Temperance preacher should be named the Rev. Mr. Tipple.

Providence has been displaying more playfulness. A large part of San Antonio, Texas, has been devastated by a flood-wave, and over forty persons were drowned. Twelve inches of rain fell in thirty-six hours, and the damage to property is estimated at over two million pounds.

My kingdom is not of this world, said Jesus, but the clergy generally do not object to as large a slice as they are able to get. And when a church is on the look-out for a new preacher they well know the kind of bait to offer. Thus, we learn from the *Daily Express* of September 5 that the Franklin Street Congregational Church, Manchester (New Hampshire), is advertising for a "live" pastor and promises him a good salary, wealthy society, and an attractive edifice. It appears from the same paragraph that a £1,000 candidate was selected in July but he was "stolen" by a rival church in Kansas City. We hope that they were quite satisfied with their capture. But there is evidently in New Hampshire a chance for a preacher to receive a "call from the Lord."

The *Natal Mercury* says that the experience of issuing free tickets on the railway to clergymen has been unfortunate. They were issued to ministers travelling on "spiritual duty," but they have been regularly used for trips to the seaside and other holiday excursions. There are about two hundred organizations that at present have granted these facilities for travelling.

A quaint story comes from Maryport. The scholars of the Wesleyan Sunday-school decided in favour of horse-drawn coaches instead of motor char-a-bancs for their excursion. The reason given was that the ride would be longer, or seem longer.

The *Johannesburg Star* reports that the secretary of a missionary society belonging to the Dutch Reformed Church has just been sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment for embezzling £5,000 of the Society's funds. We have no doubt that the money, wherever it has gone will have done as much good as though it had been spent on missionary enterprises.

Sometimes members of the clergy let the cat out of the bag, and then the ungodly may well rejoice. For example, the other day Bishop Welldon told a newspaper interviewer that "Society" would regret its neglect of religion. Then he proceeded to supply evidence.

The rich are always few, the poor are many, but if it is made evident to the poor that the rich have forfeited their belief in God and the future life, then it is as certain as any event can be that the poor will claim a predominant share in the good things of this life as compensation for the loss of the hope which once centred in the life after death.

In our way we have been saying the same thing for years. Religion is useful so long as it serves to "dope" the people. When it fails to do that it loses almost all its value to "Society."

The Rev. H. H. Turner is a "whole-hogger," and will have no trifling with the character of Jesus. Preaching at Weston-super-Mare recently he said he wished to express his dissent from those Churchmen who had been saying that Jesus was not divine in the traditional sense of the Church. He could not agree with those who say that Jesus Christ was not omniscient, and that He did not pre-exist. We congratulate Mr. Turner on his adherence to the ancient creed. It is far more honest than to go on drawing salaries for preaching one doctrine and then

preaching another—more honest, but more stupid. And that is the pass to which the modern clergyman is reduced. He may preserve his honesty at the expense of his intelligence, or keep his intelligence at the cost of his honesty. But he simply cannot preserve both.

Mr. W. Grome-Merrilees says that he attended the recent Trades Union Congress and was surprised at the atmosphere of sincerity that surrounded the proceedings. At which we should think that any self-respecting working man would "damn his impudence and have done with it." He kept out of the way of the definitely anti-Christian element, but he found that his friend "John—" claims to be a "Pantheistic Agnostic." And that has set us wondering as to what kind of mental hybrid that is. We have never met the species, but we should gather that it is a kind of first cousin to a theosophical Presbyterian Atheist. And what kind of headway does the working class expect to make while they leave their affairs in the hands of men so muddle-headed as Pantheistic Agnosticism implies?

The Manchester Watch Committee has banned the exhibition of a film dealing with incidents from the early chapters of the Bible. Perhaps the Watch Committee considered the rib-story too much of a rib-tickler.

Bishop Welldon preached at Westminster Congregational Chapel, and the newspapers have been commenting on the novelty of an Anglican ecclesiastic officiating at a Nonconformist place of worship. It has taken Christians twenty centuries to arrive at even this state of friendliness with their co-religionists.

The census returns give the population of England as 35,678,530. According to the *Catholic Times* the total membership of the Church of England, Roman Catholic, Methodist, Baptist and Congregational Churches in England, including men, women, and children over seven years of age, is 10,833,795. The same authority says that the total Church attendance is estimated at seven millions. The figures are instructive. Translated into plain English they mean that in a country where not quite one individual in every five has any direct church association, the influence of organized religion is powerful enough to impose a certain measure of Sunday observance upon the whole community, and to evade payment of the rates which an equitable system of taxation would undoubtedly demand. There are two factors in the national life which make such a state of affairs possible. The churches are well organized and their opponents are not. All religious institutions, from the Established Church to the Seventh Day Adventists, receive the support of the privileged class and its Press. The moral for Secularists is summed up in the one word, Organize.

There was a debate the other day at Bermondsey Town Hall between Mr. F. Lane (Bolshevist) and the Rev. W. Lucas, Vicar of Christ Church, on the subject of whether Christ's teachings were in favour of Communism or not. When the question was put to the vote the Bolshevist was in a large majority. So Jesus Christ was, in the view of the meeting, a Bolshevist. Well, he has been almost everything else, and he might as well be that and so complete the catalogue.

But the whole question strikes us as an elaborate stupidity. The Jesus Christ of the Gospels had as much idea of a social theory, or of social organization as a cow has of climbing the Matterhorn. Of course, it suits the game of the clergy nowadays to pretend that a Palestinian travelling preacher, filled with ideas of angels and devils, with the approaching end of the world, and preaching the doctrine of celibacy, of passive obedience, and of the blessings of poverty, was deeply concerned with questions of land ownership and municipal organization, but why others should help them play the game is something of a puzzle. Working men and working class leaders who permit themselves to be fooled in this manner deserve all they get—and they will certainly get it.

C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

September 25, Newcastle-on-Tyne; September 26, New Herrington; September 28, Greenside; September 29, Chopwell; October 2, South Shields; October 9, Manchester; October 16, Glasgow; October 17, Cullercoats; October 23, South Place, London; October 30, Birmingham; November 6, Swansea; November 13, Leicester; December 4, Friars Hall, London; December 11, Birmingham; December 18, Golder's Green.

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.

T. J. HALL (Belfast).—It is impossible to give a categorical answer to your question. One would want to know something concerning quite a number of circumstances which have evidently escaped your observation. The order in which the information was given, whether the answers given were precise and definite, without any "fishing" or feeling the way, the possibility of unconscious suggestion, all these are important matters. It is not altogether a question of honesty, but of ability to look in the right direction for a probable explanation.

T. MOSLEY.—Pleased you liked the articles. Mr. Cohen hopes to publish his book in which Spiritualism is reviewed some time towards the end of the year. We have received the book, but think very little of that class of literature. These mind-training experts are most usually quacks—perhaps that is the reason there is so good a market for their wares. We will deal with the question of Materialism so soon as an opportunity presents itself. We note what you say about the Rev. Frank Ballard's determination to deal with our *Theism or Atheism?* soon. We shall not allow the threatened trouncing to disturb our sleep.

A. A. PHIPSON.—We can put it in a few sentences. There is no such thing as a Jewish nation. There are only people of different nationalities who profess belief in the Jewish religion. And to attempt to found a State where the only thing in common is religious belief is decidedly a step backward.

F. C. HOLDEN.—The papers are being sent to the address you gave, but we have heard nothing further as yet. Probably the time has been insufficient.

J. D. ALLEN.—We were not concerned with Sir Robert Stout's action in political matters, but noted the fact that a London newspaper had noted that he was an Atheist. And that in an English newspaper was worth noting. The usual plan is to describe such as of "liberal opinions," or to say nothing about it. It was a spasm of honesty that deserved encouragement.

J. P. HARDING.—Thanks for letter. It is very difficult to get Christians to face the genuine question that they should face. When they do the result is certain.

H. S. MILLER.—Received and shall appear as soon as possible.

T. BROWN.—*Bible Romances* is at present out of print. We intend republishing as soon as it can be managed.

J. V. COLLINS (Manchester).—See "Acid Drops." We are obliged for what you are doing to secure readers. If only each of our friends would lend a hand we should soon double our circulation and treble the influence exerted by the *Freethinker*.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Cohen lectures twice to-day (September 25) in the Socialist Hall, Royal Arcade, Newcastle-on-Tyne. The afternoon lecture will be at three o'clock on "The Doom of the Gods." In the evening at 7 he will speak on "The other side of Death." Admission to both lectures will be free, but there will be some reserved seats at one shilling each. The tickets may be had from the Secretary at 107 Morley street, Newcastle. Tea will be provided at a café adjoining the Hall for those coming from a distance.

The National Secular Society's Executive is trying the experiment of a course of Sunday afternoon lectures at South Place Institute during October. The lecturers will be Messrs. Cohen, Lloyd, Moss, McLaren, and Whitehead. Full particulars will be announced later. We are making the information public early in order that London Freethinkers may make a note of the dates. We shall rely upon their doing what they can to assist in making the meetings a success.

Some time ago we mentioned that the Executive had in hand the execution of a Trust Deed for the holding of the funds of the National Secular Society. The Deed is now complete and for the future the funds of the Society will be held under that instrument. The trustees are five in number, three of whom are the President, Secretary, and Treasurer, in virtue of their office, and two others representing the non-Metropolitan Freethinkers. The Deed has been carefully prepared, and its principles are the principles and objects of the National Secular Society. Care has also been taken to see that the Annual Conference retains complete control of the Society's business.

We venture to regard this as a decided step forward. A Trust Deed is the basis upon which all the Nonconformist Churches of the country receive and hold their funds, and the Deed thus removes one more mark of distinction between the legal standing of the N.S.S. and religious organizations. Those Freethinkers who wish to benefit the Society by a legacy after they are dead, or by gifts during their lives—by far the better plan, as they can see what is being done with the money—can do so feeling that the money will be held with the proper legal safeguards as to receiving and expending. The money will be received by the Trustees on behalf of the Society; it will be banked in the name of the Trust, and administered in accordance with the principles of the N.S.S. And the accounts will continue to be, as hitherto, under the direction of a member of the Incorporated Society of Accountants. It would rejoice some of the Freethinkers who have fought so bravely in the past could they realize that this much has been achieved at last. We mentioned, at the time that the Secular Society, Limited won its historic victory in the House of Lords, that this would only be a preparation for further steps along the road to religious equality. This is one of them.

Our next step should be to concentrate on the abolition of the Blasphemy Laws. When the general election comes along it should be the duty of Freethinkers to bombard all candidates as to whether they are in favour of the abolition of these relics of mediæval barbarism, and to see that they make their influence felt. Mr. Cohen has in hand a pamphlet dealing with these laws, and the reason for their abolition, which will be published by the Executive so soon as he is able to get it ready for the

press. When it is ready it should be the duty of all to give it the widest circulation possible. The infamy of the Blasphemy Laws is so patent that there are many thousands of people, who while not agreeing with our opinions, would yet support us in the fight for freedom of speech.

We are asked to convey through this channel the thanks of Mrs. Mapp and the Manchester Branch of the N. S. S. to members and friends for their help and co-operation in the "American Tea" on September 17. The gifts included a variety of useful articles, and the sale left the Branch with £17 2s. 6d. to be placed to the credit of its funds. And from what we know of the Manchester funds this will be well spent during the coming season.

Fulham Works and Highways Committee have decided in favour of Sunday games, and are recommending the Council to open the tennis courts and bowling greens on Sunday. The Committee have also decided to open the parks and open spaces for public meetings on Sundays. We should like to see some Freethought speaking going on there. Perhaps our Freethinking friends will see what can be done in that direction. If it is too late for this year the matter might be kept in view for next season.

The Swansea Branch commences its winter's work with a Musical Lecture from "Casey" in the Elysium, High Street. There will be an Organ Recital at 6.30. Admission to the lecture will be one shilling. We hope to hear that the hall was crowded.

Theism or Atheism?

III.

I AM not at all surprised that some "Freethinkers" have expressed disappointment at my remarks on Mr. Cohen's book, but I still hope that here and there one may be found who will see that they have a different aim in view, and till this is clearly perceived we shall continue to be at sixes and sevens. Possibly, some Atheists think that a desirable consummation, I do not; but hope that we may understand one another, which is a very different thing.

For, speaking quite dispassionately, am I not right in saying that the aim of the *Freethinker* and of Mr. Cohen's book is wholly destructive? It is to prove that ninety per cent. of our fellowmen are believing a lie, and that the best you can say of some of them is that they don't believe what they profess. But I start with a different conviction. It is that when A has proved to his own satisfaction that B is a fool, probably neither of them has gained anything, but A certainly has lost heavily. What is it but a loss to have added one more fool to the long list?

Again: Mr. Cohen's arguments are all very well on certain premisses. These premisses—though nowhere explained—appear to be very different from a Theist's. Till they are closed up I cannot learn what Mr. Cohen has to teach me. I am bound to assume that when he invited all Theists in this and other lands to discard their interpretation of life, their hope, their consolation in sorrow and their strength in temptation, he is sincerely convinced that he has something better to give them. If so I ask, as a hungry learner, that he will say a little more distinctly what it is. We probably agree that life is difficult; that to behave always to one another as brothers is no light matter; let me add to this that, for my part, I have failed so often and so egregiously in the sacred duty of brotherliness that I am anxious to get any help that Mr. Cohen can give. I say it in all sincerity; I want to gather from him what he has to teach. So I ask that he modifies somewhat his method of teaching. For having been a professional teacher for forty years or more, I know that it is very

easy to fail in it, and there is no way of teaching more certain to fail than to begin by telling your pupil that he is wrong. To teach anything at all, except a lie, two conditions are necessary; first, you must make clear to yourself what exactly is the truth you want to impart; next, you must note as well as you can what of truth there is already in your pupil's mind, that you may build your truth on it, for "all learning is a combining of the self-evident."

So in asking, as a pupil, Mr. Cohen who writes that he may teach, I use a pupil's privilege, and hint that my teacher may better his method if he gives up denouncing my beliefs and expounds his own. It is only praiseworthy in Mr. Cohen that he wishes to clear the Theistical mind of error, but the only possible way of doing it is to plant his abundant truth on my fragment and in so far as it is true it will be welcome. By "true" I mean, if it does for me that which my fragment has already done; if it makes me love a sunrise more, and poetry more; and if it unites me to my fellows, and to strangers, aye, and to adversaries, I shall lose no time in expressing my grateful thanks. For one of our teachers has justly said, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

But why, then, talk of Wonder and Humour? For this reason. I cannot help inferring from several letters that some Atheists are determined not to admit that the positive Theistic creed has any meaning whatever. They hate the creed, and that being so—as far as I can see—the first thing to be done by a reasonable Theist is to show that hatred of the creed rests on a misunderstanding. For history gives plenty of instances of truth being denied so pertinaciously that there must have been a definite prejudging of the truth as hateful, and that prejudging may have been quite conscientious.

Every great scientific discovery has been violently opposed by scientific men as well as by ignoramuses, and yet later on established as truth. Take such an instance as that of Bodington, a medical man who, in 1830, published an account of his having cured several cases of consumption by open-air treatment. By other doctors consumption was held to be incurable; but the evidence for the new treatment one would have thought was irresistible. Yet it was laughed out of court as an absurdity and postponed for seventy years, while meantime Bodington's critics could point to nothing but failure. Nothing can explain this sort of resistance to truth except that there is a genuine desire not to accept it. The same thing applies to the resistance among military men to the introduction of the breech loading rifle.

Now there are a great many Atheists who remain quiescent, but the writers in the *Freethinker*, for the most part, betray an animus against the bare notion of Theism. As long as that animus remains it is idle to argue, a waste of time. What I have tried to do is to show that there is this much to be said for Theism, *viz.*, that the more you persuade yourself that the Universe is a mechanism, *i.e.*, that no spiritual forces have anything to do with it, the more you are depriving yourself of Wonder. Similarly, denial of Free Will involves the death of Humour. I am glad to hear that Mr. Cohen is writing another book, and hope that these two subjects will be dealt with more adequately than they have been hitherto.

Another reason for not combating Mr. Cohen's arguments is that he makes it impossible for a critic to say whether he is contradicting his own premisses or not. Very often Mr. Cohen denies—somewhat fiercely—that there is any sense in any doctrine implying spiritual influences. But now and again, as when he admits his belief in love and brotherhood, he allows reality to those influences. He tells us, what I guessed before, that he gives a very high place in his estimates of human qualities to those which are exceedingly

difficult to account for if the Universe is mechanical. My theory of this state of things is that Mr. Cohen, like all others who have any feeling for what is "good," is constantly straying beyond the horizon of the mechanical and setting a value on things which come from the vast world beyond, which would soon become as real to him as it is to us if he did not meantime struggle to believe that there is no such thing. This, I trust, he will also clear up. I am putting the question in a different form in my next and last article.

One more point. One critic tells me that my remarks are "misty." I have no doubt they are. But that is a very slight reason for thinking them untrue. When I hear a mathematician talking about the Differential Calculus his talk to me is strangely misty. And the odd thing is that if he goes on to talk of the Integral Calculus, though he is said to be nearer still to the centre of the matter, and his words are conveying still more of truth, they become more misty still. Mistiness is just as likely to be a symptom of truth as of a lie. The difference between the two must be determined on other grounds. A vast number of people will tell you that their deepest, firmest, and most vital convictions rest upon foundations which they decline to explain, and could not if they would. They are not always among the fools of mankind.

When we look round us on the Universe and learn something of its marvels our minds naturally take up one position or another; either postulating an unseen Divine Artificer and Upholder of all things, and giving law to man, or denying that there is more than what we can see. The latter appears to be Mr. Cohen's position, but if I am not mistaken he has not laid it down very clearly whether he accepts certain doctrines or not which belong to a world outside visible things. The more restricted human thought is to the evidence of our five senses the better an Atheist is pleased. But has it ever been so restricted?

When an Atheist expresses a cordial belief in love and brotherhood as a principle of the conduct of life, is he restricting his thoughts to "sensible" things or is he drawing ideas from a state of existence which lie beyond the evidence of the senses? I don't mean that love belongs wholly to another world, certainly not; all we know of it belongs to the manifestation of it in this world. But I am asking if his belief in love does not indicate that he is assuming the existence of some kind of life different from ours, and spiritual because unseen.

For supposing an Atheist's belief in brotherhood were drawn solely from things of this world, from what he has seen of human life, could it be said that his belief is based on any solid foundation? Is there any valid evidence that people who act consistently on the principle of loving their neighbours have more of what the world considers happiness to be, than the cold and calculating man who knows on which side his bread is buttered? If not, then the belief rests on some evidence not drawn from facts of this life and the verdict of history. Again, the belief is no light fancy. When it reaches the point of really influencing a man's conduct it gives him strength to set all his inclinations at defiance and show the finest elements of the unselfish character. But on what is it based? Sometimes this question has been answered by the assertion that experience shows how love conduces to happiness. But again I ask, does it? Have the Freethinkers who hold the belief strongly and consistently, that is, I hope, all of them, seen enough of brotherhood in actual practice to be able to convince themselves that it rewards its votaries with worldly prosperity? (I use that expression to confine the argument to the point at issue. If a happiness is meant which is not of this world, then my plea is conceded, and the Atheist, while trying to restrict his thoughts to this material world, has been obliged to stray outside his boundary).

My contention is that the Freethinkers profess to base their theory of life—a very good theory indeed—on a very tiny area of facts. For notice, they make it smaller than they need by discarding all evidence which might be drawn from the history of Christianity. Even if all possible support for the theory were gathered from that history and from the behaviour of us Christians to-day, it would amount to very little.

An Atheist's belief in love surely rests on something deeper than this. I am convinced it is the divine Spirit within him which gives the belief and enables him to act upon it. If we are to understand each other this point should be made clear.

Another tantalizing reticence in Mr. Cohen's book is his treatment of Sorley's most important volume, *Moral Values and the Idea of God*. There the above argument is the theme of the whole book, and treated with a massiveness, a sustained sense of where the centre of the subject lies, and with such penetrating insight that I cannot help rating it as a real masterpiece. But Mr. Cohen picks one little surface hole—as he reckons it—in the argument and ignores the whole of the rest of the book. Why? The reader is bound to ask Why?

But the practical present-day question will always be the most interesting, and I will conclude these notes with stating it clearly. A Christian's view of love—no matter how far he falls short of it—is that it is to embrace all mankind; even those outcast and deluded folk who believe firmly and hopefully and increasingly in an invisible Creator and Sustainer of the Universe; nay, even those who, apparently, only profess the belief and belie it in action. Is not a brotherly Atheist bound to view these multitudes with kindly eyes? Nay, more. Is he not bound to show some little respect for beliefs which his neighbours tell him are, to them, the source and secret of all joy and hope and confident endeavour; that is to say, not to vilify them with "flouts, gibes, and sneers" unless he can offer them something very much better?

E. LYTTLETON.

Shaker Celibacy and Religion

III.

(Continued from page 598.)

The normal sex life precludes psychic erotism, which is the essence of spirituality. In their morbid development there come those extremes of sexual hyperaestheticism which are the very essence of "spiritual union" with gods and ghosts. Those who are in any way inhibited for a normally satisfying sexual life easily make a virtue of their misfortune, and achieve a compensation by means of the so-called supernormal or superhuman exaltation of their spirituality that is their psychological erotism. This is accomplished by the simple trick of adopting a new and spiritual explanation for commonplace facts of the neurosexual organism. But the subjective emotional conflict is not thus eliminated. Consequently, the victims of this sort of self deception may become very vehement in their denunciation of the normal relation as well as very morbid in their desires for gratification. The difficulty of restraining their own sexual impulses is measurable by the intensity of their devotion to social purity. This is the psychogenetics of the endless war between the flesh and the spirit—between works and faith—morals and grace, the religion of authority and the religion of personal experience or of the spirit, etc., etc.

The character of the conviction which Ann Lee carried among her followers is plainly indicated in her biography: "The ministration of power over all sin, attended with visions, revelations and other spiritual

gifts, was the seal of Mother Ann's testimony to those who received it." These, of course, are the well-known accompaniment of erotic hyperaestheticism, the symptoms of hysteria.

The ardour of her religious followers led to many violent scenes after her release from prison. The band of believers was small but noisy. They attracted the attention of many outsiders who were amused at the pretensions of this female Christ. The divine services of the little group were often interrupted by tumultuous mobs, attracted by the shouting and singing and contortions of the believers. Physical encounters were frequent. Ann Lee was often severely and cruelly abused by pious ruffians, who several times arrested her in addition. In reading the descriptions of mob behaviour under the influence of intolerance one may be reminded of its similarity to mob behaviour now directed against industrial and economic radicals. Violence against Ann Lee was followed by accounts of her miraculous escapes. Even members of her own family are accused of beating her severely, but of course God again determined to prevent real pain.

On being asked by Joseph Meacham how it was that she, a woman, not only presumed to teach in the church but was even the Head of it, Ann Lee replied :

The order of God in the natural creation is a figure [symbol] of the order of God in the spiritual creationAs in nature it requires a man and a woman to produce children, the man is first and the woman is second in the government of the family; he is the father and she is the mother; and the male and female children must be subject to their parents and the woman subject to her husband, who is the *first*; and when the man is gone, the right government does not belong to the children, but to the woman; so is the family of Christ! "¹

In the choice of this sexual analogy we see a sex determinant showing that the achievement of complete sexual indifference had not been attained. So when Jesus, the male manifestation of divinity, is gone Mother Ann Lee, the female manifestation of divinity and the bride of Christ, naturally becomes the mistress of the godly household, the leader of the spiritual children. Herein we see what Adler calls the masculine protest. To compensate for the feeling of inferiority, which her femininity among other circumstances seemed to impose on her, she replaces Jesus to become the leader of the spiritual world.

"When I was a child," says Ann Lee, while giving instructions about rearing children, "my mind was taken with the things of God, so that I saw heavenly visions instead of trifling toys. Do all your work as though you had a thousand years to live and as though you were going to die to-morrow." In this turning away from childish things for godly things, I seem to see a premature precocity—and its emotional conflicts. For the feeling of inferiority, as a mere human below average, there came a compensation in the thought of unusual intimacy with things superhuman. Those who cannot adjust their feelings to things as they are often and easily achieve compensations in a world of heavenly or spiritual phantasy.

On another occasion she said of herself: "Once my feet walked in forbidden paths; my hands handled unclean things, and my eyes saw nothing of God aright. Now my eyes see, my ears hear, and my hands handle the Word of Life." By such statements Mother Ann shows that the feeling of inferiority had a double foundation, namely, her femininity and her consciousness of sin. The child overburdened with a sense of sin practically always supplies the dynamics thereof from sex-shame, because their "hands handle unclean things."

The Shaker party arrived in America in 1774.

¹ Biog., p. 146.

Material necessities at first limited their activities. They put the laws of God above the laws of man. The revolutionary spirit of America came in conflict with Ann Lee's pacifism and again brought her to prison, this time at Albany, N. Y. This incarceration made her the centre of attention by a group of orthodox revivalists and started a new era of success.

Thoroughly obsessed by her violent passions and the fearful belief in the necessity of suppressing them, quite inevitably her conflict resulted in libidinous dreams. In one of the "astonishing visions" she had a "full and clear view of the mystery of iniquity and of the very act of transgression committed by the first man and the first woman," that act being one terminating their virginity.

Thus by viewing this "very act," she came to know "that the very foundation of man's loss centres in the work of carnal coition." She refused now to live in sex relation with her husband, and was by him deserted for another woman. Sex suppression combined by her sexual polarity of mind necessarily combined to develop an increased intensity of sexual feeling associated, of course, with like increase in the intensity of her religious emotions. Ann Lee's sexualism now permeated her every religious thought, furnished the determinant for such philosophy as she professed, and the imagery in her forms of speech.

"As the first Eve was the first to violate the temple of chastity and to lead man into the work of generation," so it was the most fitting that God should choose Ann Lee, a woman, to break the charm of sexual sin which binds mankind, and thus make her "the manifestation of the spirit of Christ in the female line." Spiritual regeneration was divided into two parts, which Mother Ann likened to the acts of generation and parturition. She proclaimed the "dual order of the Kingdom of Christ." As there is a "God the Father," so there must be also a "God the Mother." "It is the spirit in the male and female by which souls are begotten and born in the regeneration." "As Adam had a body containing the substance of the male and female before Eve was taken from it, so had Christ," and "Mother Ann" is Christ's Eve. "The marriage of the Lamb is come and his wife hath made herself ready." Thus a psychological inhibition against a normal sexual life with her husband seems to have found compensation in a phantasmal lover, who is an idealized father, an elder brother, as well as a husband, to love whom was for her a psychological enjoyment of erotism and a sinless compromise with passion.

THEODORE SCHROEDER.

(To be Concluded.)

From a Notebook.

Freethinker.—To hyphenate or not to hyphenate, that is the question. Shall it be (a) Freethinker (b) Free Thinker, or (c) Free-thinker? Is it a question of being and becoming? Being is a state of ripeness, and this condition is not permanent; it is the Apollonian state, and it is liable to the revivifying attack of Dionysos—or decay. (a) He had better beware; he cannot mark time on the *Age of Reason* or the *Mistakes of Moses*—or rationalism. With regard to (b), there is a sturdy independence about the detachment, although the adjective may be the enemy of the substantive. But what becomes of our free thought if this statement be true, that "All knowledge is eternal and is available to mental sympathy"? We then may be as Free Thinkers, free to drink deeper of the Pierian spring—for our sympathy extends farther than the logic chopping of the candle-burners and biscuit-eaters. (c) This stands or falls together; the bar between supports the two, a crutch as it were, and if neither is vigorous enough to stand like Zarathustra's tree on the hill—let them both crash to the level of herd thinking whose Saviour has put his followers in "the fetters of false values." Who is for the independ-

dence and isolation of the adjective and substantive? The sun never rests and has never had a companion—he is majesty in isolation. The wind is more free than the thistle-down blown to a new home; maybe our Free Thinker partakes of the attributes of the Wind and the Sun.

Christian.—To be able to feel is common to all; and many do not get beyond this stage in their development—it is common to the lowest forms of animal and insect life. Pure thought, and by this we mean the thought that would accept a truth even if it were calamitous, would reject all those sensuous attacks on the citadel of reason, such as perfume, subdued lights, stained glass windows, vestments, music, nasal intonation, graven images of Christ on the cross, pictures of the Virgin Mary, and bedside comfort. All these forms of the scuttling of reason are accepted by the Christian. He is a person of *feeling*; if he is not a fallen angel he has far to rise before he may take any rank with those who have used reason on their feelings as a horseman would use a curb on a restive horse. Modern chaos is the result of living by “feelings” instead of by thought. Is a Christian an Anarchist? The citadel of reason is the holy ground of the destiny of man; the clodhopping feet of the sacrificers of thought on the altar of feeling should not be allowed to make this spot a market place for shouting about “feelings.” “I feel good, I feel righteous, I feel better for the sermon”; no one would deny him the pleasure of his feelings. It is when he wants to impose his feelings as *thought* on those who have long left his primitive stage that free thought says “touch me at your peril.”

Irish Comedy.—At the mention of the word “shift” in the “Playboy of the Western World” we heard a ripple of feminine laughter from the stalls. The play is rich in holy oaths, and although it may be nothing but a satire on the romantic ideas of women, there was the inevitable priest—a sort of Mrs. Grundy in trousers. What would Father O'Reilly think? We should desire something better than our moral standards laid down by priests; their minds are warped by the theory of “original sin.” They look on the world with policemen's eyes. C. de B.

Obituary—With a Protest.

We much regret to report the death of an old and highly respected Freethinker under circumstances which throw discredit on the authorities of this country. Robert Miller was one of the best known workers in the Free-thought movement in the North of London, and he was to be seen wherever and whenever central meetings of the cause were held. A Polish Jew, he had lived in London since 1879, and was known as a high-minded, generous, and clean-living citizen. His main interests were Free-thought and the welfare of his race in Russia, Poland and elsewhere; he never belonged to any political association, and his love for England was never in doubt. On April 30, 1919, to the consternation of his family and his friends, he, together with about one hundred other Russian subjects, was suddenly arrested, and within two days was deported without being given any opportunity to arrange his affairs or to make provision for the future of his family. For some time nothing was heard of him, and the authorities could not, or would not, give any information as to his whereabouts. He was eventually heard of from a prison camp in the Dardanelles, and later still from the prison at Novirossisk in Russia, where the whole of the deported Russians were interned. Then, in December, 1919, there was silence, although the letters sent to him were not returned. Everybody hoped that he had been discharged from the prison and that he would be heard of and in due course restored to his family. Recently, however, news has come to the relatives of another of the deported Russians that Mr. Miller died in the prison while under British control. The Government took Mr. Miller from his home, declined to give him his liberty when he arrived on Russian territory, and even after his death was not courteous enough to inform his family, who had more than once applied to the authorities for his whereabouts. The whole episode is disgraceful and reflects little credit on those concerned. We remember Mr. Miller's service with gratitude, and we express our sympathy with his widow and his daughter.

Report of Lecturing Tour in Stockport. September 11 to September 17.

STOCKPORT BRANCH has only recently been formed. It consists of a number of enthusiasts, mostly young, of an exceedingly keen disposition. These members rallied round the meetings in fine style, which eagerness, if continued, should provide Stockport with one of the finest Branches in the movement. All the meetings of the week were held in Mersey Square, and after the first we found a crowd ready to form immediately we commenced each evening.

Each meeting was well attended, except one evening when the rain prevented a beginning, and much interest was displayed, taking the form of questions, and on one occasion resulting in platform opposition from a Christadelphian, who also promised to reply at a meeting he was arranging for the following week. A little opposition from several Communists gave me an opportunity of showing on which side religion has been on questions affecting Labour.

Many membership forms were distributed, and I shall be astonished if the local Branch does not considerably benefit by the week's work. We boomed the forthcoming lecture of Mr. Chapman Cohen's at Stockport Labour Church early in the New Year, and altogether impressed the point of view of Secularism upon the town. Local unemployment prevented very large collections, but we managed to dispose of a fair quantity of Freethought literature. I congratulate the Stockport Branch upon its enthusiasm.

GEORGE WHITEHEAD.

Correspondence.

METHODS OF WARFARE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE “FREETHINKER.”

SIR,—In “Acid Drops,” to-day, you very rightly say that the outcry against poison gas in war is sheer cant. Perhaps you can find room for the following passage from *De Bello Germanico*, by the late T. L. M'Cready:—

“Good God! I shout in horror, “would you really do such a fiendish deed as that?”

“Such a fiendish deed as that?” says John. “Kill these German invaders off with poisoned food? Oh you foolish contradiction on two legs! Do you think it fiendish to kill him with gunpowder and lead? Was Socrates' executioner a fiend and John Brown's hangman an angel? Don't you see that it is the *killing* that is the fiendish deed, and not the doing of it in one way rather than in another? And do you think there is a civilized man in existence, base enough to actually kill a man for the sake of saving from destruction a little of that wealth that is so easy to produce? Don't you see that if there were civilization would be an impossibility? The difference between a lot of robbers quarrelling over their plunder and a civilized community is just in that very point, that the robbers will commit an amount of murder sooner than lose a little wealth, while the civilized man will sacrifice any amount of wealth sooner than commit a single murder.”

G. O. W.

“THEISM OR ATHEISM”?

SIR,—In discarding old beliefs the honest seeker after truth has no regrets, and the sentimental attachment felt for long cherished illusions is lost in the joy that accompanies the acquisition of some new conviction. Having abandoned the Theistic position without pursuing my convictions to their logical conclusion, I sought refuge in Agnosticism of the “suspended judgment” type. After reading your *Theism or Atheism?* I see clearly that this position is wholly untenable, and in my case was based on a false conception of what Atheism really is. In acknowledging my indebtedness to you I cannot refrain from expressing my admiration for the clearness with which you present your case. No wonder Dr. Lyttelton evaded the main issues of the book! In thinking of him I am forcibly reminded of what the late Rev. Chas. Marriott, then Dean of Oriel, once said to Holyoake: “Mr. Holyoake, I would rather reason with a thinking Atheist than with a Dissenting minister. I find the minister has always a little infallibility of his own

which you can never reach; while the Atheist, who proceeds upon reason, is open to reason, and there is a common ground upon which evidence can operate."

To Theists the work is staggering, to non-Theists convincing, and even confirmed Atheists cannot fail to read it without going forth with renewed energy to preach the gospel of man's emancipation from the reign of the gods. As in all your works, the evolution of the God-idea, the social origin of morals and the universal law of adaptation are insisted on throughout. They are the foundations of Atheism and your exposition carries conviction with every line. More power to your elbow, Sir!

VINCENT J. HANDS.

"THE MYTH OF JESUS."

SIR,—“Unorthodox” objects to Dr. Carpenter's description of the journey of Jesus to Golgotha as *long*, because he possesses a work which says it was about 150 cubits from the Damascus Gate. Several different places have been located as the site of Golgotha by different authorities, and probably Dr. Carpenter had in his mind one of the other locations.

Professor George Adam Smith, in his article on “Golgotha” in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, dealing with the traditional site, says the tradition does not reach back further than the fourth century, when it is said to have been indicated by the Emperor Constantine; the evidence, he says, “is precarious, and by no means strong enough to dispose of rival sites. Other sites for Golgotha have been suggested on several positions to the north of the city.” And concludes: “On the whole we must be content to believe that the scene of the greatest event in Jerusalem's history is still unknown.”

But even if Golgotha was close at hand it would make no difference; the events related could not have been all crammed into one night unless they had been thoroughly rehearsed beforehand. Added to which is the fact that the Sanhedrim could not sit at night on a capital trial; the trial had to commence in the day and finish in the day, and if a verdict of guilty was given the sentence could not be pronounced until the following day.

Then, again, when they bring Jesus to Pilate's house in the middle of the night they find him up and ready for business! No Roman guard would allow their master to be called up in the night at a minute's notice to conduct a criminal trial. The same objection applies to Herod. And all this takes place in the middle of the night, when, as Renan remarks, an Eastern city is as silent as death. The fact is the writers of this story had no knowledge of Jewish or Roman manners and customs. What they were concerned with was the production of a drama, for which all the materials were already in existence long before the Christian era.

We have only indicated a few of the discrepancies in the Gospel accounts, there are many others. W. MANN.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C. 4) : 11, S. K. Ratcliffe, “A Bible of Civilization.”

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand) : 6, Mr. E. Burke, “Charles Bradlaugh.”

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Regent's Park) : Bradlaugh Sunday, 6, Mr. A. D. McLaren, “Bradlaugh : Atheist and Republican.”

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park) : Bradlaugh's birthday commemoration, Messrs. Owen, Shaller, Hyatt, Corrigan, Gopal C. Bhaduri, Cole, and others.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

CHOPWELL (Miners' Hall) : Thursday, September 29, at 6.30, Mr. C. Cohen, “Why Secularism would Benefit the World.”

GREENSIDE (Co-operative Hall) : Wednesday, September 28, at 6.30, Mr. C. Cohen, “Christianity's Collapse.”

LEEDS BRANCH N. S. S. (19 Lowerhead Row, Leeds) : 7, Mr. J. E. Bishop, “Consciousness : Normal, Abnormal, and Super-normal Aspects thereof.”

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate) : 6.30, Instrumental and Vocal Concert. (Silver Collection.)

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Socialist Hall, Royal Arcade) : Mr. C. Cohen, 3, “The Doom of the Gods” ; 7, “The Other Side of Death.”

NEW HERRINGTON (Miners' Hall) : Monday, September 26, at 6.30, Mr. C. Cohen, A Lecture.

SWANSEA (The Elysium, High Street) : 7, “Casey” will deliver a Grand Popular Musical Lecture. Tickets 1s., tax payable at doors.

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