

# The FREETHINKER

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## Views and Opinions.

### Substitutes for Religion.

Positivism has been defined as Catholicism minus a God; and some of its followers have taken it as a compliment. So far as that may be the case it can only be accounted for on the ground of a desire to retain something that can be called a religion, even though it may be without the substance of one. For while tails are the fashion it is not every fox that cares to go about without one, and if Nature or growth has left them destitute of the appendage they will straightway assume an artificial one, trusting that the point of juncture will escape observation. So I suppose it may have been intended as a compliment by a writer in one of the religious weeklies who spoke of Atheism as a substitute for religion. So far as I understand either Atheism or religion the statement is neither complimentary nor true. Atheism is not a substitute for religion, it is its negation. And the Atheist, the logical Freethinker, is not out providing substitutes for religion for the reason that he does not admit religion plays any useful part in social life. So when an Atheist is asked, "Granted the disappearance of religion, what is to take its place?" he objects altogether to the way in which the question is put. The essential, the primary question is not what is going to take the place of religion, but whether there is anything that really belongs to religion that is worth keeping.

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### Keep Distinct Things Separate.

This raises the essential question in a quite unambiguous form. It is no part of the Freethinker's case that there are not good men and good women associated with the Churches, nor is it part of his case that good is not done by them, or that it is not done in the name of religion. The greatest evil done by religion is not that it enlists bad men in its service, but that it squanders or misdirects the energies of good ones. It may also be granted that much of the good done by believers is done by them in the full conviction that their conduct is due to the acceptance and the influence of certain dogmas. Many of them say so, and there is no need to accuse them of consciously lying. But all religions have mixed up with their genuinely religious ideas a number of non-

religious elements, and it is not an easy task for the ordinary man or woman to determine either the nature or the influence of the two factors. Few are capable of careful self-analysis, the majority are quite content to take the account of their own impulses as they accept a description of the solar system, with the result that the historic association of the secular and religious sides of life leads to their being thought of as inseparable. The aim of the Freethinker is not, therefore, to provide a substitute for religion, but to make quite clear what religion really is, to separate from it those social facts and forces from which it has gained so much, and to demonstrate that a definite breaking of the association between the two will lead to a strengthening and purifying of social life.

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### The Power of Belief.

One of the cardinal facts in the matter is organization. But organization is not a religious thing at all, it is a social one. The power of this factor in primitive religions has been emphasized by investigators such as Durkheim, and they have been led to treat early religious ideas as little more than an expression of the tribal spirit. But in any case it is plain that organization is in no sense dependent on religion. It is an outcome of social existence, due to the insistent pressure of the herd upon its units. Men organize themselves for all sorts of purposes, religious and non-religious, and once an organization is created there is manufactured a social opinion that keeps individual members up to the mark. This is to be seen in trade organizations, in clubs, and in all sorts of societies. And it needs but a brief study of the religions to show that it is this factor which is responsible for the good that may be done in the name of religion. Those who have watched the reported cases of "conversion" by such bodies as the Salvation Army will recognize that it is not the belief in specific religious doctrines that is responsible for any improvement that may result, but the social pressure exerted by a new set of acquaintances. And so far as this is concerned, any organization, good or bad, will serve the same purpose. The part played by belief in this is that it acts as the nucleus around which the organization crystallizes. But the nature of the belief is of subsidiary importance. It may be a belief that is intellectually indefensible or morally unworthy, but so long as the belief is firmly held it will serve. The only room for argument here is whether religious beliefs have a greater social or moral value than have other beliefs, but it is the height of folly to argue that the disappearance of religious beliefs will either weaken human capacity for concerted action or fundamentally affect the general well-being of society.

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### Religion and Change.

The argument or the fear that in setting religion on one side we are losing something of value may be met in another way. The history of religion, like the history of all else in Nature, is the record of an evolution. As a mere matter of fact we no more have the same religion that our ancestors had than we wear

the same kind of clothing or live in the same kind of house. We do continue to use the same formulas and make use of the same expressions, but the meaning we give them is vitally different. In a world of incessant change it is impossible for even religion to stand still, and both consciously and unconsciously it undergoes modification. The fact of change is obvious; its cause is a more debatable matter. But the more closely this matter is studied the clearer does it become that in attributing the change that takes place in social existence to the influence of religious ideas the religionist is putting the cart before the horse. It is life that ultimately moulds religion. The infallibility of the Bible, the stupid brutality of the Christian doctrine of eternal damnation, the moral iniquity of vicarious salvation, the foolishness of direct answer to prayer, all these things have gone out of fashion, not because Christians have come to understand their religion better, but because the mass of educated people have outgrown them. For the same reason we hear to-day so much from the pulpits of social salvation. People are ceasing to care about any other. In every direction it is the pressure of opinion from outside the Churches that determines the kind of teaching that is given within. The problem before the Churches is always twofold. First there is an endeavour to keep the age in line with the Church, and when this can no longer be done, then by methods more or less dishonest, the attempt is made to bring the Church into line with the age.

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#### Religion and Life.

Take Christianity on a broader scale, and one can see the same thing. The Christianity of some of the Eastern races, who were among the earliest converts, remains substantially unchanged. Among them there are still to be found many of the superstitions that characterized the early Christians. In these cases so long as the social environment remains unchanged the religion remains unchanged also. But the same religion carried into the West changes so much that it hardly seems the same creed. The quietistic elements are glossed over or ignored, direct illumination from God is dismissed as an idle dream, and Jesus the miracle worker becomes the preacher of a new gospel of social regeneration. This principle will hold true of any religion that one cares to take. In a famous passage Gibbon points out that on the determination of a certain battle in the eighth century hung the religion of the Western world. Probably. If Charles Martel had been vanquished the Koran might have been preached at Oxford instead of the Bible. But had this happened it is tolerably certain that Mohammedan priests would ere this have served the Koran much as our priests have served the Bible. They would have interpreted and reinterpreted it so as to bring it into line with the prevailing social convictions. Religion may retard the development of ethical sentiment and social life, but it can never prevent their ultimate supremacy.

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#### Our Aim.

The problem before us is, then, not that of providing a substitute for religion. The Atheist is not wondering what will take its place because he is aware that the force that kills it will be already doing all the good that is attributed to religion. The only problem before the Atheist is how best to get people to realize that the credit given to religion belongs elsewhere, and that society cannot suffer from the disappearance of the numerous sects and Churches. And it is not merely that art and science and literature and all the other things we rightly prize remain apart from religion, but that even the better aspects of what is called the religious life remain also. The task is to get religionists

to realize that religion lives by the exploitation of the social instincts of mankind. We are not at all disturbed when Christians tell us of the good done by this or that group of believers. We should be better pleased if Christians were twice as good as they are and Churches many more times more beneficial. But these things would not alter our opinion of Christianity. For we see in this no more than the workings of normal human nature, which is wider and deeper than religion can ever be. And for that reason our work is not to provide a substitute for a decaying creed, but to bring about the conditions that will permit human qualities to express themselves apart from the confusing and belittling influence of superstition.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

## The Virgin Birth.

## I.

## THE IGNATIAN EPISTLES.

THEOLOGICALS generally are agreed that the Virgin Birth is not found in any of the New Testament Epistles or in the Four Gospels themselves apart from those passages in Matthew and Luke in which it is declared to have actually happened. It is also admitted by the majority of Biblical scholars that the first ardent advocate of the Virgin Birth was Irenaeus in the latter half of the second century. There are a few conservative theologians, however, who maintain that the belief in it is implied in many New Testament passages and that before the end of the first century it was formally described as a fundamental article of the faith. They quote, in particular, long extracts from the Ignatian Epistles, in which the Virgin Birth is affirmed as a fact. In his Epistle to the Ephesians, chapter xviii, Ignatius says:—

For the Son of God, who was begotten before time began, and established all things according to the will of the Father, he was conceived in the womb of Mary, according to the appointment of God, of the seed of David, and by the Holy Ghost. For (says the Scripture), "Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and he shall be called Immanuel."

That is the longer version, while in the shorter it reads thus:—

Where is the boasting of those who are styled prudent? For our God, Jesus Christ, was, according to the appointment of God, conceived in the womb of Mary, of the seed of David, but by the Holy Ghost. He was born and baptized, that by his passion he might purify the water.

In chapter xix of the same epistle occur these words:—

Now the virginity of Mary was hidden from the prince of this world, as were also her child-bearing, and the death of the Lord; three mysteries of renown which were wrought in silence, but have been revealed to us. A star shone forth in heaven above all that were before it, and its light was inexpressible, while its novelty struck men with astonishment. And all the rest of the stars, with the sun and moon, formed a chorus to this star. It far exceeded them all in brightness, and agitation was felt as to whence this new spectacle came. Hence worldly wisdom became folly; conjuration was seen to be mere trifling; and magic became utterly ridiculous. Every bond of wickedness vanished away; the darkness of ignorance was dispersed; and tyrannical authority was destroyed, God being manifested as a man, and man displaying power as God. But neither was the former a mere imagination, nor did the second imply a mere humanity; but the one was absolutely true, and the other an economical arrangement.

That extract is taken from the longer version, but in this instance the shorter is nearly as long and exactly to the same effect, while in the Syriac version it extends to only two comparatively short sentences. In the fifteen epistles which bear the Bishop of Antioch's name there are many passages of the same import as those already given; but the most saintly of believers cannot help perceiving that many of the letters are extremely puerile in character, and some of them unutterably absurd. For example, there is "The Epistle of Ignatius to the Virgin Mary," and on the same page we find the "Reply of the Blessed Virgin to this Letter." The letter begins thus, "Her friend Ignatius to the Christ-bearing Mary," and the answer, "The lowly handmaid of Christ Jesus to Ignatius." Two letters are addressed to St. John, to neither of which is there a reply on record.

Now, curiously enough, even Dr. Briggs, the most conservative of American divines who, as a class, with very few exceptions, are the most creed-bound of all, even Dr. Briggs admits (*Fundamental Christian Faith*, p. 64) that "the Apostolic Fathers, with the exception of Ignatius, do not mention the Virgin Birth"; but he omits to tell us why Ignatius adverts to it again and again while all the rest are utterly silent about it. They must have all known of it, for according to Ignatius the only one from whom it had been hidden was the prince of this world, and yet they make not the slightest allusion to it. This is almost incredible and most puzzling when we bear in mind that, as Dr. Briggs observes, "it is mentioned very distinctly in Ignatius: 'Persuaded, as touching our Lord, that he is truly of the race of David according to the flesh, but Son of God by the Divine will and power, truly born of a virgin, and baptized by John,' etc. (Ep. ad. Smyrn, 1)." This amazing silence continued unbroken throughout the first century, and with one solitary exception through the first half of the second. The more we reflect upon it the more inexplicable does it appear to be. Meanwhile we must leave it at that.

We are now to face the most astounding fact of all. As already stated, fifteen extant letters bear the name of the famous Bishop of Antioch, and scarcely any documents have ever given rise to greater and longer controversy. There are several versions of them, and they are all Englished in the first volume of the Ante-Nicene Library, which is entitled *The Apostolic Fathers*. In their introduction to them the editors write thus:—

There are, in all, fifteen epistles which bear the name of Ignatius. These are the following: One to the Virgin Mary; two to the Apostle John; one to Mary of Cassobelae; one to the Tarsians; one to the Antiochians; one to Hero, a deacon of Antioch; one to the Philippians; one to the Ephesians; one to the Magnesians; one to the Trallians; one to the Romans; one to the Philadelphians; one to the Smyrnians; and one to Polycarp. The first three exist only in Latin: All the rest are extant also in Greek.

In the sixteenth century serious doubts were entertained as to the authenticity of any of those letters. They were attacked from all quarters. In 1666 the erudite Daillé published a masterly work bristling with cogent arguments against their authenticity. The celebrated Reformer, John Calvin, pronounced them all spurious. To-day there is a complete consensus of opinion among critics that the first eight letters are without a doubt late forgeries. On this point, therefore, all dubiety is at an end. But for some time the authenticity of the remaining seven letters was accepted by many theological scholars, such as Bishop Pearson, who, in 1672, published his once popular reply to Daillé under the title of *Vindiciæ*, which by not a few was believed to have shattered the great scholar's arguments and to have laid the authenticity

of the shorter form of the seven Ignatian Epistles on the impregnable rock of critical truth. Now what evidence is there that these seven letters, or six, according to Archbishop Usher, were written by Ignatius? The only proof adduced is that they are acknowledged as such by Eusebius, who in the third decade of the fourth century tells us that: "Ignatius, who is celebrated by many even to this day as the successor of Peter at Antioch, was the second that obtained the episcopal office there. Tradition has it that he was sent away from Syria to Rome, and was cast as food to wild beasts on account of his testimony to Christ." Then follows a description of his journey to Rome and of the occasions on which the seven letters were written (*Ecclesiastical History*, Book III, chapter 36). It seems odd to cite Eusebius as an authority upon any historical question whatsoever. Every scholar is aware that his History is full of exaggerations, inaccuracies, legends, and whitewashing of criminals. Why, Eusebius takes it for granted that the alleged correspondence between King Agbarus and the Gospel Jesus is an authentic document, and prints both letters without the least hesitation. Everyone to-day who knows anything of evidence, regards those letters as pure forgeries. As the author of *Supernatural Religion* well puts it, there is no convincing evidence whatever in support of the traditional account of the martyrdom of Ignatius and the journey from Antioch to Rome nor of the writing of the seven epistles at different stages in that journey, "the whole story being absolutely incredible." J. T. LLOYD.

(To be Concluded.)

## A Poet in Blinkers.

That same gentle spirit from whose pen  
Large streams of honey and sweet nectar flow.

—Spenser.

It is the part of a wise man to have preferences, but  
no exclusions.

—Voltaire.

AMID thousands of obscure and unloved graves at Kensal Green Cemetery is one with the pathetic inscription: "Look for me in the nurseries of heaven." This is the last resting place of the unfortunate Francis Thompson, the poet. At the time of his death he was almost unknown, and during his life he had suffered the hardships of lonely poverty not surpassed by any of the most unfortunate poets of the world. Truly, he had sounded the gamut of misery and privation. Many nights he slept upon the Thames Embankment, and under carts in Covent Garden Market. He hawked matches in the Strand, and had been a bookseller's porter, staggering through London streets with a heavy sack on his back. When he was carried to his grave, only a few friends, who had looked after him during the last sad months of his life, were present to mourn. Now, Thompson is in the ranks of poets of genius, and the laurel decorates his tomb which was denied to the living man.

There can hardly be a sadder story than his in the history of literature, though Chatterton, Villon, Poe, James Thomson, and Paul Verlaine, are among them. To be at once a genius and a slave, to live in direst poverty and to die of a lingering disease is as melancholy a lot as can be imagined. Nor would he deserve less pity if we denied his genius. His unbalanced, imaginative, reckless nature injured himself alone; but genius he most certainly had.

Assuredly, he calls for a meed of praise equal to that accorded to D'Annunzio, Maeterlinck, Rostand, and other Continental writers for whom so many British altars have flamed in worship. Thompson's genius was many-coloured, exuberant, woven with rich and strange textures. His poetry was mainly a splendid

rhetoric, as if his moods went by robed in imperial purple in a great procession. His masterpiece, *The Hound of Heaven*, is a wonderful piece of writing. Listen to these lines in which the alchemy of the poet's genius transmuted the dross of theology into the fine gold of poesy :—

I dimly guess what time in mists confounds;  
Yet ever and anon a trumpet sounds  
From the hid battlements of eternity,  
Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then  
Round the half-glimpst turrets slowly wash again  
But not ere him who summoneth  
I first have seen, enwound  
With glooming robes purpureal, cypress-crowned;  
His name I know, and what his trumpet saith.

Now hear the sonorous and stately valediction which concludes his *Anthem of Earth* :—

Now, mortal, son-like,  
I thou hast suckled, mother, I at last  
Shall sustentant be to thee. Here I untrammel,  
Here I pluck loose the body's cerementing,  
And break the tomb of life; here I shake off  
The bur of the world, man's congregation shun,  
And to the antique order of the dead  
I take the tongueless vow; my cell is set  
Here in thy bosom; my little trouble is ended  
In a little peace.

How fine, too, is his charming vision of the woman sleeping in the child, like a dryad hiding among the lush leaves in early summer :—

Thou, whose young sex is yet but in thy soul,  
As, hoarded in the vine,  
Hang the gold skins of undelirious wine,  
As air sleeps, till it toss its limbs in breeze.

The closing stanza of *Daisy* is, in its way, perfect :—

She went her unremembering way;  
She went, and left in me  
The pang of all the partings gone,  
And partings yet to be.

Thompson's prose is superb, and it is seen at its best on Shelley. Thompson was a Roman Catholic, and Shelley was an Atheist. Hundreds of men have written on Shelley, but Thompson's essay is, far and away, the finest ever written. It was sent to the *Dublin Review*, and refused by the editor, but, years afterwards, when Thompson's genius was being recognized, it was printed in that periodical. Here are some lines on the *Prometheus Unbound*, in which Thompson shows his intense admiration of the Atheist singer :—

It is unquestionably the greatest and most prodigal exhibition of Shelley's powers, this amazing lyric world, where immortal clarities sigh past in the perfumes of the blossoms, populate the breathings of the breeze, throng and twinkle in the leaves that swirl upon the bough; where the very grass is all a-rustle with lovely spirit things; and a weeping mist of music fills the air. The final scenes especially are such a Bacchic reel and rout, and revelry of beauty as leaves one staggered and giddy; poetry is spilt like wine, music runs to drunken waste. The choruses sweep down the wind, tirelessly, slight after flight, till the breathless soul almost cries for respite from the unrolling splendours.

A noble and true passage on Shelley's *puissant* imagination is the following :—

For astounding figurative opulence he yields only to Shakespeare, and even to Shakespeare not in absolute fecundity but in range of images. The sources of his figurative wealth are specialized, while the sources of Shakespeare's are universal. It would have been as conscious an effort for him to speak without figure as it is for most men to speak with figure. Suspended in the dripping well of his imagination the commonest object becomes encrusted with imagery.

What a superb tribute from one poet to another! Remember, the tribute came from a Roman Catholic poet to the Atheist singer. It is a most notable

example of the universality of the love of literature. Literature, like music, is wider than opinion, broader than dogma, as limitless as the humanity to which it appeals. At the height of the Bradlaugh struggle, when Gladstone passionately addressed his speech on the Oaths Bill to a hushed and expectant House of Commons, he quoted some perfect lines from the old Roman Freethinker, Lucretius, as daring an iconoclast as Bradlaugh himself. The majesty of the quotation was, in Gladstone's eyes, its justification. The statesman's taste persisted in being independent of his prejudices, like the French soldier who fought in the Great War, and who, when killed, was found to have in his pocket a well-thumbed copy of Heine's poems. Catholic though he was, Francis Thompson deserves a few words of praise in a Freethought paper. He never did weak or puling work in prose or verse. Although he waged an unequal war against fate, he was at least a chivalrous soldier. When his turn came, he yielded up his broken but not dishonoured sword with a brave and humble heart.

MIMNERMUS.

## The Human Mind: An Essential Duality.

MAN is mentally a two-fold creature—a psychic coalition—in whom *consciousness* and *self-consciousness* have coalesced into one human mind but without effacing their distinction or obliterating its dual and composite character.

However much they get intermingled or interlaced in our living existence they are intrinsically as immiscible as oil and water. In the most intimate woof of experience there is no possibility of mistaking to which the fibres belong. The conscious mind is made up of sensations and sense-impressions which man has inherited along with its contributory sources—the senses—from his animal stock. Whereas self-consciousness is his specific acquisition as the mental concomitant of his greater and more highly organized brain, more especially of that part known as the cerebral cortex.

Now, just as consciousness made possible the existence of *animal life*, so has self-consciousness made human *knowledge* a like possibility. Man's mind is therefore a compound of two psychic worlds—a *phenomenal* cosmos which it shares with the brute of the field and an *ideal* one which is unique to himself. The perceptive mind creates his perceptual world of sense-impressions, while his apperceptive intellect abstracts, detaches, and isolates therefrom a conceptual universe of four relations—those of resemblance, causation, space, and time. Hence self-consciousness is the key to everything which is distinctly human.

This duality has made man an incongruous creature in a three-fold sense.

1. In the first he is an abnormality—a compound of misfitting parts in respect to his sense-organs. In the capacity of a self-conscious being these have received a new orientation. To the conscious mind which man shares with the animal, the eye, for instance, serves only to disclose objects to be sought or avoided in the interest of the organism or of its species. Its mental images are mere signs of safety and life or alarms of danger and death. The sight of grass to a cow is merely a symbol of means for allaying its hunger and enabling it to live. But in the service of self-consciousness it fulfils a totally different purpose.

In its new rôle it is a mere photographic plate in an aviator's camera reconnoitring an enemy's position, taking impressions of appearances and of change to be

subsequently interpreted by the self-conscious mind. For example, the mental image of grass, corn, or fruit to man, in the exercise of his self-conscious reason, is not a sign or symbol for mere self-preservation, but a focus of numberless radiating relationships—to the soil, the air, the rain, the sunshine; to animal and human life, to living substance, or to the elements of matter—all involving one or all of the four basic elements of knowledge, that is, of resemblance, causation, space, or time.

The eye is now a mere *detector* or *recorder* of appearance, position and change for the mind's eye or self-consciousness, to group into classes, string into causal series, and correlate in time and space. That the eye is now serving an entirely artificial purpose is made doubly evident by its notorious short-comings and defects for discharging its new and artificial duties, so much so that man has had to resort to a million and one devices in order to supplement or amend its deficiencies. Indeed, it is not merely inadequate and defective, but also fallacious; for nowhere is its artificial use rendered more conspicuous and palpable than when made to belie itself and contradict its own testimony. For example, the direct and inevitable inference based upon the report of sight is that ice and water are quite different things, or that when the pool dries up or a candle is burnt, the water and the candle are annihilated.

But when it is made to watch and record the movements of a balance it is compelled to contradict its direct evidence and to declare that ice and water are the very same substance, and that neither the burnt candle nor the evaporated liquid is annihilated.

It is worth while noting in passing that in thus contradicting itself it curiously confirms the testimony of another—the sense of effort. That does not, however, signify that Nature is essentially a tangle of self-contradiction, but that the senses were evolved not to promote human knowledge, but to perpetuate life. To serve as the hand-maids of knowledge is wholly an artificial function, a gradual adaptation to new uses, not unlike the re-adjustments and modifications met with in the structure and organs of a whale, save that the latter consists of organic changes, whereas the former is made up of artificial or external additions. But these disparities are at bottom perfectly consistent, for they are due to the different relations which the sense-organs bear to energy.

In the case of sight, energy is being *absorbed* by the sense-organ, and the particular nature of the attribute is determined by the organ: the skin translates solar energy into the sensation of *heat*, whereas the eye converts it into that of *light*.

Its peculiar quality of agreeable or disagreeable is Nature's way of tuning the sensation so as to promote the life of the organism.

But in the case of muscular effort energy is being *expended*, and therefore inevitably points to an external attribute inherent in material substance and independent of the sense-organ.

It is no wonder that the contents of self-consciousness, that is, human knowledge, should belong to an entirely different mental order and consist, instead of psychic images or symbols, of inferences of relation deduced by it as abstract ideas—that from sidereal systems to molecules, atoms, and electrons; from matter to ether; from gravity to electricity; from the ecliptic to virtue; from space to time and existence. The entire gamut of human knowledge should be inferential as distinguished from the phenomenal contents of the mere animal mind.

This radical distinction between these two orders of mind—the conscious and self-conscious—is equally manifest in the different ways their contents are "stored and transmitted." In the animal world, cognition of the four relations essential to life sank

into subconsciousness and became in some mysterious way engrained in nerve-substance as instincts which are transmitted organically, i.e., internally, from parent to offspring. In man, on the other hand, they rose to self-consciousness, as the *super-conscious* field is usually termed, and are embodied in the semi-artificial elements of speech, and are transmitted externally by the wholly artificial process of education. In fact man's ideal universe is far more artificial than milch cows, non-sitting hens, silk-worms, seedless raisins, or carrier pigeons.

The knowledge of a mechanic is as artificial as the machine or engine he creates.

The foregoing contains a corollary of some importance; that as knowledge is absolutely a mental affair, to ask what is matter, ether, or physical substance, that is, the "thing in itself," is essentially a meaningless question, for it implies that you consider it as "known" or "knowable" *while outside consciousness*, which is an intrinsic absurdity. It is as ludicrous as for a monoglot to ask what is the meaning of a passage in a totally unknown tongue *without translating* it into the one language he understands. Knowledge is a thing that consists wholly of mental elements and therefore exists only in consciousness. This fact is curiously exemplified in the high super-human devices that man has recently conceived and materialized to act as detectors and recorders of the vast ranges of possible etheric radiations—actinic, Becquerel, and Röntgen rays and Hertzian waves—that lie outside the tiny span which the natural eye has power of detecting. I allude, of course, to those human "miracles," the platino-cyanide screen, the photographic plate and the "wireless set"—veritable eyes and ears—which though they embody transcendent knowledge and superlative skill have yet to be linked on to one or other of Nature's detecting set—the eye or the ear—before their detection becomes a matter of knowledge; that is, their record must first enter a percipient mind and be translated into the constituents of consciousness.

2. The disharmony or antagonism which exists between man's two minds is even still more marked in the realm of feeling and behaviour. Having acquired the idea of abstract time as that through which he speeds along from birth to death, he could project himself in thought into that portion which he had not yet reached—the future. And as he is also aware of the kind of sensation or feeling (pleasant or painful) which usually accompanies his various states and actions, he could imagine himself enduring pain or enjoying pleasure at some future time. Out of this dual awareness emerged a new order of incentives to action, a vast crowd of artificial desires and ambitions usually grouped together under the term "motives." These he has grafted on the few organic impulses of his conscious or animal nature, though they are often in antagonism as direct and deadly as that existing between the activities of a malignant growth and those of the healthy tissue.

The animal eats to allay hunger and drinks to quench its thirst, but man too often eats and drinks for the sake of the enjoyment.

This motive class of artificial desires and ambitions has now become so vast and dominant in human affairs as virtually to swamp and subjugate our instinctive propensities and passions with the result that the story of mankind has become a continuous martyrdom, for it has reduced society to a vast restless sea of human misery which is for ever lashing itself against the rocky edges of the "coral reefs" which have raised themselves above its surface by for ever building upon the skeletal remains of dead comrades.

These projecting islets—the wealthy, the magnates and millionaires—look, to the submerged, resplendent in the bright sunshine of fortune, though probably the

amount of heaven they harbour is never proportional to the glint and the glitter.

3. But nowhere has the incongruous situation in which self-consciousness landed man been more productive of evil than in the domain of the intellect. When he became consciously aware of the relations of resemblance and causality he conceived a new passion, a desire to *classify and explain*—to group the like and trace objects and events to their causal origins; in short, a passion for conceptual building—theories of ends and beginnings, cosmogonies, eschatologies, and histories. True theories were absolutely impossible, for he had no materials for his building. The similarities which he saw were often false and the true ones were usually invisible. He was in a predicament much worse than that of trying to make bricks without straw; he had even no clay for the process. A beneficent God had more occasion to send down his angels to stop the building than in the case of the Tower of Babel!

What did man do? He built his theoretical pagodas with imaginary bricks upon a chimerical foundation. His causal energy was *magic*; and even where he knew of a true causal relation he gave it a magical meaning and application, as when a piece of blood-soaked earth bore a more luxuriant growth. The true cause of this luxuriance he did not and could not know; so he ascribed it to the magic potency of the victim's life.

Likewise, true classification was quite impossible, for the mind had not developed that inward eye which could detect identities or likenesses where the physical eye saw only a most pronounced difference.

The calamity of all this building in cloudland with the substance of moonshine was not due merely to the fact that it gave man no power over Nature to subdue her forces into servility and use. The tragedy of it lay in the fact that it filled him with a self-complacent satisfaction that deprived him of all incentive to seek the truth. The evil of this stultification became chronic and persistent through being stereotyped as custom and petrified as doctrine. But the climax of its obstructive evil was reached when, in the interest of the priestly class, a halo of sanctity was thrown around them.

During the last lap of this æonic ice age the metaphysician made his debut, and threw up a barrage more effectual against progress than even that of the priest. The priest read himself into Nature and thus made magic the one universal source of causation. The metaphysician, on the other hand, gave his attention to the contents of mind and began to abstract relations of resemblance and causality as ideas and gratuitously gave them the rank of entities.

These two streams—causal, magic, and platonic ideas—soon ran into one and the same channel and formed a vast delta swamp in which gnosticism flourished and out of which finally the Christian religion emerged—a cult in relation to human knowledge that developed into an institution organized and armed to the teeth to make it as impossible as human malice and fiendish ingenuity could devise for man ever to quarry real stones for the erection of a temple of true knowledge; and the miracle which dwarfs all miracles is how he ever succeeded in breaking through the cordon of barbed entanglements, a 1,000 deep, in which the Holy (!) Inquisition penned him, and to begin to substitute physical causation in place of myth and magic in the interpretation of life and existence. Thus the human impulse to construct an ideal universe was, in its origin, comparable to an attempt to cross the Rhine without a bridge or the Atlantic without a boat. But in this blind groping it only shows a characteristic which is equally true of the life-impulse itself. From the first it was a blind groping till it embodied itself in a system of muscles and sense-

organs. And even when it had acquired them, the impulse was, and still is, blind as to whether it will ever have an opportunity of exercising them. The instinct, in which the millions annually born to misery and woe have their being, is wholly blind or oblivious to their fate. It reckons naught whether the life of the individual to whom it gives being will be such as a non-existence would in comparison be a veritable heaven.

The fundamental characteristic of both the vital and mental urges is that it seeks an end with no "care" or "thought" about available means of attaining it.

KERIDON.

### More Truth Than Poetry.

I DON'T WANT TO GO THERE NOW.

HEAVEN must be extremely quiet,  
No disturbance over coal,  
Not a chance to start a riot  
Or help to save a soul;  
No bootlegging, no home-brewing,  
No rum runners to be caught;  
All serene and nothing doing—  
If all's true that we've been taught.

No contention over borders  
Separating little states;  
No armed forces or disorders,  
No men shadowed by their mates;  
Not a Ku Klux Klan in action,  
No disdain of sect or race,  
Nothing but sweet satisfaction—  
Heaven, what a humdrum place!

No crap shooting and no racing,  
Not a single game of chance,  
No girl brought to grief through placing  
Faith in some smooth stranger's glance;  
No oppression and no cheating,  
Not a gun and not a knife;  
No regret from over-eating—  
How can angels stand the life!

No old lady angels caring  
How the flapper angels dress;  
No old fat he-angels tearing  
Through obstructions to success;  
Not a "Follies" girl pursuing  
Any rich man's son and heir;  
No strike-breaking, nothing doing—  
Gosh, it must be dreary there!

Never any expectation  
Of a change to better things  
When a new administration  
Parcels out the harps and wings;  
No reforms to push, and never  
Anything to win or lose,  
Just the same old joys forever—  
"I've got—I've got the 'Lysium blues!"

Detroit Times.

S. E. KISER.

The old Roman bent piously over the face of his beloved dead, in order to receive into his own mouth the soul which, in the words of a beautiful poem, was making its escape from the body. In Florida among the Seminole tribe it is the custom, when a woman dies in child-bed, to hold over her mouth the new-born infant, that her soul may pass into the child. Homer speaks of souls which unwillingly slit away from the barrier of the teeth. In pictures of the crucifixion, of as late a period as the sixteenth century, we see two small human forms soaring upwards from the mouths of the two thieves, one form just about to be received by angels and the other by devils. To this day the peasant in the Tyrol thinks that he can see the soul, like a tiny white cloud, leaving the dying man's mouth.—Otto Seeck, "The Passing of the World of Antiquity."

## Acid Drops.

We were pleased to find that the article we published on Freethinkers and the elections had the effect of stirring up our friends all over the country. Many of the candidates must have wondered what was the matter when they had so many people firing questions at them concerning both Secular Education and the Blasphemy Laws. Freethinkers in the past have been too ready to sit still at such times as an election for fear of injuring this or that interest of this or that cause. That is not the way religious people act when anything with which they are concerned is afoot, and we must, in this respect, imitate them. Until we put our Freethought in the forefront of our lives we shall never see it playing the part in life that it ought to play.

Two things that have struck us in reading through the replies to the questions are (1) the slipperiness of candidates, and (2) the ignorance displayed of the nature of the questions asked. To take these in their order. To the question on the Blasphemy Laws there is the reply that the candidate is in favour of the fullest liberty in religious matters. But that may mean anything or nothing. We all believe in liberty; the question is the degree of liberty we advocate. A man who answers a plain question in that way may safely be set down as a shifter. So with Secular Education. One form of reply is that every parent should have the right to say what religious teaching his child should receive. Quite so. That is a proposition no Freethinker disputes. But along with the right to choose the religion goes the right to pay for it, not to compel the rest of the community to pay for a teaching which is outside the legitimate province. By the same reasoning an Atheist parent should be permitted to call upon the State teachers to teach his children Atheism. We wonder what would be said if that were demanded?

The replies to the question of the Blasphemy Laws illustrate the second point. Here many of the candidates, some of them as highly placed in politics as Sir Donald Maclean, seem quite ignorant on the matter. Some of them seem to think that the repeal of these laws involves a license to use bad language in public. Others have taken the late Home Secretary's dishonest explanation of his running away from a deliberate plea, as a correct statement of the case. Others are apparently unaware of the existence of the laws. The candidates are just members of the public and are little better informed than any other member of that august body. In that respect the volley of questions that have been fired at them will mark a stage in their education. It may also awaken them to the fact of the existence of Freethinkers as a potential political force.

The Rev. Father Clarke, of Barrow, Lancs, promoted a sweepstake on the Manchester November Handicap. The receipts were to be handed over to the building fund of his church. The result of the reverend father's zeal was that he appeared before the local court to answer a charge under the Lottery Act. Yet there are several instances in the sacred book of Christianity of men and women being ordered to cast lots to decide some point or other.

The Dean of Exeter has been expressing his vigorous opposition to the prohibition of the liquor traffic. This has brought down upon his head the vehement wrath of local tectotallers who denounce him as a "friend of the trade." Here, too, we think the Dean has scriptural authority on his side. In the Old Testament we read of intoxicated individuals dancing before the Lord. In the New Testament there is recorded the miracle at Cana, where Jesus Christ actually turned water into wine, despite the fact that some of the guests present at the marriage feast had already done ample justice to the stock previously on tap.

The Rev. H. R. Allnut, rector of West Lynn, Norfolk, dropped dead at a whist-drive at which he was to have

presented the prizes. A man named Diamond, formerly a warder at the Borstal Institution, fell dead whilst reading the Bible. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father."

Councillor Lawson, Mayor of Sunderland, says that he belongs to no particular religious body, but is "a Christian at large." The number of the tribe "at large" is still considerable.

During the recent election campaign a public meeting in support of one of the candidates was held in Toplady Hall, Whitefield's Tabernacle. We should like to know if this particular part of the building pays rates and taxes, and if not, on what grounds of equity, or even common decency, it is exempt.

The Rev. Dr. J. H. Jowett says that there is a strong movement among the Protestant Churches in Germany for reunion. At Wittenberg recently commissioners from the different church organizations gathered together in what was Luther's monkish home before he broke with the Papacy. After a devotional service they went in procession to the door of the church where Luther nailed his theses and there ratified their covenant of union.

This is profoundly interesting. Perhaps Dr. Jowett, whose indignation at Germany's conduct of the war reached white-heat, has seen the monument to Luther in the Neu-Markt, Berlin. The Reformer is there represented as the fiercest of Berserkers, surrounded by others, equally ferocious, each wielding a huge sword. Perhaps, too, Dr. Jowett read some of the utterances of the mouth-pieces of the Prussian State Church during the war. He may remember that a good many were collected and published by one Bang.

Mr. T. R. Ybarra, the translator of the ex-Kaiser's *Memoirs*, says that Wilhelm was a "pitifully small man doomed to figure in tremendously big events." Without wishing to hit a man when he is down, we think this estimate is fairly accurate. Yet this "pitifully small man" was extolled to the skies by the spiritual leaders of Protestant Churches in Germany, and was himself well to the front in proclaiming that he was the instrument chosen by Heaven to rule the German people for their own good.

Lecturing recently at Bath on the subject of apparitions, the Rev. Father Horner said that the strangest ghost story he ever heard of came from Sydney, N.S.W., and was connected with a murder. He probably referred to the story of "Fisher's Ghost," and the tracing of the murder to the man Worrall. This occurred in the old convict days, and when all the circumstances are taken into consideration, the "ghost" may be regarded as a not improbable visitant to the man who saw it. But it is the sort of story to appeal to a certain type of man. We could give the reverend father a list of some scores of "mysterious" murders which have never been traced.

The Rev. Alexander Macrae, writing on "The Church and the Village" in the November issue of the *National Review*, thinks that church attendance, even in the country, is falling off. "The village parson, none the less, still occupies a position of importance, influence, and much usefulness among his own people." But if "his own people" are a dwindling quantity, on what grounds does the Establishment still claim the retention of its many privileges? In our rural districts "squire and parson" is a traditional combination, and what Hodge often has to say about the pair of them, when neither is present, would probably sound strange even to the Rev. Alexander Macrae's ears.

The *Westminster Gazette* (November 15) reviewed Bishop Gore's *Belief in Christ*. The feeling of the reader

of the book, says our contemporary, is that the coping stone of Bishop Gore's teaching is yet to be put on the edifice. Hence, "the impression made is a little unreal." The reviewer, in spite of this slight unreality—a state of things which admits of degrees, apparently—concludes: "none the less there is cogent argument which must be reckoned with." If this is not a perfect gem in the application of liberal principles to the Higher Criticism, we should like to know what is.

Found hanging from a tree near Wrexham Garden City, the Rev. Harrop Williams (56), a clergyman of the Church of England, left the following lines:—

Whate'er the hidden future brings  
Is sent by hands Divine;  
Through all the tangled web of things  
There seems a clear design.  
What though the skies are dark to-day,  
To-morrow's may be blue;  
When every cloud has rolled away  
God's providence shines through.

Saying the state of the man's mind was disclosed by his verse, the Coroner returned a verdict of "Suicide whilst of unsound mind." To say that these lines, in themselves, clearly indicate insanity, simply shows that "the law's a hass" just as much so to-day as ever it was. But if the Coroner is right, what has he to say of half the hymns sung every Sunday in the churches?

A writer in the *Daily Mail* (London) complains that in publishers' Christmas books he finds "endless fairy stories," and he asks whether it would not be better to develop the practical rather than the purely imaginative side of the children. The writer overlooks the fact that the Christmas festival itself is associated with a theological "fairy tale."

At the same time there is a real point in the writer's contention. The imagination has its just claims, but nearly the whole education of the child remains far too bookish and literary, despite all that has been done to introduce Nature study into our schools. Even in science a powerful imagination may be a great aid in research work, and we have no desire to see Mr. Gradgrind in supreme authority over the nation's children. In many quarters, however, there is still too much phrase and fable, preaching and moralizing, in the "training" of children, and a good deal of it might profitably make way for observation and experiment.

The impossibility of giving religious instruction which is unsectarian has often been insisted upon by advocates of secular education. Their attitude is being amply confirmed by the demands now being made by the Press organs of the various denominations. The *Guardian* (November 17) "hopefully" looks forward to the establishment of the principle that in every school there shall be "distinctive" religious teaching. "We should be able to follow our children to whatever school they went, and the Nonconformists would have equal facilities for following their children into our schools."

At a meeting of Roman Catholics, held at the Church of the Blessed Sacrament, King's Cross, on November 12, Mr. Lamb, who presided, said that it was absolutely necessary for Catholics "to have schools in which there is a Catholic atmosphere the whole time." The meeting was called to discuss "the present active and grave menace to Catholic schools."

The Rev. T. Cynon-Jones, speaking at the Lewin Road Baptist Church, Streatham, on November 15, said that his son asked him the other day what a myth was. He told him. "The boy added that his teacher had said the Bible was a myth, and that all the tales were unwarranted." The reverend gentleman urged the Church—presumably his own—to be "fastidious in its choice of teachers."

These various "rights" and "claims" deserve the serious consideration of those working for a truly national system of education in England. The attitude of many Nonconformists is contemptible, for they have declared time and again that religion stands outside the sphere of legitimate State interference. The Anglicans are almost as inconsistent. Most of them are ultra-patriotic. Yet they demand a system of education under which our boys are taught to be little Catholics, Anglicans, Methodists, Baptists, and what not, instead of meeting on common ground as little Englishmen. As far as Roman Catholics are concerned, there is only one solution to their education difficulty, and it applies to all their other difficulties. It is to concede every demand they like to make.

In a sermon on "knowledge of God," reported in the *Guardian*, the Rev. Canon O. C. Quick asks: "What happens, then, when by degrees, *polumeros kai polutropos*, we come consciously to identify this transcendent reality with God?" Would any of our readers like to have a shot at this conundrum?

The *Church Times* is not quite happy in regard to the religious status of Mr. Bonar Law. Lloyd George was a Baptist and his efforts at bishop-making did not give entire satisfaction to our contemporary. But Mr. Bonar Law is a Presbyterian and "probably knows less" than his predecessor about the Establishment. The *Church Times* scents another difficulty. "Under a strictly party Government we may have strictly party appointments." This is indeed flattering to a spiritual organization initiated—by whom?—into the business of saving souls. It is only fair, however, to point out that the Establishment has so much confidence in itself that it is now revising its Prayer Book—is in fact undergoing reconstruction generally.

The *Catholic Herald* (November 18) contains an article on the "proselytizing campaign" which the American Y.M.C.A. is carrying on in Poland. The Roman Catholic hierarchy has issued a pastoral which declares: "Renegade priests from the United States are flooding our country with their writings and their followers, and in union with the subversive parties they have obtained control of certain popular newspapers through which they are appealing to the Catholics to leave the Church." The number of renegade priests in U.S.A. appears to be considerable. But the worst of the situation is that these Yankees have abundant finance behind them. "They are everywhere erecting schools, homes for children, orphanages, hospitals, and are making every effort to win the poorer classes, in particular, to their teaching." This is called a "proselytizing campaign." In other words these Yankees, with their pockets well lined with dollars, are trading upon philanthropy. And this is just what those Roman Catholics and Protestants alike are doing when they ask Secularists, "Where are your hospitals and benevolent institutions?"

Religious conditions in Russia, Germany, and Austria afford an interesting insight into the nature and value of Christianity's legacy to Europe. Whether one form of despotism has been substituted for another in any of these countries may be an arguable point, but the emphasis of our own Press on the sufferings of the various orthodoxies in Europe since the overthrow of the pre-war rulers by divine right, shows the close connection that existed between these orthodoxies and Tsarism or Kaiserism. Every one of the institutions mentioned in the preceding paragraph and denounced by the Polish hierarchy is secular. That it should have been left to a flood of "renegade priests" from the land of the Shakers and the Seventh Day Adventists to establish such institutions, is a fact which would consign an ordinary religion for ordinary people to oblivion. But the Church militant, Roman Catholic or Protestant, is not built on these lines. It is a trustee for human souls. Why should it shrink from the exercise of whatever power it can command?



## C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

November 26, Pembroke Chapel, Liverpool; December 3, Stockport; December 6, Labour College, Earl's Court; December 10, Leicester; December 17, Watford.

## To Correspondents.

H. DAWSON.—Of course, the Churches will use as they will use anything else that serves their purpose. They are the politicians of supernaturalism. Hope you are keeping well.

H. EMERY.—The only way to make sure is to go on making Freethinkers. Whether belonging to the "upper" or the "lower" class there is a good deal of the sheep in the mental make-up of the average man. And in his eyes we shall become more respectable as we become more numerous.

E. A. PHIPSON.—If the poem sent us is the best that Burns can do in the spirit world he must have sadly deteriorated. It is quite lacking in the manly vigour of Burns, and is about as much like his writing as would be the work of a rhyming Sunday-school teacher who set out to imitate him. The man who can picture Burns writing:—

"With loving kindness will he wait  
Till all the prodigals of fate  
Return unto their fair estate  
And blessings many;  
Nor will he shut the golden gate  
Of Heaven on any,"

must have as delicate an ear for poetry as a calf.

C. BENTLEY.—We do not see what it is you invite us to deal with. These thought-reading entertainments are, so far as they have been tested, a consequence of an arranged code, confederates, or both combined.

S. O. NEIL.—You did all you could in the matter, and it will have had its effect.

A. L. M.—We only did what we considered to be our duty in the Blasphemy case. We can none of us guarantee victory, but we must always show the bigots that we will not take injustice lying down. For the rest we can only say that the Freethought party generally knows how to value those who stand aside while such an issue is being fought.

J. LATHAM.—As you will have seen by this time, the latest prisoner for blasphemy is dead. We await instructions as to the destination of your postal order.

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## Sugar Plums.

To-day (November 26) Mr. Cohen goes to church. He will lecture in the Pembroke Chapel, Liverpool, at 6.30 on "The Meaning and Morals of Materialism." Our Freethinking readers will note the occasion, and only those Christians who object to hear anything save what they already believe in will deliberately stay away.

Judging from the last visit there will be plenty of discussion after the lecture has been delivered.

Mr. Cohen's lecture at Weston-super-Mare on November 16 went off in a quite satisfactory manner. The Town Hall was not full, but it presented a comfortable appearance. Mr. Friedman, of Manchester, came over specially from Bristol to officiate as chairman, and made a strong appeal for local support. There were a number of questions when the lecturer had concluded, and a few interruptions during its delivery. This was to be expected as the subject was evidently quite a new one to most of those present. A report of the meeting appeared in the local paper; it noted the effectiveness of both the lecturer and the way in which the opposition was disposed of. But we beg to differ when it says that the lecture found few sympathizers. The marked appreciation of the majority of those present was evident, and there were many enquiries as to when Mr. Cohen will pay a return visit. He will probably do so in the New Year.

From Weston, after spending some time in writing, Mr. Cohen went on to Plymouth, where he lectured twice on Sunday in the Co-operative Hall. The hall was comfortably filled on both occasions, and showed a marked improvement on the previous visit. The President of the Branch occupied the chair on both occasions, and the Secretary, Mr. Churchill, was busy in all parts of the hall. Several new members were made, and the Committee of the Branch seem determined to make things move in the future. We wish them every success, and they may rely upon any assistance we can give.

Most of our readers will remember the case of Miss White who was sentenced to three months' imprisonment in default of a fine for publishing a book entitled *The Trail of the Serpent*. The trial made it quite evident, from the language used by the magistrate, that while Miss White was tried on the one charge she was really sentenced on another. The book dealt with the life of Jesus, and the language was held to be blasphemous, although that charge was not preferred. The prosecution thus added cowardice to bigotry, which is not unusual.

At its last meeting the Committee of the Society for the Abolition of the Blasphemy Laws had this matter before it, and the Secretary was instructed to write to the Home Secretary pointing out the character of the trial and the desirability of the Home Office interfering in the matter. In a letter dated November 14, the Home Secretary replies that Miss White has not been arrested and that no part of the fine has been paid, but that if she is committed to prison any representation on her behalf will be considered. To this the Secretary of the Blasphemy Committee has replied that it is the contention of the Society that the sentence of the Court should never have been imposed. For the moment we must let the matter rest there. The lesson to us appears to be that the only way to curb the intolerance of officials is to go on making Freethinkers, and to make Freethinkers who will let their Freethought be known.

Miss Prewett, whose name will be familiar to our readers as an occasional but welcome contributor to these columns, lectured on Sunday last at Manchester under the auspices of the local Branch. It was not our fault a notice of her visit did not appear last week, but we have no means of knowing what is going on unless we are informed. Anyway we are pleased to learn that she had good meetings and that the lectures were much appreciated. To-day (November 26) the Discussion Circle meets at the house of Mr. O. Friedman, 15 Cromer Avenue, Withy Grove, at 6.30. All are welcome.

Birmingham friends will please note that Mr. A. B. Moss visits Birmingham to-day (November 26) and will lecture in the Brassworkers' Hall, 70 Lionel Street, at 7, on "Problems of Freethought." We hope to hear that the hall was crowded.

## The Devil Discovered.

ONE result of the study of comparative religion is the discovery that devils were once deities. Men outgrow their gods and they become devils, as Paul calls the gods of the heathen (1 Cor. x. 20). The Gnostics regarded the Jehovah of the Old Testament as a bad being more worthy of the name of a devil than of a god, in which opinion some modern Agnostics are found to concur. The gods of antagonists are usually regarded as devils. The devas of the Vedas become the demons of the Avesta. Alien races themselves are devils, as the Christian missionaries are "lie-speaking devils" to the Chinese.

In the eyes of the etymologist, as in those of the philosopher, God and the Devil are one and the same. Deus, Dyaus, Zeus, deuce, divus, divine, and devil have a common Aryan root. The Gipsy word for God is "divel." The very spelling of the Devil's name in English is a matter of long and curious evolution. In the earliest extant form (*circa* A.D. 800) it appears as diobul, dioful, or deoful, and the subsequent stages of its progress are somewhat as follows: Deofol, deofel, deouel, deuel, deuil, devel, divel, and so at last to its final crystallization as devil. The Devil himself, from being a most important personage (second only to the Creator of the universe), who wandered about as a roaring lion, as a serpent, or man, has come to be a mere expression or figure of speech, and people are asking, Who the devil is the Devil? Like the quaint old man of God who preached from 1 Peter v. 8, and had the habit of putting the pronoun after the noun, they inquire: Who the devil he was, where the devil he walketh, and what the devil he was roaring about?

I have discovered the Devil where a good many other things are to be found—in the dictionary. A dictionary makes capital reading—to any word-dealer; a little inconsecutive perhaps, but, then, what splendid materials, what enshrined histories, what curiosities of literature, what bye-paths of thought, what wealth of information, what concentrated essence of our glorious language! People talk about what volumes they would take to a lighthouse, or on a long voyage; but give me a dictionary. As with all the best books, it is not to be read through at a sitting, but dipped into, like the Bible, Marcus Aurelius, Shakespeare, Montaigne, Bacon, and Emerson. If this is true of an ordinary dictionary, what shall be said of such an extraordinary work as Dr. J. A. H. Murray's *New English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, the work of an entire generation, and for the making of which the whole range of English literature has been ransacked by a staff of studious assistants.<sup>1</sup>

Looking for the Devil in Murray, I found he had a place befitting his position in the thoughts of our ancestors. Seventeen and a half columns are consecrated to his name, with its various senses, phrases, and derivatives. Nor is this all. Under the head of "diablerie," "diabolism," and their cognate words, there are added another three columns. A former instalment had a long entry under "demon." Future instalments will deal with Satan, Lucifer, and other aliases; so that, before the Devil is dropped by Dr. Murray, he will probably have a quarter of a hundred columns consecrated to his memory. God, perhaps, will not have half the space.

Lieutenant Peter Lecount anticipated many of the calculations and conclusions of Bishop Colenso in an amusing book, which he entitled *A Hunt After the Devil*. He chased Old Nick over the Bible and theological literature. Yet I am of opinion that the very

best place to look for the Devil is in Murray's *Dictionary*, for here he is treated historically, and so seen in all his former greatness and in his present decay.

Murray thus defines the Devil:—

(1) In Jewish and Christian theology, the proper appellation of the supreme spirit of evil, the tempter and spiritual enemy of mankind, the foe of God and holiness, otherwise called Satan. He is represented as a person subordinate to the Creator, but possessing superhuman powers of access to, and influence over, men. He is the leader or prince of wicked apostate angels, and for him and them everlasting fire is prepared (Matthew xxv. 41).

(2) From the identification of the demons (daimonia, daimones), of the Septuagint and New Testament, with Satan and his emissaries, the word has been used from the earliest times in English as equivalent to or including demon, applied (a) (in scripture translations and references) to the false gods or idols of the heathen; (b) (in Apocrypha and New Testament) to the evil or unclean spirits by which demoniacs were possessed.

(3) Hence, generically, a malignant being of angelic or superhuman nature and powers; one of the host of Satan, as "prince of the devils," supposed to have their proper abode in hell, and thence to issue forth to tempt and injure mankind; a fiend, a demon. Also applied to the malignant or evil deities feared and worshipped by various heathen people.

Thus Dr. Murray goes cheerily on through the twenty-five different heads under which the subject is grouped, each head further divided into numerous sub-heads, every head and every sub-head being copiously illustrated by quotations from poets, scholars, divines, and popular writers, arranged in chronological order.

All the early references show that the Devil was conceived as a person. As Trench says: "All gathers up in a person, in the Devil, who has a kingdom as God has a kingdom."<sup>2</sup> The first notable writer to treat the Devil philosophically and profanely is Shakespeare. He sometimes uses devil as a mere expression of superlativeness. Thus, in *Twelfth Night*, at the end of Act ii., Sir Toby Belch calls Maria "thou most excellent devil of wit." So Goldsmith, in his *Retaliation*, wrote of Richard Burke:—

In short, so provoking a devil was Dick  
That we wish'd him full ten times a-day at Old Nick;  
But, missing his mirth and agreeable vein,  
As often we wish'd to have Dick back again.

Even Thackeray uses "a devil to play." The word "devilish" came so much in use last century that Foote, the comedian, satirised it in his *Devil on Two Sticks*, when he says: "They are devilish rich, devilish poor, devilish ugly, and devilish handsome." Lord Byron, even when writing to a lady (Miss Pigot), said: "I should be devilish glad to see him"; and Mrs. Carlyle wrote (Letters i., 360): "I think it devilishly well done." So the late R. L. Stevenson, in his *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, uses: "I have seen devilish little of the man."

But to get back to Shakespeare's poetic, philosophic, and proper use of the term as a mere figure of speech, a personification of undesirable qualities in man himself. How finely is this expressed by Cassio when he says: "It hath pleased the devil, drunkenness, to give place to the devil, wrath: one imperfectness shows me another to make me frankly despise myself!" So in *Troilus and Cressida*: "How the devil Luxury.....tickles these together." These metaphorical devils are the veritable real devils that each has cast out for his or her own self. The Atheist Shelley so uses the term, and says: "The devil was

<sup>1</sup> Yet I, even I, pointed out to the editor the omission of the children's word, "fanits."

<sup>2</sup> Ample proof will be found in my pamphlet on *Satan, Witchcraft, and the Bible*.

rebuked that lived in him"; and Tennyson finely ends his lines on *The Sailor Boy* :—

A devil rises in my heart,  
Far worse than any death to me.

The metamorphosis of the Devil from a monster into a metaphor is probably symbolical of the fate of his divine antagonist, for it is hard to see how the deity can be an actual person if the Devil is a mere figure of speech.

The *Catholic Dictionary* of Addis and Arnold lays it down that :—

The Devil is a spirit (Ephesians ii. 2); that he is a prince with evil angels subject to him (Matthew xii. 24-26; xxv. 41). All spiritual evil and error (2 Corinthians xi. 14, 15), all which hinders the Gospel (1 Thess. ii. 18; Apoc. ii. 10), is traced unto him..... Satan has a terrible power over the world and its votaries, so much so that he is called the ruler and even the "god" of this world (John xii. 31; 2 Corinthians iv. 4); and hence St. Paul (1 Cor. v. 5) regards exclusion from the Church as to amount to a deliverance of the excommunicated person into the power of Satan.

All the early fathers held that Christ's atoning blood was a price paid to Satan.

The Devil of the Dark Ages—that is, of the period when Christianity was dominant and unquestioned—was a horrible nightmare of a malevolent being in semi-human shape, but with horns, tail, cloven hoof, and trident. He was the prince of darkness, the prince of the powers of the air. Martin Luther, who met him,<sup>3</sup> and threw his ink-bottle at him, found in his agency an explanation of mosquitoes and mice as well as other troublesome phenomena. The Bogomili called him "the elder brother of Christ," so great was the dread of his power; and even Bishop Martensen, the greatest Danish orthodox theologian of modern times, calls him "the younger brother of Christ."

Until the eighteenth century the Devil bulked largely in popular imagination. Fulke, in his *Meteors* (1640), says of the period 1563: "There was newes come to London that the Devill.....was scene flying over the Thames." The Rev. Joseph Glanvill, of the Royal Society, gives many accounts of the Devil's visitations in his *Sadducismus Triumphatus* (1681), as "the Devil, in the shape of a black man, lay with her in the bed.....his feet was cloven." Glanvill was not a stupid man. On the contrary, he was a very cute and able man, a voluminous and versatile writer, who, in his able *Scepsis Scientifica*, shows the vanity of dogmatising and the futility of mere metaphysical speculation. He anticipated the electric telegraph and Hume's theory of causation. Yet he was shrewd enough to see that the Devil and God were logically bound together, and that to deny the agency of one was really to discard natural theology and would be the triumph of *Sadduceism*.

The terrible belief in contracts with the Devil, which drove many to insanity, now remains only in the jocular saying, "There'll be the Devil to pay." *The Devil to Pay* is appropriately the title of a farce, though the words may recall many direful tragedies. To play the Devil now implies recklessness, though the Devil is supposed to be a peculiarly cute and cautious personage. Some glimpse of the old terror associated with the term may be found in such expressions as devil-fish, sea-devil, and so on. But, in ordinary parlance, devil is often associated with poor as a term of pity. Sterne, in his *Sentimental Journey*, said: "I am apt to be taken.....when a poor devil comes to offer his services to so poor a devil as myself." And

<sup>3</sup> On another occasion he said: "I heard someone walking on the floor above my head; but, as I knew it was only the Devil, I went quietly to sleep."

Scott, in his *Antiquary*, has: "What can we do for that pair doited deevil of a knight-baronet?" Thus Disraeli in 1850 spoke of the churchmen "riding the high Protestant horse, and making the poor devils of Puseyites the scapegoats."

The Devil's name appears everywhere, even in popular zoology and botany. The puff ball is the Devil's snuff-box, ferns are the Devil's brushes, the prickly pear is the Devil's fig, the bindweed is the Devil's garter, the dragon-fly is the Devil's darning-needle, the black-beetle is the Devil's cow, and so on. Even our popular games have been damned by his name. Cards are the Devil's prayer-books, dice are the Devil's bones. Nay, human beings, or collections of human beings, are in the same boat. The Inns of Court Volunteers are known as "The Devil's Own," because they are all lawyers. Yet no one thinks of doing anything save smile at the impiety of an expression which would be the essence of blasphemy if people really believed in the Devil.

A very familiar personage is the printer's devil. Beyond a penchant for blood-and-thunder stories and deeds of devilry, he is rather an amiable creature. There is a deal of human nature about a printer's devil, who so far resembles the religionist's Devil that he is often made the scapegoat for other people's sins and shortcomings. Another devil, truly a poor devil, is the literary hack, content to let his own work pass under some mightier name. There are many grades of these devils. I have heard of one who was offered two guineas to do a piece of literary work. He found a poorer devil who would do it for one guinea, and sublet the contract; the guinea devil found one who would do it for ten shillings, he another who would do it for five, and he yet another who took two shillings and a drink for doing what devil No. 1 got two guineas for.

Among "the devil's own," the term is used for one who does professional work, to gain experience, without fee or recognition. Thus, the *Athenæum* is quoted in Murray as writing: "He devils for the counsel on both sides"; and again: "This unjust system is termed devilling, and those who appear in cases for which others are retained, at the sole request of the latter, are called 'devils,' while the original holders of the transferred briefs may be styled devillees."

Among derivatives of the devil we must not omit "devil-dodger," first used by Lackington in 1791, but, like "sky pilot," popularized in the *Freethinker*, and used by Mr. Grant Allen in *Mamie*, one of his popular novels.

If the Devil is as jealous as the Deity is said to be, and refuses to hold guiltless those who take his name in vain, he will be kept pretty busy. Many expressions are really invocations to his Satanic Majesty. "Who the devil are you?" "What the devil do you mean?" "When the devil will you pay me?" "How the devil did it happen?" Such phrases, not uncommon among Christians, have "in the name of" the Devil, understood; and sometimes ill-mannered people substitute his majesty's hotel to give further emphasis. The liberties taken with the Devil's name in common speech show that real belief in the personage Jesus called "the god of this world" has faded from the minds of men.

The conclusion of the whole matter is that, although there is said to be extant a sect of Devil worshippers, though Marie Corelli writes of the sorrows of Satan, and even Mr. Buchanan seriously puts forward *The Devil's Case*, without seriously believing in him, Old Nick has, to the mass of mankind, become a mere laughing stock in his ancient guise, and a mere figure of speech or idiomatic seasoning in the ordinary parlance of the world. (The late) J. M. WHEELER.

## The Modern Causerie Essay.

THE main necessity of the modern essay is that it shall be eminently readable. It must be light while considerable attention must be paid to style so that anything difficult which it may seek to express shall appear to be simple. But it never does attempt to express anything that is really very difficult, otherwise it might fail to attract the modern audience to whom it is addressed. If the idea that it seeks to convey is not absolutely elementary or superficial, the writer must make that idea appear elementary or superficial by his method. What has been facetiously called "juggling" with an idea, tossing it up in the air and catching it, and so on, is the method used, and it must be admitted that the principal writers of the essay have attained considerable distinction in this art.

The method is rather different from that adopted by the father of the modern *belles lettres*, Charles Lamb, who exercises his fascination not simply because he deals with the trivialities of life in a charming manner, and that he can make these trivialities appear more or less important, but because he insists on being so absorbingly interested in them himself that he can communicate some part of his own interest to the reader. His essays resolve themselves largely into expressions of his own personality, which was undoubtedly a very charming one. Consequently one can read the *Essays of Elia* ten thousand times without boredom or lassitude.

Many moderns have achieved this ability to deal with the trivialities, and have even adopted a style as pure as his own, but while one man can do this thing successfully, a school of literature which depends upon the system is likely to experience a very rapid decadence.

One of the most perfect examples of the modern light essayist is Holbrook Jackson. Severe though the criticism may seem, there is no trace of an original idea in this gentleman's writings. Almost without exception the source from which the ideas are derived can be traced. It is not impossible to say that the style in which they are written varies to some degree, according to the master from whom the idea is perhaps unconsciously taken. The essays are nevertheless readable, and have a certain vogue.

Quite a different style of writer is A. G. Gardiner, who has perhaps an even greater popularity. Such collections as *Prophets, Priests and Kings*, and the other portraits in which Mr. Gardiner has indulged, are not without their interest or value, but reading the book mentioned in the light of the post-war atmosphere it becomes immediately apparent that although the essays are pleasing, they are ephemeral.

Although these two writers are chosen as examples, they are not particularly worse in these respects than many others. Their faults are common to this generation, and are possibly largely the outcome of the desires of their audiences. The lack of originality found in the modern essay is phenomenal. It would almost appear that the writers fear to think, or if they do, they fear to express their thoughts because their work might be unprofitably received, or otherwise might be dangerous to the intellects to which it is addressed. In these circumstances the essay becomes a beautifully written, happy-go-lucky sort of thing whose vacillating interest is attracted by the changing phenomena of the moment, which are blithely depicted and charming to read, but which make no demand for mental attention or consideration by the reader. The main endeavour is apparently to produce something which can be picked up for a few moments to relieve the *tedium vitæ*, and can be put down immediately some more active interest occurs.

Art which is intended merely to fill a few moments of our life with passing interest, can hardly hope to aspire to prominence, nor can it hope to fulfil any of the more serious functions of life. It seems, however, that this type of writing is what suits the modern intellectual temperament. Possibly many of the readers of modern *belles lettres* do not consider the kinema to be an artistic medium, but the two things are analogous. The kinema deals with improbabilities presented in a broad and from a producer's point of view, in a facetious manner, in a manner nevertheless which attracts and holds the attention of the audience, who merely sit and gaze idly at the flickering movements of the actors. No attempt is made to present anything that demands serious attention; the broad outlines of character, unmistakable actions, and a standardized story, are what make up the art of the kinema. In the causerie essay the same principles are used. The subject is opened immediately in the first page, it is fully described in the second page, it is described again in the third page, it is described once more in the fourth page, and the subject is rounded off by its yet more emphatic statement.

A similar parallel between the essay and the modern revue, which has so largely taken the place of drama, can be drawn. The function of art is to-day devoted to the entertainment of man, to the production of an ephemeral pleasure which he can readily assimilate, and this is a very worthy object, but in order that an entertainment may achieve art, it must be something more than this. An artistic entity while it must depend upon the pleasure it provides or the appeal it makes, must at the same time be of such a character as to widen the experience of man; that is the quality which genius so well understands, and which is so necessary to produce really lasting pleasure.

On the face of it, perhaps the modern essay does possess some qualities which entitle it to consideration. It does provide pleasure, it does fill the small periods of leisure which the modern man allows himself with a certain sense of intellectual occupation, and the charming manner in which it is usually written is such as to make it readily quotable, so that its perusal provides a pleasing sense of erudition in the application of its phrases to many circumstances. These qualities render the modern essay satisfactory reading and so endear it to the reader, who asks for more, and it becomes increasingly attractive as it becomes more familiar. In these respects it is of course once more exactly like the kinema and the revue, and it bears exactly the same relation to really adequate artistic work as either the kinema or the revue do to true drama.

G. E. FUSSELL.

### WINE OF OMAR KHAYYAM.

He rode the flame-winged dragon-steed of Thought  
Through Space and Darkness, seeking Heaven and  
Hell;  
And searched the farthest stars where souls might  
dwell  
To find God's justice; and in vain he sought.  
Then, looking on the dusk-eyed girl who brought  
His dream-filled wine beside his garden-well,  
He said: "Her kiss; the wine-jug's drowsy spell;  
Bulbul; the roses; death;.....all else is naught;  
So drink till that." What, drink, because the abyss  
Of Nothing waits? because there is for man  
But one swift hour of consciousness and light?  
No.—Just because we have no life but this,  
Turn it to use; be noble while you can;  
Search, help, create; then pass into the night.

—Eugene Lee-Hamilton.

## The International Freethought Movement—Japan.

It will interest English Freethinkers to know that my friend, Mr. Yoshiro Oyama, the distinguished Japanese publicist and militant Freethinker, had his direct lead to a rationalist view of religion and ethics from English people and English books. Some ten years ago he lived in San Francisco, and seems readily to have acquired the sort of English culture for which freedom of thought and speech is the very breath of life. From America he attacked the religious beliefs and teachings of the clerical parties in Japan through the newspapers and magazines of his native country. He now bombards the enemies of Freethought in Japan at closer quarters. He writes to me from Yokohama under the date September 30:—

Japan to-day is a growing power. She is just beginning to scale the ladder of fame among the nations of the world. Yet a close and impartial observer can easily put his finger on the weak spot. From time to time I have come across in our newspapers articles on education and religion by writers who urge the government to adopt reactionary methods. It seems to me that their chief aim is the introduction of the religious element into education. Why these journalists should place before their patrons such a dish of rotten chestnuts I cannot imagine. One of the most discouraging facts for those who would promote the advancement of mankind is the bad reasoning of every section of the reading public. The journalists are pre-eminently irrational on matters of education. Leaders of this kind of movement (spiritual and religious) build upon the ignorance rather than the intelligence of the people.

In all countries, of course, you have the aged and the ignorant who cling to the old superstitions, and refuse to be guided by reason. This we find here, particularly with the Buddhist and Shinto believers. But over enlightened people religion—Christianity, priestly Buddhism and mythical Shintoism—has no longer any power in this country. Certainly I am aware that we prophets of freedom have less honour here than we have abroad. But I do say that the religious movement will not succeed in Japan. I know that there is only one important newspaper that advocates Freethought and modern scientific ideas. But the *Jigi* is one of our leading dailies, and has an excellent reputation, being ever ready to help scholars and Freethinkers.

Recently my attention was called to our government's attitude to religion—Buddhist, Shinto, and Christian—and I found that the present bureaucratic officials seem to be on good terms with Popery and the old superstitious Buddhism. It is true that many of our nobility and their children were educated in Roman Catholic schools and are now supporting Roman Catholic Churches.

Japan has never had religious education in the schools, only moral instruction. But our public schools are trying to get the pupils to worship Shinto gods. The teachers hope that by uniting more closely the school and the Church they may be able to lessen the pressure put upon them by the bureaucracy.

I am afraid that any foreigner who reads what I am now saying about the conditions of modern Japan will at once remark that we are extremely bad reasoners. But, believe me, the tendency of the age is towards Freethought and Secular Education. People here love freedom of thought and speech, and they want an ethical system based on Nature. I note, too, that the anti-Christian theories of Nietzsche meet with quite favourable criticism. *Freethought in Japan is a success.*

I am glad to be able to announce that Mr. Oyama will keep us informed of the development of the Freethought movement in Japan.

GEORGE UNDERWOOD.

## Islam and Freethought; or More About the G.U.M.P.

WHEN I read Mr. Kwaja Kamal-ud-din's sermon in the *Islamic Revue*, referred to in my previous article in the *Freethinker* of August 20, it seemed to me to give the show away, and unwittingly to demonstrate, very simply and clearly, how gods are made, and how they have their origin in human ignorance. Mr. Kamal-ud-din cannot satisfy his curiosity as to the how and why and wherefore of the universe, and of this planetary system in particular, in which man finds himself, so he supposes a "Great Unseen Mysterious Power," out of which he manufactures a god, and clothes this god with all the attributes he thinks it ought to possess, gives it a name and a personality, and bows down and worships it, and would invite all men to do the same.

What I attacked was Mr. Kamal-ud-din's presuming to act as tailor to his supposed G.U.M.P., and clothing it with all manner of imaginary attributes, and making a god or idol of it for purposes of worship. That which is unseen requires no clothing; and if the G.U.M.P. exists, it no doubt desires to be and to remain mysterious, otherwise it would have revealed itself to mankind long since, in such a way as to leave no possibility of doubt or misunderstanding. An earthly father does not make himself unseen and mysterious to his children whom he loves and protects; why then should a "heavenly father" do so, if such a one exist?

If the G.U.M.P. does exist, it is something beyond the conception and comprehension of man, yet something quite natural, and I neither fear it, love it, nor worship it; it does not seek or need the worship of man or any other animal; there is no more necessity for man to bow down and worship it than for a horse, a cow, or a sheep to do so. I am sorry that any remarks of mine should have hurt the susceptibilities of Mr. Kamal-ud-din as regards Muslim forms of worship; but, being endowed with a sense of the ludicrous and ridiculous, I cannot help regarding worship by bodily prostration as ludicrous and ridiculous, no matter how seriously it may be meant by those performing it. In wielding either sword or pen, it is scarcely possible to avoid hurting something or somebody, and the fact of their being hurt only proves the weakness of their defensive armour. I am not endowed with the desire to worship which seems to compel some men to grovel on the ground and to bow and scrape to some unseen, mysterious, unknowable power, or to some man-made god; and therein lies the difference between me and Mr. Kamal-ud-din.

If I wanted or felt the necessity to worship anything I should worship the sun. The most perfect form in Nature is that of the globe; therefore, a god, if a man wishes to make one, should be in the form of a globe, not of a man. I dearly love the sun. It is the origin of all life on this earth, and of the earth itself. To the sun we owe life, health, warmth, light, growth, preservation, and beauty. I would sing hymns of praise to the sun, at sunrise, noon, and sunset. If I possessed Aladdin's wonderful lamp, I would rub it and request the attendant Djinn to furnish me with a magic carpet in the form of an aeroplane capable of flying round the earth at any latitude in twenty-four hours; I would start off at noon and fly westward, so that to me it would be noontide all the time, or as long as I wished it to be. Professor H. E. Armstrong, in his address before the Royal Society of Arts last year, said, "If we were seeing, reasonable beings, we should revert to sun-worship, and bend our knees to coal."

The "attributes" with which Muslims "clothe" their Great, Unseen, Mysterious Power, or Allah, are many. He is said to be "The All-mighty, the All-knowing, the All-just, the Cherisher of all the Worlds, the Friend, the Guide, the Helper. There is none like him. He has no partner. He is neither begotten, nor has he begotten any son or daughter. He is indivisible in person. He is the light of heaven and the earth, the merciful, the compassionate, the glorious, the magnificent, the beautiful, the eternal, the infinite, the first and the last."

Nearly all these attributes are equally claimed for the Jewish and Christian gods; while some of them might very well be applied to the sun. The "laws of Nature as revealed by science" do not teach us to endue any G.U.M.P. with such attributes, no matter what Muhammad or Mr. Kamal-ud-din may say to the contrary.

Monotheism, whether Jewish, Muslim, or Christian, is absurd on the face of it, in view of the facts of everyday life. To imagine that one and the same god made the lion and the lamb, the wolf and the sheep, the spider and the fly, the human babe and the flies that torment it while it sleeps, and created beautiful sentient animals merely to be slaughtered by humans for food, is to me inconceivable, and utterly inconsistent with the idea of a "loving heavenly father." No earthly father would be guilty of such a cruel, fiendish scheme of creation.

Mr. Kamal-ud-din says "our ignorance of a thing does not necessarily mean that the thing does not exist." Quite so; but neither does our ignorance of a thing necessarily mean that we must worship a thing of which we are ignorant; to do so is absurd. If Mr. Kamal-ud-din can explain scientifically and intelligently his G.U.M.P., well and good; but to attempt to explain it by clothing it and dressing it up like a magnificent and expensive doll with all manner of attributes (some of which, if it exists, it very evidently does *not* possess) is nothing but imagination and superstition, designed to cover up ignorance.

Electricity is a power of which we know very little; perhaps Mr. Kamal-ud-din would explain all about it to us? Then he might proceed and explain all about the sun, the moon, the planets, and the stars. It would be intensely interesting to know the truth about the "canals" on Mars, for instance, and whether there is life on the moon, and on the planets. When we know all about these things, it will be time enough to endeavour to know and explain any G.U.M.P. that may or may not be behind them all. The ladder of learning has many rungs, and we must step up it one rung at a time, and not attempt to skip any by jumping to the top.

Mr. Kamal-ud-din, in his reply to my criticism of his sermon, has opened up another matter for discussion, viz., the "Great Mind," and "The Law." What I have to say on this subject I must hold over for another article, this one being already long enough.

I would like to take this opportunity of correcting a printer's error in my former article, "Islam and Freethought," in the *Freethinker* of August 20 last. On page 539, second column, line 6, "downward" should read *down*.  
A. W. MALCOLMSON.

Origen, Augustine, Basil, Chrysostom, Cyprian, Jerome, etc., preached unity, universal brotherhood, justice, and charity, in as explicit general terms as have ever been employed since; but any man who fancies them to have had therefore other than the most imperfect views of human unity, the most imperfect insight into what man as man really was, may be assured that his vocation is not that of tracing the growth of ideas.—Robert Flint, "The Philosophy of History."

## 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.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (160 Great Portland Street, W.1) : 8, Mrs. Maurice Maubrey, "Life at its Best."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W.9, three minutes from Kennington Oval Tube Station and Kennington Gate) : 7, Mr. F. Shaller, "Is Man the Product of a Special Creation?"

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2) : 11, S. K. Ratcliffe, "The Centenary of Matthew Arnold."

### COUNTRY.

#### INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Brassworkers' Hall, 70 Lionel Street) : 7, Mr. Arthur B. Moss, "Problems of Freethought."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Shop Assistants' Hall, 297 Argyle Street) : 11.30, Mr. E. Hale, "The Story of the Sun." (Silver collection.)

LEEDS BRANCH N.S.S. (2 Central Road, Duncan Street, Shop Assistants' Rooms) : 7, Mr. Robertshaw, "The Little Village." Questions and discussion invited. New and old members please attend.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate) : 6.30, Mr. Thomas M. Moseley, "The Romance of the Mine."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Pembroke Chapel) : 6.30, Mr. Chapman Cohen, "The Meaning and Morals of Materialism."

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S. DISCUSSION CIRCLE (Socialist Society's Rooms, 23 Royal Arcade) : Tuesday, November 28, at 7.30, Mr. A. Wood, "Christianity and Woman."

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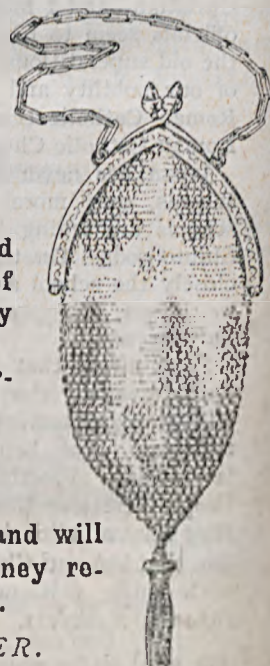
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