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Views and Opinions.

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Toleration and the Law.

In dealing with Professor Kenny's article on the evolution of the Blasphemy laws I pointed out that it raised questions much larger than the merely legal aspect of the matter. In the present notes I propose dealing with two of these—the historical and the social. The two are, as a matter of fact, closely intertwined, and the one cannot be understood without the other. And as a preliminary it may be noted that the demand of the supporters of the Blasphemy laws for special protection for the *religious* feelings of people in itself calls for some deeper examination than I gave to the subject last week. In a way, the law does protect the feelings of everybody from outrage beyond a certain point. If I speak or act in connection with any subject so as to drive a man or an audience to exasperation I may be summoned either for annoyance or for so acting as to lead to a breach of the peace. In this respect the law recognises that human beings being what they are, social amenities would be impossible if everyone were allowed to use the utmost license of speech or action in relation to his neighbour. I do not know that anyone is seriously at variance with this arrangement. In social life we must live under a system of give and take; we surrender something of our freedom of personal action in order to acquire the much greater liberty which ordered social life does give. And the comparatively few cases that come before the courts in which people are seriously aggrieved by the speech of their neighbours proves that, in the main, the pressure of public opinion is enough to maintain a tolerable standard of behaviour in this direction. At any rate, as this is a rule which applies to all classes of the community alike, no one class can claim to have a special grievance.

* * *

Disguised Intolerance.

Now, why is it that this same rule cannot be applied to religion? Or to put the same matter in another way, why cannot the rule as to genuinely offensive speech or behaviour which applies to other subjects apply to religion also? The usual answer to this, perhaps the only answer, is that we must pay more respect to the opinions of people on religion than to

their opinions on other subjects, because they feel more keenly about religion than they do about other things. This was one of the reasons given by Mr. Justice Avory in the Gott trial. But there are any number of things coming under the head of religion about which no one would hesitate to speak in the strongest possible manner. Christians do not show the slightest hesitation in describing Mahomet as an impostor, and the law will not interfere to see that the feelings of a Moslem are not outraged. And apart from this instance, there are practices attaching to many religions which the law itself feels compelled to suppress or to regulate in what is believed to be the social order. Even cannibalism, it is well-known, is practised as a religious ceremony. And if in the spirit of a scientific anthropologist I trace the Christian practice of the mass or the communion back to the religious cannibalism of primitive tribes, and declare the one to be the outcome of the other, by what logical right am I to be imprisoned because some Christian, not so well versed as myself in the origin and history of his religion, feels insulted or outraged? Clearly not all opinions are entitled to be treated with respect, and I venture to lay it down that no opinion, as such, deserves to be treated with respect unless we hold it to be a true one. To pay respect to an opinion merely because someone holds it is to lose all distinction between the true and the false. It is to place all opinion upon the same level of worth, and so to strike a blow at the primal conditions of social development.

* * *

The Dangers of Suppression.

John Stuart Mill met the argument in favour of suppression with the reply that all attempts at such were fatal to genuine intellectual development. We might suppress an opinion that was wrong, but on the other hand it might be right; and in either case we managed to suppress the desire to find out what was right and the strength that comes from seeking it. To that may be added the important fact that the advocates of such opinions as are held by only a few—the only opinions that the law seeks to suppress in even a disguised manner—are nearly always held by very earnest men and women; and although I am not arguing that earnestness is any indication at all of accuracy, I do hold that society, particularly Christian society, has not yet on hand so large a reserve of intellectual honesty and sincerity that it can afford to do anything to discourage it. The danger of any interference with the freest possible expression is, not merely that you may be suppressing an opinion that is right, but that—particularly where pains and penalties are enforced—you are creating an atmosphere that is fatal to sincerity of speech and seriousness of thought. Martyrs are like miracles in this respect, there must be few of them to give them any value at all. A whole nation cannot be inflicting martyrdom on each other for a particular heresy; it must be that the many martyrise the few. But there are few who are prepared to pay this price for any opinion at all. Make it unpleasant or dangerous for people to express an opinion, and they avoid punishment by not giving it

voice. In this way there is created a set of conditions where hypocrisy and concealment becomes habitual. Duplicity becomes as common as daylight, and not valuing frankness in speech in one's own case, one ceases to value it in the case of others, or comes to look upon them with a pitying contempt for not, as it is said, keeping one's opinions to oneself—as though an opinion that is unexpressed is of any value at all. Indeed, the most serious count against Christianity is not the number of men and women it has murdered to enforce uniformity of belief, but that in attempting to do so it has poisoned the moral and intellectual tone of society.

* * *

Our Tribal Ghosts.

But behind this particular question of punishment for anti-religious opinion, whether in its open form or in the concealed one of protecting religious feelings against outrage, there lies a curious history. What Shylock says of the Jews may here be said with tenfold force of the heretic. Suffering is the badge of his tribe. From the most primitive times the heretic has been singled out for persecution and suppression. He is the eternal martyr to human progress, and one day, when the temples of superstition are finally deserted, we may perhaps see arise one that shall be dedicated to the martyrs of all ages, to those who have made progress possible and paid in blood and tears for the benefits they have conferred upon the race. But when the savage punished a fellow-tribesman for speaking disrespectfully of the tribal gods there was at the back of this a quite definite idea. The tribe was under the protection of these ghostly rulers. Its welfare, from day to day, depended upon their good will. To offend them was to invite danger, not particularly upon the one who committed the offence, but upon the whole of the tribe. Such offences had to be prevented at all costs, and the tribal attitude towards the heretic was thus in the nature of an act of defence. If the savage theory was right the consequent action was quite logical. Nowadays, although we have given up the idea that the crops, or the weather, or the public health are influenced by the good- or ill-will of the tribal ghosts, the feeling against the heretic persists. It has become so imbedded in the inherited instincts of the herd, and so intertwined with the security of certain institutions, that we keep alive the practice without the original justification for it. To the anthropologist it is not the Old Bailey judge who sends a man to prison for blasphemy, it is the primitive savage speaking through the mouth of our contemporary legal representative.

* * *

Encouraging Intolerance.

But if it is the duty of a government to work for the education of those subject to its rule—about which there may easily be two opinions—it follows that in the maintenance of the Blasphemy laws, even in the hypocritical form of concern for the religious feelings of believers, the government is demoralizing people instead of developing them. If I were an ultra-æsthetic person, and felt my feelings violently outraged by the colours of my neighbour's dress, and forthwith expressed them by heaving clots of mud at it, it would be no defence to say that my susceptibilities were injured by the colours displayed. I should be told that I must learn to control myself, and to practise tolerance towards those whose æsthetic tastes differ from mine. And in so acting, the government is doing something towards training my tastes on more liberal lines. But in matters of religion an entirely opposite policy is pursued. Mr. Justice Avory explained to the jury very carefully that when a man heard his religion spoken of in an offensive manner, a man "who was a man" would

immediately proceed to assault him. That was Mr. Justice Avory's test of whether one was a real man or not. Clearly, a sensible government would say as plainly as it could that, as opinions differ very widely, and as tastes differ quite as much, men and women living together must learn to bear with each other's differences without recourse to personal violence, or without asking the law to inflict personal violence for them. A government that did that would be educating its citizens in toleration. A government that maintains a blasphemy law is encouraging its members in intolerance. It is providing a legal means of gratifying that intolerance. And that is always a dangerous practice. Not merely with regard to religion, but with regard to other things also. For the qualities born on the soil of primitive superstition, and strengthened in the course of man's religious history, do not confine themselves to the religious field. The intolerance cultivated there spreads elsewhere, the hypocrisy developed there spreads elsewhere. Men lose the habit—or never acquire it—of seeing that there are two sides of a case, and of carefully weighing the pros and cons in connection with a given subject. The abolition of the Blasphemy laws involves more than an act of justice towards Freethinkers; it is an act of social sanitation, a step in the direction of driving home the much needed lesson that it is a social duty to acquire truth, and that unless we make the truth gained known to others we are falling short of our duty to those around us and to those who have to follow.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Soul-Theory Discredited.

(Concluded from page 340.)

CANON BARNES'S rejection of the dogma of the resurrection of the flesh is thoroughly scientific. He emphasizes the fact that the molecules of our flesh are taken over and assimilated by other living things, even by other human beings. In other words, "the idea of the resurrection of the flesh could only be entertained so long as the truths of chemistry were unknown." But the moment the reverend gentleman proceeds to discuss the soul-hypothesis, he completely abandons the scientific method, and becomes a sheer dogmatist. As is the case with most dogmatists, he flings out statements which cannot be verified. For example, he asserts that Paul "relied on the life and teaching of Jesus Christ our Lord"; but when the first Epistle to the Corinthians was written, about the year 55, not one of the Four Gospels was in existence, and we have Paul's own assurance that his indebtedness to other Apostles, or to ordinary believers, was exceedingly slight. Indeed, so infinitesimal was it that in the Epistle to the Galatians he entirely ignores it. So far as the Pauline Epistles are concerned no one would ever infer that Jesus had been the Great Teacher the Church represents him to have been, for they describe him as having come into the world for the sole purpose of dying for its redemption. Again, so far as the Four Gospels are concerned, you can neither find in them nor build upon them any definite doctrine of the soul. Sometimes, as in Luke xii., 19, 20, it has more than one meaning in the same passage. In verse 19 it signifies man in the totality of his being, but in verse 20 it stands for the man's life. In Matthew xvi., 26 the same Greek word, *psyche*, is rendered "soul" in the Authorized Version, and "life" in the Revised. And yet in spite of these facts Canon Barnes says:—

The soul, so the Apostle had learnt from Christ, is not some essential Divine element in man which will

return to God as the stream flows into the ocean. No! the soul is our complete personality made or marred by our conduct here, fit or unfit for eternal life in the presence of God according as we have been in our earthly life true or false to the example and teaching of Christ.

The first thing to be noticed is that not a shred of evidence of the existence of the soul is adduced. It is simply *assumed* that there is something in us—personality—which is destined to survive death. It is sufficient for us to know that Jesus said so, and that what Jesus averred was fully endorsed by Paul. And yet nothing can be more certain than that both Jesus and Paul made brilliant predictions which have been falsified by all subsequent history. The Gospel Jesus was fundamentally mistaken as to the power of his Cross to conquer the world, and Paul was equally astray on the subject of the Second Advent. Canon Barnes assumes, without attempting to prove, that Jesus possessed positive knowledge of the existence of the soul and its certain survival, and that Paul was supernaturally set apart to proclaim that conception as a world-evangel. His theological credulity leads the Canon to declare, as an evolutionist, "that evolution was designed to produce spiritual beings who can survive bodily death and enjoy eternal communion with God, if they accept Christ's doctrine of the immortality of the soul." That may be very excellent theology, but it has absolutely no claim to be regarded as a scientific utterance. In the following statement the theologian reaches the very acme of scientific presumption:—

The emergence of the soul in man is the last stage—as far as man can know—of biological evolution.

Here we find the theologian at his lowest and worst, making a purely theological assertion in evolutionary terms, which is really an immoral action. At best the soul is an object of belief, not of knowledge. As Dr. Sidis says, "the soul is something that lies outside the range of experience," with the result that neither the physiologist nor the psychologist has ever been able to trace it. In other words, "the soul is nothing but superstition," a mere hypothesis that is wholly "useless and scientifically unjustifiable." "Spiritual beings" are utterly unknown to science, as are also communion with God and immortality. Again, the spiritual body of which Paul speaks is obviously a contradiction in terms. A spirit is something that is not a body and cannot be described in bodily terms. The Bible calls God a Spirit, and so justifies the absurd contention of the Anglican creed that he is "without body, parts, or passions."

Canon Barnes looks upon the Christian doctrine of the soul as the truest and most perfect ever conceived. He rejects as false the idea that the soul is the essential something in man which is, as it were, "a bit of Divine substance, which, because it is Divine, cannot perish." He represents St. Paul as rejecting this idea because there was in it very little incentive to moral conduct. He says:—

It was assumed that the stream, however muddy, would ultimately flow into the ocean; every soul would ultimately be joined to an impersonal God. To St. Paul this was false philosophy as abhorrent as the Materialism which assumes that at death we entirely cease to exist.

With all due deference we venture to challenge the accuracy of Canon Barnes's account of the view condemned by the Apostle. There is nothing to show that Paul was aware of even the existence of such a doctrine of the soul, much less that he formally attacked it. It is the view advocated by Emerson in his famous essay on "Immortality," as well as by Tennyson in

"In Memoriam" and "The Ancient Sage." In the latter the great poet expresses himself thus:—

And more, my son! for more than once when
I sat all alone, revolving in myself
The word that is the symbol of myself,
The mortal limit of the Self was loosed,
And past into the Nameless, as a cloud
Melts into Heaven. I touch'd my limbs, the limbs
Were strange not mine—and yet no shade of doubt,
But utter clearness, and thro' loss of Self
The gain of such large life as match'd with ours
Were sun to spark—unshadowable in words,
Themselves but shadows of a shadow-world.

We frankly confess that to us, of the two theories of the soul, the philosophical one is more fascinating than the Pauline; but of the truth of neither is there a single scrap of evidence, nor does the Canon, curiously enough, make the slightest attempt to furnish one fact in support of the latter's superiority. It is perfectly true that the Hindu believes in the transmigration of souls. He holds the opinion that the soul undergoes constant rebirth; that "it is a solitary pilgrim wandering through many stages of existence before it reaches the final goal"; and that each rebirth is "the consequence of work done in the previous existence." This naturally strikes a Westerner as a remarkably strange belief; but in reality it is only the Oriental method of stating that the law of causation operates in the mental and moral sphere as well as in the physical. In early Buddhism the soul-theory was definitely repudiated, but great emphasis was laid on what we now know as the laws of heredity and environment. Christianity took over the soul-theory from the ancient world; but contradicted the law of causation by introducing the possibility of a break with the past through repentance and Divine forgiveness. Canon Barnes declares that "we know nothing of a past existence," but he forgets that we are equally ignorant of any future existence. We agree that the doctrine of rebirth is pure phantasy; but we have no hesitation whatever in pronouncing the doctrine of immortality pure phantasy.

The Gospel Jesus did not teach the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. That he accepted the soul-theory is undeniable; but for him the soul was a destructible entity. In Matthew x., 28 we find these words: "Be not afraid of them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

Now, we repeat the question, what proof has ever been adduced, or can be adduced, of the existence in man of any element or entity which is in any sense or degree independent of the body? and the answer is, none. As William James puts it, in his eminently ingenious Ingersoll Lecture on *Human Immortality*:

Science has once for all attained to proving, beyond possibility of escape, that our inner life is a function of that famous material, the so-called "grey matter" of our cerebral convolutions (p. 18).

While not accepting that finding of science as finally conclusive he yet makes the following candid admission:—

It is indeed true that physiological science has come to the conclusion cited; and we must confess that in so doing she has only carried out a little farther the common belief of mankind.....For the purposes of my argument, now, I wish to adopt this general doctrine as if it were established absolutely, with no possibility of restriction. During this hour I wish you also to accept it as a postulate, whether you think it incontrovertibly established or not; so I beg you to agree with me to-day in subscribing to the great psychophysiological formula: *Thought is a function of the brain* (pp. 23, 24).

With James's own theory of immortality, based upon unverified and unverifiable speculative assumptions,

we are not now concerned, beyond remarking that it is practically identical with that advanced by Emerson and Tennyson, which Canon Barnes characterizes as false. We much prefer to adopt the scientific verdict against the soul. Science knows absolutely nothing of a "sea of consciousness," a "world-soul," or even of an individual soul "as a thing, or being, or substance, or mode of existence or activity, different from, distinguishable from, or in any sense or degree independent of the body." In fact, we only know ourselves as living beings whose only known function is so to conduct themselves as to make their lives valuable contributions to the well-being and real progress of the race to which they belong. J. T. LLOYD.

The Passing of Pietism.

A god whose ghost in arch and aisle
Yet haunts his temple—and his tomb;
But follows in a little while
Odin and Zeus to equal doom;
A god of kindred seed and line,
Man's giant shadow, hailed divine.

—William Watson.

How public conceptions of religion are changing in this country is illustrated by the disappearance of the old familiar initials D.V. (*Deo Volente*, God willing). Writing of the Bath Road, Mr. Tristram notes that in Charles the Second's time the stage coaches were advertised to do the distance between London and Bath in three days "if God permits," but in 1780 the time of "travelling had been reduced to two days, and the pious saving-clause was omitted." "God permit," according to Grose, the antiquary, was a recognized slang-term for the old stage coach, and readers of Scott will recall what another antiquary said about it. People still jest about the matter. A story still current is that of the young Salvation Army convert who wrote to his sweetheart: "I'll see you on Sunday, God willing and weather permitting, and on Tuesday whether or no."

"D.V." are initials that have dropped out of public notices, except in the case of small religious communities that are mere survivals of the past. But the people of to-day do not trouble to put such a proviso in ordinary announcements as to future events, and order their dinners and go journeys without the addition of "D.V."

The clergy, who are a caste apart from the nation, still insist on the willingness and interference of God. Some years ago, in a far corner of South Carolina, a parson was prompted, in the midst of a drought, to offer up prayers for rain. Shortly after very heavy rain fell, and lasted many days. The contentment of the inhabitants of South Carolina, however, was not great. A few, it may be, were pleased; the majority were indignant. Certain crops were totally ruined, and business affairs hindered. In this complicated modern world nothing ever happens without offending somebody. This rain, supposed to be summoned by a parson's garrulity, forced the inhabitants of the town to go to court to get an injunction against him! So the story goes, and it is as true as the Gospels.

This story shows the resentment men would feel nowadays were the old Bible times to return. For, according to the sacred legends, the prophets were for ever doing things more troublesome to the mass of people than merely shouting for rain and getting it. They foretold the onslaught of Assyria, the triumph of the Barbarians from the West, and poked their holy noses into many things. Statesmen of those times may have been forgiven for supposing that they were a public nuisance, and treating them accordingly.

The present day, however, is the twilight of the gods. Priests no longer call benefits or evil out of the

sky beyond asking for fine or wet weather, calling blessings on individual members of the Royal Family, and invoking victory to the national arms. They are alert enough to know that they could never succeed in praying for or prophesying anything that pleased all. The majority would restrain them with injunctions, or the minority would have them locked up. The old, old conception of a paternal deity has gone for ever, and the majority of educated men no longer believe in a limited-liability God, and that such a being could be swayed by the smell of sacrifice or the stimulus of entreaty.

According to the clergy, the Christian God, who is supposed to be the Prince of Peace, is still the Lord of Hosts and the God of Battles. It is so convenient to have a deity who faces both ways. Yet these priests, who consecrate battleships and regimental banners, are themselves "too proud to fight." What absurdity, and what hypocrisy! In the late war every country proclaimed through its priests that it was fighting for God and Liberty. The German parsons ranted "God cannot desert his children." Our Prayer Book used the same kind of language, tempered by British patriotism. "Give peace in our time, O Lord," chanted the priest. "Because there is none other that fighteth for us but only Thou, O God!" responded the dutiful congregation. The priests of all the nations at war blessed the flags which floated over scenes of bloodshed, and invoked God for victory. And, as all cannot win, what about God? When the priests fail, God should undergo the same criticism as the priests, for what is he but "a magnified, non-natural man," this spectre of theirs, this dreary deity of their insolence? If the peoples were wise, this God would be dethroned for ever. Then the people would no longer require priests, who would find their occupation gone.

MIMNERMUS.

Souls in "Rotten Tenements."

MANY years ago, when Theosophy, as a new form of Faith, was successfully floated in this country, Col. Olcott, President of the Theosophical Society, gave a lecture at the Hatcham Liberal Club, New Cross, on some of the teachings of this new society, laying special emphasis on the doctrine of Reincarnation. After the lecture I was allowed not only to ask several questions, but also to offer opposition. Among the questions I asked the learned lecturer was, "Have all men souls? And if yes, Have idiots souls? And if they live again, will they be idiots when they live again; and if not, how they would remember who they were in their previous existence?" Col. Olcott's reply was novel and straightforward, but by no means satisfying. He contended that the soul of an idiot was just as rational as that of any normal minded person, only the idiot's soul had had the misfortune to take possession of a "rotten tenement." In that case, I suggested that such an unfortunate soul should have an opportunity of giving a short notice to quit. But Col. Olcott said that unfortunately that could not be done, and consequently the poor soul was doomed to remain in its "rotten tenement" until its habitation decayed, and the soul might then take possession of another body. These thoughts and the discussion arising out of them, have frequently occurred to me during the recent revival of Spiritualism in this country in influential quarters. Spiritualists take it for granted that every human being is possessed of what is called a soul, but they cannot tell you what it is, where it is located, when it comes into man, nor can they tell you precisely where it goes when it leaves the body, nor whether it takes possession of some other body as Theosophists believe.

Some very eminent men have had strange views as to what happens to the souls of men after death. Even so rational a thinker on religion as Thomas Paine thought that though some men would live again, the vast majority of human beings were neither worth saving nor damning, and that, consequently, God would allow the latter to go down to oblivion, unhonoured and unsung, while the former would live on forever in some sort of paradise especially prepared by the Deity for their reception.

In the course of my career I have had many opportunities of seeing some very poor specimens of humanity. Idiots, that is, small-brained persons, with no capacity for thinking or expressing their thoughts, and a large variety of persons mentally defective, of varying degrees of intelligence, but of low type generally, and of very little moral sense. Often I have thought, while considering these poor unfortunate individuals, what a terrible thing it must be for a rational soul to take possession of such "rotten tenements." Imprisonment in the bodies of these individuals, as long as their bodies endured, must be a tragedy too terrible for words!

In the early 'eighties I came across an extraordinary case in the course of my investigations which, if the idea that a rational soul can enter the "rotten tenement" of a very low typed creature which, at best, could only be called a fearful caricature of a man, was one of the worst examples imaginable. The creature, I found, lived in a court not many miles from London Bridge. He was quite a youth, not more than fifteen years of age at the time of which I speak. He had never spoken in his life, but he could make a noise like the neighing of a horse; his head was abnormally large and his eyes, which were like those of a horse, rolled in their sockets; he was also stone deaf. Yet this poor creature lived till he was over twenty, and was never sent to any institution as far as I can remember. Now, if a "rational soul" had taken possession of such a "rotten tenement" as this, it must have been on account of the too great a competition on behalf of souls to get into any sort of body, as there was probably a shortage of sound tenements, or because it could not help it; in any case, can anybody conceive of a worse tragedy!

The law of heredity, we know, acts with perfect impartiality upon the rich and poor, the wise and the foolish, alike. Maurice Maeterlinck, in his work entitled *Mountain Paths*, says:—

The law of heredity, which insists that the descendants shall suffer by the faults and profit by the virtues of their ancestors, comprises truths that are no longer disputed. They shine forth visible to the eyes of all. The child of a drunkard will bear the burden of his father's vice all his life long, from the day of his birth to the day of his death, in body and in mind.

There is no law more repugnant to our reason, to our sense of responsibility, nor one which does a deeper injury to our trust in the universe and the unknown spirit that rules it. Of all life's injustices this is the most glaring and the least comprehensible. For most of the others we find excuses or explanations; but when we remember that a new born child, a child which did not ask to be born, is, from the moment of inhaling its first breath of air, smitten with irremediable insolvency, with a ferocious, irrevocable sentence, and with evils which it will drag to the grave, it seems to us that not one of the most hateful tyrants that history has cursed would have dared to do what Nature does quietly every day (Essay on "Heredity and Pre-existence," pp. 191-2).

But though Maeterlinck writes this strong indictment against the cruel method of the spontaneous course of nature, or the "unknown spirit that rules it," by which, I suppose, he means God, he nevertheless proceeds to say that we do not really bear the burden

of the errors of the dead; that, as a matter of fact, our ancestors really live in us, and we in them; indeed, *we are our ancestors*; and also, since our descendants proceed from us and derive all their characteristics from us, we are, in a sense, *our descendants also*. By this method of reasoning, however, the distinguished Belgian playwright does not remove the evils resulting from the law of heredity; he only shifts the responsibility further back to remote ancestors, and hopes for improvement in future generations of mankind.

Very few of our Spiritualistic friends, however, believe in the doctrine of Reincarnation to-day, though in my judgment that is the logical result of the belief in a soul that exists apart from the body. Many Spiritualists believe, however, that when the soul "goes out of the body" it wanders about in the universe, and occupies a good deal of its time in answering kind enquiries from relatives and friends on earth through the direct assistance of a lady or gentleman possessing psychic powers called "mediums." It is a curious thing, considering the infinitude of Nature or the universe, that these mediums can get in touch with the souls of departed friends, within a very short space of time, without having some idea of the locality in which they may be likely to be found, some telegraphic address, so to speak, to which messages may be sent with some probability of reaching them. It is true that, according to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the souls of the departed go almost immediately to a "beautiful abode" somewhere above, so that they may be said to have a local habitation, but such habitations are quite unknown to modern astronomers, who, so far, have never reported anything concerning the whereabouts of these souls in their frequent observations, nor have they seen any of the elderly spirits, who day by day instead of adding to their years become perceptibly younger, the males going back to the respectable and vigorous manhood of thirty-five and the females to the beautiful and attractive age of thirty, according to Sir Conan Doyle, "so that no man need mourn his strength or any woman her lost beauty."

Of course, it's a fine thing to flatter yourself that you are young, however old you are, but, as a rule, you cannot ignore the trifling matter of *anno domini*. There is, however one distinct advantage in Dr. Doyle's story of how the souls of the dead enjoy themselves in the celestial mansions over the ordinary Christian view of the fate of souls hereafter, for there is no mention of any unpleasant abode below, or any torment suggested for souls who did not manage to adopt the correct faith during their brief career on this poor little earth of ours. But if the souls that get younger day by day have got to live on for ever, and ever, however young they get, life will become a little monotonous, especially to those who desire to end it and cannot.

Modern Spiritualists acknowledge no essential relation between brain and soul. To them the soul is an entity that has existed from all eternity, and acts just as well—often much better—apart from than when existing in connection with the body. Taking it for granted that he has always existed, the Spiritualist argues that the "human soul" must be immortal, and he does not allow such matters as those relating to the souls of brutes, or to the personal immortality of idiots to disturb the even tenour of his thoughts. Nor does it strike him as at all strange that the spirits who make their appearance at his Social seances generally come on foolish errands and know no more than the "mediums," through whom they often communicate a considerable quantity of unmitigated nonsense. And now, our old friend, Mr. Robert Blatchford, has abandoned his Materialistic view of the universe, which he says he has held since he was a boy, and though hesitating to adopt the

Spiritualistic view of the soul, nevertheless talks of something that "goes out" of the body of man when he dies, and may live on through a glorious immortality. But the question is, what is it that "goes out of the body" at death, and where does it go to? And, further, does not the same thing happen to every animal that breathes, and do they all wake up to a glorious immortality? In my judgment, whatever soul we possess finds its seat not in the body, but in the brain of man. Without brain we can have no thought, no intelligence, no mind; or if you choose to use the word, "no soul"; but if that assumption be true, it does away with the idea of the soul existing apart from the organization. On the other hand, if the soul is immortal and can exist apart from the body it is a fact of nature; in that case we are all immortal, whether we like it or not, whether we are believers or unbelievers, and we need not trouble ourselves about it.

As Mr. Chapman Cohen finely says in his latest work entitled, *The Other Side of Death*:—

Immortality is not, it may be noted, something that each of us may achieve or fail to achieve. It is ours as a natural endowment, or the whole thing is an illusion. If it is a fact, there is enough, so to speak, to go round. Nothing that we can say or do can alter the fact of immortality, or make it a fact if it is not already one.

And for the poor unfortunate souls that have had the misfortune to get into "rotten tenements," all we can fervently hope is that they can find some means of making a speedy escape. Indeed, we may say with Shakespeare:—

Vex not his ghost; Oh! let him pass! he hates him,
That would upon the rack of this tough world
Stretch him out longer. —*King Lear*, Act v. 3.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

A Crumbling Creed.

THE Church, the Christian Church, is wondering why it has lost its hold upon the people, and why the majority of the people do not attend its services. The Bishop of Norwich has been writing articles in the *Daily Express* on the subject, but he does not appear to be on the right track; he seems to be playing a game of blind man's buff. If he would remove the bandage from his eyes he would be able to see more clearly.

We have not far to seek for reasons why people stay away from Church services. When people want bread they do not go to a monumental stone-mason's for it. Many people stay away from Church because they cannot honestly and truthfully join in the recitation of the Creed. What sane person nowadays believes in such dogmas as the Immaculate Conception, the Virgin Birth, the Resurrection of dead bodies? The cure of sin or any other disease by washing in blood is a repulsive and disgusting idea, either physically or spiritually.

The mischievous superstitions that have grown like a poisonous parasite round the philosophy of Christ have been a curse to humanity and a hindrance to human progress. They have been, and still are—witness Ireland—the cause of bitter hatred, malice, uncharitableness, murder and bloodshed. Christians in Ireland are at the present time wallowing in an orgy of bloodshed; they "love one another" so well that they murder each other in their beds and in the streets—men, women and children. Deeds are being done to-day in Christendom that would make a heathen blackman of Africa blush for shame. Christ and his philosophy are being crucified "every day in every way," and Christians do not "get better and better," but worse and worse.

Had so-called Christians carried out in practice Christ's philosophy and loved one another, loved their enemies, and done unto others as they would that others should do unto them, the world might have been "saved" long

ago; but they have been too fond of singing of "a happy land far, far away," and "of that new life when sin shall be no more." The happy land and the new life are by them relegated to "the sweet by-and-by," when they "shall meet on that beautiful shore."

Why do they not leave off singing and sinning and start that new life and that happy land right here and now? They could do so, if they made up their minds to do it. But they are hypocrites, they do not really want the happy land and the new life; they prefer to sing of such things as being far, far away, and to do nothing to bring them any nearer and make them realities instead of idle dreams. They prefer to go on sinning and making war and shedding each other's blood. They will not see that by their own united efforts they could make at least one sin to be *no more*—the sin of war.

At the present time, when people's minds are turned towards peace ideals, and when so many have experienced the horrors of war face to face, and its bitter and disastrous after effects of poverty and unemployment, the antiquated Church services do not help them, do not appeal to them. The Church, being tied and bound to the heels of the State, has never protested against war. The Church has ignored, in practice, the essence and kernel of Christ's philosophy, which is that men should love one another, forgive their enemies, bless those who curse them, and should not retaliate if a man smite them on the cheek, but should turn the other cheek also.

Instead, the Church has upheld and sanctioned war, applauded and glorified war. When the State declares war, the Church utters no protest against it; Christ's doctrine of peace, love, forgiveness, meekness, and humility is thrust into the background, and the Church "blesses" the men sent out to slaughter their fellow-creatures; while the State *dopes them with rum* in order to fill them with blind hatred and savagery in their murderous work of human butchery when going "over the top." Pocket editions of the New Testament were sent out to English soldiers in the Crimean War to comfort them in their sanguinary work of killing Russians. What a hideous mockery of Christ and his philosophy of love!

The Church wastes its time in preaching useless dogmas founded upon Pagan sun-myths and human blood sacrifices, and in reading dreary extracts from ancient Jewish history that should be read only in Synagogues among the people to whom it rightfully belongs; and then the Church wonders why the people will not waste their time by going to listen to such services! The people find the kinemas more instructive and more interesting.

Some people say that the philosophy of Christ has "never been tried." Why, then, does not the Church lead the way and try it? Why do not the clergy, from bishops in palaces to curates in slums, denounce war and declare they will have nothing to do with war, and will no longer "bless" men who go out to kill their fellow-men in war? During the Great War the philosophy of Christ was tried by a courageous band of conscientious objectors to war; and what happened to them? Did the Church "bless" them? Oh, dear no! They were cast into prison, punished, reviled and insulted—just as Christ himself would have been had he lived in England during the war and refused to join up and be sent out to kill Germans with rifle, bayonet, and hand-grenades.

"Men can," says a correspondent in the *Daily Express*, "wiffully give place to the devil, and fight, in spite of the Churches." Yes; and in doing so, they are "blessed" by the Church and doped with rum by the State to encourage them and make them fight; but if they refuse to give place to the devil, and refuse to fight, they are put in prison and punished.

The time has come when the Christian Church, if it wants to retain any hold upon the people, should refuse to be trailed at the heels of the State, and should declare its absolute refusal to countenance war or to have anything to do with war, but, instead, take an active and a leading part in the abolition of war. It is now close upon 2,000 years since the philosophy of Christ was founded, and if, in all those years, it has "never been tried," it is high time the Church and the State got busy and tried it and put it into practice. Now is their chance, when the war-worn, war-sick masses are longing and seeking for a sure and lasting peace.

A. W. MALCOLMSON,
(Ex-Lieut. R.D.C.)

Acid Drops.

There is nothing like appealing to the will of God in order to find out things. In Russia it is reported that the Soviet Government has sequestrated a considerable portion of the gold and silver ornaments—many studded with jewels—for the use of the people. For opposing this the Patriarch Tikhon has been imprisoned. He says it is against the "will of God." On the other hand, Bishop Antonin, one of the leaders of the orthodox Church, has issued a decree saying that the Government is carrying out the will of God in thus using the Church treasures. So there it is! There is the usual unanimity as to what is the will of God.

On the face of it, and granted the distress of the country, and the proper use of the ornaments so seized, we do not see any great harm in the sequestration. The treasures of the Russian Church have been gained at the expense of centuries of suffering of the Russian people, and if the wealth is applied for the benefit of the people, and is still being used in the public service. It must be remembered that the Russian Church was part of the structure of the State, and its property was therefore State property, as is the case with the Church of England in this country. There may be wisdom or unwisdom in the use of such possessions, but talk of robbery is nonsense. And after all, the Russian Government in this matter is only following the example of our own Henry the Eighth of pious memory. Naturally, the outcry is great. It always is when the wealth of the Church is touched. To rob the people for the benefit of the Church is quite permissible—even common. But to "rob" the Church for the benefit of the people is quite another matter. Then one is robbing God. The wealth was given to God. The worst of it is that the priest is always the collector, and we have no evidence of its destination being carried farther.

The Archbishop of Canterbury has issued a special prayer reminding God Almighty that he ought to look after Patriarch Tikhon—at least that is what it amounts to, for one does not want to ask another to do something he has not forgotten to do or intends doing. And whether God interferes or not, his followers will continue to thank him for doing what he hasn't done, and praise his wisdom for permitting what they say is downright foolishness. There was something strangely prophetic in Jesus riding into Jerusalem on the back of an ass. It all reminds one of Bruno's "Holy Asininity."

"I cannot honestly say that my views on the doctrine of the inspiration of the Bible are exactly those of my father," says the Archbishop of Canterbury. It seems as if some of the everlasting truths of religion are liable to change after all.

Prayers for the harvest are to be said in the Southwark Roman Catholic Churches each Sunday until the end of September. To an ordinary person it appears like an organized attempt to bully Providence.

Requests to his coachman, nurse, and gardener, were features of the will of the late Rev. W. Mills, of Bennington, Herts, who left estate of the value of £13,811. It is hard to chronicle the sufferings of the poor clergy, who, in their extreme poverty, can keep many servants.

After five months' endeavour the Bishop of Salisbury has been unable to secure a tenant for the episcopal palace. He has now decided to occupy a portion of the building. The Bishop must feel like the hero of the *Passing of the Third Floor Back*.

The financial condition of the Bishop of London, who cannot make both ends meet on £10,000 a year, has excited the generosity of some of his numerous admirers.

He has been presented with a handsome leather robe-case from friends at Hampstead Garden Suburb.

"Vengeance is the Lord's, not the Lord Chief Justice's," says Bernard Shaw. But the Lord's Anointed have seen to it that offences against the Church are severely punished.

Cardinal Bourne has gone to Rome to attend the Eucharistic Congress. It is a pleasant time of the year to visit Italy.

A demand for "definite denominational teaching by competent instructors," in all the elementary schools of England, was made at the Ruridecanal Conference of the Deanery of Plympton on May 25. The emphasis at present is on the inefficiency of religious instruction unless it is given by teachers who themselves believe in the doctrines. Recent discussions at conferences show convincingly the hollowness of the Nonconformist plea for "simply Bible teaching." They also show that Anglicans and Nonconformists alike are quite prepared to subscribe to a new Test Act applicable to a considerable section of what are really public officials.

G. J., who, we understand, is also a D.D., writing in the *Manchester Guardian* (May 24), says that the Genesis account of the Creation and the Fall is certainly not true "historically and scientifically." "But truth there is in them, moral and religious truth, which can never become obsolete while man has a heart and conscience to respond to it." The "spiritual" value of the inspired record is exemplified in modern apologetic far more than in the Genesis account of the Creation, or even the illuminating stories of Jonah's whale and Balaam's ass.

Last week Lord Gerald Wellesley said that the prohibition of Sunday games in the London parks is "a very grave injustice under which the working classes of to-day suffer." The *Westminster Gazette*, referring to this subject, declares that "very few private tennis courts stand idle on the Sunday." Also, we may add, a good many golf courses witness some interesting "drives" on Sunday, certainly in England, possibly in Scotland. But the men and women who play golf and tennis are people of quality, and the Lord will think twice before he damns them. It is only the sin of the working classes that will give him a tough job in the scouring line. Fortunately for themselves, they are beginning to realize this. On May 20 a poll was taken in Newport to decide whether Sunday trams should run or not. The Sabbatarians were defeated by more than two to one, and the majorities were largest in the working class quarters.

"Reunion" is a good deal in the air at present in ecclesiastical circles both in England and Scotland. The *Scotsman* (May 23) says that "the omens are good" for an understanding between the United Free Church and the Established Church of Scotland. On May 24, at a meeting at Lambeth Palace of Anglican bishops and members of the Federal Council of Evangelical Free Churches, "some of the issues on matters of fundamental principle" were considered. For this information we are indebted to the cultured and stately *Guardian*, which may be designated the honourable member for the Establishment, but we are left completely in the dark as to the nature and scope of these "fundamentals."

For cutting a bell-rope and breaking windows at Bovinger Parish Church, a labourer was sentenced at Ongar to two months' imprisonment. That is making the punishment fit the crime with a vengeance; but, then, ecclesiastical offences are always serious.

"What the world and the Church needs is more of the mind of Christ," says the Bishop of Peterborough. Most certainly the Church needs a fresh mentality.

The organ in St. Giles-in-the-Fields Church, Bloomsbury, has been in the church since the seventeenth century. And the theology preached in the same building dates from the seventh century.

A three-page letter written from Geneva in 1816 by Shelley, the poet, was sold at a Hanover Square Sale Room for £350. When Shelley was alive his books were almost unnoticed, and he was expelled from Oxford University for his Atheistic opinions.

The *Record* (May 18) urges a united front, on the part of Anglicans and Dissenters, in regard to the education question. There is "so much common ground between Nonconformists and Churchmen that it ought not to be difficult to arrive at some arrangement." With the prayer-book undergoing revision on the one side, and God's inspired revelation being brought up to date on the other side, the really common ground between Dissent and the Establishment is a dread of straight-out and avowed Secularism. The call to social reform and the reiterated announcements of "the bankruptcy of materialism" mark significantly the "progress" of "the faith once delivered to the saints" under Anglo-Saxon, or Anglo-Celtic, Protestantism.

The *Birmingham Post* (May 25) contains a lengthy communication from Madrid on the recent bull fight, which resulted in the death of Manuel Granero. The writer of the article says that the bull fight is immensely popular in Spain—a country which "reminds us of a nation full of Christian virtues yet frequently lapsing into Pagan customs." The assemblies at these exhibitions of the national "sport" are "about the most brutal that can be imagined," and "outbursts of fury and violence" are usual occurrences. This is the land where Francisco Ferrer was "executed" for organizing secular schools. Those apologists who claim the discontinuance of the gladiatorial shows in Rome as the result of Christian influence—as a matter of fact these shows lasted some time after Christianity became the State religion—should read the article in our contemporary. We also commend it to those who prate of a "Catholic revival" in English-speaking countries.

The *Catholic Times* (May 20) vigorously denounces the mascot mania as "superstition" and "a survival of paganism." Its present popularity is due to "the widespread loss of Christian belief and neglect of Christian practice." People, we presume, will not require mascots if they can get miracles. Lecky shows how the multiplication of superstitions sometimes proved their corrective. But the R.C. Church can hardly be expected to support this view. It claims a monopoly in relics.

Professor A. S. Eddington, on May 24, delivered the Romanes lecture on "The Theory of Relativity and its Influence on Scientific Thought." "Einstein," he said, left us not vague generalities for the ecstatic contemplation of the mystic; but a precise scheme of world structure to engage the mathematical physicist." This is worth emphasizing, for Relativity was declared by certain religious apologists to warn us of the fallible nature of much that was accepted as science. Einstein himself has recently been pleading for more "reality" in our educational methods and less bookishness.

Students of the ego will find much interesting matter in the speech of Lord Northcliffe, who has now returned from his tour round the world. Given a press as free as one of those melancholy eagles in the Zoo, and subsidized readers who buy the papers in the event of cutting their finger-teeth not included yet—and because there is nothing better, we should be the last to be envious of being a leader of press opinion, such as his Lordship. God-making and image-making is bound up in the ego, and we leave readers to imagine the kind of world Lord Alfred's would be—if there were not other forces at work,

such as the *War Cry*, and *Comic Cuts*, and Mormon propaganda and others too numerous to mention.

Speaking in the Upper House of the Convocation of Canterbury, the Bishop of Gloucester declared that Church people did not know for what the Church of Christ stood. Perhaps not! The Church usually sits down, and chooses a very comfortable seat.

In a leading article the *Daily Telegraph* declares that "no creed can be narrower or more intolerant than the orthodoxy of Rationalism." It is, however, no more surprising than the orthodoxy of the proprietors of the *Daily Telegraph*.

"The religious man is, quite truly, not his own master," says the Dean of Bristol. Such frankness is quite refreshing! But priests do not often reach such dizzy heights of honesty.

The Colonial Church Society is appealing for £100,000 for extending the work of prairie churches, especially in the Western provinces of Canada. Subscribers will be as green as the prairie grass.

During a thunderstorm at Halesworth, Suffolk, a farmer was struck by lightning and killed. Providence is rather careless with electricity.

The British Medical Professors will hear with dismay of the progress of Mr. James Moore Hickson at the Anglican Church in Rome. This gentleman, by the simple method of laying his hands upon the heads of the sick, is able to make them feel decidedly better. We look forward to the speedy unemployment of doctors—the dethronement of Æsculapius—and the Anglican Church displacing the herbalist in business. In fact, the imposition of hands is one of the Churches many impositions, and soft heads are its finest material. Judging by advertisements in many Christian papers their readers appear to be unable to observe the ordinary requirements of elementary hygiene.

As it is now possible to "listen in" with wireless telegraphy instruments we must look forward to this form of discovery being annexed by all religious plans and fancy. Probably we shall have some religious wise-acre informing the world that Samuel received his call in this manner. If scientific research relegates medicine men to the museum, and "free insurance" ruins our free press, this country should be a land, etc.

Now that spring is here, and "John Bull" has flung aside his winter garments for a new dress, we trust that it will live up to its aspirations. A paragraph in that paper is headed, "An Honest Atheist." We think the adjective is unnecessary and misleading and patronising; a little thought would have found a suitable caption for the report of the man who wished to give evidence on his word of honour.

We have no wish to say anything about the Bottomley case. The man is down and done with, and there is an end of it. His cant about God, which ought never to have deceived anyone is also at an end. But there is one thing on which we may say a word, and a final word. Someone, with a taste for lying and indecency set going the story that Mr. Bottomley was an illegitimate son of Charles Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant. We have been constantly asked whether there was any truth in the statement. Of course, there was not, and if people would only look up the facts they would see there was not. Mrs. Besant was born in 1847. Mr. Bottomley was born in 1860. Mrs. Besant was a remarkable woman, but she was not a mother at the age of thirteen, some years before she married the Rev. Frank Besant, and many years before she heard the name of Bradlaugh. So we hope we have heard the last of that pious lie.

To Correspondents.

Those Subscribers who receive their copy of the "Freethinker" in a GREEN WRAPPER will please take it that the renewal of their subscription is due. They will also oblige, if they do not want us to continue sending the paper, by notifying us to that effect.

OBSERVER.—You may be quite correct in what you say, but to allow one's opinions to be reversed because of the death of a near one, is to confess that they never had any intellectual foundation. Men of strong brain and informed views do not expect the universe to be rearranged from time to time in accordance with our varying emotions.

C. TIPPING.—There is no question as to the advance of Freethought in all directions. In this respect Birmingham is no exception to the general rule. The Hyde Park meetings had no connection with the N.S.S., and those responsible suspended them owing to the action of the police. As Hyde Park is one of the Royal Parks this was easier than it would be in other places.

E. EVANS.—Your experience of the preacher in the Cardiff Park is interesting, but not very unusual. It is a good sign that people are no longer inclined to take the preaching of such men quite so tamely as they have done.

A. PAGAN.—The Roman Catholic Church in America appears to be a very real threat to the liberty and progress of the people there. The only effective weapon against its encroachments is a good dose of uncompromising Freethought.

ALPHA.—Shall be pleased to see you at the Conference and also at the Saturday evening reception. We are looking forward to a good time at Nottingham.

H. R. WRIGHT.—We have heard from the gentleman to whom you referred us. It appears that he only offered to do as you reported, but did not actually do so. So perhaps we had better let the matter rest there.

A. VANDERHOUT.—We are pleased to know that you had so enjoyable a time with the South London excursion to Hindhead. We believe that the experiment is to be repeated later in the year.

F. W.—Quite an excellent suggestion. The matter has, in fact, been under consideration. We should very much like to see you at the Conference. Perhaps another year.

B. TAYLOR.—Shall be pleased to see the Huddersfield friends at the Conference. Freethinkers ought to make the most of these chances of meeting each other.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Sugar Plums.

We have just this last opportunity of calling attention to the National Secular Society's Conference at Nottingham to-day (June 4). Delegates and friends will meet on the Saturday evening at the George Hotel, at 7.30.

On Sunday the morning session opens at 10.30 prompt, and will sit till 12.30. There will be an afternoon session at 2.30, and in the evening there will be a public demonstration, at which the President will take the chair. There will be a number of speakers which will include, Messrs. J. T. Lloyd, A. D. McLaren, R. H. Rosetti, A. B. Moss, G. Whitehead, F. W. Willis, and Clifford Williams. It will be many years since the Nottingham people had the opportunity of listening to so many Freethought speakers, and we hope they will take full advantage of the occasion.

We hope that our friends will not think us over-insistent if we again call attention to the many possibilities there are during the summer months of introducing this paper to new readers. We are induced to this by a letter from an old reader who tells us that during the next three months he has resolved to buy six copies weekly and use the surplus ones to present to those whom he feels may become regular subscribers. We cannot expect a large number of our readers to follow this example, and we would rather see the same number sold to separate persons. But it is within the power of many to gain a new subscriber if they only set themselves the task. On our side we are striving our hardest to place the paper in a position where it is able to pay its way, and that task is harder than ever at the moment with the prevailing state of trade. But it can be done if only those seriously interested in the cause which the *Freethinker* represents resolve it shall be. We are constantly receiving letters from new people who have only just become aware of the existence of a journal such as this one, and while that is gratifying, we should also make it widely known that such a journal as this one exists. It is publicity we want, and it is publicity we must have.

Next Wednesday (June 7) Mr. McLaren will address the members of the Kensal Rise and Harrow Road Branch of the National Co-operative Men's Guild, at 8 p.m. at 447, Harrow Road, W.10. His subject will be "The Workers' Interest in Science," and we anticipate a good muster of members, and plenty of discussion.

Last Sunday afternoon Mr. A. D. McLaren occupied the N.S.S. platform in Regent's Park, this being his first appearance in the familiar spot after an absence of eight months. There were in the audience many old faces, also a good sprinkling of new ones. His subject was "Religion and Science," and at the conclusion a clergyman spoke in opposition for fifteen minutes. Though the reverend gentleman declared that he was a member of two scientific associations, his views on the Bible and its inspiration would have seemed very crude to the Rev. Canon Barnes. They certainly failed to make much impression on the Regent's Park congregation.

Freethinking "Ramblers" will please note that the Glasgow Branch holds its next trip on Sunday, June 11, meeting at Clarkston car terminus at 12 o'clock. The intention is to visit Ballengeich. The Birmingham Branch takes a trip to the Botanical Gardens, Edgbaston, on the same date, meeting at the entrance to the gardens at Vicarage Road, at 3.30. The delegates will attend and give a report of the proceedings at the annual Conference.

The Manchester Branch held a preliminary meeting of its discussion class last Sunday. Various arrangements were made, and it was decided to use Grant Allen's book on the *Evolution of the Idea of God* as the basis of discussion. The first meeting of the class will be held at the house of Mr. A. C. Rosetti, 39, The Crescent, Flixton, on 25th June at 5.30 p.m. The subject for discussion will be "Christianity and Mythology" as contained in Chapter II. The discussion will be opened by the Branch President, Mr. F. E. Monks. All interested are invited to join. We hope that the class will be well attended and prosperous. It is a move that we should like to see made by every branch in the country.

What is God?—A Challenge.

THE recognition of a truth, especially if not in harmony with the general contents of consciousness, is, as a rule, only a gradual dawning. This is equally true in both mental and physical spheres. The more uniform and constant is the fact, the nearer it is to us; the closer it touches or embraces us, the more palpably the evidence of it stares us in the face; in short, the more familiar we are with it, the more blind we are to its existence, showing, incidentally, that it is the sense of *difference* or the discontinuity of sensation that awakens consciousness. Just think of the millennia—the ages—that elapsed from the time of the cave-man to that of Galileo, or even from the beginning of civilization, during which it never dawned upon anyone that he lived at the bottom of a sea of air, which not only wraps us like a mantle but is material and therefore presses us on all sides with its weight. To admit that the actual substance which had given man the very idea of a spirit was material was a fact not easily accepted and assimilated by the human mind; it was wholly incongruous with its contents and therefore inadmissible. The very word "spirit" means a breath of air. How could it, then, be material?

Even after Galileo had divined the truth it took ages before it was fully assimilated. Inference and experiment followed each other for a generation and more before the bizarre hypothesis became an accepted theory. Though Torricelli's epoch-making experiment was quite conclusive without those of Pascal and Périer, yet not before it was clinched beyond all possible doubt by Otto von Guericke's invention of the air-pump, and his famous demonstration before Emperor Ferdinand III at Regensburg in 1654, with his celebrated hemisphere and his thirty horses—fifteen back to back—was the truth incorporated in human knowledge as one of Nature's indisputable facts. It is hard to realize how slowly it insinuated itself into the common stock of accepted belief, though we can scarcely open a book or a door without being aware of its presence, and have utilized its effective agency in a thousand and one useful inventions, from the common pump to the automatic vacuum brake to prevent collisions, not to speak of Nature's own devices, such as that displayed in the sucking action of the infant and the ceaseless pumping of the lungs, all of which make use of the same agency—atmospheric pressure—to effect their ends.

So in the world of thought. Proof or disproof is at first laborious and cumbersome, often involving years of strenuous study and much elaborate writing. For example, to disprove any dogma of our current creed, however intrinsically absurd, was the work of generations. Take for example the inspiration of the Bible; what a long and arduous task its refutation proved to be. It necessitated proving the falsity of its assumptions and teachings on practically every point of the compass of human knowledge. It was necessary to show that the entire cosmology of Genesis—its astronomy, its geology, its physiography, its anthropology, its biology, and its physics—was absolutely false, and therefore could not be "God's book" on the theory that he was omniscient and truthful. But to-day, to any person who has a modicum of culture, the very absurdity of such a dogma makes disproof quite superfluous.

The same progressive simplifying of refutation has taken place in respect to the dogma of immortality, or "life hereafter." What tomes have been written to "prove" that man is "immortal," and quite as many have been written to demolish them by showing that the proofs were verbal structures with no

foundation in fact. But to-day no proof at all is required, for it is realized that the word "life" is but an abstract term connoting the characteristics of living substance, *viz.*, its motility or power of spontaneous movement; its absolute dependence upon a stream of substance containing potential energy—called food; its capacity of digesting and assimilating it; its power of procreation; its sentiency, and its possession of sense-organs to put the body *en rapport* with its environment of physical energy in space and time. Those characteristics are the contents—the sole contents—of the term "life." Empty of these attributes or elements and the term *ipso facto* becomes a vacuity—a mere "sounding brass and tinkling cymbal," devoid of all meaning. To talk, then, of a "life hereafter"—of a life without the living substance which gives the term all the meaning it possesses—is to revert to barbarism and play the savage over again who implicitly believed that the spoken word—the verbal sound—possessed magical power. Indeed, the cult and art of incantation sprang from this belief. "In thy name" became a formula with which to move mountains. But we now know, or ought to know, that a word with no significance is mere sound or symbol.

If we substitute the term "consciousness" for the word "life" we are no better off. The contents of consciousness are correlated in the most absolute manner with a mundane existence. Empty of these relations and, like the term "life," it becomes a mere sound or symbol. The word "soul," unless it stands for life or mind, *never had a meaning*, for it is an entity of the imaginary and gratuitous order in which primitive man indulged so freely.

Reasoning of a similar kind will also show that the question, "Is there a God?" will be fully answered, or at least definitely disposed of as the result of an inquiry into "What is God?" if reducing to an absurdity settles any problem at all. In my essay, *Life, Mind, and Knowledge*, I have endeavoured to show that the entire contents of mind, both animal and human, are concerned with adjusting the body into harmony with physical energy in space and time. In other words, that every impulse or guidance supplied by the mind has the well-being of the organism as its sole objective and end.

Now combine with this fact another equally obvious, *viz.*, that the entire contents of the god-mind, that is, of the "mind" which man has always ascribed to a deity, are human in every respect—as essentially human as the legs, arms, hands, eyes, or ears which used to be ascribed to them. This fact is made very obvious by a practice which has been in vogue for over 2,000 years, *viz.*, that of emptying the god-mind of its grosser or more sensuous elements—taste, smell, touch, sight, sound. Impressed by the palpable fact that these were essentially animal attributes, they were jettisoned one after another to make it look more divine, or rather, less human. And if the process was consistently continued to the end, the term god would have been a vacuity—a mere sound—long ago. All that now is left are a few of the more humane emotions and dispositions, such as justice, mercy, compassion, because their physical relations are not quite so obvious—a degree more removed than the smell of the burnt offering (that is, of roasted flesh), which so delights Jahveh in the Old Testament. But neither mercy nor justice has a particle of meaning or use except in relation to sentient creatures. You do not pity a motor-car in flames or a ruined aeroplane in a crash, but you do the occupants if badly injured and in great agony. It is *pain* that awakens compassion, but a painful sensation is essentially an attribute of a sentient organism, that is, suffering has its roots in a material body. It is thus evident that the mind with which we credit the gods is still as anthropomorphic

as the bodies with which our primitive ancestors used to endow them.

But by hypothesis the gods have no relation with a physical environment. They exist in a "spirit world," and yet the fragment of mind still possessed by the deity is that which has meaning only in a material or physical setting. The god-mind and the hypothesis are therefore not merely inconsistent, but are in flat contradiction. The one demands a physical setting and the other denies its need. Thus the term god by demanding and repudiating the same conditions is by the fact reduced to an absurdity. Hence the question, "Is there a God?" vanishes therewith.

I have purposely passed over the obvious fact that man cannot endow the gods with a mind whose constituent elements are not essentially human any more than he can lift himself up by pulling by the collar of his coat.

I now invite any reader who honours the essay, *Life, Mind, and Knowledge*, with a perusal, to point out in the columns of this journal any falsity of statement or fallacy of inference detected therein. That is the Challenge.

KERIDON.

Religion and Money.

Every religion is a getting religion; for though I myself get nothing, I am subordinate to those that do. So you may find a lawyer in the Temple that gets little for the present; but he is fitting himself to be in time one of those great ones that do get.

—Selden's "Table Talk."

The Divine stands wrapt up in his cloud of mysteries, and the amused Laity must pay Tithes and Veneration to be kept in obscurity, grounding their hope of future knowledge on a competent stock of present ignorance.

—George Farquhar.

RELIGION and priestcraft may not be the same thing in *essence*. That is a point on which we do not intend to dogmatise, and this is not the opportunity to argue it. But *practically* religion and priestcraft *are* the same thing. They are inextricably bound up together, and they will suffer a common fate. In saying this, however, we must be understood to use the word "religion" in its ordinary sense, as synonymous with *theology*. Religion as non-supernatural, as the idealism of morality, the sovereign bond of collective society, is a matter with which we are not at present concerned.

Priestcraft did not *invent* religion. To believe that it did is the error of an impulsive and uninformed scepticism. But priestcraft developed it, systematised it, enforced it, and perpetuated it. This could not be effected, however, except in alliance with the temporal power; and accordingly, in every country—savage, barbaric, or civilized—the priests and the privileged classes are found in harmony. They have occasional differences, but these are ultimately adjusted. Sometimes the priesthood over-rides the temporal power, but more frequently the former gives way to the latter; indeed, it is instructive to watch how the course of religion has been so largely determined by political influences. The development of Judaism was almost entirely controlled by the political vicissitudes of the Hebrews. The political power really decided the great controversy between Arianism and Athanasianism. Politics again, twelve hundred years later, settled the bounds of the Reformation, not only for the moment, but for subsequent centuries. Where the prince's sword was thrown into the scale, it determined the balance. England, for instance, was non-papal Catholic under Henry VIII., Protestant under Edward VI., papal-Catholic under Mary, and Protestant again under Elizabeth; although every one of these changes, according to the clergy, was dictated by the Holy Ghost.

Priests and the privileged classes *must* settle their differences in some way, otherwise the people would become too knowing, and too independent. The co-operation of impostor and robber is necessary to the bamboozlement and exploitation of the masses. This co-operation, indeed, is the great secret of the permanence of religion; and its policy is twofold—education and the power of money.

The value of *education* may be inferred from the frantic efforts of the clergy to build and maintain schools of their own, and to force their doctrines into the schools built and maintained by the State. In this respect there is nothing to choose between Church and Dissent. The reading of the Bible in Board Schools is a compromise between themselves, lest a worse thing should befall them both. If one section were strong enough to upset the compromise it would do so; in fact, the Church party is now attempting this stroke of policy on the London School Board, with the avowed object of giving a Church colour to the religious teaching of the children. The very same principle was at work in former days, when none but Churchmen were admitted to the universities or public positions. It was a splendid means of maintaining the form of religion which was bound up with the monarchy and the aristocracy. Learning and influence were, as far as possible, kept on the side of the established faith, which thus became the master of the masters of the people. This is perfectly obvious to the student of history, and Freethinkers should lay its lesson to heart. It is only by driving religion entirely out of education, from the humblest school to the proudest college, that we shall ever succeed in breaking the power of priestcraft and freeing the people from the bondage of superstition.

We could write a volume on this theme—the power of education in maintaining religion; but we must be satisfied with the foregoing at present, and turn our attention to the power of *money*. It is a wise adage that money is the sinews of war. Fighting is very largely, often wholly, a question of resources. Troops may be ever so brave, generals ever so skilful, but they will be beaten unless they have good rifles and artillery, plenty of ammunition, and an ample commissariat. Now the same thing obtains in *all* warfare. It would be foolish, no less than base, to deny the inspiring efficacy of ideas, the electric force of enthusiasm; but, however highly men may be energised, they cannot act without instruments; and money buys them, whether the instruments be rifles and artillery, or schools, or churches, or any kind of organization.

Given churches with great wealth, as well as control over public education, and it is easy to see that they will be able to perpetuate themselves. Endowments are specially valuable. They are rooted, so to speak, in the past, and hold firm. They bear golden fruit to be plucked by the skilful and adventurous. Besides, the very *age* of an endowed institution gives it a venerable air; and its freedom from the full necessity of "cadging" lends it a certain "respectability"—like that of a man who lives on his means, instead of earning his living.

It is not an extravagant calculation that, in England alone, twenty millions a year are spent on religion. The figures fall glibly from the tongue, but just try to realize them! Think first of a thousand, then of a thousand thousand, then of twenty times that. Take a single million, and think what its expenditure might do in the shaping of public opinion. A practical friend of ours, a good Radical and Freethinker, said that he would undertake to create a majority for Home Rule in England with a million of money; and if he spent it judiciously, we think he might succeed. Well then, just imagine, not one million, but twenty millions, spent *every year* in maintaining and pro-

pagating a certain religion. Is it not enough, and more than enough, to perpetuate a system which is firmly founded, to begin with, on the education of little children?

Here lies the strength of Christianity. It is not true, it is not useful. Its teachings and pretensions are both seen through by tens of thousands, but the wealth supports it. "Without money and without price" is the fraudulent language of the pious prospectus. It would never last on those terms. The money keeps it up. Withdraw the money, and the Black Army would disband, leaving the people free to work out their secular salvation, without the fear and trembling of a foolish faith.

G. W. FOOTE.

Correspondence.

CHRISTIAN AND PSEUDO SCIENCE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I dare say that quite a number of your readers have, in common with myself, enjoyed reading the *Outline of Science*, edited by Professor J. Arthur Thomson. Any publication having for its end the popularisation of the discoveries of modern science, especially where embellished by such admirable diagrams and illustrations as the work in question, will be welcomed by all lovers of the light. Knowing Professor Thomson's metaphysical bias the writer, it must be confessed, had misgivings as to the manner in which the facts of science would be presented to the general reader. In this connection it is noteworthy that in the parts dealing with the interrelation of mind and matter, there is an absence of reference to the work of the ablest living exponents of modern scientific materialism, such as Loeb, Elliot, etc. However, one gradually became bullied into a sense of false security under the spell of the gifted Professor's charm of manner and lucidity of expression, to be brought back to earth in Part II. by no less an individual than that high priest of modern obscurantism, Sir Oliver Lodge! In this issue, adorned on the cover, with a striking portrait of the noble author, we are told the attitude of enlightenment to such "phenomena" as telepathy, clairvoyance, materializations, etc.

The reader puzzled by the expression *asserted facts* (italics are mine), is reassured later on by learning that mind "has shown itself capable of existing under other conditions (i.e., without a physiological organ of some kind), and further that these 'spooks'—No! pardon me, 'discarnate intelligences,' can telepathically produce an effect in the minds of sympathetic (*sic*) persons who are not too busy to attend." In short, Sludge and his circle have been scientifically canonized and we ordinary mortals still wallow in our ignorance!

Professor J. Arthur Thomson or his publishers have been guilty of a gross abuse of trust in permitting such *ex parte* statements to be delivered in the name of Science. The numerous and distinguished objectors to Sir Oliver's fanciful philosophy have been studiously ignored, their names not even so much as mentioned! Surely fair-mindedness would have prompted the insertion in the bibliography of works on "psychic science," the names of such painstaking investigators as Tuckett, Newcomb, Podmore, and many others. But superstition cannot bear the light of adverse criticism.

My disappointment is keen, but it only goes to prove that there is much for Freethinkers still to do, against Professors as well as Priests.

Johannesburg.

E. A. McDONALD.

CHRISTIANITY AND CULTURE.

SIR,—That Christianity is rapidly losing its hold on the people here and everywhere is a fact well known and frankly admitted, even by its standard-bearers. Hence their constant worry over empty Churches and their tireless endeavours to fill them by all sorts of novelties, and often quite vulgar attractions. But incontestable as the fact is I cannot see how we Freethinkers are entitled to claim it as a victory for our views and ideals and

rejoice over it, as I find some of your able contributors do in the last few numbers of your excellent paper. Why deceive ourselves? Has the Galilean been beaten because Darwin and Haeckel have conquered? Are the Churches getting empty on account of the overcrowding of our meeting places? Is not the decline of Christianity rather the result of a lapse of modern society into the depths of barbarity than of general enlightenment and the freeings of the human mind from the centuries old fetters of all sorts of ridiculous beliefs and superstitions? If men and women of nowadays have ceased to care for theology and dogmas, is it not because their interest centres, after money making, around such important questions as who will win the race of to-day or the boxing match of to-morrow?

As an anarchist—and Freethinker—by conviction and a Jew by race my admiration for Christianity will be found to be less than microscopic, but much as I should like to see it dead and buried, I think I should prefer to find the Churches packed with brainless throngs deifying a Palestinian Jew who did or did not live some 1900 years ago, rather than see the enormous mob of nowadays dancing in wild ecstasy round this or that flat-nosed pugilist and worshipping the other imbecilities of sport, the idol of modern culture and the hall-mark of Society's manliness and gentility.

It is quite true that Christianity is gradually expiring, but its death knell is not yet consonant with the triumph of our ideals. Victory is still far away, and we shall have to go through a great deal of hard work, both destructive and constructive, before we shall be entitled to say that our cause has really won.

J. M. SALKIND, Ph.D.

BUDDHISM.

SIR,—I have read with interest the articles on Buddhism by Mr. E. Upasaka. The great success of the Buddhist philosophy, and the general high level of morality amongst its millions of adherents, is, in my opinion, a striking vindication of our own secular principles—with which it has much in common. In the face of such evidence it is simply childish of Mr. De Brath and others to assert that belief in God and immortality is essential to good conduct.

It is on the question of re-birth, where Buddhism has been so misrepresented by Theosophists and others, and this is so because they have sought to express their own ideas of human survival in terms of the Buddhist theory; whereas it needs to be approached from an entirely new point of view, and moreover, *should not be confused with reincarnation*. Personally, I do not feel it necessary to adopt "as a working hypothesis" the re-birth theory in order to account for the "vast diversity between the multitudes of individual beings." When we remember that no two persons ever had, or can have, quite the same heredity and quite the same environment; when we consider the effect of pathological conditions on the human character, and the, as yet, little known possibilities of the subconscious mind; we surely have the material wherewith to form a "working hypothesis"; and I do not see that we gain anything by "carrying over the kamma to a previous life or being-phenomenon." To do so seems to me to be "assuming a noumenon behind the phenomenon," and to be "proceeding along lines of pure imagination and conjecture"; and I should want some strong kind of proof before starting out with such a (to my mind) fantastic theory.

A Buddhist friend of mine now visiting Europe is shortly publishing a book on the theory of re-birth, and I was privileged to read his MSS. in which some sort of proof is offered. Perhaps your talented contributor will deal with the "proof" in a further article, at any rate he deserves our thanks for his interesting exposition of what the Buddhist philosophy is.

VINCENT J. HANDS.

Remember that Professor Max Müller, when he published the *Sacred Books of the East* in England, explained that there were whole sections that he dared not publish in English lest he should lay himself open to a criminal prosecution.—Dr. Fitchett, "The Beliefs of Unbelief."

Grave and Gay.

The conventional Christian is often said to be a hypocrite. That is really paying him too great a compliment. A hypocrite is one who sees what is true but professes to accept what he knows to be false. Hypocrisy co-exists with mental clarity. The conventional Christian is not a hypocrite—that would mark a further stage of development—he is only a very common kind of humbug.

The finest example of waste in nature is a miracle. It occurs only where it is not needed, and never where it would do the most good, or have the greatest effect. Credulous people of all ages have been the favoured recipients of the miraculous, never the critical or the unbelieving. A single miracle before a committee of some recognized scientific society would convert the world. As it is, the miracles that have occurred leave the world unconvinced.

Civilized man gets what he wants by an expenditure of energy that would scarcely have started his uncivilized ancestor along the road of his desires. Thus the monk of sixteen centuries ago passed weeks in fasting, praying, and self-mortification, and as a consequence was sometimes vouchsafed visions that were not given to the ordinary mortal. His civilized descendant invests in a bottle of whisky and gets the same result in the course of a single evening.

When a man says that a book is a bad one what does he mean? Does he mean that the book will do *him* harm? This may be so, but is even this a reason for condemning a book? May it not be that the book has only served to make clear a mental or moral flaw which but for the book would have remained unrecognized? In that case the book is really playing the part of a "spiritual" physician.

Are good and bad really opposites, or are they only a matter of degree?

A rigorous selection is often a blessing in disguise. It eliminates the weaker and preserves a hardier and more virile type. This may account for the average Scot getting on so well in the world. A people who could survive the shorter catechism could survive anything.

Considering the number of Christs in the world, that every Church has a different conception of what he was, and even what he taught, it seems the height of absurdity to talk of his influence on the world. What we have is really a figurehead that has been taken by a powerful corporation and used in its own interest. And once the tradition was firmly established there were very few people strong enough to break completely with the manufactured figure. The result has been that "Jesus" has become everything by turns and nothing for long. A veritable figure of wax, apparently everything, and in reality nothing.

If there were not a god, said Voltaire, it would be necessary to invent one. Primitive mankind evidently thought the same and invented what Voltaire said was required. But inventions, like all else, become old-fashioned and out of date, and all intelligent persons are now aware that this invention of God is obsolete. The credit may belong to the original inventor, the fault lies with those who persist in using an out-of-date invention when something better lies at hand. Thus the man who first scooped out the inner side of a log, and went floating down stream on it, was a genius of the first water, and laid the foundations of every ship that sails the seas. But by and by other improvements came along, and the once daring progressive who stubbornly stuck to his dug-out became the laughing stock of his tribe—and he deserved it.

PETER SIMPLE.

The Joss.

Out in Chinatown, San Francisco,
In all the splendour of his oriental Joss House,
There sits a Chinese Joss.

He is made of wood,
His hands and face are painted brown,
His almond-shaped, sloping eyes are made of
glass,
His face is rather fierce and forbidding,
His flowing garments are gloriously coloured,
And glow with decorations of gold foil.

At his left hand prances his wooden war horse,
At his right hand are his spears and shield,
Before him hangs a string of musical little gongs.

There is no congregational worship for him.

The Chinese worshipper approaches his Joss alone,
Places his gift before the god,
Strikes the musical, little gongs, to call the
attention of his Joss
To the fact that a suppliant is about to say his
prayers,
Prostrates himself upon the floor,
Offers up his prayer in faith,
Believing that whatsoever he may ask the same
shall be given him,
Arises and goes upon his way rejoicing
In newness of life and hope and confidence.

And his thoughtless American brother,
Laughs at the Chinese worshipper,
And at his wooden Joss,
Regarding both with feelings of very complaisant
Christian superiority.

It is quite true that the eyes of the Joss see
nothing,
That his ears are deaf to prayers,
That his lips utter no word,
That his arms are powerless to blast or bless,
That his wooden heart throbs not.

You may give him costly gifts,
Gold and frankincense and myrrh,
You may fall down prostrate before him and wor-
ship him
In faith believing,
He will not help you—
It is all nothing to him.

You may blaspheme against him; revile him—
Plaster him all over with mud and filth;
Split him asunder with an axe—
Burn him to ashes with fire;
He will not hurt you—
It is all nothing to him.

And yet I will make bold to say
That that same lifeless, wooden Chinese Joss,
Is just as much alive, and powerful and intelligent
and good and loving,
As any and all other gods, ancient or modern,
That man has ever worshipped.

His glass eyes can see as far as the eyes of any
other god;
His wooden ears can hear as well;
His wooden lips are just as ready and able to
speak words of absolution to the penitent;
Or words of damnation to the unbelieving;
His wooden arms are just as strong to blast or
bless,
His wooden heart throbs just as passionately
With god-like love or hate.

Yes, that poor, old, wooden Joss is a real god,
all right;
In all the god-like attributes and characteristics,
He is absolutely true to type.

HOWELL S. ENGLAND.

The Bible and Literature.

(FROM "THE NOTE BOOKS OF SAMUEL BUTLER.")

"TAKING their (the Jews') literature I cannot see that it deserves the praises that have been lavished upon it. The Song of Solomon and the Book of Esther are the most interesting in the Old Testament, but these are the very ones that make the smallest pretensions to holiness, and even these are neither of them of very transcendent merit. They would stand no chance of being accepted by Messrs. Cassell and Co., or by any biblical publisher of the present day. Chatto and Windus might take the Song of Solomon, but, with this exception, I doubt if there is a publisher in London who would give a guinea for the pair. Ecclesiastes contains some fine things but is strongly tinged with pessimism, cynicism, and affectation. Some of the Proverbs are good, but not many of them are in common use. Job contains some fine passages, and so do some of the Psalms; but the Psalms generally are poor and for the most part querulous, spiteful, and introspective into the bargain. Mudie would not take thirteen copies of the lot if they were to appear now for the first time—unless, indeed, their royal authorship were to arouse an adventitious interest in them, or unless the author were a rich man who played his cards judiciously with the reviewers. As for the prophets—we know what has been the opinion formed concerning them by those who should have been best acquainted with them; I am no judge as to the merits of the controversy between them and their fellow countrymen, but I have read their works and am of opinion that they will not hold their own against such masterpieces of modern literature as, we will say, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Gulliver's Travels*, or *Tom Jones*.

"I would join issue with Mr. Matthew Arnold on yet another point.

"I understand him to imply that righteousness should be a man's highest aim in life. I do not like setting up righteousness, nor yet anything else, as the highest aim in life; a man should have any number of little aims about which he should be conscious and for which he should have names, but he should have neither name for, nor consciousness concerning the main aim of his life. Whatever we do we must try to do rightly—this is obvious—but righteousness implies something much more than this; it conveys to our minds not only the desire to get whatever we have taken in hand as nearly right as possible, but also the general reference of our lives to the supposed will of an unseen but supreme power. Granted that there is such a power, and granted that we should obey its will, we are the more likely to do this the less we concern ourselves about the matter and the more we confine our attention to the things immediately about us, so to speak, entrusted to us as the natural and legitimate sphere of our activity. I believe a man will get the most useful information on these matters from European sources; next to these he will get most from Athens and ancient Rome. Mr. Matthew Arnold notwithstanding, I do not think he will get anything from Jerusalem which he will not find better and more easily elsewhere."

The Visit.

My latch was lifted—a tall light crept in.
His wings were bleeding and his feet were sore,
His eyes were vacant as a wind-swept moor;
Most pitiful of glorious cherubim.
I fed him, as I thought an angel must
Be weary from a way so long and hard;
I bathed his feet and balm'd his wings with nard,
Then sat before him, nibbling my poor crust.

"Oh, are you Death?" I asked him—"I am Faith."
"Then shall I be exalted?" "Nay, brought low."
"What shall I have"—for he had risen to go—
"To prove I have not succored a fell wraith?"
"You shall have doubt and bitterness," he said.
And hence it is that I am worse than dead.

CARLYLE MCINTYRE.

From *Poetry*.

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

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