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Views and Opinions.

If Christianity Goes?

The gentleman who once a week deludes the readers of the *Times* into the belief that they are reading sound philosophy and up-to-date theology, the other day propounded the question, "What would happen if we deliberately abandoned Christianity as being false or useless?" The form of the question is significant of the innate crookedness of Christian mentality. A perfectly straightforward mind would have taken the two issues as only one. If a thing is false it is not likely to be really useful. As truth is no more than a working harmony between ideas and facts, to say that a thing is not true is only another way of saying that it is in conflict with facts, and with facts we must sooner or later deal. But that is not the way that a Christian training and Christian tradition puts it. Right through the history of Christianity the policy has been to teach as true that which the Church found useful to its purpose, with the consequence that the importance of truth in our dealings with the world remains unrecognized by the mass of the people. So instead of an enquiry on the really vital issue, what we get is a column of words ending with the assurance that Christ hastens to disclose himself to "responsive faith," which being interpreted means that he only bothers with those who already believe in him. And one would imagine that it is precisely those who do not believe to whom he should pay the greatest attention. In plain English Christ will have nothing to do with critics—and that is evidence of common-sense on his part.

* * *

Are We Christian?

Now what really would happen if we deliberately resolved to abandon Christianity? Of course this is a very crude way of putting it, but I am following the *Times* specialist. Beliefs are never deliberately abandoned, they are outgrown. You can no more deliberately abandon a belief than you can abandon the shape of your nose. Still, let us suppose that we are confronted by a world that is without any belief in Christianity. What would happen? And, after all, we are not dependent here upon pure theory. We can appeal to facts. A large part of the existing world—considerably more than two-thirds—if it has not abandoned Christianity, does not believe in it. And before Christianity appeared the world saw the rise and fall

of great civilizations, to all of which their religions appeared as essential as does the religion of the *Times*' writer appear to him. In all these civilizations the fundamental things of life go on with no ultimate reference to the beliefs about the gods. Men and women are born, they grow up, they hate and love, they fight and feast, laugh and cry, and in the end go out into the eternal silence, having made their contribution—great or small, good or bad—to the life around them. If we can once rid ourselves of a little of that tremendous egotism which the Christian religion has done so much to encourage we shall probably realize that the question of whether a civilization is possible without Christianity is not really a debatable proposition. The world has answered that question very definitely. And once we get beyond certain geographical areas—other things equal—it is noticeable that this three-fourths of the world shows no desire and no tendency to believe in Christianity. They have heard of it in theory and they have seen it in practice. And having observed it in both directions have come to the conclusion that they can get on very well without it.

* * *

Our Christian Teachers.

As it is quite clear that the fundamentals of life are in no wise dependent upon the belief in Christianity, can it reasonably be claimed that Christianity gives conspicuous strength to any particular virtue? So far as peace may be considered a national or human desideratum the present state of the world is sufficient answer to that. The war which has brought the world to the verge of ruin may be said to have had its origin wholly in Christian centres. For centuries the piratical enterprises of the Christian European nations have been leading up to this one end. They have gone all over the world land-grabbing and plundering and killing, till they have taught the non-Christian world, if it needed the lesson, that the only thing that could guarantee them protection against the armed international piracy of the Christian nations was military strength. No one can claim that the Christian nations have held up before the world the ideal of peace. On the contrary, they have given their best endeavours to make the soldier one of the most conspicuous figures of our life, and to impress the rising generation that before all things we must achieve military strength. The actual message of Christian civilization has been, "Get ye an army and a navy, and all other things shall be added unto you." Apart from this there is nothing in which Christians stand conspicuously superior to other people. They are neither the most sober, the most truthful, the kindest, nor the most tolerant of people in the world. Perhaps the one thing in which Christianity stands, historically, pre-eminent is the degree to which it developed the art of vindictive persecution in relation to religious opinion. And it has all along persisted in so glorifying itself and in slandering the culture of other peoples that it has made self-deception and actual hypocrisy two of the outstanding characteristics of every community where the Christian religion is strong.

What Is There Left?

Suppose, then, the world achieved the miracle of deliberately rejecting the belief in Christianity, what would it lose? The fundamental relationships of life would remain unaltered. Children would still get born, they would grow up feeling the full effects of their social environment which, in the long run, would determine the kind of character that would establish itself. Men and maidens would still fall in love, with all the inevitable consequences of the attraction of sex for sex. The glories of the heath and the grandeur of the hills, the lure of the unknown and the delight of conquest, all the beauties of art and science and literature would remain with us even though Christianity were entirely swept from the human mind. There are a thousand curious and beautiful things left in the world apart from religion. Human nature itself is in no sense dependent upon Christianity for its qualities, and certainly owes nothing to it for their higher manifestations. Science clearly owes nothing to Christianity, save the remembrance of the long and bitter fight with it for existence. Art and literature grew up independently, however much economic considerations may have led to their association with the prevailing religious system. And the attractions of this life are not yet so pallid and so insignificant that it needs another to make it endurable. The disappearance of a Church would leave society little more affected than it is by the disappearance of a government; and the waning of a creed can no more affect the essentials of life than can the passing of a theory of political economy.

Nearing the End.

After all, it is not a question of our deliberately abandoning Christianity. That, as I have pointed out, is an impossibility. No one can deliberately abandon a belief. One may profess a belief that is no longer held, and that is the case with thousands to-day. But by the time one has come to the stage of seriously talking of deliberately abandoning a belief it has been already lost. One does not give up a belief, one simply outgrows it. And that, again, is the case of the majority of thoughtful people in this and other countries in relation to Christianity. For the Christianity that is held is not the Christianity that is enshrined in the creeds of any of the Churches, it is not the Christianity that meets us in the pages of history. Often it is no more than a name for a set of emotional attachments to certain associations and ceremonies, and often a name for beliefs that are no more Christian than they are Buddhist or even Atheistic. But the great truth is, people are abandoning Christianity as the result of pressure that is irresistible because it is the product of the whole of civilization. How can a man believe in the miracles of the Churches or of the Bible in a world which has familiarized us all with the conception of natural law? How can we believe in the actual historicity of the story of Jesus Christ when comparative mythologists and anthropologists have traced for us every element of that tale, commencing in the nightmare-like beliefs of the primitive savage and thence onwards through all the modifying stages that advancing knowledge has forced upon the professors of religion? How can one who thoroughly appreciates all that science has to teach him believe in a God when he knows how all the gods have originated from illusions or the ignorance of primitive humanity? For a long time men and women may close their eyes and their ears to the obvious inferences from the facts in our possession? There is, after all, a limit to mental as well as to physical endurance. And the task of carrying the load of primitive superstition which is implied by honest assent to Christian doctrines is becoming more than the educated mind can easily bear. The *Times'* writer

is putting his question wrongly. It is not a question of supposing what will happen if the world abandons Christianity. It is only a question of how long it will be before the world has completely given it up in favour of beliefs of greater intellectual respectability.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Religious Mania in America.

TIME was when America was enthusiastically extolled as the land of the free and the heaven of the poor. Liberty was the popular motto of the country. The enslaved and badly paid workers of this country were urgently exhorted to emigrate to the United States in order to be recognized and treated as human beings. Many farm labourers in particular took the advice and ere long became farm-owners. On entering New York harbour the first object that greets the eye is a magnificent statue to Liberty. Unfortunately, however, America can no longer be praised as the land of the free. Even politically and morally it is steadily being converted into a country in which man is robbed of many of his natural rights. The Prohibition Act, for example, is rapidly manufacturing a nation of hypocrites. In religion the lack of liberty is more striking still. Theologically America has always been more hopelessly creed-bound than any other Protestant country in the world. This fact probably accounts, at least in some measure, for the appearance of so many religious cranks, with their endless "isms," in the great Republic. Revivalists have always been very numerous, and some of them most fanatical, in the land of the setting sun; and more than once this country has been inundated by them. "Billy" Sunday, the most remarkable of them all, has not yet honoured Great Britain with a visit. It appears that there is a greater number of religious sects in America than in any other country known to us. Even modern Spiritualism had its origin over there.

For the last year or two, according to the *New York Herald* of August 13, the great controversy in America has been between religion and Darwinism. This is how the *Herald* pithily puts it:—

Deuteronomy or Darwin? Genesis or Gorilla? Evolution or Adam's missing rib? Toward which belief is Christianity tending? For more than a year now there have been feverish discussions in all sorts of publications over this apparent tendency of Christian believers to split into two camps, one holding rigidly to the authority of the Bible, the other rejecting the supernatural and the supernormal as regards man's origin and descent and accepting the views of science, biologists, geologists, and anthropologists. The controversy burns hotly, with William Jennings Bryan, never so happy as when in theological dispute and as when shooting at the critics of faith his great stock question, "Why does a red cow that eats green grass give white milk?" vigorously lambasting the evolutionists, and asking us how we like the idea of being descended from Joeko the Monk.

No politician is better known in America than Mr. Bryan, who has on several occasions stood as candidate for the Presidency. He is one of the greatest orators in the world, and naturally his splendid oratory has proved an irresistible attraction in the campaign he is waging against Darwinism. He has been addressing immense audiences throughout the States, declaring that Darwinism is the falsest and most ridiculous theory of which the world has ever heard, because "it enthrones selfishness as the controlling principle and judges man by brute standards and then closes the door of heaven against him." He also says with great bitterness that "Darwin is the man whose birthday is celebrated in universities whose professors do not recognize the birthday of Jesus Christ." Fancy an

audience of three thousand people listening to such trash as that! And yet a whole-hearted Christian believer has no moral right to indulge in any other kind of talk, for if Christianity is true Darwinism is of necessity false. On the other hand, if the theory of evolution is essentially accurate the Biblical doctrine of man is a lie, and every deeply honest man is bound to choose the one and repudiate the other. Both cannot possibly be true. That a man of Mr. Bryan's brilliant gifts should see his way clear to believe the Bible and disbelieve Darwinism is almost incredible; but if he can do so honestly he is perfectly consistent in his opposition to the Darwinian theory, or any other theory that throws discredit upon the Bible and Christianity.

The *New York Herald* informs us further that "evangelists all over the country are thundering at the evolutionists, they who decline to believe that woman was made out of one of Adam's ribs, particularly since Adam's male children seem to have as many ribs as his female descendants, or the story of Jonah's voyage in the cockpit of a whale, and so on." That is more or less true of evangelists everywhere. Usually they are ignorant men who attack science without really knowing what its teachings are. One comes across them every now and then in Great Britain, and finds that they invariably appeal, not to the reason but to the emotions. In this country two eminent journalists, Messrs. Chesterton and Belloc, and many clergymen are zealous anti-evolutionists; but Darwinism has taken a deeper and firmer root in the public mind here than it has as yet done in America, with the result that anti-evolutionist agitation on this side does not have so marked an effect as it does on the other side of the water. In America the campaign causes an immeasurably more fiery sensation than it does among us. The *Herald* has an article from the pen of the Rev. W. G. McPherson, of Yonkers, in which the writer expresses his conviction that the Bible is true from cover to cover. The reverend gentleman has the amazing temerity to make the following statement:—

Why do some Rationalists propose to accept the miracles of the New Testament and reject the miracles of the Old Testament? The New Testament is no more substantiated than the Old. Both have been proved beyond the shadow of a doubt as trustworthy history by outside records. Take the Book of Genesis, against which the Rationalists are at war. You know how for many years they have objected to every statement made in the Bible that doesn't deal with a perfectly matter of fact occurrence. They discredited the Flood. Dr. George McCready Price, eminent scientist, professor of history and biology, has proved in his books that the Genesis account of the Flood is true.

A perusal of Mr. McPherson's article shows how utterly disqualified the reverend gentleman is to sit in judgment upon Darwinism. He does not understand what evolution means as expounded in the illustrious naturalist's hypothesis. Take the following sample of the quality of the article:—

If evolutionists like Dean Robins and Mr. Fosdick are right, that beasts can bring forth men, then men can bring forth beasts, and fishes can bring forth birds, and a bird-fish can bring forth a bird-fish-beast, and a bird-fish-beast can bring forth a bird-fish-beast-man. And this would be a worse confusion than hell. Let us thank God that no beast or reptile produced Adam and Eve, as their flesh was of another kind, and they could bring forth only "after their kind." If man was not of woman or of beast, then he must have been of God—a special creation.

A more horrible caricature or travesty of the evolutionary theory could not be perpetrated. Mr. McPherson has been preaching, the *Herald* says, "to great crowds in the Tent Evangel," which proves that his performances are hugely enjoyed, though he almost

always hits his opponents below the belt. No wonder the *Herald* declares that he "out-Bryans Bryan in his defence of the Scriptures and of all the statements made therein." He is a man of faith who hates and in his dealings with life's problems ignores knowledge. We could easily conceive of him as praying thus: "O Lord, save us from thinking; help us to believe." He really belongs to the Dark Ages; his presence in the twentieth century is a flagrant anachronism.

The theologians whom Mr. McPherson represents call themselves Fundamentalists, whose policy it is to shut the doors of Christian fellowship against all who refuse to pronounce their shibboleths. There are Liberal theologians in America not a few whom the Fundamentalists denounce as traitors to the Christian Faith and decline to recognize as Christian disciples. Among these are Professors Bacon, Foakes-Jackson, Lake, and Harry Emerson Fosdick. The last named is minister of the First Presbyterian Church, New York, and one of the most popular preachers in the States. The *Herald* of August 13 contains an able article by him, which is in reality a reply to that by Mr. McPherson. Dr. Fosdick's main points are the following:—

A great mass of new knowledge has come into man's possession; new knowledge about the physical universe, its origin, its forces, its laws; new knowledge about human history, and in particular about the ways in which the ancient peoples used to think in matters of religion and the methods by which they phrased and explained their spiritual experiences; and new knowledge about other religions and the strangely similar ways in which men's faith and religious practices have developed everywhere. Now there are multitudes of reverent Christians who have been unable to keep this new knowledge in one compartment of their minds and the Christian Faith in another. They have been sure that all truth comes from the one God and is his revelation. Not, therefore, from irreverence or caprice or destructive zeal, but for the sake of intellectual and spiritual integrity they have been trying to see this new knowledge in terms of the Christian Faith, and to see the Christian Faith in terms of this new knowledge....The new knowledge and the old faith cannot be left antagonistic or even disparate, as though a man on Saturday could use one set of regulative ideas for his life and on Sunday gear to another altogether. We must be able to think our modern life clear through in Christian terms, and to do that we also must be able to think our Christian life clear through in modern terms.

This is a beautiful and lucid statement of the problem which confronts Liberal theologians and of the method by which they are endeavouring to solve it, and it is evident that Dr. Fosdick represents a higher type of mentality than that displayed by Mr. McPherson's article, but the former knows as well as we do that in proportion as a man accepts the new knowledge the old faith dwindles away. Many doctrines which our fathers regarded as absolutely essential and fundamental to the Christian creed have been completely discarded by the Modernists, while others are so stated as to be shorn of their ancient meanings. If the Bible is fallible it is no longer God's Book, and if it is not God's Book it cannot reveal him. All religious authority is, therefore, of necessity a thing of the past. Christianity has become its own ghost, having been divested of that neat body of doctrines in which it once dwelt. It seems to us that Modernism is a sort of halfway house between Christian Theism and Atheism, and that the sooner Liberal theologians pull down their tents and march on to their only logical destination the better it will be for all concerned. The supernatural is a serious hindrance to them, and to throw it overboard would save them a tremendous deal of trouble.

J. T. LLOYD.

Judge Their Deeds, Not Words.

Ecclesiastical partisanship, however gilded by religious appeals, is in its methods and appeals more morally corrupting than partisanship in politics.

—*Archbishop of York.*

EVEN into the minds of the higher dignitaries of the Church light does penetrate occasionally. In his congress sermon at Sheffield, the Archbishop of York, the second highest official of the Church of England, addressing serried ranks of his clerical brethren, told them bluntly that "religion attracts, the Church repels." To this bold admission, the Archbishop added that "the ecclesiastical conscience had throughout history been a chosen home of subtlety and sophistry in the name of God." Critics of the Church have said the same thing for centuries, and it is refreshing to find an Archbishop echoing the same ideas. However, the distinguished prelate's attempt to attract the minds of his brethren to realities was quickly frustrated, for the same afternoon the Bishop of Sheffield, equally God-inspired, made a flamboyant appeal for further missionary work, and denied that the Church was "hastening to decay and dancing to disruption."

Yet the decay of the Church of England is undeniable. It still, in George Meredith's caustic phrase, entwines our social life like "poisoned ivy," but people are beginning to regard it with aversion. Only two per cent. of the young manhood of the nation regularly attend a place of worship, and of this number a large proportion are Free Churchmen, and anathema to the Government Religionists. The bulk of the members of the Church of England is feminine, and the condition of the so-called National Church is rapidly becoming similar to that of the Roman Catholic Church in France. For years the English Church has been losing its grip on the nation, and, during the World War, even the man-in-the-street could hardly fail to see that the parsons had lost their hold over the minds of the people. Professing to be disciples of "The Prince of Peace," these parsons did nothing to prevent war, and did nothing to stop it. Instead of being true to their principles, they merely acted as recruiting sergeants, got themselves exempted from military service, and actually stood aside whilst better men than themselves were sent to prison for being pacifists.

The Church of England failed before the war, during the war, and after the war. The memory of the young soldiers of Europe, who died in millions, the very flower of our civilization, shames our priests and brings discredit upon a religion which breaks down whenever it comes in contact with reality. The clergy proved themselves a caste apart from their fellow-men, a caste interested solely in its mumbling religiosity of a Church in its dotage.

The Great War has produced horrors and evils enough, but there is a silver lining to this blackest of clouds if this terrible war has shown clearly and unmistakably that the Christian Religion is but a superstition, and that the Gospel of Christ is of the things that perish. The failure of the Church of England is too complete to be glossed over by the glamour of false sentiment and assumed heroics. Christian priests are so immersed in their own mediæval dogmas that they cannot see when Brute Force usurps the place of Reason. Let the clergy stay in their cloisters and leave the people of this country free to work out their secular salvation without reference to an outworn Oriental superstition. Englishmen are fast outgrowing the weird dogmas of Eastern creeds, and care little for the rehabilitation of a Church which has failed in the past, and will fail still more in the future.

MIMNERMUS.

Cherished Feelings.

Is there not some feeling in men and women which points to the existence of a craving outside the range of mere logic? This question, expressed in varying forms, I have been asked again and again in the London parks during the past four years, and for many of the inquirers it doubtless represents a real challenge to the Secularist position.

I have never, of course, contended that "mere logic" or intellectual analysis is the only influence that should enter into the lives of men and women; but I refuse to recognize any distinction in kind between religious and other feelings. In the minds of many who have discarded their early faith there is apparently a deep-rooted idea that it is their duty to respect what they call "religious sentiment." The sense of "piety" in these men and women survives the decay of their beliefs, and sometimes is the cause of acute emotional distress. They have not forsaken religion; religion has forsaken them. In the political or social world the same "blank misgivings" do not arise to take the place of lost convictions. The reverent Agnostic who gives his mental assent to the doctrine of evolution, and yet remains painfully aware that, after all, the biblical account of a special creation is much more "sacred," probably represents the highest expression of the critic who treasures a story which he knows to be false. He does not treasure it *because* it is false. Neither does the professional cleric whose appreciation of veracity is so well-known that it has become a byword. What they both cherish, on different grounds, is the link that keeps them in touch with the opinions or interests of a past generation.

It is part of the business—I use this word deliberately—of all religions to increase man's sense of need and dependence. From his early impressible years the child is trained through his emotions to venerate certain beliefs and the traditions associated with them. I have heard of young children who were positively distressed by a circumstantial narration of Jesus Christ's sufferings endured for their sake. Truly a winsome story on which to nurture the feelings and mould the character of a little child! At a later age the growing youth still sees a special solemnity observed in nearly all religious ceremonies, and this is a potent factor in developing sentiment. On the positive side, music, language, and symbol are brought into requisition to appeal to the emotions and the imagination, and in this way a chord is touched which does not afterwards yield easily to the solvent of reason. On the negative side, the professional exponent and the devout worshipper alike leave no stone unturned to ward off whatever assault the intellect may happen to make upon the faith. The former sets his face sternly against any tendency to regard as "profane" characters the persons in the drama which he presents, and the latter meets any expression of doubt, not with argument, but with sighs, or even tears.

At the same time one can hardly emphasize too strongly the fact that the plea to spare religious feeling by no means represents the starting point in the history of Christian apologetic. The plea is insistent to-day because the intellectual basis of the historic religion is completely undermined. Intellectual pride, it is true, was always looked upon as consorting ill with simple faith; but the earlier apologists saw clearly enough that feeling in itself, however sincere, afforded no test of the worth of a cause, that if religion was a matter of pious sentiment all religious systems stood on an equally solid foundation. Christianity claimed to have a special revelation from God, not

further evidence of the "religious nature" of mankind.

With their fine sensibility to the artistic side of their faith, and to the claims of scholarship, the higher dignitaries of the Anglican Church have always deprecated an overplus of enthusiasm in the interests of perishing souls. Such a display of zeal is so very, very vulgar. Bishop Warburton regarded the early Methodists as a new set of fanatics, "fit missionaries to propagate the Christian Faith among infidels." Another right reverend gentleman, one Lavington, saw in this sect human pride "showing itself in a repugnance to constituted authorities." In the eyes of many Nonconformists such spokesmen of the Establishment were worldly-minded creatures, Churchmen only on principle, not soul-savers by nature.

In any estimate of religion's emotional influence one must take into full consideration the solace which it purports to offer to the bereaved. This is true of religion in general; but I regard Christianity's stress on its services in this respect as one of its most contemptible features. I mean, not the consolation itself, but that false and malignant attitude to the "natural man" which is the ground and occasion of it, and which is inseparable from the Christian world-view. Death and suffering were not part of God's original scheme of things. They came to the race as a result of sin, and a remedy had to be found for them. Starting its career with this debased currency, the Christian religion has continually hedged round man's conception of his origin and his destiny with its own false values, and has multiplied the states and conditions which need unhealthy consolation. It alleviates sorrows which it has itself created. Man's moral fibre is thereby weakened and his feelings are put in bondage, just as his intellect has been stunted by being warned off complete investigation into the validity of the evidence for his faith.

Words and phrases are also among the associations which wear a channel for currents of religious feeling. Everyone has heard of "that blessed word, Mesopotamia." Is not the "divine democrat" of homiletic Labour leaders in a similar category of "blessed words?" The exhortation and preaching so dear to the heart of the evangelical Protestant does not in any appreciable degree appeal to the intellect, and its general effect may be as injurious to the emotions as are some forms of Roman Catholic ritual.

Mill (*Three Essays on Religion*, p. 72) says that certain elevated feelings have become associated exclusively with religion, and that consequently there is in some quarters a dread of anything tending to dry up their source. Others declare that the aggressive Atheist, in sweeping away religion altogether, deprives the masses of the only element of idealism which enters into their lives. It is the claim of the honest, deserving masses to the ennobling influence of religious enthusiasm that is imperative. They are not more sinful than the classes; but the latter can apprehend rightly other factors in their pursuit of idealism. That such a plea can be put forward in good faith has long seemed to me well worth the special attention of those who talk seriously about "man's spiritual craving." It goes a long way to prove that religion is usurping the place of the real culture elements in mankind's struggle upward, and by making this culture the privilege of a minority is stunting and withering the growth of the finer emotions.

Refined feeling is not the supreme influence in early religion, nor does it hold any such domain in Christianity. In that religion one is confronted with a vast body of doctrine against which the nobler human emotions, freed from false hopes and fears, would indignantly revolt—belief in original sin and total depravity, hell-fire, predestination, and a personal devil. Nor have Christians spared the faith and feel-

ings of non-European races on the ground of the latter's sincerity. Christian attacks on the religious systems prevailing in India and elsewhere have provoked strong comment, though the deities worshipped in these countries compared very favourably with the Hebrew God, Yahweh. In those communities, too, the faithful may have derived considerable solace from their religious beliefs and practices.

If there is a conflict between reason and feeling, on what ground can any religious apologist declare the latter to be "superior" to the former? "Who would not fain be a complete man?" Such a man will strive to harmonize the intellectual and the emotional in his nature. The religious attitude diverges widely from this ideal. It seeks rather to maintain a yawning gulf between reason and feeling.

We Freethinkers have our emotions. Perhaps that will be news to many Christians. Yet, at one time the assertion that "infidelity begins in the heart, not in the head," was widely current among the captains of the Lord's host. Those who saw a degrading superstition enslaving their fellow-men, dissipating human energy, stifling inquiry and poisoning the minds of defenceless children, had no right to feel. But now we are told that they lack the "spiritual faculty," though in the same breath we are assured that this faculty is innate in all of us.

Secularism will preserve all the feeling worth preserving in any religious cult, but will direct it into purely human channels. Some manifestations of "religious feeling," however, deserve the unsparing contempt of every self-respecting individual. That a strong feeling of devoutness may co-exist with an extremely low type of personality is a fact which nowadays few Christians above the intellectual level of a Billy Sunday would deny. Given suitable conditions of ignorance, the grossest superstition may, and will, become congenial to the emotions of the multitude. The peasant woman who hurried with a faggot to the flames that curled round John Hus displayed a "holy simplicity." No doubt. But such holiness and simplicity have more than fulfilled their mission in the world and we can now well afford to dispense with them.

A. D. McLAREN.

Edward Thomas.

THERE is an increasing tendency in modern art to attempt to describe those indefinite emotions aroused in the receptive soul by the perception of beauty. That perception, dependent as it is so largely upon the senses, creates more often than an idea, just a thrill of the sense, a realization of wealth, a suffusion of body and mind, which causes a debacle of thought. In such a state all is lost in the knowledge of a glory which has smitten, a glory all-pervading, intoxicating, overwhelming, and momentary though its existence may be in the ego, there is peace in its assumption.

To seize that ray of evanescent glory, and make it permanent in colour, sound or words, so that it may be apprehended by less sensitive nerves is a task to test the artist, and it is a task of which the mere attempt is magnificent. It is just that task which Mr. Edward Thomas has essayed.

His verses are the outcome of a momentary mood, a glimpse of the divine essence sentient in all things, and thus quite naturally he is essentially a singer of the peaceful countryside. He passes a bridge; he sits on a stile watching the sunlight glance from the brass of a ploughing horse's harness; he sees the dawn, noon and the evening passing into night; he observes the sequence of the seasons, and he sings of all these, but through all his songs a vein of mysticism runs. He

would give to his son the song of a blackbird, and having given it, would destroy all those birds for as much as once to have heard is all. 'Tis but the glorious moment, and that is the worth of all life. And with this abnegation he is so happy that—

It seems I have no tears left

except perhaps those tears which should have fallen on a time when beauty was all too poignant.

It seems indeed that beauty is often too poignant for him. There is in spite of his declaration a pathos in his work, but it is the pathos of kindness. He loves so well all that he sees that he might, as Stevenson, iterate the hackneyed phrase, "the world is too much with us," but for Mr. Thomas the meaning would be "beauty is too frequent" for those who see even as he sees the matters of which he would sing.

Verily those matters are worthy of words, the words of the English tongue which Mr. Thomas loves so that he begs of them :—

Out of us all
That make rhymes,
Will you choose
Sometimes—
As the winds use
A crack in the wall,
Or a drain,
Their joy or their pain
To whistle through—
Choose me,
You English words.

The symbols of thought could hardly negative such a request, even though the asker were demanding of them that they should describe the almost inexpressible, an enthusiasm arising out of somewhat seen but scarcely known for the cause, as when at cock-crow he commands :—

While you are listening
To the clear horn,
Forget, men, everything
On this earth newborn,
Except that it is lovelier
Than any mysteries.

But even while he says that earth is lovelier than any mystery, he creates throughout his verse an atmosphere of mystery, an air of having somewhat more to say than he can well express through the medium of his beloved words. Thus he seeks to make concrete, to define by means of symbols the essence of the gorgeous moment, and again when he rises at dawn he sings :—

Out of the wood of thoughts that grow by night,
To be cut down by the sharp axe of light—
Out of the night, two cocks together crow,
Cleaving the darkness by a silver blow.

Love does not seem to have touched Mr. Thomas, or at least it does not appear very markedly in his verse. He certainly has made one or two love songs, but they are concerned less with the spiritual side of sexual love than with the sex emotion of the desire to give. His affection is all given to that beauty which he worships, and which he pursues unrelentingly. A beauty, which so far he achieves, but having achieved, leaves a sense of somewhat more, somewhat better and deeper, which he knows and which he cannot aptly tell.

And though this is perhaps too emphatically insisted upon, the verses themselves emphasize the idea that Mr. Thomas would have done greater and better things, that he would have brought down to more everyday levels the triumphant emotion of apprehended beauty, that he possibly did not wish to make his ideal more concrete, but that he was consumed with the desire more effectually to give to his verse the completeness of the vision which came to him as all true artists must be, since all art is failure however successful it may be.

G. E. FUSSELL.

Acid Drops.

A little time back we mentioned the idiotic appeal of *John Bull* for the Government to suppress a book entitled *The Trail of the Serpent*. That appeal to ignorance and reaction has so far been disregarded, but the authoress has not escaped being made to realize the strength of bigotry when in power. It had escaped our notice that on October 11, at the Hunstanton Police Court, Miss Annie White was charged with publishing the book without it having an imprint. This was quite a technical offence, and the regulation—a war measure—is now generally treated as obsolete. The book deals with the life of Christ, and the lady pleaded in defence that she was ignorant of the law with regard to the imprint. The Chairman of the Bench retorted that "at any rate she knew what was in the book." But Miss White was not charged with anything that was in the book, but with issuing it without an imprint. The remark, therefore, showed quite clearly that the Chairman was indulging his bigotry by punishing for one offence when the charge was really another. In the end Miss White was fined £50, or as an alternative, three months' imprisonment. The sentence may please papers of the character of *John Bull*, but we are glad to see the *Daily News* protesting against the sentence, and at its last meeting the Committee of the Society for the Abolition of the Blasphemy Laws decided to write the Home Secretary calling attention to the case. To use the law for the gratification of individual bigotry is the way to bring the law into deserved contempt.

On October 29 all ministers of religion are invited to offer up prayers in connection with the housing problem. The organizers of the movement do not consider it advisable that the prayers should have anything to say about the economics or politics of the housing problem, and one wonders what is left for the parsons to do if they leave out these two aspects. No one doubts that houses are needed, and all would like to see all the houses required produced. But what are parsons to pray for? Are they to ask God Almighty to send down houses ready made? Far from us to say that this could not be done. God has sent fire from heaven, and water from heaven, and plagues from heaven, and we do not suggest that he could not send houses from heaven. But will he? Perhaps the philosophy of the old woman of Sydney will meet the case :—

There was an old woman of Sydney
Who had a disease of the kidney
She prayed to the Lord that she might be restored
And he could if he would—but he didn't.

The *Bournemouth Daily Echo* publishes a leading article on the subject, and while, of course, welcoming the proposal, hopes that the housing problem will not be left as a divine responsibility. But if there is any meaning to the prayer crusade that is surely what they mean to do, and it is certainly what the parsons will do. But we hope that the petitions will be precise, and they should be accompanied with a full outline of the government requirements that have to be met before the building will pass inspection. It is so long since the Lord took a hand in such matters that he might be supplying houses on the lines on which things were run when he actually controlled affairs. In those days he knew nothing of sanitation, and a water supply was left much to chance. Baths were unknown, and rules as to so many cubic feet of space per person were quite unconsidered. So, unless God Almighty has kept himself in touch with all building and sanitary regulations things will likely get into a devil of a mess. And there will be a deuce of a row if, after the Lord has responded to the prayers and provided the houses, some ungodly building inspector should step in and condemn the lot.

At the institution—this means a ceremony, not a club—of the Rev. A. Guillaume to the rectory of St. Mary-le-Bow, the Bishop of Durham scorned the idea of Anglican reunion with Rome. "We could never return to the fables of mediævalism nor submit to a yoke which our

forefathers found too grievous to be borne." The world apparently was waiting for Luther and the Anglican Church and the Nonconformist conscience to give it the genuine article. Or is it to be sought among Christadelphians and the Shakers and the Seventh Day Adventists? It is one of the outstanding merits of the Establishment that it has been rich in men who could differentiate between one species of fable and another.

The New Testament, says the Bishop of Bradford, is the charter of woman's freedom. One would have to search long to beat that. Its audacity almost defies comment. A volume which teaches that woman is made for man, with the caution for fear she should draw the wrong inference that man was made for woman, which denies the right of woman to speak in church, places her under the orders of her husband, whom she is to obey as Sara obeyed Abraham, which glorifies celibacy and has a celibate for its figurehead, for that book to be said to be the charter of woman's freedom, is one of those pieces of impertinence that almost takes one's breath away. The Bishop was talking to the Church Congress, it should be mentioned. We should like to see how he would fare were the statement made under conditions which permitted of a reply. We suggest that the Bishop should make it his business to reply to Mr. Cohen's little volume on *Woman and Christianity*.

Another statement of the Bishop's was that it is often forgotten "how much women in Christian countries owe to Jesus Christ." We should like to know how much they do owe to Jesus Christ—that is, how much that is worth having. What we do know is that it was under the rule of the Christian Church that women lost every shred of the civic independence they possessed under the best Pagan rule, and that the influence of the Church succeeded in turning her into a mere article of property of the husband's. The Bishop said it was a sign of the times that the Covenant of the League of Nations provided all positions in connection therewith should be open to women. We agree that this is a sign of the times, but it says little for the Christian Church that such should be regarded by Christians as a wonderful advance. It is only restoring to women a little of the freedom which the Christian destroyed for so long. And its restoration is almost wholly due to the agitation carried on by Freethinkers during the past 150 years. And we would remind the Bishop that his own Church resolutely declines to admit the equality of men and women in its services. She may, after a long struggle, hold some of the minor offices and do some of the minor preaching. But for the chief ones she is not qualified—in the eyes of the Church leaders. We wonder whether the Bishop has ever read John Knox's tirade against women in his *First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*. Or perhaps he does not find it convenient to remember. We congratulate the Bishop on his cheek.

Mr. Arthur Porritt in his recently published book, *The Best I Remember*, says that Mr. Lloyd George and the late Rev. Hugh Price Hughes had a similar gift of achieving publicity. This is rough on the ex-Prime Minister. The reverend gentleman referred to is chiefly remembered to-day for his story of a converted Atheist shoemaker. It was a graphic and circumstantial story. So was G. W. Foote's reply to it.

Mr. Porritt was formerly associated with the *Christian World*, and several of his best stories bear upon the sayings or doings of Nonconformity's henchmen. There was a touch of the schoolmaster about Parker, of the City Temple. After one of his instructive discourses, an old lady went into the vestry to thank him. "You throw such light on the Bible, doctor," she said, "until to-day I always thought Sodom and Gomorrah were man and wife."

Sir William Whittle is the President of the Belfast Y.M.C.A., and if cheek is a qualification for office the Association could have found no better President. Ac-

ording to Sir William Whittle the cause of the present world trouble is that Germany rejected belief in Christ and so lost sight of the doctrine of Christian love. We should have thought that this war-time talk about German Atheism would have been discarded by now, but there are some people who never learn. And to slaver about Christian love in *Belfast* is the very height of impudence. It is Christian love that has made that city a hell on earth for some time past. Were there less Christian love there and in the rest of Ireland the history of the country and its present position would be far different. There is one thing that Christian love always secures—that is, an enormous outcrop of undiluted humbug and hypocrisy.

Public recognition of Bradlaugh's work is not so plentiful that the tribute by the Right Hon. C. A. McCurdy (reprinted in another column) will be without interest to our readers. It is a pity that Mr. McCurdy marred the excellence of his address by the remark that:—

Many of the years of Bradlaugh's life spent in arguing the merits of Secularism versus Christianity, or the claims of Freethought against established religion, were really apparently worthless. None of these controversies had the least relation to the Christian religion to-day.

It is quite natural for the cobbler to think there is nothing like leather, and one must expect a politician to think that the most important work of a man is political. And yet we fancy that when the work of Bradlaugh in relation to his age is impartially considered by the future, it is his work against the Christian religion that will be considered of the greatest importance. It takes neither a lofty character nor a powerful intellect to take a hand—and a prominent hand—in the game of politics. Almost anyone can indulge in that, and mere mediocrity can, and does, achieve distinction. The immediate issues of politics lie upon the surface of things, and it is by more or less dubious solutions of these that political distinction is achieved.

But to take a leading part in the fight against the entrenched religion of a country demands qualities that are far from common. It demands ability, insight into fundamental issues, and a rare degree of moral courage. It means that a man must put principles before advancement, and that he must enter the fight with a full consciousness that he has to face calumny, ostracism, and poverty for the rest of his life. That has been the lot of the religious iconoclast in all ages, and it is his lot to-day. And it is precisely because opposition to the established religion of one's day involves these things that to fight it is of such great importance. For while religious beliefs in a civilized country imply a certain degree of stupidity on the part of the people, the fact that all sins may be forgiven the reformer except this is an indication that the reactionists know from which direction the most deadly attack comes.

Mr. McCurdy's remark that the Bradlaugh attack on Christianity has no relation to the Christian religion of to-day makes one smile. It might be said with equal truth that the seventeenth century attack on witchcraft, or the attack on demonic possession has no relation to the Christian religion of to-day. But it is only because of these attacks that the Christian religion of to-day is without these things. But for that attack we should have had the present clergy asserting that old women travelled through the air on broomsticks, and some Dean Inges might have, with great daring, suggested that there was probably a natural explanation of epilepsy and insanity. Mr. McCurdy fails to realize that the Christian religion of to-day—which he admires—is the creation of men like Bradlaugh, and but for them it would never have existed. It is true that Bradlaugh would sooner have had Christianity swept away altogether, and equally true that Mr. McCurdy's Christianity is not genuine Christianity at all, but such as it is it represents the way in which the attacks of Freethinkers have compelled Christians to give up their dogmas and to cut down their doctrines in order to evade a criticism to which no adequate reply was made or was possible.

A Baptist Chapel at Chobham, Surrey, is to be sold by auction. Similar items of news have not been very uncommon of recent years. The other day prominent Non-conformists urged the frank acceptance of the Higher Criticism, which would not rob the Church of "anything worth keeping." With which we are strongly inclined to agree. These churches which are being put up to auction are "witnesses to the truth," if they only knew it.

In a *Life of Christ*, bought from a second-hand bookshop in Cardiff, was written "Herbert Rowse Armstrong, 1892." The need of a religious training for the moral life, and the value of the doctrine of future retribution, are prominent in the claims of Christianity to support in behalf of the general welfare. Those claims are not confirmed by all the characters associated with belief in a sacred book and a Saviour-god and future rewards and punishments.

"We are suffering in England not only from a dearth of clergy but, in a lesser degree, from a dearth of clergy of the right type." We take this from an editorial note in the *Guardian* (October 20). Similar complaints are rife in France and Australia. To the student of sociology the present state of affairs in regard to the intellectual and moral status of candidates for "holy orders" is precisely what should be expected. The normal tendency of organized religious systems, based upon authority, is to become petrified, and you cannot make a living, breathing, animal out of a fossil. As the gap between the living and the dead idea widens, the more contemptible appears the character that can still "realize itself" in the atmosphere of the latter.

The *Catholic Herald* (October 14) contains a leading article on Monarchy and the Church. It quotes from the daily papers a long string of sentences about the Prince of Wales, which it rightly characterizes as "slosh and slobber." It goes on to declare that, though the Church is supposed to favour kings and autocrats, it has in fact suffered terribly at their hands in all ages, and mentions particularly the royal heads of England and Prussia. But the Church was always ready to ally herself with any monarch that fully acknowledged her spiritual authority. The growth of nationality in Europe inevitably tended to break up her boasted "spiritual unity." And how was that unity maintained? By force and fraud, which Rome is still willing to exercise to gain her ends. "Obedience" is the word of command, and what happened to Dreyfus in France and to Ferrer in Spain affords good evidence of her methods of asserting her "rights" and interests.

The new Germany is still sufficiently Christian to maintain a law against blasphemy. A playwright has just been fined ten thousand marks and all copies of his play ordered to be destroyed on the grounds of the production being "blasphemous." The blasphemy as reported does not strike us as being in any way "strong," and it is a pity that the German Government has not developed to the point of letting God look after his own honour. If religion only developed a fair amount of self-respect people would soon feel ashamed of putting their opinions and their God under the protection of a policeman. Some believers, even in Christian times, when their gods have failed them have treated their deities with great severity, but the deliberate avowal that he can only exist under police protection is the greatest insult of all. And looking at the record of the gods one is not quite certain whether the policeman is there to protect the god against the public or the public against the god.

We are inclined to feel sorry for the *Church Times*, and some of the other religious papers. For these are quite tearful over the fact that war with the Turks has been averted. They were hoping that we might yet have another "holy war," with the clergy once more parading as recruiting sergeants, and now peace has been made—or is well on the way—and Constantinople will remain in the hands of the Turks instead of becoming once again a Christian city. It is intolerable to these war-like Chris-

tians that the celebrated Mosque at Constantinople should remain in "heathen" hands, intolerable that Christians should be ruled by Mohammedans. And to prove it tears were shed over the Christians that had been killed by the followers of the Prophet, but not a word of the men and women killed by the Greek Christians. Perhaps it is thought that Christians have a prescriptive right in the game of murdering the followers of another religion.

At any rate there are two things that clearly emerge from the story. The one is that there is nothing like religion for turning men into brutes in their dealings with one another, and that holds good whatever religion we happen to be dealing with. The second is that to satisfy religious prejudice there are many in this country who would cheerfully see us plunged into another war. These tell us that it is our duty to protect the *Christian* minorities living under Mohammedan rule. It is no more our duty to protect Christians than it is to protect the followers of any other religion. To do what we can to help people in the name of humanity is quite another thing, but these Christians do not argue in this way, and if it were proposed they would be the first to point out that it is not the duty of the British Government to do anything of the kind. Sectarian championship should not be one of the duties of the government, and when indulged in it invariably does more harm than good. The history of the near East proves this, and when it comes to pitting the Eastern Christian against the Mohammedan we hardly think the Mohammedan will come badly out of the contrast.

The Rev. C. W. Screech, of the Baptist Sunday School Union, considers that the Moody and Sankey hymns are quite unsuitable for children. Another sign of the times. These hymns served their purpose admirably as long as evangelical Christianity was literally accepted. They were the real driving power behind many of the revivalist meetings of a generation ago. "Hold the Fort," "Pull for the Shore," "Oh! to be Nothing!" and other "sacred songs and solos" of the same type, suited the level of the souls that they were intended to rescue. The Rev. C. W. Screech now looks at them from the outside and they are not attractive.

"Hodge," writing in the *Church Times* (October 20) on the observance of Sunday in the rural districts, contrasts the life of the English country-side to-day with that of the generation of Trollope and Miss Yonge. "The docile rustic, for whom the parson was only less of an Olympian than the squire, has gone out with low wages, penny readings," and the other attractive features of those days. Those were the "good old times" when the farm labourer "submitted to those placed in authority over him," and parson and squire each felt confident of himself and of his job. These are days of unrest in religion as elsewhere, and many experiments are being tried. That does not suit the Establishment, which abhors the sight of spiritual energy running to waste.

Dr. Norman Maclean says that the permission to the Sultan to remain in Constantinople and the continued existence of St. Sophia as a mosque, following the Allied victory, were among the surprises of the peace terms. He speaks of "unregenerate democracies" and "monuments of decadence." If international relations could be regulated by polysyllable, some of our spiritual guides would be valuable assets to the community. We know the effect of a huge paper inflation on a country's national credit. Words and phrases tend to cause a similar inflation of its moral credit. The world has had experience of both Christianity and Islam. If either of them is to be the future keeper of our liberties, then it will be truly a case of "God help us!"

Mohammedans use drastic methods as missionaries. Temperance is taught by the Koran, and, to ensure the carrying out of the rules of the sacred book, the Turkish Governor of Brusa has instituted a penalty of flogging for all persons found drinking alcohol. Our own Pussyfoots will be green with envy.

C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

November 5, Stratford Town Hall; November 12, Birmingham; November 16, Weston-Super-Mare; 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.

J. MATTERSON.—Unfortunately there are no special books that can give you detailed information on the subject of missionary trade activities. But enough will be gleaned from an attentive reading of books of travels, and the reports of missionary societies, together with a study of newspaper reports. Some years ago we dealt with the matter at some length in a booklet on *Foreign Missions*, but that is now out of print. The most recent criticism of Foreign Missions is that by Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, price 2s. and 3s. 6d.

E. A. MACDONALD.—We think you have analysed Blatchford's case very accurately. It is as clear a case of "rationalizing" as one could wish for. The faith-healing crusade is also a good example of the ignorance of people on the one hand and the unscrupulous character of these professional evangelists on the other. The Catholic priest's letter handles the case well, but when it comes to deal with his own religion, we expect he would be found building on much the same bases he rejects when used to bolster up the religion of other people.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss Vance acknowledges: A. J. Marriott, 2s. 6d.

H. S. ENGLAND.—Thanks. Shall be very glad to have copies of the magazine whenever you can send them.

D. F. GLOAK.—Second letter received. We did smile, but guessed the cause. We will use the 30s. as you suggest. There are plenty of openings. Many thanks.

F. W. LLOYD.—There is no immediate intention of republishing the articles. With the state of trade as it is, one has to be careful as to what expenditure is undertaken.

A. MILLAR.—You will find the subject of "Choice" fully discussed in one of the chapters of Mr. Cohen's book, *Determinism or Free Will?* There is no question as to the existence of the fact of choice, but only as to its nature and significance. Glad to know that you liked the lecture on Materialism so much. It is a much misunderstood subject.

H. L.—We really do not know what God has the power to do, or if there is a god to do anything at all. What we do know is that most of those things that are said to be done by God are done badly, and judging from the experience of the world we would much rather pay our respects to a God who does nothing than to one who is always interfering with things. Man blunders by himself, but his blunders are apt to become catastrophic when "God" takes a hand.

A. B. MOSS.—We hope that all Freethinkers will be as prompt as yourself in putting questions to candidates, and as determined on getting an answer. Freethinkers must let the world know they are alive if they wish to break down the boycott and make their principles prevail.

F. MAUGHAN.—It is quite impossible for us to say how many people in Bolton take in the *Freethinker*, but we are quite certain that there ought to be more. We should be pleased to visit Bolton for a lecture if arrangements could be made. The great thing is getting a suitable hall.

We are asked to state that if Edinburgh friends will communicate with Mr. J. Anderson, at 28 Queen Street, Edinburgh, something in the way of organizing propaganda in the near future may be attempted.

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.

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Sugar Plums.

Next Sunday (November 5) Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Town Hall, Stratford. Mr. Cohen will not be lecturing very frequently in London this winter and those who wish to hear him will make a note of the date. He will be followed by Mr. J. T. Lloyd, in the same hall, on November 12. Trams and buses run past the door of the Town Hall, and it is within five minutes' walk of Stratford Station (G.E.R.).

We are now within what newspaper men and politicians call "measurable distance" of a general election—indeed, by the time this issue is in the hands of its readers the date of that event may be known. So we desire to call the attention of our readers to the fact that they may each do something, as Freethinkers, to help the Cause during the progress of the fight. The two questions with which we are immediately concerned are the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws and the exclusion of religious teaching from the State schools. These are two questions that should be brought to the attention of every candidate in the country. Each should be asked whether he, or she, is in favour of the abolition of the Common and Statute Law of Blasphemy, thus leaving all genuine offences against public order and decency to the operation of the ordinary law. And each should be made to give an answer as to whether they are in favour of the State standing neutral in the matters of religious teaching, confining school to secular subjects, and leaving religious instruction to parents and the Churches.

We beg our readers to get to work. Don't leave it to others, the more who ask the question the better. And don't hesitate to make the giving of a vote dependent upon the candidate at least promising to act justly. If a Freethinker's vote is worth having he should see to it that he is treated with justice. Unless we are all determined to make these political gentlemen realize that we have a very serious conviction, and will act upon it, we must expect them to act in the future as they have done in the past. So, once more, let us all get to work. See that the candidates know we are alive. There are enough Freethinkers in the country to make our questions very prominent if they will only assert themselves. Bombard your candidates and let us know the result. The publication of the replies will serve as a guide to others when voting day comes round.

Mr. Harry Snell will visit Birmingham to-day (October 29) and will lecture in the Brassworkers' Hall, 70 Lionel Street, at 7 o'clock. His subject will be "The Priest Must Come out of the School." We hope there will be a good attendance and that those who are there will realize that the priest never will come out of the school until he is put out. And it depends upon how much in earnest we are in this matter whether the priest will take his departure sooner or later.

Two of our Pioneer Press leaflets, *What Will you put in its Place?* and *What is the Use of the Clergy?* have

been out of print for some time. They are now being reprinted and will be on sale in the course of a few days. They are excellent for propaganda work, and many of our friends may care to secure a supply. They will be sent at 1s. 6d. per 100, postage 3d.

In the near future the Pioneer Press will also issue a new book by Mr. A. J. Fallows, M.A., entitled *Realistic Aphorisms and Purple Patches*. The work consists of a very striking collection of *obiter dicta* from varied sources and is quite distinct from books of this class. It avoids the characteristics of platitude and commonplace which generally mark prose collections of this kind of work. We shall have more to say about it on publication. The work covers over 300 pages, it is printed on superior paper and handsomely bound, and will be published at the astonishingly low price of 5s. Those who are looking out for a gift book for thoughtful friends will probably find the book the very thing.

The Manchester Branch of the N.S.S. will hold its Discussion Class to-day (October 29) at Mrs. Mapp's, 1 Leopold Avenue, West Didsbury. Mr. Rosetti will open the discussion. Members are also asked to note that an American Tea will be held at Mrs. Mapp's on November 4. As the object is to raise funds for the Branch, it is hoped that everyone will respond who can.

Pagan and Christian Civilization.

VI.

(Continued from page 677.)

In the first two centuries after the death of the first Caesars the imperial revenue rose rapidly, and peace secured prosperity. Hill and dale were cultivated, the mercantile marine increased and trade between all countries. Nowhere were there wars or battles or bandits or pirates. This was the majesty of the *Pax Romana*, which made Rome a sacred home, an eternal source of life, a secure anchorage, as though the gods had renewed the life of the world; all peoples prayed for the eternity of this gift of Rome.—Friedländer, "*Roman Life and Manners*," Vol. I, p. 269.

THE result of this magnificent civic generosity and public spirit of the citizens of the Roman Empire, gave rise to towns and cities of unparalleled beauty and splendour. With all our boasted progress and civilization we have nothing to compare with them. Says Friedländer:—

But it was not only this incomparable splendour of her architecture that made Rome a city of marvels. The wanderer through her endless realm saw on every hand objects to enthral attention. Everywhere was his gaze held fast by the work of the elder and the newer art, which decorated the whole town with a labyrinthine completeness. The walls of the atria and temples glistened with the varied hues of the mural paintings and pictures, and their rooms, as those of the baths, like the streets and the squares, were filled, even as late as the fourth century, with bronzes and marbles. Then there were still 3,785 bronze statues of emperors and generals, which would have brought up the whole number of the statues to more than 10,000. Add to these the private collections, and some conception may be formed how, two hundred years later, after no few ravages, Cassiodorus could say that Rome's walls were denized with a second population of stone and bronze. And everywhere the buildings were intercepted and defined by green gardens and parks, and at all seasons were these flourishing and fresh.¹

Even in the sixth century, long after the decline had set in and the city had been several times overrun by barbarians, the Christian Bishop Fulgentius cried out, as he saw her: "How beautiful must the

New Jerusalem be, if this earthly Rome be so gorgeous!"²

But perhaps Rome's greatest pride was in her water supply. This was conducted into the City through underground pipes, or conveyed on mighty arches comprising a length of 300 miles—

And poured down in waterfalls out of artistic grottos or spread out like ponds in broad and richly decorated reservoirs, babbling up in gorgeous fountains, whose cool fragrance freshened and purified the summer air. A consideration of the mass of the water diverted to public use for baths, ponds, canals, palaces, gardens, suburban country houses, of the distance traversed, of the mason work of the arches, the hills bored through and the levelled valleys, would, says Pliny, convince any man that nothing more wonderful had been made on earth.³

In Rome in the fourth century there were 856 baths, eleven thermæ or hot baths and, at the time of Nerva, 591 swimming baths, and these were accessible to the public at the low rate of one-fifth of a penny. Many of these baths were ornamented with works of art, and further we are told that "almost every house in Rome had reservoirs, supply through pipes and abundant fountains."⁴ "For his water," says another historian, "the Roman, it need hardly be said, paid nothing."⁵

To listen to Christian apologists one would think that charity and benevolence were quite unknown in the Pagan world, in fact that they were introduced by Christianity. Nothing could be more false. At the time of Trajan, "In Rome itself," says the Rev. Wolfe Capes, "there had been for two centuries a sort of poor law system, by which many thousands of the citizens had received their monthly dole of corn."⁶ This, he adds, was "out of no tenderness of charity," but "to keep the populace in good humour.....and in later times from fear of riots." There is a distinction you see; it was only in later times, when the Empire was weakening, that fear operated. In earlier times, then, the government had no fear of the populace, therefore there was no need to bribe them with a dole. It follows then that the gift was a charitable one in aid of the needy and unemployed. If it had been a Christian government which had distributed the corn, we should have been invited to witness a practical application of the teachings of Christ about giving to the poor, but as it was the act of a Pagan government it must have been the result of self-interest or fear.

However, the same historian gives an instance of charity and benevolence upon the part of the government, which he admits was not due to self-interest. In the middle of the eighteenth century some peasants near Piacenza in Italy, turned up with the plough a bronze tablet ten feet broad, six feet high, and weighing 600 lbs. They broke it in pieces to sell as old metal. Happily some pieces were seen by men who could read the Latin words engraved on them. They sought out and bought the other pieces which, when placed together, disclosed the longest classical inscription yet discovered, consisting of 670 lines. It is a record of mortgage deeds by which large sums of money were lent by the Emperor on landed property—

And the interest at five per cent. was to be paid over to a fund for the maintenance of poor boys and girls whose number and pensions were defined. Fragments of a like inscription have been found since then at Beneventum, and we have reason to believe that throughout Italy there were similar pro-

¹ *Ibid*, p. 6.

² *Ibid*, p. 11.

³ Friedländer, *Roman Life and Manners*, Vol. I, p. 12.

⁴ Warde Fowler, *Social Life at Rome in the Age of Cicero*, p. 40.

⁵ Rev. Wolfe Capes, *The Roman Empire of the Second Century*.

¹ Friedländer, *Roman Life and Manners*, Vol. I, p. 10.

visions for a measure which history speaks of in quite general terms.

As the Rev. Wolfe Capes, who gives the facts, remarks:—

But in all parts there were helpless orphans, or children of the destitute and disabled, to whom the world was hard and pitiless, and for whom real charity was needed. From these the actual government had nothing to hope, nothing to fear, and to care for these was to recognize a moral duty which had never been owned on a large scale by any ruler before Trajan.....As to the end, therefore, we may say that tender-heartedness was shown in caring for the young and helpless, and also statesmanship in trying to rear more husbandmen to till the fields of Italy. The coins and monuments bring both of these aims before our eyes, sometimes portraying Trajan as raising from the ground women kneeling with their little ones, at other times referring to the methods by which he had provided for the eternity of his dear Italy.⁷

As to saying that this duty was not recognized before the time of Trajan, it must be remembered that this record was only preserved by a happy accident. An immense quantity perished during middle ages, and any day inscriptions may turn up proving that such, or similar charities existed during the earlier Pagan ages. Trajan's example was followed by many of the wealthy with similar kindly charities. Sir Samuel Dill says:—

Under the influence of the stoic teaching of the brotherhood of man and the duty of mutual help, both private citizens and benevolent princes, from Nero to M. Aurelius, created charitable foundations for the orphan and the needy. Public calamities were relieved again and again by imperial aid and private charity. The love of wealth was strong, but a spirit of benevolence was in the air, even in the day of Juvenal; and the constant invectives of poet or philosopher against wealth and luxury are not so much the sign of a growing selfishness as of a spreading sense of the duty of the fortunate to the miserable.⁸

The picture of Christianity coming into a world sunk in a morass of debauchery to teach the Pagans a morality and charity they had no conception of is a myth invented by Christians who have also falsified history in the interests of their creed. W. MANN.

(To be Continued.)

Thanksgiving.

Last night my Mine panned out a fraud,
My wife eloped in May,
A fire broke out and burned my barn, and all the stacks
of hay.
The hoppers cleaned my garden out,
My cows took sick and died,
The horses got the pink eye bad, and dropped on every
side.
The Bank suspended all at once,
The rust got in the Rye,
A cyclone tore the wheat field up, and all the wells went
dry.
The chickens sickened with the pip,
The hired girl ran off,
The children one by one took down with croup and
whooping cough.
And yet despite this luck I went
Down to the grocery store,
And for a turkey gobbler paid my last two dollars o'er.
I thought I'd kind o' celebrate,
Thank God,—'pon my word,
A tramp broke in the house last night, and stole the
plaguey bird.

EUGENE FIELD.

A Study in King Lear.

What are the marks of difference between real and assumed madness as instanced in Lear and Edgar?¹

—Skeat.

A PARALLEL may help us. Contrast one simulating the saint and the religious maniac. Your saint never smiles. He believes in the stories of the Bible as piously as baby believes in mother's milk. You detect no twinkle in his eye, nothing of illuminating laughter, through all that amazing menagerie—the snake, the donkey, the pigs, the beast with seven heads and twelve horns, the pigeon, the lamb, and the old monkey. Even when Jehovah, in that moment of graceful and familiar condescension, promises Moses he will show him his back parts,² he takes it with the hardened face of the ecclesiast. Towards the world his attitude is the same. At the local Methodist Chapel during service he gives vent in grunt and groan, shakes his head every few minutes as if the palsy had got him, and puts his threepenny in the plate with the air of standing bail for Saint Peter. Now and again the parson calls on him at a Love Feast when the souls of the saved are too sprightly: "Brother Dismaljib will say a few words." You know what is coming—the old rumble about the Evil One. Yet in all that he does you feel there is a purpose. His part in the human comedy is the saint. The common-sense, the gaiety of the world belittle his part. In retaliation he gives the world a double dose of solemnity.

Now, the religious maniac. "Brother!" he yells, looking round and out of the market-place, "which road? To-morrow it's hell, no option."

(Two men on horseback go by.)

"A hundred to one! The Blood against The Firepot!
(sings) "Rosary's not in the hunt, old love,
And the Cardinal's thrown a shoe."

(A boy throws a stick into the horse-trough.)

"In! Slap in the damned soup! And Satan there, the
splashes on his snout!"

(A woman presses near with a crying babe.)

"Hark how the unbelievers yelp! The Lord's Co-
operant in the scheme of grace has them in roast."

(A group of Salvation lasses, feeling of triumph, smile
jucily.)

"Yes, and the saints in glory are jubilant. I see them
smile at the right hand of the Bridegroom."

(A pigeon flies over the market-place.)

"There's young Sonnie's pouter.
(sings) "O roaming dove, where lies thy love?
—Away (coo-coo) in Bethlehem."

(The pigeon crosses a cloud in shape like the venerable figure
on the coins of the Boer Republic.)

"And there's the old boy, looking for the invisible
Third of the Indivisible Three."

(A Broad Church cleric on the edge of the crowd compresses
his lips. The clouds drift apart.)

"Look! the heavens open! The Great White Lamb
gnashes his teeth, and your sceptic, tossed to the fire,
sings in his own gravy. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!"

(A newsboy turns on his heel with the remark: "He's
off it.")

"Ay! blessed Jehovah!"

As in the first of these cases—the case of our Methody—Edgar's is a simulated lunacy; everything in keeping with the part under which he is hiding—Bedlam Tom. Like our Methody, he has his familiar—the Fiend; has, too, his queer traditions, his ejaculations, and solemn antics. Further, there is purpose in what he does. When to the aberrations of Lear he responds with sallies in the grotesque, it is to distract

¹ Questions in English Literature (Bell & Sons); Paper No. 53.

² Exodus, Chapter xxxiii.

⁷ Ibid, pp. 19-20.

⁸ Dill, Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius, pp. 97-98.

Lear from brooding on his conditon. Edgar, too, plays his part connectedly ; there is no disruption of ideas.

With Lear, once the mental balance is overset, the play of idea is unregulated by judgment or by a sense of the actual. Feeling alone sways.

(To Edgar):

"Now all the powers that in the pendulous air
Hang fated o'er men's faults, light on thy daughters."

Kent.—"He hath no daughters, sir."

Lear.—"Death, traitor! nothing could have subdued
nature to such a lowness but his unkind daughters."

Things to his eye lose their real shape.

"Arraign her first; 'tis Goneril. I here take my oath
before this honourable assembly, she kicked the poor
king, her father."

Fool.—"Come hither, mistress. Is your name Goneril?"

Lear.—"She cannot deny it."

Fool.—"Cry you mercy, I took you for a joint-stool."

He sees Gloucester, his eyes trodden out.

"Ha! Goneril with a white beard."

And notice the disruption of ideas in the context.
"Dost thou know me?" asks Gloucester.

Lear.—"I remember thine eyes well enough. Dost thou
squiny at me? No, do thy worst, blind Cupid; I'll
not love."

All womankind has taken taint from his daughters.
Hence the defiance to Cupid.

From a smile at the wisdom of mortals he passes in
a flash to a fantastic scheme for avenging his injuries.

"When we are born, we cry that we are come
To this great stage of fools. This is a good block;
It were a delicate stratagem, to shoe
A troop of horse with felt; I'll put it in proof,
And when I have stolen upon these sons-in-law,
Then kill, kill, kill, kill, kill!"

Return to Edgar. Finding that he passes unchal-
lenged as Bedlam Tom, the sense of security induces
some easiness in maintaining the disguise. There is,
too, a natural exhaustion of effort. But with Lear the
affliction grows. More and more his ideas run loose
from facts, more and more the sequence of idea is
broken, judgment a lessening factor, action the sport
of cranks and delusions:—

"I will die bravely, like a bridegroom. What!
I will be jovial; come, come; I am a king,
My masters, know you that?"

Gent.—"You are a royal one, and we obey you."

Lear.—"Then there's life in it. Nay, if you get it, you
shall get it with running. Sa, sa, sa, sa." (Exit,
running.)

There is another feature in Lear's case which is often
present in the actual type. Lear in his remotion loses
self-control in the physical habit, becomes as a help-
less infant. The indications of this are distant, but
they are there. In the last scene of the play Edgar is
speaking to Albany of a man of uncommon strength
of affection, whose identity he has not made known.
Albany asks of whom he speaks. Edgar answers:—

"Kent, sir, the banished Kent; who in disguise
Follow'd his enemy king, and did him service
Improper for a slave."

This, too. Cordelia, when Lear is in her care in the
French camp (iv. 7) says to a gentleman in attendance:
"Is he arrayed?" The gentleman replies:—

"Ay, madam; in the heaviness of his sleep
We put fresh garments on him."

A last difference between the madness of Lear and
the disguise of Edgar is this: Edgar puts off the dis-
guise at discretion; Lear comes back to himself as
from a slowly lifting trance.

To Cordelia:

"You do me wrong to take me out of the grave;
Thou art a soul in bliss; but I am bound
Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears
Do scald like molten lead."

Nor does he come back to himself but in part. No
longer troubled by thought of Goneril or Regan, he
passes, through shame and sorrow for his treatment
of Cordelia, to childlike trust in her, every sense
drowned in tenderness and love. To him, now, noth-
ing else matters.

Cordelia (to the prison official): "Shall we not see these
daughters and these sisters?"

Lear.—"No, no, no, no! Come, let's away to prison;
We two alone will sing like birds in the cage;
When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down,
And ask of thee forgiveness; so we'll live,
And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh
At gilded butterflies, and hear poor rogues
Talk of court news; and we'll talk with them, too,
Who loses and who wins; who's in, who's out;
And take upon 's the mystery of things,
As if we were God's spies; and we'll wear out,
In a wall'd prison, packs and sects of great ones
That ebb and flow by the moon."

Not in the supreme moments of saints is there any-
thing that transcends this in rapture. But this rapture
is not sanity. We feel, in this detachment from the
world, in this acceptance by Lear of imprisonment as
felicity so but Cordelia be with him, that the spirit
is altered, the mind still from its centre.

It is in keeping, in the final scene, that Lear, ex-
hausted by tragic accident, his "poor fool"³ hanged,
fails at last to apprehend what is said to him, and that
his words wander from the matter. H. BARBER.

The Menace of Liberty to Human Progress.

II.

(Concluded from page 679.)

WE have often heard of "the tiger in man," and
even the most kindly disposed person is conscious of
a feeling of dread and antipathy at sight of certain
individuals whom one may have never seen before.

It is also very evident how keenly the lower animals
can distinguish between friends and foes, and we can
only account for this by suggesting that their natural
intuition has not been dulled by attendance at Bible
classes and other distressing features of brain-storm
peculiar to man.

This sense of danger seems to be Nature's warning
to be on our guard, and its neglect has sacrificed many
a good man to some life-destroying "vinegar plant,"
accompanied by that gruesome accessory known as the
"mother-in-law."

It also explains the affinity that exists between per-
sons who find pleasure in each other's company, such
affinity being traceable to the fact that their lines of
evolution are not discordant, as we may perceive in
the amicable relations between horses and cattle in a
field. Poultry approach them without hesitation, but
if the roar of a lion could be heard the horse would
tremble with fear, and if a fox came along he would
quickly put a hen out of existence, and the world rolls
merrily on. Sometimes two conflicting animals, latent
in the brain of two individuals lured on by the sex
impulse—but usually warned against each other by
some strange intuition—neglect the danger signal, and
hence it is that we have those dreadful tragedies
where the wife's head is almost severed from her body,
and the husband is taken in hand by the executioner,
who, in drawing the deadly lever, gives vent to his
own natural instinct for destruction of life.

Lombroso, the criminologist, spent too much time
in measuring the craniums of the criminal class. He
should have visited a menagerie and thought more of
the scheme of Creation where murder is universal
and without remorse, and we find philosophers like

³ Cordelia.

Goethe wondering why there is so little love and benevolence in the world.

No wonder the Dean of St. Paul's gives his God credit for a sense of humour, and no one can blame this distinguished Churchman for realizing that he has a better prospect of personal liberty garbed as a Dean rather than a dustman. In this connection I was highly amused at the friendly banter indulged in between our worthy editor and the Rev. Dr. Lyttelton. There is not much harm in the Rev. Dr. He will trespass anywhere, even into the pages of the *Freethinker*. Like Mark Twain, he does not take life too seriously, and the probability is that both could trace their pedigree back to those far-off days amongst the trees. Unlike the "Gloomy Dean" their ancestors never lay basking in the sun on the banks of the Nile, nor wept "crocodile" tears like the late member for Hackney.

This outlook on life may savour of pessimism, but there is a consoling feature in the fact that many of the animals from whom we claim traits of temper and character are socially inclined, and vastly outnumber those which are looked upon with loathing and a sense of danger. We must, however, on this logical reasoning, rid ourselves of the idea of the "sanctity of human life," and all this arrant nonsense about the "soul." I know nothing about the "soul," though when I was supposed to have one it cost me many pounds for clerical attention and robbed me of much enjoyment in life.

The same reasoning applies also to those who clamour for liberty, equality and universal brotherhood. Millions who walk the earth only desire to labour like the animals who spend their lives in a constant search for food and safety. Work is essential for them. They love it, like the ants and the bees, and to attempt to dress them in "purple and fine linen" is akin to a garland of roses round the neck of a pig. They do not want "to hitch their wagon to a star," and they are only safe when they feel assured they have plenty of work no matter who reaps the benefit of their lives of labour. They are the natural victims of the rule of the strong, and it is equally in evidence both in savage and civilized communities; and the strain of the lion, tiger, vulture, and the snake displays itself with equal ferocity in the individual to be found in the Dartmoor convict prison and the House of Commons as in his dark-skinned heathen in the wildest part of the British Empire.

It is simply a question of degree. The head-hunters kill their enemies and eat them, keeping the skulls as indications of prowess, and in some tribes they actually forbid the male to take a wife unless some victim has fallen to his hand. As man becomes more civilized his methods change. The "herd" are kept alive and pay tribute to the stronger animals by compulsory servitude, during which period they are encouraged to breed their kind, be sober and industrious, and in the event of fifty years long and faithful service in one employ, will be rewarded with a notice of ten lines in the daily papers.

Occasionally we find dominating characters even amongst those who are condemned to lives of labour, but they usually "kick the traces" and become violent anarchists, millionaire soap-boilers with thousands of lives under their control, or demagogues who point "long, lean, warning forefingers" at the "top-dogs" till they reach port in the House of Commons and appear as frock-coated jackals at a king's levee.

This analysis of human kind may be dismissed with a shrug of contempt as a hideous "nightmare," but the contents of a daily newspaper prove beyond doubt that the actions of mankind in general can only be summed up as what could only be expected from a menagerie at large.

Hence the need for coercive and eliminating forces which are the only means for making human society more wholesome, and the world a safer place to live in. It is a difficult task as Nature seems opposed to any acceptance of the lofty idealism which has ever been the aim of the world's best thinkers. Cultured man is nobler than all the gods this unfortunate planet has known, and it is his duty to elevate the race, not by calling the attention of sheep and goats to the stars, but in advocating sane and rational methods to ensure his own safety in such contemplation, and leaving the great majority to browse in comfort and have an occasional bleat at a football match, an eye-lifting howl at a P.S.A., or even a "flutter" on a "stiff un" for the Derby. This may sound painfully candid, but we must not forget that there is no connection between the knife of the surgeon and the sympathy he may feel for the unfortunate patient who has to undergo the ordeal. Pity and indignation are the two greatest forces in the world but they must always act in concert. When they do so act we find a Christ suspended on a Cross, and one of his archbishops with £15,000 a year, who carefully avoids the latter part of the bargain. The irony of the situation is in the ominous fact that, according to natural law, the common sense is on the side of the archbishop and men like Dean Inge, who are saving their skins by a frantic attempt to form a working basis between science and religion. These highly-placed Christians are not fools. Like myself, they can see "red," and they know that the "price of their own liberty is eternal vigilance."

In conclusion, we must admit that the problem of good and evil has been with us a long time, and Darwin has very probably given us the key to its solution. The ascent of man has been a fearful struggle, and his position to-day is enough to make pessimists of us all. Still it is interesting to speculate on the secrets of Mother Nature even from the point of view of our own self-preservation, for it certainly tends to make us more alert to those dangers for ever surrounding our lives, which, even in his day, caused old Omar to write his pathetic lament:—

'Tis all a chequer-board of Nights and Days,
Where Destiny with Men for Pieces plays,
Hither and thither moves—and mates and slays,
And one by one back in the Closet lays.

AGNES WEEDON.

GOD'S VICTIMS HERE AND HEREAFTER.

Now my gross, earthly, human heart
With man and not with God takes part;
With men, however vile, and not
With seraphim I cast my lot;
With those poor ruffian thieves, too strong
To starve amidst our social wrong,
And yet too weak to wait and earn
Dry bread by honest labour stern;
With those poor harlots steeping sin
And shame and woe in vitriol-gin;
Shall these, so hardly dealt with here,
Be worse off in a future sphere;
And I, a well-fed lounging, seek
To "cut" them dead, to cringe and sneak
Into that bland *beau monde* the sky,
Whose upper circles are so high?
If any human soul at all
Must die the second death, must fall
Into that gulph of quenchless flame
Which keeps its victims still the same,
Unpurified as unconsumed,
To everlasting torments doomed;
Then I give God my scorn and hate,
And turning back from Heaven's gate
(Suppose me got there!) bow, *Adieu!*
Almighty Devil, damn me too!

—James Thomson.

Correspondence.

EVOLUTION AND DARWINISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—From Mr. Mann's explanation of an accident I deduce that scientifically, there are no such things as accidents. He has abolished accidents from the universe. Thus a railway accident is not actually an accident because the cause is known to us (say the driver has not seen the signal). But in any case, the main comparison between the two methods of evolution is not affected. When a stockbreeder deliberately chooses his finest animals for breeding purposes, I see purpose and the minimum of chance, but if he left them to breed indiscriminately, then there is no purpose, and the probability of the results being anything of any good to the breeder would be nil, whilst matings would be accidental as opposed to purposive. I am, of course, aware that Mr. Mann will point out that the survival of the fittest is equivalent to the stockbreeder's selection, but even then which animal shall mate with another has still an element of chance in it, without allowing for the vagueness of survival of the fittest. Lamarckian evolution sees purpose behind evolution, and as compared to the Darwinian process which sees no purpose, Darwinism can still be called a chapter of accidents.

The order which Paley takes in the creative evolution theory is not as Mr. Mann humorously puts it, but as follows: We have Lamarck's evidence for functional adaptation, and Paley's evidence for design. From them we deduce that Life itself is its own designer and creator through sense of need and the creative impulse. No Personal God enters the case at all. I have not space in which to give Mr. Bernard Shaw's resurrection of Paley and disconnection from Paley's personal god.

Lamarckian evolution certainly insists on mind being at the beginning of biological evolution. Does Mr. Mann credit the amœba, flowers, or plants with minds? Followers of Lamarck do, though the minds, of course, are only sufficient for the amœba's, etc., sense of need. The action of a flower opening to the sun is not automatic, but seems to be promoted by sense of need.

Mr. Mann asks me, "Does Mr. Lord believe that mind was operating in the nebulous gas from the beginning?" and "Are we to understand that mind in the beginning existed without an organization?" The answer is that I do not know, and neither does Mr. Mann. We do not know whether life existed in the nebulous gases, so we can only conjecture on such points. Mr. Joseph McCabe, in *Evolution from Nebula to Man*, page 48, says:—

When did the first living things first appear on this planet? Where did they come from? What was their character?.....Let us say at once that our knowledge is very limited indeed. We have not the smallest shred of direct information in regard to any one of these questions.

He then goes on to say that we must either remain silent on the question or conjecture about it. If Mr. Mann knows anything more definite I shall be pleased to hear it, but there is no need to keep on insisting on the connection between the Life Force and the Personal God.

I would like to know what was the cause which gave rise to consciousness, mind, etc., according to Darwinism?

HERBERT LORD.

[One would be interested in knowing whether Mr. Lord regards consciousness as a *relation* or a *thing*?—Editor.]

Any attempt to mould natural phenomena to the convenience of mankind might easily appear an interference with the government of those superior beings; and though life could not have been maintained, much less made pleasant, without perpetual interferences of the kind, each new one was doubtless made with fear and trembling, until experience had shown that it could be ventured on without drawing down the vengeance of the Gods.—*John Stuart Mill, "Three Essays on Religion."*

Like the star, hasting not, resting not, let each move in the orbit of his appointed task.—*Goethe.*

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

SOUTH 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. R. H. Rosetti, "Religion and War."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.2): 11, Dr. John Oakesmith, "The Popularity of 'The Beggar's Opera.'"

OUTDOOR.

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

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Brassworkers' Hall, 70 Lionel Street): 7, Mr. Harry Snell, "The Priest Must Come out of the School."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Shop Assistants' Hall, 297 Argyle Street): 11.30, Mr. P. Walsh, "Thomas Muir and the Struggle for Political Freedom." (Silver Collection.)

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Vocal and Instrumental Concert.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S. (The Newcastle Socialist Society's premises, 23 Royal Arcade): Discussion Circle. The subject for next Tuesday's discussion (October 31) will be "Religious Policy," to be opened by Mr. J. Brice.

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