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Views and Opinions.

War and Peace.

It is extremely probable that the course of events has by this time made most people realize the folly—sedulously spread abroad as a piece of war propaganda—that the armaments of Europe were in the main the products of German militarism, which stood as the principal threat to the peace of the world. As my readers are aware, I never subscribed to that view however clear it might be that Germany was suffering from the dominance of a military gang, led by a megalomaniacal emperor, and however necessary it might be to break that power once and for all. Those who studied the history of Europe would readily admit that this country could, fortunately, lay no claim to being a military nation, although able and willing enough to fight when needs be. But it is plain that the armaments of Europe rested upon a deeper foundation than the militarism of Germany—which was, so far as the mass of the German people were concerned, quite a recent development. Nor could they be laid to the credit of France, which by tradition was more of a military nation than Germany, and in which country the army has always been an object of veneration. The disease sprang from ideas and ideals that were more or less common to all, and because no nation has possessed leaders who were willing to tell people the truth about war, but who were all more or less possessed with the notion that national security must rest upon a basis of force—potential or applied—if it were to be gained. And so long as that delusion continued, so long were we sure of wars and preparations for wars, and they will continue until we have teachers of the people who are able and willing to fight this superstition as men have fought and “scotched,” if they have not killed, other superstitions.

* * *

Conflict and Life.

A sharply contrasted point of view to the one just expressed is given in an important book issued by Signor Francesco Nitti on *The Decadence of Europe*. It is in the form of a quotation from M. Clemenceau, and I am afraid puts forth a very widely held opinion. M. Clemenceau said in a speech delivered in the French Chamber:—

I conceive of life after the war as a continual conflict, whether there be war or peace. I believe it was Bernhardt who said that politics are war conducted

with other weapons. We can reverse that aphorism and say that peace is war conducted with other weapons.

Now although that is taken from a leading ex-minister of France, it might just as well have come from a number of the military leaders in Germany, or in France, or even some of the militarists in this country or in America, for it expresses a very common opinion, and it has, as expressed, just that mingling of truth and falsehood, just the form of words that may carry two very different meanings, which appeal to those who are not in the habit of subjecting the formulas thrown at them to a close scrutiny. To say that life is conflict is to express a truth, but it is after all only half a truth. For life is not fundamentally conflict within the group but is fundamentally co-operation. The war should certainly have taught us that, if it has taught us anything, for the prime condition of carrying on the war was the suppression of conflict among ourselves; and to conclude that because life involves conflict (rather a different proposition), therefore the conflict must take the form of military warfare, is to make the confusion almost criminal in its dissemination.

* * *

The Fetish of Force.

The fundamental fallacy here is that life—and by that must be meant social life—rests ultimately upon force, and from that is drawn the corollary that the militarist is merely one who has the courage to look at the facts as they are and to express them as they are rather than to cover them up with grandiloquent phrases that are of no value. That, I repeat, is a common view; it was held by many before the war, and it is held by probably many more since the war, for the glorification of brute force associated with the struggle has not been without its effects, and it is at present adopted as a set policy by groups of otherwise widely different opinions in various countries. The Fascisti in Italy, the Bolsheviks in Russia, the doctrine of those who talk of the dictatorship of the proletariat, are all manifestations of the one principle that any one group, provided it can get sufficient force at its command, is justified in imposing its will on the rest of the community. But that policy—whether it be imposed in the name of a monarch, or in that of a demagogue, whether on behalf of extreme socialism or extreme conservatism—is in practice a negation of all social order and progress. It is militarism applied within a society instead of its being applied between societies. It is a doctrine that is susceptible of indefinite expansion in all directions, but it would mean the splitting up of society into warring groups, and ultimately shattering it into fragments. It is the military idea, the idea expressed by M. Clemenceau, Herr Bernhardt, and others, applied all round.

* * *

War and Primitive Life.

There is no ground for the popular belief that primitive society is continuously at war. That picture of primitive life is as false as the eighteenth century doctrine of the noble savage. The savage is not noble,

neither is he filled with ideas of war—unless one chooses to call war the contest that is going on between man and the animal world. Society commences in the grouping of people on a basis of co-operation, and cannot commence, nor can it be sustained, in any other way. There are circumstances connected with early society which give rise to contests between groups, but these circumstances need not detain us here. And even when there is established a definite military class, with warfare a recurrent feature of tribal life, the life of co-operation is always in the background, and upon that militarism fastens its tentacles. For militarism is parasitic from every point of view. It obviously cannot support itself in the means of living. That has to be provided by others, and whether it is provided by the people with whom the army fights, or the people for whom the army fights, does not affect this in the slightest degree. But militarism is as parasitic morally as mentally. No army in the world has ever been able to keep itself fit by fighting. The inevitable effect of that is to demoralize and to weaken. It is only by falling back upon the virtues developed during seasons of peace that an army can get its moral strength, just as it must fall back upon the wealth amassed during peace-time to support it during war. The militarist class is the most parasitic that society has yet invented. It produces nothing, and under modern conditions it may be questioned whether it can even discharge the function of protecting.

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Civil War.

Early in 1915 I wrote that the special feature of the war was not that it was large, but that it was in essence a civil war. To the journalist, to the politician, to the theologian, it was a war between nations. To those who looked at human affairs from the standpoint of evolution, and with due regard to modern conditions, the war was as much civil war as though Scotland or Wales had gone to war with England. For the conditions of modern life, the gradual evolution in social life that had gone on, had produced the result of making the various European groups so interdependent that England, Germany, France, and other countries were no more independent of each other than are Scotland, England, or Wales. That is being realized now that bitter experience is teaching men the lesson. Thousands are now beginning to realize that the days of profitable international piracy are over. Try how we may, no nation in Europe can to-day grow wealthy by plundering another. This not because the will to rob may not be present, but because the conditions prevent it being profitable. Willy-nilly nations are being driven into honesty, and that is no more than an illustration of the fact that just as the conditions under which a small tribe exists make co-operation and not conflict the condition of health, so, as the larger groups which form nations are driven into closer and closer communication, eventually working together in commerce and science and literature, they take on the characteristics of a single community, a disruption of which spells disaster to all.

* * *

The Moral Equivalent of War.

The truth stated by M. Clemenceau, but so stated as to become a dangerous half-truth, is that life is conflict. So it is, or to put it from the point of view of a scientific sociology, life is conflict in and through co-operation. There is with all men a love of rivalry, of conflict, and the delight in victory; and these feelings are so deeply rooted, and so persistently displayed in all stages of human existence, that one is quite justified in attributing to them some special value in social life; and a special value they undoubtedly have. Briefly, they stand as among the

immediate incentives to conduct that make for development. Among animals we have in the conflict that takes place for the possession of the female a rough and ready form of selection which secures that the weaker specimens shall not survive. With man, where the conflict takes on a more intellectual form, the desire to stand well with the rest of the tribe, the power of public opinion, the sheer delight of exercising qualities, whether of mind or muscle, keeps alive the love of conflict, and the delight in victory, with the tribute of admiration that is paid the victor. Conflict is thus indeed deeply rooted in life, but the mistake made by generalisers of the militaristic variety is assuming that the typical and inevitable form of this is the soldier; whereas the truth is that a social life developed to even the point that we have developed it, makes the soldier merely a degraded form of qualities that should find a much healthier expression, and which during times of peace actually do find it. It is not the abolition of conflict that is desirable, or even possible. What is required is the establishment in public opinion of what the late William James called the moral equivalent of war. And that is with us in our everyday life. It is with us in the delight taken in facing the dangers of exploration, of travel, of scientific research, in the doing of dangerous duty at sea or on land, in the air or below the earth. It is here in the exercise of the courage it requires to stand for an unpopular opinion and on behalf of what one believes to be truth and justice. There are a thousand and one ways in which a peaceful social life keeps alive the qualities of courage, loyalty, the sense of discipline and of duty. Indeed, it is only social life that does create and keep alive these qualities. Militarism does not, war does not. They merely exploit and weaken them. The choice before us is veritably not that of war versus peace, but only between different kinds of warfare. The choice before civilized humanity to-day is whether it will continue to exercise the love of conflict, of rivalry, and the delight in victory on the crude level of brute force, or whether it will exercise them in the wholly beneficial level of intellectual effort and social competition; and so far as one can see it is on the answer to that question that the immediate future of civilization depends.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

BARRACK-ROOM PHILOSOPHY.

SINCE barbarism has its pleasures it naturally has its apologists. There are panegyrist of war who say that without a periodical bleeding a race decays and loses its manhood. Experience is directly opposed to this shameless assertion. It is war that wastes a nation's wealth, chokes its industries, kills its flower, narrows its sympathies, condemns it to be governed by adventurers, and leaves the puny, deformed, and unmanly to breed the next generation. Internecine war, foreign and civil, brought about the greatest set-back which the life of reason has ever suffered; it exterminated the Greek and Italian aristocracies. Instead of being descended from heroes, modern nations are descended from slaves, and it is not their bodies only that show it. After a long peace, if the conditions of life are propitious, we observe a people's energies bursting their barriers; they become aggressive on the strength they have stored up in their remote and unchecked development. It is the unmutilated race, fresh from the struggle with Nature (in which the best survive, while in war it is often the best that perish) that descends victoriously into the arena of nations and conquers disciplined armies at the first blow, becomes the military aristocracy of the next epoch, and is itself ultimately sapped and decimated by luxury and battle and merged at last into the ignoble conglomerate beneath. Then perhaps, in some other virgin country a genuine humanity is again found, capable of victory because unbled by war. To call war the soil of courage and virtue is like calling debauchery the soil of love.—G. Santayana, from "Reason in Society."

Illusions.

In the *Christian World Pulpit* of January 11 there is a sermon by the Rev. W. Mckintosh Mackay, D.D., of Sherbrooke Church, Glasgow, preached before the University of Glasgow. The text is Luke v, 11: "When they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all and followed him." It is an exceedingly familiar story. After securing what they regarded as a miraculous draught of fishes, as the direct result of obeying Jesus, Peter, James, and John, as soon as they brought their boats ashore forsook their calling and became followers of Jesus. Immediately after the miracle Peter is represented as being afraid and saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Jesus comforted him with the words: "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men." Whether Simon Peter ever proved himself a successful catcher of men or not we do not know, though tradition assures us that he was the first Bishop of Rome. Dr. Mackay's point is that, on this occasion, Peter had a vision of the highest and best, and had the courage to choose it as the supreme quest of his life. Much of what the reverend gentleman says is perfectly true, and he says it very well. Take the following extract:—

What is knowledge? What are the honours that attend its acquisition? In the highest sense of the word, is it not a thought which you can bring into relation with human life, a thought which is followed, not for its own sake alone, but for its bearing on the progress of man?

Again:—

Take the example of the politician struggling for honour and power. Here, again, such a man may start with no very high ideal, little more than the love of fame. But after a while, if he is a true man, a better ideal will take possession of him. This power he aspires after is not to be used for selfish purposes. It must be employed for his country's needs. It must be wielded to champion the down-trodden and the oppressed. It must be exercised for the exaltation of righteousness among the nations and for the dissemination of peace throughout the world.

Once more:—

What do we mean by the very word profession, as distinguished from business or trade? Do we not mean that the first thought of personal gain is superseded, though doubtless not lost sight of, by the higher one of service? A minister whose chief end is popularity, a doctor who is suspected of making the fees of his patients more important than their health, a lawyer who stoops to sharp practices, a teacher who has no living interest in his pupils—such men are rightly discredited. They have forgotten that the very meaning of the word "profession" implies that the man who pursues it should seek in it higher ends than his own.

All that is universally true and beautifully stated; but there is nothing distinctively Christian about it, and it is at best but an extremely far-fetched inference from the preacher's text. Confucius, the Buddha, and the pre-Christian philosophers of Greece and Rome gave expression to precisely the same ideas about life and its meaning. There was nothing new for the Gospel Jesus to say about anything under the sun. It is, therefore, wholly untrue to contend that "thus, then has Christ gone through the whole of life beautifying it, sanctifying it, glorifying it—for this call to a higher service than self." It would be a natural inference from Dr. Mackay's remarks that until Christ came there had been no men and women of high nobility of character in the world, whereas the truth is that they were almost as numerous in pre-Christian times as they are to-day in the most Christian country.

Dr. Mackay emphasizes the New Testament teaching on the alleged duty of self-denial. A friend once wrote to Dr. Livingstone about the sacrifices he was making in spending his life among the savages of Central Africa, but the good man pooh-poohed the very idea, exclaiming: "Away with such a thought. I never made a sacrifice." Dr. Mackay knows much better and boldly contradicts the famous explorer, asserting that "Livingstone did make many a sacrifice." We unhesitatingly affirm that Livingstone was entirely right. He led the life he loved best. No doubt he often endured many trying hardships and privations, but in doing so he was not denying but expressing himself. It is true that the Christian life is always called a life of unbroken self-denial, but the description is essentially false. A Christian never denies himself. If he abstains from attending the theatre, or takes no part in dancing, it is because he believes that by such abstention he will secure a higher seat in heaven. He deprives himself of earthly enjoyment in order to experience the more precious spiritual enjoyment. He prefers dream-life to real-life, and as the poet observes, dreams are true and most enjoyable while they last. What Dr. Mackay characterizes as the higher vision of Christ is in reality a dream-vision—a sheer illusion. Peter believed certain things about the Jesus he undertook to follow and obey, but before the end, according to the story, he and the other disciples were woefully disappointed in him, with the result that as at the beginning they "forsook all and followed him," so at the close they "all forsook him and fled." It was the hour of their disillusionment.

According to Dr. Mackay such a disillusionment never happens. He says:—

The higher vision leads to the perfect joy, and it also leads to the more enduring reward. Whatever goes this can never go. Whatever is lost this can never be lost, this salvation of life which comes to a soul that gives itself to the spirit and service of Christ.

Preaching before the University the reverend gentleman was bound to speak with exceeding cautiousness. Theological dogmas are absent from the discourse except by implication. One is fully aware that the speaker is at least a fairly orthodox theologian. What he means by the highest vision of Christ he does not tell us, but, obviously it is, in his estimation, a vision that yields perfect joy, and that "also leads to the more enduring reward," and he assures us further that "whatever goes this (reward) can never go." But he is radically mistaken. Disillusionment has come to tens of thousands in this generation. To such people all supernatural beliefs are mental illusions just as truly as mirages are optical illusions. While they were accepted as objectively true they did yield unspeakable delight, and the hope of eternal bliss in Immanuel's land burned with enrapturing brilliancy. That experience was possible only when monarch reason lay asleep; but the moment he awoke those beliefs were seen in their true light, and naturally the joy to which they led, and the reward they so confidently promised completely vanished. At first the disillusionment engendered a sense of loss, but very soon the discovery was made that the seeming loss was genuine gain, and there sprang up in the heart such a feeling of gratitude and happiness as had never been previously known. The divines cannot remind us often enough that the hope of immortality went, and so it did, but so also did the fear of death and hell-fire. What was the reward? It was two-fold; there was first the total riddance of false hopes and fears, and second the generation of a stronger, saner, and wholesomer love of this present life than had even been experienced before. To the

preacher all this is inconceivable, and he will not allow its possibility. Dr. Mackay exclaims:—

What if there are but a few little fish found lying at the bottom of the boat when the toiler drags it to the land if he finds a Christ standing to welcome him on the shore? Life's but the chance of winning God, and the world is well lost when it brings a man to the vision of the highest.

A man who can speak like that is the slave of illusions and utterly incompetent to sit in judgment on those who have been emancipated. Their position and outlook upon life are entirely incomprehensible to him. He but expresses his ignorance when he declares that the life the disciples had won, upon leaving their boats and their nets to follow Jesus, was everlasting. His ignorance of such a life is as deep as ours. His belief in it may be sincere enough, but of knowledge he has absolutely none. To say that "in following Christ the disciples had literally found a kingdom" is to give utterance to what is unsusceptible of any verification. The Gospel Jesus made them promises which were never fulfilled. The world loved illusions then, and lived and died in their service. Now, at last, the process of disillusion is in full operation, and ultimately men and women will devote themselves exclusively to this life and its problems. Then, and not till then, will begin the Golden Age of the human race.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Last Fruit of an Old Tree.

If Christians would teach infidels to be just to Christianity, they should themselves be just to infidelity.

—John Stuart Mill.

MATTHEW ARNOLD, in one of his charming essays in which he was politely endeavouring to infuse "sweetness and light" into his hard-headed and commercially-minded countrymen, criticised the aggressive manner in literature and journalism. He called it the manner which "aims rather at an effect upon the blood and senses than upon the spirit and intellect, and loves hard-hitting rather than persuading." Arnold himself, be it remembered, could hit exceedingly hard, but he always wore the velvet glove over the steel gauntlet, although it was difficult to persuade his antagonists that he was a Chevalier Bayard rather than a bonny boxer.

The Apostle of "sweetness and light" was never wearied of the pleasant pastime of bishop-baiting. He smothered the then Bishop of Gloucester with ridicule because he stated publicly that he wished to do something for "the honour" of "God." But the thing that fluttered the doves of orthodoxy was Arnold's comparison of the Christian Trinity to "three Lords Shaftesbury." That, despite the shrieks of the orthodox, was but "Fanny's pretty way." Like the famous curse directed against the jackdaw of Rheims, nobody seemed a penny the worse for it. Religious animosity, on the other hand, has always been responsible for much that was really brutal in speech and in action. Roman Catholics burned Protestants, and Protestants killed Catholics. Both Catholics and Protestants murdered Freethinkers; and torture was often disguised murder. "The man died under our hands," reads an official report on an unfortunate prisoner who had been put to the rack and other pleasantries.

Religion appears to impart venom to its votaries. The austere Milton left the slopes of Parnassus and used the language of a Quarter-Master-Sergeant when he attacked his theological opponents. The light-hearted Sydney Smith could no more write civilly of Methodists than Mr. Hilaire Belloc, or the editor of the *Morning Post*, of Jewish people. William Cobbett was more than usually outspoken in his treatment of

Quakers. That a Freethinker must be either a fool or a rogue is a postulate of Christian Evidence lecturers and young curates. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle has denounced Materialists with unsavoury rhetoric, a form of speech he disdained before he embraced the superstition of Spiritualism.

Old Doctor Samuel Johnson was not a bad-hearted man, but Oliver Goldsmith was right when he said: "There is no arguing with Johnson, for when his pistol misses fire he knocks you down with the butt-end." Johnson was at his worst concerning sceptics. He calls Bolingbroke "a scoundrel and a coward." Yet the doctor never read the author he so savagely pillories. "I have never read Bolingbroke's impiety," he remarks with unexpected ingenuousness. To Johnson, Freethinkers were vermin which his rhetoric would exterminate. To him, Gibbon, Hume, and Voltaire were all scoundrels. Men like Priestley and Price were an abomination. Boswell says that when Dr. Price came into a company where Johnson was, the latter instantly left the room. Rousseau was "one of the worst of men, a rascal who ought to be hunted out of society."

Shelley's known Atheism incurred the hatred of the orthodox. The abuse which was supposed to have killed Keats was the quintessence of courtesy compared with the assault and battery made upon Shelley by the enlightened Press of a Christian country. Here, for example, is what the *Gentleman's Magazine* had to say when the news of his death reached England:—

Percy Bysshe Shelley is a fitter subject for a penitentiary dying-speech than a lauding speech; for the muse of the rope rather than that of the cypress.

That was what a periodical edited by a Christian gentleman for Christians had to say of the young Freethinker, who had devoted most of his short life of twenty-nine years to the service of Humanity. Not long before another representative of the "Religion of Love," we recall, met Shelley in the post-office at Pisa, called him "a damned Atheist," and knocked him down.

The late G. W. Foote, the first editor of the *Freethinker*, had his full share of abuse. His waste-paper basket was seldom without an insulting letter or post-card sent to him by orthodox folks. "I have been accused of all the crimes in the calendar, except murder," he once remarked. "That solitary exception was due to the difficulty of finding a corpse." Bradlaugh was subjected to similar treatment, and he was excluded from the House of Commons for thirteen years on account of his known Freethought opinions.

Across the Atlantic, Christian prejudice barred Ingersoll from important positions in the political world. A man of his consummate ability might easily have attained the proud position of President of the United States. Fortunately for us, Ingersoll esteemed duty before dollars. In an age of commercialism he remained faithful to principles; in an age of ostentation he cared for truth.

Such examples show the last fruit of a very old Upas tree, which is slowly dying. It once bore scaffolds, stakes, prisons, and torture chambers. Latterly, it has borne hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness.

MIMNERMUS.

There is the greatest difference between presuming an opinion to be true because, with every opportunity for contesting it, it has not been refuted, and assuming its truth for the purpose of not permitting its refutation. Complete liberty of contradicting and disproving our opinions is the very condition which justifies us in assuring its truth for purposes of action; on no other terms can a being with human faculties have any rational assurance of right.—J. S. Mill, "On Liberty."

The Passing of Religion.

The whole of the prevalent metaphysics of the present century is one tissue of suborned evidence in favour of religion.

If the motive of the Deity for creating sentient beings was the happiness of the beings he created, his purpose, in our corner of the universe at least, must be pronounced, taking past ages and all countries into account, to have been thus far an ignominious failure.—J. S. Mill, "Three Essays on Religion," 1904 ed., pp. 35, 82.

PLUTARCH tells us that in the reign of Tiberius a great voice was heard on the shores of the Ionian Sea, "Great Pan is dead"; and there was great lamentation in the land.

To-day the same lamentations may be heard over the passing of the new God who was about that time commencing his career. Nineteen hundred and twenty-three years is a pretty good run for the Christian Deity, but nothing remarkable in comparison with some of the heathen gods. Some of the Egyptian gods had been worshipped five thousand years and more before the advent of the new God whose dying convulsions we are now witnessing; and they were still going strong.

In 1909—five years before the Great War—Mr. Masterman, in that fine book, *The Condition of England*, observed:—

Present belief in religion, as a conception of life dependent upon supernatural sanctions or as a revelation of a purpose and meaning beyond the actual business of the day, is slowly but steadily fading from the city race. Tolerance, kindness, sympathy, civilization, continually improve.....The general standard of humanitarian sentiment is probably higher in the cities than ever before, certainly exhibiting immense advance from that in the rude, squalid, barbarism of the submerged eighteenth century life, or the vast penury and discontent of the early nineteenth.....Men lived like beasts, and as beasts perished. Yet few of them would have definitely denied that there existed a Creator and there awaited for them a judgment (pp. 219-20).

"To-day," continues Mr. Masterman, "the Churches labour on steadily amid a huge indifference. The very material of their appeal is vanishing."

Dolling's testimony from Poplar was:—

Religion has, so to speak, gone to pieces.....God is not in any of our thoughts; we do not even fear Him.Heaven has no attraction because we should be out of place there. And Hell has no terrors (p. 221).

It is a European movement, conspicuous even to the superficial observer.....It continues without violence, continuously, steadily, as a kind of impersonal motion of secular change. It is the passing of a whole civilization away from the faith in which it was founded and out of which it has been fashioned (p. 223).

That was the state of religion before the Great War, upon the outbreak of which the clergy prophesied a great revival of religion. A prophecy utterly wide of the mark. What is the position to-day, four years after the war? The fact is that the war, far from causing a revival of religion, only accentuated the difficulty of belief in any kind of benevolent or intelligent interference or guidance in human affairs by an over-ruling Providence. The Rev. Dr. J. Scott Lidgett, in an article contributed to the *Contemporary Review* (December, 1922), entitled "The Sovereignty of God," fully admits the damage inflicted on the popular belief in God. He says:—

The war and its consequences have shaken, if not shattered, the popular conception of the Sovereignty of God. The widely held expectation of what He might be expected to do in a crisis has not been fulfilled, has indeed been falsified. People looked for what is called Divine intervention to prevent, or at all events to mitigate, an unparalleled calamity, and

such intervention, from without, has not taken place (p. 707).

The reverend gentleman attributes this state of affairs to three causes:—

The teaching of the Bible, and especially of the Old Testament; the doctrine of St. Augustine (his abstract doctrine and not the philosophy of History presented in his *Civitas Dei*) as modified by Calvinism, together with an anthropomorphic view of Divine superintendence of human affairs from outside.

The influence of St. Augustine in the matter may be dismissed, for what did the average man know about St. Augustine, either of his "abstract doctrine" or of the philosophy of his *City of God*? And it is the average man we are dealing with, for the educated and cultured were under no delusion as to the historical character of the Bible. As a matter of fact St. Augustine was no more responsible for the doctrine taught before the war than Luther or Wesley, not nearly so much.

The Rev. Scott Lidgett continues:—

The popular view sprang out of an external and prosaic interpretation of the Bible.....The prophets set forth Jehovah as the supreme actor in history. Perfect in holy character, possessing illimitable resources, and holding the universe He has created in the hollow of his hand.....The New Testament preserves this point of view and presents it upon a yet grander scale. The whole of its frame-work is apocalyptic (p. 707).

He goes on to say that the popular view of religion largely overlooked the spirituality of the Bible and looked for—

Divine intervention, and this rather to ward off, or limit, calamity than to safeguard and increase spiritual values.

Well, the people only believed what they were taught to believe by their spiritual pastors and masters. The Bible itself is packed with instances of Divine intervention. We read there how God intervened to bring the Jews out of Egypt; how he fed them in the desert; how he helped them in battle, casting stones down out of heaven in one instance, and making the sun to stand still in another; how he intervened to save his servants in the lions' den and the fiery furnace. The Psalms, the most spiritual book in the Bible, are full of promises of material, as well as spiritual, benefits to those who put their trust in God.

Those who had been taught to look upon God as their Heavenly Father naturally looked to him to act as any earthly father would do if he had the power, and when there was no intervention and the war went on to the bitter end they naturally came to the conclusion that either there was no God, or if there was, he was powerless to help or indifferent to the sufferings of mankind; and now the Rev. Scott Lidgett comes forward and blandly explains that this view of God is "anthropomorphic," that is, that it endows God with the attributes of man, whereas God does not intervene in this fashion. He tells us:—

The nature and methods of Divine Sovereignty must be sought and found in the spiritual ends that become manifest in history and in the way by which these spiritual ends are revealed and attained (p. 710).

Men must not count upon the intervention of God to save them from the consequences of their sins (p. 715).

If this means that the multitudes who suffered and perished in the war did so in consequence of their own sins, it is utterly false. They did nothing to provoke the war, they were driven like cattle to the slaughter. Those who could have prevented the war and did not choose to do so have, for the most part, escaped. Those, like Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg,

burg, who protested against and struggled to prevent the war, lie in bloody graves, murdered while under arrest. While this God goes on serenely and unheedingly working out his spiritual processes with infinite slowness through the ages, regardless of the agonies his creations are undergoing in the meanwhile.

If this account of God's spiritual activities, combined with a masterly inactivity in the material well-being of his creatures, be accepted, says the Rev. Scott Lidgett:—

Then even the gigantic calamity of the war and its consequences furnishes an outstanding illustration, and not a denial of the Sovereignty of God. Never before has there been such an overwhelming demonstration in every sphere of life of the hopeless futility of any system of civilization which is based upon the rejection, or but qualified acceptance, of the spiritual values upon which human well-being depends. The insolence of every such system has been visited by a judgment which will serve as a warning to all succeeding generations (p. 714).

But you cannot have a judgment without a judge, and in this case it is evident that God is the judge, so that Divine intervention does happen after all, but only to punish and chastise those who reject "spiritual values," never to prevent impending disaster or to rescue and save after disaster ensues.

The reverend gentleman speaks of "insolence." It seems to us that the insolence lies in the recklessly untrue statement that civilization before the war was "based upon the rejection, or but qualified acceptance, of the spiritual values upon which human well-being depends." Before the war, as now, religion was taught in every State provided school in this country.

Writing before the war, the Rev. G. Longridge says:—

In Germany the Lutheran child carries in his knapsack three books—a Bible, a hymn-book, and Luther's Catechism.¹

Again:—

No candidate for any branch of the civil service could hope for admission if he were not a member of some recognised Church.²

In Holy Russia the mass of the people were the least educated and the most religious in Europe. The Rev. Scott Lidgett has evidently forgotten the opening words of his article:—

The war and its consequences have shaken, if not shattered, the popular conception of the Sovereignty of God.

The people were evidently not deficient in belief or the belief could not have been shattered.

(To be Concluded.) W. MANN.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.—An exceedingly interesting address was delivered last Sunday evening at the St. Pancras Reform Club by Mr. George Bedborough on "Race Improvement." The audience was regrettably small, but the lecture was followed by a good discussion. These Sunday evening debates are held under the auspices of the North London Branch, N.S.S., and it is much to be deplored that North London Freethinkers do not make them more widely known. Complaints constantly reach us that there is not enough propaganda carried on during the winter months. Here in North London, within easy distance of trams, buses and tubes, anyone who cares to come to St. Pancras Reform Club will find "a feast of reason and a flow of soul" which ought to give him food for thought for the rest of the week, at least, and an opportunity for joining in a series of most interesting discussions. Wake up, North London! To-night, January 21, Mr. A. D. McLaren will deliver an address on "Science and the Workers," so please see that there is a good muster of "saints."—K. B. KOUGH, Secretary (*pro tem.*).

¹ Rev. G. Longridge, *National Education*, Mirfield's Manuals, No. 45.

² T. F. A. Smith, *The Soul of Germany*, pp. 73-74.

Acid Drops.

The War Office has withdrawn the grant that has been made to schools for the Cadet Corps, and we hope that they will not be renewed. There is an outcry against the withdrawal, and there is much nonsense talked about the Cadet Corps' work in the training of boys in good citizenship, etc. The Bishop of London, with his illimitable capacity for saying foolish things, is also protesting against the withdrawal of this money from the Church Lads Brigade, and also talks of the use of the Brigade in training the social character of the boys. All this is sheer nonsense. The War Office only had one object in giving the grant, and that was because it thought the Cadet Corps had a definite military value. It had no interest whatever in anything else, and if head teachers had done their duty they would have taken no part whatever in the formation of such bodies. When Liebknecht told the Prussians that they had been using the schools as training stables for the army we all thought it a wise and a bold thing to say—and then immediately began to institute military drill in our own schools—as though it would have a different effect here from what it had in Germany. Physical drill, and the duties of citizenship can be taught, and should be taught quite apart from the atmosphere of an army. If it cannot be done, then we had better write our civilization down a failure and done with. But the drill-sergeant, equally with the priest, should be kept out of the schools. The dominance of both represents a national disaster.

Bishop Welldon says that if Christ returned to the earth he would nowhere "feel so much at home to-day as in a hospital." He would notice, we venture to suggest, a marked difference in the treatment of the sick from that which prevailed in his time. The New Testament plainly recognizes and supports the idea of demonic possession, and Jesus Christ himself, on this subject, was not ahead of the popular demonology. For centuries the Christian Church followed in the same wake, ascribing various diseases to the agency of evil spirits. It was left for secular science to provide rational methods of dealing with disease, and for Christian apologists to ask "infidels" where they had established hospitals.

At West London Police Court on January 10 an order was given for the destruction of a number of copies of *Family Limitation*, by Margaret Sanger, which were found in the possession of Mr. Guy Aldred. Sir W. Arbuthnot Lane, consulting surgeon for Guy's Hospital, said that the book should be in the hands of every young person about to be married. He saw no harm in it. Mr. Harold Cox, who was also called, said it was gross injustice to call the book "obscene." But the magistrate made the order for the destruction of the book, and from one point of view we have no doubt he was right. There are some minds that are so radically unclean that almost anything would be obscene. And unfortunately these minds are not limited to one class of society, to one sex, or to people of one age. They exist everywhere, even on the Bench. The unfortunate thing is that this class should be practically permitted to lay down the law for healthier minds, and so help to make indecent things that are not indecent at all.

It is unfortunately true that many of these books on birth control are sold by people whose main interest is that they can sell at a fancy price pamphlets and books which, if sold in the ordinary way, would give the ordinary trade profit, and would thus fail to attract this class of people. But the remedy for this is not to label the subject as "obscene," and so convert the trade in them into a semi-illicit one, and excite the pornographic appetite of our Christian population, but by getting them distributed through the ordinary bookselling channels, and regarding the subject as one that should be discussed and ought to be discussed without the slightest suggestion of anything improper. Until this is done, and until

stupid magistrates and unclean minded parsons cease to talk of a discussion on birth control as "obscene"—as though there were anything more unclean about birth than there is about death—harm will continue to be done, and the trade in these publications will continue in an atmosphere that ought not to exist. We do not know what the Birth Control League (The Malthusian League) is doing in this matter, but we should like to see that body more active than it appears to be. Their concern is with the ideas promulgated. In this paper our concern is only with freedom of publication, and about that the public to-day show too little concern.

At the risk of being monotonous we must once again point out that this inability to discuss a question such as birth-control is mainly due to the unclean atmosphere created by Christianity. To the Christian Church sex has always had about it an element of uncleanness—religious and moral. The aim of the ultra-pious was to put the idea of sex out of their consciousness, with the result of inviting concealed manifestations of it in all sorts of disagreeable ways. The subject became taboo, the practice of sexual irregularity grew. To mention the relations of the sexes to a Christian audience involved the calling up of indecent images and objectionable thoughts. So greatly have the sexual relations of men and women dominated all other considerations that it is difficult to get women considered in their capacity as mere members of the State. And against this unwholesome condition there is only one genuine cure. That is the creation of conditions that shall permit the relation of the sexes being discussed with none of that religious obscenity that has usually surrounded the topic. It is not the purveyor of "unclean" literature that makes for indecency. It is those who create a market for it by making sex an unclean subject that do this. The pornographer has never had a better friend than the Christian Church.

We hear from an Indian correspondent that special endeavours are being made just now for the Christianisation of India. The Archbishop of Canterbury has sent a Mission of Help at a cost of £6,000, and a fund is opened to cover the expenses of the mission while in India. General Booth has also received a message from the King to carry to the people of India—we presume the General is artful enough to know that this will mean greater kudos than carrying the message of the Gospel alone—and in Portuguese India there is a similar "liveliness" in the direction of impressing the natives with the value of Christianity. We quite admit that if the people could be induced to take an interest in Christianity it would keep them off more dangerous topics, for there is nothing like giving the masses plenty of religion to keep them quiet. But, on the other hand, we do not imagine that Christianity is ever likely to impress the people of India very much. With so many gods of their own they will not be attracted by another one, and in their own native religions they have all that Christianity has to offer, as a religion, with other things in addition. India is well supplied in matters of religion, and as the educated people of India assume a larger share in the government of the country we cannot see them giving up their own religions in order to embrace a religion such as is Christianity. With India, as with other countries, genuine development means Freethought.

The *Guardian* (January 5) says that Christianity is losing its hold on the Welsh people, who used to be "famous for their church and chapel-going propensities." Not only is there indifference in the industrial centres, but—this makes our contemporary shudder—there is "a certain amount of actual hostility to religion." The reference to the industrial centres is interesting. Driving belts, steam hammers, cranes and piston-rods are evidently not conducive to the growth of religious sentiments and beliefs. These are worse competitors even than "professional infidels."

The gentleman who signs himself "Randall Cantuar," in his New Year Message to his flock draws a very dismal

picture of the present state of things throughout the world. He urges as a remedy the return of mankind to the "simple message of the Gospel of the Living Lord." We have heard something like this before, more than once, and shall probably hear something like it again. It is the Anglican Church's contribution to the solution of our national and individual problems. It would be well for Christian Socialists to make a note of the fact.

While the Archbishop of Canterbury puts forward his plea, the Bishop of Ely writes to the *Times* on the subject of divorce. He does not go into minute details on the actual merits of the question, but points out that the Church has no alternative but to "obey the letter of the Gospels" in this matter. Yet the Peculiar People are sent to goal for obeying "the letter of the Gospels."

We have evangelists at home and there are evangelists abroad. Those at home are professedly civilized, those in some places abroad are not always professedly so. But whether formally civilized or not there is little to choose between them. The mentality of a Billy Sunday does not appear to be any better than that of a Central African who has just given up his own Mumbo-Jumbo for that of the white man; and both are welcomed with almost equal warmth by the organized Christian bodies at home. The main thing appears to be whether they can keep the game going or not. Nothing else appears to matter; and, therefore, a semi-demented person like Evan Roberts, a clown like Billy Sunday, or an uneducated African, is all one. The fools and the credulous are impressed, the sensible and the critical do not matter. They are of little use to the churches anyway.

Thus the *Evening News* of January 8 says that "Samson Opon, an illiterate native of Ashanti, is destined to become a great figure in the Christian life of Africa." A short time ago Samson was indulging in the worship of disembodied spirits. Then the word of the Lord came to him, and now he wanders about the country carrying a wooden cross and preaching the Gospel—as he understands it. The Wesleyan Methodist Mission appear to have adopted him, and the secretary reports that he has converted thousands. Indeed a new training college has had to be built to accommodate them. We should be the last to doubt but that the Christian religion, presented as it would be by an ignorant black, and shorn of the modern and more civilized interpretation given it by Europeans, would be likely to appeal to uncivilized people. We have always insisted that this is its proper habitat, but it is rather unwise for the Wesleyan Methodist Mission to give the game away in this open manner. Probably it is thought that it will spur up subscriptions at home.

Dr. A. Wakefield has been expelled from the chair of Biblical Literature in the William Jewell College, says the *Detroit Evening Times*, for doubting that the devil exists. Dr. Wakefield should have no doubt as to the existence of idiots at any rate.

We have before commented on the frightful exhibition of religious ignorance in the United States which has enabled bodies of Christians to make combined attack on the doctrine of Darwinism; and as this form of Christian belief generally encourages a disregard for truth, the confident assertion was made that men of science had now generally abandoned Darwinism. The American Association for the Advancement of Science has now issued a manifesto denying the statement and declaring that the evidence in favour of the evolution of man is now strong enough to convince every scientist of note in the world. It is a terrible thing to think that at this time of day religious ignorance is still so great as to force that kind of manifesto from a scientific organization. When we are dilating on the power of knowledge, it may be just as well to give a passing thought to the tremendous power wielded by ignorance. It is not a cheering thing to think about, but it will save the world a lot of trouble if we do.

We note an American paper raising a strong protest against mixing religion and politics, and saying—quite rightly—that a man's religious opinions should have nothing to do with his election to office. Unfortunately, they very often have, and we are quite familiar with the politician who is in a Church because he thinks the Church will help him in his election. Nor are we unacquainted with the type of politician who would "paste his political poster on the pearly gates of heaven if he thought it would gain him a vote." We have that gentleman in this country, and he is fairly prominent in all the political parties.

But let us be quite fair. The fault is not wholly that of the politician, it belongs quite as much to the Churches. It is they who have set the lesson that the one they would work for is the man with whose religious opinions they agree, and the man they will work against is the man with whose religious opinions they do not agree. They create an environment in which honesty is a handicap and craftiness and dishonesty an advantage, and the politician, who is so largely a creature of his environment, yields to the pressure. If we want honest politicians we must make the conditions of being honest easier than they are; and if we want that we must clip the power of the Churches as one of the first steps to the process.

With reference to the statement cited from some unnamed woman evangelist by the brother of the murdered man in the Ilford case that in her experience women criminals were without a "religious sense," and the brother's declaration that Mrs. Thompson was without religion, it is interesting to learn that just before her execution Mrs. Thompson asked for the spiritual assistance of the Very Reverend Canon Palmer, Rector of the Catholic Church, Ilford. So that whatever her faults she died in the sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection and the conviction that she would go straight to heaven. Where her murdered husband would go she probably did not care. But not having committed a murder he had no opportunity to make his peace with God. Heaven must be a glorious place in which to spend eternity—that is, if one is not too particular about the company one keeps.

Those who think that Christianity is dead would do well to take notice of an organization such as the International Bible Study Association. This body seems to have its headquarters in America, and it embodies the crudest and most ignorant form of Bibliolatry. It indulges in a fantastic form of belief in prophecy, and is convinced that the world war was brought about by God in order to fulfil certain Biblical prophecies and to establish its kingdom on earth. We have no idea where its funds come from, but it must have plenty of money at its disposal as in addition to being able to take expensive buildings, such as the Albert Hall, it can distribute from house to house millions of leaflets and pamphlets. All of this involves the expenditure of large sums of money, how much no one probably knows but the heads of the organization, and it is just likely that these keep the information to themselves. It is usually the plan not to make the relation between income and details of expenditure too plain.

But we are not so much concerned with the amount of money collected and the way in which it is spent as we are with the evidences it gives of the existence of a huge body of ignorant religious belief more suitable to the seventeenth than to the twentieth century. With these people the science of the past two centuries has no existence. They are living in an old and worn-out world. But they do represent a reserve of ignorant superstition upon which the more "advanced" Churches can call, and probably will call, when they find their existence too seriously threatened. We regard this mass of believers as so many noxious germs in the social body, germs which may not be at present very active, but which at any moment may break out into a state of virulent

activity. No society can be considered safe or sound which harbours so much fanatical ignorance in its midst.

What a lovely thing Christianity is when there is nothing to tone down its native hue. We recently had placed before us a copy of a letter sent to one of our readers by her father—a staunch Christian conveying to her the news of her mother's death—who was also a staunch Christian. Our correspondent, we gather, was cut off from her home on account of her unbelief. When the mother died the father wrote his daughter informing her of the death, telling her that she died "in the sure and certain hope of being united" in the next world, and "your dear mother wished that no unbeliever or Atheist should be at her death-bedside or attend her funeral." And this delightful exhibition of religious bigotry concluded with a message from the mother that she bore her daughter no ill-will or enmity. All we can say is that we know of nothing but Christianity that can so distort one's natural affections, and can at the same time cloak the bigoted brutality with an expression of sorrow for the one wronged, while convincing one of one's own invincible morality. There is something in it evidently when we are told that sinners are attracted to the Cross.

We see the Salvation Army still keeps up the humbug about its Suicide Bureau. The Bureau is in charge of Brigadier Chapman, and he told a *Daily Chronicle* man the other day that he thought suicide was on the increase judging from his experience. Thousands of people come to him with thoughts of suicide, and are, of course, saved by the Bureau. Those who believe that people who really intend committing suicide will go round to the Salvation Army Bureau to talk over whether it is advisable or not, will believe anything. We should say that one way and another, and taken altogether, Christianity has discovered more ways of fooling the public than any other religion the world has seen. In this matter it is a case of "We lead, others follow."

In order to attract young people from the streets, says the *Daily Mail*, the Rev. J. Tunbridge, of Oxford Place Chapel, Leeds, has organized a series of church services to be held in a kinema in Briggate, a favourite promenade of boys and girls. Provided the kinema is not too brightly lighted we have no doubt but that, on damp evenings particularly, the said boys and girls will not mind coming in out of the rain; and if the parson can announce that a good many have come in, we do not suppose he will be greatly concerned with anything else. And after all something must be done to get young men and women to listen to the clergy.

Three paragraphs from the *Liverpool Echo*. Number one:—"The following is told of Charlie Chaplin: A little fellow who had been taken to the movies asked, 'Is Charlie a good man, mamma?' 'Why, yes, Charlie's all right,' replied his mamma. 'Will he go to heaven?' 'I think so, dear. Charlie does good work, cheering us all with funny tricks.' 'Mamma,' said the serious chap after serious deliberation, 'won't God laugh!'" So far as we can see, if Charlie does go to heaven he will be one of the most human of its inhabitants; and, if the orthodox description of heaven is reliable, something to cheer up the angels is sadly needed.

Number two—from the advertisement columns:—"Wanted, comfortable rooms for a business man; no Christians, no old maids, no cats."

Number three:—"Village Greybeard: 'Tremenjous crowd at our church last night!' Second ditto: 'Oh aye? Somethin' speshul?' 'Aye, it were burned down!'" Here is a hint for those parsons who are anxious to attract large numbers to their places of business. Churches have been put to much worse uses than the one suggested.

To Correspondents.

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

MR. H. O. BOGER writes, as a Christian, that he quite agrees with the letters that appeared in our issue for January 7 on the question of "Capital Punishment," and "Out to Kill," but doubts whether subscription to any particular creed or belief makes much difference to one's attitude on these subjects. We regret that the length of Mr. Boger's letter, together with its introduction of other topics prevents our publishing it in full.

R. STUBBS.—We do not at all disagree with what you say as to the value of pictorial illustrations in a paper, but we cannot see our way to indulge in them at present. A column for children would probably be useful in the paper, but it does not lie within the scope of our own abilities and we have no one to whom we could entrust the work who could do it to our satisfaction. It is much more difficult to write for children than for adults—which is one reason why so much that is done is useless. It may sound quite good to the adult, but does the child find it so attractive? The difficulty is to live the child mind. It is quite easy to write childishly, but that is not what we call writing for children.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—T. A. MATHEWS' New Year's contribution, 15s.; Mr. and Mrs. White, 5s.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss F. M. Vance acknowledges: Stockport Branch, 7s. 6d.; Mr. and Mrs. White, 5s.; Mr. and Mrs. Dawson, 5s. 6d.

"SEARCHLIGHT" (S.A.).—Thanks for New Year's greetings. We are afraid that lack of moral courage is not peculiar to one sect or class. With a Christian soaked environment it is common to all. The Bishop of Bloomfontein's letter is very foolish, and we are surprised that he thinks the controversy has gone on long enough. The editor seems to have taken the hint. Still it is good to let Christians realize there are others beside themselves on the planet. Many of them seem to have overlooked the fact.

T. MOSELEY.—The first series of *Essays in Freethinking* will be followed by others, when we may include some of the articles named by you. Much will depend upon whether the sales show there is a sufficient demand for the articles in permanent form to justify their republication. Glad to have your appreciation of what we have done. All we can say is that we give our best, whatever it may be worth.

E. A. PHIPSON.—The distinction between the teacher and the parson in the school is clear. The one is in his proper sphere. The other is an intruder—there for only interested purposes.

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

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

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

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Sugar Plums.

On Sunday next (January 28) Mr. Cohen visits Glasgow. He will lecture in the City Hall Saloon in the morning at 11.30, and in the large City Hall in the evening. Freethinkers in Glasgow would do well to make these meetings widely known among their Christian friends and acquaintances. One never knows where such an introduction may lead.

There were much improved audiences at Mr. Cohen's lectures at Manchester on Sunday last. Councillor Monks presided at both meetings and made a strong appeal for local support. The Branch has been handicapped of late owing to the difficulty of getting a central hall, and has been forced to hold its meetings at some distance from the centre of the city. Arrangements have now been made to hold the meetings in a more central position, and we have no doubt but that it will lead to larger audiences. The Branch works hard and deserves all support.

The ordinary meeting of the Glasgow Branch will be held to-day (January 21) at 11.30. The speaker will be Mr. J. Grant, and his subject, "Theism, is it a Reasonable Belief?" As the lecture will be given from the Christian point of view Freethinkers may find it more than usually interesting.

We note that the correspondence about "Atheistic Propaganda" in Weston-super-Mare is still going on in the local Press. Among recent letters we notice one from our occasional contributor, Mr. Vincent J. Hands. Mr. Hands puts his points well, and they should serve to open the eyes of those whose acquaintance is through the versions served to them from the pulpits. Mr. Cohen will be visiting Weston again early in February.

The next meeting of the Discussion Circle of the Manchester Branch will be held at Mr. C. E. Turner's, 18 Darlington Street, Withington. Members and friends will be welcomed.

We received a letter from C. Rudge with a postal order asking for specimen copies of the *Freethinker* to be sent. We have no name of town to which the papers are to be sent, and will be obliged if the sender will supply the deficiency.

We owe Mr. Repton an apology. His article of last week bore the heading "Yoga Straits." The last word should, obviously, have been "Sutras." It was noted too late for correction.

Last Sunday evening at Trade Union Hall, Brixton Road, S.W.9, Mr. A. D. McLaren spoke for the South London Branch of the N.S.S. on "What is Progress?" The address provoked—if we may use the word—a good many questions, and there was also considerable criticism of some of his views. This is an excellent sign, for Freethinkers are out to preach to the unconverted. This evening (January 21) Mr. Shaller lectures for the South London Branch on "Is Christianity played out?"

Those who are interested in the subject of the *pros.* and *cons.* of vaccination will find useful a pamphlet just issued by the Anti-Vaccination League, entitled, "An Inquiry into Vaccine Lymph, with a brief history of its compulsory inoculation in England." There is no price on the copy sent us, but it may be obtained at the offices of the League, 296 Vauxhall Bridge Road, S.W.1.

The death of a gifted and talented man produces upon me the greatest sorrow, because the world has more need of such men than heaven has.—*Lichtenberg.*

Animism.

It is unquestionably true that the first trace of all conception of a supernatural being is the conception of a ghost.

—Herbert Spencer.

Let the ghosts go. We will worship them no more. Let them cover their eyeless sockets with their fleshless hands and fade for ever from the imaginations of men.

—Col. Ingersoll.

THE late Professor Huxley in his Essay on the "Evolution of Theology" remarks:—

It is a matter of fact that, whether we direct our attention to the older conditions of civilized societies in Japan, in China, in Hindustan, in Greece, or in Rome, we find underlying all other theological notions the belief in ghosts, with its inevitable concomitant, sorcery; and a primitive cult in the shape of a worship of ancestors, which is essentially an attempt to please, or appease their ghosts. The same thing is true of old Mexico and Peru, and of every semi-civilized or savage people who have developed a definite cult; and in those who, like the natives of Australia, have not even a cult, the belief in, and fear of, ghosts is as strong as anywhere else.

Huxley calls this deification of ghosts, *Sciotheism*, but its underlying principle is known as Animism.

Animism, or belief in spiritual beings is, in the words of Dr. E. B. Tylor, "the groundwork of the Philosophy of Religion from that of savages up to that of civilized man." It is the outcome of that earliest analogical reasoning which concludes external objects to be animated by a life similar to our own. To man in his wild state the same life appears to stir in everything, in running water, in trees, clouds, and animals—the idea being confirmed by temporary departures, as in swoon or sleep. From the appearance of men, living and dead, in dreams, it was inferred that man had a phantom likeness of his body separable from it so as to appear to others at a distance, and continuing to exist and return after the body was dead. From the supposed reality of dreams arose the supposed reality of ghosts, spirit messengers, whence resulted all kinds of imaginary supernatural beings.

Dreams mainly account for the soul theory. That men have unsubstantial images belonging to them is inferred also in other ways by savages who have watched their reflections in still water, or their shadows following them, or have seen their breath as a faint cloud, vanishing, though one can feel it still there. In the barbaric theory of souls, life, mind, breath, shadow, reflection, dream and vision come together, and account for one another in some vague, confused way, that satisfies the untaught reasoner. The Zulus so identify soul and shadow that they assert a corpse does not cast a shadow. This may remind us of the mediæval superstition that one who sold his soul to Satan lost his shadow. Dante has the idea that the power of casting a shadow is the distinct property of the living.

Schoolcraft tells us that North American Indians think "there are duplicate souls, one of which remains with the body, while the other is free to depart on excursions during sleep." The only distinction made between sleep and death is that sleep is a temporary while death is a permanent absence of the soul or spirit. According to Crantz, Greenlanders believe "the soul can forsake the body during the interval of sleep." Thomson says New Zealanders believed "that during sleep the mind left the body, and that dreams are the objects seen during its wandering." In Fiji and Borneo it was believed that the spirit of a man who still lives will leave the body to trouble other people during sleep. A traveller in equatorial Africa remarks that if you ask a negro where is the spirit of his grandfather, he says he does not know, it is done. But if you ask him about the spirit of his

father or brother, who died yesterday, he is full of apprehension; he believes it generally to be near the place of burial. So vividly present is this conception of spirit survival, that among many tribes the hut, kraal, or village is removed to a new distant site immediately after the death of one of the inhabitants.

Among the Tipperahs if a man dies away from his home his relations stretch a thread over all the intermediate streams so that the spirit of the dead may return to his own village, it being supposed that spirits cannot cross running water without assistance (Sir J. Lubbock, *Origin of Civilization*, p. 240). The Karens have a similar practice arising from the same notion, a trace of which may be found in Burns' *Tam o' Shanter*. The Utes in North America dispose of the dead they fear, by putting them under water to prevent the return of their spirits. In West Africa a widow would duck herself under water to get rid of her husband's spirit and then feel free to marry again. Ducking under water is still a charm to get rid of disease; and indeed a very salutary one.¹

In some European folk lore, a sleeper must not be turned lest the spirit should miss its way back to the mouth. The legend of King Gunthram tells how as the king lay asleep in his faithful lieutenant's lap, the servant saw a serpent issue from his lord's mouth and run to the brook. But it could not pass, so the servant laid his sword across the water, and the creature ran along it and up into a mountain. After a while it came back and returned into the mouth of the sleeping king, who waking told how he had dreamt that he went over an iron bridge into a mountain full of gold. Tylor's *Primitive Culture*, i, 442.

Notions of transmigration naturally follow the animistic conception of the soul. Sir A. C. Lyall, *Natural History of Religion in India*, p. 23, tells how when the news of the death of a high official reached the Sepoy guard at the main gate, a black cat rushed out. The guard presented arms to the cat as a salute to the flying spirit of the powerful Englishman, and the coincidence took so firm a hold that the practice continued whenever any cat passed.

The Brazilian Indians say that the souls of the brave become beautiful birds feeding on pleasant fruits, but cowards are turned into reptiles. All the world over we find the idea of souls residing in animals, and their ability to change their forms. The bear the savage meets in the woods is too cunning to appear as a man; but "he could an he would." Hence savages talk seriously to animals alive or dead, propitiate them and ask pardon when it is their painful duty to kill them, so that their spirits may not return to trouble them. So the woodman, pioneer iconoclast, who still performs his mystic rites, when he cuts down a tree, asks permission, offers sacrifices and provides a green sprig to stick into the stump when the tree falls, that there may be a new home for the spirit.

Hundreds of fairy tales are occupied with stories of transformations and changelings; and fairies are but relics of earlier spirits. In his *Science of Fairy Tales* Mr. E. S. Hartland enters into these, dealing particularly with the variants of the swan-maiden. In a form of these stories found in the Shetland Isles we may perhaps trace their genesis. An inhabitant beheld a number of the sea-folk dancing by moonlight on the shore of a small bay. Near them lay several seal-skins. He snatched one up, the property as it turned out of a fair maiden, who thereupon became his wife. Years after one of their children found her seal-skin, and ran to display it to his mother, not knowing it was hers. She put it on, became a seal, and plunged into the water. A similar tale is found

¹ "If you can interpose a brook between you and witches, spectres, or even fiends, you are in perfect safety." Note to Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel*.

on the Gold Coast and among the Dyaks of Borneo. It is apparent that such a legend might grow from some man looking for a loved one drowned and seeing a seal at the spot. When we read that an Eskimo widow would not take walrus-flesh because her drowned husband had turned into a walrus, we see this is the explanation. Animals, sometimes trees and plants, and sometimes sun, moon, and stars, are taken as ancestors and the mythic ancestor becomes the totem god of the tribe.

It is easy to see how the idea of the transmigration of souls arose. Animals were observed to be no less instinct with life than men.² Soul and life in early thought were identified with breath, and when life passed from one person it was supposed to be ready to enter some other. Some new form or habitation must be provided for the spirits of the dead, and this was usually the form first seen; so that "the soul of our grandam might haply inhabit a bird." "In North-West America we find some Indians believing the spirits of their dead enter into bears, and travellers have heard of a tribe begging the life of a wrinkle-faced old she grizzly bear as the recipient of the soul of some particular grandam, whom they fancied the creature to resemble." (P. C., ii, 7). Many North American tribes, when little children died, buried them by the wayside, that their souls might enter mothers passing by, and so be born again. In Mexico, the Tlascalans thought that after death the souls of nobles would inhabit beautiful singing birds, while plebeians passed into weasels and beetles, and such like vile creatures. Among the Tacullis, the medicine-man effects re-incarnation by putting his hands on the breast of the dying. Then, holding them over the head of a relative, he blows through them. The next child born to the recipient of the departed soul is supposed to be animated by it, and takes the name and rank of the dead person. Our bishops, who, at the laying on of hands, at ordination, say, "Receive the Holy Ghost," perpetuate the superstition. "The medicine-men of the Concomes pretend to receive the spirit of the dead in their hands, and are able to transfer it to anyone, who then takes the name of the dead person" (Dorman, 45). The idea of breath being the life may be seen in the story of Jahveh Elohim breathing into man's nostrils the breath of life (Gen. ii, 7). Among the Zulu Kaffirs it is thought that men turn into many kinds of animals, though the greater number assume the form of snakes. "When a man dies among black men," says Umpengula Mbanda:—

the grave is covered with branches. The person to whom the dead man belongs watches the grave continually. If a son has died, the father watches the branches continually, that when they see that the branches are rotten they may be satisfied, knowing that nothing can now disturb the remains, for they are rotten. And if he observes a snake on the grave, the man who went to look at the grave says on his return, "Oh, I have seen him to-day basking in the sun on the top of the grave" (*Religious System of the Amazulu*, p. 142).

The notion that black people when dead get re-incarnated in white form has been found in Africa, Asia, and Australia. "Black fellow tumble down, jump up White fellow." A native who was hanged years ago at Melbourne expressed in his last moments the hopeful belief that he would jump up White fellow and have lots of sixpences. Mr. Tylor shows

² The Dyaks of Borneo ascribe a soul even to plants. "They regard unhealthiness in a plant as a temporary absence of its invisible *ego*, and when the rice perishes its soul is said to have flown away" (Oscar Peschel, *Races of Man*, p. 245). Motion is the universal sign of life, and in the philosophy of the savage all that moves and grows lives. In many languages the only division of things is into animate and inanimate.

that the mere continuance theory of an after life is prior to that of its being a compensation or retribution. Belief in future rewards and punishments comes later than belief in mere continuance and indicates a beginning of ethical notions. The prevalent idea of savages is that the present life is continued with little change. Modern spiritist philosophers have come round to the same opinion, and their ghosts, even when talking pure savagery, have the decency to appear in clothes. The shade of the Algonkin hunts the spirits of beavers and elks with the spirits of bows and arrows walking on the spirits of his snow shoes over the spirit of the snow.

(The late) J. M. WHEELER.

(To be Continued.)

Is there Light upon the Uplands?

Is there light upon the uplands, breaks the dawn along the sea,—

Do the buds of promise blossom, is it well with thee and me?

What the herald prophets whisper doth the crowd with welcome greet,

Do the echoes of the mountains still their hallowed truths repeat?

Stars that shoot across the darkness vanish where we may not see;

And if still the darkness linger, what, O soul, is that to thee?

Though the creeds of Folly fail not, though the lamp of Truth burns low,

Though here still upon our altar loom the shades of long ago—

Yet the day is waxing stronger, clearer light is shed around;

And with garlands of new worship soon Endeavour shall be crowned.

Though the waves that shoreward hasten vanish back into the sea,

Yet the flowing tide advances, and 'tis well with thee and me.

Fairer than the night of sorrow, hours of dolour undefined,

Comes the dawn of matin gladness bringing sunshine to the mind;

Fairer than the dream of Eden and the human race condemned,

Is the gospel of the Good, and all men by Man reclaimed;

Fairer than the suppliant kneeling, and the cries to heaven above,

Are the brave heart's honest Labour and the creed of Human Love;

'Mid the shadows though we wandered, phantom shadows of the brain,

Now earth's "Jubilate" soundeth, and our hearts are glad again;

For we know that joy abideth with the soul that still is true,

And all men shall reap the harvest, every man shall have his due.

—Samuel Waddington.

Common Speech.

THE piquancy of Cockney dialect and of Cockney wisdom has been exploited ever since Dickens created Samuel Weller. The secret of this success lies in the unfamiliar way of turning a phrase, and the exceptional quasi-phonetic spelling employed.

The fashion set has been followed almost to boredom for readers. Dialect in itself is a picturesque and informative study, but when it is made the occasion for presenting fatigued and ubiquitous *bons mots* in other guise it loses its savour. There is hardly a district in Britain which has not its characteristic novelist, who spells his English, so far as dialogue is concerned, in a peculiar and almost irritating manner. The worst of it is that a reader, after many experiences, begins to try to recognise the origin of his or her acquaintances by the manner of their speech.

Nearly all these writers claim that the most perfect English is spoken in the district they have chosen as their own country. But they neglect one very important thing. The dialect may have been spoken; but within a fairly wide experience I have found it to be a matter of intonation rather than of absolute dialect.

There is no doubt that simple people come directly to the heart of things. They possess the spirit of poetry unwittingly, and they use it. Far better would it be if the dialectic novelist were to forget that such a thing as dialect has ever been heard of, and were to infuse his dialogue with the living speech of the people. At present he relies upon his extraordinary spelling to distract attention from the usual dullness of his remarks. If he were obliged to abandon his pretence at phoneticism, he would be compelled to pay more attention to his dialogue.

Possibly, however, the fault is one that grows out of town writers dealing with rural peoples, or rural writers handling situations arising in an industrial environment. Actual contact with the people and their common speech would destroy the illusion of dialect, as well as providing gems of poetic phrasing so natural as to appear artificial.

Opening my notebook at random I come across a phrase used by an ancient and rusty clad labourer working with a fork upon some mysterious operation in a field of tousled hay.

He hailed us as we passed, pointing to a dead grass-snake, which he had speared with his fork and thrown over the low wall into the road.

We acclaimed his prowess, and I remarked that he must have been very quick to kill it with a fork.

"Yes," he said, "I was that. He was going through the grass like thunder."

Think it over! Thunder, not lightning! I, too, have seen thunder going through the grass at the heels of the lightning which flashed across the sky.

And again in a dingy railway carriage in a dingier industrial district a crowd of brawny, but to my urban, and at that time not very experienced eyes, villainously truculent looking, ironworkers, talked and wrangled amiably on their homeward way.

Suddenly voices were raised; laughter rose scornful, and energetic expressions of anger flowed over one or two faces.

A solemn, heavy looking man declared, without any special emphasis, "It is as true as the son of my body."

Though it did not reduce the argument or the laughter, it did illuminate that dingy, arid compartment, and what greater quality of truth could he have instanced?

Yet once more!

A number of scrawny, dirty children, playing some absurd, fantastic game in a street in an industrial

city. It unnecessary to describe the street. Our industrial cities are all alike in the working-class quarter.

One of the children was unable to compass the feats of the others and began crying. He was encouraged by an older, but not much sturdier little ragamuffin with, "Try like the spider does."

It was not quite of the same quality, but the illumination was there; only it was not the illumination of Nature. It was artificial, secondhand. Still it was the use of such an expression in everyday speech that contained the element of surprise. Certainly it was a phrase unlikely to be used by one of the educated classes, and possibly that is why the novelists, in their search for the element of surprise, depend so much upon dialect to weave the stuff and fire of life into their anæmic productions.

But the most important point to notice about these three speeches is that they were not in the dialect of either Wales, Stafford, or Yorkshire. They were just spoken English, and they were no more inaccurate in their enunciation than is the intonation of the clergy, shall we say.

The blood of life was in the speech, the homely common speech of the people, speaking naturally and without constraint. A fig for your dialecticians, who know not the people, but know other books written by other writers, who follow in the procession of fashion and use tricks but feebly.

G. E. FUSSELL.

When I'm Alone.

WHEN I'm alone
The firm earth seems
Light as my own
Ecstatic dreams.

The firm earth seems
But gossamer;
Ecstatic dreams
The mountains stir.

But gossamer,
Elusive, fleet,
The mountains stir
Beneath my feet.

Elusive, fleet,
Solidity!
Beneath my feet—
The Nebulæ.

Solidity!
Of sense bereft,
The Nebulæ
And I are left.

Of sense bereft,
The Stars and Space
And I are left
In parlous case.

The Stars and Space!—
And Time gone by—
In parlous case
The Stars and I.

And Time gone by,
Ragnarök near,
The Stars and I
A-quake with fear.

Ragnarök near!
O world of men,
A-quake with fear,
I love you then.

O world of men,
Brothers my own,
I love you then,
When I'm alone.

JOHN ERNEST SIMPSON.

The International Freethought Movement.

FREETHOUGHT IN JAPAN.

MR. YOSHIRO OYAMA, my good friend and co-worker in the cause of Freethought, writes to me under the date of December 6 last year. He describes from the inside the intellectual state of things in his young and interesting country, where the intrigues of religious bodies apparently are as complicated as they are in Europe:—

From time to time I have noticed in our daily newspapers and monthly reviews and magazines a number of articles on religion by various writers who are well qualified to criticise the spirit of the age. These articles are not meant to guide the nation, but rather to stem the tide of natural reason. It seems to me astounding that men of intelligence can be so unwise as to deliver themselves into the hands of the enemy of Freethought.

Society here in Japan is at a critical stage. If I am asked why I think so, I reply that our social reformers and our state bureaucrats have put too much trust in religion. Prompted by the daily Press—an untrustworthy guide here as elsewhere—they have put their money on the wrong religion. From the moment that we Freethinkers threw aside the cloak of religion we have nourished another feeling towards our countrymen, and we have absolutely no prejudice against anyone on the ground of politics. We have exerted all our intellectual strength to lead them to mental and social freedom, but the bureaucrats and ignorant politicians have formed a gigantic and damnable combination. Their highest motive in life, their only incentive, is the fleecing of the Proletariat, and for this purpose they make use of religion. Western or Eastern, it does not matter which so long as it can be made into a cloak to cover their iniquities. This combination of Christian, Shinto, and Buddhist vampires is sucking the life-blood of our people. Religion, I am sorry to say, is fashionable in Japan. Our Government measures people by their religious sentiments, and it questions their right to use their natural reasoning faculties.

However the people are beginning to show signs of intellectual restiveness. They are tired of being ignorant and helpless, and even somewhat ashamed of allowing themselves to be fleeced. We are helping them to understand religions by simply explaining them in terms of their historical evolution, and at the same time introducing to them a system of moral conduct based on reason. I give our country ten years to throw off the yoke of religion.

We Freethinkers can appreciate the generous enthusiasm for truth in this Shelley-like trust in the perfectibility of average human nature. I hope my friend does not underestimate the strength of the forces of unreason arrayed against him and those who think with him.

They number many heads in that hard flock;
True swordsmen they put forth; yet try thy steel,
Thou, fighting for poor human kind, wilt feel
The strength of Roland in thy wrist to hew
A chasm sheer into the barrier rock,
And let the army of the faithful through.

GEORGE UNDERWOOD.

The tragedy of the suffering Son of God has, perhaps, from the mysteries of the ancient Greeks down to the offshoots of Christianity in Protestantism, been a more essential constituent of the truly religious life than all other traditions and dogmas. But such a material cannot be made. It must grow. If we need it no longer, then it becomes very questionable whether we need religion at all any longer.—F. A. Lange, "History of Materialism."

Correspondence.

CHRISTIAN CIVILIZATION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The following lines "occurred" to me when passing a long line of "unmasked human misery" at the Labour Exchange entrance a few days since.

Common orthodoxy would "give hell" to these poor unfortunates, who "live hard, die-hard, and go to hell in the end." Surely this is a better picture:—

To pass the veil, unhallowed and unsung,
Nor specious epitaph, nor critic tongue,
After earth's gibing cares, to be forgot,
Swoon to mere nothingness, and peaceful rot,
Unfed, unwarmed of life, to hear when all is done,
The tranquil message of oblivion.

H. WADE-FRENCH.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT.

SIR,—I was told yesterday that "A Government which favours the butchering of women would not survive another general election." I wish I could believe this, for I have no political creed or bias. I prefer humane to barbarian rule, and attach no importance to party names. All decent-minded men have a distinct grievance in the fact that, after the country has had a clean record of fifteen years with no judicial murder of a woman, the new Government should have signalized its entry into office by re-establishing woman-slaughter preceded by acute mental torture of the helpless victim. On the 9th instant a woman was brutally put to death with callous deliberation, much to the joy of certain ghouls who made "copy" out of the disgusting act. Her guilt was presumed, but could not be proved, as no third party was present when she was supposed to be "conspiring," therefore no one can ever know whether she was really guilty or not. The gallows was given the benefit of the doubt, but a humane Home Secretary might have given it to her.

E. GRANVILLE ELIOT.

SIR,—Where is the sense in execution when we do not know what it involves? According to Christian doctrine, if the criminal repents but a moment before death he is launched straight into everlasting bliss, so that instead of punishment he obtains a supreme reward. And if it means simply annihilation, he can never suffer any more. As to "cruelty" it is no more cruel than that endured by all the souls who might be born but are not. Therefore any parents who do not bring the maximum number of offspring into the world are guilty of equal cruelty to those who drive people out of it, legally, or otherwise. The whole proposition is a *reductio ad absurdum*.

EVACUSTES A. PHIPSON.

"THE LAWS OF GOD."

SIR,—A letter appeared in the *Saturday Review* (December 30) on the subject of divorce. The writer, Rose Macdonald, expressed a hope that the marriage and divorce laws would be "re-adjusted to suit the requirements of plain common-sense." We hope so, too. "There are people," she says, "whose minds stand still; they are born, live and die, having learned nothing and forgotten nothing, over whose minds the progress of civilization passes without touching, enlightening." We quite agree with her. But is she quite sure that she herself is not among those people? "We still have," she goes on to say, "the laws that were made by men in a less enlightened period of history and civilization." Quite true; not only the marriage and divorce laws, but the blasphemy laws and the law of capital punishment still survive from that mediæval period. But when she says that "until the laws of men are brought into greater conformity with the laws of Nature, which are the laws of God, we must expect tragedy of love and crime," we begin to wonder if she be not one of those "people whose minds stand still." What makes her think that "the laws of Nature are the laws of God?"

Rose Macdonald has something to learn yet, and something to forget.

A. W. MALCOLMSON.

THE WEALTH OF SUPERSTITION IN IRELAND.

SIR,—One hardly knows which to admire the more—the cool way in which Mr. Murphy makes statements or the delightfully *insouciant* manner of (when asked to) not substantiating them. I am glad, however, I was given the opportunity of “scotching” the insane drivel about the “aristocratic English Tory Cardinals” specially kept in the Vatican to keep the dear Irish in slavery. I was also glad to get further details of the nefarious doings of Mr. Murphy’s fellow countrymen in the matter of—is it swindling their poorer brethren over plots of burial ground? What I cannot understand is, why drag in capitalism? Surely this economic doctrine is not to be blamed for the way in which certain Irish Roman Catholics try to make money by hook or by crook?

For the conditions prevailing in Ireland in 1923 Mr. Murphy refers me to two works by Michael Davitt and John Mitchel. The former wrote his book in 1904, and the latter in 1868, so of course they make splendid authorities for his statements. What I wanted to know was whether the British Government was paying *now* for Romish education in order to still keep the gallant Irish in slavery, but alas, Mr. Murphy doesn’t know. He also prefers to say nothing more about the Irish “irregulars” who, true to tradition, are still indulging in their favourite pastimes of murder, outrage and incendiarism. But it was quite refreshing to learn that they are all, to a man, Irish Roman Catholics.

The only reason I can discover for Mr. Murphy rushing into print was not so much to tell us about the credulity and superstition of the Irish as to “have a smack at auld England” which is not exactly fair to the readers of this paper.

H. CUTNER.

ARE WOMEN UNFIT FOR WIVES WHO HAVE BEEN BROUGHT UP BY MOTHERS ONLY?

SIR,—The appeal of the man Prohaska against the Highgate Magistrates finding him guilty of persistent cruelty, which failed in the Divorce Divisional Court (Sir Henry Duke and Mr. Justice Hill) is more important than appears on the surface, and the case is similar to many that have come under our notice. That there are many thousands of men who still claim the right to mete out any kind of treatment they think fit to their wives, on the ground that they are the heads of the household and have complete authority over them, is unquestionably true.

Some time back a case of cruelty was tried before the Willesden Magistrates; the defence was so similar that but for the difference in names and length of marriage they might be identical.

The argument that women being brought up without a father makes them more difficult as wives is entirely frivolous, but what is established in such cases is that the women not having been witnesses of cruelty in their upbringing are less amenable to it in marriage; they have not understood that the patriarchal family involved cruelty, nor does it necessarily. It is frequently said by opponents to divorce, “What is cruelty in marriage?” and the answer is given in this case by the husband: “Here was a state of affairs for which a safe end could not be foreseen.” And this brings me to the object of this letter which is to point out that when the majority of the Royal Commission on Marriage and Divorce recommended cruelty as a ground for divorce, its definition of cruelty was that “it must be such cruelty as tended to permanently injure the health of *either spouse*, and make a *common life dangerous*,” and we know that there are forms of cruelty practised upon husbands, and wives, which do end in lunatic asylums, and often in murder, as for instance the case of wife-murder at Bradford on the 8th instant.

M. L. SEATON-TIEDEMAN.

We still pray for a fine harvest, but we really consult the barometer, and believe more in the prophecies of meteorologists than in an answer to our prayers. *Te Deums* for victories excite more ridicule than sympathy, and we encounter the cholera by improved systems of drainage without attributing much value to fastings and processions.—*Leslie Stephen*.

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, side entrance down steps): 8, Mr. J. H. Van Biene, “Is the Potentiality of Matter Sufficient to Account for Consciousness?”

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, Mr. A. D. McLaren, “Science and the Workers.”

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 Christianity Played Out?”

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2.): 11, Mr. Joseph McCabe, “The Cross and the Crescent.”

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Shop Assistants’ Hall, 297 Argyle Street): 11.30, Mr. John Grant, “Theism: Is it a Reasonable Belief?” Questions invited. Silver collection.

LEEDS BRANCH N.S.S. (2 Central Road, Duncan Street, Shop Assistants’ Rooms): 6.45, Mr. J. T. Ashurst, A Lecture.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, The Hon. Bertrand A. W. Russell, F.R.S., M.A., “The Prospects of Industrial Civilization.”

STOCKPORT BRANCH N.S.S. (191 Higher Hillgate): Thursday, January 25, at 7.30, Mr. Robert A. Crank, “Christian Myths and their Parallels.” Questions and discussion. All interested in the movement along with opponents are cordially invited to attend.

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