

The

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## Views and Opinions.

### More About a Future Life.

One of our readers is good enough to send us a copy of the *Scotsman*, which contains a report of an interview with Sir Oliver Lodge. The question of what is fantastically called "psychic phenomena" was not discussed at the recent meetings of the British Association, and one of the representatives of the *Scotsman* sought to make good the omission by interviewing Sir Oliver on the subject. As was to be expected, this distinguished scientist—I use the expression in all seriousness, because in his own department Sir Oliver Lodge is a very distinguished man—re-affirmed his conviction of the immortality of man, and hoped for a time when scientific men would undertake the serious study of what is generally known as Spiritualism. On that it may be remarked that scientific men are not so oblivious to what takes place as Sir Oliver's remarks would lead one to believe; but having in their hands already an explanation, in general terms, maybe, of these "psychic phenomena," they do not, naturally, feel inclined to settle themselves down to the discussion of a theory that is unwarranted and useless. And it is certainly worthy of note that, in the presence of a scientific gathering the claims made on behalf of Spiritualism are put much more modestly than they are put elsewhere. As a matter of fact, there is no scientific evidence on behalf of Spiritualism. There is evidence offered, but it is not scientific. For when we have a number of men observing the same set of occurrences, and find that there is no agreement as to what occurred, or as to what is the meaning of what occurred, to call that scientific evidence is a gross abuse of language.

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### All About It.

But at present I am not so much concerned with Sir Oliver's belief in Spiritualism as with his conception of a future life. And that well illustrates what I have said so often in this journal, that when one carefully analyses what people have in their minds when they talk of survival beyond death, one is faced with propositions that are so self-contradictory, and so inconceivable as a whole, as to stand self-condemned. As I do not wish to misrepresent, even un-

intentionally, Sir Oliver, I will give his exact words. "I am convinced," he says,—

that existence is continuous, that there is no break of continuity on death except in so far as concerns the material body; that we go on, the same individuals as before, carrying with us our character, habits, powers and personality generally—carrying them through that adventure or episode in existence for better or for worse, and unable to separate ourselves from ourselves, however much some of us might desire it; that we still continue in a region of progress, growth, development, and enlargement of knowledge and powers, much as we do here..... Whatever our condition may ultimately grow to be, the immediate condition after death must depend very largely upon the way we have used our lives and opportunities..... We here are limited by our bodily senses, which only tell us about matter, and to everything else in the universe, even to the ether, we are blind. Now the intelligences on the other side have no material bodies, and therefore cannot make any direct impression upon us because of our limitations.

Hence, the need for mediums to act as go-betweens—although why if these departed spirits can operate through a medium, or can impress the brain of a medium they cannot impress the brain of those with whom they wish to communicate, is a trifle puzzling to the uninitiated.

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### The Same—With a Difference.

We are in the next world what we are here. We have the same powers, the same characters, the same capacity for progress and knowledge. We are exactly the same persons—*minus the conditions for being the same persons, and the conditions that would make our being the same of the slightest value.* For character and habits are not things that are of value in themselves, but only in relation to a given environment. Honesty of speech and action would be without meaning under conditions where lying and stealing were impossible. Character and habits are, considered as things, as definite as arms and legs or an anatomical structure. Kindness is of importance in a world where people may be injured by unkindness, bravery a thing to be admired in an environment where cowardice means neglect of duty or injury to one's fellows. So if our character and habits are to be of any value in the next world it must be a world which is identical with this one. And we should like Sir Oliver Lodge to explain—as he believes that all this has been arranged by a "Power" for our benefit—why in that case we could not as well stay where we are? And if the next world is not similar to this one, then we should like explained what use characters and habits developed in this environment will be in one that is totally unlike it? And it would be impertinent on the part of a mere layman to do more than remind a scientist of Sir Oliver's standing that death is, in the evolutionary process, one of the prime conditions of the development of life. We should dearly like a scientific explanation of what human nature would be like in the absence of death. And I suspect that if Sir Oliver sets himself seriously to that question he will find his theory of progress and development in some other

world where death does not exist tumbling about his ears like a house of cards.

Incomprehensible.

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The great point is that we get rid of our material bodies while still continuing as the same individuals. Now, there is no question that our intelligence is developed, and our individualities are built up on the bases of the senses. And so far as we use the word "intelligence" with an intelligible connotation, we are expressing not a *thing* but a relation. But when we get rid of the material organs what have we left? Let anyone try to think of seeing without an organ of sight, or hearing without an organ of hearing, and he will realize the emptiness of such expressions as maintaining one's own personality while getting rid of the conditions on which that personality is built up and perpetuated. Neither sight, nor hearing, nor touch, are things in themselves that are expressed through a medium, and so may exist apart from the medium. They are all the expressions of certain "material" structures in relation to a given environment. To speak of them in any other way is not to talk science, it is not even to talk sense, it is a mere parade of sounds without the least scientific significance. What, in the name of all that is reasonable, is a man like in the absence of a material structure? How do we know it is a man when we see it? And how do we see it if there is nothing to see and nothing to see it with? If we were to speak of another world where there is brightness without there being anything that is bright, everyone would agree that we were talking nonsense. Are we talking sense when we speak of man minus all that goes to make up man as we know him?

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The Power of the Past.

At the back of this cloud of meaningless expressions there lies a history, and that history reminds us of many other survivals which, while once full of significance, are gradually divested of all meaning. To the men of long ago the conception of man living again was implied in all they thought about him. The conception of a biological organism was as yet unborn, even that of a biological death was non-existent. What man then saw in his fellow man was a material structure plus another and smaller man which, so to speak, pulled the strings from the inside. And when the—to him—catastrophic disaster of death took place the natural conclusion was that this little internal copy of the man seen had gone somewhere else. In that stage of culture the expressions used by Sir Oliver Lodge really had a meaning. But as time passed, and as knowledge grew, this idea of the man seen and another man unseen no longer fitted the facts. It was realized that to reduce the conception of man to the level of contemporary knowledge we were forced to deal with the manifestations of human activities as functions of a definite organic structure. And at this point language begins to play us tricks. For we are compelled to use the language of a past generation. The instrument is extremely faulty, but we have none better. And inextricably mixed with the words we use are expressions which imply the very significations we are trying to displace. Thus, when we speak of man living again, freed from the limitations of the material organism, or possessing the same powers that he now has in a world entirely different from this one, we are expressing ideas that were full of meaning to the primitive thinker, but which are quite meaningless to the modern scientist. In the case of poetry the use of expressions that once connoted statements of supposed actual fact, are innocuous, even helpful, because in that connection they are frankly recognized as no more than metaphors and serve to express emotion in given circumstances. But when we come

to the region of science different considerations arise. Here our aim is, or should be, to make expression tally with exact meaning. In matters of ordinary science we all strive to do this. It is only where science and religion touch that we repeat the old expressions as though they corresponded with actual fact. It is one of the many cases in which the savage perpetuates himself in the life of to-day. And it is quite certain that if Sir Oliver Lodge were dealing with this question of survival free from early religious prejudice, he would be the first to realize that it involves so many gross contradictions of what we actually know to be the case that he would at once set it on one side as being unworthy of further consideration. The alleged facts of the seance room might still remain for treatment, but he would then be thrown back on the search for some explanation other than that of survival. Contradictory things cannot be true, either in logic or science. And we are to-day in a position to rule out of court as scientifically unjustifiable the conception of man as we know him surviving beyond death. And man as we do not know him, man so transformed as to present none of the characteristics by which we know him as man, is not man at all. If we are interested in survival at all it is the persistence of man as we know him. Nothing else matters.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

### "Mithraism and Christianity."

THE above is the title of a remarkable study in comparative religion by the Rev. L. Patterson, M.A., vice Principal of Chichester Theological College. It is a small book of about a hundred pages, and published by the Cambridge University Press, but though of slender bulk it is brimful of excellent matter. The author, while professionally holding a brief for Christianity, is yet exceptionally fair and impartial in his attitude to Pagan religions in general and to Mithraism in particular. He has his bias, of course, but he succeeds marvellously well in keeping it in check. His knowledge of the literature of the subject is both extensive and accurate; but no amount of knowledge can prevent a convinced Christian from being more or less unjust to another religion. Mithraism may have been "an essentially pure and manly religion," but as compared with Christianity it was woefully inadequate and imperfect. The first chapter in *Mithraism and Christianity* deals with "Origins and Attributes." Mr. Patterson frankly admits the antiquity of Mithraism, thus giving the lie direct to those theologians who maintain that the Mithraic rites and ceremonies were taken over and assimilated from Christianity. This was the contention of the Church Fathers. Justin Martyr, for example, brazenly affirms that the demons foresaw and parodied the Christian mysteries beforehand. Tertullian goes so far as to assert that "the Devil, by the mysteries of his idols, imitates even the main parts of the Divine mysteries; and that he baptizes his worshippers in water, and makes them believe that this purifies them of their crimes." That is a dazzling compliment to the genius of his Satanic Majesty. The fact, however, is that Mithra was worshipped and sacrificed to as a Deity several thousand years before Christ. Mr. Patterson quotes from the Rigveda to the effect that Mithra was closely associated with the Indian Supreme Being, Varuna, to both of whom prayers and sacrifices were offered. In the Rigveda, composed about two thousand years B.C., Mithra is thus described:—

Mitra, when speaking, stirreth men to labour:  
Mitra sustaineth both the earth and heaven.  
Mitra beholdeth men with eyes that close not.  
To Mitra bring, with holy oil, oblation.

From India, his first home, Mithra passes to Persia,

from Persia to Babylon and Asia Minor. Mr. Patterson says:—

As early as the fourteenth century B.C. we find the name of Mithra on a cuneiform inscription of a contract made by the Hittite king with the ruler of the Mitanni, a tribe in northern Mesopotamia. He is invoked together with Varuna and Indra.

According to the earliest tradition Mithra was born from a rock. Justin Martyr and Origen declare that Jesus, also, was born in a cave. In some quarters Mithra was called the son of the great God Ormuzd, and perhaps of a virgin mother. He was also spoken of as the Word. Zarathustra speaks:—

I invoke Mithra, the lord of wide pastures,  
I invoke the holy, tall-formed Sraosha,  
I invoke the most glorious holy Word.

Mithra was further known as the Mediator between the unknown and inaccessible God and the human race. For the Persians he occupied a middle position between Ormuzd and Ahriman, doing battle for the former. At Babylon he was identified with the sun (Shamash), and the sun was believed to occupy the middle position in the circle of the planets. But the emphasis, of course, is to be laid on his moral and spiritual mediatorship as the world's Saviour. Mithra symbolically sacrificed himself in order that men and women might be saved from sin and hell by mystic union with him as risen from the dead.

Enough has now been said to show that Mithraism was a religion of personal redemption by mystic union with the dying and resurrected Saviour-God, Mithra. Other Saviour-Gods, union and communion with whom secured deliverance from the guilt and power of sin, were Osiris, Adonis, Attis, and Dionysus. In Mithraism the outward act of initiation was baptism, which symbolized the cleansing of the heart from all corruption, and fellowship with the risen Lord materialized in a sacramental meal of bread and water or wine. It was the close resemblance of these rites to the Christian sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper that led the Church Fathers to allege that the former were but copies of the latter made by demons. Mr. Patterson minimizes the resemblances and magnifies the differences between Mithraism and Christianity to the utmost; but the fact remains that in all essentials the two religions are marvellously alike. How are we to account for this close similarity? Mr. Patterson, while under-rating them explains the resemblances thus:—

The progressive theory is the only one that does justice to all the facts. It admits the similarities without denying originality of conception. It is ready to believe that all men think more or less alike, but, not that their thoughts are all on the same level of truth and purity. We have accepted, with some caution and diffidence, the principle of progressive revelation, and applied it to the Old Testament, and also to the New Testament, and early Church doctrine. But if religious teachers and thinkers are to do justice to, and derive full benefit from, the science of comparative religion, they must extend this principle so as to cover the whole range of human thought. If we believe, like St. John, that the Logos did enlighten every man, then all the great sages and teachers must have possessed some knowledge of the Divine Will (p. 96).

Now, without a doubt, evolution does apply to all the religious cults known to us, and Mr. Patterson is of opinion that, "from the Christian standpoint we ought not to be afraid of the evolutionary or progressive view of religion." It requires a bold man to entertain that opinion, because the origin of religious beliefs is of such a nature as to absolutely discredit them. Professor Gilbert Murray puts the case as follows:—

There is the primitive *Euthenia*, or Age of Ignorance, before Zeus came to trouble men's minds, a

stage to which our anthropologists and explorers have found parallels in every part of the world. Dr. Preuss applies to it the charming word "Urdummheit," or Primal Stupidity. In some ways characteristically Greek, in others it is so typical of similar stages of thought elsewhere that one is tempted to regard it as the normal beginning of all religion, or almost as the normal raw material out of which religion is made (*Four Stages of Greek Religion*, p. 16).

On the assumption, then, that such was the beginning of all religion, or that ignorance is the normal raw material out of which religion springs, does it not inevitably follow that the evolutionary or progressive theory offers the theologian no support whatever? As a matter of simple fact, every supernatural belief is rooted in complete ignorance and fostered on fear, and is it not undeniable that in proportion as Secular knowledge grows such beliefs die out? It is notorious how few whole hearted students of Nature are supernatural believers. Gods exist only as cloaks for ignorance, and multitudes of people fancy that they know things of the existence of which the sole evidence is their blind belief. Blindness is an essential characteristic of every supernatural belief. Tennyson understood this quite well when, in the introduction to *In Memoriam*, he exclaimed:—

We have but faith: we cannot know.

Now, look at the facts as history presents them to us. Mithraism, as a cult, is no more, and many other religions have ceased to be. Why? Mr. Patterson makes one enormously significant admission. In the Preface he recognizes "the fact that an idea is found in the heathen religions does not prove it to be false, and worthless, nor, on the other hand, does the survival of a belief in Judaism and Christianity necessarily prove it to be of permanent value"; but the question is, what does prove a supernatural belief to be of permanent value? Certainly not its survival on the author's own showing. And yet he maintains that Christianity supplanted Mithraism because of its superior merits, a claim which he does not even attempt to substantiate. The real explanation, however, is radically different. It is beyond dispute that by the third century Mithraism was more widely extended than Christianity. It was the religion of the Roman army, both on the Continent and in Britain. It held Ireland under its sway. As Harnack points out, Mithraism "permeated almost all the Western empire," and about A.D. 180 became of immense "importance as a universal religion." "It came to be recognized at Rome that the imperial cultus and Mithraism were calculated to afford each other mutual support." On what ground, then, can we account for its sudden and total collapse, despite the wide extent of its diffusions? There were two reasons for it, one of which is supplied by Harnack in his *Expansion of Christianity*. This fair-minded scholar says:—

A glance of Cumont's map reveals at once the sharpest difference between the two religions; in fact, it points to the real reason why the cult of Mithra could not gain the day, and why its religion had to continue weak. For the entire domain of Hellenism was closed to it, and consequently Hellenism itself (Vol. ii. p. 447).

Christianity being still in the making, and more adaptable, became and continued for a time an intensely Hellenized religion, and so captured and corrupted Hellenism itself. Another reason for the downfall of Mithraism was the nominal conversion of Constantine to Christianity, and his forcing it upon the empire as its official religion. But Mithraism did not perish except as a separate cult, it still lived on in Christianity, which adopted and claimed all its fundamental doctrines as its very own. Did the change prove beneficial to the Western world? No honest student of history can return an affirmative answer to

that question. The history of Christendom is not calculated to serve as an irrefutable evidence of the truth of Christianity. On the contrary, the impression it creates is that as a moralizing and socializing factor Christianity has abundantly proved itself to be a curse rather than a blessing; a hindrance rather than a help to progress. Except for one period towards the end of the Middle Ages, it resolutely set its face against Humanism. But now, at last, its doom is knocking at the door, and the day is coming when it will be supplanted by Humanism, now more widely known as Secularism.

J. T. LLOYD.

## Byron's Religion.

I claim no place in the world of letters; I am, and will be alone.

—Landor.

The like will never come again; he is inimitable.

—Goethe.

BYRON is one of the most fascinating figures in English literature. He flashes through his brief life with a disastrous glory. An aristocrat, a man of illustrious descent, he championed the cause of the people. He was the Napoleon of passion and poetry, and, not only England, but Europe admired him. When he died a soldier's death at Missolonghi, Byronism became a fashion. From Moscow to Madrid armies of young men lengthened their hair, shortened their collars, and were in love with poetry and their neighbours' wives. Both supremacy in genius and personality belong to Byron. Astonishing, perhaps; but what a man, what a poet!

There was nothing narrow or insular in Byron. His genius crossed all frontiers. He roused attention throughout Europe. He moved the aged Goethe and the youthful Victor Hugo. What, said Castelar, does Spain not owe to Byron? Mazzini sounds the same note for Italy. Sainte-Beuve, Stendhal, and Taine speak of his power in France. He was the intellectual parent of Puschkin and other Russian writers, and the revival of Polish literature dates from Byron. Ecker-mann, and others, in Germany, help to complete the verdict of the Continent. Why? Byron was a great poet, and he was easy to understand. He deals rhetorically with elemental emotions, and he enjoyed the fame of being a rebel, an aristocrat in exile, a champion of the democracy. Eloquence makes the widest appeal, for it expresses with vigour the simple feelings of men. "Give me liberty, or give me death!" That is the kind of thing; a sonorous and impassioned phrase flung out to thrill the hearts of thousands. Byron's verse has this rhetorical quality. Verse upon verse of "Childe Harold" reads like oratory, grandiose and sweeping:—

Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean, roll!

You can almost see the outstretched arm, hear the resonant voice. The effect is enormous. "The Isles of Greece," and "Ode to Napoleon," and "Lines on Completing my 36th year," and other poems, have the oratorical note and ring. Listen!

The sword, the banner, and the field,  
Glory and Greece, around me seg,  
The Spartan, borne upon his shield,  
Was not more free.

There is music in it; the trumpets sing to battle. Nor is this all, for Byron had a Voltairean gift of wit and satire, a command of mocking phrase and rhyme. There he was no poseur, but all that was sincere in him became triumphant, and the writer of "Don Juan" is a deathless delight. At least, he was a man. Like one of the Greek heroes he was youthful and resplendent. Compared with many of his rivals his voice was as the roar of a hurricane above the whisper

of the ocean-foam. His burning words roused men like a tempest-blast. This man sang of Freedom, took up arms in her cause, and died in her defence. What would you have? Even his stolid countrymen were captivated, whilst his heroic attitude fascinated a continent.

Byron was a rebel. His sympathy with the revolutionary spirit showed his Freethought, and he tells us that all forms of faith are of equal uselessness:

Foul superstition, howsoe'er disguised—  
Idol, saint, virgin, prophet, crescent, cross,  
For whatsoever symbol thou art prized—  
Thou sacerdotal gain, but general loss,  
What from true worship's gold can separate  
thy dross?

"The Vision of Judgment," in which Byron's genius for satire has full force, is startling in its blasphemy. From its audacious opening, with the angels singing out of tune, to its close with old King George the Third practising a hymn, it is full of mordant satire of the Christian Religion. Every epithet hits, every line that does not convulse with laughter, stings. In the preface to "Cain," a poem as full of profanity as an egg is full of meat, Byron remarks sardonically that it is somewhat difficult to make the Devil "talk like a clergyman," and that he has endeavoured to restrain His Satanic Majesty within the bounds of "spiritual politeness."

"Childe Harold" is saturated with the nature-worship of Rousseau—the same Jean Jacques whose books were condemned solemnly by the Archbishop of Paris. In this rare atmosphere the petty religions of man all dwindle and disappear, "like snow upon the desert's dusty face."

Even gods must yield; religions take their turn;  
'Twas Jove's, 'tis Mahomet's, and other creeds,  
Will rise with other years, till man shall learn  
Vainly his incense soars, his victim bleeds—  
Poor child of doubt and death, whose hope is built  
on reeds.

Byron may have dreamt, like so many poets, of immortality; he certainly did not believe in it. How finely he apostrophizes this longing:—

Still wilt thou dream on future joy and woe?  
Regard and weigh yon dust before it flies,  
That little word saith more than thousand homilies.

He uttered a predominant mood when he wrote:—

My altars are the mountains and the ocean,  
Earth, sea, stars, all that springs from the great whole  
Who hath produced, and will receive my soul.

Leigh Hunt, his friend, says Byron was "an infidel by reading." Thomas Moore, who knew him well and wrote his life, admits that the poet was "to the last a sceptic." Apparent as his heresies are in his poetry, his letters, particularly those to his friend Hobhouse, show he was no Christian. In his correspondence with the Rev. Francis Hodgson he is even more emphatic. His scepticism deepened as he grew older, but far too early came "the blind fury with the abhorred shears," cutting the thread of his existence.

Few men so impressed themselves upon their generation. Tennyson has told us that, when Byron died, it was as though the firmament had lost some mighty star, in whose vanishing the world was left to the blackest night. When Byron went flashing and glowing down the troubled skies, trailing clouds of glory, his sudden quenching afflicted men as with the sense of some elemental phenomenon.

MIMNERMUS.

The highest type of the orthodox Christian does not forget; neither does he learn. He neither advances nor recedes. He is a living fossil embedded in that rock called faith. He makes no effort to better his condition, because all his strength is exhausted in keeping other people from improving theirs.—Ingersoll.

## Let Us Clear Our Minds of Cant!

THE end of the 'seventies and the beginning of the 'eighties was a crucial period in the history of British Rationalism. It witnessed the breakdown of the old crusted intolerance of British Respectability, *i.e.*, of the middle and upper class society of the time. The latter were ceasing to regard orthodoxy as an indispensable bulwark of the capitalist system, and this meant that the religious orthodoxy that had hitherto obtained had lost its strangle-hold on the intelligence of the educated population of the country generally. The obscurantists thus found the weapon of social ostracism, of which they had hitherto availed themselves with success to prevent the expression of Rationalist thought, more or less suddenly break in their hands. But the average man was still timid.

It was at this time that people began to avoid the traditionally offensive imputation of Atheism if one renounced a belief in a personal divinity, by styling themselves Agnostic—an appellation invented, I believe, by Huxley about the year 1868. The interest in the Theistic controversy was keen, but chiefly centred round the theological question of the existence of the Supreme Being rather than the ethical one of the moral value to be attached to such a being as the creator and orderer of the world around us, even if he did exist. The Agnostic was very emphatic in his disclaimer of the folly of attempting to prove the non-existence of the Deity—a method on which the supposed Atheist was alleged to base his negative proposition. I confess I could never see, while admitting its perfect legitimacy in logic, the extreme practical importance the Agnostic seemed to attach to his favourite distinction between the assertion (first expounded, by the way, by Kant in the *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft*) of the impossibility of proving by any device whatever the affirmative proposition—God exists; and the complementary assertion of the equal impossibility of proving the negative assertion—God does not exist. As I have just said, while its logical validity was incontestable, its practical importance seemed to me as good as nil, and hence it always struck me as a somewhat irrelevant proposition.

Be this as it may, for myself, at least, I always regarded the most important distinction between Theism and Atheism as one of ethics. I was of the opinion of the youthful Goethe who, when adjured by Fräulein von Klettenberg to seek reconciliation and forgiveness from God, replied that, considering all he had recently suffered, he thought, on the contrary, that, so far from God having any claim against him, it was he who had a claim against God, and that it was consequently for the latter to seek of him the reconciliation and forgiveness spoken of. Neither then nor since have I been able to see such signs of moral goodness on the part of the Creator and Providence of this world which would justify any human being in falling down and worshipping such a personality, if, with the theologically-minded, we postulate his existence. "By their works ye shall know them" ought to apply at least as much, if not more, to gods than it does to men. Hume saw this a century and a half ago, and, judging by the divine "works" as we know them in the world around us, I contend that fulsomely grovelling before their assumed author is unworthy of ethical human beings.

As regards the question of existence, I am willing to concede the bare possibility, constituted by inability to prove the negative, if the Agnostic or any would-be Theist find any satisfaction therein; but assuming the affirmative in the personal sense of the popular theologian and the man in the street, as I contend, simply lands us in the ethical dilemma of intellectual degradation by the worship of a being we know to be

unworthy, coupled with the moral degradation and hypocrisy in pretending to think him otherwise on the one side, and the open recognition of the Creator and Providence of the universe as the "enemy" on the other. It has always seemed to me to be the question of ethical value which distinguishes the true Atheist—the Atheist of principle—from the Theist. For the one no good intentions will excuse the author and Providence of this world for the evil and misery contained in it. For the other, the arbitrary assumption that all the evil will "come out in the washing" and leave but the good behind—an assumption to which "nature red in tooth and claw" gives no colour—affords a sufficient ethical justification of God and his ways as exhibited in the world of his creation and governance.

This question of ethical values, it seems to me, must bar any reconciliation between the consistent Atheist and the Theist in this dispute. The question of fact, of existence, is really quite a subordinate one. Although the Agnostic absence of proof of the negative may give the Theist the technical right to assume the existence of his creative personality—his God—yet the further question as to the moral worth of "God" is left untouched. "God" may exist, but the question still remains, Is he morally worthy of the worship of men? and this question must surely give pause to any man who thinks honestly and straightforwardly. If he answers it in the affirmative, at the very best he is driven to accept the position that his deity pursued good objects and that the end justifies any means to their attainment, so that, while it may be inadmissible for men to plead the unreserved right to do evil that good may come—and this notwithstanding the excuse of their limited sphere and power of action—it is an unconditional justification in the case of God, in spite of the hypothesis of practically infinite means at his disposal.

It may be noted that this ethical proposition, based on the indictment of the Deity as creator, orderer and "universal provider" of this world of sorrows, cuts at the root of Theism in a manner the mere question of existence does not. Barring a logical proof of the negative, it may be open to anyone to assume the existence of Deity; but it is not possible, I submit, in the same way, in the face of the evil and wanton cruelty of the world, to absolve God from moral guilt. I know that attempts are constantly being made to whitewash the author and governor of this world for the evil that he is responsible for, either directly or indirectly. I add indirectly, since it is customary for Theists to seek to exculpate their God from the moral guilt which must *prima facie* be attached to him by the paltry sophism that the evil is not willed but *permitted* by him. They fail to see that this only adds to the moral guilt the quality of meanness. To *permit* evil which one can avert, and to excuse oneself with the equivoque that one has not done it but only permitted it, is surely the lowest form of prevarication. For the man who has the courage openly to refuse homage to such a being we should, I think, reserve the scorned but nevertheless honourable name of Atheist, notwithstanding that we may admit the Agnostic "possibility" that the said being may exist, since we are unable to *prove* that he does not.

With the advanced Christian religionist of the present day, however, the Theistic question tends to fall somewhat into the background, or to shade off into a Pantheism in which personality in the Creator and Providence has very much "paled" as compared with the old frankly anthropomorphic notions. What interests the modernist Christian is not so much the "architect of the universe" as the character of the alleged founder of the Christian faith. This attitude has increased in emphasis with the progress of the dis-

solution of orthodox Christianity. The old religious consciousness having given up the notion that the God-idea was (1) to be accepted in faith as a bare dogma (2) that it could be proved by any of the three stock arguments exploded by Kant, or (3) that the nature of the problem admitted of its being in any other way validly shown to be even a probability, by reason, had to be content with the assurance of Kant and of the nineteenth century Agnosticism deriving from Kant, that the God-thesis could be just as little disproved as it could be proved. So with the Christ problem; the divinity-dogma evincing itself year by year as less and less acceptable to the modern mind, the Christian apologist has to content himself with reiterating extravagant adulations on the alleged unsurpassed and unsurpassable beauty of the character of the traditional originator of the Christian creed. The bare dogma of the divinity of Jesus and the artificial attempt to explain away its irrationality showing visible signs of failure to resist the assaults of his adversary, the Christian apologist has to fall back upon this third line of defence. His endeavour is to establish the Christian faith upon the traits of character displayed in a somewhat meagre and avowedly partisan account of a propagandist tour (or series of tours) of at most three years' duration. For it must be remembered that, such as it is and what there is of it, this constitutes the sole foundation upon which we can build our judgment on the moral character of the hero of the narrative. I set aside the controversy as to the historicity of the hero himself. For the sake of the argument I am willing to concede the historicity of the central figure of the Gospels for the nonce, and take my stand on the figure as there portrayed. This is the "master" whom Christians of every denomination profess to regard as the supreme type of human excellence for all time. We are all familiar with the wild and whirling words of ecstasy, real or simulated, with which this proposition is dinned into our ears as a truth no one can venture to criticize, much less to impugn.

E. BELFORT BAX.

(To be Concluded.)

## Praise and Blame of the Bottle; Or Christianity Nowhere.

Then did they fall upon the chat of victuals and some belly furniture to be snatched at in the very same place, which purpose was no sooner mentioned, but forthwith began flaggons to go, gammons to trot, goblets to fly, great bowles to ting, glasses to ring, draw, reach, fill, mix, give it me without water, to my friends, so, whip me off this neatly, bring me hither some claret, a full weeping glasse till it run over, a cessation and truce with thirst.—  
"The Discourse of the Drinkers," Rabelais.

WOMAN, wine and song make a formidable trinity; against the holy trinity of abstraction it wages a war, and more often than not, the trinity existing in thin air is vanquished. The bottle has more worshippers than the Bible; and Solomon knew more about human nature than St. Augustine. To contemplate our choicest slums one is not so much impressed by the number of drunken people to be found there as one is struck by the incredible number of heroic people who are sober in their gloomy surroundings. Drink is a way of escape when sanity becomes unbearable; this method is double edged, for it becomes a temporary blessing and in many cases a permanent curse. That it may be more of one than the other does not in any way prevent a continuous stream of apprentices to this time-honoured calling. A canon of judgment is frequently invoked in the words, "as drunk as a lord"—this, no doubt, some plebeian tarradiddle of respect to the fluid capacity of those who keep society from falling to pieces. Hamlet's step-father drank most royally—cannon proclaimed it to the heavens that the king had

emptied his goblet, and even modern writers have scribbled about mysteries under the cellar flap. The esoteric significance of the vine and the hop seems to us to be just as important as anything connected with ritual, vestments, or total immersion.

These and many other considerations were evoked by our visit to the New Theatre where Mr. Matheson Lang presents "Christopher Sly." It is a play wherein consummate irony, hidden by the grotesque, displays to the inward eye the joy and sorrows of life. It is romantic tragedy, and, if the late Wilson Barrett made the stage a pulpit, the author, Signor Giovacchino Forzano, has restored its function. The Churches we have always with us, but a glance down the theatre announcements will tell us that it is not so with good plays. One would imagine from the recent glut of legs and lingerie plays that national brains had dropped from their usual altitude. For this reason alone "Christopher Sly" deserves a generous welcome; an appeal to sense instead of senses may be quixotic, but Mr. Matheson Lang has taken the risk and from those who prefer thought to regressive instinct he deserves support.

There is no moral in the play, but this will not prevent anyone from finding a hundred. There is life clothed in colour, music, folly, and wisdom, and Destiny, the great chess player, moves his pieces for a little taste of each and puts them away in the box of oblivion. Christopher Sly, who sometime had more feet than shoes, is the vehicle of vicious stabs at life; he is a Parsifal, and Hazlitt thought that he belonged to the kin of Sancho Panza. It will take some time to remove the impression we received of Mr. Matheson Lang's rendering of the Bear Song. It may be a theft from Heine's "Atta Troll"; Heine would not object, for it is a mood suitable to a master of irony; it is that mood representing the terrible side of life that is fearlessly moulded by the dramatic genius, and presented in the rags of folly or the purple of kings. Perhaps the nearest to this mood that many of the present generation have been was during the late war. It is the zero of fearfulness, a standing on the threshold when the nerves respond to nothing; it is a feeling of having one foot in the grave knowing that you will have to put in the other foot, or if your time has not come you may take out the one foot—for a little while. Our modern Christianity has not scratched the surface of this world, and Freethought to do so will have to use a different instrument from rationalism.

In the first act there is excellent fooling; Sly is helplessly drunk, and the Earl proposes the deception. All are agreeable—even his friends, with the exception of John Plake the Player, and Dolly, the Earl's mistress. Here the note of forethought is sounded. A minority of two are sceptical; what if Sly should kill himself upon discovery of the trick? The Earl's answer to this is that he will have had a night's enjoyment. Sly is carried away amid cheering and laughter; in the memory of men and women now may be found a similar parallel, but we shall only in a slight manner define it. Nearly one million of our kind were crucified—and the world is indifferent; a John Plake or Dolly in those days would have stood in splendid isolation amid the braying and brawling of the most vulgar products of a disreputable civilization. Our drunken hero awakes in a magnificent bed, and he is surrounded by every type of flunkey, male and female. It is a mystery to the present writer that the lords of creation should have hands or legs or even digestive organs—so much is done for them. Sly is eventually baited, but not without a long struggle. He is sceptical, and a fine dramatic point is made when he declares that the flunkies are drunker than himself if they mistake him for their master. He is led on to a scene between himself and the Earl's mistress; when he experiences the

only reality, the pack of tormentors burst on them and he is buffeted and cudgelled into a cellar. The *Daily Mail* critic protests that the cellar scene is too long; above his comprehension may be the fact that the world could be placed in that cellar on the stage of the New Theatre. The world *is* in the cellar, and we shall never lack the type of Job's comforter like the Old Retainer who tells Sly that he once had three teeth knocked down his throat for spoiling the dog's food. He did not complain—he kept his job, and one wonders if this might not be one of those subtle thrusts that the *Daily Mail* critic did understand.

Sly breaks a bottle and opens a vein in his arm and dies peacefully, with an end to all his illusions. Dolly appears to him, but too late, in a scene depicting the truth of what we know of life when we view it as Matthew Arnold did. The false values of Christianity will always prevent mankind from seeing life clearly; we are now face to face with the result of two thousand years of teaching that man is a fallen animal; and, if we must moralize, the bottle is no escape from life's responsibilities. Religious fervour is no more efficacious than drunkenness; neither is of use—only the steady thought that man is a risen animal—a tadpole of an angel if you will—and that thought is the only thread that will lead us out of the maze and make us master of things is one of those affirmations that give life any value.

Mr. Matheson Lang is to be congratulated on his masterly performance; Miss Florence Saunders has intense emotional power and uses it to advantage, and the Old Retainer will remind many spectators of worldly wisdom. Mr. Arthur Whitby's study of John Plake is artistic, and the rest of the company do justice to their parts. In this play Christianity is nowhere, and for this reason alone it deserves the support of all Freethinkers, for they are tired, and rightly so, of the inane performances of dramatic Christianity in the pulpit or on the stage. Mankind is of more importance than Christianity, and the stage should be the mirror of the heart of man—not the village church.

WILLIAM REPTON.

## Acid Drops.

According to Bishop Edgar Blake (Methodist Episcopal Church) Methodism should take a leaf out of the book of the Roman Catholics and lay the same strong hold on their children and youth. What an assertion! What a confession! This is truly a case for the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. The little innocents will open their eyes wide when they see how the members of varied religions agree and love one another.

The *Universe* is not a bad name for a newspaper whose Church claims a monopoly of the religious market. A Welsh correspondent, writing in a recent issue, says that alarming developments have occurred in connection with the negotiations to secure common agreement for a system of religious teaching in the schools of Wales.

They mean that we shall have to fight to even hold to what we already have. Surely it is about time the Welsh laity made a decided move and showed the rest of Wales that Catholic men and women intend, come what may, to maintain religious instruction for their children. The Church of Wales and the Free Church Council have not yet realized that there are such things as Catholic schools in Wales. They must be made to realize this fact, and though it will probably mean a bitter controversy, yet it is our bounden duty to go out boldly and tell them that we shall not move an inch from our position. On the contrary, as missions enlarge and funds increase, we shall probably build more schools.

Wherever one turns the story is very similar. In most of the States of the Australian Commonwealth the Roman Catholics are exerting all their political and social

influence to secure subsidies for their schools. In U.S.A. also they are making increasing efforts to organize their own school system.

We commend the general tone of the preceding extract from the *Universe* to the notice of all who are interested in education. The real issue involved is a serious one and goes to the roots of national unity. Where Roman Catholics are not predominant in a country they form a sort of community within a community, and their separate schools contribute more than anything else to maintain this spirit of exclusiveness. Their aim primarily is not to make their boys and girls little Britons or Australians or Americans, but to make them little Roman Catholics.

Rev. A. H. T. Clarke, of Devizes, contributes to the July number of the *Nineteenth Century* an article in which he quotes from Weismann's *Studies in the Theory of Descent* (English translation) a passage declaring that the human mind craves for a spiritual First Cause, and must admit a teleological principle behind the co-operating forces of Nature. "If we conceive a Divine universal Power exercising Will.....we reconcile the apparent contradiction between the mechanical conception and teleology." This passage, with one from Kelvin, which was long ago repudiated by biologists, is made the basis for the following astounding assertion in the *Guardian* (September 16):—

Kelvin and Weismann boldly say that science to-day "compels" a belief in a divine universal benevolent Deity, not only "creating" but sustaining the world.

We have here an illuminating example of clerical methods of controversy. The English translation of the *Studies* was published in 1880-1882, and the German original in 1875-1876. In *The Evolution Theory* (English translation, 1904), which Professor J. A. Thomson calls Weismann's "crowning work," no support whatever can be found for the statement quoted. Here are two passages from this work:—

All this (adaptation) did not come about because of some definitely directed principle of evolution of a mysterious nature, which impelled them (species) to vary in this direction and in that, but solely through the rivalry of all the forms of life and living units, with their enormous and ceaseless multiplication, in the struggle for existence (ii. 379).

But all that involves a high thinking power that would enable us to recognize the pseudo-ideas of everlastingness and infinity, the limits of causality, in short, all that we do not know but regard as at best a riddle, will always remain sealed to us, because our intelligence did not, and does not, require this power to maintain our capacity for existence (ii. 395).

Mr. Clarke quotes jubilantly scientists' admissions that they have not proved spontaneous generation. This is Weismann's view on this head:—

I see no possibility of avoiding the assumption of *spontaneous generation*. It is for me a logical necessity (ii. 366).

In a general way we can quite well believe that an organic substance of exactly proportioned composition exists, in which the fundamental phenomena of all life—combustion with simultaneous renewal—must take place under certain conditions by virtue of its composition (ii. 370).

If one thing more than another shows the weakness, ethically as well as scientifically, of the average Theist and his ideals, it is his "convincing proof" of his own position and his criticism of his opponent's.

Mr. Harold Begbie, turgid, ponderous, and brotherly, contributes to the silly season subject in the *Daily Telegraph* on "The New Woman." The most interesting parts of his sermon are quotations from dead authors. His tirade against the degradation of the English race is ineffective, as that is exactly the logical state that results from Christian influences. His remark about "souls afflicted with adenoids" adds to the general information on the subject. Henceforth, the soul has a nose. And one wonders, if the nation were not in such a bad way, whether it would tolerate the maudlin slop of

Mr. Harold Begbie, who was also a bit of a poet during the war. The Lord's vineyard has some wonderful workmen in it, and a knighthood for Mr. Harold Begbie would just serve him right.

The following two advertisements appeared in the "Religious Announcements" column of the *Star* (July 30), one of the leading papers published in Christchurch, N.Z. :—

Evolution is now universally accepted, but the Clergy are hostile to it yet.

Man has not fallen, but risen, hence the bottom has fallen out of Orthodoxy!

We should like to know what big London daily would insert such advertisements. No wonder the clergy in New Zealand are making desperate efforts to get the Bible into the State schools!

At Marlborough Street Police Court a starving, out-of-work, man was sentenced to a month's hard labour for stealing a can of milk from a doorway. The milk of human kindness is not unduly prominent in this instance.

Dr. A. Churchward claims that man is a million years old, and that his nursery was Africa, not Asia. If correct, this solution makes the story of Adam and Eve look black.

The Wesleyan Reform Conference at Mansfield has passed a resolution condemning Sunday newspapers. Apparently, Wesleyans do not want people to have pleasant Sunday afternoons outside of their tabernacles.

Sir Robert Parks declares that the union of the Wesleyans, Primitive Methodists, and United Methodists is not a dream. Maybe, but it sounds like a nightmare.

As a memorial to the late Signor Caruso a giant candle, eighteen feet in height, will be placed in the Church of the Madonna, Naples, Italy. Severe Protestants will regard this memorial as a light thing.

"This is the most fatal summer for young children we have had for many years," declares a doctor in a London newspaper. What a comment on the hymn, "There's a friend of little children, up above the bright, blue sky"!

The Archbishop of Canterbury will lay the memorial stone of the Harrow School war memorial in October. We wonder if he will tell the Harrow boys that the clergy were exempted from military service, and that the Army chaplains received officers' pay and not the ordinary pay of the fighting men.

In the interview with which we deal elsewhere in this issue of the *Freethinker* Sir Oliver Lodge says that his investigations in Spiritualism "confirm the main truths of Christianity in a remarkable way." That is certainly a remarkable statement, to say the least of it. The main truths of Christianity are the divinity of Jesus and the Virgin Birth. And we should really like to hear in what way anything that has occurred to Sir Oliver Lodge can confirm the truth of those doctrines. He also said that Spiritualism has made possible many of the miracles that were thought impossible. Which miracles? Has it made possible the feeding of 5,000 people with a handful of food, with basketfuls of scraps left after the repast? Has it taught us how Jesus was carried to the top of a mountain by the devil and shown all the kingdoms of the world? Sir Oliver says that the Incarnation is a "vital truth." Well, it all depends upon what one understands by the expression. As Christians have always understood it, it is the very reverse of a truth. If one chooses to make it mean anything that suits the humour of the moment, then it can be made a truth. But so can Old Mother Hubbard, or Jack the Giant-killer.

Alderman Fr. D. O'Meara, at a conference held in St. George's Convent, speaking of his experiences on the Southwark Borough Council, said it was of the utmost importance "that there should be adequate Catholic representation on every public body." He advocated the establishment of a fund to assist Catholics to meet their expenses when representing Catholic interests on public bodies. Bishop Amigo quite concurred with this view. These frank avowals are of interest, because Roman Catholics often repudiate indignantly the charge that they use their political influence, wherever possible, to further the interests of their Church. In Germany they had their own political party, the Centre, which acted consistently on the principle of "support in return for concessions." In some parts of Australia they are now demanding State subsidies for their schools, and threatening to bring political pressure to bear on this question.

Cardinal Gasquet, at the silver jubilee celebrations of the Church of the English Martyrs, Manchester, said that before the Reformation the Roman Catholic Church was the centre of the life of the people. "It was looked upon as the common house of all, just as the cemeteries were called God's acres." The simile is an excellent one. "They make a desert and call it peace" represents the spirit of every religious organization that claims to have an infallible guide, whether in the shape of a Pope or a book.

The *Catholic Herald* says that Dr. Cosmo Lang, Archbishop of York, believing as he does in the Sacerdotium and the Holy Mass, "has very little about him of the Protestant, and nothing of the Puritan." The *Herald* asks what "gifts" he has "to offer the Methodist denomination," with which he seems to have been fraternizing of late. Our contemporary should recognize in Dr. Lang's action a palpable sign of Anglican tolerance, and nowadays the patronage of an archbishop is a very real "gift" even to a body of Methodists.

Mr. G. W. Howard, a Christadelphian, declares that all paid ministers of religion suffer from a fundamental handicap which prevents them from telling the truth about death and the soul. They are dependent on their congregations for pecuniary support. The Christadelphians maintain that there is no scriptural authority whatever for believing that man has an immortal soul. Does Mr. Howard suggest that, if the clerical gentry accept his view of death and the soul, the essentials to trade will soon be found wanting?

The League of Nations appointed a Commission to report on the question of armaments. That report has just been published, and among other things it says of the firms engaged in the manufacture of arms :—

1. Armament firms have been active in fomenting war scares and persuading their own countries to adopt war-like policies and to increase armaments.
2. They have attempted to bribe Government officials at home and abroad.
3. They have disseminated false reports concerning the military and naval programmes of various countries in order to stimulate armament expenditure.
4. They have sought to influence public opinion through the control of newspapers in their own and foreign countries.
5. They have organized international armament rings, through which the armament race has been accentuated, by playing off one country against another.
6. They have organized international armament trusts, which have increased the price of armaments sold to Governments.

We have had much talk of war criminals, but it seems that we have been looking in the wrong direction for them. We wonder what ought to be done to these gangs of men who have made it their purpose in life deliberately to stir up people to war in order to fill their own pockets? They are clearly a standing menace to civilization.

The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts has had a windfall of £5,000. More savages will become rice Christians in consequence.



**C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.**

October 2, South Shields; October 9, Manchester; October 16, Glasgow; October 17, Saltcoats; October 23, South Place, London; October 30, Birmingham; November 6, Swansea; November 13, Leicester; November 20, Liverpool; November 27, Ton Pentre; 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.

W. MCKELVIE.—Mr. Cohen has booked Liverpool for November 20.

H. ELSEY.—You can form a Branch of the National Secular Society in any town on obtaining a minimum number of seven members, and making proper application to the Society's Executive. No one is a member of the Society until his or her membership has been accepted by the Executive, and the name entered on the Society's books.

D. C. CORONES.—Mr. Cohen will reply to your enquiry on his return from the North. He is in too much of a rush at present.

A. G. PYE.—Pleased to have your appreciation of Mr. Mann's articles. The passage in Tacitus is also open to the gravest suspicion. It appears to be a rendering of a passage from Sulpicius Severus. The passage was not quoted by any of the early Christian writers, and was unknown till about the fifteenth century. Some scholars have, indeed, cast doubts upon the genuineness of the whole of the *Annals*.

H. WISHART.—Batch of papers received. Many thanks. They prove very useful.

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.**

To-day (October 2) Mr. Cohen pays a visit to South Shields. He will lecture in the Marsden Miners' Hall, Imeary Street, at 3 o'clock, on "Why the World Needs Freethought," and at 6.30 on the "Eclipse of Christianity." This will be the conclusion of Mr. Cohen's present trip to Tyneside and we hope to see a good muster of local friends, with a good sprinkling of Christians. Admission is free, but there will be some reserved seats.

Mr. Cohen had two very good meetings at Newcastle on Sunday last. In the afternoon the hall was well filled, and many were compelled to stand in the evening. It is

quite evident that Newcastle, like most other places in the country, is quite ripe for a vigorous Freethought propaganda, if only the proper amount of energy and direction is put into it, and we hope that now a start has been made it will be followed up as quickly and as energetically as possible. One great difficulty in Newcastle is the securing of a suitable and centrally situated hall. That may presently be overcome, and perhaps Sunday's meetings may help to this end. There were many friends present on Sunday from the surrounding districts, and later in the season Mr. Cohen may attempt a more extended tour of Tyneside. Mr. Proctor made a very efficient chairman at both meetings, and his appeal for members and helpers brought, we believe, some response.

The first of a course of Sunday afternoon lectures at South Place Institute will be delivered to-day (October 2). These lectures are arranged by the N. S. S. Executive, and we beg the co-operation of all London Freethinkers towards making them a complete success. South Place can be easily reached from any part of London by tram, 'bus, or train. It is within three minutes' walk of Liverpool Street Station, and the stopping place of many lines of omnibuses. The lecturer to-day is Mr. Whitehead, and the chair will be taken at 3.30. We hope to hear that the hall was well filled.

The speakers for the remaining Sundays will be Messrs. Lloyd, Moss, Cohen and McLaren. London readers can help to make these lectures a success by distributing the small slips announcing the series, which may be obtained from either the Secretary of the N. S. S. or the *Freethinker* office. These notices are small enough to be carried in the waistcoat pocket and can be dropped in trams or tubes, or handed to friends. Fifty of them judiciously placed by one interested in our work do more effectual advertising than a hundred handbills distributed indiscriminately.

The syllabus of the meetings arranged by the North London Branch is now ready, and copies may be had from Miss Vance, Secretary N. S. S., *Freethinker* office, or the Branch Secretary, Miss Alice M. Robertson, 24, Parliament Hill, Hampstead. The remarks in the preceding paragraph apply to the distribution of these also. The meetings are held at 7.30 at the St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, Kentish Town, and the numerous unattached Freethinkers in N.W. London should make a point of attending them. If they can bring an argumentative friend with them so much the better.

An old reader of the *Freethinker*, Mr. C. T. Shaw, who has lately been carrying on business as a newsagent in Wolverhampton, is leaving that town and desires to open in the same business in Birmingham. His idea is to open a shop in which there shall be a constant display of Freethought literature, and which will also serve as a centre of supply for the district. Mr. Shaw is an old hand at Freethought advocacy. For six years he edited in Paris *La Verité Philosophique*, and translated several of the late G. W. Foote's pamphlets. He has been in Wolverhampton for over ten years, where his advocacy of Freethought has been so pronounced that local bigots have been roused against him. This is the main reason for moving to Birmingham. He requires a small shop at a modest rental, a place that could be used as a depot, while he worked the smaller places round the city. Perhaps some of our Birmingham readers would know of a suitable place to let. We should like to see a Freethought depot in every town. Perhaps it will come to that one day.

The *Newcastle Daily Chronicle* has a very pleasing notice of Mr. Cohen's *Theism or Atheism?* We are pleased to note that this work seems to be establishing itself as a text-book in the same way as the author's *Determinism or Free Will?* has already done. The number of letters received privately from readers is also very gratifying.

Our readers will, we are sure, excuse our again reminding

them of the many opportunities that will present themselves to most to obtain new readers for this journal. We are desperately anxious to see the "one and only" with a sufficiently large circulation to pay its way, and there is no more effective way of doing that than for those who are interested in the progress of Freethought to introduce the paper where it is not at present known. An introduction is often all that is needed, the paper itself will do the rest. If each of our present readers would resolve to get only one new subscriber between now and, say, Christmas, what a difference that would make in the influence of the *Freethinker* and to everybody concerned in the progress of Freethought! And it can be so easily done if we are only determined that it shall be done. We invite all our readers to seriously think it over.

### Olive Schreiner.

It is well known that the only consummate genius South Africa has produced was from childhood a thoroughgoing Freethinker. Her *Story of a South African Farm* is an irresistible attack, not upon Protestantism, as some aver, but upon religion as such. In August, 1920, after spending several years in London, Olive Schreiner returned to her native land, and on the 10th of last December she died peacefully and painlessly in her sleep. Two days later she was temporarily buried at Maitland, close to Cape Town, beside her brother "Will" (the Right Honourable W. P. Schreiner, K.C., at one time Prime Minister of the Cape Colony). It was a silent ceremony.

Early in 1894 Olive Schreiner and Mr. S. C. Cronwright were married, and went to live on the bridegroom's farm, Krantz Plaats, near Cradock. Mr. Cronwright added his wife's surname to his own, and became known as Mr. Cronwright-Schreiner. One day they both ascended Buffels Kop (5,000 ft. above sea level), and standing together on the summit she fell in love with the spot, and there and then resolved to be buried there; and at once one morgen (about two acres) was purchased for that purpose. On August 13, 1921, the anniversary of her departure from London, the reinterment on the summit of Buffels Kop took place. Olive, her baby, and her pet dog, found their final rest on the top of that high mountain. Curiously enough, it was on a farm, not far off, that most of Olive Schreiner's immortal novel was written. For two years, 1875 and 1876, she was governess to the Fouches' at Klein Ganna Hoek, the adjoining farm to Krantz Plaats, and it was there, "in a mud-floored little room," that the greatest South African work of fiction came into being. The reinterment was carried out by the bereaved husband "with loving care in the dignity of perfect simplicity." Mr. Cronwright-Schreiner, as convinced an Atheist as his beloved wife had been, uttered a few exceedingly touching words, but his emotion more than once overcame him. He was looking back upon a beautiful life spent in the service of the native races of South Africa, as well as of all other oppressed and down-trodden peoples. The divines often assure us that if Atheism were to prevail the world would be plunged immediately into a state of moral and social anarchy, in which crimes of the worst description would become the order of the day; but here was an Atheist who devoted her life to the noble task of rescuing the perishing, comforting the sad, strengthening the weak, and encouraging all who laboured for the good of society.

For particulars about the reinterment we are indebted to the *Johannesburg Star*, and the *Midland News*, Cradock.

Except the blind forces of Nature nothing moves in this world which is not Greek in its origin. — *Sir Henry Sumner Maine*.

## Shaker Celibacy and Religion.

### IV.

(Concluded from page 620.)

As there can be no generation in the flesh without the union of male and female, so there can be no spiritual regeneration without the "united influence of spiritual parents, in the order of males and females." Thus Ann Lee evolved into the exalted station of a "Spiritual mother in Christ" to all her followers. By her spiritual marital union with Jesus, she secured also a phantasmal compensatory exaltation, to relieve the tension of her sexuo-emotional conflict, as well as the feeling of inferiority derived from her "sinful" sex passions.

And so we might continue through ever so many of her acts and thoughts, and we would find side by side the correlated influence of her abnormal sex conditions, with her religious emotions and the theology built upon them. But repressed eroticism, even with the best of religious formulæ, will not always be content with purely spiritual outlets. The evident sexual obsession of our prophetess confirms the many statements as to her occasional licentious conduct. These disclosures were made under oath, and are alleged upon personal knowledge. These will again exhibit the psychologic unity of desperate asceticism and excessive sensuality. The hostile critics of Shakerism say that Mother Ann left her husband under pretence of asceticism "to cover her own misconduct," and that in England she supported herself "at the expense of her character." In 1770 she received the "manifestation of the second heir in the covenant of life," and then began declaiming against marriage and coitus. Now she had attained the state of "sinless perfection," the claim of which attainment was an important neutralizer for the depressions due to her unsatisfied lusts, their irregular gratification, and the resultant subjective moral conflicts.

In America (after 1774) she and her companions acquired the reputations of "dissolute characters." "The report was, they practised singing, fiddling, dancing and whirling, telling fortunes, playing cards, drunkenness, with other conduct too bad to write." Ann's reckless promiscuity is said to have insured to her a venereal disease. During the Revolution "at midday she once dared a drum major to beastly conduct, for which she was drummed out of camp, and the drum major for accepting the challenge was displaced from his office." Alcoholic beverages, by intensifying the phantasies, minimized the consciousness of objectives and of the fears of objective origin. So it encouraged spiritual experiences, accompanied by licentiousness. It was said that ardent spirits used freely "would assist in overcoming fallen nature." Now they began to teach that many things, "forbidden to man in his carnal state, are allowed and innocent to the spiritually minded." The initiates were compelled to mortify the flesh by bodily macerations, quite as cruel, though not as prolonged, as those indulged by the early ascetics. Some of these, it is said, were "too indecent to name" or "unfit for publication." Unto the spiritually minded, all that they are glad to acknowledge to themselves becomes spiritual. Some of this exposé which was deemed sufficiently proper for publication will follow, as condensed from the sworn statement of eye witnesses:—

I have seen Mother (Ann Lee) at Niskeyuna, in times of her intoxication, come into a room where many were gathered for a meeting, and were, by her order, stripped naked. I have seen her slap the men, rub her hands on all parts of their bodies, etc. All the time she would be humming and making an enchanting noise.....Once, in a meeting at Petersham, Mass., the Mother came in, leading with her a naked man, whom she committed to another named Aaron

Wood, saying, "This man must go through the mill." Aaron was stout; he whirled him 'round, then threw him on the floor, hauled him around by the hair of his head, calling out "You bestial devil!" which caused the man to groan bitterly and he appeared almost dead. After other indecent conduct, Mother told the women to dog him off.

The man's wife was among the onlookers.

The following from a Shaker poem seems to confirm this:—

We say we have our sins confessed;  
And in one faith we all agree,  
That from all sin we will be free,  
No secret lust do we conceive,  
*But open plainly all we feel;*  
We ever stand in open view,  
And can hide nothing that we do.  
And all our actions day and night  
Are free and open to the light;  
Our confidence no man can crush,  
*Or put a Shaker to the blush.*

"A man named Shepard constantly attended on Mother. This man, Elder Whitaker said, was born a eunuch, had no sinful nature, and, therefore, we could not be suspicious. Shepard afterwards left the Shakers and became the father of several children." Both sexes are said to have bathed together in nudity by Ann Lee's orders. Doubtless this was thought of as proof of being above the temptations of the flesh.

Another witness swears:—

I saw Ann Lee locked in the arms of a naked man; they placed themselves in the centre of the company (of about fifty). One man asked Ann Lee if he might strip off his clothes. Answer, "Yes, you may all strip," and likewise all of the men stripped off their clothes, and continued in that situation, dancing and carousing for the space of three or four hours.

Perhaps the following verse from a Shaker poem confirms this charge:—

In silent pray'r sometimes we kneel,  
Or sing, or speak just as we feel;  
And as salvation we possess,  
Our joy and gladness to express,  
We dance, each like a living spark,  
*As David danc'd before the ark.*

Did not David dance in nudity? <sup>1</sup>

Ofttimes, when Ann Lee was overcome with excessive intoxication, her resultant sickness was explained as suffering for the sins of others, and then she demanded more rum or brandy to strengthen her to bear her burden. These strange scenes seem to have been of regular and frequent occurrence in these early years of American Shakerism. It is said that Aaron Wood would "frequently by orders seize a man in a shameful manner, haul him about, and abuse him in a manner too indecent to write." (Manustupration?)

There are some grounds for suspecting that some were emasculated involuntarily. At one time the leaders contemplated the selection of certain men and women for the purpose of producing holy children. Yet it was forbidden that those not of the elect even touch so much as the hand of his wife, while extraordinary dances in the nude continued among the elect as a means of "fighting the devil." They had the gift of speaking in unknown tongues, and inflicted painful penalties to subdue the flesh.

One girl, because an older man manifested an interest in her,—

was stripped naked, in the presence of both men and women, and whipped most unmercifully. My brother was taken into the house by the leaders, and in the presence of both men and women was stripped naked, and was told it was for having converse with that girl, and that they were about to punish him to subdue the lusts of the flesh and the devil. They then led him down to the tanyard, tied a cord around his private parts, and led him about the yard until those

parts were turned black. The cruel treatment lasted about an hour.

One more testimonial and I shall close. This evidence also comes from apostates and opponents:—

The Shakers, amidst all their professions, lived in whoredom. One Shaker woman was brought to my house and delivered of a child. This was after she had been a Shaker for a number of years, and continued a Shaker. One evening, when many of both sexes were gathered for meeting, after dancing, those women, by orders, from their bosoms nursed those men. One day when haying, three or four women with men were raking hay in the same field; one of the Shakers, a married man (he was promoted among the Shakers for his extraordinary power), behaved very unbecomingly to those women, not fit to write. The following evening, after those women had gone upstairs to rest, this man brought them downstairs one by one, their legs over his shoulders, their backs to his back, and their heads down.<sup>2</sup>

Much of this affidavit is omitted. Obviously all of this is but the exhibitionism and sex play of those who are still children as to their psychosexual impulses and valuations. Likewise, all those who are still in the throes of the childhood conflicts over sex will find it necessary to manifest an intense aversion to these childish acts. Their resentment will be as intense as the feeling-necessity for concealment of the same conflict within themselves. As is to be expected from such people, we also find charges of homosexuality hurled back and forth between those who had left and some who had remained in the society.<sup>3</sup>

Their manner of breaking up family ties and affections was considered by their enemies even more cruel than that imposed by the morbid desert hermits. There are many references to the treatment of persons suspected of insanity among the Shakers. The conduct of the leaders toward such, and the attitude of the masses, bears little doubt but that all must have been dwellers in the borderland betwixt insanity and healthy mindedness. Like all mystics from sexual suppression, or hyperestheticism, there came to be among these people talk of spiritual affinities and spiritual wedlock,<sup>4</sup> and universal love, intellectualizing erotomania.

So pronounced is this sex influence in promoting religious revivals, that, from among the revivals that obtained in America in the beginning of the nineteenth century, and especially the Kentucky Revival started by the Presbyterians, the Shakers gathered so large a following that some European travellers expressed the opinion that they would overrun the United States and obliterate all other forms of religion.

THEODORE SCHROEDER.

(From *The New York Medical Journal*, June, 1921.)

That which, in the last centuries, was termed natural religion, the belief in one God, principle or cause of the universe, in the immortality of the soul, the spiritual and imperishable element of man, is but an attenuated form of the ancient belief, a form more acceptable to reason than that same belief, but quite as fundamentally gratuitous as the ancient symbols, from which rationalistic philosophers unconsciously borrowed it.—*Alfred Loisy, "La Religion."*

Priest is the staff of king,  
And the chains and clouds one thing,  
And fettered flesh and devastated mind.  
Open thy soul to see,  
Slave, and thy feet are free,  
Thy bonds and thy beliefs are one in kind.

—*Algernon Charles Swinburne.*

<sup>2</sup> Mary Marshall; extracted from *The Rise and Progress of the Serpent from the Garden of Eden to the Present day.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>4</sup> A compendious narrative, elucidating the character, disposition, and conduct of Mary Dyer, by her husband.

<sup>1</sup> Samuel vii. 14, 20, 22.

## Pages From Voltaire.

### THE A. B. C: OR CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN A. B. AND C.

*Whether man is born wicked and a child of the devil.*

B.—As you are an Englishman, Mr. A., will you tell us candidly what is your opinion about justice and injustice, government, religion, peace, war, the laws, etc.?

A.—Certainly, I will, with pleasure. What I find most just is liberty and property. I am very glad to contribute to give my king a million sterling a year for his household, provided I may enjoy my property in my household; I wish every one to have his prerogative; I know no laws save those that protect me; and I find our government the best in the world, because every man knows what he has, what is required of him, and what he is able to do. Everything is subjected to the laws, beginning with royalty and religion.

B.—You do not, then, admit of divine right in society?

A.—All is divine right if you would have it so, because God has created men, because nothing happens without his divine will, and the sequence of eternal laws eternally executed. The Archbishop of Canterbury, for example, is no more archbishop by divine right than I am born a member of Parliament. When it shall please God to come down to earth in order to present a benefice of twelve thousand guineas a year to a priest, I shall then allow that his benefice is his by divine right; but till then I shall believe his right to be wholly human.

B.—So that among men everything is convention. It is the doctrine of Hobbes pure and simple.

A.—Hobbes was merely echoing the opinion of all sensible men. All is convention or force.

C.—There is, then, no law of nature?

A.—Certainly there is; it is interest and reason.

B.—Man, then, is born in a state of war, seeing that our interest almost always runs counter to that of our neighbour, and that we force our reason to support the particular interest by which we happen to be moved.

A.—If man's natural state were one of war all men would cut each other's throats, and the species would have died out long ago. The same would have happened to us as happened to the men who grew up from the dragon's teeth sown by Cadmus; they fought and not one remained. Man being born to slay his neighbour, and to be slain, would of necessity fulfil his destiny as the vultures fulfil theirs by eating my pigeons, or the polecats by sucking the blood of my fowls. There have been groups of men that have never made war; for example, the Brahmans and many people of the American isles, whom the Christians exterminated, not being able to convert them. The primitive Christians, whom we call Quakers, are beginning to make up a considerable nation in Pennsylvania, and regard war with horror. War is, therefore, not essential to mankind.

B.—In spite of what you say, it is necessary that the desire to destroy, the delight in exterminating one's neighbour for a petty interest, the most horrible villainy and blackest perfidy, should be the distinctive characteristic of our species, at least, since the moment of original sin, for the gentle theologians tell us that from that moment the devil took possession of our whole race. For that reason the devil is our master, as you know, and a wicked master he is; therefore, all men resemble him.

A.—That the devil may be in the bodies of theologians I am willing to admit; but of a certainty he is not in mine. If, as it is said, the human species were under the immediate government of the devil, it is

clear husbands would kill their wives, sons would slay their fathers, mothers would eat their children, and the first thing an infant would do as soon as it felt its teeth, would be to bite its mother, that is, supposing its mother had not first put it to the spit. Now, as nothing of this sort happens, it is proved that they mock us when they say that we are under the power of the devil. It is the most senseless blasphemy ever uttered.

C.—Upon reflection, I confess that mankind is not quite as wicked as certain people make out, in hope of governing them; they resemble those physicians who suppose that all the ladies at court are attacked with that shameful malady which brings much money to those who cure it. Undoubtedly there are maladies, but the whole world is not in the hands of the faculty. There are great crimes, but they are rare; no pope for more than two hundred years has resembled Alexander VI; no European monarch has been able to reproduce the vices of Christian II of Denmark or Lewis XI of France. We have seen only one archbishop of Paris enter parliament with a dagger in his pocket. The massacre of Saint Bartholomew is, indeed, horrible, whatever the Abbé de Caveirac<sup>1</sup> may say about it; but nowadays when we see all Paris occupied with Rameau's music, or with *Zaire*, or with light opera picture-shows, Ramponeau, or Nicolet's ape, we forget that half that nation nearly two hundred years ago were cutting each other's throats for theological arguments. The abominable punishments of Jane Grey, Mary Stuart and Charles I are not renewed among you every day.

These epidemic horrors are like the great plagues which sometimes ravage the earth, after which men till, sow and harvest, drink, dance and make love above the ashes of the dead which are under their feet, and, as a man said, who passed his life in feeling, thinking, and joking: *if the whole is not good it is at least passable.*

There are provinces, like Touraine, for example, where no great crime has been committed for five hundred years. Venice has seen more than four centuries pass without the slightest sedition within her borders, or a single tumultuous assembly; there are a thousand villages in Europe where no murder has been committed since cutting people's throats for religion went out of fashion; labourers have no time to spare from their work; their wives and children help, they sew, they spin, they knead, they bake (not after the manner of the archbishop La Caza); all these good people are too much occupied to think of evil. After work, which is as pleasant as it is necessary to them, they make a light meal, which appetite seasons, and yield to sleep in order to begin again the next day. I have no fear for them except on the holidays which are so ridiculously consecrated to psalm-singing, with hoarse and discordant voice, in Latin, of which they understand not a word, and to losing their reason in a public house, which they understand but too well. Once more, if the whole is not good, it is passable.

B.—By what madness have they been able to imagine that there exists an hobgoblin with a yawning mouth, four paws of a lion and a dragon's tail; that he is attended by a thousand imps shaped in his image, all driven out from heaven and shut up in a furnace underground; that Jesus Christ once descended into this furnace to chain up these animals; that from that time they come out of their prison every day, that they tempt us, and enter into the bodies and souls of men; that they are our absolute rulers, and inspire us with their devilish perversity? From what source could have come an opinion so extravagant, a tale so absurd?

A.—From the ignorance of the medical profession.

Englished by GEORGE UNDERWOOD.  
(To be Concluded.)

<sup>1</sup>Jean de Caveirac (1713-1782), the author of an apology for the massacres of St. Bartholomew.

## Where Are Your Hospitals?

RELIGIONISTS are wont to assume that progress in civilization, efforts for the relief of suffering and disease, education reform, works of charity and mercy are the outcome of religion.

It is a common taunt of Christians that Freethinkers have never founded a hospital, never established an orphanage, never, in short, engaged in any kind of philanthropic endeavour.

Speaking some years ago in the City of Gloucester, the writer was persistently interrupted by the shouts of a man in the audience. "Where are your hospitals, your Sunday-schools, and your orphanages?" "Come with me," he continued, "and I will show you the house where Robert Raikes started the first Sunday-school."

You come with me to Gloucester Gaol and I will show you some Sunday-school scholars, and *teachers* as well. The old gaol never sheltered but one Freethinker worth mentioning. George Jacob Holyoake, sentenced for the imaginary crime of blasphemy. He was one of the noblest men who ever lived, the founder of the Co-operative movement, by which you and your mates continually benefit. Look at the fine stores you have in this City and remember that they are the fruit of Holyoake's labours for the poor.

We had no more interruptions that evening.

There is something distinctly humorous in the assumption that Freethought as a social organization has ever been in the financial position to endow hospitals or other charitable institutions. It is only the other day that a bequest to the N. S. S. was legalized; it is, therefore, unreasonable to expect that we can point to a long list of charities founded by Secularists.

Underlying this assumption is the inferential claim that all such institutions are the outcome of Christian philanthropy. Were such a claim justifiable Christianity might hold the field. But, is the claim justifiable? Most certainly it is not.

Take hospitals, for example. The earliest known hospitals for the treatment of disease were founded, *not* by Christians, but by Buddhists in India. The pagan emperor of the East, Valens, established a hospital at Caesarea in the fourth century.

With the Mohammedan occupation of Spain in the eighth century, we find the early foundation of a magnificent hospital at Cordova, and the establishment of the first asylum for the insane in Granada. These institutions, founded by the Moors, prepared the way for the first medical and surgical colleges in Christendom. In matters of hygiene and sanitation it is probable that the Mohammedans of the eighth century were in advance of the Spanish Christian of the twentieth.

Progress in hygiene and sanitation naturally runs *pari passu* in the track of advancing civilization, and thus forms an interesting comment on the real social advance of the people.

Let us examine the Christian claim to progress in works of mercy and charity, and let us glance at the condition of things in Mediæval Europe when the Church was at the zenith of her power, and the people were her obedient slaves.

It is conceded that the sanctity of filth was recognized and respected by priest and people alike. The more horribly dirty and loathsome the person of the monk or friar, the nearer was he to "sainthood." Personal health was neglected, public health was unknown. Cleanliness was everywhere conspicuous only by its absence. Houses were built closely together, with an entire disregard even of ordinary decency. There were no baths, no drainage.

The natural consequences ensued, and Europe was ravaged with fevers, plagues, epidemics and famines,

accompanied by the frightful mortality with which the history of the Middle Ages is filled.

*But there were no hospitals, and few Christian physicians or nurses.*

In the twelfth century there were fifteen epidemics; in the thirteenth twenty plagues; in the fourteenth eight epidemics, and accompanying these scourges were a succession of famines. In the fourteenth century that terrible plague which came to be known as The Black Death extended from China to Ireland. In the East it had destroyed 37,000,000. In the whole of Europe it is estimated that the mortality reached the enormous total of 25,000,000. It reached this country in 1348, speedily stripped whole towns of their inhabitants, and in London alone the Great Plague claimed no less than 100,000 victims.

*But there were no hospitals, and few Christian physicians or nurses.*

For a period of more than sixty years England was attacked by a disgusting and loathsome disease originating and propagated in this country by the filth and impurity in which the people lived. This was known as the "Sweating Sickness," which usually proved fatal within twenty-four hours.

*But there were no hospitals, and few Christian physicians or nurses.*

Thus, for nearly sixteen hundred years Christians had accomplished little or nothing. No hospitals built, no physicians trained. The Church, however, was not entirely supine. She had decreed fasts, imposed penance, organized pilgrimages, celebrated innumerable masses, muttered countless prayers, chanted endless litanies, and given the Viaticum to millions of the dying. These "Divine Services" proved barren of result.

Disease had now become so prevalent that it was of the most urgent importance and necessity that the sick should be segregated. Impelled by the instinct of self-preservation, even more than by humanitarian or religious motives, the public conscience was aroused, and forthwith the foundations of our most important London hospitals were laid, Bart's in 1546, Bethlehem, 1547, St. Thomas's, 1553.

Religionists like to claim these institutions as peculiarly their own, as fruits of the dissemination of the Gospel. Such a claim is wholly untenable in view of the fact that it was not until the ravages of disease had attained such enormous and dangerous proportions that, for the protection of society, it was forced upon the community to take measures to minimize the risk of contagion. Worldly prudence was the ruling motive, and not religious sentiment. At all times religion has striven to control social institutions, and it would be strange, indeed, if Christians were willing to forgo the prestige that would be accorded their religion if they could substantiate their claim to the initiation and inauguration of benevolent institutions which are maintained and financed by the contributions of all classes of the community, irrespective of creed.

During the past half century medical and surgical science has made enormous strides; yet vast areas still remain almost unexplored. Deaths from consumption in Great Britain and Ireland still amount to a thousand weekly, and in many other countries the figures are much worse (Lord Curzon). Great fields in morphology, pathology, morbid psychology and embryology are, as yet, almost uncultivated. The discoveries of Jenner, Harvey, Pasteur, Metchnikoff, Lister, Simpson, Bruce, and others have been instrumental in saving millions of lives.

Here again it is necessary to emphasize the fact that religion has no monopoly in this beneficent work. It is an old saying, "Of three doctors, two are sure to be Atheists"; be that as it may, it will not do for religion to lay claim to all the benefits of our common civilization, and our common humanity, and affix its

own sectarian labels thereto. Christians built hospitals for identically the same reasons as they laid out cemeteries, that is, for self-protection. To ascribe all their activities to Christian charity and Christian philanthropy is both false and absurd. Even to-day our hospitals are primarily schools of medicine and surgery, and only secondarily is their object the cure of disease. Our asylums for the insane (if we may believe the statements of Dr. Lomax in a work just published) clamour for drastic reform.

Moreover, the Christian Church has for centuries vetoed progress and opposed reform. In this connection the words of Sir James Crichton-Browne, spoken a few days ago at Bath, at the 34th Annual Conference of the Sanitary Inspectors' Association, may be cited. Sir James said: "Syphilis could be prevented, and the reason why that had not been done was ignorance and negligence on the one hand, and *Ecclesiastical Prejudice* and short-sighted morality on the other."

Hence, it ill becomes Christians to reproach Secularists with failure to found hospitals. It would be well if they endeavoured to obey the precept of their Master, and first cast out the beam from their own eyes, then, perhaps, they will be able to see clearly to cast out the mote in the eyes of their brother man.

BERNARD MOORE.

### Mr. Whitehead's Tour in Manchester. September 18 to 24.

THE opening lecture was given in the Rusholme Public Hall, Dickenson Road, Rusholme, on Sunday evening, the subject being "Religion and Race Culture." The audience was—numerically—disappointing.

Successive lectures were delivered during the week in the open air in various localities. The Tuesday meeting was an utter failure, but on Thursday we had an especially good meeting, a local mounting the platform and defending Christianity for ten minutes. Here the audience showed a decided hostility to America when an American was casually mentioned by the speaker.

On Friday there developed a section who, wishing to prove their physical prowess, declared they would "rush" the speaker, "tear him limb from limb, and drag him through the town." This angry element was a great contrast to the charitableness of the Lecturer, and a reminder that they should love their enemies and attempt to follow the teachings of the "meek and lowly Jesus" did not seem to placate their fury.

Saturday was a quieter day, but some "respectable" ladies attempted to create an anti-Semitic atmosphere, which is rather ungrateful of a Christian after being provided with a Jewish Saviour.

The police regulations are rather irksome, and attention will have to be given to this matter.

The financial return was small, owing, no doubt, to the prevailing distress. It is felt, however, that the literature disposed of has fallen on good soil, and sufficient interest has been aroused to justify the expectation of a large audience when Mr. C. Cohen opens the lecture season on October 9. Let us hope that the enthusiasm will be of a lasting nature.

HAROLD I. BAYFORD.  
*Hon. Secretary.*

He who considers the relations of the body and the limits of his existence, and who delivers himself from the fear of the future, renders in this way his life perfectly pleasant; and a man thus satisfied with his manner of living has no need of an eternity in which to be happy. He is not unhappy when he sees his mortal condition bring him gradually to the grave, since he sees in that a peaceful end to his course.—*Epicurus.*

Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice;  
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment.  
—*Shakespeare.*

## 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.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, Mr. A. D. McLaren, "Science and the National Life."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W. 9, three minutes from Kennington Oval Tube Station and Kennington Gate): 7, Social; Instrumental and Vocal Music.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C. 2): 11, Dr. C. W. Saleeby, "Light Against Death."

SOUTH PLACE INSTITUTE (Finsbury Pavement, E.C.) : 3.30, Mr. George Whitehead, "A Critical Examination of Jesus Christ."

### COUNTRY.

#### INDOOR.

LEEDS BRANCH N. S. S. (19 Lowerhead Row, Leeds): 7, Mr. H. R. Youngman, "Charles Bradlaugh."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. W. H. Thresh, "Communal Insects—The Story of the Ants."

SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH N. S. S. (Marsden Miners' Hall, Ineary Street): Mr. Cohen, 3, "Why the World needs Free-thought"; 6.30, "The Eclipse of Christianity."

STOCKPORT BRANCH N. S. S. (191 Higher Hillgate): 10.30, Discussion. Will all members who have not yet returned their application forms please do so as soon as possible.

## PROPAGANDIST LEAFLETS. 2. *Bible and*

*Teetotalism*, J. M. Wheeler; 3. *Principles of Secularism*, C. Watts; 4. *Where Are Your Hospitals?* R. Ingersoll; 5. *Because the Bible Tells Me So*, W. P. Ball; 6. *Why Be Good?* G. W. Foote; 7. *Advice to Parents*, Ingersoll; *The Parson's Creed*. Often the means of arresting attention and making new members. Price 1s. per hundred, post free 1s. 2d.

### THREE NEW LEAFLETS.

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