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Views and Opinions.

The Advanced Clergy.

Presumably, the principle that there is more joy in heaven over one sinner saved than over seventy righteous men is responsible for the pleasure that many people feel when they hear a clergyman giving vent to what are called advanced opinions on the matter of religion. There are many preachers posing as such to-day, and the professed readiness to exchange old ideas for new ones would be wholly welcome did not one feel that the exchange has been put off as long as possible, and even now indicates more prudence than originality. To play the part of a pioneer is good, but merely to follow in the wake of a long line of heretics, feebly re-echoing their heresy, is to strive for the reputation of a fearless thinker without experiencing the toil of being so in fact. It may be admitted that these men deserve some credit. We praise the youngster who forms his letters correctly, and we should not deny credit to those who are beginning to lisp the first simple lessons in a right understanding of religious beliefs. But it is only on this basis that these men deserve praise. For the thinking of the advanced theologian is so simple, his discoveries are so elementary, his advanced thought is so far behind the best thought of the age, that it is only in the pulpit that he could take rank as a thinker. Children when they give up believing in fairies do not claim credit as advanced thinkers. They simply state the fact, and feel a little ashamed that they credited these things for so long. But our advanced theologian claims our admiration because he no longer believes in things which any educated man should be ashamed to accept. He might as well ask us to admire him because, living in the twentieth century, he no longer believes in the astronomy of the twelfth.

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Facing-Both-Ways.

Even then these men are sadly wanting in logic in their timid heresy. Had they genuine mental strength and moral courage they would come out from Christianity altogether. What they do is to attempt to keep a foot in either camp. On the one hand we find them denouncing as untrue almost every belief that goes to make up historic Christianity. On the other, in order to uphold his character as a "true" Christian, our "advanced" cleric "blathers" about the good Christianity has done in the world, of the comfort

it has afforded people, of the truer and purer life it has brought to multitudes of people. And all this is an outcome of the influence of a set of beliefs which are being dismissed because they are neither truthful nor useful. As an exhibition of theological subtlety this may be interesting enough; as a display of intellectual strength it is beneath contempt. For one cannot have it both ways. If a man wishes to gain the credit of being abreast of the times, and rejects certain beliefs because they are untrue, he cannot reasonably hold that these same beliefs have been of lasting benefit to the race. If, on the contrary, he believes that Christian beliefs have conferred on the world incalculable benefits, he must give up the pleasure of being considered an advanced thinker by denouncing them as being morally and mentally pernicious. I am assuming that he wishes to gain the respect of thoughtful and genuinely cultured people. If he merely wishes to be popular in the pulpit he may easily combine both positions.

* * *

A Plain Issue.

The essential point of what I am saying is this. Every attack on the truth of Christian doctrines is an attack on the historic value of Christianity. For Christianity is not merely a set of teachings or a number of dogmas, it is a great historic fact. Christianity, from the point of view of a student of history, represents a great and organized influence in the life of the race. For many centuries it may be said to have been the dominant influence of which men and women were conscious. It moulded their thoughts and it dictated their lives. And it did this in virtue of certain teachings which were held to be absolutely true. And now it happens that these so-called advanced clergymen declare that these teachings were not true—and not merely that, but they also say the Church actually taught people what we know to have been false, and offered the most stubborn opposition to the reception of better views of the world and of men. So far, good, and we have here a test by which we can measure the real value of the Christian religion as it meets us in history. For you cannot enlighten men and women by giving them false views of the world in which they are living; you cannot moralize them by a sectarian teaching which creates an altogether artificial and false standard of value; you cannot make them intellectually upright by a teaching and a practice that is the direct negation of mental freedom and independence. And, consequently, the extent to which historic Christianity has done these things is the measure of the evil it has inflicted on the race. It is not a question of whether historic Christianity was "genuine" Christianity or not. The distinction is in itself an evidence of the crooked intellectuality which the Christian influence has bred. For the only Christianity with which the world is really concerned is that which the world has known in history. And if that has been evil, then the only Christianity that matters to the student is evil. Thus, the logical deduction from the repudiation of Christian doctrines by certain clergymen is an indictment of historic Christianity. If they cannot see that, one

wonders how on earth they ever came to develop the intelligence which led them to repudiate the stupid teachings of historic Christianity.

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A Disastrous Creed.

It is not here a matter of the prevalence of a mere speculation without influence on conduct one way or the other. The false teachings of the Christian Church had a most disastrous effect on conduct, and have here and there left some very ugly traces in human nature of their prevalence. There was, for instance, the belief in witchcraft and demoniacal possession. Those who talk of the good influence exerted by Christianity, despite its false teachings, overlook the many thousands of men, women, and children who were burned or otherwise killed owing to this superstition, and of the perfect nightmare under which a very much larger number lived. It is true that neither of these superstitions originated with Christianity, but it is also true that they both had the sanction of Jesus Christ, and no religion ever practised more horrible brutalities in connection with them than did Christianity. The belief in eternal damnation is one that may well come under the same condemnation. And when we add to these the false views of ethics taught, the intolerance encouraged, and the way in which that intolerance and superstition became organized into powerful factors in the social environment, I think it may fairly be said that the good done by Christianity was incidental, the evil a direct consequence of its teachings.

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Our Great Need.

After all, I am in doubt whether those clergymen who take what are called liberal views do more to further progress than they do to retard it. And I am suspicious that seeing so much they do not see more. To throw over specific doctrines is good, as far as it goes. But if we are merely surrendering doctrines, which it is becoming increasingly difficult to hold, and meanwhile perpetuating the quite dangerous superstition that the religion—which is made up of these doctrines—is still of immense importance to mankind, then it does not seem to me that we have gained much. We leave the enemy in possession of all that is worth having, for what the Church, as an institution, wants is to control the situation. And whether it does this in the name of specific dogmas, or in the name of a pure and enlightened Christianity which has never existed and is, in fact, pure myth, matters very little. History and experience show that while the Christian Church has always fought for every one of its superstitions as long as it could, it has eventually adopted the heresy it could not suppress and incorporated it into the body of its teachings. In this way it has gained a new lease of life, and the "liberal" minded members of the Church, adopting the same tactics, are like a tenant who has had "notice to quit" and tries to avoid surrendering possession. Many of them are candid enough to tell us that this is, indeed, their object in propounding liberal views. They say quite frankly that if this is not done the world will have forsaken Christianity once and for all. And that, to me, is a consummation devoutly to be wished. And we are only making towards this end when we make it quite clear that the views which the educated thinkers of to-day have repudiated, or are beginning to do so, are not excrescences, they are part of the only genuine Christianity the world has ever known. In short, you cannot civilize Christianity; you can, with intellectual honesty, only either hold it or end it. And if intellectual courage and honesty were not still the rarest of virtues, these "advanced" clergymen would come out of the Church and lend their aid to depose one of the most depressing superstitions that have ever burdened the spirit of man.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Pain.

CHRISTIANS generally regard the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah as a prophecy of Jesus Christ. In particular the clause, "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," is often quoted as an apt designation of the Galilean. In the *Church Times* of March 17 there appeared a sermon entitled "The Man of Sorrows" by the Rev. G. C. Rawlinson, M.A., of St. Barnabas', Pimlico. Applying the passage to the Gospel Jesus, Mr. Rawlinson thinks "it will help, perhaps, to throw light on the whole subject of human suffering." He says:—

This problem of unmerited pain, which has puzzled man since the dawn of thought, puzzles him more than ever to-day. Many, from the author of the Book of Job to Mr. H. G. Wells, have endeavoured to throw light upon the riddle. Is there any meaning in pain which we can discover?

He accuses the great novelist, Mr. Thomas Hardy, of being entirely cynical about the subject, most of whose characters pass through experiences of tremendous suffering. All are acquainted with the sad story of poor Tess; but the charge of cynicism is based only upon the following sentence at the close of the book: "The President of the Immortals had finished his sport with Tess." Surely, if such a being exists, he must be guilty of the vile conduct attributed to him by the gifted writer. On what other ground can we account for the tragic misfortunes which befell so good and sweet a girl? Or take the moving picture of a suffering servant of Jehovah in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, who is said to have been a good man, guilty of neither violence nor deceit; "yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him, he hath put him to grief." So, likewise, the Gospel Jesus is represented as drinking his cup of woe in obedience to his Father's will. In Gethsemane "he fell on his face and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." Now, Mr. Rawlinson's contention is that the Catholic religion teaches a higher way of regarding suffering "by which it becomes beautiful and attractive." He maintains that "suffering becomes beautiful when it becomes voluntary." He adds thus:—

The suffering stoic bears up gallantly under the burden and sets his teeth to endure, but all the time he would have it different if he could. The suffering saint would not change his lot even if he had the power. It is, I suppose, the thought of the sufferer shrinking from pain that makes it unbearable and ugly to the spectator. Our imagination places us in his position, and we see things through his eyes. The ugliness seems to lie in unwillingly endured pain. We are made unhappy because he is unhappy. On the other hand, where there is no shrinking but a joyful acceptance, not desiring to have it otherwise, the ugliness disappears.

We are deeply convinced that the alleged higher way of regarding suffering is a radically wrong way. Pain is not a thing of beauty and a joy for ever to anyone. Of course, a strong Christian can believe it to be the keenest pleasure in the world, just as he can believe that the bread and wine on the communion table become, after consecration, the body and blood of Christ; but the belief effectuates no alteration whatever in either case. Indeed, it is a cowardly act to accept suffering gladly as if it were the most precious boon. It is not a boon. It is true that some sufferers can be happy in spite of their suffering, but never by means of it. Suffering is, in some instances, a sign of imperfection or of mal-adaptation, and in all cases a hindrance to growth and development. Mr. Rawlinson puts undue emphasis on the fact that some sufferers enjoy much happiness and seem to rejoice in their

afflictions. After giving an example supplied by a missionary in Central Africa, the preacher declares: "That is supernatural. Such joy in suffering is beyond unaided nature." Such an assertion forces us to the conclusion that Mr. Rawlinson is woefully ignorant of human nature. There is nothing supernatural about happiness triumphing over pain and suffering. Henley, the poet and critic, was a life-long invalid. At the age of twenty-five he was so ill that he had to be sent to a hospital in Edinburgh; and yet, though by no means a religious man, his life was full of joy and useful work, and he could sing:—

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud,
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody but unbowed.
Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds, and shall find me unafraid.
It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.

In Birmingham there lives a man who for upwards of twenty years, as the result of an accident, has lain on his back, unable to move or speak, and often enduring intense pain; and yet, though a firm Secularist, his life has been and is a highly happy one. He is exceedingly studious, reading the best works in philosophy and science. Long ago Mr. Walsh learned to hold the pen between his teeth, and he writes long and excellent letters to his friends. He has even published a pamphlet of great merit on the *Religion of Humanity*. There is absolutely nothing supernatural in his enjoyment of life despite continuous suffering. He has a temperament which enables him, not to love pain and suffering, but to make the most and best of life in spite of them.

To a believer in God the existence of pain is bound to present a profoundly difficult problem which he never succeeds in satisfactorily and finally solving. If God exists, as defined by Christian theologians, it is from him that suffering comes, directly or indirectly, and it necessarily follows, either that it is the unavoidable outcome of some creative blunder, or that it has some beneficent mission to fulfil. Naturally, an orthodox divine angrily rejects the notion of a creative blunder, and stoutly contends that suffering has some noble purpose to serve in the education of the human race. As to what exactly that purpose is scarcely any two men of God are in agreement. They cannot agree because they do not know. At best all they can do is to guess. For example, what good purpose does cancer serve? As yet cancer is an incurable disease from which tens of thousands die every year. The most pious, saintly woman we ever knew has just died of it in her sixty-ninth year. For the last nine months of her life she suffered the most excruciating pain which made her doubt, deeply pious though she was, the goodness of her Heavenly Father. Mr. Rawlinson, however, claims that even cancer represents a Divine visitation which a child of God should heartily welcome. He says:—

It is from Catholic deathbeds, where all is joyfully accepted, that we get the truest inspiration; from a man, for example, like Huysmans, the French novelist, dying in slow agony of cancer on the tongue and declaring his joy in his sufferings and his unwillingness to avoid them, because of the many sins of his unconverted past. There, and in cases like that, you have the power and the inspiration that come from the supernatural. To find joy in suffering, that is the Catholic secret.

We are amazed to find a clergyman who teaches that cancer is a minister of the God of love. A more deplorable case of blasphemy against such a Deity never occurred and never can occur, and the man

guilty of it is infinitely more deserving of nine months' imprisonment with hard labour than was Mr. J. W. Gott. Huysmans was, until middle age, an ardent realist, almost a disciple of Zola; but he began to study impressionism and mysticism and ended his life as a Catholic fanatic. His dying attitude to suffering was inconceivably absurd, wholly contrary to reason and common-sense. Pain is not a good thing, nor does it serve any good purpose, and our wisdom consists in doing our utmost to get rid of it. J. T. LLOYD.

Booth's Bunkum.

Dost thou think because thou art virtuous there shall be no more cakes and ale? —*Shakespeare.*

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

It is the fashion with some journalists to write as if the force of Puritanism had spent itself. In this instance the wish, indeed, is father to the thought. For there is not a Borough Council or a Bench of Magistrates from John o' Groats to Land's End in which the Puritans are not doing their utmost to force their narrow views upon the community. Unfortunately, they do achieve a certain measure of success; not because they are actually in a majority everywhere, but simply because they are organized, whilst their opponents are disorganized. The population of Britain is not largely composed of drunkards, dope-fiends, and loose livers, but the grandmotherly restrictions imposed by the "kill-joys" are engineered by kindly folk who act on the pleasing assumption.

Let there be no mistake on this point. Puritans are the most cynical of people. Charles the Second always regarded his fellow-men as scoundrels, but he never thought the worse of them on that account. The Puritans more harshly regard their fellow-citizens as "miserable sinners," and, in addition, wish them to be damned for it in this world and the next. In a lay sermon which General Booth the Second has just written he has voiced the views of the "kill-joys," and the precious document is one worth perusal. For the general of the Salvation Army actually represents the views of a large, if uneducated, section of the religious public. Further, he has the unusual merit of being quite honest in the expression of his views, a weakness usually repressed by clergymen.

General Booth the Second labours under the delusion that this country is suffering from a "pleasure-plague." He declares that modern men and women make pleasure a refuge from the disappointments of life and an anodyne against serious matters. Drawing on his unique knowledge of history, General Booth drags in a reference to that unpleasant person, the Emperor Nero, and accuses the majority of English people of being "fiddlers." General Booth also notes with horror the fate of certain dope victims, but he makes no mention of the salient fact that the victims number a dozen amid a population of nearly fifty million. And he proceeds to moralize from the random instances. In short, the General caricatures modern society in his zeal for the reformation of his fellow-men and women, a proceeding equally reprehensible as old-world Nero fiddling in a time of trouble. To regard abnormal persons and freaks as representative of the population of a civilized country is to outrage common-sense and good manners.

The population of this country is fiddling to some purpose if the nation is able to carry on at all during the strenuous times that have succeeded the world-war. Recreation and pleasure have their proper place in the scheme of things, despite the nonsense preached by Salvation Army officers. Salvationists object to theatres, music-halls, dances, smoking, drinking, card-games, and sport, and the very fact that the Salvation Army flourishes at all shows that there are a number

of people who agree with this narrow and restricted view of human life. By all means let the real reformer labour at his work and criticise where criticism is due. He will always find material, and he never need lack audiences. But he must recognize that recreation is as necessary as work, and that people's ideas of amusement differ widely. Salvationists may admire bad music and worse sermons, they may like to listen to converted policemen and pugilists, but they will never persuade their countrymen in any numbers that these things are the quintessence of pleasure. In these matters there is always room for common-sense and liberty.

MIMNERMUS.

The Victory of Science over Genesis.

THE LAST PHASE.

EVERYBODY has heard of the famous conflict between the Bible and science. At one time it was demanded of the scientist that he must bring his researches into harmony with the Bible, on pain of imprisonment or death if he refused. Galileo was imprisoned and forced to recant his discovery that the earth revolved round the sun. Sir Isaac Newton's discoveries were denounced by the preachers of his time as Atheistic. Many people still living can remember the torrent of abuse lavished by the clergy of all denominations upon Charles Darwin for writing *The Origin of Species* and *The Descent of Man*.

Then the clergy came to realize that the advance of science cannot be suppressed or overthrown by maledictions which only came home to roost and made them ridiculous, and that for the vast majority of intelligent people the Bible account of the creation of the world, of the origin of plants, animals and man, of the story of the Deluge and Noah's Ark, and of the origin of different languages at the Tower of Babel are diametrically opposed to the facts and discoveries recorded by science, and it is impossible to reconcile them. Then the clergy altered their tactics. If the facts of science could not be altered to suit the Bible, then the Bible must be altered to suit the facts revealed by science. They had not suffered defeat, the clergy never admit that. They merely evacuated their old defences to take up a stronger position. This was the period of the reconcilers; innumerable books were published which professed to harmonize science and the Bible, in which it was discovered that the six days of Creation really meant six geological epochs, or vast periods of time, during which periods the fishes, birds, animals, and man successively came into existence. That the great Deluge which the Bible describes as covering the earth and destroying every living thing except those preserved in the Ark was really only a local flood in the neighbourhood of Mount Ararat, and so forth. These books are as dead as the Dodo now; nobody reads them, or wants to read them; they moulder on the top shelves of the secondhand bookseller and ultimately find their way to the twopenny box.

Since then many distinguished Hebrew scholars, holding high office in the Church, have admitted that these Bible tales do not agree with the teaching of science, and it is impossible for the ingenuity of man to make them agree. One of the first of these was Bishop Colenso who, in the year 1862, commenced the publication of his book *The Pentateuch and Book of Joshua Critically Examined*. The Pentateuch means "by five," and is the name given to the first five books of the Bible, supposed to have been written by Moses, but as they contain an account of his own death and burial (Deuteronomy xxxiv., 6-7), not much reliance can be based on that claim. Bishop Colenso declared :

The first chapter of Genesis, understood in its

plain grammatical sense, does mean to say that in six ordinary days Almighty God "made the heaven and the earth, the sea, and all that in them is." But geology shows that the earth was not brought into its present form in six days, but by continual changes through a long succession of ages, during which enormous periods innumerable varieties of animal and vegetable life have abounded upon it from a time beyond all power of calculation (Colenso, *The Pentateuch*, part iv., p. 96).

A few years earlier (in 1857) we find the Rev. Baden Powell—father of the famous defender of Mafeking and founder of the Boy Scouts—declaring: "Nothing in geology bears the smallest resemblance to any part of the Mosaic cosmogony, torture the interpretation to whatever extent we may" (Rev. Baden Powell, *Christianity without Judaism*, p. 257). Baden Powell, besides being a clergyman, was Professor of Geometry at Oxford University.

In 1860 Dr. Jowett, the famous scholar and theologian, whose translation of Plato is a classic, who became Professor of Greek at Oxford and Master of Balliol College, writing in the famous *Essays and Reviews* (p. 156), observes:—

He who notices the circumstance that the explanations of the first chapter of Genesis have slowly changed, and, as it were, retreated before the advance of geology, will be unwilling to add another to the spurious reconcilments of science and revelation.

In 1873 the Rev. Dr. Davidson, whose knowledge of Hebrew was so extensive that he was appointed one of the revisers of the Old Testament, declared, "the reconcilers of Scripture and science labour in vain," and concludes: "The sentiments of the sacred writers about the phenomena of nature were those of the age they lived in; and it is impossible to reconcile them with scientific ideas of modern times."¹

Two years later, in 1875, Dean Stanley of Westminster Cathedral, in his sermon on the Sunday following the burial in the Abbey of Sir Charles Lyell, the great geologist, whose geological researches did so much to undermine the authority of the Bible, said:—

These endless schemes of attempted reconciliation of Scripture and science have totally failed and deserved to fail. Scripture is falsified to meet the demands of science. To twist the statements of Genesis into apparent agreement with the last results of geology, the ingenious expositor has represented days not to be days, and morning and evening not to be morning and evening, the deluge not to be a deluge, and the ark not to be an ark.²

Canon Driver, Professor of Hebrew at Oxford, one of the greatest Hebrew scholars of his time, dealing with the Bible account of the existence of vegetation before the creation of the sun, as described in the first chapter of Genesis (verses 11-13-16-17), says: "No reconciliation of this representation with the data of science has yet been found," and "however reluctant we may be to make the admission, only one conclusion seems possible. Read without prejudice or bias, the narrative of Genesis i. creates an impression at variance with the facts revealed by science"; and, further, that all efforts at reconciliation are "different modes of obliterating the characteristic features of Genesis, and of reading into it a view which it does not express" (Canon Driver, "The Cosmogony of Genesis," *The Expositor*, January, 1886).³

Bishop Ryle, Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, is equally emphatic; he says: "No attempt at reconciling Genesis with the exacting requirements of modern science has been known to succeed without entailing a degree of special pleading or forced interpretation to which, in such a question, we should be

¹ Davidson, *Fresh Revision of the Old Testament*, 1873; pp. 101-2.

² Dean Stanley, *Sermons on Special Occasions*.

³ Cited by White, *Warfare of Science*, Vol. I., p. 246.

wise to have no recourse" (Bishop Ryle, *The Early Narratives of Genesis*).⁴

The Rev. Professor T. G. Bonney, Hon. Canon of Manchester, who speaks with the authority of a Professor of Geology at University College, London, says: "We must frankly admit that at the present day no geologist of any repute would accept the narrative of the Deluge or that of the episodes of Creation as actual and literal history" (Professor T. G. Bonney, *The Present Relations of Science and Religion*, 1913; p. 191).

The last quotation brings us down to 1913, just before the great war. It will be noticed that all these utterances were made by highly educated and cultured men, to equally well-informed people. Either in expensive books and magazines or to cultured audiences, where working-men are unknown and unwanted. For the congregations of Whitechapel, Bermondsey and East Ham, Moses was still the greatest scientific authority upon the origin of the world and its inhabitants. The Nonconformists also, with very few exceptions, sat tight and said nothing, certainly not to the poorer congregations. Then came the great war.

With the outbreak of the war the clergy believed that under the stress of the emotions, mainly imminence of death in the fighting ranks and strain and anxiety among those left at home, we were about to witness a great religious revival. In fact, some preachers actually asserted that God had arranged, or allowed, the war to take place for the express purpose of bringing back the wandering sheep to the fold. The Bishop of London had a military khaki suit made—in pinkbeek imitation of the mail-clad bishops of the Middle Ages who led their retainers into battle—and went out to the troops. He returned with glowing accounts of the great religious revival among the soldiers and their demand for more chaplains. Of the truth of the matter and its bearing upon the subject of our article we shall treat in our next. W. MANN.

(To be Concluded.)

Is Religion Instinctive?

ON the surface of things religion appears to be as constant a factor in human life as gravitation in the order of Nature—with this difference—gravitation is most obvious where there is action, whereas religion is most conspicuous where society is standing still, as, for example, in the slow-moving East, and in the more backward countries of Europe. Our modern world is, after all, very primitive in its ideas, and, therefore, very religious. The structure of society shows this at a glance.

Hence, it is, perhaps, not altogether strange that a well-known publicist expresses the opinion in the current issue of the *R. P. A. Annual* that "It is likely that the religious instinct, though stripped of gloom, servility and fear will persist indefinitely."

That such a statement from such a careful writer as Mr. Keighley Snowden should pass unchallenged would seem to imply either acquiescence or timidity. Allowance must, however, be made for the vague phraseology of much of our colloquial speech, and it may be that the terms employed should not be too rigorously scrutinized or too closely pressed.

Yet, it is precisely the use of such "terminological inexactitudes" which enables the "believer" to quote them against the "sceptic," and to which the prestige of a great name gives immense force.

There is, perhaps, no more fruitful source of misunderstanding than the loose employment of high-

sounding and emotional phrases with no clear definition of their actual meaning. What is "religious instinct"? Will Mr. Snowden be good enough to tell us? Or, possibly, some orthodox theologian will kindly oblige?

To give a clear and precise meaning of instinct in the broad and general usage of popular speech is sufficiently difficult, but to furnish an adequate definition of "religious instinct" (if there be such a thing) would seem well-nigh impossible.

In this connection we are informed that the late Professor Tyndall once said that "the religious instinct in man had an immovable basis, and that the first duty of science was to meet its demands." This reputed saying of the great Professor lends emphasis to the demand for an exact definition of the terms.

The standard dictionaries tell us that: INSTINCT is from the Latin *instinguo*, to incite, to impel. "Instinct is the immediate stimulus to action, apart from prior experience and intelligence. The term includes every impulse, organic, and psychic which fulfils its action directly of itself. It is named "blind impulse," because it does not wait upon intelligence for its rise, nor does it receive aid from intelligence in reaching its end."

Professor James says: "Every instinct is an impulse." Herbert Spencer defines it as "compound reflex action," and as "a kind of organized memory." Samuel Butler also asserts that instinct is inherited memory. Archbishop Whately says: "Instinct is a blind tendency to some mode of action, independent of any consideration on the part of the agent of the end to which the action leads." "Instinct is a propensity prior to experience, and independent of instruction" (Paley); "Instinct is an agent which performs blindly and ignorantly a work of intelligence and knowledge" (Sir W. Hamilton); "By instinct, I mean a natural blind impulse to certain actions without having any end in view, without deliberation, and, very often, without any conception of what we do" (Reid). "Instinct is untaught ability" (Bain); "Instincts are inherited motor intuitions" (Baldwin). Darwin's view is that instincts were "slowly acquired through natural selection," and, he adds: "The resemblance between what was originally a habit and an instinct became so close as not to be distinguished." Again, says Darwin, "The very essence of an instinct is that it is followed independently of reasoning." There is, thus, a consensus of opinion amongst eminent thinkers that instinct is a blind, untaught, and unconsidered act; in short, little more than automatic.

How, then, can the term be rightly applied to acts of religion? We have it on the authority of Paul, the Apostle, that "he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. xi. 6). Archbishop Whately, and with him Darwin, agrees that the essence of instinct is independent of reason. A religious act must be a reasoned act, a conscious act, with a definite end in view. An instinctive act is without deliberation, and with no end in view. Instinct is inherited; religion is acquired. The terms are thus contradictory, and rendered meaningless by their juxtaposition.

The question here arises: "How are instinctive acts to be differentiated from such reflex acts as are unconsciously performed? And the answer is, that instinctive acts must be attended by some measure of consciousness, though not involving consciousness of purpose. As Professor Lloyd Morgan says: "Instinct is a bit of animal automatism not necessarily involving more than the lower brain centres"; but, he adds, "It is a bit of automatism accompanied by consciousness in a broad sense." The late Professor Romanes defines instinct as "reflex action into which there is imported the element of consciousness." Consciousness, however, does not assist the religionist here. In

⁴ Cited, *Ibid.*, Vol. I., p. 19.

his admirable treatise, *Theism or Atheism?* Mr. Chapman Cohen reminds us (p. 24) that: "We have to allow for what one writer well calls 'physiological thought,' that is, thought which rises subconsciously, and has its origin in the pressure of insistent experience."

In a complex social environment there is a corresponding complexity in instinctive behaviour. Adjustments may be obtained either by instinctive adaptation, or by acquired modification. It should be noted that instincts may arise from unintelligent as from intelligent habits; that their evolution may be assisted by "natural selection," and that the power of instinctive action is conserved by the organic memory of inheritance.

If the instinctive in man is to be considered as synonymous with, "of, or belonging to, his constitution as human," does that mean the constitution of the infant at birth, or the constitution of the adult after years of education, training, and development? Or does it mean a synthetic tendency, in virtue of which man is at birth, and throughout life all that he is or may become? Before the existence of a "religious instinct" can be admitted, these questions must be explicitly answered.

The survival or non-survival of instincts, whether called "religious" or not, will be determined by "natural selection," but we see no ground for supposing that the so-called "religious instinct will persist indefinitely."

In the close study of religions and their origins we sometimes stumble upon an apparent difficulty. History and anthropology seem to be at variance. Looking one way down the perspectives of social evolution, we see the narrowing sphere of religious ideas; looking another way, we see the persistent and powerful interference of the same ideas in almost every circumstance of human life and conduct.

It is evident that primitive man was dominated by his fear of imaginary supernatural beings; it is equally obvious that modern civilization is characterized by secular ideas and activities, without reference to the supernatural. The detection of such contrasts is the first step in criticism, enabling us to classify distinctions in categories of knowledge. The scientific mind recognizes that the very contrasts of phenomena arise from a common source, otherwise the phenomena would not admit of comparison. Thus Darwin demonstrated the essential unity of life by the variations of species.

Generally, the mind is more impressed by differences than by similarities. It is for this reason that the message of Freethought requires such frequent repetition. Believers in "revealed religion" are struck with the external differences in beliefs, customs, and modes of worship as practised by the "heathen" of other lands; but they entirely fail to see that under these outer marks are concealed the ignorance and fear of a common humanity. The recognition of the *identity* of the "instinct" which impels the savage to propitiate the anger of his gods, and the "instinct" which urges the Christian to praise and prayer, rests, mainly, on a deeper appreciation of the actual facts.

The "instinct" by which religious observance was prompted in the mind of primitive mind and by which it is prompted to-day is chiefly fear allied with ignorance, and is composed of elements originally furnished by the environment of barbarous races of mankind.

Dr. McDougall tells us that, "The organization of the sentiments in the developing mind is determined by the course of experience; that is to say, the sentiment is a growth in the structure of the mind that is not natively given in the inherited constitution."

We all know from past experience that feelings emerge in consciousness without reference to recog-

nized causes and consequences. In other words, we are unable to say precisely how these feelings have arisen, though analysis shows that they have been formed out of connected experience in the past. Similarly, in religion, what is termed "religious instinct" is in reality an emotional state of mind, induced by ideas that have become established in consciousness during childhood.

Those of us who have been brought up in a religious atmosphere know how the strains of an old familiar hymn learned in childhood frequently produce feelings which many suppose to be indicative of a so-called "religious instinct." Only the few who are capable of self-analysis perceive that the emotion or sentiment which has stirred us is to be explained by the fact that the music has been connected with some of our greatest bygone pleasures—with the wearing of new Sunday clothes, with some joyous anniversary, with the distribution of buns and oranges on some festive occasion, or with the presence of mother, father, kindred or friends. Or it may be that the tune of the hymn has recalled to memory days of sorrow and bereavement, or our presence at the graveside of one we loved. Thus, the refrain of that old familiar hymn, though not causally related to our past joys and sorrows, but only associated with them, suddenly raises a wave of emotion which has resulted from the pleasures or griefs of our past experience. Such feelings have nothing whatever to do with any imaginary "religious instinct," they have nothing to do with religion at all.

The strength of religion lies chiefly in habit. It is enshrined in our institutions, in our laws, and in society, and has become a matter of custom and routine. The rejection of that which has become habitual demands courage, determination, and conviction. It is, consequently, rare. Habit and custom prevail; they form the largest records of the history of humanity. We must remember, though, that habit is largely the persistence of the primitive, and the primitive always was, and is, religious.

It is not contended that religious ideas are on the point of vanishing away. On the contrary, religion moves, dominant and potent, in the world to-day, and one must be blind indeed not to see how the structure of our modern life is riddled and honeycombed thereby. Notwithstanding, we have tangible reasons for believing that so-called "religious instincts" will be superseded by advancing knowledge, and that they are, therefore, *unlikely* to "persist indefinitely."

We have now passed so completely out of the modes of thought which predominated in the "Ages of Faith," and we are so firmly convinced of the uselessness of all those notions and ideas which are commonly supposed to be religious, that it is only by an effort of the imagination that we are able to realize the position of those who defend these things. We now know that every event is naturally caused, we realize the absurdity of attempting to explain phenomena by a supernatural hypothesis; we are assured, therefore, that a natural view of the universe is too strongly rooted in experience, has stood too many tests, to be thrown aside in favour of any problematical "religious instinct." "Antiquity cannot privilege an error, nor novelty prejudice a truth." We may well wonder how any trained and educated in the dogmas of theological creeds contrive to escape from bondage, and to regain a measure of intellectual freedom. After acquiring the habit of blind credulity it takes a strong counter-effort to accustom the mind to sound reasoning and the weighing of evidence.

It is for these reasons that the so-called "religious instinct" has persisted so long. Freethought invites us to seek clearer concepts and more practical principles for the guidance and conduct of life.

BERNARD MOORE.

Acid Drops.

We are continually receiving letters concerning the accuracy, or otherwise, of a statement made by Lady Hope some years ago concerning Charles Darwin's conversion to Christianity in his later years. Lady Hope, while on a visit to the United States, told the following tale to a religious gathering of her recollection of a visit paid to Darwin.

It was one of those glorious afternoons that we sometimes enjoy in England that I was asked to go in and sit with the professor, Charles Darwin. He was almost bedridden for some months before he died.....What are you reading now, I asked, as I seated myself by his bedside. "Hebrews," he answered, "still Hebrews. The Royal Book I call it. Isn't it grand?"

There is some other talk of the same kind, with a request from Darwin to Lady Hope that she would speak to his neighbours about "Jesus Christ and his salvation," etc.

Soon after this yarn was published the *Literary Guide* went fully into the matter, and had no trouble in showing that the whole story was pure fabrication. The exposure was published in the *Guide* for January, 1916. There was also published in the course of the article a letter from Darwin's son, Francis Darwin, to the editor, which ran as follows:—

Neither I nor any member of my family have any knowledge of Lady Hope or of her visits to Down. And in what she writes there is internal evidence that her statements cannot possibly be true.

My father could not have become actively and openly Christian without the knowledge of his family. His account of his religious views, published in the *Life and Letters of Charles Darwin*, shows him to have been an Agnostic, and there is not the slightest reason to believe that he changed his views after writing the autobiography.

This ought to settle the matter. But instead of that the story has been reprinted as a tract and is being circulated extensively. Lady Hope was just a common romancer, quite careless about the truth so long as her falsehoods served to the Glory of God. And those who are circulating the tract are just members of the very ancient and extensive order of religious liars. We think that our friends of the *Literary Guide* might do well to reprint this article as a tract.

Professor Couklin, of Princeton University, in his recently published book, *The Direction of Human Evolution* (p. 210), quotes Thomas Carlyle's tirade against Darwin and evolution:—

I have known three generations of Darwin's, Atheists all.....Ah! it is a sad and terrible thing to see a whole generation of men and women professing to be cultivated, looking around in a purblind fashion and finding no God in the universe.....And this is what we have got; all things from frog-spawn; the gospel of dirt the order of the day.

Thomas was specially qualified to pronounce an opinion on "sad and terrible things," but perhaps he would have found it even sadder to hear that the Biblical account of creation remained unaffected by Darwinism. Yet, he ought to have remembered that God "formed man of the dust of the ground," which, after all, has a close relationship to dirt. We once heard the sage of Chelsea characterized as a pair of bellows, with the indigestion, masquerading as a prophet. That was unfeeling, even though applied to one who seemed to believe that tribulation is not so bad a thing as some people imagine. If Thomas were alive to-day would he find, like all the rest of them who rise so easily above the level of "materialism," that evolution only strengthened his faith?

Methodists in Glamorgan, South Wales, are endeavouring to induce the Glamorgan County Council to issue six-day licences only to motorists "in the interests of religion." Presumably, motorists will be expected to walk on the Sabbath.

There is a touch of irony in the account of the death of a Westminster potman, who hit himself on the head with a ginger-beer bottle, and fell into the water and was drowned. It would be profane to suggest that Providence is a humourist.

Father Adelard Delorme, a Roman Catholic priest, accused at Montreal of murder, has changed his plea of "Not Guilty" to one of "Insanity." Tantamount to a confession. Comment is superfluous.

Canon H. A. Wilson, of Cheltenham, speaking at Streatham on March 13, said that "if the Church of England collapses, Christianity might just as well order its coffin." From which one may conclude that the Church is facing grave moments. Some years ago, when it was proposed to found a Chair of Theology in Melbourne University, one of the leading Australian papers asked if theology really needed a chair. Was it not rather a coffin?

The *Christian World* (March 16) says that Wesley's Chapel in the City Road is "shabby and dirty," and that the roof of the room in which the great evangelist held his five-in-the-morning prayer meetings is sagging ominously. In Wesley's day both the soul and redemption were very real things, and there was no need to fall back upon "eternal verities" in order to convince the masses of the blessings of salvation. These "verities" will never attract Bill Smith to the penitent stool two hours before breakfast. To-day the various religious bodies vie with one another in trimming their sails to catch the wind of social reform or Labour parties. After nearly two thousand years of place and power, sometimes almost omnipotent in its range, Christianity finds it inadvisable to try to realize its ideals all at once.

The same issue of our contemporary contains a condensed report of a sermon by the Rev. Dr. W. E. Orchard, in which he said that "the idea of purgatory has found its way back into many convinced Protestant minds." It is evident from the report of the sermon that Dr. Orchard's own mind is among the number. Here, too, we have a remarkable instance of a disintegrating creed returning to primitive conceptions. Purgatory in one or other of its manifold forms was a cardinal element in the spirit world of the Mediterranean countries in which Christianity grew up. The Roman Catholic Church merely gave definite body to it as an article of the faith. Jesus Christ preached to the spirits in prison, and the angels that had sinned are represented as being in Tartarus—for that is what the Greek version says—"reserved unto judgment" (2 Peter ii., 4). If one traces the idea of purgatory back to its source in the primitive conception of the soul and its habitation, one gets near to the central fact of religion. The purification, by fire, of the spirits in the underworld was far too promising and practical a bit of orthodoxy to escape the close attention of the Roman Catholic Church, especially at a time when the popular mind was familiar with the stories of Hades and Tartarus. But that English Protestantism should find its way back to this realm is, indeed, an inspiring thought. England's debt to Rome is still far from being liquidated.

The Rev. S. Chadwick, President of the Free Church Council, says that the message of evangelical Christianity is better than a programme of little work and big wages. If Mr. Chadwick keeps on preaching that, we do not think he will have much trouble in securing funds. And taken with other things it looks as though religion is to be used as much as possible. The Conservatives announce that one of their purposes is the maintenance of religion, and when Mr. Lloyd George went to Wales to dig potatoes—with the help of a photographer—he gave out the news to a Press representative that he was taking some Welsh hymns with him. If these people get to work with their various brands of religion when the elections do come, then we shall feel inclined to say of all "God help us!"

Notices appear on the London hoardings announcing a Roman Catholic pilgrimage to Lourdes, and a Most Reverend, a Right Reverend, and a plain Reverend are to accompany the pilgrims. The Roman Catholic Church fully recognizes the value of titles, and has provided a rich variety of dignities to appeal to aspirants for office or for salvation. The "modern world" is a phrase heard very frequently to-day, but after all it is in many respects a very primitive world. We have often thought, on seeing the published list of new year "honours," that if one half of the community could be made a Duke and the other half a plain Mister it would simplify things wonderfully. It is just possible, however, that any procedure so simple and practical would cheapen these marks of distinction, which, according to the revelations of a year or two ago, occasionally command high figures in the political market.

The Rev. A. J. Taylor, of Gorleston, thinks that what is wanted to-day is a Church with some humour in it. We are quite sure that a Church of that kind would be a great improvement on any Church that we have ever heard of, but it is distinctly dangerous for a clergyman to suggest this. For humour, once it is allowed to become active, is a wayward thing. Like the wind, it bloweth where it listeth, and it might break out at all sorts of inopportune moments. A man with a keen sense of humour might regard the Christian Church itself as a huge joke, and the Christian religion as a splendid essay in humour. Imagine a man of his kind reading of Jesus curing blindness by moistening some dirt with spittle and then clapping it on the blind man's eyes, or feeding some thousands of people with a few loaves and fishes and having more food left at the end of the feast than he had when it commenced. People do not laugh at these and similar things because they have learned to restrain their sense of the ridiculous in relation to them. But once tell them that they ought to laugh, and who shall say where the thing will stop?

Besides you cannot permit them to laugh with religion and deny their right to laugh at it. And that is the one thing that Christianity and Christians could never stand. The strange thing is that Mr. Taylor professes to believe that Jesus himself was a humourist. It may be, but the New Testament does not make the fact very obvious, and if it is so, we suggest that Mr. Taylor compile a pamphlet on "Jokes by Jesus," or some such title. Of course, he might run the risk of being locked up for blasphemy, but it would help to test the matter. So far, we do not recall a passage where it tells us that Jesus laughed, although it does tell us that he wept. And his traditional picture is not that of a laughter, but a man of sorrows. And if there is anything calculated to cast a damper over a jovial assembly it is a picture of the traditional Jesus. Still, as Jesus has been proved to be a Communist and a Conservative, a Liberal and a Socialist, an advocate of passive resistance, and a red revolutionist, we do not despair of some parson proving him to be a humourist. He might even go on to show that he founded the Christian religion as a joke. In that case, we should feel inclined to repeat Heine's remark about the Aristophanes of the sky, the joke tends to become monotonous.

"Medicants are unmitigated humbugs" declares the Rev. D. Kennedy Bell. He ought to know, for the clergy are always begging.

The Rev. Dr. F. B. Meyer, at Southport on March 20, said that the world seemed "spiritually bankrupt." The old Puritan stock that made the middle classes had to be built up again. This identification of Puritanism with the spirit and ideals of the middle class is significant, not as an original discovery but as emanating from a leading Nonconformist. In this quarter to-day the emphasis is usually on brotherhood and the need of moving away from the class spirit altogether. Nevertheless, Nonconformity as a religious organization in England has always fitted naturally into the middle class idea and the system for which that idea stands.

Only a few days previously to this speech by Dr. Meyer the "National Council of the Evangelical Free Churches" held a conference at Liverpool and discussed the question of reunion. There was a general consensus of opinion that in any scheme of union with the Anglican Church the motto of the Free Churches must be "freedom first." This is all according to book, but what does it mean in practical application? An Established Church, patronage, religious tests and disabilities—all these destroy the spiritual life. The "Free" Churches were opposed to them on principle. But the Bible in State-aided schools, compulsory Sabbath observance, and the exemption of churches from payment of rates—all these the Nonconformist conscience could swallow without even winking. While these proposals and counter-proposals are being put forward for reunion the party spirit in the Anglican Church is becoming more acute every day. If the Anglo-Catholics get the upper hand in the Establishment they will coalesce beautifully with the Nonconformist advocates of a "progressive revelation." Such a combination should be christened "The New Coalition."

The Bishop of Accra, Africa, whose diocese is larger than the British Islands, says that for a long time he was the only European working in his diocese with more than two millions of coloured folk. How the Bishop's white duck outfit and pith helmet must have interested the dusky ladies of Africa, clothed only with a smile.

The great importance of the Bible as a character-builder is one of the grounds often urged for teaching it to children in the schools. Now and then, even in these degenerate days, we have evidence of its value in this respect. On February 25 Lloyd Burwood, an ex-soldier, described by the *Birmingham Post* as "intensely religious," committed suicide at Ewell. Acting on the Biblical injunction, "If thy right hand offend thee cut it off," he cut off this offending member in October last.

The recent unsavoury publicity associated with prominent film stars has prompted some members of the profession to issue a statement asking for fair play. It is a quaint document, but its most delightful paragraph records that "our church-going populace is equal to that of any other profession."

According to the newspapers "Industrial Sunday" will be kept in the churches and chapels on April 30. The first of April would be a more suitable date.

Judging from a number of specimens we come across we should say the principal qualification for becoming a minister of the Gospel is—Cheek. And if anything else is required, it must be—more cheek. Thus, in Belfast a meeting was held the other day to protest against the growth of "Bolshevism"—which seems to be a name for anything and everything to which one objects, and has now taken the place of the German bogey. The meeting was addressed by several clergymen, including the Lord Bishop of Down. And their remarkable contribution to the discussion was that without religion there could be no basis for a desirable social and moral life. Now this kind of thing is stupid and ignorant enough when said in other parts of the world, but to say it in Belfast, or anywhere in Ireland, where the whole country is torn by religious hatred, and where religion is urging men to deeds that are a disgrace to any civilized community, almost takes one's breath away. Within hearing of the hall in which these clergymen were speaking women and children were being murdered by the religious "gunmen" that Catholic priest and Presbyterian parson have had under their training. And noting all this, these men have the impudence to inform the world that the only guarantee for morality is religion. Certainly, the great requisite to preaching the Gospel is cheek—that and an ignorant audience.

Over two thousand pounds have been raised towards the purchase of a vicarage at Oatlands Park. What has happened to the "starving" clergy that so much money should be spent on mere bricks and mortar?

C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

April 9, Huddersfield.

To Correspondents.

- J. ANDERSON.—We are sorry the Freethinkers in Edinburgh are not more active. There should be a splendid field there for work if it were only attempted in the proper manner. We know that you have done all that one person can do. We trust that something may be done in the near future.
- H. M.—Sorry, we cannot reply to your enquiry here. It would take several articles to deal with it properly. You will find the subject of Spiritualism dealt with in the latter part of our *Other Side of Death*.
- C. BROWN (Detroit).—We are afraid there is no possibility of Mr. Cohen visiting America in the near future. His hands are too full at home for the present.
- CANADIAN BLACKSMITH.—We have no recollection of receiving a dollar from you. We must presume it has gone astray. If you omitted to put "England" on your envelope it has possibly gone to London, Ontario.
- J. LAUDER.—Much obliged. We are doing as you suggest.
- F. ROSE (Bloomfontein).—We are obliged for the following: A. Schwartz, 5s.; A. S., 2s. 6d.; J. Skinner, 5s.; S. Cohen, 2s. 6d.; J. Lenk, 5s.; A. Cohen, 5s.; F. Rose, 10s. 6d. Thanks for your activity in all that affects the cause.
- G. F. SHOULTS.—We are obliged for contribution of £1 towards distribution of pamphlet on *Blasphemy*.
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Friends who send us newspapers would enhance the favour by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.
The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—
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Sugar Plums.

Next Sunday (April 9) Mr. Cohen will lecture twice, afternoon and evening, in the Victoria Hall, Huddersfield. This will be the conclusion of his lecturing this season, and he will then be able to devote a little more time to other matters in connection with the movement. The week-end lecturing, with practically three days' absence from home, makes a big inroad into each week, and, in addition, a trifle more leisure will not come amiss.

Mr. Cohen's visit to Pembroke Chapel, Liverpool, turned out quite successfully. The Chapel was well filled, and the lecture was listened to with evident appreciation by those present. The applause was frequent and prolonged, and every point was well taken. The Rev. J. Vint Laughland presided and introduced the speaker in a well chosen speech. Mr. Laughland is evidently a man of wide and liberal opinions, and it is well to know that he is receiving the support of those attached to Pembroke. We do not think there is another chapel or church in the country

sufficiently enlightened to invite Mr. Cohen to deliver an address of the kind he gave and which would extend so cordial a welcome. At the conclusion of the lecture there were a number of questions, and Mr. Laughland made suggestions as to a return visit, which were well taken up by the audience.

The Hon. Bertrand Russell's address on "Free Thought and Official Propaganda," the thirteenth of the Moncure Conway Memorial Lectures, attracted a large audience to South Place last Friday evening. The lecturer emphasized the necessity of arousing public opinion in defence of free thought, and not taking it for granted that individual liberty was an assured possession. In the narrower sense free thought meant thought that did not accept the dogmas of religion. He himself was a dissenter from all known religions, and hoped that religious beliefs would die out altogether. They belonged to the infancy of human development. But free thought was also used in a wider sense, difficult to define. When we speak of anything as free we must say what it is free from. Sometimes the external compulsion is obvious, sometimes subtle. Obviously, thought subject to legal disabilities, such as blasphemy laws, was not free. But legal penalties were the least obstacle to free thought to-day. Its greatest enemies were economic penalties and the distortion of evidence. The former found expression in such measures as refusing employment to men of dissentient views, while the latter was facilitated by propaganda, now a recognized adjunct of government in all countries, and by the unfair advantage exercised by wealth and power in obtaining publicity. Credulity was one of the chief evils of the day, and the increased facilities for spreading mis-information only intensified its power for harm.

The cure for the troubles that acted as a dead-weight upon freedom was not, in Mr. Russell's opinion, to be found in preaching and exhortation, which led to hypocrisy. Education, he urged, should teach people to believe propositions only when there was some reason to think them true, whereas much was taught which was known to be false, e.g., in history, self-glorification was rife in all notions. The existing methods of education not only did not create the mental habits which induced pupils to form sound judgments, but they actually aimed to stunt self-expression. For William James's "will to believe" he would substitute the "will to find out." Strife was the logical outcome of the former. Let us encourage the spread of the scientific spirit—a different thing altogether from mere possession of the results established by science.

Mr. Russell related three incidents in his own life which showed how the scales are weighted in favour of Christianity—in modern England. One of them affords a practical insight into the value of organized religion as a "spiritual" force. At one time ambitious of political honours, he was recommended by the Whips of one of the parties to a certain constituency. But, on being questioned by an inner caucus, he admitted that he was an Agnostic. "They asked whether the fact would come out, and I said it probably would." The party selected another candidate—a suitable one, no doubt, with a nice appreciation of the close relationship between policy and principles. He was elected, and is now a member of the Government.

One fact, just touched upon by Mr. Russell, might be made the centre of considerable discussion on present tendencies both within and without the sphere of organized religion. People have ceased to regard religion as the one thing that really matters, and to this attitude must be largely attributed the growth of the spirit of religious toleration. Even among those who still take an interest in Christianity, and are not openly hostile to it, the centre of gravity has shifted from its doctrines to questions of historical and literary criticism. And, owing to the spread of intelligence, the multitude is aware of what is going on. One of the tasks before us is to bring science, literature, and criticism as far as possible within reach of the masses, who will never feel a keen sense of duty towards what Mr. (now Sir Arthur)

Balfour once called a "departmental Deity." Dogmatic assurance, we are told, has disappeared from the world of Protestant Christianity. Has organized hypocrisy taken its place?

It was due to no fault of ours that there was no notice in this column of Mr. R. H. Rosetti's visit to Manchester on Sunday last. But we received no word of it from anyone concerned, and only noticed that he was there when glancing through the lecture list, and the rest of the paper was made up. These are matters of which word must reach us week by week or they are very likely to be overlooked.

But we are glad to find that the lack of notice here did not prevent Mr. Rosetti from having good audiences at both meetings. In the afternoon his subject was "Christianity and the Labour Movement," and in the evening "Is Christianity in Harmony with Science?" In both addresses the attitude of the Christian Church to scientific and social progress was described, and the foolishness of expecting any radical alteration to-day emphasized. There was a little opposition offered at the conclusion of both lectures which was easily and effectively dealt with, and the lectures brought the Manchester Branch's lecture programme to a pleasant and successful close. On Saturday, April 1, the Branch holds its Annual Meeting at 3 o'clock in the same building, the Rusholme Public Hall. All members are earnestly requested to make an effort to attend.

The South London Branch is arranging a Charabanc excursion to Bradlaugh's grave at Brookwood Cemetery to take place on a Sunday at the latter part of May. There will also be, after the visit to the grave, a meeting outside the Cemetery, at which an address will be given, to be followed by a picnic and a motor run through Hindhead. The trip is not expected to cost more than 10s. per head, and may be less if a sufficient number participate. But it is requested that all who wish to join the excursion will write at once to Mr. L. Brandes, 89 Union Grove, London, S.W. 8.

The West Ham Branch will be holding another of its Socials in the Earlham Hall, Earlham Grove, Forest Gate, E., on Saturday evening, April 1, at 7 o'clock. There will be dances, games, and music. All Freethinkers are welcome, and admission will be free.

Freethinkers in the neighbourhood of Battersea will please note that the *Freethinker* and all the publications of the Pioneer Press are on sale at the Battersea Workers' Bookshop, 173 Lavender Hill. We invite all concerned to give the place a call.

Mr. C. E. Lyle, M.P. for one of the divisions of West Ham, was written to by one of our readers on the matter of the Blasphemy laws. Mr. Lyle replied:—

While I am in favour of allowing a man to think for himself and air his views on any subject, I am not in favour of his language being offensive to other people. No doubt the old Blasphemy laws are out of date; but I should require to see a copy of any new laws proposed before voting on them.

This is another sample of the usual foolish talk of those who have not the courage to make a definite pronouncement one way or the other. No one is in favour of offensive language, and there are laws already which adequately protect the public with regard to that, and which are not touched by the abolition of the Blasphemy laws. The question which Mr. Lyle should answer is whether he believes in the right of Christians having a law which gives their peculiar opinions a special measure of protection, and leaves them to decide whether the language, for the use of which a man may be imprisoned, is offensive or otherwise. And when that has been answered Mr. Lyle might also tell us the substantial difference between the Catholic Church burning a man at the stake because it was opposed to his teachings, and the Protestant imprisoning a man because he speaks of his religion in a way he does not like.

The Religion of Jesus.

III.

(Continued from page 198.)

I HAVE always regretted not having kept the thousand-and-one references to Jesus and his religion I have met with in all kinds of reading. As I write, there are two papers before me, the *Times' Literary Supplement* and *John o' London's Weekly*, and they both prove an old contention of mine, that Jesus is the greatest exponent of whatever branch of knowledge or particular fad a writer favours. We know that to Sir A. Conan Doyle Jesus is the greatest Spiritualist the world has ever seen, and we have read, I think, that, according to Mr. Lansbury, the creed of Lenin is the Sermon on the Mount put into actual practice, which makes Jesus the greatest Bolshevik that ever lived. To be the greatest Bolshevik means to be the greatest Revolutionary, and Mr. Lansbury gets support from the review in the *Times' Literary Supplement* of an Italian Life of Christ recently written. The author believes everything in the Gospels, which is decidedly refreshing in these days of Modernism, and comes to the conclusion that Jesus is the greatest of Revolutionaries. He goes further. Although "Christ never wrote a line himself except in the sand, and the wind wiped it out, yet he was the greatest of all poets with the miraculous gift of communicating the highest truths in the simplest language." Shades of Shakespeare, Shelley and Goethe! The greatest Revolutionary and the greatest Poet! Anything else? Well, Lord Riddell in *John o' London*, in the course of a fine article on "Public Speaking," says "Bernard Shaw says somewhere that our Lord is the greatest of all political economists. It might be said with equal truth and without irreverence that He is the greatest of all rhetoricians.....All the utterances of Jesus Christ may well be studied from the oratorical point of view." With such terrific qualifications the religion of Jesus really ought to be the most wonderful religion the *universe* has ever seen—and I am quite sure its supporters would claim it equally useful for the inhabitants of Mars and Jupiter if these popular planets are inhabited.

There is one particular gem which I must introduce here, as it would be difficult even in the extensive literature on the religion of Jesus to equal it. It is from a book by a Mr. Huntley Carter, called *Spiritualism. Its present day meaning. A Symposium*, and is taken from the article by Fergus Hume:—

But Christ, as the Saviour of the world, took up the Cross of the War when it began and bore the greater part of the agony necessary to relieve the force, giving to each of us only so much of the suffering as we were able to bear. We, by parting wrongfully with our creative power, brought about the suffering which rightfully we should have endured alone. But Christ, knowing that we could not bear the agony, came to our rescue. Heavy has been the cross of each who by thought, word and deed brought about the cataclysm; but heavier, beyond human comprehension, has been, and still is, the cross we have laid on His shoulder; that cross which He bears in His wonderful compassion for His ignorant, ungrateful children. But the ingratitude comes from want of knowledge, and when we know in ourselves that He is truly the Redeemer of the world then only shall we be able to give Him the adoration and worship which are due to our Saviour.

That this kind of hopeless drivel (though it is written by the author of famous detective stories) should find a ready market and be accepted as authoritative by educated people because it is in favour of orthodox religion, proves how necessary is our fight for intellectual emancipation. Personally, I feel sometimes, on reading such rubbish, its author should get nine months' hard labour for *blaspheming humanity*.

But if this extract from a layman is funny, what can we say of such books as *Christ and Christianity*, by the Rev. Frank Ballard? I take this book up because it is typical of many apologetic works, and its author has given himself the reputation of being a terrible infidel slayer. His two special bogies are Robert Blatchford and Haeckel, and he pursued them unmercifully for years. Whether anybody reads him now-a-days I do not know, as I rarely see his works for sale, and the one above mentioned I picked up for a penny in a wooden box. It gives "a selection from more than 2,000 questions asked and answered at open conferences," and it will prove an eye opener to those who want to find out the "real truth" about the religion of Jesus. Dr. Ballard is "hot stuff" on authorities. What Lecky would have thought of him is difficult to say, but it would have been interesting to hear a discussion between them on "the simple record of three short years of active life," for, as far as Dr. Ballard is concerned, to understand something about these three short years one would have to read at least 100 volumes of all kinds—to say nothing of dozens of articles in various reviews. Nearly every answer that this terrible foe to Atheism gives requires the study of half-a-dozen books, and when you have gone right through these the worthy doctor recommends a few dozen more at the end of his work. To digest them all would require at least two years' hard labour, which seems rather a lot for Lecky's "simple record." As for the quality of the replies given by Dr. Ballard, I can only say that they are of the usual type, based on superstition, credulity and "big names in the Church." The real difficulties are, of course, shirked, as when this is given as an answer: "This is one of the many New Testament problems for which we neither have, nor in all probability ever shall have, any clear solution." Notice the Doctor's admission of many New Testament problems. Even an infidel slayer has to pull himself up sharply sometimes. Dr. Ballard, with his library of authorities forms a refreshing contrast to those Christians and reverent Rationalists who would have us believe that the sweet, simple story of Jesus can make its appeal to the simplest mind and heart—unless, of course, simplicity is necessary to swallow the childish Christian myth.

"But," insist my Christian critics, "what does it matter what people say about Jesus or his religion? It is his teaching—his actual words which have transformed the world. What can you say about them?"

Well, taking the Authorized Version as giving the substance of his teaching, what do we find? In my own case I have only to quote a verse to raise a tremendous discussion. If no one present has a Bible, then a blank denial that Jesus said such and such a thing is always vehemently asserted. If a Bible is present or can be got, then it is always a false or out-of-date version. If a particular version is at last agreed upon, then the particular verse discussed is always badly or wrongly translated. If the "original" Greek is at last settled upon, and there is no escape there, then I am invariably told that the original writer, not being gifted with the wonderful personality of Jesus, was unable to comprehend him, and therefore we must not be surprised that a slight error has crept into the original records or that a copyist here and there dropped a vital word. Why, infidels like myself would have objected or found some objection, if no error whatever could be discovered, so the fact that there are a few "insignificant" ones is proof positive that the story and religion of Jesus are divine. When this wonderful piece of Christian logic is finally disposed of I am almost invariably told that Jesus, though not really an Oriental Jew, had to speak like one, and therefore the verse or teaching brought forward is the beautiful Oriental way of putting a universal fact, not necessarily understood by material-

istic minds like mine. And, finally, I am asked why do I invariably pick upon the *difficult* texts when there are so many nice easy ones to choose from? I put it to any reader who has engaged in controversy with Christians whether he has not suffered this sort of treatment—anything and everything to occupy the time rather than an admission that the religion of Jesus is, after all, never practised by Christians, and therefore is of no use. And another remarkable thing is that when a person calls himself "unorthodox" you will find him a thorough believer in everything, no matter how stupid or superstitious, while the person who has given up the Virgin Birth, the Resurrection, and all the miracles insists on being called a Christian.

One of the most vital questions of the day, not only to society in general but to individuals in particular, is the divorce question. So long as there is marriage (that is, legalized mating), so long there are bound to be misfits, people who, after having come together, find they are quite unsuited as life partners. There are also the cases of married people who are habitual drunkards, reprieved murderers, hopeless lunatics, unfortunate beings the results of heredity and environment, of vice and foul passions, people whom one can pity and blame at the same time, but who have no right to perpetuate unhappiness and terrible misery upon their innocent mates. And yet the religion of Jesus—the Jesus whose highest contribution for suffering humanity was, we are told, love and tender sympathy for the vilest and lowest—allows no separation whatever, no divorce, except it be for "fornication," to these people; the innocent partner must suffer for the rest of his or her life, simply because Jesus said so! No reason whatever is given, of course, except that it happens to be opposed to the Pharisees; and the dead hand of a Jewish peasant, after nearly 2,000 years, still can cast its heavy manacles on the lives of modern men and women who can still be found grovelling in their fear of what might happen if they dared to disobey! If I had no other reason than his attitude on the question of marriage and divorce I would oppose Jesus and his religion as unfit for modern needs, in spite of Lecky and Mill and his other Rationalist eulogizers. It would be futile to refer to the thousands of books that have been written on the subject of Jesus and his teaching on these questions. The Gospels hopelessly contradict themselves (as usual), and their commentators nearly fall over themselves to prove Jesus is fully abreast of the most humane of modern movements or of the ideas and fads of the commentators themselves.

(To be Continued.) H. CUTNER.

Evil Little Spirits from Nowhere —Nowhere at All.

The earth has bubbles, as the water has,
And these are of them.

EACH periodical revival of the spirit-cult is due to some cause or causes in our social life. The cause can often be traced as easily as the atavistic and deplorable effects can be seen. It would have been a miracle had there *not* been a recrudescence of superstition during, and immediately after, the "world war." All the conditions were favourable, and miracles do not happen—to-day.

The Christian religion had been steadily breaking down before the war. This had been admitted time and again by official representatives of all sections of Christianity. These same official Christians expected that through the war they would regain much lost ground. As all war—even justifiable war—is a reversion towards barbarism, they were quite entitled to look for a revival in their savage religious ideas.

Unhappily for them and their bad business the decay had gone too far for them to put any semblance of real vitality into it. All that all their efforts succeeded in reviving was non-conscientious objection against "doing their bit" as citizens. Hence, the tears of paid official Christians, and the nonsense-stories that "God" sent the war to punish (all) the people of this world and teach them to be true believers. Presumably, the teaching of the Christian religion that an Omnipotent, Omniscient, Infinite, and Eternal "God" SHALL visit the sins of the fathers upon the (innocent) children to the third and fourth generations is a part of the lesson meant for us. So much the worse for the said children's free-will. (What a "God" in which to believe!) But we can say, in truth, that we are suffering to-day for the sins of the Christian Fathers—which fact might be of use to the "intellectuals" of the Christian Want-of-Evidence Society.

The war was the painful proof of the utter failure of the Christian religion after over fifteen hundred years of power, and with a Three-fold, All-Powerful "God" behind (or within) it. More than that, the five-year-long tragedy brought home to many who had never really *thought* about the subject before the full futility of belief in "God" or "Gods"—be they never so many, so few, or so vague. They began to realize, if only in a dim, semi-conscious, emotional manner, that Atheism or Rationalism was the only right reliable basis on which to build up happy, healthy, free, human, social life in *this* world.

Unfortunately, and largely owing to the evil influence of the Christian religion, with its priests and parsons, the great masses of the people were quite unable rationally to think out these questions in philosophy, psychology, ethics, and sociology. The bulk of them simply common-sensed their way away from (definite) Christian belief. The Mumbo Jumbo men, in their official capacity, were utterly incapable of giving any effective intelligent lead in any direction to anybody. This was, and is, true of those who enjoy fifteen or ten thousand pounds per annum for preaching "Blessed be ye poor," "Woe unto you that are rich." It was, and is, equally applicable to the more consistent, if less fortunate, ones, if any, who, while representing a Triune "God" on earth, are passing rich on fifty pounds a year. The number of men and women who became Atheists as a matter of intellectual conviction was very considerable. The increase in the circulation of the *Freethinker* was one proof of a "certain liveliness" in intelligent inquiry. BUT, after all, the rationals were, and are, still very much in the minority.

Here was THE opportunity for Spiritism. The shock of the outbreak of war, the stress of the struggle as it developed, and the terrible prolonged strain to the end of 1918 were such as never had been known. Verily, these were the times that tried our faith. The Christian faith failed to stand the test. Thousands of men and women discovered that the Christian religion was, indeed, a "whited sepulchre," and none so fair, outwardly, withal. They had not the consolation of a rational faith in humanity to support them in the hours of bitter and unprecedented trial. In their anguish and anxiety they blindly groped for solace, comfort and some hope—somewhere, somehow. The formal, traditional but doubting Christian belief in the hope of a glorious resurrection left them as cold and hopeless as a Crucifix by the way side amidst the blinding snow of a frozen land in the depth of winter. They echoed the despairing cry of "Christ"—"My God, my God, *why* hast thou forsaken me?" The thought-out Faith of a rational Humanism—that so well sustained Bruno and Ferrer "by the river-brink" to take the "offered cup" and "quaff the darker Drink"—they could not understand.

Thus, using the principle of relativity—not as a "blessed word," but with real meaning—the last revival of the spirit-cult was the natural resultant of social and mental conditions. Free-will had as little to do with it as it had to do with the defeat of Carpentier by Dempsey. If a man with an acquired taste for "Scotch" has his supply cut off he will try to find satisfaction in Irish spirit or hooch—though these may be more turbulent and have a bigger kick. His taste has been demoralized. He cannot appreciate the value of a rational food-drink like malted milk—or good ale. So it was with the intangible and unpotable spirits of religion. Christian spirits had failed to satisfy many. Nay, they had ceased to be. They were but a memory—as distilled spirits are (supposed to be) in North America. But those who had hitherto found solace in the Christian (dead and gone) spirits, were possessed by a mental taste that had been debased.

Another factor favourable to the growth of the Upas tree of Spiritism was the still remaining element of a sort of a kind of a belief in the Bible. This taint, first contracted in childhood, was, perhaps, the primary influence in giving many the bent towards the spirit-cult when orthodox Christian beliefs were failing them. The specious promises and the more or less soothing delusions of the spirit-world "caught on" with Bible-bred men and women more easily than the sure, safe and sound principles of a rational philosophy. This, again, was a case of cause and effect. The writers (whoever they were) of the various constituent parts of the Bible all believed in spirits, devils, demons, angels, talking asses (four-legged ones), and many other weird and wonderful freaks. The initial letter is not the only similarity between Barnum's and the Bible. In the Bible there is a collection of "rummy phenomena" that beats anything that any present-day meejum can produce. "God" himself, is a spirit—Omnipresent—here, there, everywhere and nowhere—a veritable, if unverified, will-o'-the-wisp. As a matter of fact, the pedigree of will-o'-the-wisp and JeHoVaH is the same—by Fear out of Ignorance. Basing opinion upon the Bible, no one could deny the possibility, or the probability of spirit "phenomena." For long enough I have longed to see a set debate between a capable Spiritualist and a Protestant Christian parson. But the latter funk *that*—almost as much as they do meeting the editor of the *Freethinker*. Their belief is not sufficient for acting on "Christ's" promise—"and when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say; for the Holy Ghost SHALL teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say." Fearing such an encounter they act after the manner of Falstaff: "The better part of valour is discretion; in the which better part I have served my life"; only, for "life" read "religion"—for on that, they live.

Such being the social and mental conditions, and such the forces at work, the wonder is that this revival of the spirit-belief has not been much worse. It is probable that belief (more or less indefinite) in spirit communications will yet become more popular, particularly INSIDE the Protestant Christian churches. On the Freethought platform, as far back as 1907, I ventured to prophesy that we should see an increasing number of parsons adopting Spiritism, in some form or other. Subsequent events, and present tendencies, have justified that rare excursion into the field of what is often "the most gratuitous form of error"—prophecy. They will avoid, and are avoiding, the more concrete spirit "phenomena." They are relying on the more subjective forms of this form of supernaturalism. Hence the importance of the line of inquiry and criticism that Chapman Cohen, in par-

ticular, has developed. With that leading we can occupy much of the ground before the supernaturalists are able to "dig themselves in" in the mud of muddled thinking. The more obvious becomes the failure of the official Christians to defend their creed by rational argument (as they once *did* try to do), the more they will fall back upon mysticism and subjective experiences. By this means, too, they will try "to earn their keep," and may succeed—for a time.

In all this we see how religion is an evil thing—here and now—as ever. Supernaturalism nearly made us lose the war. It has made us, to a large extent, lose the lessons of the war. It is causing us to miss the settlement of the peace—and for peace. The false hopes, deceptive promises, irrational ideas, and soap-bubble ideals of supernaturalism lead, inevitably, to neglect or botching of the weighty problems that DEMAND immediate solving. Trusting to "a power NOT ourselves, that makes for righteousness," besides being cowardly, means repeating the errors of the past. The war is past. The "powers that be" are already arranging the disposal of their forces for the NEXT GREAT WAR (neither between nations nor between races). They hope thus to gain the initial advantage, which may give them the final victory. Russia, Ireland, China, and the West Virginian coal fields offer a very faint inkling of how such a greater war would (or will?) transcend in horror all the terrible horrors of the Inferno from which we have just emerged. NO SPIRITS, NO BELIEF IN SPIRITS, NO "GODS," NO "CHRISTS," NO MIRACLES CAN PREVENT IT.

The only real hope for the people of this world is in an active, rational Humanism. The practical philosophy of Rationalism, of Reason and Knowledge, of Secularism is necessary for the salvation of the world as never before. Unless, or until, the people, "leaders" and "led," accept and ACT UPON the principle of Moral Causation, greater disaster looms ahead. Our life to-day, individual and social, has been conditioned by the past, just as we are still paying for the Crimean War. Our every thought, word, and act to-day is conditioning the life of the future; even as our great-great-grandchildren will still be paying interest to the descendants of Great War profiteers.

What is that future to be?

The Rational road is hard and difficult, but it is firm and solid, with no mirage, no morass. The Rational method *may* be slower than the miracle, but it is surer. That method is the road that leads to a happy land of happy humans here—not to a phantom and fantastic Summerland, far, far, away.

"We are builders of that city."

Here is the incentive for the calm courage and persistent effort of the steadily growing forces of Reason and Knowledge, who find their inspiration in the matchless motto of Freethought—*La vérité oblige*.

ATHOS ZENO.

Correspondence.

UNCIVILIZED RELIGION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In the *Freethinker* of March 26 it is stated that "in connection with religion intolerance is.....accepted as a virtue." This statement is made rather comprehensively. But there is one religion which provides a noteworthy exception. This religion is Buddhism, where the rule as to toleration is laid down as an important precept. The Buddha himself enjoined that nothing should be accepted merely upon authority, not even his own; but only that which is found to accord with reason and experience. Outside of this, where there is lack of evidence one way or the other, belief should be suspended. The explanation probably is that, in Buddhism, the god-idea is absent. Paul Dahlke, in his *Buddhist Essays*,

says that "Buddhism is the only completely atheistical system in the world." Gods and demons there are plenty to be found in the Buddhist books. But, properly understood, they are only allegorical figures taken from the folk-lore of the period to point a moral or to adorn a tale. These, the Hindu gods, are referred to as well-meaning but rather stupid and muddle-headed beings. What the Buddha would have thought of the Hebrew-Christian god, had we been aware of him, we cannot say; but, where the Great Brahma Himself was convicted of ignorance, we can easily imagine. Old Jahveh was only a little, local tribal god; Brahma was behind the First Cause of the universe.

It is true, however, that all those religions in which gods are worshipped are intolerant, vindictive and blood-thirsty. They are, as the *Freethinker* says, "uncivilized and uncivilizable." This is proved by the moral degeneration which always accompanies Christianity into Buddhist countries. For one thing, the Fifth Precept which the Buddhist must follow is: "I observe the Precept to abstain from all intoxicants," and the first thing that the convert to Christianity usually does is to observe the Christian precept to "take a little wine for thy stomach's sake," which means vile arrack, toddy, or viler whisky. Once, when I ventured to remonstrate with a drunken Singhalese, he replied by instancing the glorious examples of Lot, Noah, and other disreputable Biblical characters, ending up with the clincher: "An' didn' Chrisht (hic) turn the warrer into wine?" The Christian superstition is uncivilized. It is only fit for savages and undeveloped peoples. It is a standing reproach to the knowledge, the achievements and the intelligence of Western civilization. That anyone should be convicted of blasphemy for ridiculing its god is almost inconceivable.

E. UPASAKA.

[We quite admit that the charge of intolerance does not lie against Buddhism. But from our point of view Buddhism does not come within the category of religion.—Editor.]

DOES IT MATTER?

SIR,—In these days of reasoning minds and thus, advanced thought, the power and influence of the Church shows a marked decline; thousands of Christians are so in name alone. You will find them everywhere. Should the subject of religion crop up it's "Well, does it really matter?".....many of them have ideas for the advancement of the human race but their problems are purely social.....Religion? "Oh, the power of the Church is of no great moment now.....don't you lay rather TOO much stress on religious influence and its evil?.....whatever the right or wrong of religion, it will make no great difference to the other problems of life."

With them the material reconstruction of existing conditions is of primal importance, better housing, relief of poverty, the problem of drunkenness, Labour, Capitalism, better Government, etc. "Yours," they say, "is merely a policy of destruction," little realizing that until we have destroyed the rotted mental structure, they will find themselves unable to rear their castles. They are all three parts Atheists, having abandoned the Church, retaining the principal Christian beliefs mostly because, among other reasons, they have not considered any others, or realized Humanity's great need of standing on firm ground in this regard.

There are hundreds of them....."Why concern myself with the time absorbing studies the Truth entails?" they say, "I live decently, and do all the good I can, and surely that is sufficient?" It isn't! They are fools to adopt that line of reasoning—yes; but then we are all fools, varying only in degree according to our different standards.

The main thing is that, if nothing else, they are sincere in their reasoning, and it is up to us to show them the paucity of same. To show that it is when able-minded take up such an attitude that the unscrupulous are given the opportunity to mislead their weaker fellows. To show, beyond doubt, that only through sound principles, born of sound reasoning, can come the emancipation of the State, the race and Humanity as a whole. We must show them that such apathy as theirs has played a major role in the enactment of the tragedy that has brought us to to-day. We must make them realize that the final act is not yet; that it depends on US whether our children's children, through to the time the

curtain falls, shall bow to a brilliant climax of a wonderful drama or droop in bitter tears to the finale of a tragedy WE SHALL HAVE THRUST UPON THEM.

Does it matter? So far as *we* are concerned No! Yet shall WE emulate the gods of the heathens, taking all and giving nothing? or are we MEN desirous of handing down to our children the gold of sustained, unselfish effort whereon they may safely set their feet without fear?

ARCHIE L. PEARCE.

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, Mr. W. Sansum, "The Police System and how it affects the Masses." Discussion Circle meets every Wednesday at 7.30, "Coronet" Hotel, Soho Street, W.

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. T. F. Palmer, "The Theory of Relativity."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C. 2): 11, John A. Hobson, M.A., "The New Interest in Psychology."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

LEEDS BRANCH N. S. S. (Youngman's, 19 Lowerhead Road): 6.15, Mr. W. Moffat, "How We Grow."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Operetta—"Cinderella." Performed by children of the Secular Sunday School. (Silver Collection.)

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The Parson and the Atheist

A Friendly Discussion on
RELIGION AND LIFE

BETWEEN

Rev. the Hon. EDWARD LYTTTELTON, D.D.

(Late Headmaster of Eton College)

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