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## Views and Opinions.

### Society and Christianity.

Having occasion to remark in the course of a lecture that "religions, save in their more primitive stages, have all along discharged the functions of subduing the mass of the people to the interests of a class," the generalization was objected to by a very thoughtful opponent as of too sweeping a character. Yet the statement appears to me to be little more than a historical truism. To begin with, an established religion announces in the very fact of its establishment that it is the religion of the State, and that is only another way of saying that it is the religion of the ruling class. And its support by that class makes it plain that in their opinion it does not, at least, run counter to their interests. A religion that was not either positively or negatively favourable to the claims of a ruling class would receive no support, and if it were actively hostile it would be, on some pretext or other, suppressed. Moreover, once a religion is established it acquires vested interests of its own, the maintenance of those interests gives it a direct concern in conserving the existing social structure undisturbed. The mere fact that there are thousands of men whose incomes and social positions are dependent upon the existence of a specific set of beliefs is enough to create a very powerful economic interest in favour of doing all that can be done to keep those beliefs alive. In this way the interests of the priesthood of an established religion become identified with those of the ruling social class, and in its own interest it is driven to resist any movement that makes for a drastic alteration of the existing social arrangements. Conservatism and self-preservation are with religions interchangeable terms.

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### Religion and the Past.

But here, as in so many other instances, the economic reason rests upon a psychologic one. Religious beliefs do not come to birth in a civilized society. All we have there are various modifications of existing beliefs. Organically, religious beliefs have reference to a set of conditions, psychological and social, that belong to the past. And although some of the conditions that create religious beliefs may continue to exist among a people for a very long time—we have them with us yet—still considered as a general part of the social structure, they may be said to exist once only. The fear and

ignorance that give birth to the belief in a God and a soul once removed can never be recreated. Between never knowing and forgetting there is a very wide difference. It follows, therefore, that all religious beliefs depend for their vitality upon a perpetuation of the past. It has no hope in development either in the present or in the future. At the root of all the opposition shown by religions to all advanced ideas lies the perception of this truth. It is a manifestation of the instinct of self-preservation. Every change, whether it be in the form of dress associated with ceremonial religion, or style of language, or mode of service, is opposed from the same fear of the new and from attachment to the old. And the clearest proof of the conservative power of religion lies in the fact that all ruling classes, without a single exception, have always seen that the people were well supplied with religious teachings. It is an admission that for the consolidation of vested interest there is nothing so serviceable as religion.

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### A Bulwark of Conservatism.

This real influence of religion is disguised somewhat by the fact that the beginnings of religious revolts very often appeal to the masses as against the classes. This is so, but it is not at all in conflict with what has been said. It is mainly due to a political accident. Generally speaking, the ruling religion is the religion of the dominant class, and, therefore, for anyone who is in revolt to appeal to that class is hopeless. It would be an invitation to the dominant class to commit suicide. The religious rebel is, therefore, compelled to look for support to those who have least to gain from the established order, even if they are not consciously in opposition to it. It is for this reason that they who are in revolt against the established religion are compelled to seek support among the masses of the people. But, once established, it becomes as conservative as any other religious form. It has occupied the position of its rival, and with the position has annexed all its tendencies and interests. The assumed sympathy of English Nonconformity with the democracy is a case in point. A democratic religion Christianity can never be. It is at best a theocracy, and at worst a divinely established autocracy. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Nonconformity was fighting a Church that was essentially the Church of the dominant class. Indeed, it was not questioned by the overwhelming bulk of Nonconformists that once a Church gained political power it was quite justified in forcing conformity upon others. But the essential fact here is that the Nonconformists were compelled to look outside the governing class for help, and they thus gave a quite unintended support to what was to become a democratic movement. But just so soon as Nonconformity had become strong enough to maintain itself as a religious movement, its appeals to the "people" began to weaken, until to-day there is hardly a perceptible difference between it and its religious rival. Christianity has once again demonstrated its essential serviceableness to the established interests of a ruling class bent on keeping things as they are.

### The Use of the Slave Virtues.

It was argued by Nietzsche that Christianity achieved the unique triumph of a slave class imposing its virtues upon a dominant class. To him the prevalence of Christianity represented the triumph of what he called the "slave virtues." This latter statement is true enough, but I do not think that history bears out precisely Nietzsche's interpretation of what occurred. The position seems rather to be that, in the disintegration of the old civilization recourse was had to a teaching that would hold a people in continued subjection, and this could only be done by opposing the sterner and more manly teaching of the old pagan world with one that emphasized the slave, or as Winwood Reade called them, lickspittle virtues. The emphasis placed by Christianity upon the teaching that this world was as nothing compared with the salvation of man's soul in the world to come, and upon the sanctifying virtues of suffering and submission, has been of enormous value to ruling classes everywhere, and Christianity has constantly stressed the teaching. The virtues of submission and resignation under injustice and wrong have been given a premier place, and they certainly have not been preached for the benefit of the mass of the people. Nor does it require a very profound study of history to perceive that it was the use of these "slave virtues" by the governing classes that served to make the lot of the people the more hopeless. Nothing else could have given the Church the power it once possessed. And of the secular power it may certainly be said that no other teaching made the "sin" of rebellion so deadly an offence. Preaching of love, of charity, of brotherhood, there was always enough and to spare, but when the people were taught that the love of the ruling class was sufficiently manifested by acts of charity, and that their own love must be displayed by lack of envy, by contentment under suffering, and obedience to the established authority, it will be realized that these qualities were made themselves instruments of continued enslavement. From this point of view Christianity was, indeed, a triumphant success. True, there are certain features of life that make the most powerful of teachings inoperative in the course of time, and there were occasions when the restraining influence of Christianity proved itself ineffective. But so far as it could be done Christianity gave tyranny a completely religious sanction—not so much in name as by sanctifying the conditions that made misrule possible, and by making disobedience one of the gravest of offences.

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### Counting the Cost.

Nietzsche was quite right when he said that the victory of Christianity meant the triumph of the "slave virtues." But its real significance from the point of view of the sociologist is that it meant the imposition of these virtues in the interests of a dominant class. It is not a question here of the abstract value of these particular qualities, neither is it a question of whether the dominant class is a bad one or a good one. The essential point here is that any class, once in power, finds Christianity useful as a means of reconciling people to the existing order, and so preventing that process of change which is of the essence of improvement. As a matter of fact it can be shown that for by far the larger part of its history the influence of Christianity has been exerted to the direct injury of society. And perhaps no clearer illustration of this evil influence could be given than the disappearance of those ideas of civic life and independence that were so marked a feature of the ancient world. It is equally noticeable also that both at the Renaissance and at the period of the French Revolution those who were working for a revivification of social life were

compelled to hark back to the pagan world for their ideals. All the intervening centuries had provided them with nothing in the way of an inspiration or an ideal for their purpose. Mentally, Christianity had demoralized the race by placing a veto upon the free exercise of reason, and by weeding out through direct persecution and otherwise the strongest and most independent types of intellect. Morally it made for disaster by placing in a premier position those qualities which are both the outcome and the condition of injustice and wrong. And, socially, by its withdrawal of attention from the task of social improvement, by the preaching of the equality of all before God, while emphasizing the divinely ordered social and political inequality of men on earth, it gave injustice in the western world a security of tenure it could not otherwise have very easily obtained.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

### The Primate on Religion and Science.

AN archbishop is not expected to be a profound theologian or an eloquent and popular preacher. His high office is one of administration and jurisdiction rather than of theological and homiletic functions. As the administrative head of the Established Church it was only appropriate that the archbishop should have been the preacher in the Birmingham cathedral in connection with the Church Congress recently held in that city. The subject he chose for his discourse was "The Church through the Generations," which he handled with singular dexterity and grace. With the internal affairs of the Anglican Church we are not in the least concerned. He vigorously maintained that the reforms secured during the last five years are bewilderingly great and have made "corporate and constitutional life in the Church a living reality," with the result that "nearly every man and woman to whom I am speaking has at this moment a franchise of real and operative importance in the life of the National Church, a franchise recognized by Parliament as well as by the Church." It is highly significant that the *Church Times* for October 14, in reporting the sermon, entirely omits the paragraphs in which his Grace contends that "the almost bewildering rapid development which the last five years have seen is a phenomenon without precedent," and gives a verbatim report of Bishop Gore's bold pronouncement at the meeting of the English Church Union held on the evening before the opening of the Congress. The truth is that the first portion of the Primate's sermon and the Bishop's speech are wholly irreconcilable. Dr. Gore unhesitatingly declared that in the Anglican Church there is just now a complete collapse of discipline, and that the situation is so anomalous that nothing short of disestablishment can alter it for the better. As is well known, Dr. Gore is the leader of the Catholic party in the Church, and, naturally, according to him, there can be no exercise of real discipline as long as the Modernists are permitted to remain in active membership, with freedom to utter their pernicious heresies. In its "Impressions" of the Congress the *Guardian* for October 14 observes:—

The speech of Bishop Gore at the English Church Union on Monday evening recalls an incident at the last Birmingham Congress (twenty-eight years ago). As the Rev. Charles Gore (as he was then) stepped forward to read a paper, a slight commotion was noticeable in the body of the hall. An ascetic figure, garbed in cassock and girdle, sprang to his feet, holding aloft a Bible, and in his familiar musical tones, vibrating with passionate conviction, Father Ignatius electrified the audience by exclaiming, "I protest against that heretic, Charles Gore, being permitted to

address this assembly." Only after both the Mayor and Bishop Perowne had used their good offices for some considerable period, was Mr. Gore able to proceed with his paper. Thus does the heretic of one age become the champion of orthodoxy in the next.

It is difficult to tell what position the Archbishop of Canterbury occupies as regards theology. He is a man of infinite caution and tact who seldom commits himself on any subject. In a general way he is doubtless on the side of the orthodox creeds of Christendom. He often hears it said in various tones that the tide of infidelity is rapidly rising and threatening to submerge the old doctrinal bases, and to sweep away the formulæ in which to express the Church's hold upon them. In particular he has been deliberately assured that the Church is steadily "losing, if it has not already lost, its hold of the credal verities on which our fathers stood." Of course, there are many thousands of serious but narrow-minded people in the Church who are inclined to blame the Primate because he refuses to come out to curse the Modernists. He frankly admits that they are theological adventurers, but excuses them on the ground that "such adventures, however you may describe them, are not unnatural in an age of eager thought, new discovery, and scientific as well as theological unrest." Indeed, he warns his hearers and readers against becoming the victims of rash judgments. He is quite right in saying that grave injustice may be done by quoting isolated passages and leaving their contexts out of account. Then he utters these wise words:—

Do not exaggerate the character, or—I use the word without disrespect—the importance of this or that startling or alarming phrase used by some one or other of those to whose attempts I have referred. Do not mistake for the confident tread of an advancing force what is really the tentative step of an eager investigator who is testing, perhaps rashly testing, the strength of a doubtful bridge before he tries to lead his followers across it.

We gladly accord to Archbishop Davidson full credit for his fair and just attitude to and treatment of one party in his Church which is being so extravagantly and unrighteously condemned by another. He refers to the Report of the Committee of the Convocation of Canterbury presented in May, 1863, relative to the case of Bishop Colenso and his criticism of the Pentateuch, and then pronounces the following weighty judgment:—

It is not too much to say that the teaching about Biblical Inspiration and Mosaic authorship, which is there laid down as almost axiomatic, would find no single supporter among the accredited theologians of our Church to-day. The moral of the story is not that Dr. Colenso's theology, taken as a whole, was right, but that traditional modes of orthodox exegesis are not necessarily of enduring value, and have no right to claim immunity from the most searching criticism to which they can be subjected.

Now, despite his admirable fairness towards conflicting theological schools within the Anglican Church, the Archbishop is a valiant defender of the Christian faith, though he is not prepared to submit a cast iron definition of it. And here he instantly ventures beyond his depth. He asks a pertinent question, and his way of putting it is an infallible clue to his answer to it. "Is it too much to say that attacks on supernatural religion which had vogue in the 'sixties and 'seventies of last century have lost the support of a great deal of the best science of to-day?" The question is so ridiculously vague that it is almost impossible to discuss it intelligently. Which attack on the supernatural has lost the support of modern science? Which science is it that has anything to do with the supernatural? Science deals exclusively with Nature and her laws, and knows nothing at all about any Supernature. God and an unseen world are

certainly not scientific subjects. Again, which science is it that is "based in part on a recognition of psychic phenomena incompatible with the position taken by the foremost positivists of the mid-Victorian age?" Has his Grace ever studied the science of psychology as interpreted by the later and best masters? Psychology does certainly investigate psychic phenomena, but not as a department of the supernatural. Psychic phenomena are the outcome of neural action, apart from which mental life, as far as we know, is absolutely impossible. Dr. Davidson admits that theology is perpetually changing the modes of expressing itself, but he omits to state that it is doing so because of the pressure of scientific discoveries. Geology and astronomy have given the lie to the early chapters of Genesis, and the theologians are now following suit. Literary criticism has discredited the historicity and accuracy of many other parts of Scripture, and most of the divines accept and act upon the verdict. "Beyond all question," goes on the Archbishop, "these fifty years have brought a change of standpoint both to those who challenge and to those who defend our Holy Faith." Perfectly true; but the emphatic point is that those who defend the Faith have been forced to change their tactics by those who challenge it. Almost every theologian is now prepared to allow that nothing is true because the Bible says it, which clearly shows that the truth of Christianity cannot be established by an appeal to the Bible. What other proof of its truth is there? Most divines now disbelieve in the evidential value of alleged miracles, and refer us to the evidence from experience as the final test. But is it not almost an axiom that religious experience demonstrates nothing but the reality of the beliefs which produce it, but by no means the objective existence of the things believed in? This, of course, is an aspect of the subject upon which the Archbishop does not touch.

Towards the end of the discourse which, for him, is an exceptionally long one, the Archbishop indulges in an emotional apology for retaining in the services of the Church the old, but living, creeds and prayers. His claim is that "the phrases, though cast in other days, other surroundings, than ours, and retaining their birth-marks, are no empty survival of effete or dying things. They live. They have hands and feet." While making that claim, however, he admits that time has modified their meanings, and that many loyal Churchmen are longing for at least a somewhat drastic revision of them. But on purely sentimental grounds, his Grace advocates their retention without the least alteration, and while in this mood he waxes somewhat impatient with the arguments and demands of the Modernists.

It must be confessed that the sympathy of the present writer is not with the Modernists, except in so far as some of them may be on the road to pure Naturalism. It seems to us that no benefit whatever can accrue from the repudiation of certain portions or aspects of the supernatural while firmly holding on to others. What is the use of rejecting the miraculous while continuing to believe in God, or what is the use of God if he cannot or does not interfere with and change the ordinary course of Nature for the good of his people? To believe in the supernatural and deny the miraculous seems to us the quintessence of inconsistency. We quite agree with Matthew Arnold when he tells us that miracles do not happen; but we hold that if God exists they ought to happen, for otherwise why does God exist at all? The Modernists want to get rid of miracles, treating the so-called Christian facts as mere symbols, after the manner of the Dean of St. Paul's. Is it not a fact that all Divine activity would of necessity be supernatural, so that everything God did for us men would be a miracle? To us, therefore, the non-existence of the miraculous proves the

non-existence of God and his Providence. What is left? Nature, men in close relation to each other. Man is a gregarious animal, and the only duty devolving upon him is to live in the service of the group to which he belongs, which he can discharge without any assistance from outside Nature. J. T. LLOYD.

### Rupert Brooke.

The bloom whose petals, nipped before they blew,  
Died on the promise of the fruit.

—Shelley, "Adonais."

THERE have been multitudes of names in the tale of the heroic dead of the last great war which could be said in sober truth to be a loss to their country; but few are associated with greater pathos than the career of Lieutenant Rupert Brooke, the soldier-poet who laid down his life for England at Lemnos. For many saw in this young genius the hope of a continuance of a noble poetic tradition, and watched with fascination the opening of what promised to be a great and memorable career. It was very tragic irony which closed in the war the years of study before the great task for which they were to fit him had been but well begun.

The feelings of Brooke's admirers must be like those of the survivors of a shipwreck when, the morning after the storm, they contemplate the relics that the capricious sea has spared from the rich contents of the sunken ship. Their joy at the sight of each relic is insufficient to compensate for the sad memories it awakens of equally precious treasures lost. Nor is this feeling attributable merely to the fact that an early death snatched from us a poet of genius. Many such might pass without exciting these keen feelings of regret. The world would be grateful for what it had received, and would not concern itself with speculations as to how much greater might have been their achievements had more time been allowed them. No one in the case of Rupert Brooke can banish the thought of what might have been, of the future that was denied him.

"There are only three things in the world," said Brooke proudly; "one is to read poetry, another is to write poetry, and the best of all is to live poetry." He himself did all three things triumphantly. Indeed, his short life was packed with experience. He assimilated culture at Rugby and Cambridge, and he travelled widely. When the calling bugles of England sounded he never hesitated. He took part in the expedition to Antwerp, and sailed for the Dardanelles. Now he lies in Lemnos, a fitting grave for a poet, the guerdon of a brief and happy life.

This young hero was at heart as Pagan as a youthful Greek of the classic period. The young man for whom the passing hours had such possibilities of joy or sorrow was conscious always that they could never return. Young as he was, he realized "the sense of tears in mortal things." In the most exultant moments of life he was conscious of the shadow of death, and it thrilled him to a finer tenderness:—

And has the truth brought no new hope at all,  
Heart, that you're weeping yet for Paradise?  
Do they still whisper, the old weary cries?  
Mid youth and song, feasting and carnival,  
Through laughter, through the roses, as of old  
Comes Death, on shadowy and relentless feet,  
Death, unappeasable by prayer or gold;  
Death is the end, the end!  
Proud then, clear-eyed and laughing, go to greet  
Death as a friend.

Again and again the young singer reverts to the working of this Nemesis. In many a lovely line we get hints at the tragedy which was at the core of the Greek conception of life, this Pagan antipathy to that final dissolution for which there was no consolation. His sympathies were ever with the youth

who feels in his blood the hunger of an unshaped desire and revolts against Fate which would subdue it. Listen to this beautiful sonnet:—

Breathless, we flung us on the windy hill,  
Laughed in the sun, and kissed the lovely grass.  
You said, "Through glory and ecstasy we pass  
Wind, sun, and earth remain, the birds sing still,  
When we are old, are old! 'And when we die  
All's over that is our's, and life burns on  
Through other lovers, other lips,' said I,  
'Heart of my heart, our heaven is now, is won'!"  
"We are Earth's best, that learnt her lesson here,  
Life is our cry. We have kept the faith! we said;  
We shall go down with unreluctant tread  
Rose-crowned into the darkness!" Proud we were  
And laughed, that had such brave, true things to say,  
—And then, you suddenly cried, and turned away.

Rupert Brooke was first and last a poet, and translated the poetry into action. How fine was the inspiration that prompted him to request that any money that he left should be divided among three of his fellow-singers. "If I can set them free," he said nobly, "to write the poetry and plays and books they want to, my death will bring more gain than loss." It reminds us of Shelley shielding Byron's body from an armed assassin. "I cannot understand it," exclaimed Byron, afterwards referring to the act, "a man to run upon a naked sword for another."

Idealist though he was, Rupert Brooke had a keen zest for life. "Is there anything better," he asked, "than sitting at a table and eating good food and drinking good drink and discussing everything under the sun with wise and brilliant people?" He was only too happy in his friends, and he has written some delightful things of friendship:—

There is nothing in the world like friendship.  
There is no lust in it, and therefore no poison. It is cleaner than love and older; for children and very old people have friends, but they do not love. It gives more and takes less, it is fine in the enjoying and without pain when absent, and it leaves only good memories. In love all laughter ends with an ache, but laughter is the very garland on the head of friendship.

Brooke had a light side to his nature. He would write "limericks" for his friends, and was fond of good stories. He liked one of a private soldier who had been fighting from Mons to Ypres, and was asked what he thought of his experiences. The soldier said: "What I don't like about this blanky Europe is all these blanky pictures of Jesus Christ and his relations behind bits of blanky glass." Brooke's commentary was characteristic, when he added: "It seems to express perfectly that insularity and cheerful Atheism which are the chief characteristics of my race."

Sometimes the smiles and tears are very near, as in the poem on a dog, who did what he wanted "for a day," which he made a red-letter one. "He fought with the he-dogs, and winked at the she-dogs, and ran amok generally." Then:—

When the blood-red sun had gone burning down,  
And the lights were lit in the little town,  
Outside in the gloom of the twilight grey,  
The little dog died when he'd had his day.

Brief quotation only partially illuminates the genius of the young poet who died for his country. The war wrought a change in Rupert Brooke, and afterwards he sang with richer inspiration. In his later poems he showed more passion. In his own noble way, and as though he knew his own fate, he wrote a beautiful sonnet, which must remain his own proper epitaph:—

If I should die, think only this of me:  
That there's some corner of a foreign field  
That is for ever England. There shall be  
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;  
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,  
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,  
A body of England, breathing English air  
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

MIMNERMUS.

## The Evolution of the Sense of Humour.

### I.

#### ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT.

A STUDY of the evolution of distinct mental faculties, such, for instance, as the faculty of music, of mathematics, or of poetry, would be a highly interesting one, and it is rather surprising that no psychologist has seriously undertaken it. For besides its intrinsic interest, such a study, undertaken on evolutionary lines, would probably afford strong support to the doctrine of evolution in general, for it is these very faculties—these outstanding and exceptional capacities of the human mind—which have been supposed by some scientists to constitute serious difficulties in the theory of evolution, and of natural selection in particular. The idea that these faculties are a stumbling block to the theory of gradual development may be largely due to the fact that they appear among civilized societies in a very exceptional and sporadic manner, and it is urged, as against the influence of natural selection, that they could scarcely have been of so much utility either to individuals or communities as to bring them under the operation of Darwin's law. It is quite possible, indeed, that natural selection may not have had much to do with the production of these faculties, but that they may rather be of the nature of aberrant variations or "sports" arising only or mainly in the later stages of mental evolution, and this view is supported by the fact that they are apt to occur suddenly, and often in a very high degree of perfection, in families which have exhibited no previous tendency in such directions—as in the case of musical "prodigies" or poetic geniuses—and that there is little or no tendency for such qualities to be inherited. On the other hand, as Darwin showed, qualities due to natural selection must have depended on their heritability throughout their whole development, and this heritability, preserved and strengthened along with the quality itself, is the distinguishing feature of such characteristics, while new varieties, aberrant types, or "sports" are erratic in their incidence and not usually heritable. These abnormal faculties are, therefore, most probably due to disturbances in the equilibria of the germinal psychoplasm under the later and less stable conditions of evolution rather than to the steady and age-long building on deeply laid foundations which natural selection implies. Nevertheless, few modern Biologists doubt that these qualities, however produced, are equally products of evolution in the general sense.

But with the evolution of the sense of humour we seem to be on surer ground. There are three important tests by which we are able to form an opinion regarding the evolutionary development of organic characters. If, in the first place, we find that an organic character, whether physical or mental, is common to both man and the lower animals, and if, in the second place, we find that it exhibits a progressive development as human societies develop, we are justified in concluding that it is a product of gradual evolution. And if, furthermore, we can show that this mental or physical quality has been useful to its possessors in the course of its evolution and has had "survival value" either for individuals or societies, we may conclude that natural selection has played a part in its development. I shall now try to show that the subtle, though very definite and recognizable characteristic which we call a sense of humour seems fully to satisfy these three conditions, viz., (1) Sub-human origin (2) Human development (3) Utility.

Humour seems to have had its origin in the "play instinct," and it is hardly necessary to point out that

we find the play instinct well developed among the higher mammalia. The gambols of the young of dogs and cats, both wild and domesticated, are well known, as are also the friskings and playful antics of lambs, kids, calves, and colts. And no one who has watched a kitten lying in ambush and suddenly jumping out on its startled playfellow, or seen a dog with eyes full of merriment waiting till its master approaches and then darting away with gleeful barkings, could have much doubt that there enters into this play instinct a dawning sense of fun and humour. But the humorists, par excellence, of the animal world are to be found, where we should, of course, expect on evolutionary principles to find them, among its highest representatives the quadrumana. To be convinced of this one has only to visit the monkey house of any well stocked Zoological Garden and watch the ways of its occupants. The pranks and practical jokes perpetrated on each other by monkeys seem to show much more than the mere instinct of play, for they seem to include a very definite and zestful sense of humour.

Coming now to a consideration of human conditions we find our second test of evolutionary development fully met. All human communities, even of the lowest types, exhibit indications of a sense of humour existing among them, and this sense certainly grows and develops into higher forms with the growth and development of social groups. Among savages the sense of humour is crude and coarse, aroused only by the passing event or the scene immediately presented to the observer. That is to say, it is entirely a concrete sense and has not yet undergone the process of abstraction. It usually takes the form of playful pranks, practical jokes, and "monkey-tricks" played off at the expense of one's fellows. It delights in grotesque and farcical situations placing some unfortunate individual in a ridiculous aspect, and it very often exhibits a decided element of indecency. We see its survivals among us even now in the entertainment afforded by some such spectacle as that of a stout and pompous gentleman giving chase to his hat as it careers along the street before a gale, or the sense of titillation induced by the clever narration of a certain type of anecdote which no one would think of repeating in the presence of ladies.

From these rude beginnings the sense of humour develops with the development of civilized societies, the increasing power of abstraction, and the enlarging scope of language. And one does not doubt that, were this development examined in detail, it would show a gradual advance from the coarse, broad humour of the savage to the highest refinements of modern wit—the subtleties of double meaning, of veiled suggestion, or of mirth-compelling contrast, the brilliant flash of repartee, the delicate sting of sarcasm, the soft, smooth whip-lash of irony and satire. These highest types of humour are appreciated only by the most civilized minds, and are utterly incomprehensible to the savage or even to many educated Orientals. Europeans living in the East have observed that sarcasm is usually unperceived by the Oriental, who is apt to take it quite literally, and that the brightest gems of wit and humour often meet with a stolid and unruffled gravity.

A. F. MADDOCK.

(To be Concluded.)

We can recognize the stars in the heavens, it is true, and after thousands of years of work we have succeeded in determining their distance, their size, and gravity, as well as their movements and the materials of which they are composed, but we have been able to do all this with a thinking power created for the conditions of human existence upon the earth, that is to say, developed by them, just as we do not only grasp with our hands, but may also play the piano with them.—August Weismann.

## The Jerusalem Ghost.

EASTER is the season for Christians to talk, for parsons to preach, and for hireling (and mostly anonymous) religious journalists to write, on the resurrection of their "Lord." In other words, this is the time of the year when the old Jerusalem Ghost story is dished up again, to the satisfaction of believers, and the laughter of sceptics.

The worst service you can do a story of this kind is to reason about it, to advance the "evidence" on which it is supported, and to ask unbelievers to discuss it. This is the way to make *more* unbelievers. A great many Christians have become Freethinkers through listening to such discussions, but who ever heard of a Freethinker becoming a Christian from the same cause?

We smiled, therefore, on beginning to read a controversial article in the *Baptist Times and Freeman* on "The Historic Truth of the Resurrection of Our Lord." Perhaps, after reading our reply, the writer will wish he had let the subject alone; although, of course, it is just possible that he does not mind our criticism as long as it does not come under the eyes of his own readers.

This writer begins by referring to the "unique character" of the resurrection of Jesus. But what was there unique about it? We wish he had told us. Persons rose from the dead in the Old Testament. We read of others in the New Testament; a girl, a lad, and Lazarus, besides a crowd of buried "saints" who rose from their graves when Jesus was crucified, and afterwards went into Jerusalem. So far from being unique, the resurrection of Jesus was a commonplace occurrence: We mean that it was commonplace then, and to the people who believed it. There was nothing in it to stagger *their* credulity. Hugo Grotius, indeed, who may be called the father of modern Christian Evidences, actually appealed to Pagan authorities in favour of the *possibility* of the resurrection. He cited certain cases from Plato, Herodotus, and Plutarch; and argued that, whether they were true or false, the record of them showed "the opinion of learned men concerning the possibility of the thing."

The next point urged by this writer is that the apostles, who went about preaching the resurrection, had everything to lose and nothing to gain by doing so. What they did get was "hatred, persecution, exile, and death." Yes, that is what the Christians say. But where is the proof? We ask for a scrap of historical evidence that a single apostle suffered martyrdom. We know there are Christian traditions, and what these are worth may soon be decided by any sane man or woman who will take the trouble to read them. But even if every apostle suffered martyrdom, the fact would only prove their sincerity; it could not possibly prove their accuracy as observers, or their logicality as reasoners. This view is amply confirmed by an appeal to religious history. Fanatics have laid down their lives in all ages for the most contemptible superstitions.

We are next reminded by this writer that the apostles, who were cowards before the crucifixion, were as bold as lions after the resurrection; that they converted and baptized three thousand persons in "an hour or two" and that multitudes were soon gathered into the Christian fold. "This is history!" he exclaims; and he says that "it has to be accounted for upon historical principles." Bless his simple soul! What he calls "history" is a *Christian* document—that is, a *partisan* document—written of course by somebody; but who that somebody was, where he wrote it, God only knows; which is another way of saying that nobody knows, and that nobody is ever likely to know. To call this document "history" is to beg the whole question. If the Acts of the Apostles

is history, then the Gospels are history too, and the discussion is ended by a single word. It might occur, however, even to this Baptist writer, that disputes are not settled quite so easily. A plain-spoken sceptic might even suggest that this writer has no better idea of "history" than a Central African, or any other savage who takes the dreams and oracles of his mystery-man for Gospel truth.

This advocate of the Jerusalem Ghost story proceeds to remark on the number of people who saw Jesus after the resurrection. Here again he treats us to fine "history." The number of witnesses amounted to "nearly six hundred," and is it possible that "this large number of persons were all deceived and all visionaries"?

We reply, in the first place, that there is no safety in numbers. A conjurer prefers a large audience to a small one. In some cases it is easier to deceive a crowd than a few individuals. We have ourselves seen scores of people watching a ghost slip by the window of a haunted empty house, when it was obvious to a cool observer that what they saw was only the flickering light of a gas-lamp blown by the wind. Nothing is commoner than for ghost stories to be believed by the mob and disbelieved by the sensible minority. The famous Cock-lane ghost, for instance, had an immense vogue with the multitude, and was finally disposed of by a few persons in the full possession of their wits.

But let us look at that "six hundred." We shall find that they are not as substantial as the six hundred of the Light Brigade. Five hundred of them are introduced at one fell swoop by Paul. It was a splendid stroke on his part, and we have always admired his audacity. When you are in for a lie it is as well to make it a good one. The man who forges a cheque for five pounds when he can make it five hundred, is both a rogue and a fool. Paul was of a different complexion. He found a big number just as easy to write as a little one. No lumbering tricycle for him; he forged ahead on a motor car, and was out of sight in no time. Other writers mention a woman, two women, two men, and then eleven men, as witnesses of the risen Jesus. Paul smiled, took his pen, and dashed in five hundred. He was too wise to say who they were, or where they saw Jesus. He simply said that some of them were dead when he wrote, though most of them were still living. He was too wise to give the name and address of a single one. He confined himself to a statement that could not possibly be disproved. It might not satisfy the critical reader, but it might catch on with the rest. And it did. Yes, and it catches on still. For the mob is the same in all times and places, with a large and active bump of wonder, and small and feeble organs of perception and ratiocination.

What this Baptist writer totally ignores is one of the most important features of the story. All the persons to whom Jesus is alleged to have appeared after his resurrection—whether the number be eleven or six hundred—were what the man in the street would call "in the swim." No outsider, no independent witness, ever caught a glimpse of him. His crucifixion, as the story goes, was public enough. Why did he not demonstrate his resurrection in the same public manner? Why did he skulk about like a guilty thing? Was he afraid that the police would run him in again, and that Pontius Pilate would nail him up again on the cross? The more one considers this *partisan* character of the whole of the testimony, the more one sees that it is not "history" at all, but the legend of a little sect, which subsequently, owing to a variety of causes, and none of them supernatural, entered upon a prosperous career as the state religion of the Roman Empire.

We have a word in conclusion to this Baptist writer, whoever he may be. He refers to "ignorant and loud-voiced unbelievers." Well, we do not know the strength of his voice, but we perceive the depth of his

ignorance. He appears to be quite unaware that the majority of present-day Freethinkers feel themselves under no sort of obligation to propound "rationalist" theories of the resurrection. Whether the crucified Jesus died on the cross or only swooned; what became of his body if he did not rise from the dead; whether the disciples were all victims of hallucination, or were simply deceived by a fervent woman who had seen an apparition; all such questions as these belong to an earlier and less scientific stage of the controversy. We now challenge the whole story of Jesus Christ—from the immaculate conception, through the miracles, up to the resurrection and ascension—as a fable gradually constructed out of Hebrew prophecy and Gentile legend and mythology. All the parts stand or fall together. It is only the Christians who regard the resurrection as the capital feature of the narrative. To the Freethinker it is all of a piece, and in every feature it follows the laws of such pious constructions. The pattern existed east, west, north, and south, hundreds, and perhaps thousands, of years before the Christian era. All that the Christian builders did was to show a little originality in adapting their work to the requirements of the more cosmopolitan sentiment that followed the break-up of the old national religions. The way to this achievement was opened by Paul, and it was he and not Jesus who was the real Founder of Christianity.

(The late) G. W. FOOTE.

### Acid Drops.

The following letter has been received from the Library Committee of the Borough of Holborn, in answer to a request that they would place a copy of the *Freethinker* in the Reading Room every week:—

BOROUGH OF HOLBORN PUBLIC LIBRARY,  
198 High Holborn, W.C. 1.  
October 20, 1921.

SIR,—I placed your letter of the 13th August last, together with the copies of the *Freethinker* which you were good enough to send, before the Library Committee at the last meeting. I was directed to thank you for your offer to present a copy of the periodical regularly to the library, and to say that the Committee regret that they are unable to accept it.

I am, Sir, Your obedient servant,  
(Signed) E. J. BRADLEY,  
Borough Librarian.

The letter is quite according to rule, but deserves notice as a landmark in the history of English pharisaism. The Library which cannot accept the *Freethinker* files *The Pioneer of Wisdom* (devoted to the ingathering of Israel and to expounding the destiny of the Twelve Tribes), *The Lord's Day*, *The Bible Student* (which proclaims that there is no eternal hell, and that man has not an immortal soul), and *The Christian Science Sentinel*. Whether the Committeemen represent public opinion in Holborn or not, we are unable to say, but we believe there are more Freethinkers than British Israelites in the borough, and we presume that they contribute their quota towards the up-keep of the Library. But to say that we should like to know how long Englishmen will tolerate such cowardly discrimination by public bodies is quite unnecessary. They will tolerate it just as long as they think it pays to do so—and no longer.

The sufferings of the clergy almost beggar description. A motor-car and a substantial cheque have been presented to the Bishop of Aberdeen by Church people in his diocese. It is almost as dreadful as the Crucifixion.

The Church sets her face like a flint against divorce. Public opinion, however, is against her. The cases to come before the Divorce Court judges during the ensuing term total 1,014. Certainly, man puts asunder those whom "God" has joined together.

At the meeting of the Catholic Confederation of England and Wales, held at Sheffield at the beginning of the month, Monsignor Provost O'Kelly, of Salford, said: "They were bound by their faith, by the declaration of the Popes, and the Irish and English Bishops, to say that a Roman Catholic could not be a Socialist." Now we know. And we hope that those queer people, the Christian Socialists, will observe that the oldest and most authoritative Church in Christendom has laid down the law on the matter. And, really, we agree with the Roman Church. For a man who can see in the utterances of an ignorant Judæan religious fanatic, with his angels and devils, his miracles and his contempt for the world, and concern for the salvation of man from hell-fire, the ideal Socialist is so near a state of mental obfuscation as to be almost hopeless.

The following from the *Marine Engineer Officers' Magazine* for September last will be interesting to most of our readers:—

An application form for employment in a certain commercial firm has been passed into our hands, which will no doubt be interesting and perhaps amusing to those members in regular employment as tending to show what the unfortunately unemployed have sometimes to contend with in seeking a berth with a strange company. After applicant has given his full name and address he has to state where he was born, giving the day, month, and year, his height and weight, whether married or engaged, teetotaller or not, a smoker or not. Also, he is asked to give his religion and denomination; whether dark or fair complexion; father's occupation, number of brothers and sisters and their occupations; what games he follows as a recreation, hobbies, etc. These will be sufficient to demonstrate what goes on in some people's minds as to the making of an efficient Marine Engineer, but we have no idea whether an owner or firm would be better served by a fair or dark complexioned engineer, or by a married one, or one engaged to be married, or whether men of a particular denomination would increase the i.h.p. or revolutions of the engines.

The italics are ours, and it is almost unnecessary to comment further upon it. We suggest to the Union concerned that it should institute an enquiry as to the accidents occurring on boats run by Presbyterian engineers as against those run by members of other religions, and of no religion at all. It will be a surprise to many that such inquisitorial methods are still in existence, and it will, perhaps, be a reminder to a larger number that we are still a very long way off being a free and a civilized people. Savages in trousers would be a more accurate description of the majority of the population.

At the recent Roman Catholic Bible Congress at Cambridge Rev. C. Lattey, S.J., dealt with the well-known passage in the First Epistle of John (v. 7,8) concerning the "three heavenly witnesses." His remarks are not without interest, as showing that even Roman tradition is not quite so consistent with itself as the standard-bearers of the "one true faith" represent:—

Hardly any scholar, Catholic or otherwise, would nowadays deny that the passage was an interpolation in the text.....He also regarded it as clear that Pope Innocent III, in no way committed himself to the text, but only brought it in where he was quoting the Abbot Joachim who used the passage. The Pope's own definition did not come till later. The Council of Trent declared the Vulgate "authentic" because it was considered safe. The decree of the Holy Office declared the passage authentic in the same sense, that is, it was part of the official Vulgate.

The passage had long been rejected as an interpolation by all honest scholars. Nevertheless, it has been the theme of waggon-loads of learned comment, it appears in many early Latin versions of the Epistle, and it was quoted by Roman Catholics and Protestants alike as Biblical authority for the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. If such passages have, admittedly, been inserted in the original text in one place, what is the criterion of authenticity for any part of the "inspired record"?

At most of the churches one of the October Sundays has been devoted to a service styled "the harvest festival." We have just passed through a very severe drought at home, the effects of which are still seriously felt in parts of the country, while abroad we read of millions starving

in Russia, owing to the failure of the crops. These thanksgiving services, like those arranged on the conclusion of peace, are all part of that formalism and hypocrisy which religion, more than anything else, keeps alive in the community. Prayers for rain come under the same head. They remind us of Will Ogilvie's fine poem, *Drought*, that realistic picture of the dread King, whose "road is fenced with the bleached, white bones, and strewn with the blind, white sand."

I have withered the grass where my hot hoofs tread,  
I have withered the sapless trees,  
I have driven the faint-hearted rains ahead  
To hide in their soft green seas.

This is literally true. On the occasion of one of the fiercest droughts in Australia the "faint-hearted rains" made their way to New Zealand and destroyed thousands of acres of standing crops. "His tender mercies are over all his works."

The Westminster Abbey services in connection with the "Unknown Warrior's Grave" were quite characteristic of the part which religion plays in our national life to-day. It was largely solemn gush—the most sickening of all forms of cant. It infected even our visitors. General Pershing said in his speech over the "Grave": "Let us resolve together in friendship and in confidence to maintain towards all peoples that Christian spirit that underlies the character of both nations." In the United States we have recently had news of serious lynchings of negroes in Georgia, of armed conflict as the result of strikes, and of the revivalist meetings of Billy Sunday. And when we look nearer home—strikes and lockouts, meetings of unemployed, suppression of free speech, and stalking behind all these the spectre of civil war in Ireland. "Serious Street-fighting in Belfast" is a heading in one of the newspapers reporting the Abbey proceedings.

Dr. W. E. Orchard, addressing the Anglican clergy in Newcastle Cathedral on October 17, spoke very sympathetically of the Catholic idea in the Christian religion. The ideal system, he thought, would include a Pope, an episcopate, a presbytery and individual congregationalists. There is nothing startlingly original in this enumeration, and the reverend doctor of divinity must know perfectly well that all he is asking for in this respect already exists in the organization which claims apostolic succession in the Christian Church. Like most of his deliverances, this one impresses us as getting very near the limit of fatuity.

Another Rhadamanthus has entered the arena to claim a share of the honours previously divided between Father Vaughan and the Bishop of London. Rev. W. Riley, at the Congregational Union, drew a deplorable picture of a nation given up to immorality, drunkenness, and frivolity of every description. We have to go back, presumably, to an earlier period in the annals of the Church, to find the enlightenment and morals of true religion. The conscience of the average modern soul-saver is very sensitive to-day.

The dead hand is an important factor in religion. By the will of the late Miss Gertrude Towgood, of St. Leonards, the Church and Salvation Armies each receive £250. Almost every day in the year one or other of the various religious bodies receive legacies which help to perpetuate uncivilized ideas in a civilized country.

At the Methodist Conference at Westminster one of the speakers said men and women should be equals. Just so! The Christian religion, however, declares that woman was man's "rib," and that she is subordinate, and must obey her lord and master.

There is more opposition between the Cinema and the Churches. This time it has to do with the organists, many of whom play in Cinemas as a means of adding to the scanty salary paid them by the Churches. The *Church Times* is quite of opinion that the two occupations ought not to go together, and solemnly remarks, "One

thing is quite clear, that no man can discharge the functions of cinema organist and a church organist as well." But we wonder why not? We do not ourselves play anything that is destitute of a handle, but there seems no opposition between the two occupations. We suspect that the root of the objection is the feeling that unless everything connected with religion is kept apart from the play of ordinary life it will soon begin to feel the influence of the time-spirit, and then good-bye to religion. For in a civilized community religion can only be maintained by preventing the free play of life and opinion on its teachings. That is what is meant by the maintenance of a religious atmosphere. It is an atmosphere in which current common-sense is kept at a minimum.

A London contemporary recently declared that the following was the shortest sermon on record: "The fool hath said in his heart, 'There is no God.' And why did he say so? Because he was a fool." Several correspondents have sent us newspaper clippings referring to the sapient sermonizer, Vicar Cross, of Bradford. Whenever we hear this favourite old quotation of our orthodox neighbours, we are inclined to ask, Which fool and which God? The words are attributed to David, who was the "man after God's own heart." Most of the "advanced" members of the Protestant bodies, however, threw Jahveh overboard some time ago, and now, apparently, it is King David's own turn to follow his Lord.

The Rev. A. S. Rashleigh, curate of Hasbury, Worcestershire, recently presided at a meeting in support of the Labour candidate for the division. As a consequence, the rector demands that he give up his association with Labour or his curacy. Would similar action have been taken if Mr. Rashleigh had presided over a meeting in support of the Conservative candidate?

According to the *Weekly Dispatch* (London) the Rev. H. R. L. Sheppard, Vicar of St. Martin's Church, Trafalgar Square, preached a sermon on what Christ would have thought had he lunched at the Carlton Grill. Perhaps he might have made unkind comparisons between the Carlton Grill and the Grill in Hades.

Through a delightful misprint, a newspaper was made to say that a prominent Wesleyan was "a native of Hell," instead of Hull.

The valuelessness of missionary work in China has often been commented on, and there is nothing quite new, although that does not detract from its interest, in the following from *Travels of a Consular Officer in North-West China* (Eric Teichman, Cambridge University Press):—

One often hears of statistics of the large numbers of copies disposed of, not given away, but sold; but it is not stated in explanation that the books are disposed of so cheaply that they are sometimes bought for the paper they contain, and used in the manufacture of the soles of Chinese shoes.....Further, even when the Bibles are read, it is now widely recognized, even by missionaries themselves, that the wholesale distribution of obsolete tracts and translated Scriptures, in their less objectionable parts often but a meaningless jargon of transliterated Chinese characters, does more harm than good to the cause of Christianity. A translation of the Old Testament distributed, in accordance with the declared policy of the Bible Societies, without notes or comment, cannot but compare unfavourably with the austere pure classics of Confucius.

Mr. Teichman warns missionaries and their supporters against treating the Chinese as though they were ignorant heathens. The warning is necessary, but it is one that missionaries cannot afford to heed. For the type of people who give this most colossal fraud their support are filled with the carefully instilled belief that these "heathen" who are to be evangelized are poor, ignorant, degraded people, sunk in all sorts of vice. If they once discovered that the Chinaman is as good as the European, and in some respects his superior, the financial supplies would dry up. And the missionaries are not likely to permit that.



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

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.

C. H. HUNTLEY.—Will see if we can get something on the lines you require. Christianity is much the same all over the world, and under all its forms. The Kensitites and the Roman Catholic crowd make a pretty contrast in storming the citadel of ignorance and bigotry.

W. OWEN.—Your lecture notice for October 23 did not reach the *Freethinker* office till the 19th, too late for insertion.

M. HART.—The recent vote against women at Cambridge only serves to show what a wide difference there may be between education and a university training.

H. BOULTER.—There is no question as to the humbug of English public life in relation to advanced matters. There is a moral cowardice about it that is only tolerated because it is so general and so pronounced as to impose upon those who practise it.

J. MUIR.—Naturally, the *Catholic Times* thinks Father Lambert's reply to Ingersoll quite crushing. All that one need say is that whatever measure of immortality may be achieved by Father Lambert will be due to his name having become associated with that of Ingersoll. The *Catholic Times'* opinion that the three men who have done most injury to America are Emerson, Horace Mann, and Ingersoll will make informed people smile, that is if any of them see the *Catholic Times*.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—A. Mitchell, 2s. 6d.

J. BRESK.—We are pleased to see the letter in the *Birmingham Mail* on the matter of the Assistant Recorder's treatment of yourself in relation to the Oath. A letter on behalf of the National Secular Society has been sent to the Home Secretary, and we are now awaiting a reply.

J. FOTHERGILL.—Pleased to learn that Mr. Cohen's visit on Tyneside is likely to be productive of good to the cause.

S. ROBINSON.—Glad to have your appreciation of Mr. Mann's articles. Summaries of progress in science are always appreciated by *Freethinker* readers.

W. JAMISON.—The question of the rightness or wrongness of a particular war has no bearing whatever on the inevitably demoralizing consequences of all war in modern communities.

MRS. T. M. COWLEY.—Sorry, we have no pamphlet in print dealing with the Sunday question.

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.**

There was a very good audience at South Place on Sunday last to hear Mr. Cohen's address on the Blasphemy Laws, and the lecture appeared to give the fullest satisfaction to all present. The last lecture of this course will be given by Mr. A. D. McLaren to-day (October 30) at 3.30. His subject is a good one, and we know enough of the speaker to say that it will not lack interest. Mr. McLaren's views are neither lightly formed nor timidly expressed, and as he is something of a globe trotter his lecture will have that element of authority which can never be acquired in the study. We trust that the hall will be well filled.

To-day (October 30) Mr. Cohen visits Birmingham and will lecture in the Picture House, Station Street, at 7 o'clock on "The Eclipse of Christianity." We should like to hear of the hall being crowded with Christians, and would cheerfully see Freethinkers compelled to stay outside in order to accommodate them. The local Branch is issuing a strong appeal for funds, and we hope that it will meet with a ready response. The expense of running lectures is very heavy, and there are few, including the poor lecturer, to bear it. Many bearers make a light burden.

We have received an enquiry as to why no report appeared in these columns of Mr. Whitehead's recent lectures in Huddersfield. Mr. Whitehead was giving some open-air lectures there at the end of September, and when his report of the meetings came to hand we were away in the North of England, and although it might have appeared in a subsequent issue, in the rush of pulling up arrears, after ten days' absence from the office, it was overlooked. It is now too late for insertion, but it may interest all to know that the meetings were quite successful, and the efforts of the lecturer were well supported by the local Freethinkers, which included the sustained efforts of a namesake of the lecturer, who has for many years been carrying on open-air work on his own account in the town. We hope to see Mr. Whitehead renewing his campaign next summer.

We are pleased to learn that Mr. J. T. Lloyd had two splendid meetings at Manchester on Sunday last. In the evening the hall was quite full, and a number of questions were asked. The lectures appear to have roused considerable interest and enthusiasm, and this was all the more gratifying as such a large number in the audience were newcomers to the meetings. We are pleased to learn that Mr. Lloyd was in such excellent form, and that his lectures were so greatly appreciated. The next meetings will be held on November 6.

Mr. Cohen's week in Scotland was quite a successful one. Following the two crowded meetings in Glasgow, the one in Saltcoats proved satisfactory from a propagandist point of view. There were over 200 present, in spite of a storm of wind and rain which must have kept many away, and quite prevented visitors from a distance from attending. The majority had never listened to a Freethought lecture before, but they took it with an appreciation that was quite encouraging. It was the first meeting of the kind there, but we do not think it will be the last. Our old friend Mr. Andrew Millar officiated as Chairman. A very fair report of the lecture appeared in the *Ardrossan and Saltcoats Herald*, which prettily compliments both the chairman and lecturer.

The debate at Milngavie with the Rev. Mr. Hislop was also a complete success. The subject was "Has Christianity Benefited the World?" Mr. Hislop is a very prominent clergyman of the town and was a quite courteous and able opponent. There was not an angry or uncivil word during the whole of the debate, and the Chairman, Provost Fergusson, had a consequently easy task. The only cause for complaint was the inability of

those concerned to push back the walls of the hall, and so accommodate more people. Every inch of floor space was occupied, and listeners were packed like sardines in all the approaches. In the end the doors had to be closed and several hundreds turned away. The closest attention was paid to the speeches, and some good results are expected from the discussion. We expect that a report will appear in the local press.

The topical nature of the subject, and the reputation of the lecturer as an exponent of it, attracted a good audience to hear Dr. C. V. Drysdale's address, "Neo-Malthusianism and Secularism," at the North London Branch last Sunday. Dr. Drysdale emphasized very strongly what the spread of knowledge on this question owed to the Secularist movement, and especially to the popular interest aroused by the prosecution of the Knowlton pamphlet. With regard to the doctor's advice to Secularists to concentrate on a constructive policy, we need do no more than express our gratitude for it, and our hope that he will throw his own weighty support into our movement.

The Swansea Branch of the N. S. S. commences its winter's work with a lecture in the Elysium, High Street, Swansea, by Mr. Cohen, next Sunday evening. His subject will be "Freethought, Free Speech, Blasphemy, and the Law." We appeal, on behalf of the Branch for all members and sympathizers to see that the send-off is a good one, and that the fullest possible support is given the Branch in its work. Trade is very bad in this district, we understand, and that makes it the more imperative for all who can to help, financially and otherwise, to the limit of their capacity.

The Glasgow Branch holds its meeting to-day (October 30) at 11.30 in the Shop Assistants' Hall, 297 Argyle Street. The lecturer will be Mr. Robert Parker, and the subject "O. Henry, the Man and his Stories." Glasgow readers will please note.

The midsummer number of the *Free Oxford*, which is described as an "independent Socialist review of politics and literature," contains some decidedly good reading. Rev. Conrad Noel's "Notes on the Life of the Divine Outlaw" represent Jesus Christ as essentially a rebel against the social conditions of his day, and the founder of "the workers' international." That will be news to some Socialists. "Franklin Fortune" contributes a crisply written article on "Shelley as the Poet of Revolution." Speaking of the poet's *Necessity of Atheism*, he declares that it represented the "creed" in which at that time Shelley "conscientiously believed." When did he abandon this "creed"? We are not, of course, concerned to second all the economic and political views of our contemporary, but it is well abreast of the intellectual currents of the times, and we are glad to see that "next term" it will appear fortnightly instead of monthly.

#### LIFE'S PHILOSOPHY.

Of human life the time is a point, and the substance is in a flux, and the perception dull, and the composition of the whole body subject to putrefaction, and the soul a whirl, and fortune hard to divine, and fame a thing devoid of judgment. And, to say all in a word, everything which belongs to the body is a stream, and what belongs to the soul is a dream and vapour, and life is a warfare and a stranger's sojourn, and after-fame is oblivion. What then is that which is able to conduct a man? One thing, and one only, philosophy. But this consists in keeping the demon within a man free from violence and unharmed, superior to pains and pleasures, doing nothing without a purpose, nor yet falsely and with hypocrisy, not feeling the need of another man's doing or not doing anything; and besides, accepting all that happens, and all that is allotted, as coming from thence, wherever it is, from whence he himself came; and, finally, waiting for death with a cheerful mind, as being nothing else but a dissolution of the elements of which every living thing is compounded.—*Marcus Aurelius*.

## The Beloved Disciple.

"THERE was.....one of his disciples whom Jesus loved." The Gospel according to St. John, which states this fact, is the sole authority for it. The book thus specified is the fourth of our Gospels, and the author is named only in the superscription. The treatise is divisible into two parts of very unequal size, the first twenty chapters and the last chapter. The former portion ends by saying:—

Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name.

The latter part then begins quite abruptly and finishes with the remark:—

There are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written.

The division here noted being incontestable, and the larger piece having obviously received the smaller as a supplement, we propose to call the one "the work" and the other "the appendix." The author of the work mentions the Beloved Disciple thrice, explicitly (xiii. 23, xix. 26, xx. 2), and, according to most commentators, twice by implication (i. 37, 40; xviii. 12, 13, 15, 16). In each of these cases there is an evident desire to glorify the person concerned and to do it at the cost of his fellow disciples. Let us begin with the specific references, but first observe that these are always made by the author himself on his own responsibility. For he never once asserts that anybody said Jesus loved the man, though he implies that such was the opinion of those who knew the disciples. He does not present him before the Last Supper, even if he hints at him previously. Then, however, he introduces him in a manner not to be overlooked or forgotten. The company are shown at table, and there, "reclining on Jesus' bosom," is "one of his disciples whom Jesus loved." This attitude is obviously intended to bespeak a unity of mind as well as of heart between him and his master, for we are told that when Jesus predicted his betrayal, Simon Peter, burning to learn the name of the betrayer, applied to the Beloved Disciple, as if he must know what Jesus was thinking, and that the Beloved Disciple actually obtained from Jesus a sign clearly inculcating Judas (xiii. 23-27). At the commencement of the work Jesus himself is represented as able to reveal the Father because he "is in the bosom of the Father" (i. 18). This looks as if the author sought to claim for the Beloved Disciple the same peculiar affection, and the same privileged insight with respect to Jesus that he claims for Jesus with respect to God. But there is no other evidence at all that Jesus had any disciple whom he specially loved, or that any of the disciples showed special penetration with regard to the thoughts of Jesus. Upon the contrary, they are set forth as unworthy of affection, and to the last degree short-sighted and stupid.

As to the incident under notice, the other three evangelists—those called Synoptic on account of their similarity of view—say nothing whatever about it, and, moreover, agree that Jesus, whilst saying that one of the company would betray him, gave no closer indication of the man than that he had his hand on the table (Luke xxii. 21, 22), or that he dipped with him in the dish (Matt. xxvi. 23; Mark xiv. 20, 21), actions which must have been common to all, so that he really left everyone—excepting, perhaps, Judas himself—in complete uncertainty as to the object of his suspicions.

Our author says that Jesus when on the Cross gave his mother into the charge of the Beloved Disciple, who was standing by along with her, and her sister, and Mary Magdalene. The Synoptists have nothing of the kind and omit the improbable and repulsive fact that the mother of Jesus witnessed his shameful execution; whilst Matthew (xxvii. 55, 56), Mark (xv. 40, 41), and Luke (xxii. 49) affirm that the women who had followed him from Galilee beheld the terrible scene "from afar," and Matthew and Mark expressly say that one of these women was Mary Magdalene. Our author states that the Beloved Disciple and Peter, having been told by Mary Magdalene that the body of Jesus was removed from the tomb, hastened thither, and that Peter entering the first, beheld the grave clothes folded up, whilst the other following him "saw and believed." This means that whereas Peter, with his natural eye contemplated only the objects in the tomb, the Beloved Disciple, with his spiritual eye, perceived what had really happened, and thus became the first of all believers in the truth and import of his Lord's resurrection. Hereby the precedence of Peter as regards the entry is turned to his disgrace, for he is represented as having had a golden opportunity which he miserably neglected. Subsequently, our author declares that when the apostle Thomas on seeing the risen Jesus exclaimed, "My Lord and my God," Jesus replied, "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen yet have believed" (xx. 28, 29), thus making a gracious allusion to the faith which the Beloved Disciple had so readily displayed. The Synoptists, however, say nothing at all about the above incident at the tomb. The sacred spot was visited, according to Matthew, by Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James, and Salome (xvi. 1, 2), and, according to Luke, by Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary, the mother of James, and other women (xxiv. 1-10). Luke, in a rather doubtful verse, says, or is made to say, that Peter, moved by the reports of the women, visited the tomb himself, saw the grave clothes, and went home "wondering at that which had come to pass" (v. 12). The silence of the Synoptics on the matter here in question is very remarkable. For if Jesus had had a favourite disciple, and this person had figured among the witnesses attesting the resurrection, we should surely have heard of it from one or other of the first three evangelists, all of whom are admitted to have written long before the fourth ever set pen to papyrus.

The above are the only occasions where our author openly introduces the Beloved Disciple, but, as we have said, there are two instances where he is supposed to bring him covertly upon the scene, in the first case quite disguised, and in the second under the title of "another disciple," with its correlative "the other disciple," which he certainly uses towards him when he describes him as visiting the empty tomb.

In the former of these cases two disciples of the Baptist, one of whom is unnamed, whilst the other is called Andrew, are set forth as the very first followers of Jesus, the hour when they met him being recorded (i. 37, 38, 40). In the latter Peter is said to have gone with another disciple to the house of the High Priest, where Jesus was taken on the night of his arrest, and this anonymous disciple is reported to have entered the building on the strength of his acquaintance with the High Priest, and then to have got Peter admitted into the courtyard by the portress (xvii. 12, 13, 15, 16). Neither of the incidents here described is referred to by any other authority. The first is sufficiently probable: The second supplies a witness at the trial of Jesus, which otherwise would seem to have passed *in camera* as far as his friends were concerned, for according to the Synoptists Peter got no farther than the precincts, whilst according to the Fourth Evangelist

he got there through the Beloved Disciple who had prestige enough to go where he would. If the person here referred to be the Beloved Disciple, he is further extolled in these narratives. The former represents him as one of the two earliest followers of Jesus, and the latter sets him forth as possessed of influence in upper circles, whilst both agree in giving him the advantage over Peter. The above occasions are the only ones where the author of the work directly specifies the Beloved Disciple, or is rightly or wrongly supposed to indicate him under the title of disciple, though omitting the laudatory qualification.

But there is still another instance where, according to many authorities, he speaks of him without designating him in any way. This is with reference to a matter of great importance which he alone has handed down to posterity. He says that when the soldiers came to take the body of Jesus away from the Cross one of them pierced it in the side with his spear, thus causing a wound whence flowed blood and water. In support of this statement he refers to the testimony of one who had been present at the time, saying: "He that hath seen hath borne witness, and his witness is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye also may believe" (xix. 35, 36). The witness here adduced is often regarded as the Beloved Disciple, because a few verses earlier the latter is described as standing by the Cross. But this was before the death of Jesus, and according to all the Synoptic gospels some three hours elapsed between that event and the removal of the body from the Cross, which our author connects with the incident of the piercing. Moreover, he declares that Jesus shortly before his death committed the care of his mother to the Beloved Disciple, who accepted the charge, and took her to his home "from that very hour" (xix. 25-27), the rational inference being that he led her away when Jesus bowed his head and died. Whether he stayed, or whether he left, or if he did leave, whether he came back, or otherwise, cannot be determined from the narrative; but one thing is certain, the author does not specify him as the person who saw the piercing and the flow of blood and water.

There is no other case where a possible allusion to the Beloved Disciple can be found in the work. He remains at the finish what he was at the start, an enigmatic figure. The only thing which may be said with strict accuracy is that the author introduces us to a very interesting personage about whom all other writers have been most unaccountably silent. He describes him as the favourite friend of Jesus. He gives him the place of honour at the Last Supper. He puts him close to the Cross. He brings him early to the sepulchre. He makes him the first of all believers. But he never calls him by name, or supplies hints to identify him. The mystery is complete. When we turn, however, from the work to the appendix, the veil is lifted, but whether to disclose fiction or reality is another matter. The entire piece is taken up with a delightful scene, where the risen Jesus appears on the shore by the breaking light to a little band of followers, who are fishing in the Sea of Tiberias. Simon Peter, Thomas, called Didymus, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples are said to have formed the company. After a few words had been exchanged between the stranger on the beach and the occupants of the boat, one of the latter, "the disciple whom Jesus loved," said unto Simon Peter, "It is the Lord." Whereupon Peter leaped into the water to approach his master, more quickly, whilst the others followed in the boat a distance of two hundred cubits, dragging with them a net cast at the command of Jesus, and now full of fish. Peter himself pulls the net ashore, and they all sit down with Jesus to a meal. Then Jesus draws a threefold profession of love from Peter, and gives him a threefold injunction to feed his flock,

after which he intimates that Peter will die a martyr's death. At this moment Peter looking round sees the Beloved Disciple following, and says, "Lord, what shall this man do?" To which Jesus replies, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me."

Commenting on these remarkable words, the writer of the appendix says:—

This saying therefore went forth among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, that he should not die; but, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" This is the disciple which beareth witness of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his witness is true.

Then comes the formal conclusion before quoted, which is so much inferior to the one ending the work itself. The foregoing incident is nowhere else recorded, but it bears a suspicious resemblance to the account which Luke (v. 1-11) gives about the wonderful draught of fishes obtained by Peter and his companions at the suggestion of their Lord, and, likewise, to the narrative where Matthew (xiv. 28-30) says that Peter strolled over the waves to meet Jesus. The superiority of the Beloved Disciple as the first to recognize the vanquisher of death is once more asserted, but there is also a clear attempt to give Peter his meed of praise, and to rehabilitate him was doubtless one of the objects designed in the piece.

For our part we think it quite possible that verses 1-14 of the appendix originally stood just before the last two verses of the preceding chapter. They contain a full account of the apparition, and end with the words: "This is now the third time that Jesus was manifested to the disciples, after that he was risen from the dead." The remaining portion, namely, the exhortation to Peter, the prophecy touching his death, and the reference to the Beloved Disciple as author of the work, looks very much as if it were the real appendix. Professor Schmiedel thinks there is a mistake about the appearance referred to being the third, because one to Mary Magdalene is also mentioned, but the writer distinctly qualifies his assertion by saying that the appearance he describes was the third "to the disciples," so that Dr. Schmiedel's objection is forestalled. All this, however, concerns us little indeed, for the sole point of importance attested by the writer of the appendix is contained in the section which undoubtedly came from his hand, and consists of the assertion that the author of the work was no other than the Beloved Disciple himself. This is news, indeed, for the author never once even hints that he was the Beloved Disciple, much less declares it openly. The thought of the two being one could hardly have found acceptance with any modern critic had it not been for the statement in the appendix supported by a late tradition which became general. Without such assistance it would have been imagined either that the Beloved Disciple was a fictitious character, or that he was a real personage to whom the author had paid a tribute of hero-worship, more remarkable for zeal than veracity.

C. CLAYTON DOVE.

### A New Freethought Classic.

THE question, "What would you put in its place?" is one of the most awkward to answer of any that are put to the critic of religion. But it is only awkward to answer in such a way as to satisfy the religious enquirer, for the genuine Freethinker is quite well aware that it is unnecessary to invent a new superstition to replace the old, and that the void rapidly

and naturally fills itself without such invention. The hard thing is to convince the religious mind that there is anything in life worth while, anything inspiring, anything to feed the faculty of wonder and to sustain the pride of existence when the conceptions of God and immortality have been cancelled. It was evident only the other day that a mind no less open than Dr. Lyttelton's was unable to grasp the possibility of the higher emotional and imaginative life in the realm of Freethought. Therefore, it is all to the good that a book appeared in France in 1918 which answers, not only fully but beautifully, this insistent question. I would recommend this book to Dr. Lyttelton and unbiassed Christians as one of the best expositions of the educated Freethinker's outlook on life, and to Freethinkers I would recommend it as a book of encouragement, an incentive towards the ideal personal life. I refer to G. Duhamel's *La Possession du Monde* (which may have appeared in English), published by the *Mercure de France*, and obtainable in this country for four shillings. This book in its three years' life has run into twenty-three editions, which speaks for itself. Duhamel is an avowed Freethinker. Not to-day, he says, have I found either God or the future life; and repeatedly he speaks of death as the end, as "the edge of the abyss," and speaks in a detached though sympathetic manner of "the Christians" and their beliefs.

The main thesis of the book is simply this: that possession is not in the fact of "ownership," but essentially is a thing of the mind. To understand, to know intimately, to sympathize with things is to possess them. He who understands them possesses the mind of Shakespeare, the beauty of the sunset, the sea, Goethe, life, the universe, even the infinite. The man who owns a moor to shoot over does not possess it as I do who lie and inhale the heather-scent and welcome the sunlight in the mood of beauty and the desire of the fuller life. Applying this principle to the whole of life, he calls on us to take up our possession, which is boundless, and to become the apostles of the new gospel of self-realization in pointing out to others the sources of our true happiness. He deals with social life—with ordinary, accidental social life—in a way that makes us realize the depth and the wonder of existence. He speaks of the treasures in books, of the beauty of the world, of observation and knowledge. Finally, he treats of the two things by which we live, memory and hope, and shows that the cult of memory is the true road to the higher life, since the present moment passes into the memory as a permanent possession, and by seeking for the best and producing the best in the present we constantly add to the treasures of the mind. The present, in his view, is only of value as a source of the treasures of memory, while the future (where is hope) serves as a constant escape from the harshness of the actual. But he is no visionary; on the contrary, his doctrine is simply "get the best out of life," and his book is an attempt, a wholly successful and triumphant attempt, to show what is the best and how wonderful that best can be. Duhamel was a surgeon through the war; he says, "I have seen thousands of men suffer and die, and daily I see fresh ones enter the dark arena and fight." He is no blind optimist, but still less is he a pessimist. Let those who realize something of the possibilities of life, and who would know more, go to Duhamel and read of "the possession of the world."

H. TRUCKELL.

This is philosophy; to make remote things tangible, common things extensively useful, useful things extensively common, and to leave the least necessary for the last.—*Landor*.

## From a Note-book.

War.—Rousseau wrote wise words on education. The instinct to strike a child comes easier than an effort of thought to understand it. May we not say that the sheep who bleats that there will always be war is in the same state of development as a parent who hopes to teach by blows? Conscripts to fight for freedom! What botched thinking! What muddiness of thinking on our national diet of South American beef and chemical beer! The cause of war has been whispered. Let us as Free Thinkers shout it from the housetops. The economic system of ours logically leads to war. The surplus of production must find a market abroad; so must the surplus of each industrial nation. The meeting of these involves us in war. We will not say of priests with Dante that "every people itch with the vermin," but their colossal error in siding with slaughter has stamped them as a plague—as one more burden for the back of overloaded mortals. We may scratch the priest off the list of those who strive to put an end to war. The economics of Jesus would have killed Robinson Crusoe, and the sermons by army chaplains during the war are things—things to be remembered and never forgotten, even when one feels disposed to be generous. Compromise with that—with black-coated parasites and tom-tom beaters who lodge in the body of the system that logically leads to war! By their words and deeds we know them. Clear thinking will provide more overwhelming reasons against the next war than will be found in the Sermon on the Mount.

Public Opinion.—The ideas of schoolchildren usually reflect the average of public opinion. This, from the *Daily Mail*, not in leaded type, nor as large as the type devoted to the activities of Lord Northcliffe. If public opinion occupied a higher level, what would be the use for that paper? We would not have the war or peace journalist's conscience at a gift! Mr. Hamilton Fyfe, in his book, *The Making of an Optimist*, just stammers out at the age of fifty what every young Freethinker could sing at the age of fifteen. Well for the journalist that the ideas of schoolchildren usually reflect the average of public opinion. With class control of school curriculum and a priest's finger in the pie, the *Daily Mail* will be enabled to effectively prevent any advantage from "free" education. If praying could be effective, even Free Thinkers might do their bit to ask for a Rabelais or a Cervantes, to do for the Press what these two giants did for corrupt priests and false chivalry. In the meantime we must look around for fresh readers of the *Freethinker*, rejoice at the decline in numbers ordained for the Church, and assist mankind to balance on two legs after the miracle of ascension. Those who preach that man is a fallen animal are content to let him so remain. In that position it is easier to straddle across his back. Is public opinion on all fours? Or shall we think nobly of schoolchildren?

Mankind as One Man.—Pascal and Emerson, in fact, all the great thinkers who did not draw inspiration from the parish pump, have visualised mankind as one man. We are the sum total of the past; we are also all that the future may draw upon. To hear definitions of the Christian God's scheme, the grand finale is to be something like stock-taking in a huge business. Balance sheet, chartered accountants, dividends—all on a basis of profit and loss. Mankind as one man is an advance from counting-house piety. Wagner, too, must have had sympathy with this evolutionary conception; he wrote, "When all men cannot be free alike and happy—all men must suffer alike as slaves." Suppose we apply a simple test to their theory. In passing Guy's Hospital there may be seen a crowd of ailing people waiting for medicine and treatment. Am I part of that? Emphatically, yes. Bad food, bad housing, dangerous methods of getting a living bring the city's wreckage here. One must have a heart of brass, or a Christian's head to go home in peace and say "that is none of my business." Quote me not my duty to my neighbour. That is starting at the wrong end. What of the handful of men who have the lives of millions for making or marring? What is their duty? To do nothing but hire priests to tell you of your duty to your neighbour—and leave money to be given away when they die—for an obvious reason; £40 to housekeeper and

£40,000 to provide pink flannel petticoats for the children of the Aborigines. Such red-herring ethics are only suitable for slaves. The slave part of me—of mankind, needs freedom; I or we shall not find it in ethics, cunning of fence, bulwarks of power, power speaking to humility, bonds made by words for slaves. The monastery, the convent, all religious orders are denials of mankind as one man. Counting-house morality is preferred by them—to what? To a rejection of the theory that the world started as a business concern and will be wound up at the finish. When geologists disagree about a "time space" in regard to the age of the world previous to the Genesis date, it would seem as hopeless to find out who took the shutters down as to theorize on those who will put them up.

C. DE B.

## Correspondence.

## THE MYTH OF JESUS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I agree with Mr. Mann that "the kingdom of God" was a Jewish idea before the Christian era began. This, however, has nothing to do with the point I raised in my previous letter, as to how the saying, "There be some of them that stand here, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God," could have been attributed to a person who never existed. The plain implication of the verse, as we find it, is that Jesus had predicted the advent of "the kingdom of God" within the lifetime of his hearers, and that the prediction was committed to writing before sufficient time had elapsed to prove it false, and while "some of those that stood there" still lived. I hope Mr. Mann has an answer to this difficulty.

Mr. Mann's theory that "brethren of the Lord" means merely "disciples" is ingenious. Has he come across any other passage in Jewish or Christian writings where the words have this meaning? I doubt it. Further, in Galatians i. 19 the term, "the Lord's brother," is used to distinguish James from other apostles, so that Mr. Mann's interpretation seems to be precluded. ROBERT ARCH.

SIR,—Ought not Mr. Mann to *make sure* before he says, with reference to the illustration of Golgotha in *The Story of the Empty Tomb* (by the Rev. C. C. Dobson, and published by Chas. J. Thyme), that "with the aid of the camera *equal* evidence could be produced for a *hundred* rival sites"? Does this not show that Mr. Mann will say almost anything by way of disparagement of things he does not want to be convinced of, seeing he did not know about the "mysterious work" above, and judged it beforehand, and thus is under the condemnation found in Prov. xviii. 13? I have written the author asking if the photograph is *faked* (for Mr. Mann's benefit), but am wondering whether it was worth while, seeing the way he argues. In any case, the *long* journey question is "trumped" by John xix. 20, who says, Golgotha "was *nigh* to the city."

Mr. Mann discovers a wide *difference* between "when the morning was come" and my statement "early morning." I commend his keen vision, it excels mine, for I see nothing in it. The morning came at sunrise and this was about 6 a.m., being the time of the Passover, which occurs about the time of the vernal equinox, when day and night are equal all over the world. Hence, "early morning" would be about that hour, and "when the morning was come" would be the same. Anyhow, he is welcome to *all* the difference he can see in them. But his next statement is a regular blunder. Every schoolboy knows that "Good Friday" is kept in celebration of the crucifixion, and that it *never* occurs in *December* (as Mr. Mann says), but in our March or April. And yet this gentleman has the audacity to tell me *I* make things *worse*. What a capable judge! But since he has so kindly corrected Dr. Carpenter, who said the crucifixion occurred at *sunrise* instead of at *nine o'clock*, I will do him a service. The trial before Pilate took place shortly after 6 a.m., and would not last long, and the journey to Herod would not last long either, for he was in Jerusalem at the time (Luke xxiii. 7). When Herod could not have his wish fulfilled (verse 8) he questioned Jesus with many words, but getting no answer set Him at nought, arrayed

Him in a gorgeous robe and sent Him back to Pilate. This could all have happened in a short space of time; and, likewise, the scourging of Christ and Pilate's final argument with the leaders of the Jews. These three things, the trial, the journey to Herod and the return to Pilate, and the journey to Golgotha, could all occur between the hours of 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. as stated in the Gospels, and if Mr. Mann objects it is up to him to produce well *thought-out* reasons, and not rely on "authorities" who can blunder, and *do* blunder, as badly as himself. In conclusion. The so-called "trial" in the High Priest's palace was a *farce*, for after hearing their "witnesses" against Christ Pilate could "find no fault in Him," for the simple reason that "their witness agreed not together" (Mark xiv. 56, 59). In other words, their "evidence" was of equal value to Mr. Mann's. "UNORTHODOX."

### Fearful Conversions.

A CANDID Christian clergyman, the Rev. W. Deane (late Principal of the Teachers' Training College in Fiji), has recently published an interesting volume on *Fijian Society: or the Sociology and Psychology of the Fijians* (Macmillan, 1921). In a chapter on religion he states that Fijians are peculiarly susceptible to fear, and that the motive of fear (as in the fear of hell) has often led to so-called "conversions." Says Mr. Deane:—

To satisfy myself I prepared some small statistics which vividly prove the true nature of the Fijians in this respect. I requested a body of native converts to Christianity, twenty-eight in number, to write down on paper the reason of their conversion. The following was the result. One was converted through reading Matthew xxv. 46, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." One was changed by the influence of a fearsome dream; three through being put in jail; another was frightened by a policeman; eleven gave as their reason a serious illness; one was shipwrecked; eight became Christians under the preaching of the Gospel. Five of the latter heard sermons preached from the above quoted text, Matt. xxv. 46. One of them listened to a discourse on the text, "The wrath of God abideth on him." Yet another was converted by the passage, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." Only two grew up in the calmer knowledge of Christianity, and even they were largely under the dominion of fear in their religious experience. Since that inquiry made about ten years ago, I have come upon innumerable cases of a similar kind.

Mr. Deane's account suggests that, in all cases of conversion, it is important to ascertain the motive of the change. Of Fijian conversion, one might observe, as the Frenchman observed concerning a certain institution, "The more it changes the more it is the same thing!"

### Obituary.

Just as we are going to press we learn with the deepest regret of the death of Mr. Charles Pegg, for many years very closely associated with the old Manchester Branch of the National Secular Society. Mr. Pegg was a very familiar figure at the Conferences of the Society, but of late years failing health prevented his attendance. We have no particulars of his death—which we understand occurred suddenly on Saturday, October 22—but we seize the opportunity of paying a word of tribute to one who for many years worked earnestly and ungrudgingly in the Freethought cause. He belonged to the old Bradlaugh days, and his interest in the cause was maintained till the end, although he had for some years ceased to take an active part in the work, but Freethought in Manchester is reaping some of the consequences of his earlier labours. Mr. Lloyd, who was lecturing in Manchester on the 23rd, was asked to stay and conduct the funeral service on Thursday, October 27. C. C.

### SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

#### LONDON. INDOOR.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Johnson's Dancing Academy, 241 Marylebone Road, near Edgware Road): 7.30. Debate: "Idealism v. Materialism," Mr. C. Ratcliffe v. Mr. P. J. Raymond.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30. Councillor Margaret Hodge, "The Spinster of the Present Time and of a Hundred Years Ago."

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. Mr. J. H. Van Biene, "Is the Potentiality of Matter sufficient to account for Consciousness?"

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C. 2): 11. Joseph McCabe, "Modernism in the Church of England."

SOUTH PLACE INSTITUTE (Finsbury Pavement, E.C.) : 3.30. Mr. A. D. McLaren, "A Freethinker Looks at the World."

#### COUNTRY. INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Picture House, Station Street): 7. Mr. Chapman Cohen, "The Eclipse of Christianity."

GLASGOW BRANCH N. S. S. (Shop Assistants' Hall, 297 Argyle Street): 11.30. Mr. Robert Parker, "O. Henry, the Man and his Stories."

LEEDS BRANCH N. S. S. (19 Lowerhead Row, Youngman's): 7. Mr. Arthur Whitaker, "An Amateur's Understanding of the Einstein Theory."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30. Mr. Joseph McCabe, "New Light on Ancient Babylon." (Lantern Illustrations.)

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