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## Views and Opinions.

### The Church Congress.

When Huxley said that the Christian Church was like the Bourbon kings, it neither learned anything new nor forgot anything old, he did the Church a little less than justice. He failed to take into account the position in which the Church was placed. A society may revise its articles of association with no sense of discredit. A man may reject old ideas and accept new ones with a feeling that he is all the time acting true to principle and doing justice to himself. But how can an institution like the Christian Church discard its old teachings without confessing itself to have been in error, or accept new ones without admitting that its teachings have hitherto fallen short of perfection and that it is dependent upon mere human wisdom for a better instruction? In either case the Church sinks to the level of a mere ordinary human institution, and the character it has hitherto given itself is destroyed. It can at best take the rank of a mutual improvement society, but it forfeits all claim to possessing knowledge that others have not, or having avenues of information that are not open to others. The Church, therefore, does not merely refuse to learn new things save upon the direst compulsion, it must refuse to do so. It must hold on to what it has as long as it can, and even when it is compelled to give some things up and to take new ones from others it must pretend that it is only an elaboration of what it already possesses. A claim to completeness, if not infallibility or superiority, must be made either directly or by implication. Otherwise there is no reason why the Church should exist at all. Huxley was not, then, merely blaming the Church for acting as it has always acted; he was blaming it for being a Church. The Church dare not learn readily, it dare not forget quickly. And between the two there results that atrophy of the intellect which is a characteristic of every Church in Christendom.

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### Playing with the Truth.

When the Christian Church was alive—mentally—it had ideas. These ideas were often wrong ones, often stupid ones, but such as they were they were its own and it proclaimed them aloud with no uncertain voice. It had its own theory of the world and of

man. It had a flat earth, filled with angels and devils, with a solid heaven above and a real hell below. Its doctrine of man, his origin, nature and destiny was such as is found to-day among savages, with whom the beliefs of the orthodox Churches naturally affiliate. But still they belonged to the Church, and the Church taught them with confidence. And then things underwent a change. Bit by bit a new world was elaborated, a world that knew nothing of angels or devils, of miracles, or of special creations. In that world the Church had no logical foothold, and the time came eventually when it dare not deny the new, and was equally afraid to discard the old. So instead of voicing ideas it took to mouthing phrases, hoping that men would mistake sound for sense, and readily pay the Church a measure of their ancient deference. If one requires proof of this the Sheffield Church Congress amply affords it. The Archbishop of York, who preached a sermon in connection with the Congress assumed the air of the brave but faithful friend when he told the members present that the Church had lost its hold on the people. The courage to admit what is so patent to all hardly needs comment. It is that of the burglar who, when caught breaking into a safe remarks, "All right, its a fair cop." But having admitted this the Archbishop falls back upon phrases. And his special one has gone the rounds of the Press. It is "religion attracts; the Church repels." Wonderful! But if the Church does not stand for religion, for what does it stand? If we are to make sense of the sentence it means that the religion taught by the Church does not attract. But to say that plainly would be too dangerous. For, after all, the religion taught by the Church is the Christian religion. It may not be the sort of religion exactly that is taught by other Churches, but it is a religion, and it is a form of the Christian religion. So that if the Archbishop really means what he says, he was telling his audience that the form of Christianity taught by the Church of England, and on which something in the neighbourhood of £30,000,000 is spent every year, is played out, or nearly so. Honesty of speech is the last virtue that will flourish in the Church no matter how reformed it may become.

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### Religion and the People.

When the Archbishop says that religion attracts people, what does he mean? What religion is it that attracts? It is not the belief in a saviour-god, which is one of the essentials of Christianity. Those who really understand religion know that we are here moving in the region of pure myth. It is not the doctrine of rewards and punishments in another life, the absurdity and the ethical rottenness of that is becoming apparent to even the man in the street. A closer reading of the Archbishop's sermon shows that what he has in his mind as attracting the average man or woman is not Christianity at all. He says, "It is the mark of multitudes of men and women who are genuine seekers after true religion that they care less for individual salvation than for the salvation of the common life of man. They will not welcome any

gospel that does not help them there." But individual salvation is of the very essence of Christianity. It has been the note of Christianity right through the ages. It was the desire for individual salvation which led men and women to forsake home and family to lead the life of beasts. The gospel of rewards and punishments in another life is built upon belief in the importance of individual salvation. It is true that multitudes of men and women are more concerned about the welfare of society than they are about individual perfection in some highly doubtful future state. But that is a product of social evolution, not of devotion to the egoistic doctrines of Christianity. People are realizing to-day the truth of the teaching that the time to be happy is now, the place to be happy is here, and the way to be happy is to see to it that others are happy also. Evolution has helped the humblest of us to realize that man is before all things a social animal, that his qualities and capacities are of social origin, and have a strictly social application. And if that be true, there is simply no room in the educated intelligence for the Christian religion—that is, so long as we use the expression with honesty of meaning.

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#### The Churches and the War.

The Archbishop, as an explanation of the falling away of men and women from belief in Christianity, falls back upon the easy plea that it is the result of the unsettling caused by the war. The explanation sounds insincere, and at any rate it is terribly superficial. There is nothing in the fact of war to shake people's faith in religion. Religion and war have always gone very well together, and short as the public memory is, the way in which the clergy tried to prove that the war led to a deepening of the religious life must still be remembered, and also how heartily they lied in depicting the filth, and demoralization of the life led by the soldiers as bringing them into touch with "religious realities." The pious soldier, too, has always been a very familiar figure in religious literature. Or if it be said that it was the unexampled brutality connected with this war that led to a shaking of men's religious faith, then again the reply is that religion and brutality have not hitherto been found irreconcilable. It was strong religious faith that enabled those who were not excessively brutal to stand quietly and approvingly by while men and women were tortured on the rack or burned at the stake for a difference in religious belief. Far from the war having been a cause of men disbelieving in religion, I am of opinion that had the war continued there would indeed have been the danger of a genuine revival of religious belief. It would have meant that the world would have retrograded at a steadily increasing rate, and the nearer we get to the savage the nearer we get to genuine religion. For an uncivilized environment is the one in which religion has its origin, and the nearer we get back to that the more likely religion is to flourish.

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#### The Beginning of the End.

So far as religion is concerned the effect of the shock of the war was to awaken numbers of people to a sense of reality. For a century there had been going on a steady undermining of all religious belief, and particularly of the Christian religion. The inspiration of the Bible, the belief in the supernatural, in special creation, had been steadily weakened. The growth of the doctrine of evolution had helped all to appreciate such anti-religious arguments as were current, and in sociology the religious teaching was found to be without warranty. But still the sheer conservatism of the people, their natural inertia, secured with many an outward conformity, with others a passive acquiescence to the continuance of the orthodox creeds. The war

did not bring a single new argument to light, but it did awaken numbers to the facts. Without the development that had been going on for three or four generations the war would have left religion where it was. With these developments it acted as a spark might on a train of powder. The moral and social collapse of the Churches as institutions served to emphasize the falseness of its teachings as a body of doctrines. The Churches had for long lost intellectual respect; the war helped to rob it of the pretence of social utility. The plea of the Archbishop of York that men are "wanting a true religion as never before" is sheer cant. It is not religion that men want or need, but sane ethical and intellectual guidance, and that the Churches simply cannot give. One of the speakers at the Congress talked about the Atheistic attack on Christianity, and that is, to them, serious enough. But the most serious attack of all comes from the development of human life and knowledge. And that no Church can hope to fight successfully. It may by trickery and evasion, by appeals to the fears of some, the ignorance of others, and the self-interest of yet another group, postpone the day of its fall, but Christianity is going the way that all religions go sooner or later. How soon or how late the end comes will depend upon the extent to which those who see the truth combine to speak and act so that there shall be no mistake as to their position. CHAPMAN COHEN.

### Religious Anomalies.

At one of the sessions of the autumnal meeting of the Congregational Union Dr. Selbie, Principal of Mansfield College, read a paper on "Evangelical Faith and the Bible," in which he endeavoured to show that it is possible to accept "the assured results" of modern criticism without being guilty of any disloyalty to the evangelical creed of Christendom. Dr. Selbie was obliged to meet the objection that "it was impossible to hold and preach the evangelical faith in its entirety if we accepted the ascertained results of modern scholarship in regard to the Bible." It is an undeniable fact, as was made abundantly clear in the recent voluminous correspondence on the subject in the *British Weekly*, that there is a large number of divines in the various Churches who not only do not accept "the ascertained results" spoken of, but also resolutely deny their existence. Several prominent clergymen positively asserted that the so-called "ascertained results" of Biblical criticism are constantly changing. Indeed, as soon as the Principal concluded a short discussion took place, the Rev. Pitt Bonarjee affirming that "ascertained results" of twenty-five years ago were considerably modified to-day, and Dr. J. D. Jones going the length of protesting against the dogmatism indulged in by advocates of modern criticism. In his reply, Dr. Selbie deprecated the notion that he had any intention of even attempting to impose a higher critical dogmatism, and closed on a highly emotional key, complaining that "he was getting old and done for, and would have to leave the work to younger men"; to which the Chairman, Rev. Thomas Yates, with mock sympathy wittily retorted: "I am sorry Dr. Selbie is considering his latter end. Cheer up, Jeremiah!"

Dr. Selbie's position is both logically and ethically an impossible one. He claims to be an evangelical divine, but he by no means belongs to the old school of evangelicals. In the course of his paper he repudiated the literal views proclaimed by that school, saying, as reported in the *Christian World* of October 12:—

What did they mean by evangelical faith? If they meant what was very often implied, that the evan-

gelical faith involved certain dogmatic positions, among which were dogmas concerning revelation and inspiration, and also certain views, one or two perhaps out of many, in regard to the Atonement, if they held that that was the evangelical faith, then unquestionably it was impossible to preach that faith.

The Principal forgets, however, that the theories concerning the Bible and the Atonement which he now rejects were regarded fifty and sixty years ago as fundamental articles of religion, to cast the least doubt about which was to incur a serious charge of heresy. To the present Head of Mansfield College, the evangelical faith is a vague, shadowy, uncertain thing of the spirit, rather than of the letter, a something which it is quite impossible in terms of reason to define, "a living experience of God's redemption in Christ Jesus." This is sheer emotionalism. He said that "they were to preach the grace of God in Christ, but that they should preach it in ways that appealed to the intelligence of the young people." Surely an impalpable thing of the spirit never appeals to intelligence, its supreme appeal being always to the feelings. Dr. Selbie's own appeal was decidedly of this sort:—

They were going back to pure fetishism of the Bible, creeds and what not. There was a better way. He wondered whether the Christian Church in general and the Congregational Church in particular believed, or ever had believed, in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Had they ever really faced the antithesis between the letter and the spirit?

The pulpit has been playing endless variations upon the following saying attributed to the Gospel Jesus: "The words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life," as well as upon this expression by Paul: "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." Thus we find the Principal exclaiming: "Yield to the craving for literalism and religion dies; but keep clear and strong the belief in the spirit, and the issue will be a larger faith and a deeper understanding of the meaning of God and a nobler acquiescence in his will." As long as there are people who respond to such appeals religion will live; but it is generally admitted that the number of such people is steadily diminishing; or in other words, that the popular belief in religion is irresistibly on the wane. As certainly as knowledge grows faith declines, and fact replaces fable. Dr. Selbie speaks scornfully of "literal inspirationists," and admits that Atheistic lecturers have no difficulty in flooring them. What the Principal pours contempt upon and is convinced we shall never return to is the idea that the letter of the Scripture is inspired, his claim being that the inspiration applies to the spirit or meaning within the letter, or in other words, that the letter was supplied by man and the spirit by God. Now, words as employed by the writers of the Bible had certain meanings which alone they would naturally convey to readers; but Dr. Selbie maintains that God breathed into them other higher and nobler meanings which no man can discover except by supernatural guidance. This is obscurantism with a vengeance, and the more one thinks about it the more amazing it appears that anyone has the temerity to advocate it. It breaks down completely before the light of reason.

Dr. Selbie is apparently aware of the insecurity of his position, for he is reported in the *British Weekly* as scolding his brother ministers:—

Many ministers, he proceeded to say in a scornful tone, are just as much out of date as the Atheistic lecturers in the market-places, and the Churches ought to have made that kind of talk upon Christianity absolutely impossible. He would cry shame upon a minister who never preaches from the Old Testament, because this is the richest quarry of religious experience in the world. Nothing in this new

view of the Bible, he maintained in the concluding passage, interfered with the most absolute faith in the revelation of Christ as both Lord and Saviour.

Two things remain to be said of the address as a whole. The first is that it proves that Dr. Selbie has adopted only a selected number of the ascertained results of modern criticism in regard to the Bible. He is neither an orthodox theologian according to the credal standards nor a thoroughgoing modern critic of the Bible. This paper shows him to be the strangest mixture of a "reverent" critic and a milk-and-water divine who preaches a Gospel wholly out of date while the "Atheistic lecturers of the market-places," whom he so cordially despises, are backed up by both reason and history. He declared, for example, that the critical study of the Synoptic Gospels has demonstrated the historicity of Jesus. It has done nothing of the kind. It has, on the contrary, proved that these documents are largely legendary, and that the character they portray cannot be wholly historical. Does the Principal believe in the historicity of Matthew i. 18—ii. 23, or in the historicity of the very different narrative in Luke i. 5—ii. 20? Does he not admit with Usener, Soltau, Schmiedel, Harnack, and Bacon, all first-class Christian scholars, that, apart from the passages already specified, the whole New Testament treats Jesus as the son of Joseph and Mary? Does he not also agree with Professors Foakes Jackson and Lake, of Union Theological Seminary, Professor Bacon, who occupies the Chair of New Testament Criticism and Exegesis in Yale University, and a host of other eminent Liberal Theologians, in the conviction that the Christianity of the Churches never came from Jesus at all, but from Paul and his successors, who, as Bacon puts it, substituted the Gospel *about* Jesus for the Gospel *of* Jesus? If not, on what ground does he venture to differ from them? Are they not as great, accurate, and reliable critics, to say the least, as he and those who agree with him are?

The other thing needing to be said is that the statement, "Discover as much as we might, Christianity will ultimately be a matter of experience," is essentially and dangerously misleading. Is not this what Christianity has been throughout the ages to those who verily believed in it? To the overwhelming majority it has always been a matter of profession merely, except to those who exploited it as a means of gaining wealth and power, who in many instances did not believe in it in any other sense. The outstanding fact about Christianity, however, is that as a moralizing, uplifting, and ennobling force in social, national, and international relationships, it has proved a colossal failure. With the Prince of Peace as its omnipotent Head, the Christian Church, ever since it came into power under Constantine the Great, has been a war-instigating, war-waging, and often war-mad institution. Nominally the temple of the Holy Ghost, it has been the centre of innumerable wicked intrigues and immoral practices.

Our conclusion is that Biblical and historical criticism has completely undermined the Christian foundations and renders it utterly impossible for anyone who honestly accepts the critical results to be an honest supernatural. Such a person, if he pretends to be a Christian believer, is necessarily on the defensive all the time.

J. T. LLOYD.

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It is Character which builds an existence out of Circumstance. Our strength is measured by our plastic power. From the same materials one man builds palaces, another hovels, one warehouses, another villas; bricks and mortar are mortar and bricks, until the architect can make them something else.—George Henry Lewes, "*Life of Goethe*."

## The King of Terrors.

Oh! the divine comedy! —Ernest Renan.

Be neither saint nor sophist led, but be a man.

—Matthew Arnold.

SINCE the dawn of the Christian era the fear of death and pain has increased among the populations holding that lugubrious faith, especially among the dwellers in great cities. Fear of death scarcely exists among Asiatics, because, living in closer contact with Nature, their experience teaches them that death and life are inseparably entwined in a struggle for supremacy; that the victorious soldier of to-day is the disregarded corpse of the morrow. Under Eastern skies death is regarded as no less, and no more, than birth, and the shadowy figure with the scythe is not feared as an enemy. Inhabitants of towns necessarily acquire their knowledge of Nature from books, or from superficial and fleeting observation. For nearly six months in every year Nature is represented in the towns by fog, rain, and snow, and the necessity for fires and artificial lighting. Dwellers in mean streets, who see the sky but as a narrow strip, have little chance of meditating on the rigid processes of natural laws.

The Christian clergy, for their own purposes, exploit this ignorance. Death is, according to these pastors and masters, the "king of terrors." They heighten the effect by appealing to the fears of their hearers, and use the legendary Devil and his fearful pyrotechnics as a lever to bend people to their will. The terror such stories inspire is largely owing to the gross ignorance which surrounds the subject of death. Men fear it, as children do the dark, through not knowing what it is. The fear of the night can be dissipated by a little light. Death would be no bugbear if it were known better. And nobody is there to tell people, except a small number of devoted Freethinkers who are anathema to all the Churches of Christendom. The sermons from the clergy, archaic in thought, and inflated with nonsense, deal in generalities and exaggerations. "The wages of sin is death" is their idea of wisdom. The clergy is hopelessly out of touch with modern ideas, and even common-sense. Hence the Churches are fast emptying of men. Soon, the cure of souls will pass into the physician's hands with the care of the body. For it is now admitted that a healthy body and a sane mind go together.

Why should men fear death? It is only our nightly sleep prolonged without a waking. As Shakespeare puts it, "our little life is rounded with a sleep." Notice how the grand old Pagans look death in the face without flinching. Epictetus says proudly:—

Why should we fear death? For where death is, there are we not; and where we are, there death is not.

Equally emphatic is Marcus Aurelius, who bids us regard death as a friend:—

What is it to die? If we view it by itself, and stripped of those imaginary terrors in which our fears have dressed it, we shall find it to be nothing more than the mere work of Nature; but it is childish folly to be afraid of what is natural. Nay, it is not only the work of Nature, but is conducive to the good of the universe, which subsists by change.

Modern science shows that the Pagans are right. Sir Henry Halford, towards the close of his medical career, said few of his patients, in the last hours, exhibited signs of severe suffering. Sir Benjamin Brodie, the famous surgeon, said the act of dying is seldom a painful process. The great anatomist, Sir William Hunter, just before he died, whispered to his friend, Dr. Combie: "If I had strength enough to hold a pen, I would write how easy and pleasant a thing it is to die."

For thousands of years priests of all Christian denominations have chanted the old, sad refrain of death as an enemy, but the Freethinker listens to far other strains. Death is the universal law of Nature, which befalls all living beings, though the vast majority encounter it sooner than human beings. The terror of death is passing away now because the Christian religion itself is decaying. It is well. The Faith

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

MIMNERMUS.

## Pagan and Christian Civilization.

### V.

(Continued from page 667.)

There are those who know it (the Roman world of the time of Nero and St. Paul) almost only through the medium of the *Acts of the Apostles*, and who entertain the most erroneous notions concerning Gallio or Festus, concerning Roman justice, Roman taxation, or Roman moral and religious attitudes.....There exist denunciations of the morals of the Roman world of this date which would lead one to believe that every man was a Nero and every woman a Messalina; denunciations so lurid that, if they were a third part true, the continuance of the Roman Empire, or even of the Roman race, for a single century would be simply incomprehensible.—Professor T. G. Tucker, "Life in the Roman World of Nero and St. Paul," 1910 (pp. 3-4).

EVEN to-day, with all our boasted civilization, our cities would appear mean and ignoble compared with the cities of the Roman Empire at the height of its power. Friedländer, the great historian of Roman life and manners, says:—

Were all other knowledge of Rome lost there would be evidence enough of the great and mighty civilization that has passed away in the many ruins so widely scattered, and the immense remains of works of art found beneath heaps of debris and ashes.<sup>1</sup>

These are but landmarks of a great civilization that once extended over vast districts now desolate after centuries of barbarism. The same historian says:—

These ruins give a picture of the richness of the artistic decoration in the extremely numerous cities of importance in the Roman Empire, and make modern attempts at beautifying and ennobling private and public life by art seem mean in comparison. (p. 231.)

The Emperor Augustus Caesar, just before the beginning of the Christian era, boasted that he found Rome a city of brick and left it a city of marble; his biographer, Mr. Firth, says:—

The boast was not an idle one. His board of public works enjoyed no rest. The number of great public buildings erected under his supervision will compare favourably with the record of any monarch, either before or after his time.<sup>2</sup>

Nor did the great emperor do this merely for his own aggrandisement. He built no gorgeous palace for himself; for forty years he lived in a modest house on the Palatine that had previously been the residence of a citizen. When this was destroyed by fire, in the year B.C. 6, the Roman citizens insisted that it should be replaced by a building more in keeping with the dignity of the owner's position. When the palace was finished, he allowed the public free access thereto, and affected to regard it as belonging to the state rather

<sup>1</sup> Friedländer, *Roman Life and Manners Under the Early Empire*, Vol. II., p. 231.

<sup>2</sup> J. B. Firth, *Augustus Caesar and the Organization of the Empire of Rome* (pp. 201-202).

than to himself.<sup>3</sup> The life of this great world ruler was a model of simplicity.

The pleasures of the table had no attraction for him, his tastes, both in eating and drinking, were of the simplest. He ate when he was hungry, without regard for stated hours, and then his favourite food consisted of coarse bread, small fish, cheese made of goats' milk, and green figs.....His beds and tables were long carefully preserved to show the simplicity which had contented the founder of the empire.<sup>4</sup>

Nor was Augustus singular in this respect. Titus completed the Colosseum, and erected the famous baths. Domitian added many new buildings, with a stone stadium for 30,000 people, and an Odeum for an audience of 10,000. Trajan, who was lauded for his frugal administration of the treasury and the magnificence of his public works, lavished money on aqueducts and baths, roads and docks. "But," says Sir Samuel Dill :—

The prince of imperial builders and engineers was Hadrian. Wherever he went he took with him on his journeys a troop of architects to add something to the splendour or convenience of the cities through which he passed. "In almost every city," says his biographer, "he erected some building." But the capital was not neglected by Hadrian. He restored historic structures such as the Pantheon and the Temple of Neptune, the forum of Augustus, and Agrippa's baths, with no ostentatious intrusion of his own name. In his own name he built the temples of Venus and Roma, the bridge across the Tiber, and that stately mausoleum which, as the Castle of St. Angelo, links the memory of the Pagan Empire with the mediæval papacy and the modern world. The example of the imperial masters of the world undoubtedly reinforced the various impulses which inspired the dedication of so much wealth to the public service or enjoyment through all the cities of the empire.<sup>5</sup>

But great as these works of the Roman Emperors were, they form but a small part compared with the works executed by private and municipal enterprise :—

In forming an estimate of the splendid public spirit evoked by municipal life, it is well to remind ourselves that much has necessarily been lost in the wreck of time, and also that what we have left represents the civic life of a comparatively brief period. Yet the remains are so numerous that it is almost impossible to give any adequate idea of their profusion to those who are unacquainted with the inscriptions.<sup>6</sup>

It would have been utterly impossible for the richest state to have provided funds to erect all the magnificent buildings and public works with which the towns and cities of the empire were provided in such profusion. They were the result of the lavish generosity of the public spirited citizens of the empire.

There was in those days an immense "civic ardour," an almost passionate rivalry, to make the mother city a more pleasant and a more splendid home.<sup>7</sup>

Take the case of Pliny the younger, whose letters are so well known. Dill says :—

Pliny has a conception of the uses and responsibilities of wealth which, in spite of the teaching of Galilee, is not yet very common. Although he was not a very wealthy man, he acted up to his principles on a scale and proportion which only a few of our millionaires have yet reached.....With Pliny, as with those more obscure benefactors, the impelling motive was love for the parent city or the village which was

the home of their race, and where the years of youth had been passed. Pliny, the distinguished advocate, the famous man of letters, the darling of Roman society, still remained the loyal son of Como, from which his love never strays.<sup>8</sup>

Pliny followed and improved upon the example of his father in munificence to his native place. He gave a sum of nearly £9,000 to provide a town library with a yearly endowment of more than £800 to maintain it. He gave another sum of between £4,000 and £5,000 to Como for the support of boys and girls of the poorer class. He left more than £4,000 for public baths, and a sum of £16,000 to his freedmen, and for communal feasts. His private benefactions, says Dill, were on a similar scale. He placed large sums at the disposal of his friends in their need, and to his old nurse he gave a small estate at a cost of about £800. "But," says the same historian :—

The amount of this good man's gifts, which might shame a modern testator with ten times his fortune, is not so striking as the kindness which prompted them, and the delicacy with which they were made. (p. 194.)

Yet Pliny is only one example of a multitude of more obscure benefactors many of whom conferred much larger gifts. The records inscribed in stone of these benefactions are known to us in great quantities, says Dill :—

These memorials abound for those who care to read them. And anyone who will spend a few days, or even a few well-directed hours, in examining the inscriptions of the early empire, will find many a common, self-complacent prejudice melting away. He will discover a profusion of generosity to add to the beauty, dignity, or convenience of the parent city, to lighten the dulness of ordinary life, to bring all ranks together in common scenes of enjoyment, to relieve want and suffering amongst the indigent.<sup>9</sup>

The benefactions of Herodes Atticus were astonishing, almost fabulous; they extended to Corinth, Thessaly, Euboea, Boeotia, Elis, and Athens. He gave an aqueduct to Canusium and Olympia, a race-course to Delphi, a roofed theatre to Corinth, provided sulphur baths at Thermopylæ, helped in the restoration of Oricum in Epirus, and liberally aided the resources of many another decaying town in Greece. The objects of his liberality were as various as the needs of the community—temples, theatres, bridges, baths, markets, a portico or colonnade, relaying roads or pavements.

There has probably seldom been a time when wealth was more generally regarded as a trust, a possession in which the community at large has a right to share. There never was an age in which the wealthy more frankly, and even recklessly, recognised this imperious claim.<sup>10</sup>

Herodes Atticus used to say that the true use of money was to succour the needs of others. The many Christian millionaires in Europe and America, made by the late war, might learn a lesson from this Pagan. What are they doing with their wealth? W. MANN.

(To be Continued.)

God, the creator and preserver of heaven and earth, whom the first article of our creed declared to be so wise and benignant, had not displayed paternal care in thus consigning both the just and the unjust to the same destruction. In vain my young mind strove to resist these impressions. It was impossible; the more so as the wise and religious themselves could not agree upon the view to be taken of the event.—Goethe (on the Lisbon Earthquake of 1755).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 203.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, pp. 347-349.

<sup>5</sup> Dill, *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, p. 228.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 226.

<sup>7</sup> Dill, *Roman Society*, p. 195.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. 193.

<sup>9</sup> Dill, *Roman Society*, pp. 194-195.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p. 231.

## The Menace of Liberty to Human Progress.

THE above title may sound rather alarming to those serious and enthusiastic reformers who seem to think that restraint and coercion are the chief curses of humanity, and whose energies are concentrated on the removal of the temporal and spiritual barriers which have been set up throughout the ages in order that mankind in the mass should be restrained and disciplined in the interests of a powerful minority usually composed of the strongest, subtlest, and probably the most unscrupulous individuals of any given period in the world's history.

It had always been a problem to me to account for the lack of common-sense that obtains in the conduct of civilization, but, apparently, no less a philosopher than Goethe was beset by the same insane arrangement of mundane affairs, as evidenced by the quotation you published a short time ago wherein he comments on the state of the European nations.

"The conditions of our existence," says Goethe, "are far too artificial and complicated. Our food and mode of living are not natural and our social intercourse is not loving and benevolent. One cannot help often wishing," he concludes, "that one had been born a so-called savage on some South Sea Island, that one might have enjoyed a thoroughly unalloyed human existence."

Goethe may have had visions of some gem set in the South Pacific where, 'neath the palm trees' shade, dusky maidens would wait upon him with luscious fruit picked without regard to the cost of living or the freak resolutions of a Trades Union Congress.

He must also have been aware of the native skill with poisoned spears, their fiendish delight in "head-hunting," and the stew-pots in which they boiled their enemies, varying the diet occasionally with some unfortunate missionary who should have stayed at home enjoying the safer delights of a mothers' meeting. Probably Goethe included all the rough incidents of savage life with the smooth, but he certainly made a strange choice of locality in which to find love and benevolence, though we are forced to admit that the more savage and hideous we find human-kind the more they are looked after by their Heavenly Father, who usually places them in the fairest spots on the earth.

At the same time we must not lose sight of the fact that there are different methods of "head-hunting," and a well-aimed blow with a rugged "knobkerry" is far more soothing and merciful than the fate of the civilized man who has to spend his life in servitude, and in the event of a long dose of unemployment is practically compelled to cut his own throat to dodge the landlord and the tax-collector.

Goethe's outlook on the world is shared by many serious thinkers to-day, and some of them are under the impression that religion in general, and Christianity in particular, stand in the way of human emancipation.

Remove the priest and the parson, and the golden age will be upon us, the lion will lie down with the lamb, and a little child would weave daisy chains about a python's neck.

When I broke away from the Roman Catholic Church my enthusiasm for liberty knew no bounds. I got a severe attack of what has been aptly termed "the malady of the ideal." I exhorted the mob to "stand on their feet like men," and look out on the world with their own eyes. I did not know then where the lamb would be when the "king of the forest" lay down to digest him. Neither did I then appreciate the restraining and sanitary influences of the Churches in general, and the useful work they performed in assisting the police to maintain order and

secure liberty to those who by mental capacity are only privileged to enjoy it. I was compelled to admit that the Voice of Philosophy had spoken to the world for ages and its appeal to the dignity of man was still unheard. We had achieved in the realms of art, music, literature, and industry everything that should go to make life worth living, and in our relations with our fellow-man we insisted that order should be maintained, and no one must intrude without due cause on the privacy of another.

And still there was plenty of work for the common hangman. Convict prisons were always up to the normal, and lunatic asylums showed no decrease in the number of those who had been "smitten by God's frown."

Then the Great War came along, and for the last seven years Dame Nature has been grinning at the idealist in his advocacy of peace between the nations, and his pathetic attempts to reform the world by telling us to be "respectable" and lead unblemished lives, so that, in the words of Mr. Vincent Hands, we may line up with Christian ministers to be lauded to the skies as "the Christ that is to be."

This was all very well when man believed he was a special creation with the attributes of the God who would eventually take him to his heavenly home, in which comforting belief generations have lived and died, accepting their trials and tribulations in this life as a passport to greater glory in the celestial kingdom.

For many years I, too, was a pilgrim through this Valley of Tears in search of eternal bliss till Darwin drew my gaze from the stars and brought me down to our common ancestry, and I found myself linked up with the other strange and fearful denizens of the planet forever engaged in the bitter struggle for existence.

Man the animal had been revealed with the result that our attitude towards our fellows is now changed, and, in matters such as freedom and liberty, must be gauged in accordance with the peculiar values Nature sets upon them. Prior to the advent of Darwinism the world had undoubtedly accepted standards of life and culture possessing elements which sought to raise the character of mankind, and that is the reason why I discern a charm in the sympathy that underlies Christianity, the calm, tranquil selfishness cultivated by the followers of Buddha, and the glorious Pantheism of the ancient Greeks which has, for all time, impressed the world with its idealistic worship of the beautiful.

And still, in spite of all these elevating tendencies, Shakespeare, in his day, found "the world was out of joint"; Goethe laments the chaos amongst the nations, George Bernard Shaw insures his life before he ventures to Ireland, and the death of Michael Collins creates a deeper sensation than the most delightful symphonies composed by Haydn or Beethoven. There must be something wrong somewhere, and it is the duty of serious thinkers to endeavour to solve this mystery which seems to mar the progress of humanity. One would think that even crude Socialism would remove many of our difficulties as it is an appeal to our temporal rather than our metaphysical needs, and the glaring inequalities of life are so apparent that one wonders why so little headway is made in the attempt to convince the community that the first essential in an ordered state is a man's right to a decent life in return for service rendered for the general welfare.

Other "isms" have just as dismally failed, but it may yet be proved that the action of the violent anarchist—either engaged in mapping out the destruction of thousands of lives in a general's tent, or hurling the bomb at an individual—provides a useful clue to the solution of the difficult problem as to why harmonious relations should not exist between men as

units, or grouped together in nations as we find them to-day.

It is largely a question of physical and mental evolution, and the scientist of the future will find it imperative, in his research work on sociology, to probe much deeper into the question of man's ascent from the lower animals than the point indicated by Darwin, who confined our ancestry to those apes most nearly approaching the physical attributes of man. To me it is absolutely essential to take some types of mankind almost back to the stage of the protoplasmic slime so far as their development is concerned, and I also think that too much attention has been given to our direct arboreal ancestors and not sufficient to the more appalling fact that man, as the apex of the tree of evolution, has evolved from and partakes of the instincts, cunning, and desire of life that have animated every living thing that this planet has known.

This being admitted, it logically follows that inasmuch as the animal kingdom is constantly in a state of warfare as the law of its being, so we may expect to find in man conflicting strains derived from particular lines of evolution which make it absolutely impossible to secure safety unless we adopt methods of restraint such as loss of personal liberty and coercion.

AGNES WEEDON.

(To be Concluded.)

### Acid Drops.

When the Lord gave to the Christian nations of the world—with special reference to British Christians—the guardianship of a large portion of the earth's surface, he thoughtfully arranged it that the Chinese people, who number about a fourth of the human race, should have a strong leaning to peace, and a marked teaching against militarism. That was wise, and showed evidence of design in Nature since it would have been foolish to have given Christians the right to take charge of the earth and at the same time have made non-Christians strong enough to resist them. So for a long time the Chinese continued an easy prey to all sorts of Christians who wished to shoulder the burden of looking after them. England, France, Germany and others relieved the Chinese of the burden of looking after a great deal of their territory, and the Christians thanked God that he had so wisely inspired the Chinese to act as they did.

So far all went merry as a marriage bell. Then the Chinese began to bethink themselves of looking after their own affairs, and looking at their Christian benefactors they saw that one way of enforcing the Lord's will was by means of gunboats and armies. So some of the Chinese began to also dream in terms of armies. But the development of military adventurers in China appears to have led to great discontent, and we now find that there is a strong movement in China in favour of the disbanding of the army. Judged by all the canons of Christian civilization that is a great mistake. And if China learns aright the lesson which Christianity has taught and is teaching the world it will recognize that the right way to teach the gospel of human brotherhood is by way of poison-gas and bombs. For the Christian God is a mighty man of war, and how can the simple Chinese expect the Christians of Europe and America to refrain from taking on the "burden" of controlling as much of China as possible if she discards the holy "gospel of pike and gun"? The soldier and the priest are the pioneers of Christian civilization. Nay, they are Christian civilization. The sacred character and the indispensability of both are the outstanding contributions of Christianity to the history of the world.

At the Church Congress at Sheffield last week Dean Inge spoke very disparagingly of certain aspects of religious "conversion." He said that a considerable proportion of the converted was made up of victims to

the drink habit. General Booth, of the Salvation Army, is asking his people to pray for the Dean. The General seems to think that the Dean's heart is "lifted up with pride," and pride is nigh unto destruction.

The Dean also declared that many of those who know the outwardly respectable and religious on earth will not greet with enthusiasm the latter's appearance in heaven. Some of the newspapers criticize the very reverend gentleman's remarks as being too "light and airy" for such an occasion. At one time he was censured for his gloominess. If the Dean continues in his recent vein, these journals will regret that they tempted him away from his native soil.

Mr. Pike Pease, M.P., said that probably not more than three per cent. of the young population of this country attend regularly any place of worship. It is worthy of remark that adherents of the Christian religion are quite prepared to talk in this strain in order to make an impression inside the flock. Yet on other occasions defenders of the faith declare roundly that the youth of England never desired the removal of restraints in regard to Lord's Day observance. Could men of personality or character one degree higher than that of a suburban hawker ask for, or accept, exemption from taxation in the face of such apathy concerning the worth and influence of religion?

Mr. Fred Hughes assured the Congress that "they," presumably the supporters of the Labour cause, "could not surrender the claim of Christ to rule the business world." Mr. W. L. Hichens, chairman of Cammell, Laird & Co., said that business should be conducted in accordance with the laws of the Gospel, but they differed as to how far the Church should go in applying the divine law. There is real vision in this utterance. It gives more solid information about both business and divine law than a whole library of learned comment.

The *Daily Telegraph*, in a leading article on the same subject, finds that "adherence to the Christian ethic is not incompatible with success in business." This sentence, too, bears the mark of the trained hand. But it is by no means original. Samuel Smiles and Thomas Binney were at considerable pains to bring home to believers the same profound truth. And their teaching and preaching did not fall upon deaf ears in Christian England. Such men contributed their quota bravely to the diffusion of a spirit of confidence in the ranks of the Nonconformist manufacturer, while the Establishment's henchman kept a watchful eye on the spiritual welfare of the landlord.

"I am best off the face of the earth," was the pathetic statement made in a note left by the Rev. F. R. Hoare, rector of Birkin, whose body was recently recovered from the local canal. We have no wish to gloat over such happenings, but Christians are fond of emphasizing the restraining influence of belief in a future life, especially when an Atheist does anything to provoke their censure.

Next month will see the Borough Council elections, and an East End parson, the Rev. E. W. Grevatt, issues a solemn appeal to Christians to see to it that those who hold wicked Atheistical opinions are kept off the new bodies. It seems that some people are about who teach that there is no god and others who hold that Jesus was only a good man alongside with Buddha. And those who teach these things must be kept off the Borough Councils. So says the Rev. E. W. Grevatt. But what one would like to know is on what ground it is held that Christians must rise and see that none but those who hold their peculiar opinions shall hold public office? The only ground that we can see is the one that furnished the reasons for suppressing heretics in the past, and now seems good for suppressing them—so far as is possible—in the present. For the difference between shutting a man out of civic life because his opinions on Christianity are

not "sound" and suppressing him altogether is one of degree only.

The Sheriff of Des Moines (U.S.A.) is during off-hours a parson, and the other day he was called on to hang a man. On this occasion he played the dual part of Chaplain and hangman, and so—we assume—received double fees. While hanging the man he recited parts of scripture. We have no doubt that the condemned man felt duly grateful at being hanged by so godly an executioner.

Mr. George Lansbury says that Jesus Christ was crucified because he was a disturber of the rich man's peace. We are afraid that Mr. Lansbury has a New Testament of his own, for neither in the copy that we have, nor in the histories of Christianity we possess do we find support for that view. To teach non-resistance to evil, to declare that the things of this world do not matter, that it is the duty of a man to turn one cheek when the other is smitten, that all that matters is man's salvation in the next world, has never yet disturbed the rich man, and certainly it has never helped the poor one. The truth of this is shown by the fact that right through history the figure of the meek and suffering Jesus has been held before the people as an encouragement for them to suffer in all patience. Mr. Lansbury might reply that the rich have used the New Testament for their own ends. That may be quite true, it is quite true. But the fact of them seizing on the New Testament and heavily subsidizing its teachings is proof that they saw in it a teaching well suited to their purpose. We should like Mr. Lansbury to shake himself free from the atmosphere of mere sentiment with which he surrounds himself and set him seriously to answer the question of why it is that Christianity has in every country been eagerly embraced by those who wished to keep the people "in order." He might then discover more in Nietzsche's dictum that Christianity taught a slave morality than at present he appears to see.

The *Christian World* (October 12) throws an instructive light on the present religious condition of English Protestantism. Professor S. W. Green, M.A., speaking at New College, said that "the craving for a fixed and final authority was an infirmity of human nature, and would never be met by an infallible Church or an infallible book." Dr. John Skinner finds that the criticism of the past two generations leads to a better comprehension of the nature of revelation. Principal W. B. Selbie declares that the intelligent young man of to-day will have nothing to do with the view that the Bible is a fixed and unalterable quantity. What becomes now of Germany's Higher Criticism as a main cause of the Great War? Also, what view of the Bible do Christian missionaries present to the simple-minded natives whose souls they are out to rescue?

According to Dr. Rashdall, Dean of Carlisle, the terms in which the creeds of the Anglican Church are expressed are repugnant to many conscientious persons. The *Morning Post*, commenting on this statement, sounds a note of warning. "To begin the process of revision is to embark upon a task fraught with endless perils." It certainly is. And, unfortunately for the Establishment, not to begin is also "fraught with endless perils."

The *Westminster Gazette*, writing on "The Church and the Age," urges all Christian organizations to "go forth wayfaring for the simple democracy of the unecclesiastical Jesus." Like so many of our contemporary's ambitious efforts to achieve something lyrical in its editorial columns, the passage quoted comes very near to bathos. "Wayfaring" and "go forth" are quite along approved lines; but "unecclesiastical" is a barbarous mouthful which will make Christian Socialists shudder. They know the tricks of the trade much better, and their simple call, "Three cheers for Jesus Christ!" makes a more profound impression on the crowd.

*Chambers's Journal* recently contained an article on some Edinburgh literary homes, which gives a few in-

teresting details about Carlyle's earlier days. In 1826 he wrote to his brother:—

By Jane's (his wife's) express request I am to read a Sermon and a Chapter with commentary, at least every Sabbath evening to my household!

Did he ever do anything else all his life? We don't think Thomas required much pressing into this service. No wonder poor Jane often complained of unendurable headaches!

About this period Carlyle was devoting much time and attention to German literature. He said he was tired to death of Goethe's and Schiller's palabra about the nature of the fine arts. "Poor fellows, and poorer me, that take the trouble to repeat such insipidities and truisms." On this subject, however, his mind later underwent a considerable transformation. But he never got rid of the preaching habit.

The general effect of this habit, or malady, on the English and Scotch national characters would be an interesting subject for some of our psychologists to handle. We do not know any other people in whom it forms so prominent a feature of the national life. It even colours a good part of our literature. "Advanced" writers, like George Eliot, are not entirely free from the infection.

The Principal of Ridley Hall, Cambridge, told the Church Congress that during the war a considerable portion of the Western religious world was on its knees supplicating the divine intervention on behalf of those in the trenches. We do not doubt it. In fact it is what one would expect of those who believe in prayer. And we expect that those who prayed would attribute the return of those who were saved to the influence of their prayers. The surprising thing is that these people have not enough mental independence to ask themselves why some returned and others did not. Imagine worshipping a God who, having the power to save the men in the trenches, allowed between three and four millions to be killed! It is useless replying that he saved those whom he would. That only adds stupidity to folly. And sensitive folk would surely ask themselves why some were killed and some were saved. And if they answered that question honestly there would be an end to their prayers for the future.

Viscount Halifax is urging upon the "national" church reunion with Rome, under papal authority. Dr. W. H. Hutton, Dean of Winchester, deplors the dissension in Christendom caused by the Reformation. That event rent the seamless robe of Christ, and the tear is still there and visible. One can only say that it is a pity. One supreme Orthodox Church has some chance of ruling in "power and glory." "Eternal verities" hold out little prospect of bringing this goal within sight of even the most eager of soul-savers.

Such pleas for reunion have, of course, been warmly welcomed by the Roman Catholic Press. And it must be admitted that there is not much in the way of mere doctrine to separate some Anglicans from Rome. Incense, candles, vestments, and the real presence can all be had inside the Establishment. The Roman Catholic organs, of course, warn the Anglo-Catholic, very sympathetically but very solemnly, that not one of the rites and ceremonies of his Church is "sacramentally efficacious." This warning only moves him, or a good many of him, to indignation. "Meek and lowly were his ways." These words were not written of Anglo-Catholic reverends, nor of the editors of Roman Catholic journals. If he of whom they were written could suddenly appear in the midst of either group, what would they do with him?

In France 2,000 sheep followed one another over a cliff into a deep ravine, the leader having been startled by a dog. Nearly all were killed. Those interested will please note that the favourite term for a Christian community is sheep. "Ye are my sheep." There is no physical likeness between Christians and sheep.



### C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

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.

H. ANTILL.—Thanks for the efforts you are making on behalf of the *Freethinker*. We wish that all would insist upon their newsgagents giving the paper fair play. We might, if they would, soon be at the end of our financial worries.

J. W. DOUGHTY (Transvaal).—The first book you name was by an author named Mitchell. "Hypatia" was the *nom de plume* of an early nineteenth century writer.

W. MACGILLIBAY.—No apology is necessary. We are pleased to find our writings of use to you in local controversy. We write to be read, and whether the readers are interested in this journal or in some other matters little. If the arguments are sound they will do their work wherever they appear.

J. W. GOTT FUND.—Since closing this Fund, the amount asked for having been more than subscribed, we have received the following which have been added to the total announced last week: C., 10s.; R. Bell, 5s.; J. Lazarnick, 5s.; A Few Spitalfield Friends, per F. Collins, £1; Ewan Davies, 5s.; F. Pack, £1 1s.; E. Wilson, 5s.; R. W. B. P., £1 1s.; H. O., 1s.; Govanite, 1s.; Govanite, 2s.; R. Young, 10s.; G. F. Shoults, £2; W. A. Williams, 2s.

Corrections: The 10s. acknowledged last week from J. Partridge should have been per J. Partridge and from Messrs. Reed, Collins, Terry, and Brotherton, 2s. 6d. from each. "M. & E., £2 2s.," should have read from the "Metropolitan Secular Society."

This Fund is now closed.

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.

### Sugar Plums.

The Glasgow Branch made a good start with its season's lectures on Sunday last. In the morning every foot of floor space was crowded, and the large City Hall was comfortably filled in the evening, with the exception of the back of the large gallery, which alone holds as many as would fill a good sized hall. Mr. Cohen's lectures were

followed with close and sympathetic attention, and we should say there is no doubt whatever as to the progress Freethought is making on the Clyde. We should like to see other parts of Scotland as active as the Glasgow Freethinkers, and are quite sure they would meet with an equal measure of success. Mr. Cohen has promised a return visit at the end of January, and if these other parts would get busy he might be able to arrange to stay in the district for a week.

To-day (October 22) Mr. Cohen will lecture in Preston, a town he has not visited for many years. His subject will be "Freethought and the Social Question," and the lecture will be delivered at the Independent Labour Party's rooms, Glover's Court, Opposite the Town Hall, and will commence at 7.15.

Mr. A. D. McLaren's meeting in Katharine Street, Croydon, last Sunday was one of the best he has had this year. He spoke for more than an hour on "The Triumphs of the Faith," and the stream of questions at the conclusion would probably have run on till midnight if the speaker had not been obliged to rush off to catch the train. Many N.S.S. leaflets were distributed and eagerly accepted. Mr. McLaren will speak again in the same place this evening (October 22) at 6.30 on "Christianity, Secularism, and Morals."

Only indirectly we have just learned that there was some of the old fashioned opposition at Mr. Whitehead's recent open-air lectures at Manchester. A number of young Christian rowdies assembled at several of the meetings with an obvious intention of creating a disturbance. At one time, we are informed, the meeting had quite an ugly aspect, but the arrival of several policemen taught some of these followers of Jesus to exercise a little caution. We are glad to learn that Mr. Whitehead faced the storm in a very calm manner and continued to deliver his lectures in spite of all that could be done to prevent him. That course is bound to tell in the long run. Bullies are invariably cowards, and the next time Mr. Whitehead visits Manchester he will, we feel sure, reap the benefit of his courage on this occasion. When these ardent young Christians find rowdyism only helps to point the moral of the Freethinker's lecture they will probably give it up as hopeless.

Mr. J. T. Lloyd lectures this afternoon and evening (October 22) for the Manchester Branch of the N.S.S. The meetings are held in the hall over the Free Library, Dickenson Road, Rusholme, at 3 and at 6.30. Mr. Lloyd's subject in the afternoon will be "Ghosts," and in the evening "The Star and the Manger." We hope local "saints" will do everything possible to ensure successful meetings, and if they can bring a Christian friend with them, so much the better.

On Saturday evening (October 21) the Manchester Branch holds a social in the same premises. Those who have organized these socials have left no stone unturned to make them a success. We hope their efforts will be rewarded by a large attendance.

We note that our old friend, Mr. F. E. Willis, of Birmingham, is a candidate at the coming municipal elections. He is standing for the Ladywood Ward, and his return will ensure Freethinkers one member on the Council who will see to it that justice is done between those who believe in religion and those who do not. We hope that all Freethinkers who can will see to it that Mr. Willis is returned with a good majority.

Next Tuesday evening (October 24) at 7 o'clock, at the N.S.S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C.4, the first meeting of those desirous of forming a Discussion Circle will be held. Mr. Cohen will open the discussion, and all who are interested in the project, whether members of the N.S.S. or not, are cordially invited to attend.

## The late George R. Sims and "The Christian Faith."

UP to within a few weeks of his death Mr. Sims wrote in the *Referee* about Adam and Eve as though they were our first parents and all the various races of mankind had descended from them. Of course he knew that Darwin contended that man had come from an ape-like ancestry because I had discussed the matter with him on more than one occasion; but so far as I know he remained unconvinced on that subject to the day of his death. Not only did he believe in the Bible story of the making of Adam out of the dust of the earth and Eve out of a rib extracted from his side while he slept, but incredible as it may seem, he believed in the still more absurd story of the alleged Fall of Man through eating forbidden fruit taken from a tree in the garden. I have heard him laugh over the story many times when I have criticised it, but still he continued to write about it as though it were true; no doubt he recognised that that story was the very foundation stone of his faith, for if the first Adam did not fall, what need was there for the second Adam to come down from heaven to die to blot out the sins of mankind? And so it must be said that he clung on tenaciously to what Gladstone used to call "the narrow ledge of Theism" and the other two fundamental doctrines I have just mentioned. But it has often been said that a man's disbeliefs, in matters of religion, are of more importance than his beliefs. It is gratifying, therefore, to the friends of Mr. Sims to know that he had no belief in a person devil, indeed, as far as I can remember, he agreed with the greatest of all dramatists, Shakespeare, that there was only one devil, and that was ignorance. Further, he hated the orthodox Christian idea of a burning hell with every drop of his English blood. Like myself, he had heard Spurgeon's fulminations against unbelievers and the dreadful prospects of a warm reception awaiting them as well as those Christians who were not "called," and therefore not truly converted, after life's brief spell on earth. He had also heard the fiendish doctrine proclaimed with all its attendant suffering, in language which could only produce a shudder of abhorrence in the frames of every self-respecting person. We discussed this horrible teaching in the early 'eighties, and again ten years later, and even later still, when a few of the more advanced clergy were beginning to modify or get rid of the teaching altogether.

On one occasion, in our tours over London Mr. Sims brought his Foreign Secretary with him, Mr. A. E. Armfelt, or "Count Armfelt" as he sometimes called him, a gentleman of noble birth from Algiers. This gentleman, who was a man of fine culture and a charming personality, had travelled all over Europe, and like Mr. Sims could speak fluently in several languages. Sometimes I think Mr. Sims brought him to discuss with me some of my alleged wicked heresies, because Mr. Armfelt had lived among the Turks, and understood the main features of the Mohammedan faith, as well as those of other religions. Mr. Armfelt assured me that when he was in a foreign country and lodged at the house of a Mahomedan it was a great comfort to him to see his host go down on his knees, before he laid him down to rest, and pray; then, indeed, he felt secure, just as he felt when he stayed at the house of a pious Christian. I replied that I had heard of religious men who were very treacherous, and sometimes murdered their guests.

With his wide experience of the world Mr. Sims had to admit that he also had known of such cases. And so we glided off into another direction and with other arguments, and finally Mr. Armfelt declared with great gravity of countenance that he thought it a great mistake to attack any form of religious belief;

indeed, if people were sincere, no matter what their faith, nay, even though we knew their faith to be absolutely erroneous, it was best in his judgment to leave it unquestioned, because their belief in it was a great comfort to them. My reply was that in that case we should never get any progress in religious beliefs at all—and if we were logical we should accept all religions without enquiry—and then we should be sure that among our numerous faiths we had got the right one. Mr. Sims laughed at this retort, and his friend did not advance any further arguments. With regard to prayer I have every reason to believe that Mr. Sims had no belief in the efficacy of prayer at all—except perhaps in the subjective sense—that it might help those who believed in it. Early in his career Mr. Sims wrote a little dramatic poem called "Jack's Yarn," which was reprinted in the columns of the *Freethinker* on two or three occasions under the editorship of our friend the late G. W. Foote, and which I should like to see at least once again in these columns, for this little poem is a direct attack on the question of the efficacy of prayer. About the year 1890 Mr. Sims began to attack Socialism in the *Referee* with great vigour and persistency without in the least appearing to understand the scientific and evolutionary aspects of the question, and he continued these assaults up to the end of his career. Himself an individualist of a very pronounced type, he had nothing but the greatest contempt for the man who he considered wanted to live on the labour of others. Mr. Sims was a successful man who had won his way into the front rank of his profession by sheer hard work. It was his proud boast that he worked sixteen hours a day for a living, and he could not understand a working man who objected to work more than eight hours a day without wanting extra and sometimes double pay, even if he was prepared to exceed those hours at all. And when the Bishop of Manchester in a strong speech declared that if everybody put into practice the chief teachings of Jesus the country would soon be landed in moral and physical bankruptcy, it was not surprising to find that Mr. Sims heartily supported him. He could not accept literally such teachings as "Sell all thou hast and give to the poor and follow me"; "Give to every man that asketh of thee, and from him that taketh away thy goods, ask them not again" (Luke vi. 39); "Blessed be ye poor for yours is the kingdom of heaven" (Luke vi. 20); "And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek turn unto him the other, and him that taketh away thy cloak, forbid not to take thy coat also" (Luke vi. 29); "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew v. 3).

When was it good for a man to be poor in spirit? Ah, indeed, when? To be poor in spirit at all times was to be trampled on by the proud and the tyrannical, and to be poor and miserable in the past, as it is to-day, was to be the slave and tool of any unscrupulous rascal who cared to take advantage of you. This was the view that Mr. Sims accepted and which he proclaimed on every available opportunity. However, it is only fair to say that he regarded the Jesus of the Gospels as a historical personage, though he considered some of the alleged miracles were accretions that had grown round the career of the Nazarene before the Gospels were written. For example, he did not believe in the story of the devils being cast out of the body of a man only to take possession of the bodies of a number of poor unfortunate pigs, whose constitutions were so disturbed that they ran furiously down a steep pit into the sea and were drowned (Mark v. 13). Nevertheless he was inconsistent enough to believe in the virgin birth of Jesus, and the alleged resurrection following the crucifixion. These are only some of the peculiarities of the modern Christian mind.

When, however, an earnest and clever man like Mr.

Sims said he believed such things I felt bound to accept his word, because if I did not, I knew that I should lay myself open to the retort that neither did he believe that I believed in the doctrines and principles which I declared I did believe. This *tu quoque* argument in such a case is never very satisfactory; it proves nothing and is entirely unconvincing. Mr. Sims, however, always hastened to assert that he believed in all the beautiful and reasonable teachings of Jesus, such as:—

Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Matt. v. 8, 9, 10.)

Do unto others as you would they should do unto you.

And so on.

Sometimes in the *Referee* Mr. Sims wrote of Jesus as "Our Saviour," but he never informed his readers what in his judgment Jesus saved us from. He could not have meant from ignorance, from prejudice, from superstition, because he must have known that Jesus never did save mankind from any of these things; nor could he have meant from war, famine, or disease, because these have existed and flourished at various times in all the great nations of the earth. But if Mr. Sims only meant saved in the conventional meaning of the term, viz., from sin against God, he only used words that had no real meaning. How can finite man sin against an infinite and all powerful God? Such a thing is an impossibility.

So far I have tried to describe, as well as I am able, some of the beliefs and disbeliefs of the famous journalist and playwright extending over a period of close on forty years. It now only remains for me to say that I always found Mr. Sims a most lovable personality, generous, large hearted, active in the service of his fellows, and with a real love of children, genuinely interested in social reforms that made for the improvement and the well-being of the masses of the people. In addition to all this he was a splendid man of business, which of course helped to make him so successful in many departments of life.

On one occasion I asked my friend, the late Mr. W. J. Patmore (Mr. G. R. Sims' private secretary), how two men of such strong individualities as Robert Buchanan and Geo. R. Sims could possibly collaborate together. Mr. Patmore smiled. Robert Buchanan, said he, is a very clever man, but he is a dreamer; on the other hand Mr. Sims is a practical man of the world, with a fine capacity for business, as well as a strong dramatic instinct, and in the long run these latter qualities prevail. But he agreed with me that in controversy on the problems of religion Mr. Sims was no match for his poetical and dialectical confrère.

In my previous article I told how Mr. Sims as a young man misrepresented the manner and teachings of the late Charles Bradlaugh. Therefore, I am delighted to be able to record the fact, that a few months before his death Mr. Sims read the latest *Life of Charles Bradlaugh*, by his friend and co-worker, The Right Hon. John M. Robertson, and in the *Referee* paid a fine tribute to the sterling qualities and noble aims of the very "much misunderstood" champion of the people, not only as a great political reformer, but also as the great "Iconoclast" who did much to shatter the idols of an old and effete superstition.

Some of the critics have lately disparaged Mr. Sims as a poet, but I always considered and still regard him as a very good one indeed. Here are a couple of verses from one of his early poems. It is one which his friend and late confrère, Mr. H. Chance Newton ("Carados"), considered one of his finest poems. It

was called: *Le Quart d'Heure de Rabelais*, and ran thus:—

Who counts the cost when tables groan  
And round the flagon passes?  
Let care beneath the board be thrown  
Among the broken glasses.

Laugh on, toil on, from morn till eve,  
Through night and noon and daytime,  
Till broken health shall pluck your sleeve,  
And death proclaim it "Paytime."

And as all readers of the *Referee* know, Mr. Sims worked up to within a few days of his death. And these were among his last lines:—

"You need a rest," my doctor said,  
Just speaking to me as a friend,  
I took his hand and shook my head,  
"God keep me busy to the end."

For idleness I have no zest,  
Time is not ours in sloth to spend,  
Since life is work and death is rest,  
God keep me busy to the end.

And now he has gone to his long rest, and thousands who knew him only by his works will mourn for a long time the loss of such a fine strong character from our midst.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

## Islam and Freethought.

UNDER the above heading, Mr. A. W. Malcolmson indulges in some interesting criticism on a sermon which I delivered at the Mosque, Woking, on the occasion of the last Eid, dealing with some of the reasons which in my opinion should lead a scientific mind to believe in the existence of some Great Unseen Mysterious Power, styled by us Muslims, Allah. The writer, however, tends rather to a confusing of issues and ideas, discounting the value and charm of his criticism by his method of handling a subject which demands above all, coolness—and the restraint which accompanies it—for its worthy consideration. Instead of combating my conclusions, he would have done better to have attacked my arguments, which I sum up here very briefly.

Everything in Nature is obedient to law. Every atom, every combination of atoms, including man himself, must obey that law slavishly. The old theory of Nature and its empiric blunders is over and done with. The best intellects in Biology and Freethought, including Haeckel, have revised their briefs. Matter has been rejected as the First Cause and something styled "Law-Substance" has taken its place. There may be a hundred and one laws at work in Nature, but they all converge on one purpose, and it is this that has led the scientific mind to accept the doctrine of Monism—that is to say, the universe as a whole derived from one agency—and that agency has been called by Haeckel, "Law-Substance" for want of a better name.

In short, law is, and must be obeyed, if the world is to go on at all. Every phenomenon of the universe, every phase of humanity bears witness to this fact. Law is "The Obeyed" entity; and in this connection the reader will perhaps be interested to learn that the word "Allah" which is the object of worship with Muslims, literally means "The Obeyed." The difference then between an advanced Freethinker and a Muslim would seem to be a difference of but one step. We accept the Great Mind as the Source of the Law, whereas the Freethinker, if he attaches any weight to scientific truths (and if he does not, we need not trouble him) does not go beyond the Law and denies the existence of any Mentality as behind the Veil.

There is not an organism—no, nor even an inorganic entity—but has within itself the process of

growth and progress, so long as it remains subject to the Law. The moment it ceases to be so subject, it begins to wither and become decomposed. It may assume a new and useful development, if it again comes under the working of the Law, emanating this time immediately from a human mind. A piece of wood detached from a tree loses further growth, but it may be converted into a chair, a table and the like, when it comes again under the dominion of the working mind.

In all human activities is not this dead matter, when worked out anew into something useful under some principle, an undeniable proof of a working mind? Why not in the case of the whole universe where the whole growth has been from the birth of Time, under an unchangeable Law? If the existence of the exchange girl controlling the whole machinery of the telephone system can be rightly traced to a mind, that is to say, to the inventor of the telephone—why may not the existence of the brain in the human frame be traced to another mind? The brain performs the same functions in animal organisms as the girl in the telephone exchange. Whenever we need something there is a call in the brain recesses through the in-going nerves (afferent) coming from certain members of the body; and the brain atoms answer the call through out-going nerves (efferent). On the same principle the human mind has devised that development of military organization known as "the brain of the army," or General Staff. This military system has been modelled on the working of the human brain, the several units of the army representing the members of the human body. The stomach, for example, when hungry, must inform the brain of that hunger, by means of the in-going nerve and the brain through the out-going nerves takes the necessary steps for satisfying the need. And is there not discernible a curious inconsistency in those who, while crediting the human mind with the organization of the "brain of the army," shrinks in effect from assigning to that mind itself any origin at all?

I can confidently assert that whatever reasons induce us to connect work of the human hand with the promptings of the human mind will apply with equal cogency to prove the presence of the Great Mind.

Mr. Malcolmson when speaking of the Theory of Causation is plausible enough when he says: "We might go on like that *ad infinitum*, like recurring decimals, and still be no nearer to a solution of the problem of the origin and cause of the universe." But this only serves to show our own inability and ignorance; our ignorance of a thing does not necessarily mean that the thing does not exist. We Muslims confess our inability to know everything of God. According to the Qur-an, we might go on like that *ad infinitum*, as Mr. Malcolmson says, and there again we shall be continually finding the Laws of Creation, Sustenance and Preservation which will compel us to believe in the existence of the Mind who is our Creator, Sustainer and Preserver. Of course those who assert "God is knowable," and have seen the new Epiphany at the Cross, can be put to the ever unsuccessful task proposed by Mr. Malcolmson.

It was scarcely necessary for Mr. Malcolmson to bring Muslim worship into the discussion at all, more especially in the apparently jocular vein he has chosen to adopt in dealing with a subject sacred to others. Our conception of worship goes beyond physical movements and gesticulations. If the word Allah in Arabic means "The Obeyed," the word "ibadat," which stands for the English "worship," in Arabic literally means "obedience." With a Muslim, to worship God means to obey him, which must mean to obey his laws, whether spiritual, moral or physical. We feel no shame in following those laws slavishly, nor can Mr. Malcolmson even, neglect to do so. Mr. Malcolmson,

like every other human being is a chained slave of the law. For his very life he cannot afford to do otherwise than obey it. Laws are unchangeable and inexorable in their penalty if broken. Where then lies the difference between Mr. Malcolmson and myself? Mr. Malcolmson, too, must bow his reluctant head to the authority of the law. With me, law becomes merely an idol, a fetish, if my worship is not meant for the Mind from which the law emanates. I have a mind which can frame laws and which, in this sense is above the law. In worshipping Allah, the Source of the Law, mind bows to Mind. If physical movements are only an index and expression of mind, our falling on the ground is simply an indication of submission to the laws of the Obeyed One, and in this, I for one see no occasion for ridicule. Mr. Malcolmson is perfectly welcome to attack the principle on a rational basis, but the form used for the indication of the principle is a side-issue; and sportive treatment of a side-issue should not be regarded as adequate or indeed any substitute for serious thought.

KHWAJA KAMAL-UD-DIN.

The Mosque, Woking.

### South African Jottings.

WHAT with heavy taxation, the high cost of living, labour troubles and unemployment, one would not imagine that dwellers in the homeland had too much spare cash. From the South African Press I learn that Bishop Talbot of the Transvaal is now on a cadging expedition to the Old Country "to raise funds for the Transvaal Missions." He will be entertained by another "returned empty," Bishop Furze of St. Albans. Seeing that Bishop Talbot comes from the richest province of the Union this visit of his is distinctly instructive. How is it, we may ask, that these ecclesiastical mendicants cannot squeeze enough from the pockets of their dupes in the Golden City, that they must batten on their dupes at home? The fact of the matter is that Church people here in South Africa are accepting their spiritual wares at a lower and truer valuation. They object to stump up; and the majority of them don't care a continental whether the Church sinks or swims. Incidentally, too, the poor bishop must have a cheap holiday sometimes at the expense of the faithful. Then, too, there is his tennis, golf, and motor-car to be thought of. And, alas! these luxuries are simply unattainable without hard cash. Hence the colonial bishop must periodically call upon the faithful in the homeland to dub up and look pleasant. Bishops are funny animals, and I wonder what the ethnologist of the future will have to say about them. Here in the Orange Free State we have a truly remarkable specimen, who shies like a skittish mare at evolution, psychology, and physiology. He simply has no time for them, but is a dab hand at golf, extreme unction, and cheap wit. He is putting the editor of our leading daily right, and dictating what should and should not appear in a leading article. Like all new brooms he would fain sweep clean, and scientific theories must go to the rubbish heap. He must be near akin to that well-known specimen of his kind—Wilberforce—that *Homo Sapiens* who declared apropos of Darwin's "Origin of Species," "that the principle of natural selection is incompatible with the word of God." Or, like his brother Lightfoot, who, with truly marvellous ingenuity, calculated that man was created by the Trinity on October 23, B.C. 4000. The Bishop of Bloemfontein tells us that "Christianity killed slavery; that if it were supported it would kill war." It is true that a still more sapient representative of the episcopal species, *viz.*, Bossuet, hotly maintained that "to condemn slavery was to condemn the Holy Ghost," and that another, to wit, Las Casas introduced negro slavery into the West Indies, but these were both of the Roman variety. Every school-boy knows, or should know by this time that natural selection is now one of the accepted facts of science, and that the age of the universe is calculated not in thousands, but in thousands of millions of years. If natural selection be incompatible with the Word of God, and natural selec-

tion is a fact, then it follows that the "Word of God" is false, which is precisely what the materialistic philosopher has ever maintained. But if the dear, good bishops have flopped out on the fields of biology and geology, their defeat in the field of history is no less conspicuous. And if history reveals anything at all, it proves that Christianity afforded all the necessary ethical justification for slavery as an institution, and that far from killing war it has done all in its power to promote it. Bishop Welldon defends war on the ground that it promotes virility, and one of the stock jobs of these "Lords Spiritual" is the blessing of war flags and battleships.

The bishops and clergy of South Africa are now very busy on a great faith-healing stunt, and from far and near they are raking in the halt, the sick, the lame, and the blind to be cured by their champion imported Healer and Miracle Worker, a layman of the name of Hickson. A great wave of emotion has swept over the credulous elements in both town and country, and Hickson is acclaimed as the "man who has worked miracles." The scenes at the crowded churches are said to baffle description— Lourdes is eclipsed! Vivid accounts of "authenticated" cures are being published in the Press. Unfortunately nothing more than the statements of the clergy are to be had. And as no competent medical testimony is so far forthcoming—not even names and addresses of the cured ones—the sceptic fails to see where "authentication" comes in. As immense crowds of a highly susceptible disposition have been gathered together, we know from the psychology of the herd that "suggestion" is quite likely to work some cures here. But if so, there is nothing at all wonderful in the fact. Psychic experts elsewhere in Europe are doing excellent work, it is said, every day, and in France numberless clinics exist. But these experts are too honest to claim that there is any element of superstition about the business, nor do they profess to do it in the name of Jesus Christ or any other dead and gone human. Supernaturalism is only another expression for the ignorance of primitive savagedom written larger; and unfortunately we have plenty of that breed still with us.

The Anglican Bishop of Mauritius is in the soup. Like Brother Talbot he, too, went home on a cadging stunt. He wanted a modest little sum of £2,000 or so, and worse luck (for himself) didn't get it. The home people simply wouldn't respond, and the bishop got very soured. He informed an interviewer, so says the *Daily News*, that the failure of his mission meant that the orphanage girls would be turned out to prostitution or for sale to the Mohammedans. He appears also to have made other serious remarks reflecting grievously on the moral tone of Mauritius. Bitter articles are now appearing in the island Press, and the Government has cabled home to Mr. Churchill and the Bishop for an explanation. The Bishop, who is now on his way to the island, is promised a warm reception by the industrial associations there. This bishop asked and received not, quite contrary to what his gospel led him to expect. But instead of venting his spleen on the unfortunates of his diocese, why does he not blame the Master who has left him in the lurch? It seems somewhat blackguardly to impute immorality in this promiscuous fashion, and the islanders would not be human if they did not resent it. It is a good sign that the homeland people are waking up a little. Charity should begin at home, and probably if they knew as much as South African Colonists do about these episcopal mendicants, they would stop supplies altogether. SEARCHLIGHT...

Harrismith, South Africa.

To pass an hour with Goethe now and then will reinvigorate our belief in the much-derided ideals of life, it will make us remember our common humanity, it will lift up our eyes beyond clouds and planets and comets to those fixed stars which, though they may be useless to lighten our streets, light up our minds with visions of heavens above heavens, and in the fierce tempests of life remain after all our only true guides to steer our vessel bravely through winds and waves to a safe harbour.—  
Max Müller.

## Correspondence.

### FREETHOUGHT AND THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—If all newspapers had been as consistent in their opposition to war as the *Freethinker* has been, if they had only shown the same intelligent appreciation of the causes which give rise to war, and had been as anxious to cultivate the *peace mind* instead of the *war mind* in their readers, war might well be a thing of the past. Nevertheless, I feel I cannot endorse your criticism of the League of Nations. That the League has failed is, alas! only too true; but the world cannot afford that it should be disbanded on this account. The League, it must be remembered, *can only be effective in so far as we make it effective*; it has no autonomous power and authority apart from that with which *we* invest it; the failure lies not so much with the League as with *us*. Not only the apathy of the masses, but the failure of those who, whilst agreeing with the principles it stands for, are not wholeheartedly according it their moral support and strengthening it by intelligent criticism *from within*, is largely the cause of its present ineffectiveness.

Among many questions which the League has attempted to deal with is the universal adoption of an eight-hour working day. It recommended this, and the various signatories to the covenant were under the obligation of bringing it before their various parliaments for ratification *within twelve months* of the recommendation. Germany was one of the powers who did this, and they agreed to give effect to it if England did the same; over twelve months has elapsed and it has not yet been brought before our parliament for ratification. The same thing happened with a recommendation that no woman should work during the six weeks preceding and the six weeks following child-birth, and that the State should make provision for her during this period.

Now Sir, if the League is to be effective, *we* must see to it that our representatives carry out the edicts of the League. I recommend all Freethinkers to join the League of Nations Union (if they find the local secretary is a parson, all the more need for them to join and keep an eye on him!) study its literature and the doings of the League, give it their support—and *then criticise it as much as they like*.

VINCENT J. HANDS.

### EVOLUTION AND DARWINISM.

SIR,—Mr. Herbert Lord objects to Darwinism because Life "becomes the result of a series of accidents." An accident, according to the dictionary definition, is something that happens by chance. There is no chance or accident about it; science does not recognize chance as a factor in any of the operations of nature. We only describe things as happening by chance when the factors or causes are unknown to us. One may predict with confidence that the sun will rise as usual this day month, but one cannot predict if it will rain or be fine on that day. Yet both events are equally determined by preceding events; neither of them happens by chance.

Mr. Lord actually resurrects poor old Paley from the tomb to which Darwinism consigned him. Paley was once used as a text-book at Cambridge to lead the undergraduate to God, but was scrapped many years ago and forgotten by everybody but the Christian Evidence lecturers. The steps appear to be these: First you accept Lamarck, who leads you to "Creative Evolution," then you are ready for Paley, who, with his famous watch in hand will conduct you to the Creator, and presently you will find yourself on your knees with Uncle Tom in his cabin, a candidate for the New Jerusalem.

I am not going to argue as to the respective merits of Darwin's and Lamarck's speculations. The subject was thoroughly threshed out in the latter part of the last century; there is a vast literature upon the subject, contributed by the best scientific minds of the time, and after a prolonged investigation and exhausting discussion, an overwhelming verdict was given in favour of Darwin and against Lamarck, and now a few brilliant literary men who detest the methods and aims of modern science are trying to overturn that verdict with their pens.

Mr. Lord says: "That mind is the product of a series of accidents I certainly cannot believe. Mind must be at the beginning of biological evolution." This is putting the cart before the horse. We know that at one time our solar system was a nebula of rarefied gas which during countless ages by the operation of natural laws evolved into the state of things as we have them now. Does Mr. Lord believe that mind was operating in this nebulous gas from the beginning? We only know of mind in connection with a bodily organization. Are we to understand that mind, in the beginning, existed without an organization? If not, and mind then existed with an organization, then we have our old acquaintance God back again, and it is difficult to understand why the Creative Evolutionists do not openly join up with the Deists.

"Creative Evolution"—the very name suggests a Creator; that is why the religious welcome it so enthusiastically. Professor Lloyd Morgan in an address to the British Association in 1921 chose the expression "emergent evolution" as a contrast to creative evolution. Life, consciousness, mind, morals and religions emerge when the conditions which give rise to them are fulfilled. They are not causes, they are results. W. MANN.

#### THE QUEEN AND THE BIBLE.

SIR,—The story that Queen Victoria handed a Bible to an African chief with the remark that it was the source of England's greatness is a myth. Coloured pictures representing the kneeling African receiving the Bible were familiar as grocers' almanacs forty and fifty years ago, but no such meeting took place, and, as you say, this was emphatically denied by a Court official while Queen Victoria was still living.

But the excuse for the story had better be given. It is put forward by the Rev. Charles Bullock, author of *The Queen's Resolve*. The Rev. Henry Townsend, of Exeter, returned from missionary work in West Africa in 1849 bearing a letter and a piece of cloth as a present for Queen Victoria from Sagbua, Chief of Abbeokuta. The African chief was never in London, and the missionary never saw the Queen. But the Earl of Chichester presented the cloth, and sent at the Queen's command a letter which stated not that "the Bible was the secret of England's greatness," but that "England has become great and happy by the knowledge of the true God and Jesus Christ.... In order to show how much the Queen values God's word she sends with this as a present to Sagbua a copy of this word in two languages—one the Arabic, and the other the English." This letter was printed in full in the *Church Missionary Intelligencer* for 1849. Out of this the picture and the whole fiction grew. R. S. P.

#### THE INGRATITUDE OF THE "REDEEMED."

SIR,—For one may I thank you for your valued article in your last issue. I consider the matter discussed to be one of the greatest moment. Since all human acquisitions, unlike inborn qualities, have to be conveyed artificially by the aid of speech to the next generation, it follows that, if neglected, all gain is for ever lost until re-fought for and won by subsequent generations. This fact creates a parental duty of cardinal importance, viz., to inform our children of the Egypts, the Red Seas, the Sinais, and the wildernesses through which our forefathers had to pass to enable us to enjoy the Canaan of freedom.

If Freethinkers imitated the Jews in this respect there would be no loss of won territories and no practical indifference or apparent ingratitude.

Many years ago I advocated the establishment of Freethought Sunday Schools for the sole purpose of making the rising generation fairly familiar with the history of two origins—that of Christianity and that of Freethought.

A helpful aid for the purpose of keeping the names of those heroes who braved the prison, the gibbet, and the faggot, as well as the malice, the execrations, and the calumnies of society, green in the memory of successive generations would be a cenotaph erected in their honour, and for us to lay upon it, year by year, our grateful wreaths.

What wealthy "legatee of freedom" will start a subscription list for that noble purpose? KERIDON.

## 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.

N.S.S. (62 Farringdon Street, E.C.4): First meeting for formation of Discussion Circle, Tuesday, October 24, at 7 p.m. Mr. Chapman Cohen will open the discussion.

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. F. P. Corrigan, "Immortality! Fact or Fiction?"

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.2): 11, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., "The Last Judgment."

#### OUTDOOR.

CROYDON (Katharine Street): 6.30, Mr. A. D. McLaren, "Christianity, Secularism, and Morals."

PECKHAM RYE.—11.15, A Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Corner Technical Institute, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7, Demonstration. Speakers: Messrs. R. H. Rosetti, Warner, H. C. White, H. Hicks, A. C. High.

### COUNTRY.

#### INDOOR.

LEEDS BRANCH N.S.S. (2 Central Road, Duncan Street, Shop Assistants' Room): 7, Mr. John W. Mann, "An Auxiliary Language," Questions and Discussion invited.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. C. E. Ratcliffe, "Morality and its Problems."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Rusholme Public Hall, over Free Library, Dickenson Road): Mr. J. T. Lloyd, 3, "Ghosts"; 6.30, "The Star and the Manger."

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S. (The Newcastle Socialist Society's premises, 23 Royal Arcade): Discussion Circle. The subject for next Tuesday's discussion (October 24) at 7.30 will be "The Importance of Money," to be opened by Mr. A. Bartram.

PRESTON (I.L.P. Rooms, Glover's Court, opposite the Town Hall): 7.15, Mr. Chapman Cohen, "Freethought and the Social Question."

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