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Views and Opinions.

Science and Religion.

The discussion concerning the relations between religion and science, once more revived by the presidential address to the British Association, will justify one giving a little more than a passing glance to the concluding chapter which Professor J. Arthur Thomson writes for the popular production *Outline of Science*. The heading of the chapter is "Science and Modern Thought," and with his description of the method and manner of science no serious fault can be found. Criticism can only begin where he attempts to discriminate between religion and science in such a way as to give religion a function in life which is "higher" than that of science, and is concerned with matters—perhaps he would say with aspects of life—with which science cannot deal. This is contained in the following passage:—

Science seeks to discover the laws of concrete being and becoming and to state these in the simplest possible terms. These terms are either the immediate data of experience or verifiably derived from these. Religion, on the other hand, implies a recognition—practical, emotional, and intellectual—of a higher order of reality than is reached in sense experience. It sees an unseen universe, which throws light on the observed world. Its language is not scientific language, and the two cannot be spoken at once. The concepts of religion are transcendental, those of science are empirical. The aim of religion is interpretation, not description. Religious interpretation and scientific description must not be inconsistent, but they are incommensurable.

Mere Words.

Professor Thomson's description of the relations of religion and science is substantially the one given in his little *Introduction to Science*, and I have criticized that at some length in one of the chapters of my *Theism or Atheism?* But there is room for a still further criticism. And the first comment that one has to make might well be the final one. This is that it is radically false; and one may go further and say that it would never be offered were we not living in a society where religion is well established, and where a great many do not feel themselves sufficiently free to go their own way without paying the least deference

to religion, or to tell its professors that they can get on very well without it. Professor Thomson's classification does not arise from a scrutiny of the facts, but from a desire to find some use for religion, even though it may be only that of seeing an unseen universe or establishing the truth of an unthinkable proposition. Personally I do not see that an unseen universe is any more impressive than an unsmellable one, although, if the vision of the religious man is concerned with the one, his olfactory organs may well be assailed by the other. To be quite plain the language of Professor Thomson is pure verbiage. It means nothing. It conveys no meaning. Its only use appears to be to provide the average unreflecting reader of the *Outline of Science* with the feeling that, although the whole of the positive side of the work provided under the Professor's editorship has no connection whatever with God, yet in some way or other religion still plays a useful part in the world. No one is quite clear as to how or when or where. And in that respect men like Professor Thomson are apt to undo with the one hand what they have done with the other. For it is not the loading of the mind with a multiplicity of scientific facts that is of importance. In the higher and best sense of the word this is not even education. Mental training consists in developing correct modes of thinking, and if the *Outline of Science* does not do this no one will be a penny the better for the reading of it.

* * *

How Religion Begins.

Now let me take Professor Thomson's distinction between science and religion. In what way do the two differ in their origin? The correct reply is that there is no difference whatever. The problem before man, whether in the earliest ages or in the present, is the same, it is that of understanding the world in which he is living. And in the first attempts at this there is not the slightest recognition of a "higher order of reality," there is not even the distinction between religious and non-religious. There is only an attempt at understanding the world and that is given in terms of life and personality. Man reads himself into Nature, and thinks of natural operations as being exactly similar to his own. It is only later that the distinction between the natural and the supernatural, or between religion and science arises. And this distinction begins the moment it is recognized that there are some things that can be counted on without reference to the assemblage of primitive ghosts or gods. A division is made between the things which the gods do and things which occur without their intervention. The latter gives us the beginning of what afterwards comes to be known as science because things with which that department is concerned are known, the conclusions verifiable, and prediction—which is one of the hall-marks of science—is possible. And the former gives us the department which we know as religion because it is concerned with things or forces that lie outside the range of the immediately known, the conclusions are not verifiable, and prediction is impossible. To take a concrete example. So long as man thinks that rain is dependent upon the will of the

gods he is moving in the region of religion. The rain may fall or it may not, but its falling does not rest upon the operation of forces which he understands, and there is nothing to predict. When he realizes that the fall of rain is due to forces that are as certain in their action as the fall of a stone towards the earth, and that given these forces rain is a necessity, a rainfall passes from the region of religion to that of science. But in either case man aims at understanding why rain comes. The religious explanation of a rainfall is merely the earliest attempt at understanding, *which is afterwards supplanted by the scientific one*. Religion comes as much from the "immediate data of experience" as does science. The distinction is that in the first instance further experience proves our earliest conclusion to be wrong, while it shows our later conclusion to be more correct. And that is really the whole distinction between religion and science. Religion is a scientifically discredited explanation of natural happenings. It is that and no more than that. Professor Thomson's distinction between the two is nothing more than nonsense.

* * *

Playing with Phrases.

In order to exhibit clearly the full extent of the nonsense written by Professor Thomson in defence of religion, let us assume that religion does deal with a world that science cannot reach. In that case what is it that suggests the existence of this unseen world to the religious mind? Clearly it must be something that is either given immediately in experience, or verifiably derived from experience. There is simply no other way thinkable in which this other world could be reached. And in either case it is exactly upon the same level as science itself, and the attempted distinction breaks down. To say that this "reality" reached by religion is "higher" than that reached by science is still more nonsense. A different "reality" is dimly comprehensible, but why "higher"? Difference does not in itself imply either higher or lower, it simply involves difference. One suspects that the word "higher" is only introduced in order to create a prejudice in favour of religion. One has only to call a thing "low" to make many timid souls afraid of it, and to call a thing "high" is equally attractive to the same type of character. Again, when we are told that the concepts of religion are transcendental and those of science empirical, Professor Thomson is either trying to confuse his readers or he is giving us more nonsense. When religion tells that God sends the rain it is no more dealing with a transcendental conception than is science. There is the fact, rain, and there is the alleged cause—in the one case a personal being controlling Nature, in the other case the operation of a number of non-conscious forces and conditions. In this case we have to choose between two explanations, or interpretations. It is not really a question of choice between a transcendental and an empirical explanation, but between a rational and an irrational one. Or if by transcendental Professor Thomson means only an explanation that goes beyond the immediate affirmations of sense experience, then he is confusing the mere data of science with the generalizations to which science properly leads. And that is no more than observing the fact that all stones fall to the ground—which is the immediate testimony of our sense-impressions—and formulating a law of falling bodies, which goes beyond the immediate testimony of sense. And the distinction here is not that of a science and a religious transcendentalism, but between a collection of scientific data, or a special science, and the existence of a philosophy of science which shall unite all the sciences as science unites a group of experiences under a special generalization. But that is not religion.

Wanted—Courage.

One wonders how long it will be before our scientific men will take their courage in both hands and tell the religious world quite frankly that they have no use for their re-dressed primitive anthropomorphisms? Could anything be more humiliating than the fact of these men not daring to issue a popular outline of scientific teaching without putting in a quite unnecessary explanation that while all that has gone before has no more connection with God than it has with Jack and the Bean Stalk, yet it leaves religion with a region of its own? And it is so utterly untrue. It is simply false and misleading to tell the reader of this *Outline of Science* that the "unseen universe" of religion throws light on the observed world. I challenge Professor Thomson to point to a single instance in which religion has, or can, throw light on the observed world. If Professor Thomson brought the same looseness of statement to bear on scientific discussion, or made the same rash declaration concerning a matter of science, he would soon be brought to book. It is quite true that the language of religion is not the language of science, but that is not because religion has to do with a "higher reality"—whatever that cheap narcotizing expression may mean—but because it uses the language of a primitive vitalism with which a sane science will have nothing to do. It is not as dealing with two orders of existence that religion and science meet, but as rival interpretations of the same set of facts. And so long as we use language with no ambiguity of meaning, so long as we speak the whole truth with no mental reservation, the religious interpretation stands as wholly and hopelessly discredited. The pity is that we should have men with a position in the world of science lending their assistance to the continuance of teachings to which the whole of our knowledge of Nature gives the lie. For the past seven years we have been having a pitiable illustration of how near the surface of our political and international life is the savage. Professor Thomson's deliverance would lead one to think that he is not yet completely routed from even the strongholds of science. CHAPMAN COHEN.

"The Ruins of Empires."

I.

SUCH is the title of an exceedingly remarkable work first published in the year 1791. Its author, M. C. F. Volney, was one of the most famous French Freethinkers of the latter half of the eighteenth century. He was a man of undoubted genius. He published several other books which achieved a wide circulation and considerably influenced public opinion, but the *Ruins* was his masterpiece, by which he is now best known. Volney was a philosopher, and the *Ruins* is a philosophical meditation upon the revolutions of history. The chief aim of the work is to illustrate by the presentation of indisputable facts, the complete failure of Christianity to redeem the world. Naturally it was fiercely attacked by the orthodox writers of that day, but the vehement denunciation only succeeded in widening its circulation and heightening its influence. Now what is it that Christianity claims to be able to accomplish? After fourteen centuries of Christianity on this island what has actually been achieved? Dr. Jowett, in a wonderfully flowery article in the *Christian World* of September 28, makes inferentially amazing admissions:—

We are busy making a new England. Is it to be a satisfying England? Is the material to be the shrine of the spiritual? Is the enhanced mode of living to be the home of a new life wherein are found

love and joy and peace? That would be a vitally new England. In very deed and truth that would be garden city. It would be the new Jerusalem.

That is what the divines have always been busy making, but have never yet actually made; a new world. The old England is with us still, and there are no immediate signs of its leaving us.

Dr. Jowett dwells complacently in a purely imaginary garden "which the Apostle Paul discloses to us." It is a veritable Garden of Eden without the snake. It would never occur to him to address the Creator in Omar's well-known lines:—

Oh Thou, who Man of baser Earth didst make,
And ev'n with Paradise devise the Snake;
For all the sins wherewith the Face of Man
Is blacken'd—Man's forgiveness give—and take.

Our optimistic divine nestles comfortably in a lovely bower, surrounded by sweet-smelling, beautiful flowers, in a quiet corner of the garden, apparently untroubled by or even unaware of the raging tumults of sin and folly, of tyranny and oppression in the world outside. Even during the Great War Dr. Jowett was undisturbed by all its harrowing horrors, in the emotional realization of the alleged truth of the Biblical statement: "The Lord sat as king at the Flood; yea, the Lord sitteth as king for ever."

The great preacher indulges in an eloquent eulogism upon love, with every word of which we are in hearty agreement. Listen:—

Love is indefinable and indescribable. All analogies fail us, for there is nothing which is in any degree like it. Even our similes are farfetched and remote. We say that love is the sun at which every other lamp is kindled, and yet that word does not take us into the holy place. Love is the father of lights. Love is the magic circle in which every other grace and virtue is only a segment. Love is the mystic effluence in whose magnetic bonds sundered personalities are drawn together and become one.

Dr. Jowett paints an equally fascinating picture of joy, from which we learn that "joy has more kinship with cheer than with ecstasy." He tells us that joy "is not a noisy thing. It is not like a bonfire on the Fifth of November; it is more like quiet sunshine. It is calm radiancy of spirit." The reverend gentleman is equally happy in his description of other indescribable qualities, such as long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and self-control, all fundamental and indispensable attributes of a complete and robust human character. There are exceptionally fine phrases in this article, and as true as they are fine, such as: "Peace is the frictionless activity of right relations"; "Long-suffering is the mood which can endure an endless succession of pinpricks and not lose itself in reprisals"; "Meekness is life with a collar on, pulling at the racial plough"; and "Meekness is strength yoked to other people's burdens." On *self-control* our divine says:—

Nothing is loose and licentious in the soul. No power goes off at its own bidding. There is no rebel in our spiritual kingdom. There is no Ireland in our little republic, no Mexico; there are no spasms of explosive flame. All that is within us is held in a leash of noble order.

A garden is a most appropriate retreat for the manufacture of such exquisitely enchanting sentences, and Dr. Jowett assures us that it is only in a garden "these large, strong, sweet virtues can be reared." That may be true enough; but the question that forces itself upon our attention is, where is the garden in which these incomparable flowers do actually grow and come to fruition? They are certainly not graces which have adorned and lent distinction to the Christian Church at any period of its existence. Paul was quite right in affirming and reaffirming "that law could not create the things of grace." It is also per-

fectly true that life cannot be profitably regulated by rigid rules or set commandments. Here again we are at one with the divine. Life graced by the virtues already named "is not made and coloured by commandments. It is not the product of legislation, it is rather the issue of a new relation. It is not the fruit of law." At this point our agreement with the article ends. We differ absolutely from the following statement:—

This wonderful fruit appears in our life through the presence and ministry of the Spirit of God. The quickening life of God the Spirit enters into vital communion with men, and the fruit appears. That is the proclaimed secret of the Word of God.

Now we are facing the supreme argument against the truth of the Gospel message. If the Christian religion is true why is it that the churches are still busy making a new England? If there be a God the Spirit why is his fruit such a rarity under the sun? If God sitteth as king for ever, why is his kingdom still spoken of as a reality of the future? In Isaiah ii. 4 we find the following glowing prophecy of what the Lord was about to do and of the result:—

And he shall judge between the nations, and shall reprove many people; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

That beautiful prediction was issued nearly three thousand years ago, and it remains to this day entirely unfulfilled. How can you reconcile its non-fulfilment with the alleged fact that Almighty God sitteth as king on the throne of the world for ever? No reconciliation is possible, and the only sane inference we can draw is that the reign of God is a sheer invention of the religious imagination. Peace is said to be a fruit of the Spirit, but the Spirit has never borne it anywhere from the beginning until now. Dr. Jowett says "we need not worry about the fruit if we are only in the Spirit"; but that is an old theological subterfuge trotted out whenever the divine encounters any real difficulty. The doctrine of Free-will is a scandalous slur on the goodness of the Creator, and was devised simply as a cowardly evasion of the difficulty now under discussion. To say that the Spirit bears the fruit if we are only in him, is an unforgivable insult to the Spirit if he exists at all, and if he does not exist the dependence upon him recommended by the preachers is a wicked and injurious affront to our own nature, which we ought to resent with all our might, and fall back upon the resources as yet lying dormant within ourselves.

The question we propound is, how to account for the ruins or revolutions of empires on the assumption that an omnipotent God of justice and love sitteth as king for ever?

J. T. LLOYD.

THE LONELY GOD-KING.

To know himself more great than star or sea,
And yet to long to be the least of all
If only through his high white-pillared hall
One foot might sound—one voice of sympathy.
To long to fall from empire, if so he
Might into love's own humble sweet arms fall.
To have the whole world's women within call,
Yet to watch each before his greatness flee.
This is the doom of God; and in a dream
I wept for God, and of all saddest things
Saw that the saddest was the King of kings.
It haunts me still—the agony whose gleam
Shot from the lonely eyes that never yet
One answering sweet sufficient love-glance met.

—George Bu-*low*.

Worshipping a Carpet.

Never were such sharp questions asked as this day.
Never was average man, his soul, more energetic, more
like a god!
—Walt Whitman.

THE recrudescence of the centuries-old quarrel between Christians and Mohammedans reminds us that little is known of the Moslem Faith in this country. The inclusion of the expulsion of Mohammedan Turkey in the Allies' Peace Terms is regarded by many as simply a matter of high politics. The Koran, the Bible of the Mohammedans, revered by two hundred and thirty millions, of whom eighty millions are British subjects, is as little read in Christian countries as the *Analecks of Confucius* or the *Zend-Avesta*. The Roman Catholic Church, the largest and most influential in Christendom fosters ignorance. She does not even encourage Christians to read their own Bible, and sacred books of other and rival faiths are entirely tabooed.

Yet there is much in common between some aspects of Mohammedanism and those of Roman Catholicism, and the annual pilgrimage of the Holy Carpet to Mecca bears a great similarity to lesser functions approved by the business-like ecclesiastics of Rome. Every year the Mohammedans of Egypt undertake the pilgrimage to the holy places at Mecca, bearing at the head of their procession the valuable tissue of gold and brocade known as the Holy Carpet. The term is, in reality, a misnomer. The fabric is not a carpet at all, and is not even in one piece. It consists of a number of pieces of tapestry embroidered with texts of the Koran in gold wire and intended to be hung round the walls of the Kaaba, a square stone building in the centre of the court of the great mosque at Mecca. Attended by a brilliant concourse of Islamic priests, troops of the Egyptian Army, and representatives of the British Government, the departure of the pilgrimage is the occasion of gorgeous ceremonial in the square below the citadel of Cairo.

Richly-caparisoned camels, and pipers playing eerie tunes take part in the procession, and at the head is a cream-coloured camel bearing an embroidered palanquin, containing two copies of the Koran. Year by year, ever since the thirteenth century such a palanquin has been carried at the head of the Egyptian pilgrimage. Then down the road to the music of military bands goes the procession on its long journey across the desert, a journey now mitigated by the secular assistance of the railway and steamboat.

What is the origin of this old-world ceremonial it is hard to say. Its origin goes farther in time than the evangel of Mohammed, which, after all, is but a comparatively modern religion. The Kaaba at Mecca, the object of fanatical idolatry on the part of present-day Mohammedans, is far, far older than the days of the Prophet of Islam. It was a centre of idolatrous worship in his day, for we are told that the Prophet purged it of its idols. It is a square stone building into the wall of which is built the black stone, the most venerated object of worship of two hundred and thirty millions of the human race. Oriental scholars connect the original worship of the Kaaba with an Asiatic version of Venus. Thus, in the annual pilgrimage of the Moslem world we have an echo of older forms of superstition, the origin of which is lost in the twilight of past centuries.

Islam has a noble and ancient history, but no people can for ever live on its past, however illustrious. She has given to the world one of the immortal books in *The Arabian Nights*. She has incarnated dreams in marble buildings. Her poets penned manuscripts which throughout the ages retain the perfume of Eastern gardens. For long she was truly powerful; now she is at the foot of the ladder of progress.

What is the reason for this decline and fall? The

answer is simple. She is the victim of priestcraft and stereotyped superstition. To the Moslem, religion is not an amusement, a social decoration, or a social police force. It is a passion that inflames his mind and makes other things trivial. Christianity is open to much of these objections; only there is less religion in it. It is only better as a mild attack of small-pox is better than a severe attack. Most Christians have the disease on Sundays and are free from it on week-days. The followers of Mohammed were more fanatical than the Prophet. The Caliph Omar wished to burn all books except the Koran, which he regarded as the beginning and end of wisdom. This narrowness has destroyed Islamism as an intellectual force. During the past five hundred years Moslems have done nothing for human advancement. They have not made a single contribution to art, literature, science, manufacture, or invention. They have not produced an engineer, chemist, biologist, historian, painter, or musician of the first rank. It is in a condition of intellectual atrophy, and its doom is said. It must be so whilst the darkness of ignorance overshadows the people. When the full sun of knowledge illuminates the earth, both the Cross and the Crescent will be as remote as when the Star of Ormuzd burnt out in the troubled and unquiet skies. MIMNERMUS.

Pagan and Christian Civilization.

III.

(Continued from page 629.)

It is a grave mistake to imagine, because there was much, and sometimes appalling, looseness of life under a Nero, that the race of noble and virtuous Roman matrons—the Cornelias and Valerias and Volumnias—was extinct; and it is equally a mistake to suppose that Rome no longer produced its honourable gentlemen filled with a sense of their responsibilities to family and state. The satirist should not here nor elsewhere be our chief, much less our only, guide. The England of Charles II. is not to be judged in its entirety by the comedies of the time nor by the *Memoirs of Grammont*.—Prof. T. G. Tucker, "Life in the Roman World of Nero and St. Paul," pp. 291-292.

IMAGINE the position of Heliogabalus, a boy of fourteen, Emperor of Rome, supreme ruler of the then known world:—

On a peak piercing the heavens, shadowing the earth, a precipice on either side, the young Emperors of old Rome stood. Did they look below, they could scarce see the world. From above delirium came, while the horizon, though it hemmed the limits of their vision, could not mark the frontiers of their dream. In addition there was the exaltation that altitudes produce.¹

His crafty and unscrupulous grandmother Maesa, who displays all the ruthless characteristics of the late Dowager-Empress of China, was greedy, with a terrible eagerness for power and authority, which caused her to plot and scheme for her grandson's elevation to the throne, with the idea that she would wield the power in the name of the boy-emperor. Maesa was quickly disillusioned, the boy was more than a match for her, and upon every occasion where she attempted to exercise authority she had to give way and retire foiled and beaten.

Moreover, the boy had a vast religious scheme he was bent on imposing upon the empire. This was no less than the unification of all religions into one great monotheistic worship of the God Elagabal, whose high-priest he had been at Emesa. To this end he had a magnificent temple built at Rome, to which he transferred the most venerable objects of Roman

¹ J. S. Hay, *The Amazing Emperor Heliogabalus*, p. 79.

superstition; all the sacred stones, even the Palladium from the Temple of Minerva, the sacred fire which was the symbol of Rome's existence, even the shields which had fallen from heaven and to which the oracles had attached the very destinies of the city itself.

But in spite of all his labours, Heliogabalus never succeeded in popularizing the cult of Elagabal. Mr. Hay says:—

Men began to fear his propensity for swallowing other cults. His rapacity in absorbing the deities of centuries made the superstitious uneasy for the continued existence of gods whom, they believed vaguely, they might some day need, and who would then have lost their power and authority.

And what was worse he attempted to unite the Hebrew and Christian religions along with all the rest. As Mr. Hay points out:—

Neither Christian nor Hebrew was ever popular in old Rome. Their characters, their rites, and their machinations were sincerely disapproved of both by the rulers and the governed; they were generally known as robbers, thieves, liars, law-breakers, cannibals even, men who were lacking in every virtue that Rome held dear; men who set up their own specimen of a creed to the exclusion of all others, the which was, generally speaking, subversive of government, law and order. They were men entirely displeasing to the high gods, and therefore to be spared only when the master of Rome refused to kill. Now Antonine [Heliogabalus] clearly protected these atheistic vagabonds, citizens of no state, troublers of every nation; nay more, he attempted to tolerate their blasphemies by uniting them with his own religion.²

As Mr. Hay remarks, it was certainly a bad day for the House of Severus when the Emperor decided to mix himself up with the hated Judaism. It was putting weapons in the hands of his enemies.

When Maesa found she was not to be the power behind the throne, she conspired with her daughter, Mamaea to bring about the downfall of her grandson and raise Mamaea's son Alexander to the throne, and through their machinations, Heliogabalus was murdered by the Prætorian guards, along with his mother the other daughter of Maesa—at the age of eighteen. So this terrible old woman in her greedy lust for power compassed the death of her own daughter and grandson.

Circumstances, says Mr. Hay, have conspired to obscure the history of Heliogabalus at every point. All we know of the unfortunate boy is related by his enemies, the friends and supporters of his murderers. Alexander himself made strenuous efforts to justify the murder and exulted in the crime:—

This attitude is most clearly seen in the scandalous literary productions which alone disgrace the name of Elagabalus, all issued from the pens of Cassius Dio, Herodian, and Maximus (or Lolius Urbicus), all three servants and bedesmen of Alexander and his female relatives.³

As for Lampridius' biography of Heliogabalus, Mr. Hay says:—

It is merely one vast stream of personal abuse and ordures, directed against the memory of the great exponent of that monotheism which was the chief danger to Constantine's theories in a similar direction; while Lampridius' sources are vitiated by the fact that they are imperial attempts to blacken the memory of a murdered emperor whose popularity with the masses made his murderer's position insecure on the throne of the world.⁴

Lampridius did not write this libel until one hundred years after the death of Heliogabalus, and he

seems to have swept the gutters of all the garbage concerning him and mixed it up with the offspring of his own putrid imagination:—

Antonine had the stigma of all crimes imputed to his memory; and Alexander the good arose superior to all human frailties. Then, and not till then, Rome began to be shocked. Men whose fortunes Antonine had made by his liberality, the Senate, whom he had snubbed so unmercifully, the army to whose donatives he had not attended properly, all these found it advisable to adopt the views of the new administration; their education in ingratitude was complete. Instead of the generous, fearless, affectionate boy whom the populace had known, there emerged the sceptred butcher ill with satyriasis; the taciturn tyrant, hideous and debauched, the unclean priest, devising in the crypts of a palace infamies so monstrous that to describe them new words had to be coined. It was Mamaea's work, and for 1800 years no one has had the audacity to look below the surface and unmask the deception.⁵

It is noteworthy that amid all the torrent of feculent abuse there is not one definite act of cruelty reported of Heliogabalus, no wanton murder is cited, nor is it stated that the people suffered from his misrule. His traducers knew better than make false charges against his public acts, for contemporaries, who knew better, would have risen up to give them the lie. They went a different way to work, they professed to give the details of his *private* life and personal habits, of which the outside world could know nothing, and therefore could not refute.

If, says Mr. Hay, with caustic irony, the boy-emperor had only adopted Jehovah instead of Elagabal for his god, then:—

His life would at least have become blameless, not only by the baptism of blood, but also in the pages of ecclesiastical historians. We might then have seen St. Antoninus "Athleta Christi," a holy martyr worshipped throughout the length and breadth of Christendom as the upholder of Monotheism against the forces of his polytheistic surroundings.⁶

(To be Continued.) W. MANN.

Christian Chivalry.

ONE of the favourite pleas of the Christian apologist is that mediæval chivalry and the cult of the Virgin had the effect of raising the status of woman and causing her to become the object of tender and reverential regard to the opposite sex. And even so rationalist a historian as Lecky suffers from this obsession. Nothing could be further from the truth; nothing more contrary to the facts. The pictures drawn by historical romancers of the Knight of the Middle Ages succouring damsels in distress, and defending the weak against the oppressor are the high-water mark of the most imaginative of pure fiction. Just as well talk of Jack the Giant Killer being an historical character. Theoretically indeed, under the knightly code, the knight was the defender of the widow and orphan; practically he was nothing of the sort, and his relation to both was more truly comparable to that existing between the lamb and the jackal. Diving into the subject, in sober and critical mood, unobsessed by sentimental or supernatural bias, the delver after facts is confronted, in the person of the knight errant of chivalry, with a character of a very different mould indeed. As Freeman says:—

The chivalrous spirit is above all things a class spirit. The good knight is bound to endless fan-

² J. S. Hay, *The Amazing Emperor Heliogabalus*, pp. 118-119.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

⁵ J. S. Hay, *The Amazing Emperor Heliogabalus*, p. 172.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 98-99.

tastic courtesies towards men, and still more towards women of a certain rank; he may treat all below that rank with any degree of scorn and cruelty. The spirit of chivalry implies the arbitrary choice of one or two virtues to be practised in such an exaggerated degree as to become vices, while the ordinary laws of right and wrong are forgotten.....Chivalry, in short, is in morals very much what feudalism is in law, each substitutes purely personal obligations devised in the interests of an exclusive class for the more homely duties of an honest man and a good citizen (*Norman Conquest*, V., 482).

The chivalry of the Middle Ages rested on slave labour, and if the brilliant glamour which it once exercised over so many minds has vanished for ever, we can attribute the salutary change to the removal by modern civilization of social barriers. As Gautier shows, the extent to which the knightly code and the worship of the Virgin raised the status of woman has been greatly exaggerated. Gautier also shows clearly how difficult the feudal system rendered it to separate the woman's fief and her person. It may be true that in theory the Church insisted on freedom of Christian marriage, but the theory was completely lost in the practice. As a matter of sober fact, landed property and women were transferred together—the transaction was a purely commercial one, and marriages were bought and sold as a matter of everyday routine, like stocks and shares in the markets of the modern world. Noble lords regarded this as a most lucrative source of income. Indeed, Lord Thomas de Berkley (1245-1321) placed literal dependence on it. In the latter part of the fifteenth century Stephen Scrope, "Writing nakedly to a familiar correspondent," says, "for very need (of poverty) I was fain to sell a little daughter I have for much less than I should have done by possibly," *i.e.*, than the fair market price (*Gairdner Paston Letters*). All this in truth is damning enough to the Christian romancer's claim, but there is even worse to follow. For historians emphasize the fact how general and common it was in this period to inflict upon ladies in the highest social circles the most degrading and brutal personal violence. Wife beating was a recognized institution of social life, sanctioned by legal codes of that day, and child marriages were the rule rather than the exception. We read of the Berkley family alone, that between 1288 and 1500, no less than five of these marriages are recorded—the ten contracting parties averaging less than eleven years of age. The marriage of another scion of this noble house was contracted at the tender age of six.

Was it Christian chivalry that prompted the fiendish Cyril and his devilish monkish horde to foully murder the gifted Hypatia?

Christian chivalry rewarded the heroic Joan of Arc with the faggot and the stake. And of all the thousand knights pledged under the knightly code, what single one couched lance or drew sword in defence of this noble girl? After twelve centuries of Christianity, when the knightly code, and the age of chivalry were in full swing what does one find was the position of woman in merry England? A mere chattel—the slave and toy of a brutal spouse—her state was that of utter and hopeless degradation. But does Christianity ever act the noble and chivalrous part? Is it not a fact, that even in our own day, organized Christianity enacts the part of the coward and the tyrant?

Too cowardly to strike at the strong, its tyranny is exercised on the weak and helpless; and in the latest victim of the Blasphemy Laws we see how Christian chivalry still points a moral and adorns a tale.

Harrismith, S.A.

SEARCHLIGHT.

Acid Drops.

Apropos of our remarks on the League of Nations and the peace of the world in last week's issue, we have received a copy of an article by Mr. D. A. Peat, the London editor of the *Glasgow Sunday Mail*, which the writer thinks will put a peace movement on a practicable basis. His plan is that there should be a combination—primarily, but not exclusively—of men of military age who should undertake not to fight unless the subject of dispute had first been submitted to arbitration. This would, the writer thinks, permit a reasonable and genuine patriotism, would discourage war, and would, in any case, show which party was the aggressor if either refused to submit to arbitration. On the surface the plan is quite a reasonable one, and we agree that if the Churches gave the plan the same publicity they gave to the subject of war in 1914 "a smashing blow would be dealt at War." We have said much the same ourselves of the power of the Churches, but if Mr. Peat expects the Churches to give his plan publicity, before it is in a position to do without their support, then he knows very little of the Churches. For there was never a reform movement yet that was nursed or encouraged by the Churches.

Allowing for the educational influence of Mr. Peat's proposed League public feeling would have to be much more developed than it is for the movement not to be stampeded at the first real sign of war. At such a time, owing to the cowardice of some and the primitive passions of others, the usual catch-cries have only to be raised for all good resolutions to go by the board. And if a Court such as Mr. Peat proposes is to have effect two things are necessary. Governments must agree that all questions must go to arbitration. At present it is certain that a certain number would be reserved on the score that to submit them would not be consistent with that curious thing "national honour." One party would not go to war, he would merely claim that "national honour" would not permit arbitration, and leave it to the other party to attack. And the second thing would be the constitution of the Court. In the case of the League of Nations we see that made almost useless from the fact that we have the same gang of politicians practically ruling it. If the League is ever to be useful all these things must be cleared out entirely. That and an International Court, and if the League is kept clear of these little big men who rule the political worlds there is no reason why the League should not be the Court. The International Court is already in being. What is required is for it to summon enough courage to assert its independence and issue its decisions.

We have the utmost sympathy with Mr. Peat's plan, and with any plan that is likely to put our militarists in the subordinate position in which they ought to be. But we suggest that one way to work would be to get such an organization in being as is proposed. Then keep the politicians out and give the diplomatists the go-by. Get prominent men of other sorts in all countries to join it, and let them elect an International Court of their own. Let the Court judge all questions of international dispute that arise and issue its decree. Such a decree will have a moral force behind it that governments would soon hesitate to affront, and it would be an instrument of enormous educational value. It is quite useless asking governments to form such a Court. They will not do it, or if they do it will only be such as they can dominate, or reduce their function to uselessness. The League of Nations was doomed the moment the old gang of European politicians were allowed to dominate it. At present, we see it has come to a decision regarding the circulation of obscene literature. So might a Methodist meeting. It is silent over the causes and the prospects of another war. The very thing it was created to prevent!

According to Mrs. L. Shepard, formerly of Salt Lake City, the Mormon Church, though only ninety-two years old, sends 5,000 missionaries to Europe every year, and

within the past twenty years more than 30,000 converts to the faith have been embarked for the land of the stars and stripes. What is the attraction of Joseph Smith's gospel?

During the Merionethshire floods the Corris Methodist Chapel was undermined by the rush of water and collapsed. At Southsea the Rev. W. A. Dwight fell dead while playing golf. If one may believe popular report, certain members of the community spend a good deal of time in the company of Providence. It is time they cautioned him that his reputation is at stake.

Some of our religious journals are now urging that the state of affairs in the Near East calls for vigorous interference on the part of Great Britain, who shares with the rest of Christendom, in the duty of common guardianship of all Christian communities. "Spiritual things are spiritually discerned." We were reminded of this recently in reading extracts from speeches made by prominent ecclesiastics in Europe in 1854 when the Crimean War was imminent. The metropolitan of Moscow said: "The struggle is one of the cross against the infidel." The Archbishop of Paris, the tool of Napoleon III., with equal clearness perceived the real issue: "*C'est pour la gloire de Dieu que vous combattez*" (It is for the glory of God that you are fighting). Our own Archbishop of Canterbury of that time also rose to the occasion: "Jesus Christ, our Saviour, for whose sake you fight, will bless your arms." We were not fighting against the Turks then. One may say conscientiously that all these captains of the Lord's host, and expounders of moral values, were real ornaments to their profession.

Some two months ago the Darlington Town Council resolved to institute proceedings against a number of shopkeepers for Sunday trading. Now another meeting of the Council decided to rescind the resolution, so that youngsters may purchase sweets without running the risk of feeling that they are demoralizing the characters of the pious folk of the town. Some of the Councillors described the proceedings as ridiculous. What else can one expect when people carry the ideas of an evangelical meeting into civic life? We should like to see Labour members more active than they are in fighting these ridiculous acts of petty religious tyranny.

The Mayor of Northampton, Bradlaugh's old constituency, does not play games or read newspapers on Sunday, he does not smoke, and he does not drink alcoholic beverages. What on earth does he do? Northampton is in the throes of a struggle for and against Sunday games. Of course the Mayor is on the side of the local religious bodies, and they in turn are on his side. The local Socialists are exerting all their influence against Sabbatarianism. We note gladly that Socialists are acting similarly in Victoria and New Zealand. But if the restraints imposed by organized religion are to be removed, opposition to them must be a matter of principle, not the protest of a single occasion.

The *Record* (September 21), the organ of the evangelical Anglicans, urges the Government to introduce legislation to restrain "the open and defiant desecration of the Lord's Day." Our contemporary is referring to Sunday trading; but it is significant that it adds, "It is not possible now to enforce by Act of Parliament the religious observance of Sunday." Just so. It was possible at one time, and it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that some of our evangelical neighbours would like that time to return.

Three Sunday-school boys were charged before the Cambridge magistrates last month with breaking into seven churches and stealing the contents of the offertory boxes. One of the stock clerical "arguments" against Sunday sports is that they will allure boys and girls away from Sunday-school. The last mentioned institution, as tested by results, does not compare favourably with the cricket field.

Miss Maude Royden has been discovering some of the fruits of Christian brotherhood while on her visit to the United States. She says that in the Southern States she found that no coloured man, however small the admixture of colour, however high the standard of culture and probity reached, may mix with the whites. He must not travel in the same car, stay at the same hotel, or worship in the same church. And in Arkansas she was not permitted to offer a coloured bishop the trifling hospitality of refreshment when he came to visit her. Now what we should like Miss Royden to deal with is the plain question of what she considers to be the value, in practice, of the preaching of Christian brotherhood when it has created a distinction that was absolutely unknown to the old Pagan world? We do not expect she will answer the question. None of these preachers do. In spite of the facts before them they continue mouthing about the value to the world of the "Christian" principles of love and brotherhood, ignoring the fact that the egotism and selfishness inherent in Christianity inevitably make, in practice, for the limitation, if not for the destruction of decent humanitarian conduct. The negro was brought from Africa by Christians, made a slave by Christians, treated as an animal by Christians, and then denied a legitimate measure of social intercourse by Christians when actual slavery became no longer possible or profitable. Once more we say that Christianity is one of the greatest disasters of the modern world.

The Scottish Federation of Provision Merchants have been protesting against the Sunday trading carried on in Scotland. They protest against this on two grounds. In the first place it breaks the Sabbath, and that is a very serious offence. In the next place these Sunday traders are actually charging more for the goods they sell on Sunday, and are so making much greater profit. And that is simply "rubbing it in." To see the ungodly flaunting their wickedness in the face of the godly is bad, but to see them actually making profit on the job is a thing that no association of godly Scottish shopkeepers can be expected to stand. So the Secretary for Scotland has promised to see what he can do in the matter.

Mr. J. W. Poynter writes in the *Catholic Herald* on Mr. Robert Blatchford and the latter's articles on Spiritualism. Mr. Blatchford's views, we are solemnly assured, are changing since he wrote such sentences as: "I cannot believe that the Christian religion is true," and "I cannot believe that God is a loving Heavenly Father." Mr. Poynter is very kind and gentle and considerate in his attitude. Rome is always full of compassion for the Blatchfords. Mr. Poynter concludes:—

We would direct Mr. Blatchford's attention to the "mass of evidence" and the "cloud of witnesses" for orthodox Catholic Christianity, its "motives of credibility," and its explanation of such things as Spiritualism. Perhaps Mr. Blatchford's attention has already been directed to all these marvels. However, the one true faith is out to make converts, and in the present state of the market cannot afford to lose a single soul within its reach.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, traveller and poet, left instructions in his will that he should be buried "without religious or other ceremony." According to the daily paper these instructions were carried out. The clergy will have a difficult task in justifying their existence when it dawns upon human beings that at the three chief events in life these mummers can be ignored.

The Christian Church has a peculiar, if not a tender, conscience. The Rangoon Turf Club offered a contribution to the Church funds of Burma. A committee sat up till the early hours of the morning discussing the matter, and finally decided that the money might be taken. Then the Bishop stepped in and vetoed the gift. That is why we say the conscience of the Church is peculiar. For if the money had been won by someone by betting who had given it to the Church, no objection would have been

raised. No enquiry is ever made as to how a man makes his money when he offers it to the Church. And the Ecclesiastical Commissioners draw rents from slum property, or from war loan, or from investments in quite as questionable a direction as the funds of the Turf Club—which are derived from subscriptions from members, and from admission money to racecourses, and not from betting. And some very eminent members of the Church might have contributed in this way to the Turf Club funds—even some members of the royal family. No, the real distinction between the Turf Club money and other money is that in this case its origin is known. In others it is not. And it is both British and Christian to refuse money which is dubbed by respectability—or by a certain kind of respectability—"tainted money," and accept with thanks other money derived from sources that are very much worse. For British Christian respectability does not say that you must not do anything that is mean or shady, but only that you must not be known to do it.

Canon Francis Underhill, writing in the *Guardian* (September 22), admits that Modernism is making headway in the Church. "There is something very attractive to the modern mind in a rationalistic Christianity from which the difficult miracles have been excluded." The discrimination between "difficult" and "easy" miracles will be recognized at once by Modernists as a masterly contribution to the solution of their problems. With the Establishment faced by this movement within, and the Nonconformists bringing God's word up to date, reunion is a fine rallying call for zealous souls.

Mr. H. G. Wells declares that Jesus of Nazareth is "easily the dominant figure in history." The adverb "easily" gives the show away. The New Testament records about three years of Jesus Christ's life and makes him far too "easily dominant" to be historical. To those whose faith is equal to the Nazarene's recorded character and achievements "all things are possible"; but their number is not increasing by leaps and bounds.

"What distresses me most about the Church is that it is so sluggish." The speaker is the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Chelmsford. One of our readers suggests that his lordship invites a few leading Freethinkers to address the congregations. Perhaps the Bishop would regard the remedy as worse than the disease. There is no doubt that the "National Church" is passing through critical times; but it is strange that the clergy who saw in the European War a divine Providence, purging us of our iniquities, cannot see a similar influence at work "within the kingdom." Providence is not likely, in the process of purification, to stop short at poison-gas and fifteen-inch guns just to please the clergy.

A son of the late Rev. H. R. Browne, of Eastbourne, is about to be ordained. The latter was one of seven brothers, who were all parsons and sons of a parson. The passion for saving souls seems to have run in the family. The mental make-up of the Brownes should be an interesting study to the psychologist. Evidently they, at any rate, cannot shout from the house-tops of Eastbourne, "We have piped unto you and ye have not danced."

Sunday (October 8) is to be harvest thanksgiving day in many of the London churches. The Press, religious and secular, contains lengthy advertisements appealing for funds for the starving children in Russia and elsewhere. Disastrous floods are reported from several quarters. The Australian files just to hand give graphic details of the recent floods in the Macquarie and the Queanbeyan, which swept away whole herds of sheep and cattle, and also a few human beings. This time last year in parts of Australia the people were praying for rain. But the thanksgiving services come round with clockwork regularity; they are part of the game, and as long as Providence achieves some results, however inconvenient and untoward, the clergy will be thankful for small mercies. The Devil is not much of a hero nowadays.

"They must conclude with the mechanist that the forces which determine the structure and formation of living matter were wholly the known physical forces." This is the concluding remark of a recent lecture on "The Interpretation of Life," by Professor Brailsford Robertson, of Adelaide, reported in the *Advertiser* (July 26). Professor Robertson said that vitalism was not now accepted by any biologist of standing. Further proof of the bankruptcy of materialism.

The first steps in an ecclesiastical trial for heresy, instituted against Bishop Montgomery Brown for publishing his *Christianism and Communism*, were taken early in September at the General Convention of the American Episcopal Church. The following awful resolution was submitted by the diocese of Arkansas, to which Diocese Bishop Brown belongs:—

Whereas William Montgomery Brown, late bishop of this diocese has in his late published work *Communism and Christianity* renounced the Christian religion, the teaching and traditions of the Church, and has said in said work that he denied the divinity of Christ and has published to the world the awful dogma that cannibalism is the basis of our sacrament of the holy communion of bread and wine, thus denying the sacrament of the supper of our Lord, and has in said work promulgated the most sacrilegious propaganda against the Church and her teachings and doctrines, and renounces and denies in every particular the faith and creed of the Church; and whereas, to permit him after such renunciation of the doctrines, teachings and traditions of the Church to remain, even in name, a Bishop of the Church, and longer to retain his sacred priesthood, would be to put a premium on heresy.

We therefore demand of and recommend that the house of bishops take the necessary steps and action to bring the said William Montgomery Brown to trial for heresy to the end that he may be deposed from the sacred office of a bishop of the Church and stripped and unfrocked of the priesthood.

The solemn buffoonery of it is delicious. But we have reached a stage when if a man sincerely believes in Christianity we can only smile at him, and if he is not sincere in his profession of belief he merits nothing but contempt. We understand that, in spite of the terrible indictment, no trial is to take place.

The Rev. Stanley B. James admits that church congregations are made up largely of women, and says that strenuous efforts are being made "to reach the men." Further proof, no doubt, of the deep-rooted religious instinct in human nature. Woman has had to play her own part in working for freedom and equality in the economic and political spheres. She will have to do the same in regard to religion and clerical influence. Her place in the general order of things depends mainly on herself. Only when she realizes this fact will she cease to be the servile tool of the Church, or to be imposed upon by "inspired" books which presume to lay down for her the principles of faith and duty.

In a book review in the *Times Literary Supplement* we notice this remarkable statement: "She handles the religious element without offence to Christian or Freethinker." Readers of the *Freethinker* will be glad to know that they are alive and that they have feelings. Boycott and gaol have somewhat tended to encourage the delusion that a Freethinker did not exist; for this recognition many thanks.

As an indication of how near the public is allowed to approach the religious question, the *Daily News* gives a fair sample entitled: "Are the Clergy Shunned?" This silly-season subject always in season is canalized into a defence of the parsonic collar by a Wesleyan minister. This red herring of the round collar question will be very useful in preventing a straightforward answer to a straightforward question. "Can the Clergy justify their existence?" But that would be too near reality for the high level of our Press, the papers of which will soon be given away with a bag of sweets.

C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

October 8, Manchester; October 15, Glasgow; October 22, Preston; November 5, Stratford Town Hall; November 12, Birmingham; November 19, Plymouth; November 26, Pembroke Chapel, Liverpool; December 3, Stockport; December 10, Leicester; December 17, Watford.

To Correspondents.

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

"SEARCHLIGHT" (S. A.).—Yes, the National Secular Society has a branch at Lagos. We should like to see one in South Africa, as well as in other places overseas. The world never stood in greater need of common sense than it does at present.

CATHERINE STONE.—Your view of ancient Roman and Greek culture is the only sensible one. Unfortunately, large numbers only know concerning these peoples what their Christian teachers tell them, and that is always a tainted source for anything that concerns its opponents. Contemporary events show that where the interests of the Christian Church is concerned no lie is too elaborate and no slander too gross for use.

G. WETHERELL.—Very pleased to hear from you again and to know that you are still doing something to push the old Cause along. We should like to hear that an organization had been formed in Victoria. Pleased to know that our books and the *Freethinker* are doing their work so well.

H. S. ENGLAND.—Thanks for verses and cutting. What the people dealt with require is a sense of humour. It is lack of that which does a deal towards keeping Christianity alive.

G. A.—MSS. received. Regret we are unable to use. Idea good, but wants better working out.

MANCURIAN.—Thanks. Both shall appear. We quite appreciate what you say.

J. KERR.—We received the typewritten copy of the declaration. We have no means of saying whether it is genuine or not, although we have seen similar things before. But if it is not quite accurate in form, in practice it is what the policy and teaching of the Roman Church actually is.

H. MOORE.—Hope you will succeed in getting together the Freethinkers in your locality.

Will the reader who forwarded, per Mr. Cohen, an order for pamphlets to the value of 2s. 4d. please forward name and address. They are not on the slip containing the order.

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

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

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

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

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

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

All Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to "The Pioneer Press" and crossed "London, City and Midland Bank, Clerkenwell Branch."

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

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

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

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

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

J. W. Gott Fund.

We are not surprised at the ready response which has been made to our appeal of last week on behalf of Mr. J. W. Gott, and I quite expect that by the time the next copy of the *Freethinker* is issued we shall be able to announce the closing of the Fund. As may be expected, those who have contributed warmly endorse what is being done, and are agreed that so long as such things as the Blasphemy Laws disgrace our statute books we have no alternative but to fight in whatever way is possible. Hope is expressed by the contributors that Mr. Gott's health will benefit from the rest he is taking. On that matter there is not much that is favourable to report. He wrote me on Tuesday, October 3, that he fancied there was a slight improvement; but I am afraid that it is not much. Whether it will be maintained or not remains to be seen. His complaint is not one that yields quickly to treatment, and nine months' imprisonment in a Christian gaol is not calculated to strengthen one's powers of physical endurance. Anyway, what can be done to help a victim of Christian bigotry and brutality is being done, and I thank those readers of the *Freethinker* who have so quickly and so generously responded. I did not expect less of them, but it is not every man, or every class of men that live up to expectations.

Acknowledgments: J. Pendlebury, £10; C. Cohen, £1; J. W. Fitch, £2 2s.; C. Bush, £5; R. Gibbon, 10s.; J. White, 5s.; A. D. McLaren, 5s.; A. W. Davis, £1; R. Crum, 5s.; W. B. Columbine, £10; V. Wilson, 5s.; V. H. Smith, 10s.; J. W. Ball, £1; J. Robson, 2s. 6d.; H. Littledale, 10s.; T. Dunbar, 5s.; A. W. Coleman, 10s.; Miss D. W. Coleman, 10s.; H. Bayfield, 10s.; E. L. Hogg, 10s.; C. W. Marshall, 5s.; J. Ireland, £1; D. Macconnell, 10s.; O. Friedman, 10s.; S. Healing, 5s.; Mr. and Mrs. J. Neate, £1; J. Partridge, £1; T. Robertson, £2; E. C. R., 2s. 6d.; E. Parker, 5s.; W. H. Hicks, £1 1s.; Mrs. L. Wells, 10s.; Mrs. C. M. Renton, £1 10s.; Mrs. E. Taylor, 2s. 6d.; Mrs. Ben Lee, 2s. 6d.; E. C. R., 1s.; A. D. Corrick, 10s.; R. Richards, 1s. 3d.; H. Moore, 1s. 6d.; A. B. Moss, 10s.; W. J. Easterbrook, £1; total, £47 6s. 9d.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Cohen lectures to-day (October 8) in the Public Hall, Dickenson Road, Rusholme, Manchester, at 3 and 6.30. In the afternoon he is lecturing on "The Meaning and Morals of Materialism," and in the evening on "The Challenge of Freethought to the Churches." Both lectures should attract good audiences.

On Sunday next (October 15) Mr. Cohen will visit Glasgow. In the morning the meeting will be in the City Hall. As this hall has a seating capacity of about 3,000, we hope that all Glasgow supporters of the Cause will do their best to advertise the meetings among their friends, unorthodox and otherwise.

Now that the autumn lecturing season is commencing we take the opportunity of impressing on our friends the importance of taking every opportunity of introducing the *Freethinker* to newcomers. We are still worrying away at the task of making the *Freethinker* pay its way, and if we succeed, we think it will be the first time it will have done so during the whole of its history. As our friends may guess, the slump in trade has made this end a little farther off than it was, for with so much unemployment it was only to be expected that there should be a drop all round in sales. That, however, should only act as a spur to renewed endeavour. We have "the goods" in the *Freethinker*, and if only the boycott could be overcome the rest would be plain sailing. And we see no other way of overcoming that save by the circula-

tion being sent up in particular localities so that news-agents may not find the boycotting a profitable proposition.

While we are on this subject we may state in answer to enquiries that all the publications of the Pioneer Press may be ordered through any newsagent in the kingdom, who should have no difficulty in getting them through his wholesale agent. This will save purchasers postage when they do not care to send direct to the office. The *Freethinker* is supplied to the trade on sale or return in every case.

The President of the Glasgow Branch writes:—

When winter comes the Glasgow Secular Society usually run a series of lectures. This winter is not to be an exception, and as the Society has taken on a more ambitious programme than any previous year the committee hope that the members and the unattached Freethinkers will give their support in every way. There are many capable speakers, and one of the most capable—Mr. Service—will open the session on Sunday, October 8, with "Brains *versus* Brawn" as his subject. Those who have heard him before know what the others have missed.

The following Sunday evening the City Hall (Grand Hall) should be packed to hear Mr. Cohen on "The Challenge of Freethought to the Churches," a subject which should interest Christian friends. Bring them along and do them a good turn. Mr. Cohen speaks in the smaller hall in the morning. Later on Mr. J. T. Lloyd pays us another visit. In a letter some time ago he wrote: "It is a pleasure to speak to the Glasgow people." Enhance his pleasure by filling the hall! Mr. Lloyd has given of his best to Freethought and deserves well of the movement. Let us see that he gets it.

Other men with a message are coming; Mr. Jos. McCabe, Mr. G. Whitehead, and Mr. W. Marriott, in the order named, and the social side has not been overlooked. A dance is being arranged for November, and the Charing Cross Halls have been booked. Tickets are on sale.

And all that can be done, and more, only if the public support the Society. There are plenty of Freethinkers to treble, yea, more than treble the membership. The fee is small, even in these days of financial stringency; and in addition they could advertise the lectures, etc., among their Christian friends and bring them along. We have no divine command to go out into all nations and preach the Gospel of Unbelief, but we have a Moral Right and Duty to tell our neighbours the truth about that organized sham, Christianity.

With all this we warmly agree, and trust that expectations will be more than realized.

Last Sunday Mr. A. D. McLaren broke new ground at Croydon, where there appears to be scope for a vigorous Freethought campaign. He spoke in Katharine Street on "The Old Faith and the New," and although the audience was small at first, before he had concluded it increased considerably and followed the speaker's remarks very attentively. This evening (October 8) Mr. F. P. Corrigan will speak in the same place at 6.30.

The *South London Press* last week contained a snapshot in which we can see our old friend, Mr. A. B. Moss, standing among a large group of people in the Borough Market, under the shadow of St. Saviour's Cathedral, listening to an address by the Lord Bishop of Woolwich. In the discussion that followed, we understand that Mr. Moss was allowed to put over a dozen questions to the Bishop on the conflict between the Bible and the doctrine of Evolution. Mr. Moss will have something to say on the subject shortly.

The Birmingham Branch made a good start at its new meeting place on Sunday last. Mr. Lloyd was the speaker, and a pleasant feature of the attendance was the number of strangers present. There was also a good sale of literature, which is a very pleasant and practical testimony to the impression produced by the speaker. We trust that the Birmingham friends will see to it that the Branch receives a full measure of support during the season.

We are glad to learn that the Newcastle Branch of the N.S.S. has secured a regular meeting place in the Socialist Society's premises, 23 Royal Arcade, Newcastle; discussions will be held every Tuesday evening at 7.30. We trust that these meetings will be successful and will lead the way to a regular propaganda on Sundays. There are plenty of Freethinkers in and about Newcastle-on-Tyne, and a still larger number of Christians waiting for conversion. A series of Sunday lectures in a suitable hall could not but have a good effect, and in this matter the Executive is always ready to do what it can to assist local effort. We hope that the hint will not be lost on our Newcastle friends.

Pater the Epicurean.

II.

(Concluded from page 637.)

It is certain that Pater, who loved such things so deeply, and who felt so towards life that he could take up the professed object of getting together the threads of a myth to add to the pleasure of mankind by increasing the available number of poetic ideas, could not be other than one who held a sincere delight in the homes of men, and all their wonderful sentimental associations. Those associations are one of the most important bases of human emotion. Out of the emotions aroused by these associations comes a large proportion of the beauty of life, and the adornment of the home therefore is just as much to Mr. Pater as the contemplation of an already beautiful domicile. Again and again in the course of his writings, he weaves a web of wonder round some home, giving it a touch of that magic which it possesses for those who began and held their being in that spot. Indeed practically all the stories, and it may perhaps be considered admissible to include many of the criticisms under the title of stories, are filled with the tale of the love of home or homes. Both Marius and Gaston are full of the charm of the sentiment. It follows naturally that he comes to have a great love for his country, the land in which he was born, and to tinge his pictures of the great homes and gorgeous buildings of Europe with something of a British air.

As always with such emotional souls, so tender in susceptibility to beauty, it is in speaking of another, and that other an imaginary soul that he reveals his own most intimate feelings. He says:—

With Florian then the sense of home became singularly intense, his good fortune being that the special character of his home was itself so essentially homelike. As after many wanderings I have come to fancy that some parts of Surrey and Kent are, for Englishmen, the true landscape, true home counties, partly of a certain earthly warmth in the yellow of the sands below their gorse bushes, and of a certain grey-blue mist after rain, in the hollows of the hills there, welcome to fatigued eyes, and never seen farther south; so I think that the sort of house I have described, with precisely those proportions of red-brick and green, and with just a perceptible monotony in the subdued order of it, for its distinguishing note, is for Englishmen at least, typically homelike.

The wonder and the mystery of this sentiment has a never failing attraction for Pater. He cannot but return to it. He cannot but depict it, and he cannot but analyse it continually. He is essentially modern in his desire to know, besides the beauty, the pleasure which lies in this human satisfaction, what it is that gives the satisfaction, and how it is that human beings come to make so much of such an intangible, yet seemingly inevitable, purely mental phenomenon. So many of the energies of the race are devoted to practical ends, that it is surprising to the super-sensual nature of the artist, when he discovers the ethereal nature of the ties which bind the race in so close an

unity. He cannot but wish to analyse these ties, and to make them clear to all, so that they may become even more binding than they are. It thus becomes inevitable that the wonder and mystery which so suddenly and unexpectedly surrounds familiar things in the day when they are again noticed freshly, seems to Pater to play a considerable part in the formation of the æsthetic sense as well as the delight in and love of a beautiful home.

I have remarked how in the process of our brain-building, as the house of thought in which we live gets itself together, like some airy bird's nest of floating thistledown and chance straws, little accidents have their consequence; and thus it happened that, as he walked home one evening, a garden gate, usually closed, stood open; and lo! within, a great red hawthorn in full flower, embossing heavily the bleached and twisted trunk and branches, so aged that there were but few green leaves thereon—a plumage of tender, crimson fire out of the heart of the dry wood.

To come upon such a thing would be startling; it would rouse the old love of the place to enthusiasm, and it would not be possible for a few days at least to forget so far as to be able to go about the day's work amid the familiar surroundings unexpectedly, unaware of its renewed and ever renewable beauty. The pity of it, for Pater, as again shown best in his own words, is that the habit of apperception is limited to the few. The many are so inflicted with the heavy penalty of dread and overpowering labour, that their senses become numb to all but the grossest satisfactions:—

Thinking of the very poor, it was not the things men care most for he yearned to give them; but fairer roses, perhaps, and power to taste quite as they will, at their ease and not task-burdened, a certain, desirable, clear light in the new morning, through which sometimes he noticed them, quite unconscious of it, on their way to their early toil.

Pater has tasted so deeply the sensuous delight and sweetness of beauty that he is more than anxious that all men should equally realize it with him. He has known the pleasure of that wide awake expectancy of the fulfilment of the promise of life that he is eager to experience death, and he has known so much and vivid, gorgeous experience, that he wishes to add the double line which signifies that the account is closed. He is certain that equally lovely and desirable with all of life must be its last moment. He does not fear, and he does not express any opinion of the great question of what follows. For him is life sufficient. He has known and felt life in its most significant phases, and he is ready at any moment to know its culmination and termination. His work has been to try and find out, to do his utmost to express just what he has felt and understood, and while he is aware that what he may learn at death will be inexpressible, he is wishful also of that experience:—

As he felt the pressure upon him of the sensible world, then, as often afterwards, there would come another sort of curious questioning, how the last impressions of eye and ear might happen to him, how they would find him in the scent of the last flower, the soft yellowness of the last morning, the last recognition of some object of affection, hand and voice; it could not but be that the latest look of the eyes, before their final closing, would be strangely vivid; one would go with the hot tears, the cry, the touch of the wistful bystanders, impressed how deeply upon one! or would it be, perhaps, a mere frail retiring of all things, great or little, away from one into a level distance?

To do complete justice to the great genius of Pater would require much more space than that of a short article. It is only possible in a few brief words to give some hint of the light and shade of his character; to indicate in however limited a manner his

wonderful perception of the lines of beauty in the warp and woof of life, his ability to draw these lines together into a picture of concrete beauty; to state his love of objects of beauty, and his uniform desire that they should, at however remote a time, but preferably at once, form a part of the environment of everyone, so that their full benefit might be dowered upon the race; and to add some slight appreciation of his regard for mankind, and for the beautiful nature which forms his true environment.

"And always," as he says of Filon, "he is all delicacy—a delicacy which keeps his large yet minute antiquarian knowledge ever in service to a direct interest in humanity." It is amazing that such a man's work should have been put away upon a high shelf, because he is a stylist, a sort of half derogatory term. The very words he uses are beautiful, because words are the material of his æsthetic medium, and it is by the use of words that he preaches in so lovely a sort, the worship of beauty, which is the most humane of all preachings, and which, if rightly understood by the generality of men, would prove the solution of the major part of their difficulties, which arise in the first place from an equal indifference to beauty and ugliness, so that the latter comes to preponderate in their environment, and to affect them by its illth, where a conscious seeking of beauty would provide them with all the surroundings of wealth. G. E. FUSSELL.

The Church's Attitude Towards a Real Menace.

A thousand years scarce serve to form a state;
An hour may lay it in the dust; and when
Can man its shattered splendour renovate,
Recall its virtues back, and vanquish Time and Fate?
—Byron.

OVER on this continent the various churches have taken it into their heads for each one to adopt some special reform. The Presbyterians are fighting the cigarette and the race-track; the Methodists are out after liquor, card playing, and theatres; and the Baptists are afraid that dancing is going to ruin the world.

And yet there is not a murmur against the terrible evil being perpetrated in our very midst, namely, the manufacture of poison gas.

In the United States at the present time are being manufactured gas bombs, a few carloads of which would be sufficient to destroy every vestige of plant and animal life on this planet.

This outrage brings forth not a word of protest from the churches that bewail the dire results, and demoralizing effects of short skirts, and flimsy bathing costumes.

May I ask when, in the history of the world any nation has been ruined by race-tracks, dancing, cards, etc.? *Never.*

But look at the nations that have been ruined by war. The work of a thousand years has been laid to the dust in an hour. The priceless treasures of art have been ruthlessly destroyed; and the very buildings consecrated to the worship of the Christian God have been shattered to fragments, and strewn to the four winds.

Why does not the Christian Church direct a strenuous and concerted attack on this violation of the teachings of their Jesus Christ? The answer is plain. The officials of the Church are now what they always have been, namely, the servile tools, minions, supporters, and bootblacks of the reactionaries, and in the midst of the latter job they often pause long enough to throw the empty blacking tins at those who desire to make the world a decent place to live in.

Toronto, Canada.

HUBERT SHERIFF.

Grave and Gay.

It is a depressing reflection that the two classes that have been most honoured in the world's history are priests and soldiers—the two classes that are the most parasitic of all. Neither produce, in any genuine sense of the term, and both consume on a gigantic scale. Priestly consumption is seen in the temples and churches that are strewn all over the world and in every age. Millions of pounds are spent annually in the service of religion, and in the past millions of lives have been sacrificed to it. Yet there is not one of the arts or sciences that owe anything to religion, as such. If all the religions and all the priests of the world had been blotted out at the dawn of the historic age, the world would have lost nothing useful, nor would it have sacrificed any knowledge that it possesses. And the soldier has been almost as wasteful, but not quite so, for a plea may be put in that he has played the part of a protector. But his protection was only against some other soldier, and so the general proposition remains unchanged and unaffected. The soldier produces nothing. He and the priest are the master parasites of human society.

In discussion it is the other man's point of view that is of chief importance, and that is the one thing that receives least consideration.

What another man thinks about you is ultimately of but small importance. It is the opinion that one has of oneself that is of final consequence.

No Christian body has ever raised a memorial to the Devil. And yet he has founded more Churches than have all the saints in the calendar. Even the Christian religion itself would have no reason for its existence but for the Devil.

There are few people who are strong-minded enough to think out a problem or a position clearly. When they have gone a little way they falter and retire, and generally end by returning to the same kind of error they set out by rejecting.

To say that God, if he exists, is stupid, is blasphemy. To say that God is wise is worship. The difference between worship and blasphemy is thus the difference between flattery and intelligent criticism.

Whenever I read a book that proves triumphantly God exists, I comfort myself with the reflection that perhaps after all the writer is wrong. Things are seldom so bad as they seem, and the darkest cloud may have a silver lining.

When a professed heretic talks of true Christianity as opposed to false Christianity, one may take it for granted that he is either muddle-headed or a coward.

The paradox of Hedonism lies in this, that while all men desire happiness, happiness must not be consciously striven for. To make happiness the conscious end of effort is to court defeat. If real happiness is to be gained it must emerge as the normal fruit of action—something that is, so to speak, superadded to the immediate aim. This is probably what Spinoza had in mind when he said that happiness is not the reward of virtue, it is virtue.

The Christian teaching that we must avoid temptation is radically unsound, and can never serve to train a healthy character, and is at most a species of prudence. The real indication of strength and accuracy of character is not to experience temptation at all. In many directions the evil of a thing lies in our desire for it, and it only becomes innocuous when the desire for it is eradicated.

PETER SIMPLE.

Correspondence.

RELIGION AND THE "DAILY HERALD."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—There must be some readers of the *Freethinker* who are interested in the *Daily Herald*, but who may not have observed what would appear to be a significant change in the editorial point of view of that newspaper.

On Saturday, September 23, Mr. George Lansbury, who is no longer editor, contributed the sort of leader page article to which Saturday readers have grown accustomed, all about applying Christian ethics to the general world muddle and notably to the Greco-Turkish squabble. This was one of his paragraphs:—

People will say it is impracticable to talk about religion, that we who do so are either dreamers or just fools. This is pure nonsense. For what has the practical man and his policy done for us? Look around and you will soon discover graves and grasses, disappointment and despair.

On Thursday, September 28, there was on the same page of the *Daily Herald* a brief review of Sir Oliver Lodge's new edition of the book he wrote about his dead son Raymond. The review was over the initials "H. F.," which are those of Mr. Hamilton Fyfe, the editor who has succeeded Mr. Lansbury; and having referred to a chapter in which Sir Oliver describes more recent incidents in the intercourse which he "believes to have taken place between himself and his son," the reviewer proceeds:—

On such a matter it is hard to write frankly. The sympathy one feels for the bereaved father and mother and with their eagerness to feel that they are in touch with their lost dear one clashes with the amazement which one feels at what can only seem to most of us the credulity of so famous a scientist.

And the review concludes thus:—

The whole thing seems childish and yet lamentable. One cannot feel contempt for those who are deceived in this way—only pity.

There seems to be indicated by these contrasts a new attitude towards life. Curiously, immediately above the "Raymond Revised" review, the *Herald* published Longfellow's sigh that "half the wealth bestowed on camps and courts" were—

Given to redeem the human mind from error.

MANCURIAN.

EVOLUTION AND DARWINISM.

SIR,—I took it for granted that every reader of this paper would know the difference between the Roman Catholic views of Mr. Chesterton and Mr. Belloc and those of Mr. Shaw. Because I speak of these authors' "tirades against Darwinism" does not imply that Mr. Shaw is not an evolutionist. Mr. Lord seems quite incapable of seeing that a man can oppose Darwinism and still remain an evolutionist. Several eminent American scientists do so.

Mr. Lord wishes to know what I mean by Darwinism. I will endeavour to comply. Darwin's theory lays down that: (1) In the living world there is always a tendency for plants and animals to outstrip the means of subsistence; (2) This results in a struggle for existence; (3) That no two animals or plants are exactly alike, they all vary in a smaller or greater degree; (4) That owing to the struggle for existence a process of natural selection ensues equivalent to the artificial selection of the gardener who eliminates the weakly or useless and selects the strong and useful to survive. So in nature, only those survive who vary in the direction that best fits them to their environment; and as through the ages the environment has been continually changing, only those fittest to adapt themselves to their environment survived. Those who could not adapt themselves have ceased to exist and have been replaced by others who could, and this has resulted in the innumerable species of animals and plants that exist to-day.

Darwin, of course, was a pure naturalist and was concerned only with living things. He wrote nothing upon the evolution of inorganic matter, of the evolution of the

stars and planets. That is why Darwinism and evolution are not convertible terms, although it was largely due to Darwin's labours that evolution came to be accepted.

The critics of Darwinism pointed out that although the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest accounted very well for the origin of species, yet it did not account for the fact of variation. What caused all living things to vary in degree from the fit to the unfit? The reply was that science was busily investigating the point, and would no doubt in due course, reveal the secret; that we did not know the truth about the inner constitution of matter yet, but when we did we should be in a better position to answer the question.

The theologians, who violently denounced Darwinism at the outset, but as usual turned round when they found it too strong for them, now declared that variation was due to the finger of God; but as they could provide no proof of the existence of God, their explanation was somewhat in the air.

Then the "Life Forcers" came on the scene, Butler, Bergson, and Shaw. They declared that evolution is due to a "Creative Life Force," and, so far as I can understand their position, they place will and mind at the beginning of the process, instead of being the last products of evolution, a result received with enthusiasm by the religious, who of course identify this supposed "Creative Life Force" with their God.

Science rejects this hypothesis. Science accepts a theory when that theory is founded upon facts, and explains the phenomena of nature. But the Life Force theory explains nothing. It is in precisely the same position as the God idea. It does not explain the *how* and the *why* of any single thing, and its exponents seem to think there is no necessity to explain anything, you must take it on trust like the God idea. The "Life Forcers" are reactionaries, like the religious, they dislike and fear science, they constitute the modern mystics and Mr. Bernard Shaw is their high-priest, and no doubt if his theories became generally accepted he would turn round and rend his deluded followers.

The tendency of modern science is to regard life force and nerve force as only further evolutions of the material forces of the universe, comprising light, heat, and electricity—to hold that there is no special "Life Force" apart from, and of a different order from these other forces.

W. MANN.

SPEAK OUT!

One reason why so many persons are really shocked and pained by the avowal of heretical opinions, is the very fact that such avowal is uncommon. If unbelievers and doubters were more courageous, believers would be less timorous. It is because they live in a fool's paradise of seeming assent and conformity, that the breath of an honest and outspoken word strikes so eager and ripping on their sensibilities. If they were not encouraged to suppose that all the world is of their own mind, if they were forced out of that atmosphere of self-indulgent silences and hypocritical reserves, which is systematically poured round them, they would acquire a robuster mental habit. They would learn to take dissonants for what they are worth. They would be led either to strengthen or to discard their own opinions, if the dissents happened to be weighty or instructive; either to refute or neglect such dissents as should be ill-founded or insignificant. They will remain valetudinarians, so long as the curtain of compromise shelters them from the real belief of those of their neighbours who have ventured to use their minds with some measure of independence. A very brief contact with people who, when the occasion comes, do not shrink from saying what they think, is enough to modify that excessive liability to be shocked at truth-speaking, which is only so common because truth-speaking itself is so unfamiliar.—*John Morley.*

It is not even a Man which theologians create; for no man is quite without pity; no man, however cruel he might be, could bear to gaze for ever on the horrors of the fire and the rack; no man could listen for ever to voices shrieking with pain, and ever crying out for mercy and forgiveness.—*Winwood Reade, "Martyrdom of Man."*

Some Religious Terms.

The Bible.—A wonderful book packed with so much wisdom that it surpasses all understanding. A record of miracles used in Courts of Law for producing another miracle—a Christian liar speaking the truth.

The Immaculate Conception.—A physiological phenomenon, now unfashionable. Recipe: To one part Essence of Faith and one part Distilled Ignorance, add one part Oil of Simplicity; shake well, and wait and see.

Faith.—The Christian Beecham; ("Worth a").

Hope.—An unconscious human criticism of the divine scheme of things.

Charity.—Providence's scheme for economy by which hungry mouths are always in readiness to catch as they fall the crumbs from the rich man's table. A divinely ordained process to enable "him that hath" to make a trifle less miserable the ordained lot of "him that hath not." God's "Poor-law System."

The Trinity.—Twins with only one shadow!

Conversion.—The making of an ordinary kind of fool into a special kind of fool.

Free-will.—A theological process for proving man to be a knave, and his Creator either a fool or a cad.

Original Sin.—The signature of the Chief Potter placed on the "luckless pots he marred in making."

The Creation.—An automatically working apparatus for furnishing meat for the Celestial Soup Kitchen.

The World.—God's abattoir—minus a "humane-killer."

The Hereafter.—"A vision of fulfilled desire," or "the shadow of a soul on fire." (See Omar Khayyam.)

Hell.—The Kitchen of Heaven; Speciality, Poached Eggs on Toast, *ad infinitum.*

The Devil.—The Chef of Hell; a personal friend of all religious reformers and revivalists. He keeps a good table—genius always "in the soup."

Baptism.—Membership card for the Christian trade union. Motto: "It's better to souse than sizzle!"

The Atonement.—The Creator's penance for the blunders he made in the all-wise plan.

The Ascension.—The first "Passing of the Third-floor Back."

Priests.—Also known as "ju-ju men." A neuter sex that wears both trousers and skirts, but is neither male nor female. Occupation: dropping sand into the bearings of the social machine. Recreations: "Lying to the Glory of God"; Conjuring; Art Decorative work, *i.e.*, Painting black white, and white black.

Christian Unity.—A dream of the Shovel-hat Medicine Men, at present waiting for science to discover how fire, oil, and water may safely be compounded. A near approach to Christian Unity is seen when the outspoken unbeliever is to be prosecuted for "blasphemy"; or when he is trying to secure a rational Sunday. D. P. S.

God's Handiwork.

God made it all. Each misery, each strife,
Each vice, each crime, each bitterness of life;
And to each sin on earth He gave position—
God made it all—and man kneels in contrition.

He made the stake that tortured frames might burn,
He made the rack for holy saints to turn;
He made the gibbet, block, the thumbscrew gory—
He made the hands to use them to His glory.

Each fell disease—each pestilential breath
That drags its victims to a ghastly death;
Each want, each woe, each filthy, lewd attraction—
God made it all—and smiled with satisfaction.

ARNOLD WARREN.

The doctrines of a Trinity, of an Incarnation, and of the Death and Resurrection of a God-man are developed in Osirianism with such gravity, such moral purity, and such splendour, that we cannot hesitate to honour them by a comparison with these doctrines as developed in Christianity.—*J. S. Stuart Glennie, "In the Morning-land."*

Mr. George Whitehead in Manchester.

SEPTEMBER 24 to SEPTEMBER 30.

MR. WHITEHEAD'S opening lecture was delivered on Sunday at 8 p.m. on a piece of waste ground in Moss Side, and as it happened to be opposite a chapel many of the worshippers were soon members of our audience. The subject was "The Futility of Prayer"—a very appropriate subject under the circumstances.

On Monday and Tuesday we had our meetings at another place, and I was informed that here two clergymen and a local preacher attended and listened to the whole lecture, but afterwards walked away, not waiting for question time.

The Thursday, Friday and Saturday meetings were held in Platt Lane, and were better attended; but by Friday an ignorant and rowdy element had gathered, bent only on spoiling the meeting, and again on Saturday, two or three members of the audience were utterly unruly, and cannot be said to have observed even the elements of public controversy. During the week there were few logical remarks from the opposition—no reasoned opposition, but plenty of brawling, vilification and personal abuse.

Our books were characterized as "fit for the dust." Nevertheless, we managed to dispose of a fair quantity to the audience on some evenings, and one can only hope that they will be carefully read.

As last year, Stockport has supported us when able, and the spirit of helpfulness between the two branches is all to the good.

The writer feels that he can say with safety that the week's work will be well shown to-day (October 8) when Mr. Cohen lectures in Manchester; and after his week in our district there should also be a full hall to hear Mr. Whitehead when he returns to give two lectures next Sunday.

HAROLD I. BAYFORD, *Hon. Sec.*

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON
SEPTEMBER 28, 1922.

The President, Mr. C. Cohen, in the chair. Also present: Messrs. Corrigan, McLaren, Moss, Neate, and Rosetti; Miss Pankhurst, Miss Kough, and the Secretary.

The Minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed. New members were received for the Leeds Branch.

The report from the Propagandist Committee recommending, amongst other items, that a scheme for next summer's out-door lecture work be completed by March and afterwards sent to Branches wishing to avail themselves of the services of the lecturers, was received and adopted.

It was also reported that the summary of the Trust Deed was appearing in the current number of the *Freethinker* and would be printed for general circulation. Copies to be obtained on application to the Secretary.

Instructions were given for applications to be made for dates for lectures at Stratford Town Hall, Fulham, North London, etc., and for enquiries to be made as to the possibilities of reviving the Society's Annual Dinner.

It was also agreed that the Sunday lectures on Peckham Rye be continued until the end of October.

The meeting then adjourned.

E. M. VANCE,
General Secretary.

The Lady Beauty.

THE Lady Beauty passed our way;
My comrades laughed and called her bawd.
I marvelled much they stood unawed,
So light she passed, so queenly gay.

And as she passed, on me she smiled
A queenly smile that lit the skies—
Since when in my dull comrades' eyes
Shineth her image undefiled.

J. E. S.

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.

ETHICS BASED ON THE LAWS OF NATURE (19, Buckingham Street, Charing Cross): 3.30 Lecture in French by M. Deshumbert on "La Morale Hindoue." All invited.

NORWOOD LABOUR CLUB (Co-operative Hall, 56 Auckland Hill): Tuesday, October 10, at 7.30, Mr. F. P. Corrigan, "What is Morality?"

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W.9, three minutes from Kennington Oval Tube Station and Kennington Gate): 7, Mr. A. D. McLaren, "A Freethinker Looks at the World."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.2): 11, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., "Patriotism and History."

OUTDOOR.

CROYDON (Katharine Street): 6.30, Mr. F. P. Corrigan, A Lecture.

PECKHAM RYE.—11.15, Mr. F. P. Corrigan, A Lecture.

THE TRIANGLE, PECKHAM.—Wednesday, October 11, at 7.45, Mr. F. P. Corrigan, A Lecture.

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

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Shop Assistants' Hall, 297 Argyle Street): 11.30, Mr. S. G. Service, "Psychology—the Mechanism of Behaviour."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. Sydney T. Harris, Lecture Recital, "Songs of Many Centuries."

LEEDS BRANCH N.S.S. (2 Central Road, Duncan Street, Shop Assistants' Room): 7 p.m. Rev. W. J. Tunbridge, Oxford Place Chapel, will lecture on "What is a Christian?" Questions and discussion invited.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Rusholme Public Hall, over Free Library, Dickenson Road): Mr. Chapman Cohen; 3, "The Meaning and Morals of Materialism"; 6, "Freethought's Challenge to the Churches."

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S. (The Newcastle Socialist Society's premises, 23 Royal Arcade): Discussion Circle. The subject for next Tuesday's discussion (October 10) at 7.30 will be "Public Speaking," to be opened by Mr. F. B. Carlton.

SWANSEA AND DISTRICT BRANCH N.S.S. (Elysium Hall, High Street): 7, Mr. Joseph McCabe, "The Revolution of Civilization." With special Lantern Selections.

FREETHINKER (30), educated, desires post in Nottingham, Motor-car or Lorry Driver, or indoor position.—H. BAYLISS, 165 Pretoria Road, Birmingham.

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