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## Views and Opinions.

### *The Ban and the Books.*

A decree of the Roman Catholic Church placing the whole of the works of Anatole France upon the Index reminds us that the Roman Church does its best to live up to its boast that it is unchanging. Unchanging is precisely what a Christian Church ought to be. A Church that is the repository of a revelation direct from God Almighty himself has no need and no room for change. It has got the truth straight from headquarters, and there is an end of it. All we have to do is to take it thankfully and wonder why, when God gave us his revelation, he did not give us an unshakable capacity for swallowing it. Not that the latter reflection would ever cross the mind of the good Christian. He is content that he has all that is worth knowing; that was the original view of Christians, and it is still the opinion of multitudes of them. Moreover, it is the only honest view. A Church which on the one hand claims to have a revelation from God, and on the other shows itself ready to modify that revelation—"reinterpret" is the favourite word—forfeits all claim to respect. It proclaims that so long as it is permitted to use the old formulas—and have a share of the social and financial pickings—it does not care very much what it teaches. It is for this reason that one feels rather more respect for the ignorant and narrow Christian than for the liberal and educated one. There seems more moral nerve in the one than in the other. From this policy, however, the Roman Church, if not quite free, is freer than the other churches. It would not be true to say that the Roman Church does not change, but its changes are spread over so lengthy a period that one is apt to lose sight of them. Still, it does occur, and it is evidence that not even the Church of God is proof against the reason of Man.

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### *The Pot and the Kettle.*

Protestants who read the banning of the works of Anatole France will not be slow to congratulate themselves that there exists no "Index" in their churches. But the distinction is really superficial. After all, the essential feature of the Index is the boycott. And there are more ways than one of working that. In England the Churches do not officially forbid their congregations to read certain books and threaten to inflict punishment—spiritual or otherwise—if they

disobey. But the injunction is there, and they who offend have to pay the price. And all things considered I am not sure but that the boycott is more effective in Protestant than it is in Catholic countries. To give one instance that strikes home so far as we are concerned. There is nothing but the unofficial boycott of the Protestant world that stands between this paper and a circulation that would enable it to easily pay its way. And only those who are engaged in the struggle know by what mean methods this boycott is kept in being. Some time ago I called attention to the action of a West of England paper which was advising a billposting company not to stick up posters advertising the *Freethinker*. Before that we had made arrangements with a newspaper seller who had a good stand in one of the main London thoroughfares to display the *Freethinker*. This went on for some weeks and his sales were increasing. Then the Protestant Index set to work. He was cautioned that if he persisted he would not only lose custom, but also his stand. He was compelled to submit. It is the same with the general Press. Freethought meetings are not reported, Freethought books are seldom reviewed. The boycott in Britain is not official, it is not public. It is stealthy, it is cowardly, it is underhand, and it is enforced with all the accompaniments of cant and hypocrisy that have given British Christianity so world-wide a reputation.

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### *Our Great Need.*

Now I say emphatically that this Protestant boycott is far more demoralizing, far more dangerous to character than is the open and public declaration of the Roman Church. They are both detestable, for of all forms of warfare that which is constantly being waged against speech and thought is the most despicable. But where the intolerance is open and undisguised, where the boycott is officially proclaimed and the penalties officially inflicted, there is the minimum amount of damage done to character—individual and national. If a man resists, his resistance has all the dignity of a national act. If he submits, he does so to brute force, and with no more sense of personal degradation than has a soldier who yields to an enemy in overpowering numbers. But the intolerance in vogue in this country is dishonest in its operation and degrading in its consequences. There is little credit in resisting, and there is no personal consolation in submission. It induces a moral cowardice that is everywhere in evidence and which passes unnoticed only because it is so terribly common. There is a weakening of what a medical friend of mine well calls "moral nerve." Over and over again we hear it said that what is needed is more liberal thought. There is a greater need than that. There is plenty of liberal thinking about—some of it so liberal as to be about as useful as a river when its banks are broken down and the water allowed to lose itself in the surrounding soil. Our great need to-day is for liberal thinking with moral courage behind it. We want liberal thinkers who are not frightened of what Shelley well called "verbal bugbears," and who do not run away from a

cause merely because its enemies choose to say it is disreputable or criminal. And for this lack of moral nerve nothing is so responsible as is the Christianity of these islands. It makes a virtue of what is one of the most demoralizing aspects of human nature.

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#### The Burden of Belief.

We do not suppose that the action of the Roman Church will cause Anatole France any uneasiness. The day has gone when the anger of the Vatican could do this. The good or ill-will of the Pope may be of moment to politicians, but to others it is a source of amusement or derision. The loss will be that of the good Catholics who feel that they must obey the order given. Submission is a Christian virtue, and but for the devout believer the camel would be the only animal that takes its burden kneeling. Anatole France will probably take the action of the Vatican as a compliment. And it is really that, because there are some men and some institutions whose hatred is praise and whose praise is condemnation. The friendship and hatred of the Church belong to this order. Its dislike is a testimony of worth; its friendship evidence that one is doing nothing to weaken one of the most disastrous superstitions that have ever oppressed humanity. There is something supremely ridiculous in a body of men telling other people what they may or may not read, and when it is done in the interests of a religion such as is Christianity stupidity merges in criminality. It is a crime against both the living and the unborn, and the pity of it is that Christianity has so infected our social life that the instrument of boycott or of suppression has become a factor in the policy of every Christian government in the world.

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#### Christianity and Force.

I put this down to the influence of Christianity because as a matter of historic fact it was introduced into European politics by the Christian Church. The attempt is often made to apologize for the intolerance of the Church, and for the persecution caused by it, by saying that in this matter it was the State using the Church for its own purpose. But that is not the case. In the ancient Roman State, the mantle of which fell on the unworthy shoulders of the Christian Church, there was no war on opinion. That began with the establishment of Christianity, and so foreign was it to the ancient Roman polity that, as H. C. Lea has pointed out, when the Church came officially to the work of suppressing freedom of thought it found no legal machinery in existence for that purpose. It was compelled to create it, and the result of its labours was the infamous mediæval Inquisition. In the atmosphere which the Church created, and which it was able to maintain for centuries, freedom of thought and speech became impossible. The thinker, the scientist, the philosopher, moved with the shadow of the Inquisition over him, and none knew when or at what moment the doors of a Christian prison might be opened to receive him. What the world would have been like to-day had the Christian Church had its way almost defies imagination. The nearest approach to it, mentally, is seen in the gross superstitions that are current among the more primitive peoples of the earth. Had the Church had its way we should still have a flat earth, and a college of Cardinals would have given us the laws of biology. The distance between the modern and the mediæval mind is the measure of the distance we have travelled from the pure doctrine of the Christian Church.

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#### The Mother of Intolerance.

This policy of persecution, of suppression, was not accidental. It was a direct and logical outcome of the doctrine of exclusive salvation upon which Christianity

is built. Given a belief that man's eternal salvation depends upon certain beliefs in God and the soul—beliefs that are in their very nature incapable of proof—and the consequence is an endeavour to maintain them by any possible means. On tyranny in secular matters there is always the check of immediate and verifiable results. In religious ones no such test exists. It was thus under the Christian rule that the suppression of free speech and free thought became a measure of social sanitation, and its policy of war against ideas. That warfare, if properly conducted, is wholly to the good since it is the warfare out of which springs health and strength. But Christianity fought ideas with the weapon of brute strength, and that was wholly to the bad. It never realized that the only way to fight bad thoughts is to put against them better thoughts, that the fact of a teaching being false or ignorant is no ground whatever for its suppression. And because of its dominance over the State the evil principle established by Christian influence worked in secular affairs without the check it might otherwise have had. On the one side the State sought to restrain freedom of thought and speech in the interests of what it called social order. And on the other, there was a public created which in the main took the principle of intolerance and suppression for granted, and only complained occasionally at its incidence. It is in this way that Christianity acted as a corrupting force on the whole of the social body, and I am convinced that the historian of the future—provided he happens to be furnished with the proper knowledge of psychology and sociology—will so regard it. The actual and concrete persecution of the Christian Church staggers the imagination. But we only see that in its true aspect and recognize its full consequences when we see it as the outward expression of its essential nature.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

### Blind Credulity.

THE Rev. T. M. F., Canada, asked Professor David Smith whether Acts i, 10-11, "is an interpolation of the early Church, or did the angels really make the assertion that the Lord would come as he had gone?" and in his Correspondence Column in the *British Weekly* of June 21, Dr. Smith undertakes to answer the Canadian clergyman's question. Far be it from us to be in any degree captious in our criticism; but it is a fact generally recognized by New Testament scholars that the Book of the Acts bristles with inaccuracies, some of which are due to ignorance and carelessness, and others to the influence of a tendency to justify and commend Gentile Christianity, whose founder and champion was Paul. These inaccuracies and contradictions are to be found in every part of the narrative. Take the story of Paul's conversion, and you will find that according to xxii, 9, his companions saw the light but did not hear the voice of him that spake to him, but that according to ix, 7, they heard the voice but beheld no one, nor fell down. In chapter xxvi, 12-18, there is a different account still, according to which the companions fell down to earth, while Paul alone beheld the light and heard the voice of Jesus. Such contradictions are the result of either ignorance or carelessness. Other inaccuracies are due to the writer's eagerness to minimise the conflict between the Gentile and Judaic disciples. Important facts related in the Pauline Epistles are ignored in the Acts, such as the insistence on the circumcision of Titus successfully resisted by Paul and Barnabas, and the public quarrel between Paul and Peter at Antioch. Many more instances might be cited, but those already given suffice to show that the Acts is not a book that

can be relied upon as to historical accuracy. Consequently it is wholly immaterial whether chapter i, verses 10 and 11 should be regarded as an interpolation or as an authentic portion of the original narrative. Of course, its authenticity as part of the original story as written by Luke, or another, would by no means establish its historical truth. We agree, therefore, with Dr. Smith in the statement that "there is no reason to doubt the authenticity of the passage," but totally differ from him when he adds that "it would be a misfortune if there were."

Professor Smith treats the passage as historically true, which, as an orthodox theologian, he is in duty bound to do. To pronounce any part of Scripture mythical or legendary, is to depart seriously from orthodoxy as embodied in the historic Creeds. That time has completely discredited the doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ is of little moment, the pious explanation being that some day, whether soon or late, it will prove itself gloriously true. It is the word of the Lord which cannot be broken. In the Churches Christians are still singing, apparently with unabated confidence and wistful longing:

O Lord Jesus, how long?  
How long ere we shout the glad song?  
Christ returneth! Hallelujah!  
Hallelujah! Amen!

Dr. Smith exhibits considerable ingenuity in dealing with this subject. Deprecating the great amount of foolish and harmful speculation indulged in concerning it, he says:—

The statement is that he (Christ) shall so come in like manner as the Eleven that day on Mount Olivet beheld him going: he will appear precisely as he disappeared. And how did he disappear? Remember that profound principle which runs all through the Scriptures, and finds its supreme exemplification in the New Testament testimonies to the Resurrection. ....The Eternal World continually encompasses us, and it is the limitations of our mortal condition that hide it from us.

How does the Professor know that we are encompassed by an Eternal World? He has never seen it himself nor has he met anyone who has actually seen it at any time. It is easy enough to speculate, conjecture, theorize, and so form numerous hypotheses about another sphere than this, and highly interesting it often is thus to occupy the mind; but Dr. Smith imagines that he possesses positive knowledge of such a sphere, though he has never seen it. Quoting Shakespeare, he admits that "whilst this muddy vesture of decay doth grossly close us in," we cannot see or hear it. Then in his *naïveté* he gives expression to the following ridiculously obvious fallacy:—

In relation to the spiritual world we are meanwhile as a man born blind in relation to the material world: we lack spiritual vision, the faculty for seeing the unseen.

We are emphatically not in the same relation to the spiritual world as a blind man is in relation to the material world, because the blind man *lives* in the world he cannot see, and is surrounded by numberless men and women who both can and do see it, while we do *not* live in the spiritual world, which we cannot see, nor do we ever come into contact with people who do live in and see it. Thus, the Professor's analogy entirely breaks down.

Our limitations are such that we cannot see the Eternal World; and yet Dr. Smith assures us that, even in our present mortal condition, there are two ways "whereby a spiritual manifestation may be vouchsafed to us." One is the way of accommodation to our physical limitations, and in surprise we ask, has any communication from another world ever reached us by that road? The Professor answers by pointing to the Incarnation as a disclosure of that

kind, forgetting that the Incarnation is not an established fact, but a theory about, or an artificial interpretation of, an alleged fact. To all appearance the birth of the Gospel of Jesus did not differ at all from that of any other child, and the child himself had no uniqueness attaching to him, except perhaps that it was not known who his father was. The virgin birth was an after thought out of which the doctrine of the Incarnation was evolved. That it meant the becoming flesh of the eternal Word of God did not even occur to those who added the story to the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. To Dr. Smith, however, the virgin birth is a veritable fact, and some years ago he published a book in defence of it. Only to a comparatively small number of theologians is the virgin birth a historical fact, while the overwhelming majority of Liberal divines repudiate the Incarnation. "The other way is that we should be gifted with spiritual vision—that the veil of flesh should be withdrawn." But this way is blocked up and rendered impassable by the previous statement that "the limitations of our mortal condition" render the Eternal World invisible. As a matter of fact, the veil of flesh *cannot* be withdrawn, it never has been and never will be. The Old Testament Theophanies and angelologies are but so many fairy tales, interesting and amusing enough as long as they are not taken seriously.

Dr. Smith's credulity is well-nigh miraculous. There seems to be absolutely nothing he cannot believe, except the testimony of his own reason. Leaving out the references we cite the following astounding passage touching the alleged post-resurrection appearances of Jesus:—

Look at the story of his manifestation to the disciples in the room where they were assembled on the evening of the Resurrection Day. Suddenly "he stood in their midst." He had been present all the while according to his word, but "their eyes were holding" till the miracle was wrought. The veil was lifted from their hearts, and then they beheld him. And similarly, when the manifestation ceased, what happened? The veil re-enfolded them, and "he vanished out of their sight." It was as though a cloud had fallen upon them. And so in telling the story of his Ascension, his final disappearance, St. Luke says, "a cloud received him out of their sight."

That forcibly reminds us of a clever moving picture trick in which an actor, a big, powerful man, appears on the screen and, on putting on a black robe, instantly vanishes out of sight, leaving not a trace behind. So Jesus suddenly appeared in the midst of his disciples and as suddenly disappeared. He is credited with possessing the power to make himself at one moment visible and at the next invisible. Only a cinema actor can do that to-day. If anybody pretended to do it now at a religious service he would be universally condemned as an unmitigated fraud. But the Gospel Jesus, after his recorded resurrection, is represented as a being who could be visible or invisible at will, who, though arrayed in an immaterial, spiritual body, could yet appear to sit down among his disciples and partake of fish. On one occasion when he suddenly appeared to them, they were "terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they beheld a spirit"; but he showed them his hands and his feet, invited them to handle him and see for themselves that he was not a ghost. Then he said: "Have ye here anything to eat? And they gave him a piece of broiled fish. *And he took it, and did eat before them*" (Luke xxiv, 36-43). Does Professor Smith accept that tale as literally true?

Professor Smith's closing sentence is this: "He came, He is here, He will be manifested." The reverend gentleman teaches at the College, Londonderry, and we venture to ask him, If the risen Christ is in Ireland just now, what on earth is he doing

there where anarchy reigns supreme? Ireland is perhaps the most profoundly religious country in the world, and one wonders when Christ is going to manifest himself for its redemption. Pronouncing no judgment whatever on the rights and wrongs involved in the Irish political situation we only wish to know what part the Churches are taking in working out a just and satisfactory solution of the many difficult problems with which they are now confronted. Controversy apart, our sincere and most fervent hope is that ere long Ireland shall enjoy perfect peace and ever-growing prosperity, and once more become known, as under the name of Juverna it used to be in ancient time, as the "Happy Island." J. T. LLOYD.

### Watson's Wonderland.

Behold, when empire against empire strives,  
Though all else perish; ground 'neath iron war,  
The golden thought survives.

—Sir William Watson.

COLLECTED editions make or mar men's reputations, for so often they are warehouses rather than treasuries. Beside the masterpiece comes the half-success; beside the permanent, the temporary, and sometimes the fugitive. Nothing, however, is more gratifying in these days of exaggerated and bubble reputations than to note the steady path along which the fame of Sir William Watson has advanced. He owes his good fortune solely to the sterling merit of his work, for he has never sought the sweet uses of advertisement. Those who look back to the best reviews of the past few years will be surprised to perceive how noiselessly Sir William crept into the hearts of lovers of literature.

No one can read Watson's poems from *The Prince's Quest*, published two generations ago, to the very latest volume, without being struck with the amount of work of the classical quality of which there can be no question. It is not too much to say that *Wordsworth's Grave*, *The Tomb of Burns*, *In Laleham Churchyard*, and *Shelley's Centenary*, will be linked indissolubly with the memory of the great writers they celebrate, so penetrating is the insight into the genius of each poet. Maybe, Watson's finest effort in this direction was his *Lachrymæ Musarum*, which made so notable a stir when Tennyson died. It ranks as one of the noblest poems we have had for many years.

In nothing, perhaps, is Sir William Watson's genius so bright as in his gift of aphoristic expression. Take, for instance, the following felicities:—

Song is not Truth, not Wisdom, but the rose  
Upon Truth's lips, the light in Wisdom's eyes.

Not in vague dreams of man forgetting men,  
Nor in vast morrows losing the to-day.

The mystery we make darker with a name,  
Now touching goal, now backward hurled,  
Toils the indomitable world.

And set his heart upon the goal,  
Not on the prize.

On matters of Nature, indeed, Sir William Watson always sings with dignity. When we remember what Catullus, what Lucretius, what Wordsworth, what Tennyson, what innumerable poets have sung in praise of Nature, a modern poet might almost despair of striking a note that would command attention. But Watson has a charm and power of his own. Here is a couplet from *The First Skylark of Spring*:—

O high above this home of tears  
Eternal joy sing on!

He can make a picture of a commonplace scene:—

Where, on the tattered fringes of the land,  
The uncounted flowers of the penurious sand  
Are pale against the pale lips of the sea.

How striking in its way is the following:—

I beheld the waters in their might  
Writhe as a dragon by some great spell curbed.

The poet's humanity is beyond question. In *The Purple East* and *A Year of Shame* he impeached Abdul, Sultan of Turkey. Was ever monarch attacked in such grand and sonorous lines, with such sinewy rhetoric, sounding declamation, pictorial richness? Sonnets, written for the purposes of the moment, echoing in the memory of the men who read them. For Sir William has never lacked courage, witness his *Freethought* "four square to all the winds that blow." It is playful in *The Eloping Angels*, a satire that Byron might have written, and it is serious in *The Unknown God*:—

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.

In a fine sonnet, addressed to his friend, Aubrey de Vere, he expressly voices negation:—

Not mine your mystic creed; not mine in prayer  
And worship, at the ensanguined Cross to kneel;  
But where I mark your path, how pure and fair,  
How based on love, on passion for man's weal,  
My mind, half envying what it cannot share,  
Reveres the reverence which it cannot feel.

In one of his latest volumes, *The Man Who Saw*, Sir William Watson wrote on the subject of the world-war, and he chose Mr. Lloyd George as the theme of his principal poem. It is a real tribute to Sir William to say that he was never stupid nor dull. Compared to the childish crudities of the younger poets, his dignified lines are, at least, readable. The times are out of joint for political poems. The trouble is that it is well nigh impossible at present for a man to write exactly what he thinks, as a man, about men in authority, and yet print what he writes. This makes political poetry possible, but improbable, and gives point to the gibe that there is less freedom in Britain under the Guelphs than in ancient Rome under the Cæsars.

Sir William Watson has, in his time, given us of his best, and that is the highest kind of poetry. He is one of the singers of the English race who has held his ear close to the movements of the modern world, and brought away with him some sounding echoes of its music. This is, after all, the thing that tells in literature. In the last analysis, noble thinking means noble writing. All else is as ephemeral as ocean foam.

MIMNERMUS.

### Literature During the Great War.

#### II.

(Concluded from page 443.)

AND now let us see how the physical conventions have fared during the Great War, and what effect it had on the relation of the sexes in view of the discord and harmonies likely to arise through such a tremendous dislocation of the licensed and "penned-in" habits of the people. It was only natural to assume that a period of international violence would find its reflex in the romantic literature of the times. Woman yearning to be free seems a special feature of the new books, and the war appears to have provided a golden key to open the door to the sensuous East; the hidden mysteries of Chinatown, and all that glorious abandon of Bohemian life, which, though ardently desired at all times, is effectively kept in check by the "moral," spiritual, and economic forces acting as the police agents of modern civilization.

The great tragedy of Death and Separation which is inevitable when men go forth to slaughter each other, had been the means of stimulating the curiosity of some popular thinkers as to the prospect of communing with those who had "passed away," and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Sir Oliver Lodge have produced interesting works in this connection.

It is highly probable that the bonds of affinity and mental attachment to certain individuals can never be entirely severed, and may possibly present strange and peculiar phases of re-adjustment. It is a study generally based on our sympathetic emotions, and its very nature implies a plea for kindness and mutual forbearance on this plane of existence, so that the sense of separation may give place to calm and tranquil resignation, free from the cruel tortures of Self-Reproach which never fail to remind one of the good they might have done and the opportunity gone beyond recall. It has been the great problem of the ages. We can imagine old Omar wistfully thinking of—

Some he loved, the kindest and the best,  
That Time in all his choicest vintage prest,  
Who drank their cup a round or two before,  
And then stole silently to rest.

There is one consoling feature about the modern attempt to "pierce the veil." It has a great and wholesome tendency to empty the Churches, and the Roman Catholic priests are losing financial and numerical strength on account of the ease with which the souls in purgatory can slip in and out at the behest of a "medium." Prices have gone up for Masses for the holy souls in the Roman Church, and part of their sentence in purgatory is remitted by this means. Unfortunately, they have no "off-days," and the five shillings you spend on a Mass may only rub off a couple of centuries, whereas I have attended seances and had delightful "spirit" interviews with old friends at a mere outlay of twopence at the door and a penny on the collection plate. There is no hell-fire about the spiritualist, so let us hope that the Salvation Army will shortly be in the Bankruptcy Court with the older established firm of Black Militia men.

The war produced the usual crop of poetry of the Sir Galahad type:

My strength is as the strength of ten  
Because my heart is pure.

These songsters, undoubtedly, loved their country far better than themselves as many of their voices are stilled for ever.

Other poets have sung their strains in a minor key, Life has been sweet to them, and their verse betrays anger and indignation at the brutal exhibition of the "tiger in man." They did not want to fight, but being good patriots, went into it with reluctance fearful of the lash of the whip of public opinion.

One of the saddest poems written at this period was composed by a soldier who imagines the dead speaking to each other as they lay on the battle-field in the dark hours of the night. The note of Resignation is not heard. The thoughts are with those who have been left behind, the anguish of the bereaved, the lure of life, at its strongest urge so ruthlessly dispelled, and the dismal failure to grasp its meaning so forcibly indicated in the querying title:—*Why are we Dead?*

What a triumph for those who moulded the minds of those unfortunate men when they were children! What a terrible victory for an educational system that can send men to death and mutilation in massed battalions with scarce a protest from the "educated" victims concerned. One may well excuse the cynical smile of the critic as he thinks of the war memorials all over the country, those gruesome tributes to the success of the false and pernicious "education" that still controls the general mentality of the civilized nations.

And now our literary pilgrimage is nearing its end, and so far we have failed to discover any book giving a logical, definite, explanation of the strenuous events under review. The great conflict has been chronicled in every detail in volumes without number, but what may interest the military experts and the chemists of the future with regard to strategy or more deadly composition of poison gas can serve no useful purpose for those who desire to get through the modern inferno of life with the least possible inconvenience to themselves. In the destiny of mankind war has always exercised a terrible influence, and it will continue to be used as the most effective "purge" for the ills of nations who overstock themselves and constitute a possible danger to the strong, ruling class, who have made this "medicine for the mob" so palatable that men may now be actually seen wearing ribbons denoting the number of times they have been wounded in the gruesome process of clearing out the national stockyard.

There is no doubt that the Great War was the natural consequence of mutual antagonism brought about the Will to live and the need for expanding oppressive frontiers. There were also domestic dangers in almost every nation involved, and the strong men of Europe, acting under a natural keen sense of self-preservation realized that war was preferable to revolutionary attempts to overthrow ruling dynasties and replace them by a general servitude concealed behind the platitudes of sincere but mistaken idealists who failed to observe the inexorable law of nature which maintains the ascendancy of the individual, and ordains that only the fittest shall survive.

Mr. Arnold Bennett in his book on *Liberty* is woefully blind to the "refined jungle" methods of the nations under the educated and highly-skilled civilization of the present day. He can give us the smoke and atmosphere of the Five Towns, but he fails to appreciate the statement of Von Bernhardt, which he quotes in his defence of Great Britain's attitude during the war. "We must not," says Bernhardt, "think merely of external foes who compel us to fight—a war may seem to be forced upon a statesman by the state of home affairs." The mind of the Super-Animal speaks here with all the world as game. It is a contest between the rabbit and the snake.

"War," replies Mr. Bennett, "in addition to being hell, is idiotic. We declare it to be absurd that half the world should be overrun with ruin in order that a great race may prove its greatness. We admit that in the process of evolution commercial rivalries between nations are not merely unavoidable but excellent in themselves. And though we have to acknowledge defeat in certain of these struggles, we wish for nothing better than that they should continue."

What a tragedy it is that in the process of evolution writers who have not as yet passed the mud-fish stage should be allowed to pour forth on a suffering world their volumes on *smoke*, and their insipid efforts to deal with such a subject as liberty, which is entirely beyond their range of vision and, as a consequence, not yet within their power of comprehension.

AGNES WERDON.

The Sea of Faith  
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore  
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.  
But now I only hear  
Its melancholy, long withdrawing roar,  
Retreating, to the breath  
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear  
And naked shingles of the world.

—Matthew Arnold, "Dover Beach."

## Questions for Men of Science.

A WHILE ago the sceptical Miss Lovisa Brunzell, then of San Francisco and now of New York, with a view to finding out how far men of science were believers in supernatural religion, prepared a set of questions and mailed a limited number of them. The work was impeded by the circumstance that the book *American Men of Science* had been allowed to go out of print. This directory is now again obtainable for use, corrected to 1921, and the mailing of the *Questionnaire* has been resumed. Below will be found the questions; and while we are reprinting them we may as well append the answers to them that were made by Luther Burbank, the Darwinist and experimental evolutionist of Santa Rosa, California:

*Question.*—Were you ever, or are you now, a communicant of any church? If so, what denomination?

*Burbank.*—No, although I attended church regularly until I was forty, also Sunday School—the last twenty years, however, more for the social benefit than otherwise. Was brought up a Baptist and attended Baptist and Methodist churches until I was forty.

*Q.*—Do you believe in the divinity and miraculous conception of Christ?

*B.*—I do not; there is no proof of it, either natural or otherwise.

*Q.*—Is it your opinion that prayer is answered by an intelligent being from without?

*B.*—I do not believe that prayer has been or ever will be answered by any intelligent being from without. There is absolutely no proof whatever of this, though it may be very comforting to some to believe this myth.

*Q.*—Do you think that the sole value of prayer consists in its effect on the person praying?

*B.*—Mostly. Sometimes it might prove of value to others.

*Q.*—Has science taught you that heaven and hell do not exist?

*B.*—The common orthodox heaven and hell do not exist. They could not exist if there were an all-powerful and just ruler. No criminal could be as cruel as the God who would consign human beings to a hell.

*Q.*—What is your opinion of the Bible? Is it the word of God or of man?

*B.*—Without the shadow of a doubt the work of man, being a history of the lives of ancient tribes reaching towards civilization, and constructed mostly unconsciously by men both good and bad.

*Q.*—Do you assume that the soul of man ceases to functionate at death?

*B.*—In other spheres, I do. Its influence will live in humanity—will live for good or bad for all time. We actually live in the lives of others.

*Q.*—Do you agree with Büchner that "the brain is the seat of the soul?"

*B.*—A very difficult question to answer in a few words. The brain, if we include the whole nervous system, is the soul. Millions of souls functionate, through heredity, through our own personal ones.

*Q.*—Would you say that matter and force govern the universe rather than a supreme being?

*B.*—Matter, which in its last analysis is force, governs what we know of the universe.

*Q.*—Can you harmonize the Christian faith with the laws of nature?

*B.*—In part, though this requires more than a "Yes" or "No." It is a faith grown up in our heredity, and has been an important factor, even though it does not harmonize with the laws of nature.

*Q.*—Can you say with Darwin that "Agnostic

would be the more correct description of my state of mind"?

*B.*—Yes, with reservations.

*Q.*—Have your labours in the field of science and research caused you to alter your earlier opinions on religion?

*B.*—All my work in the field of science and research has come through a change in my earlier opinions on religion. Growth is the law of life. Orthodoxy is the death of scientific effort.

*Q.*—What facts of nature substantiate your views?

*B.*—The evolution and development of man and his civilization through his own efforts, and only these.

*Q.*—Is life after death proved or disproved by science?

*B.*—It has never been proved or disproved, but it is rapidly, in my opinion, being disproved and so accepted by most intelligent people.

*Q.*—What, in your opinion, has given rise to religious beliefs?

*B.*—Probably two things: First, the desire to extend our present life; and second, the desire of its teachers to be supported by those who labour.

*Q.*—Is religion of any value in the conduct of human affairs?

*B.*—There is no possible doubt that it has been and, like police force, will be in the future to those who are not able to govern themselves, especially in their relations toward others.

Further remarks: The thousands of religions which exist and have existed are stepping-stones to a better adaptation to environment, and are one by one being replaced by the clear light of science and knowledge—in other words, as the fables of childhood are being supplanted by a better understanding of the facts of life.

LUTHER BURBANK.  
*Truthseeker, New York.*

## Lecturing Tour in Huddersfield.

(JULY 1 TO JULY 8.)

THIS week's lecturing was interfered with by the inclemency of the weather. One meeting was never commenced while another had to be abandoned after about ten minutes' speaking as a result of severe showers of rain. All the other meetings, however, passed off in a most successful manner. The crowds were extremely attentive, and the long series of questions kept the lecturer busy for a considerable time each evening. The last meeting was especially enthusiastic, good supplies of literature being in demand together with many applications for forms of membership, which, let us hope, will be duly filled.

Only one circumstance calls for special comment. On the Tuesday evening two clergymen were in evidence at question time, one taking part in ten minutes' platform opposition. After my reply he requested me to tell the crowd what Atheism had done in the past compared to the feats of Christianity, especially in reference to hospitals, etc. I undertook to deliver a special lecture upon the subject if he would choose the night and promise to be present to reply to it. He made the promise, choosing Friday for the ordeal. A large crowd accordingly presented itself, but my opponent did not appear, to the disgust of the whole assembly, which, however, listened with eagerness to the lecture. The local comrades intend to give the matter publicity in the Press, and numerous members of the audience promised a lively time for the gentleman on his first public appearance.

The usual small band of the faithful assisted at the meetings, for which I tender my thanks together with the wish that more of our own people would take an active part in lecturing missions.

For the fortnight commencing July 9 I shall be again in the Tyneside district. Particulars of places of meeting will be found in the local Press. GEORGE WHITEHEAD.

## Acid Drops.

We go to press before the decision of the L.C.C. is known as to permitting games to be played on Sundays in the public parks. The clergy in London are in full cry against it and are beating up their followers, who do not wish to play on Sunday, to prevent others being permitted to play either. We suppose that to be miserable alone is more miserable to this type of Christian than to be miserable with a crowd. The clerical opposition is, of course, that it will keep people away from church. This may be true, and it is evidence only that the interest of the clergy in the matter is purely that of a tradesman who desires to close a rival establishment. For ourselves we believe in Free Trade, in religion as in other things. The clergy are naturally strong protectionists. They are aware that given open competition the traffic in their class of goods is a vanishing quantity.

We are glad to see the *Times* advocating in a leading article the use of the public parks for Sunday games. It is an indication of the distance we have travelled and of the steady influence of Freethought propaganda. There is one remark in the article in question which calls for a special word. The writer gives, as a reason for Sunday games, "Young people must find an outlet for their abounding energies; and if innocent means of recreation are not provided on their only free day in the week, many of them may be driven, at best, to idle loafing, and at worst to pursuits more definitely harmful." We agree with every word of this, and would put it in an even stronger manner. But it must be quite clear that this is nothing new. If the Christian Sunday has this effect on young people to-day, it must have been exerting the same influence for the past three centuries. And in that case we have testimony to the truth of what we have so often said—that no other institution, unless it be the Christian Church itself—has been so great an instrument of demoralization as the Christian Sunday. We are glad to see the *Times* coming to this point of view, although its conversion is a trifle late.

The Upper House of the Convocation of Canterbury has declared its adhesion to the Nicene creed. The clergy, like the Bourbons, learn nothing and forget nothing.

Among the encouragements to piety, or imbecility and hypocrisy passed under the Commonwealth in England was the following:—

Those that say the bodies of men shall not rise again after they are dead, shall be adjudged guilty of felony, and on complaint before any two justices of the peace, and on complaint before any two justices of the peace, be committed to prison, without bail, till the next gaol delivery; and at the said gaol delivery shall be indicted for feloniously publishing and maintaining such error; and in case the indictment be found, and he shall not, upon his trial, abjure the said error, he shall suffer the pains of death, as in cases of felony, without benefit of clergy.

This delightful regulation may be found in Scobell's *Acts and Ordinances of Parliament*. A country in which Christians had it all their own way would be a nice place in which to live. Their rule makes one realize why the next world appeared so attractive to many. A thoroughly Christian country would be a first-class place to leave.

We trust that Freethinkers have not overlooked an illuminating statement in Bertrand Russell's book entitled *Freethought and Official Propaganda*. As a way out of abysmal ignorance the author makes the two following suggestions:—

(1) That jobs should be given to people on account of their fitness to perform them; (2) that one aim of education should be to cure people of the habit of believing propositions for which there is no evidence. With the first proposition nothing can really be done as it is a pious aspiration. The second, however, is a different pair of shoes. With this steadily in view we might see an end of theological nonsense, which, for precision and real definition reminds one of an elephant walking through a greenhouse full of rare plants.

Fabianism is like shandy-gaff—it is neither beer nor lemonade, yet it is marvellously like Prussianism in its aims and aspirations. After reading in the *New Statesman* an article entitled "German Cheap Labour," by O. Madox Hueffer, one is left wondering as to the state of mind that is necessary to absorb its meaning. Mr. Hueffer tells us for sixpence what Lord Northcliffe told us for a penny. The former with more bad taste than can be compressed into print, describes German children as "tow-headed infantry," and "the human crop." The article begins and ends with the fertility of German women. The worst that can be said of it is that the article illustrates in practice those Christian virtues that have made England what she is.

Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch ought to thank his lucky stars that he does not live in 1822. The following is taken from one of his lectures:—

If God created man in His image, man has a right (shall we not even say, a duty?) to erect himself to the fullest inch of that image and ask questions. Does it not, at any rate, argue a certain nobility of mind (if exorbitant) in one betrayed by his fellow creatures, that he walks straight up and has it out with the Creator Himself?

He is braver than Canon Barnes, yet not so courageous as George Robey in "Round in Fifty." This latter gentleman amuses many with his very primitive Freethought set to music. Freethinkers would do well to note the faces of the audience during this song. Sir George metaphorically plays at skittles with Noah in front of the spectators who are the result of many generations of teaching that the contents of the Bible are sacred. The mental attitude of many towards priestly impositions to-day is the result of being preached at and screeched at so long that man is fallen. Freethought should help man to stand up and laugh.

Aberystwyth *must* be a stronghold of the Lord's. Truth will out, and, for truth without clothes we trust that all Christians will be proud of their religion supported by the police. As an advertisement of that "learned at the mother's knee," the following extract needs no comment:—

In reply to the mayor, Superintendent Edwards said the police had no objection to the concerts provided the music was sacred, but churches and chapels were empty enough without having other competing attractions.

"The clergy are arraigned before the world because now in the world's deepest distress and darkest days they have not a word of real hope and comfort, or even a feeble ray of light." So reads the pamphlet advertising Judge Rutherford; it sounds good and the statement is true, but the cure is apparently nothing to do with cosmopolitan's private control of credit, and the systematic religious drugging of the people through their emotions.

Mr. Austin Hopkinson, M.P., writes to one of his constituents that all superstitions melt to nothing when the sun of science shines upon them. We quite agree with this, but we ought to add that Mr. Hopkinson's remark refers to Spiritualism alone. And that is only one of the superstitions with which this country is cursed. Christianity is a far more dangerous superstition than is Spiritualism, and but for the vogue of the greater the lesser would not find it easy to make headway. When the mind is already weakened it is easier for an attack to be made upon it. The analogy of the body in the face of disease germs is here strictly applicable.

The Dean of Bristol, who was formerly a tutor at Oxford University, says that "normal boys tend to be the least inclined for religion." Where, then, is the craving to satisfy the "religious instinct"? We may mention that the Dean is not alone in his opinion of "normal boys."

"The irreligious life is the frame without the picture" is another of the very reverend gentleman's profound observations. Of course he means his particular interpretation of the "religious life." Which is the picture

and which is the frame in the religious life of modern England? The Nonconformists are pleading for a new presentment of the faith, based on the message, or theory, of a "progressive revelation." The Anglicans are split up into two main divisions, one urging the frank acceptance of the Higher Criticism, the other demanding jealous regard for the honour of the Church and her traditions. Christadelphians, Second Adventists, disciples of the New Thought, and Christian Scientists all proclaim that they have the "picture" and the other fellow only the "frame."

A paragraph in the Press, recounting the activities of a distinguished visitor to Paris, says that "on Sunday he went to Longchamps Races and in the evening to the Opera." English visitors to the Continent generally take the maximum advantage of the good things provided, though at home they are too often quite ready, at the dictation of a well-organized fraternity of "men of sorrows," to spend one-seventh of their life in abject misery.

*The New Republic*, followed by *Public Opinion*, has recently been asking why the intellectual class does not possess a greater influence over affairs. It just sits on a hill and watches the tide. We think that our contemporary has touched the pulse of the causes underlying much of our national and individual ill-health. The number of wealthy men, it is often said, who stand on the side of freedom is small. But the intellectual class may be as indifferent as any other to what lies beyond its own immediate interests. If the overwhelming majority of our men of science and culture declared earnestly against the Blasphemy law, it would probably disappear at a very early date.

Mr. W. P. Pycraft, whose "Scientific Jottings" in the *Illustrated London News* are read with so much interest, states in the issue of June 24 that many thousands of the sea-elephants in the South Seas "have already been done to death to furnish oil," and that the beautiful penguins in the Macquaries were "not so long ago" destroyed wholesale by one of the oil-producing companies. "The wretched victims were made to walk the plank into boiling cauldrons to save the trouble of killing them." But these "poor things of a day" have no souls, and has not the Christian trader long marked out the whole world as his own by gift of God?

A motor-car in which the Archbishop of Cambrai and a vicar were travelling caught fire at Mormal. The former and the chauffeur were seriously injured, the latter was burned to death. If the travellers had been well-known Atheist lecturers! Providence has had a long time to grow old in. What do the mental experts say about him?

We gather from one of the Sunday papers that the arrangement between the Vatican and the Soviet Government, to which we recently referred, is "off." We are glad to see this, not because we deny the right of the Roman Church to preach in Russia, or for Roman Catholics to have the same rights and privileges as others in Russia, but solely on the ground that it is not the business of any government to enter into undertakings with any Church by which it is placed in a privileged position. The evils of the association of the State with religion are written all over the history of the Christian period. It threatens the welfare of the State and of the individuals composing it.

After the War the clergy arranged that memorials should take the form of additions to existing churches, the erection of chapels, and other little acts of piety of service to the profession. The recently celebrated centenary of Brixton Parish Church reminds us that just after Waterloo a similar programme of memorials was arranged. This was one of five "thanksgiving" churches erected in London out of a fund of two millions. At that time Prussia was cordially associated with our victory. She was a great Protestant nation with all the virtues characteristic of such nations.

Of three Bedfordshire chapels one has been turned into a motor garage, one into a workmen's club, and a third is to be sold for hard cash. These "conversions" in John Bunyan's country pass almost unnoticed in the England of aeroplanes and wireless telegraphy, which only adds to the pathos of their tale of "change and decay." If the immortal tinker could return to our midst for a short sojourn, would he think that our latter-day pilgrims were any nearer to "the delectable mountains"? One notes, too, that Wesley's old chapel in the City Road, London, is sadly in need of repair, and even a paltry £10,000 is not easily forthcoming for this purpose.

Canon Alexander, of St. Paul's Cathedral, supports the appeal for £100,000 for necessary repairs to "the parish church of the British Empire." There are a good many Roman Catholics, Mohammedans, Buddhists, and Jews in the Empire. What do they think of the Rev. Canon's description of his temple? We say nothing of the Nonconformists. They found out long ago that neither episcopacy nor imperialism is nearly so black as it used to be painted.

After a long-winded discussion the London County Council Parks and Open Spaces Committee referred back to the Council the question of allowing Sunday games in the parks. The matter was set down for discussion during the present week. A considerable section of the London Press is supporting the movement for Sunday games. The *Daily Graphic*, however, in its issue of July 8, very solemnly and piously asks the Council and the public to bear in mind all that the British Sunday has meant to the nation and the Empire. We, too, sincerely hope that they will do so.

One of our readers informs us that an Aberdeen parson lately declared, "Materialism is dead. Mr. Cohen must bring his science up to date. He is fifty years behind his time." We are dismayed, but take a little heart on reflecting that we have heard the same thing, about others as well as ourselves, very many times. And we really ought to have something better than the word of an Aberdeen parson to settle the matter definitely. The reader who sent us this information has sent on the parson a copy of Mr. Cohen's *Theism or Atheism?* and has promised him if the book can be refuted to join the Church. We do not fancy that we run any great risk of losing a reader. But we should like to know what the parson has to say to *Theism or Atheism?* It might prevent our getting conceited.

## How to Help.

There are thousands of men and women who have left the Churches and who do not know of the existence of this journal. Most of them would become subscribers if only its existence were brought to their notice.

We are unable to reach them through the ordinary channels of commercial advertising, and so must rely upon the willingness of our friends to help. This may be given in many ways:

By taking an extra copy and sending it to a likely acquaintance.

By getting your newsagent to take an extra copy and displaying it.

By lending your own copy to a friend after you have read it.

By leaving a copy in a train, tram or 'bus.

It is monstrous that after forty years of existence, and in spite of the labour of love given it by those responsible for its existence, the *Freethinker* should not yet be in a sound financial position. It can be done if all will help. And the paper and the Cause is worthy of all that each can do for it.



## To Correspondents.

J. F. HAMPSON.—We received a cutting from the *Preston Guardian*, but that was subsequent to the one mentioned by you. We hope your efforts to secure new readers will prove successful. It is a much appreciated kind of help at present.

J. E. ROOSE (N. Rhodesia).—You may be right in saying that we do not make sufficient allowance for the selfishness of human nature, but it is better for one to err on that side than on the other—decidedly better for one's own mental health. And, after all, "human nature" is a very modifiable thing, and it is precisely because the "selfish" man injures himself most in the long run that his selfishness condemns itself. Pleased you so much enjoyed the criticism of Blatchford. One has to take these men on the valuation the world sets on them, not on their intrinsic value, which is often poor enough.

KENHARDT (S. Africa).—We have received a letter containing a postal order from the above district, but there are 10 instructions as to what the order is intended for, and no name of sender. Perhaps the sender will write us.

W. MERCHANT.—Thanks for cutting, but an account of Mr. Norwood's sermon in America would not be of great interest to readers here. Poems to secure insertion must be short. We are obliged, however, for your sending. Papers are being forwarded.

L. QUIRK.—No copy of the paper has come to hand. We are, however, pleased to see that you are getting in the Free-thought side wherever possible. We should be pleased to assist at a meeting of the kind named, but are afraid there is not much chance.

E. A. BUTLER.—Thanks for cuttings. We have no doubt but that the *Daily News* and other papers will come nearer to the *Freethinker* as it becomes safer for them to do so. There are multitudes of people who are not dishonest because they wish to be so, but because they lack the courage to be otherwise. And yet the honest course is not at all hard—once resolved to pursue it.

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.

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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:—

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

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

## Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote's *Bible Romances* has been for long out of print, although it has been in constant demand. A new edition has now been issued by the Secular Society Limited, and will be ready at once. As many of our readers are aware it contains some of the best of Mr. Foote's writing, and displays the qualities of wit, sarcasm, humour, and wide reading, for which he was justly famous. The book runs to about 240 pages, is bound in cloth, and published at 2s. 6d., postage 3d. There is no other firm in London that would publish so large a book at so small a price, and it can only be done as an effort in propaganda. We anticipate a good and quick

sale for the work, which is the chief justification for publishing at so low a price.

The Shelley Centenary has filled a prominent place in the Press of the past week. The *Times* (July 7), in its leader "Cor Cordium," revealed a hopeless inability to rise above the commonplace. "Extravagant praise is the retort to extravagant blame, and this poet has been endowed with gifts that were not his." That sentence represents the summit of its effort. The *Morning Post* of same date contains a fine article, full of sympathetic insight, by Mr. E. B. Osborn. Mr. Edmund Blunden, in the *Daily News*, says that Shelley's "philosophy (or religion)" aimed to remove the fetters that depressed humanity, while his poetry was an expression of supreme happiness ever dogged by the footsteps of that same human misery. The leading article in the *Times Literary Supplement* is nearly as heavy as lead, written in a style more suited to a disquisition on Martin Tupper than on one who "stormed the eternities." The *Westminster Gazette* essays a story of "pinnacles" and "hoverings," and achieves bathos. Mr. H. S. Salt writes on "Pioneer and Prophet" in the *Daily Herald*, emphasizing the reversal by a later England of its original estimate of both the poet and the man. Mr. George Lansbury declares that Shelley saw clearly that there can be no true freedom without economic freedom.

We have seen no attempt to depict the poet as a Christian in embryo, or even as a theist, though very few of the writers spoke quite frankly of his attitude to religion, and, in particular, to Christianity. It is not without significance that only the few who did so made any approach to a faithful picture of Shelley's personality. Sir Rennell Rodd, at the Haymarket commemoration meeting, paid one of the finest tributes to "the most spiritual of all the poets." "No other had so exquisitely expressed the material in terms of the spiritual, and the spiritual in terms of the material." He was "the political anarch, the convinced Atheist," who remained to the last "a wayward child of vision." Mr. W. A. Mutch, in the *Daily Graphic*, also mentions the poet's Atheism and makes an attempt to explain it away. Shelley was "a thinker and a poet," "the pure rapture" of whose "lyrical verse has never been matched, save by Coleridge."

The religious organs for the most part maintained a dignified silence. The *Record*, *Christian World*, and *Guardian*, appear to have severely made up their minds to give the celebrants a wide berth. The *Church Times* and the *Challenge*, however, heroically ventured into the seething current of appreciation. The writer of the article in the *Challenge* calls Shelley the "prophet of immortality." "None speaks with a clearer voice on the question of the life beyond." According to J. A. Symonds, who was a life-long student of Shelley, this is precisely the subject on which the poet did not speak with a clear voice. Perhaps neither Symonds nor Shelley himself counts as a witness before our contemporary's tribunal.

The *Morning Post* (July 1) contains an article on the youthful Shelley's sojourn in London just after his expulsion from Oxford. At first, with Hogg who had intervened on behalf of his friend and consequently received the same treatment, Shelley lodged at 15 Poland Street. This was in the early spring of 1811. Later, he lived at St. James's Coffee House, at Cooke's Hotel, Dover Street, in Half Moon Street, and in Pimlico. The L.C.C. has not yet affixed a memorial tablet to any house in London to record the presence of the young Atheist. Nor does his name adorn the Reading Room of the British Museum. The august institution which has found a niche for Lord Tennyson and Lord Macaulay represents England's collective wisdom too faithfully to exalt a "political anarch and a convinced Atheist."

"There is obvious irony," says the *Observer*, "in the formal commemoration of such a man as Shelley, who, were he living now, would be on the worst of terms with

respectability and silk hats.....It is worth remembering that Shelley lived not in the first inspiring days of the revolution, but in the black period of reaction after Waterloo, and that he sang his song of unabated hope in the coming dawn just when the sun of liberty seemed to have set for ever. The world can never be governed in his temper of generous impatience and impracticable vision; indeed it would then become too hectic a place for most of us to live in. But that is the temper which somehow keeps imagination alive in days when the pressure of facts is most cruel, and because common sense recognizes its worth posterity exalts as an angel one whom his contemporaries shunned as a devil's imp." "That Atheist Shelley" is not the only one whom time has transformed from a devil of darkness to an angel of light, and it is to the group of Freethinkers who fought the spirit of reaction from the latter end of the eighteenth century to about 1830 that England largely owes it that liberty was kept alive in these islands. We should, too, be more pleased if it were Shelley the believer in complete mental and social freedom, Shelley the ardent Atheist and hater of shams, from monarchy downward, that is being honoured. But unfortunately that Shelley is receiving scant notice at the hands of those who are writing about him.

Our readers are taking advantage of the offer concerning Mr. J. M. Robertson's *History of Freethought* which appears on the last page of this issue. We would call the attention of all intending purchasers to the fact that the offer will only remain open for a limited period—probably for another month—so that those who wish for copies should write at once. Our stock of Mr. Headley's *Evolution and Life*—a very limited one—is also being rapidly exhausted, and readers who require copies should write for them at once. We are usually deluged with orders for a good remainder of this kind after all copies have been sold. We give the above warning in order to avoid disappointment.

Mr. Whitehead is returning to the Newcastle district for some more open-air work, and will lecture on the Town Moor every evening till Friday the 14th. He will be at Blaydon on the 15th, on Sunday morning at the Sandhills, Newcastle, in the evening at South Shields, in the Market Place. Other meetings are being arranged in the district, the visit being brought to an end on the 23rd. The whole of the expenses of these meetings are borne by the Executive, which is a fact that should be kept in mind by those who are able to assist financially as well as otherwise.

We are glad to see a large part of one of the chapters in Mr. Cohen's *Grammar of Freethought* reprinted in the New York *Truthseeker*. But by an oversight, we presume, the name of the author and the source of the article are omitted. We are, of course, pleased that anyone should reprint anything we write. We write for propaganda, and the wider the publicity the better.

In connection with the West Ham Branch of the N.S.S. an attempt is being made to form a "Speakers' Class." Mr. and Mrs. Warren, of 32, Richford Road, Portway, West Ham, have kindly placed a room at the disposal of the class, and the first meeting will be held on the evening of Thursday, July 13. This may, perhaps, catch the eye of anyone interested in time, but particulars of future meetings, etc., may be obtained on writing to the Branch Secretary, Mrs. H. Rosetti, 17 Garbut Road, Upminster, Essex.

The South Shields Branch of the N.S.S. has arranged to hold a picnic at Marsden Rock on Saturday afternoon, July 22. Trains leave Westoe Lane Station at intervals after 2 p.m. Further particulars may be obtained from Mr. J. Fothergill, 12 Straker Terrace. The Glasgow Branch, owing to the unfavourable weather last week, postponed its ramble to Cadder Wilderness to Sunday, July 16. Those intending to be present will meet at Lambhill Car Terminus at 12 noon.

## The Ethical Value of Truth.

THAT the basic principles of right action were its peculiar monopoly, embodied in its own creed and nowhere else, has ever been the claim of every religion the world has known. So generally accepted has become this claim, and so familiar is the domination of the religious ethic, that one feels tentative about challenging, even in the pages of the *Freethinker*, the religious monopoly in morals. But when one surveys the host of religions and notes the variety of their creeds, the varying depths of obedience they command, their dogmatism, and the extreme contradiction of the religious world within itself, one is driven to the conclusion that they cannot all be right. When one examines, further, their general exposition of the "truth," one realizes as well, the absurdity of the religious claim, by its attempt to discover the obvious basis of morality in its own religious foundation of varying idea and doctrine. An anomaly, the dismissal of which, however, only brings us to a greater problem—the claim of Truth.

One is accustomed to find so much dogmatism surrounding Truth, and exercising a certain tyrannical domination over it, that its aspect becomes at times tiresome, and the inclination follows to inquire what is Truth, why does it matter? The query itself supplies the answer—*Truth is a stimulus to pursuit*.

Now humans are subject, in spite of religion, to limitations. Although, according to religion, we are hampered in the higher aspects of our being by natural conditions, at present it is only by them that we are able to conceive anything, and Truth, together with all else common to our senses, can be but a natural human conception, and its desire a natural desire. In other words, Truth is neither absolute nor supernatural, but is linked to matter. From matter arise our conceptions of Truth and of itself.

It follows that if Truth is the foundation of morality, and is of material conception, the ethical fabric around will also be material, limited by the limitations of the material and formed by the aspirations derived from association with it. It will be safe, therefore, to assert that ethics were made by and for man, not man for ethics.

Realizing the material origin of human conception, and consequently of Truth, we are now confronted by the problem of the value of Truth, and compelled to justify our proposition that Truth is a stimulus to pursuit. At this point, we unite with our religious friends, and insist with great emphasis on the value of Truth. Not one of the multitude of religions but places a first value on Truth, not one but insists that Truth is absolute, not one that denies that value is relative. The anomaly being obvious, we will pass on without comment to the logical inference that the relative, being limited to its own conditions, and Truth having value, its value will be in its relativity.

We now have as the basis of our morality, instead of an absolute idea, something elusive, but—as is common to the elusive—stimulative. Truth is the abstract ideal.

It has been written that the object of evolution is progress, a shallow thought, but little worthy of the mind which we believe evolved it. The object of movement is certainly progress, how could it be otherwise? But evolution as opposed to devolution (degeneration), what is it but a human conception of movement working to man's peculiar advantage? We have, then, as the justification of the basis of our morality, merely our selfish *ego*, which being as it is, is just as it should be.

Truth being the ideal derived from man's empiric knowledge of the harmony that promotes his interests, and of his own happiness, "higher" is but our con-

ception of something of greater relative advantage to our material selves. It is in the pursuit of this "higher" that we find the moral basis of life. For its sake revaluations are necessary from time to time. In other words, we find the higher value of Truth in the higher ideal.

I have attempted in this paper, without religion, to justify morality in Truth. Perhaps in some small measure I have succeeded; but for worlds I would not endeavour to establish a definite code of ethics for all time. That is what the world is suffering from to-day.

Religion may have been justifiable once, but if so, only before the dawn of ordered thinking. To-day who of the enlightened would not escape from the miserable tyranny of an unexplained dogma?

VICTOR BOND.

### Adrian's Bull.

ADRIAN'S Bull was not an Irish Bull. That is, it was not one of those unshapely animals often pictured in the British Press as issuing from the lips of Irishmen. But its *raison d'être* may be said to have been similar, being to teach Pat that he made a serious blunder in claiming a country for himself, when it really belonged to "His Holiness" the Pope of Rome, in common with other unexploited lands.

A very Roman Catholic production, the *Manchester Catholic Herald*, has recently decided "for all time" Adrian's Bull was illegitimate—that Adrian never wrote it, and never could have handed over his "faithful" Irish to Henry II, and its authority is the great historian, Cardinal Gasquet, who, having all the literary treasures of the Vatican at his disposal, supercedes all other historians whatever, as history cannot possibly be written without access to those treasures and knowledge of the languages in which they are written. So that the long-disputed matter of Adrian's Bull is closed. It was a forgery. Possibly the *Herald* will pardon a poor benighted Atheist Irishman, a wanderer in outer darkness far from that fold which failed to atrophy his brain, if he was not aware that Cardinal Gasquet was a great historian; however, he will remember that such is the case, and also the fact that the Vatican is the repository of all historic truths.

As to Adrian's Bull, there are two kinds of evidence that it was genuine, both fairly conclusive; the first consists of probability, taking into consideration the position of the Papacy then as compared with later times, the interests of the parties concerned, and the wave of Christianized, or Papalized feudalism from Europe which was gradually spreading the Papal idea everywhere since the time of Pepin and Charlemagne, who commenced the reciprocity in plunder with the Vatican, which has been continued by their descendants and successors with far-reaching results even to our own time; the second is an actual, tangible, historic fact, of which there is sufficient to establish any case in the minds of unbiased men; but the criminal whose life is at stake is always prepared to prove, to his own satisfaction, at least, that black is white, and that there never was such a loving person as he, though he did occasionally pick pockets, or cut a few throats; it was all done without malice.

Adrian IV, or Nicholas Breakspear, the one English Pope, was elected to that high, and, at that time, commanding position in 1154, the same year that Henry II succeeded Stephen on the English throne; the troublous nineteen years of Stephen cannot have been very productive of Peter's Pence in England, as the land was almost reduced to ruins, and this of itself is a good reason why the Pope should propitiate the new king. It is therefore highly probable that the overtures came in the first instance from the Pope, and it is also probable that the exigencies of the moment had

much weight in the selection of this first and only Englishman as religious head of Christendom. In the negotiations, doubtless, the great boons which had been conferred by Popes on Henry's predecessors both in England and Normandy, and their mutual helpfulness, would be recalled, and Henry would be reminded that Pope Alexander II had granted Britain to William the Bastard, with a view to Peter's Pence. From this reminiscence would be suggested that there was a free land to the west still un-Poped, the offer of a licence to plunder which, might smooth matters in England. Through a nebula of conjectures and doubts which surrounds the whole dirty business, one fact shines clearly enough to a reader who knows anything of such Irish literature of the period as has escaped the "revising" hands of priestly chroniclers. The Pope's writ did not run in Ireland and it was only Norman tyranny which enforced it in Britain, as the action of Alexander II shows. In Ireland Papal legates came and went like thieves in the night with their booty; if they met any chieftain with his clansmen as they were carrying away the plunder they went away shorn. The native hierarchy and clergy were held in contempt, and were ready, as they have always been, to sell Ireland to anyone who would give them a status there in keeping with the splendour and pretensions of their masterful institution.

Those who deny the authenticity of the Bull forget that, in the ideas of that period, there was nothing criminal or even remarkable in such a transaction, as the Pope was the acknowledged lord of Christendom, and princes who revolted against him were regarded as daring innovators, and generally condemned, though they were usually strong enough to laugh at their enemies, and the Popes were usually politic enough to win them round again. Or, if they do not forget these facts, as is most likely, they write as they do presuming on a general ignorance of history among their dupes, and deny facts which did not affect their position at the time, but which may vitally affect it now, just as they slung the bribe of the canonization of Joan of Arc at the French nation they were losing, while carefully hiding the fact that it was they who burnt her. There is no historic evidence that Henry had ever dreamed of invading Ireland at the time of the Bull; he had much hard work to do in England and Normandy, among which work was the curbing of the power which the Norman kings had set up in those lands and which was becoming a dangerous rival—the Roman Hierarchy. But when, eighteen years later, he had firmly established his throne, and had mollified Pope Alexander III by doing penance for the murder of A' Becket, he was probably reminded of the old bribe of Adrian by the appeal of the refugee Irish prince, Diarmid MacMurrough, and he easily obtained a confirmation of Adrian's Bull from Alexander. Of course, the latter is also a forgery, as, no doubt, also are the forty odd Bulls which Cardinal Gasquet will find in the Vatican archives mentioning Adrian's document quite dispassionately and as a well-known instrument. That is, of course, if they file this stuff, and if the Cardinal be truly a great historian. Possibly Henry sent Strongbow to reconnoitre the position while he obtained the Pope's blessing.

One of the strongest evidences of the authenticity of the Bull is the fact that the Vatican has invariably treated Ireland as the vassal of Britain in all dealings between the two countries in which it has intervened, from that time down to to-day, when it stands on the side of the New Free State, which is founded on the alleged ownership of Ireland by Britain. An exception may be the letter of Clement VIII, in 1600, urging the Irish to fight under Hugh O'Neill, but when one remembers that England had entirely thrown over Rome, and that the letter enjoins the duty of fighting for "their faith," it may be easily under-

stood, and later, when Innocent X sent aid to Owen Roe O'Neill, the objects were the restoration of Charles II and Romanism, and the result was that the only man of his time capable of coping with Cromwell in battle or Council was harassed to death by silly factions. The Vatican has always been on the side of "God's anointed." Again, the Vatican has never officially denied the genuineness of the Bull. It must be one of those things upon which it holds itself free to make an infallible declaration should the necessity arise. It works thus, as explained by a sapient writer in the *Herald*:—Certain truths are so Catholicly obvious that there is not believed to be necessity to lay them down as articles of faith for a few thousand years or so, as the Immaculate Conception and Papal Infallibility; suddenly they become rigid laws without apparent cause. Adrian's Bull may follow this very logical course, and possibly the taking up by a dignitary of the Church of this subject is a hopeful sign for the future of Atheism and sense in Erin. With the one exception mentioned, it is certain that the Popes have always behaved toward Ireland like a line of potentates faithfully fulfilling a contract executed by a predecessor, and throughout the centuries, whether Britain persecuted Catholics or not, to this day, the best asset of foreign domination there, has been and is, the Papacy.

When William of Orange invaded Ireland, he did so as the hireling of Pope Alexander VIII, one of the pawns in the great game between the Papacy and Louis XIV; so that Orangemen and Catholics in Erin quarrel about a man who cared nothing for either.

The Abbe MacGeoghagan, a son of an Irish refugee of the Williamite wars, wrote a history of Ireland from the earliest times in French, a work remarkable for its evidences of deep scholarship and patient research with regard to the earlier times, but marred in its later or Christian portion by lists of saints and holy men; accounts of foundations of holy houses, and general "churchy" tone. He condemns Adrian's Bull as fictitious in his introduction, but on the same page later, the poor old Abbe forgets and says: "The title of Henry II was founded on a Bull obtained clandestinely from Adrian IV, an *Englishman by birth*," and again, "The cause of this Bull was a false statement which Henry had given to the Pope of the impiety and barbarism of the Irish nation," and in the body of the work he reproduces the famous complaint of Donal O'Neill, king of Ulster, to Pope John XXII, in 1318, of the barbarities of the English in Ireland (from the *Scotic Chronicle* of John of Fordun), in which Adrian's Bull is referred without blame or enmity to that Pope, and and acknowledging at least tacitly his right, but praying Pope John to intercede with Edward II. He also reproduces, from Peter Lombard, the letter sent by John to Edward II, exhorting him to check the disorderly conduct of his people in Ireland, and enclosing a copy of the fictitious Bull!

Thomas D'Arcy McGee, a writer of note in the mid-Victorian period, a rebel, and a devout Roman Catholic, speaks of the Bull in his *History of Ireland* as an accepted fact. His two curt references are as follows: "A plan (the invasion of Ireland) which he must have formed in the first months of his reign, since the Bull he had procured from Pope Adrian bears the date of that year—1154." And: "Henry proceeded to that work of reformation under plea of which he had obtained the Bull of Pope Adrian"; and both the Abbe and McGee show that the Irish Hierarchy entered joyfully into Henry's plans, which, no doubt, included the regularizing of Peter's Pence, and Roman rule generally. Those reverend fathers knew all about the Bull and were moved to tears of joy at the advent of this criminal wretch—perhaps the worst of a scoundrelly line.

The Rev. E. A. D'Alton, a recent writer on Irish History, examines the matter from all points of view, and concludes that "the grounds are many for holding that the Bull was actually issued," and says further: "If we place ourselves in the twelfth century, and try to realize the condition of Ireland then, and the position of Henry, we shall more readily admit that the Pope was not much to blame." Which amounts to an endorsement of the libels contained in the Bull and also to a proof that Ireland, in the author's opinion, was not a true "daughter of the Church," a fact which may be established by a study of the Bowdlerized Irish Annals, in which the ignorant and unskilful clerical vandals have left many valuable clues, as criminals often in the endeavour to destroy proofs of their guilt, only make them more damning.

As Father D'Alton says, for centuries no doubt was entertained of the genuineness of the Bull. It was only in the seventeenth century that the attack began; at a time, be it noted, when Papal stock was a drug on the market; when men in every European land were asking why this Italian State should dictate, on the strength of primitive fears, to a world which had long outgrown those fears. Just as it took about six centuries to discover that it was six centuries since the Nativity, if the fixing of A.D. may be described thus, so it took five centuries to discover that Adrian's Bull was a forgery. Such "epoch-making" discoveries are, of course, like most other things, conditioned by the economic needs of the parties concerned, and if there be many doubting Thomases, it is because the fraud is so very clear. Poor old Vatican! In these degenerate days, when men are beginning to follow the light which will make their sojourn on earth's surface beautiful, the light of reason, the tinsel glitter of your tawdry mansions in the skies is fading in the distance, and the denunciations of your priests sound in the ears of intelligent men like a part of a confused medley of savage sounds from a far away melancholy past, a medley of which the other discords are supplied by Mohammed, Moloch, Astarte, Eleusis, and all the wild "faiths" of the world, including the dances of prehistoric savages designed to propitiate the terrible forces of Nature which baffled their undeveloped brains.

As to the Vatican being an indispensable adjunct to the building of correct history, one must beg to differ. In this age which knows that each individual human being is an epitome of the history of organic life, no such collection of musty scrolls, of copies of what someone heard someone else say that it was said that someone had written, is at all necessary to the proper scientific interpretation of the story of man. They have merely an academic interest, and were the holy Father to imitate Sardanapalus, it would be rather for the benefit of historic truth than otherwise.

Again, it is a very puerile thing to talk about the languages of the Vatican library in an age which has elucidated the mystic figures of Egypt, and the formidable wedges of Assyria. One wonders if Cardinal Gasquet reads those, and also why they are not locked up in the Vatican.

To all unbiased minds, the relations subsisting between the Papacy on one side, and Great Britain and Ireland on the other, during the last two centuries, are sufficient to convince them of the authenticity of the instrument which purports to be a licence from Adrian to his accomplice Henry II, to plunder Ireland, without the huge body of actual evidence contained in the works of Catholic writers like Baronius, Bellarmine, and others before that time.

Ireland shows signs of awakening from the state of coma induced by priestly drugs, hence these frantic denials of glaring facts; the Bolshevik, for good or ill, has reared his much abused head in the Island of Saints, and he wants a more substantial nourishment

than that stupendous concentration of the god who is everywhere in a tiny wafer. He is not much concerned, either, as to the truth or otherwise of Adrian's Bull; but he is much concerned to make the army of god-boomers called priests justify their existence by means of useful work. Truth has issued a Bull declaring them to be false charlatans, and authorizing all intelligent persons to assist in their overthrow, and that authentic Bull will be strictly obeyed until its object is achieved.

AUSTIN RUSSELL.

### "Giordano Bruno" Society.

ITALIAN NATIONAL FREETHINKING ASSOCIATION.

*In the first Centenary of the tragic Death of the Poet of Freedom—Percy Bysshe Shelley.*

A CENTENARY has already passed by since the day in which George Byron saw a funeral pile burning on the *plage* of Viareggio, whose fuel were oil and wine. On it was consumed the mortal body of a young poet whose life had been a dream and who had disappeared in the middle of a hurricane.

The world, deprived of such a soul, would have to repeat the lines of *Alastor* :—

Ah! thou hast fled!  
The brave, the gentle and the beautiful,  
The child of grace and genius.

But the world did not know anything and did not understand at all. Percy Bysshe Shelley had lived as a foreigner to his coevals, and seemed to divine the remote future epoch, absorbed as he was in an ideal of life which appeared to his contemporaries a blasphemy or a madness.

Shall we feel now worthy of making amends for the unjust verdict, and honour with pure heart the poet of the redeemed world?

In fact if every nation may recognize itself in his universal spirit, Italy can really consider him as one of its sons. It has been in Italy that he lived his most quiet and productive years; here, at Spezia, Naples, Pisa, Venice, Rome, he drank avidly powerful virtues of our sky and our sea; here he drew the inspiration for the most sublime creations of his spirit; here is his tomb crowned by the majestic ruins of our past epochs.

Who more than he, of all the strangers that loved Italy and wrote songs about it, felt vividly our misfortunes, found more bitter words against our dominators, announced with a more sure faith our final redemption?

Thou which wert once, and then didst cease to be,  
Now art, and henceforth ever shalt be, free,  
If Hope, and Truth, and Justice can avail,  
Hail, hail, all hail!

From the ruins of this cemetery of history he saw rising up the luminous phantasms of the future and in the midst of the solemn silence of dead ages he felt on his head the resounding epopee of the new times pass and go on.

In this hour of bewilderment, of anguish of confused aspirations, let mankind ask the word of truth of its great Prophet; let it salute Shelley as the bard who predicted the day in which Man, free from the slavery of iniquitous laws and false dogmas, will build on the broken sceptres and tiaras, the Temple of Peace and Brotherhood; let them meet devotedly around the solitary tomb at the shade of the Aurelian Walls, and make of this tomb the altar of the new god who only may redeem it, that is, Love.

CENTRAL COMMITTEE,

25 Porta Angelica, Roma,

July 10, 1922.

[The celebration of the centenary in Rome took place in the evening hours on Sunday, July 9, near the Aurelian Walls flanking the cemetery in which the heart of the poet is preserved. On his gravestone flowers were put as a token of remembrance.]

Men who would cover the earth with missionaries, sent forth to disturb the ancestral faiths of other people, have proved the most sensitive to any attacks directed against their own.—*Thomas Scott.*

### Grave and Gay.

The Atheist is said not to believe in the efficacy of prayer. That is a disagreeable way of putting it. A more amiable way to put it is that the Atheist believes in the equal efficacy of all prayer. He is the true Catholic.

The chief reason why people worship God to-day is that they believe he once did something. He is like an ex-official who draws a pension for no other reason than that he once received a salary.

It is idle to talk of a nation having a "mission." All that any nation has is a function. The first statement is theology. The second is science.

The central fact of the Renaissance was the re-discovery of the ancient world. It was not a calling in of a new world to redress the balance of the old; it was a revivifying of the old world culture in order to purify a world that stank under the cloud of Christian teaching.

Love really is more enduring than hate, and is so more powerful. The commonest nature is capable of loving with a tolerable degree of permanence, but it requires a character of abnormal persistency to go on hating for ever. And considered as a form of repulsion hatred tends to defeat itself, since unless the force of repulsion is checked it drives the object it repels beyond its influence. It is really dependent upon the quality of attraction in order to express itself. And, socially, unless the force of attraction is more powerful than that of repulsion Society itself would be dissolved, and "then no more of thou and me."

There are said to be over 3,000 gods in India, and the missionary expects the natives to thank him for introducing another one. Taking the Christian God to India is like adding a couple of coppers to a millionaire's banking account.

After all it would seem that the only genuine friend that God has on earth is the Atheist. When one looks round the world, not to believe there is a God is the only valid defence that can be put up for him. The Theist persists in blaming God for everything, the Atheist relieves him of all responsibility.

It is surprising that while most men are ashamed of being detected in an act of physical cowardice, so few should be ashamed of intellectual cowardice. Far from that being the case they will take it as a sufficient justification that it was not safe to express their opinions, or that it was not wise to oppose the majority. And yet physical cowardice is a small matter beside intellectual cowardice. In nine cases out of ten, when a man is guilty of physical cowardice the consequences end with himself and are negligible. In intellectual matters this is seldom the case. To suppress one's opinions may be to suppress something that is of infinite importance to the whole of humanity. To hide one's convictions is to convey the impression to others that you agree with their views, and you are thus bolstering a lie. And in society the personal attitude is reflected in the way we glorify the soldier and ignore the thinker.

The past is only tolerable so long as there is not a better present.

In religion the search is for personalities, in science for causes, in philosophy for formulas.

Fully developed intelligences are rare. The natural converse of this is that half-baked intelligences are common. And society organizes itself for the majority.

PETER SIMPLE.

## Correspondence.

### A SECULARIZED BIBLE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Although you never tire of pointing out absurdities, immoralities, or inaccuracies in the Bible, you must admit there is a good deal of truth, instruction, and common-sense in it, and it is surprising therefore that it has not occurred to you to prepare a new edition of it, where all that is valuable shall be collected, rejecting everything that is superstitious, unscientific, contrary to reason or ethics, or valueless, as such a volume would be popular among all classes in addition to its intrinsic merits.

Many of the proverbs, for instance, are quite unexceptionable, the poetical portions would be interesting as *belles lettres*, while the stories such as that of Joseph, and the Prodigal Son, would form a section very suitable for children, just as are the fables of Æsop, whether founded on fact or not.

I am convinced that such a volume would supply a much felt want, and need not encounter opposition from the adherents of any religion or none.

EVACUSTES A. PHIPSON.

### LABOUR AND RELIGION.

SIR,—In connection with the visit of Mr. Whitehead to Chopwell I suffered some disappointment on account of the attitude of Labour men and pronounced Rationalists and Evolutionists on this question of Religion versus Secularism. Some are Republicans and anti-Imperialists, and yet are afraid of that which fosters a belief in Monarchism and Imperialism.

I think that the result of the proceedings at the Edinburgh Labour Party Conference proves that the thing we Labour men are afraid of, viz., religion, is slowly but surely throttling the Labour Party and driving it irresistibly back to Monarchism and Imperialism.

Religion, which is conservative and belongs to the past, cannot be a friend of progress.

All the old enthusiasm for Socialism and the inauguration of the Socialist State seems to be dying out since the days when our speakers discussed the problems of science and evolution openly in our propaganda meetings.

In your pamphlet *Socialism and the Churches* it is shown that the real driving force in Socialist propaganda is Rationalist and Secularist. All attempts to emphasize the idea of Jesus as a Socialist or the idea of a Heavenly Father are so many attempts to filch from the people their power of resistance to the evils inherent in a system built on falsehood.

Let us who have broken away from the false teachings of Christianity (and our name is legion) come out openly on the side of demonstrable truth, knowing the truth will ultimately prevail.

Despite the coldness and aloofness with which Secularism has been received in this village, in the first opening skirmishes against the strongholds of reactionary thought both Mr. Cohen's and Mr. Whitehead's meetings have aroused considerable discussion amongst the supporters of Christianity here.

We are still going on with the work for Secularism knowing that it can stand the test of reason and knowledge.

V. M. HARDY.

By means of caste, slavery, the system of privileged classes, and monopolies, the People were forbidden to raise themselves in life; they were doomed to die as they were born. But that they might not be altogether without hope, they were taught by their rulers that they would be rewarded with honour and happiness in a future state. The Egyptian fellah received the good tidings that there was no caste after death; the Christian serf was consoled with the text, that the poor would inherit the kingdom of heaven. This long and gloomy period of the human race may be entitled *Religion*.—Winwood Reade, "The Martyrdom of Man."

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON:  
INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.2): 11, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., "The Philosophy of the Poets."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 6.15, A Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Regent's Park): 6.30, Mr. A. D. McLaren, "Creation or Evolution?"

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15 and 6, Mr. Rosetti will lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Corner Technical Institute, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7, Mr. J. J. Darby, A Lecture.

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S.—Ramble to Prestwich, Clough, and Philip's Park. Meet Deansgate 2 p.m., Prestwich car for Kersal Bar; leave Kersal Bar 2.30; total fare about 8d.

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