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Views and Opinions.

Religion and Science.

A week or two ago we were pointing out the fallacy of assuming that because scientific men were not openly hostile to religion they were inclined to agree with religious opinions, and that the warfare of science with theology was a thing of the past. This is a view that has been well-worked of late by some religious leaders, and for obvious reasons. It is true that scientific men are not in a hurry to come into the open and attack religion, but then they never were. "A scientific man" is, again, a very elastic phrase. It may mean a first rate scientific thinker, or it may mean a mere plodding workman in a scientific laboratory whose opinions on matters that lie outside his own special collection of facts are not of value to anyone but himself. Between the scientific thinker and the worker in science there is a world of difference. The one is very rare, the latter is fairly common. Moreover, even scientific thinkers were never in a hurry to attack religion. They were mainly concerned with getting on with their own special work; and only hit out when the pretensions of the Churches made it necessary for them to get breathing space. And the severity of their blows taught the Church a lesson. It became, if not more modest, at least more cautious. It ceased to openly assail scientific teachings because it no longer paid to do so. The method set up was to talk about the underlying unity of religion and science, and of the deeper knowledge that would unite both; and when the Church dropped active opposition a number of scientific men so far yielded to social pressure as to maintain a discreet silence concerning their own opinions on religion. It is regrettable that this silence should be maintained, but the fact is there and must be faced. Religion is still a strong social force, even governments think twice before they rouse the bigotry and prejudice it can summon to its support, and in this respect the average man of science falls into line with the tendencies of normal human nature.

* * *

Letting Out the Truth.

Still there are some religious leaders who are not satisfied with this state of things. Thus, the Rev.

Griffith-Jones, addressing a meeting of the Congregational Union at Leeds, lamented that:—

A considerable section of the scientific world had clearly turned away from the religious view of Nature, history, and human nature. It no longer attacked Christianity, it simply ignored it, and passed on its way as though the question were finally disposed of. Religion in their view was a dying survival, and it would soon pass into the quiet grave awaiting all the outgrown superstitions of primitive humanity.

Now that is a far more truthful presentation of the facts of the situation than is that which pictures scientific men as having suddenly awakened to the discovery that religion holds in trust some great truth which is undiscoverable by their own methods. There are, as we all know, a certain number of men of science who talk vaguely about the truth of religion, etc., but it is quite plain that if they were as confused about their own work as they are about religion it would soon be good-bye to their scientific reputation. But the majority of them remain quiet, content that religion leaves them alone. This is quite a mistaken policy; it is equal to leaving unnoticed the germs of a deadly disease because there does not happen to be at the moment an epidemic. After all, the social value of science must depend upon the kind of intelligence that is general among the people, and one day those who think it is not their business to tell the people the truth about religion may find that they have been following the most stupid and the most costly of policies.

Only One Religion. * * *

Mr. Griffith-Jones is vexed that scientific men should regard religious beliefs as in the nature of dying survivals from the primitive ages of humanity. But so long as we use the word "religion" with due regard to historical accuracy in what other way can we regard them? What is the substantial difference between the religious beliefs of Mr. Jones and that of the primitive savage? It is true that he believes in a different kind of a God, but the essential point is not the kind of a God believed in, but whether there is good ground for believing in any. And when the pedigree of the God of the present day Christian deity is traced, we find that it leads directly back to the God of the savage, and without that there would be no present day deity at all. Again, will anyone tell us the essential difference between the prayers and incantations of a savage and those of Mr. Jones? To pray in the one case for material benefits and in the other for moral and mental improvement, rounding the whole with a stultifying "Thy will be done," makes no material difference. The law of causation is just as operative in the mental as it is in the physical world. The preference shown for the one over the other is entirely due to the fact that it is more difficult to trace the chain of causation in the one case than it is in the other. There is not a scientific investigator who has really studied this branch of knowledge who would deny the substantial accuracy of all this. It is quite useless citing to the contrary scientists such

as Sir Oliver Lodge. His authority belongs to a branch of science which has no connection with the origins of human beliefs. To those who can speak with authority it is quite well known that every religious belief has just that origin described by Mr. Griffith-Jones. It is good to see him recognizing that this is the scientific position. We have been saying the same thing for many years, and we are proud to think that we have done something towards bringing home the truth to the mass of people.

* * *

The Enthronement of the Savage.

There is one other thing in connection with Leeds University that troubles Mr. Jones. There is no chair of theology in the university. He says that it is because of the science that rules there, and the absence of a chair of theology is "an insult to the intelligence of the human race." One may excuse temper in one of Mr. Griffith-Jones' profession. These men have for so long been used to seeing our educational institutions providing the material for them to work on that they feel wronged when one of these institutions takes no notice of them. But when Mr. Jones has regained his equanimity, what we should like him to tell us is what useful purpose a chair of theology would serve? It must be understood that by a Chair of Theology the clergy do not mean an attempt to understand the real meaning of theological systems. All they mean is a course of instruction in special pleading on behalf of the established religion. A chair of comparative religions might be of service, provided it were in the proper hands. It would enable students to appreciate the fact that, after all, Christianity is only one of many religions, making the same claims as other religions, and with no better evidence in their support. A chair of comparative mythology would be still more valuable—particularly if it were filled by a man who was not afraid to speak out. Such a course would teach students the meaning of all religious beliefs and the origin of many curious social customs and institutions. Anthropology should form an important part of any complete course of education in a good university. But that is not what a parson is after. What he wants is a school and a university that will either turn out young men good Christians, or finish them off in such a way that they will be pliable material in the hands of the agents of the "Black Army."

* * *

The Impertinence of the Pious.

The longer I live the more I marvel at the irrepressible impertinence of the Christian clergy. Here is a body of men, the representatives of a creed which cannot offer us reliable information on any subject under the sun. They can tell us nothing concerning any branch of knowledge which cannot be told us by others, and what is more to the point, anything useful they have to tell us has been forced on them by outside pressure. Whenever they have ventured on independent teaching—even in the case of the origins of religious beliefs—they have been demonstrably wrong. Further, the attempt to foist their erroneous and ridiculous teaching on the world has resulted in a greater amount of wasted energy, and a greater dead loss to civilization than can be said of any other single force. And yet, with an effrontery unaffected by experience these men still demand that their views shall be given an official position in schools and universities. Worse still, in most cases their demands are granted. The time that should be given to genuine education is given to committing to memory a number of formulæ that are never worth the paper they are written on. If all the purely theological doctrines that have been taught from the days of the apostles to the present time were collected and boiled

down they would not yield a single reliable or valuable lesson on a subject that is of genuine interest to mankind. The fact that a very large number of scientific men take up the attitude towards religion that is complained of by Mr. Jones, and the further fact that their attitude is one taken up by the majority of educated persons is proof of the justice of what has been said. It is the pressure of the logic of life on the logic of mere theory. It is an indication that the real enemy of religion is not a man or a society, but the better forces of modern civilization.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Christ Crucified.

THE Rev. Dinsdale T. Young, of the Wesleyan Central Hall, Westminster, is in the front rank of to-day's pulpit orators. The Central Hall is one of the largest auditoriums in London, but it is not large enough to accommodate all who wish to hear Mr. Young. One of his distinguishing traits is ultra-orthodoxy. He has no sympathy whatever with what used to be called the New Theology. This is highly characteristic of his sermon on the text, "But we preach Christ crucified" (1 Cor. i, 23), which appeared in the *Christian World Pulpit* of April 19. Mr. Young regards the crucifixion of Christ as "the transcendent tragedy of history"; but why call it a tragedy at all, if it is the great thing about Christ, and if nothing else could have made possible the world's redemption? Our attention is called to the enormous difference it would have made to us if the message had simply been, "We preach Christ." "An uncrucified Christ," Mr. Young adds, "could not save; but a Christ crucified has potentialities of salvation beyond all our dreams." He has no patience with the Social Christ, the Comrade Christ, the Ethical Christ, and the Political Christ, so much admired and so enthusiastically preached by many to-day, the only Christ for him being Paul's "Christ crucified." At this point Mr. Young becomes tremendously dogmatic, saying: "No man is a Christian preacher in the New Testament sense unless he preaches Christ crucified." He even goes to the length of maintaining that it is not sufficient to preach Christ crucified as an historical fact, without any explanation or doctrine, saying:—

Outside religion how people would be laughed at if they said what so many people are saying in the churches to-day: Give us facts without explanations. Suppose a man said, "Give us the sun and the moon and the stars without astronomy," would he not be ridiculed? Suppose a man said, "Give us all the flora of the world without botany." Suppose another man said, "Let us have the animals without zoology; let us have the facts without sciences or explanations," how foolish it would be. But I submit to you that it would be equally ridiculous to take up the position that some take and to say, "Oh, yes, let us preach Christ crucified as a fact, but without any explanations." But it is in the explanation that salvation lies for you and me.

Mr. Young is perfectly right, if we are to be guided by the teaching of the New Testament and the Church. As a mere fact the crucifixion of Christ did not differ in the slightest degree from that of the two thieves, its distinctive character being solely due to the theologians. The atoning efficacy ascribed to the death of Jesus is nothing but a theory formulated by the Pauline school of religious thought. And ere long, as historical students know well, the original theory of the Atonement began to split up into parts, each part, after a time, becoming a distinct theory, and this process went on until different theories of the Atonement

ment were practically innumerable. There are some people now living who remember the bitter controversies carried on by the different sects over the doctrine of the Atonement, each sect declaring that its theory alone was true and that salvation was possible only on accepting it. Mr. Young is quite familiar with this history, and yet he has the temerity to affirm that "it is in the explanation that salvation lies," meaning, naturally, the Wesleyan Methodist explanation, or any other theories that fundamentally agree with it.

The curious thing about all theories of the Atonement is that each one claims to be based on the New Testament. Mr. Young makes that claim for his theory. He puts it thus:—

How is it that the forgiveness of sins, if I may so put it, is always hitched up with the fact of Christ crucified in the New Testament? If our sins are to be forgiven, it is always through Christ crucified. Well, that is a substantial theory.....It is propitiation, reconciliation, and our Lord's own word, ransom.....We believe that Christ was crucified as a substitution for our sins, and we rest on that fact. We believe that Christ died for us, and we contend that that theory runs like a red cord through the New Testament.

We thoroughly agree with the great preacher as to the Scriptural character of the doctrine of the Atonement which he proclaims with such eloquence. It was the theory which Mr. Spurgeon held and advocated throughout his wonderful ministry, and we are deeply convinced that it constitutes the very essence of the Christian religion. But, in reality, it is much older than Christianity. We find it in Egypt, Persia, India, and many other countries thousands of years before Christ was ever heard of. In its Christian form it has been of immense service to the Church. Mankind was conceived of as being in a state of enmity with God, and the Divine wrath against guilty sinners—children of the Fall, was greatly utilized. Mercifully God's beloved Son took pity upon them, became man by a supernatural birth in order that he might, by dying on the cross, become the propitiation for their sins, and then instituted the Church in which he promised to dwell as the Risen Lord to the end of the world. His apostles taught that it was within the Church alone he was to be found, and that it was through the Church alone he could do his saving work. The poor lost sinners were warned against the wrath to come from which the only escape was through faith in Christ crucified and docile submission to the Church. That is still the doctrine of salvation insisted upon in the Catholic Church; but the Protestant Reformation, by substituting an infallible Book for an infallible Church, destroyed the foundation upon which it rested, so that among Protestants salvation was not quite so vitally dependent upon the Church as among Roman Catholics. With the loss of belief in the infallibility of the Church has gone the weakening of attachment to what used to be known as the Cardinal Articles of the Faith. Mr. Young admits that comparatively few now preach the orthodox doctrine of the Atonement. It is rapidly becoming obsolete. "I hope it is not pessimism on my part," declares the preacher, "but we hear very little to-day in the Church about the forgiveness of sins." The truth is that the sense of sin is dying out because people are making the discovery that it has always been nothing but a sense engendered and fostered by the Church. "Forgiveness of sins," exclaims Mr. Young, "is not a mere theory, but the experience of multitudes throughout the ages. They can't all have been mistaken." The experience was the mere offspring of blind belief, not of positive knowledge. The sense of sin is a product of long and arduous training, just as the belief in God is, and children are taught to regard God, of whom no one has the least

knowledge, as the object against whom they have sinned, and the amazing fact is that he against whom they have sinned cannot forgive them except through the merits of Christ crucified. "We preach Christ crucified," says Mr. Young, "as the source, and the only source, of the forgiveness of sins." We have no hesitation in characterizing that doctrine as the most immoral and degrading ever invented by the human brain. The whole scheme of salvation, with its forgiveness of sins and justification by faith, has thus for its very foundation a horrible murder, for which, though Divinely decreed from all eternity, the Jewish nation has in all the long ages been falsely held responsible. Mr. Young himself tacitly admits this when he describes the crucifixion as "the transcendent tragedy of history."

The only comforting reflection is that the trend of modern thought, even in the Churches themselves, is distinctly towards unbelief in so demoralizing a superstition, towards Naturalism as opposed to Supernaturalism, towards simpler, saner, and wholesomer views of life, in short, towards Secularism, the finest, truest gospel the world has ever known.

J. T. LLOYD.

"Dangerous Nonsense."

We shall never enfranchise the world without touching people's superstitions.

—G. W. Foote.

Speedy end to superstition, a gentle one if you can contrive it, but an end.

—Thomas Carlyle.

It was quite refreshing to find that Sir H. Rider Haggard has been girding at popular superstition. He even went so far as to characterize the end of Lord Carnarvon being due to magic and the vengeance of Pharaoh as "dangerous nonsense." So it is, but there is more to be said on the subject of vulgar beliefs.

Although compulsory education has now been in existence for half a century it has been ineffective in the suppression of many little superstitions. It has been impotent to remove from the minds of the present generation ignorant beliefs that used to prevail in bygone ages. For some of these, such as the spilling of salt, and the quaint notion that Friday is a day of ill-luck and misfortune, the origin can be traced to remote times, but for others, which still flourish in different parts of the country, it is difficult to suggest the explanation, except on the ground of a blind credulity and a really defective education.

Why, for instance should thirteen be regarded as an unlucky number? There is, of course, no logical explanation for it. The idea is the purest fantasy, but that misfortune will befall a person if he is at a dinner which comprises thirteen guests, is a silly superstition so widely believed that it has to be considered. So prevalent is the idea, that in an hotel or a passenger-boat you will rarely find a room numbered thirteen. A short time since the London County Council was actually petitioned by a number of respectable, if not respected, residents who lived in houses numbered thirteen to change that number to 12a. In recent times efforts have been made, here and there, to combat the superstition by forming "Thirteen Clubs," the members of which are pledged to do the things which credulous folk regard as hazardous. These clubs, however, do not affect seriously the popularity of the superstitions.

The wearing of charms is another very common form of delusion, and the most unlikely people have been known to cherish such toys. Under our boasted veneer of civilization there is a mass of sheer, unadulterated ignorance, which is a bad heritage from a barbarous

and credulous past. This dark underworld, with all its foolish fancies and stupid superstitions, exists in London, Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester, and other towns and villages of to-day just as it existed everywhere in the Middle Ages. Whilst it belongs chiefly to the working-classes, it is not confined to them, for charms are bought as eagerly by the titled nobodies in the West End as by the factory workers and servant girls in the East End of London. Factories turn out charms in gold and silver, as well as in cheaper metals. Motor-cars carry their mascots no less than donkey-carts. This wide-spread credulity shows itself in so many directions. Well-known manufacturers continue to make huge fortunes by selling medicines which profess to cure all the ills that flesh is heir to. For a paltry outlay of a shilling or two the purchaser is promised protection against half a hundred fatal diseases.

Many modern sailors, like the ancient mariners, believe that a child's caul is a charm against drowning, and, during the submarine peril of the Great War, the price for this charm rose from thirty shillings to three pounds and over. Some time since an exhibition was held in London consisting almost entirely of charms, "sacred" emblems, amulets, and other curious objects, worn by soldiers, sailors, and civilians to avert death, ward off disease, and bring good fortune. There were many hundreds of exhibits, the whole forming a most ironic criticism of our boasted Christian civilization.

The plain, blunt truth is that the majority of our population is only partially educated, despite two thousand years of Christian teaching. It is as plain as a pikestaff that to be a Christian one need not be educated, nor even intelligent. To be a Freethinker, on the other hand, one must learn and think. The strength and continued power of priestcraft lies in the unthinking and uninformed masses of the population. In nine cases out of ten the Christian is a man who does not understand his own religion, who does not know what he himself believes or disbelieves, and has never given a single hour's study or thought to his own or any other faith. The fifty thousand clergymen of this country live upon this ignorance and prey upon this credulity. The greatest strength of the Christian religion is the tail-end of civilization. It represents the lowest culture in modern society, the bed-rock of people who know little beyond the alphabet. The clergy of the Church of Christ march at the back of the procession of humanity and pretend, hypocritically, to be the vanguard of Light and Liberty. It is a sorry trade, and it caused doughty Thomas Carlyle to dub it, "The Great Lying Church."

MIMNERMUS.

ADDRESSED TO A SKELETON.

Last night I saw—it may be in a dream—
 These withered bones stalk to my couch and say,
 With such unearthly tone that as I lay
 Froze at my heart its life-sustaining stream—
 "Child of the dust! immersed in many a scheme
 Of fruitless care, know, thou hast but a day
 Ere cold obstruction stops thy pulse's play,
 And Death must quench thy being's vital beam!"
 Speak yet again, thou griesly monitor,
 If an immortal spirit e'er possessed
 This perishable frame, oh speak once more!
 Give but one sign—and I may guess the rest.
 Speak! Move!—the dry bones mock my idle quest,
 Showing my soul but what it knew before.

—John Chalk Claris.

Luther in the Light of To-day.

III.

(Continued from page 245.)

THE DISSOLUTION OF LIBERAL PROTESTANTISM.—The student in the Dissenting Colleges is forced to examine into the origin and development of Scripture. He cannot fail noticing the relation of the Mosaic traditions of Creation and Deluge to those of the Sumerians as taken over by the Semitic Babylonians and Assyrians and questioning whether these Biblical stories are not loans. He looks with suspicion on the "Chronicles" as manifestly not genuine history.....He is no longer disposed to accept Deuteronomy as of Mosaic authorship.....This is what modern high criticism has taught him; and he finds that the very foundations of Protestantism are undermined. It may still stand, an empty crust, a something to which the uneducated and half-educated adhere; but to him the merely external authority of the Bible is a thing of the past. What can he do? Can he preach to a congregation on texts he mistrusts? On what is he to repose his own faith if the Book fail him? In a good many cases he becomes a sceptic. In some he ministers with a sense and a knowledge of the unreality of his teaching. In some cases he turns to the Church as the living witness of the Truth.—Rev. S. Baring-Gould, "The Evangelical Revival," pp. 352-353.

LUTHER became aware that Erasmus was at last preparing to attack him, and about the middle of 1524 wrote the great scholar a letter endeavouring to ward off the blow. He complains of the criticisms of Erasmus which have reached his ears lately, and declares he has nothing whatever to fear, "even though an Erasmus should fall on him tooth and nail." After a most flattering eulogy of his gifts and standing, he asks Erasmus to consider well whether it would not be better to leave his (Luther's) doctrines alone and to busy himself with his own Humanist affairs. Luther says:—

I desire that the Lord may bestow on you a spirit worthy of your name. Should the Lord, however, still delay this gift, I would beg you meanwhile, if you can do nothing else, at least to remain a mere spectator of our tragedy; do not write against me or increase the number and strength of my opponents; particularly do not attack me through the Press, and I for my part shall also refrain from attacking you.

The reply of Erasmus was the publication at Basle, almost immediately, of the book *On the Freedom of the Will*, which reached Wittenberg in September, 1524. Probably it was in the Press before Luther's letter arrived.

Luther regarded the servitude, or bondage of the will as the very keystone of the arch of his theology, without which the whole edifice would collapse. This is another point upon which the authors of the popular biographies of the reformer, preserve a very judicious silence. For, with the exception of the Presbyterians and a few obscure sects, the overwhelming majority of the Protestants have repudiated Luther's doctrine upon this point and adopted that of Erasmus.

Erasmus points out that Luther makes God the author of all evil, as well as the author of all good. Moreover, if man has no free-will to choose the good and refuse the evil, then:—

God inflicted eternal damnation on sinners, whereas they, in so far as they were not free agents, could not be held responsible for their sins. What Luther had advanced demanded that God should act contrary to His eternal Goodness and Mercy. It would also follow that earthly laws and penalties were superfluous, because without free-will no one could be responsible. Finally, the doctrine involved the overthrow of the whole moral order.¹

¹ Hartmann Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. II, pp. 262-263.

And why, asks the cool and subtle Erasmus :—

Why does not God remove the vice of our will, since our will is not in our power; or why does he make us responsible if the vice of the will is inherent in man. The vase says to the potter: "Why did you create me for eternal flames?"²

Luther affected to treat the work with contempt. He wrote to Spalatin that he was disgusted with it, that he had read only two pages of it, and that it was tedious to him to reply to so unlearned a book by so learned a man. But he had other matters to attend to; the terrible Peasant-War had broken out and was engaging all his attention; it was also the year of his marriage to Catherine Bora, the ex-nun. Luther delayed his reply until late in the following year, Catherine herself urging him to the work on the ground that "his foes might see in his obstinate silence an admission of defeat." It was entitled *De Servo Arbitrio*, variously translated as "The Bondage of the Will," "The Servitude of the Will," "On the Enslaved Will." Like the work of Erasmus it was written in Latin.

However we may be shocked and horrified by this extraordinary work, we should bear in mind that it was not thrown off hastily on the spur of the moment. Luther himself was at pains to declare in the work itself that it was written after the most careful deliberation, and not in the heat of controversy; and he declared later, in his old age, that of all the multitude of his writings, he could not review with perfect satisfaction any except perhaps his *Catechism* and his *De Servo Arbitrio*. And in fact:—

The work exhibits, better than any other, the undeniable qualities of its writer, the elasticity of his mind, his humour and imagination, and his startling readiness to turn every circumstance to advantage. At the same time, undoubtedly because it was a case of breaking a lance with Erasmus, the style is more polished than usual and the language less abusive. The editor of the Weimar edition speaks of the book as the "most brilliant of Luther's Latin polemics, nay, perhaps the most brilliant of all his controversial works."³

Another proof that it was written with more than usual care and deliberation, and, it should be added, Luther held to the views expressed in this book to the very end of his life.

Luther develops his argument as follows: If Satan is the Prince of this world and never releases the victims he has enslaved without being forced to do so by the power of God, then it is clear there can be no free-will. Luther continues:—

Thus the human will stands like a saddle-horse between the two. If God mounts into the saddle, man wills and goes forward as God wills.....But if the Devil is the horseman, then man wills and acts as the Devil wills. He has no power to run to one or the other of the two riders and offer himself to him, but the riders fight to obtain possession of the animal.⁴

God, so Luther asserts, has "an eternal hatred towards men, not merely a hatred of the demerits and works of free-will, but a hatred which existed even before the world was made."⁵ This grim Deity inflicts punishment upon those who do not deserve it.

Luther, anticipating the objections against the injustice of this proceeding, observes:—

This is the acme of faith, to believe that he is merciful who saves so few and who condemns so many; that He is just who at His own pleasure has made us necessarily doomed to damnation; so that, as Erasmus says, He seems to delight in the tortures

of the wretched and to be more deserving of hatred than of love. If by any effort of reason I could conceive how God could be merciful and just who shows so much anger and iniquity, there would be no need for faith.⁶

In effect, says Luther, what is the use of faith if it does not enable you to believe the most unreasonable and outrageous things?

Luther concludes by declaring that:—

God foreknows nothing subject to contingencies, but He foresees, foreordains, and accomplishes all things by an unchanging, eternal, and efficacious will. By this thunderbolt free-will sinks shattered in the dust.⁷

There is no doubt that Luther adopted the ideas of the enslaved will from St. Augustine to meet and explain his own spiritual experiences. In order to lead a holy life and ensure the salvation of his soul he had renounced the world and entered a monastery. But he found that in spite of the most strenuous austerities the worldly sensual and carnal desires still pursued him. By no effort of the will could he rid himself of them, therefore his will was not free, and this he traced back to the original sin of Adam and Eve by which they lost the freedom of the will.

W. MANN.

(To be Continued.)

May Day and Whitsuntide.

Im wunderschönen Monat Mai
Als alle Knospen sprangen
Da ist in meinem Herzen
Die Liebe aufgegangen.

—Heine.

Or è di maggio, e fiorito è il limone;
Noi salutiamo di casa il padrone.
Or è di maggio, e gli è fiorito i rami;
Salutiam le ragazze co' suoi dami.
Or è di maggio, che fiorito è i fiori;
Salutiam le ragazze co' suoi amori.

—Ancient Italian Maggio.

THE decoration of horses with rosettes, or an occasional "Jack in the Green," and girls with paper feathers dancing round a barrel organ, are all that remain to remind the Londoner of the old festival of May Day. When I was a youth, it was the custom to trip out early in the country to get the May dew and gather hawthorn. This old Pagan practice is not quite extinct. Shakespeare, in his *Henry the Eighth*, alludes to it, saying it is impossible to make people sleep on May morning. And who does not remember that passage in *Midsommer Night's Dream* where Lysander appoints to meet Hermia

— In that wood, a league without the town,
Where I did meet thee once with Helena
To do observance to a morn of May?

Chaucer, in his "Court of Love," tells us that early on May morning "forth goeth all the court to fetch the flowers fresh, and branch, and bloom."

To this custom of early rising Herrick alludes, in his fine pastoral on "Corinna's Going a Maying":—

Get up, get up, for shame; the blooming morn
Upon her wings presents the god unshorn.
See how Aurora throws her fair,
Fresh-quilted colours through the air;
Get up, sweet slug-a-bed, and see
The dew-bespangling herb and tree.

There's not a budding boy or girl, this day,
But is got up, and gone to bring in May.
A deal of youth, ere this, is come
Back, and with white-thorn laden, home.

² Michelet, *Life of Luther*, p. 193.

³ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 284-285.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 274.

⁵ Murray, *Erasmus and Luther*, p. 231.

⁶ Lecky, *History of Rationalism*, Vol. I, p. 387.

⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 387-388.

And Tennyson's "May Queen":—

You must wake and call me early, call me early mother dear.

Early rising was but a survival of a vigil in which the fun was kept up through the night. Stubbes, a Puritan writer of Queen Elizabeth's time, in his *Anatomic of Abuses*, published in 1585, says:—

Against May, Whit-Sunday, or other time, all the yung men and maides, old men and wives, run gadding about over night to the woods, groves, hils, and mountains, where they spend all the night in pleasant pastimes; and in the morning they return, bringing with them birch and branches of trees to deck their assemblies withall; and no meruaile for there is a great Lord present amongst them as superintendent and Lord of their sports—namely, Sathan, prince of hel. But the chiefest jewel they bring from thence is their May-pole (say rather their stinking poole), which they bring home with great veneration.

This interesting passage lets us know that the old Pagan rites were confounded with witchcraft, and confirms the evidence that the persecution of witches was the last act in the tragic suppression of Paganism. The rites of May Day are in reality a continuation of the rites of Dionysus Sabazios. Mr. W. W. Story says:—

Scarcely does the sun drop behind St. Peter's on the first day of May, before bonfires begin to blaze from all the country towns on the mountain-sides, showing like great beacons. This is a custom founded in great antiquity, and common to the North and South. The first of May is the Festival of the Holy Apostles in Italy; but in Germany, and still farther north, in Sweden and Norway, it is *Walpurgisnacht*, when goblins, witches, hags, and devils hold high holiday, mounting on their brooms for the Brocken.

In the Neapolitan towns great fires are built on this festival, around which the people dance, jumping through the flames, and flinging themselves about in every wild and fantastic attitude. Similar bonfires may also be seen blazing everywhere over the hills, and on the Campagna on the eve of the day of San Giovanni, which occurs on June 24. These are relics of the old Pagan custom alluded to by Ovid,¹ and particularly described by Varro, when the peasants made huge bonfires of straw, hay, and other inflammable materials, called "Palilia," and men, women, and children danced round them and leaped through them in order to obtain expiation and free themselves from evil influences—the mothers holding out over the flames those children who were too young to take an active part in this rite.

The chief feature of May Day was the setting up of the maypole. This being the time when the sap rises in the oak, the priests, joining with the people, used to go in procession to some adjoining wood on the May morning, and return in triumph with the much prized pole, adorned with boughs, flowers, and other tokens of the spring season. Besides the principal maypole, others of less dimensions were likewise erected in our villages to mark the places where refreshments were to be obtained; hence the name of *ale stake* is frequently to be met with in old authors as signifying a maypole. Bishop Grosseteste (d. 1253) suppressed the May games in the diocese of Lincoln because partaking of heathen vanity; and from that period and example the practices of the day have gradually altered from their original mode of celebration. Stubbes remarks that when the maypole was reared, "they fall to banquet and feast, to leape and dance about it as the heathen people did at the dedica-

tion of their idolles, whereof this is a perfect pattern, or, rather, the thing itself." The acrid old Puritan was quite right. The maypole was an emblem of the life and generation manifest in the flowering of vegetation. It was the symbol of the renewal of life, as was also Flora, or our Maid Marian, or the Queen of the May; while Jack-i'-the-Green represents the tree-spirit, whose rôle is so important in all the old religions.

The last maypole in London was taken down in 1718. It was set up in Wanstead Park, Essex, as a support to Sir Isaac Newton's large telescope. Pope thus perpetuates its remembrance:—

Amidst the area wide they took their stand
Where the tall maypole o'erlook'd the Strand.

"The Mayings," says Strutt, in his *Sports and Pastimes*, 1801, "are in some sort yet kept up by the milkmaids at London, who go about the streets with their garlands and music, dancing." But the milkmaids gave place to the chimney-sweeps, as Maid Marian had to Malkin, a clown dressed in woman's clothes; and even the sooty sweeps have almost entirely abandoned the festival. Our country largely owed its title of "Merrie England" to its remnants of Paganism. Puritanism did much towards stamping these out, but Puritanism has in turn itself become almost as effete as Paganism.

Had the Puritans known the *Pervigilium Veneris*, a Latin poem ascribed by Erasmus to Catullus, but certainly later, it would have afforded them an additional text for invective against the Pagan superstitions which the May games were denounced as representing. The poem shows that the Romans, like our English ancestors, celebrated the season by betaking themselves to the woods for three nights, where they kept vigil in honour of Venus, to whom the month of April was dedicated, as being the universal generating and producing power. The poem seems to have been composed with a view to its being sung by a choir of maidens in their nocturnal rambles beneath the soft light of an Italian moon. All the signs of spring whisper of love, and the constant refrain comes in, *Cras amet, qui nunquam amavit; quique amavit, cras amet*. Students of peasant customs and mythology will not be surprised at the suggestion that the three nights of vigil arose from watching the seeds which were expected to sprout at this season within three days.

May is the month of Mary, the mother of God, as it formerly was of Cybele, mother of the gods, the Bona Dea of the ancient Romans, whose feast at this period naturally associated itself with that of Flora. A remnant of the Floralia is preserved in the *Infiorata* or flower festival, dedicated now to the Madonna dei Fiori, celebrated every May at Genzano, which lies over the old crater now filled by the still waters of Lake Nemi. All the people are gaily dressed, and fun and flowers prevail, and as night comes on the young people dance the salterello in the very groves where the *Rex Nemorensis* obtained his office by slaying his predecessor.

J. M. WHEELER.

History shows a curious reversal of the principle of accommodation. Just as Science was formerly compelled to accommodate its conclusions to Theology, no matter at what cost of consistency, with what sophistical excuses, so Theology is now compelled to accommodate its dicta to the conclusions of Science, by utterly distorting the meaning of words.—G. H. Lewes.

If all mankind except one were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person, than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind.—John Stuart Mill.

¹ "Moxque per ardentis stipulæ crepitanis acervos,
Trajicias celeri strenna membra pede."—*Fastii*, lib. 4.

The God that Wants to be Worshipped.

(WHAT DO YOU THINK OF HIM?)

It is a Sunday morning, pleasant, bright, serene,
The spring air drenched with sunshine,—
From the distant church tower comes the music of the
chimes
Calling the Christian populace to worship.

And there goes my Christian neighbour, with his wife
and children
All dolled up in their Sunday's best,
Hurrying along to church.

If one should ask my Christian neighbour why he goes
to church,

After overcoming his astonishment at the impertinence
of the question, he would reply,

"I go to worship God, Almighty God, the Omnipotent,
Omniscient and Omnipresent,
The God who made me, and the universe in which I
live,

Who clothes and feeds, protects and providentially pre-
serves me,

In order that I may worship him in spirit and in truth,
May bow down before him and praise him

May glorify him in the highest and magnify his great
and holy name for ever."

My Christian neighbour really believes all that.

And yet this man is quite an intelligent fellow;
So intelligent, in fact, that even now if as he walks along
with his family to church,

The God that he is going to worship
Should suddenly meet him face to face right there on
the street, and say,

"Behold, I am your God Almighty,
I am omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent,
I made this universe in which you live,

With all its countless millions of suns and systems,
And I made you and all your crawling kind and huddled
you here upon this little earth,

Where I now clothe and feed, protect and providentially
preserve you,

In order that you may bow down before me and worship
me in spirit and in truth,

That you might sing my praises and glorify me in the
highest,

And magnify my great and holy name for ever!"

This neighbour of mine, shocked into sanity, would
answer,

"Great God Almighty, what an infinite amount of time
and trouble you have taken

From a motive so unworthy!

Maybe you have all power, and all knowledge,
Maybe you are in addition present everywhere;

But if the only object of your stupendous work,
Was to make me and all my crawling kind,

Here on this speck of star dust,
For the pleasure of having us swell your head by telling
you how wonderful you are,

For the pleasure of hearing us sing your praises, and
glorifying you in the highest,

And magnifying your name that, you say, is great and
holy, for ever,

Why then you can be God to me no longer;
Clothed as you are with infinite power,—dowered as you
are with infinite knowledge,—

Your silly self-admiration only makes of you an infinite
fool.

Here's one place where your purpose failed to carry,—
Here's one poor, crawling creature that will never wor-
ship you again,

My only feeling for you is an infinite contempt."

And thereupon my Christian neighbour, Christian then
no more,

Would take his wife and children out into the park
And spend his Sunday there in pleasant, rational re-
creation.

HOWELL S. ENGLAND.

Acid Drops.

At the annual meeting of the National Liberal Club on
May 2, there is expected to be some lively proceedings
as a result of the committee permitting games to be
played on Sunday. The opposition comes, it is said from
Scottish and Welsh Nonconformist members, while others
are a bit timid as to how it will affect votes in the con-
stituencies. One of these Sabbatarians was asked the
other day, "Why is it morally allowable to play Sunday
chess or draughts, and not cards?" The question was
worded wrongly. It should have been "religiously" in
place of "morally." It is a religious, not a moral ob-
jection that is at the root of the whole question, and until
that aspect of it is clearly brought home, the Sabbatarians
will continue to have it very much their own way.

But the reply to the question was "We do not play
chess or draughts on Sunday." That "we" is worth
remembering. It expresses so much. Because *we* do not
want to play on Sunday therefore no one else shall be
permitted to play on Sunday. Because *we* believe people
ought to go to Church on Sunday, therefore everything
shall be done, by compulsion, to compel them to go there.
It is all a case of "we," and it expresses the egotism and
intolerance of Christianity as nothing else can.

A petition with about 200 signatures has been sent to
the Bishop of Ripon requesting him to inhibit the Rev.
C. E. Russell, vicar of Manston, Leeds. Two members of
the congregation have sworn an affidavit that the Vicar
cursed them both. Fortunately, like the famous curse
directed against the Jackdaw of Rheims, "nobody was a
penny the worse."

Some excitement has been caused in India owing to a
report that human sacrifice is practised among some of
the tribes of the Naga Hills. This is one of the beautiful
outcomes of religious belief, and to cure these people of
the habit we send them a religion which is based upon
exactly the same belief. Christianity is built upon the
sacrifice of a single man, and all students of comparative
mythology know that this belief is directly descended
from the custom of sacrificing a human being annually.
The advance of knowledge and general culture converted
the annual sacrifice into a final one, and then reduced
that to mere symbolism. And this will cure the in-
habitants of the Naga Hills of the same disgusting prac-
tice. Christianity alone can never do so.

There was only one member of the House of Commons
who was sent there by God, and that was Mr. Scrym-
geour, member for Dundee. We have his word for the
fact and must let it go at that. Last week this gentleman
introduced a Prohibition Bill into the House of Commons,
and again assured the members that he was the mouth-
piece of God. But the members laughed heartily and
threw the Bill out by an overwhelming majority. They
might have reminded Mr. Scrymgeour that Jesus once
turned water into wine for a number of people who were
already pretty "full." And in return he might have
told them that as they believed in God inspiring men and
women there was no objection why he should not be one
of the selected persons. The reply and the counter reply
would have formed a pretty subject for discussion.

Journalists in search of sensation have often exploited
the idea "if Christ came to Chicago," and Mr. Upton
Sinclair has used the subject in a novel in which he
takes the legendary figure through the modern hurly-
burly of film studios, beauty-parlours, lobster palaces,
and other phases of American society. The cream of the
jest is that one of the stone-faced business men wants
Christ to sign a contract to appear on the films; but the
Galilean runs away and hides himself in a stained-glass
window. The novel is said to have captured the religious
public. It ought to for it is as true as the Gospels,

The Christian Evidence Society in issuing its annual appeal for funds says that there would not be so much scepticism were it not definitely propagated by societies which exist for no other purpose. We welcome this testimony to the success of our efforts. It is, moreover, a truth that is often overlooked. We have after many years struggle won a little breathing space, and have forced organized Christianity to cancel or modify many of its once most generally accepted teachings, but were militant Freethought to cease its efforts it would not be long before we should lose the ground already won and find many of the darker aspects of Christianity rapidly revive. The lesson for all Freethinkers is that of persistent effort along the lines we have always followed. Christians never give up a teaching on their own initiative. It is always a consequence of pressure from without.

The Dean of York regrets that there is no war memorial in York Minster similar to those which exist in some other cathedrals in the country. We should have thought that the Dean would have been rather too pleased to keep out of sight the close association of Christianity with war, but the clergy are generally ready to put a chance of advertisement before everything else. We suggest that a fitting memorial would be a series of pictures faithfully representing the horrors of a modern battlefield, with the clergy acting as recruiting agents and doing all they can in each country to inflame the peoples against each other.

A writer in *McCall's Magazine*, illustrating the lack of religious education with some children, relates the following: A child was asked how many Gods there were. He replied, "I don't know; there's an awful mess of them." But that, instead of showing a lack of religious instruction, to us shows a perfectly sane view of religious history when a child is allowed to vent its natural intelligence upon it. One thing certain is that there is an awful mess of gods, and another is that they make an awful mess of almost everything with which they are permitted to interfere. If children were only left alone they would often settle the religious question for themselves.

Here is another true story which illustrates the same point, that also came within our own experience. Something had occurred in a family under distressing circumstances and the child had been told that it was the work of God. Shortly after the child, a little girl, was heard asserting in opposition to some of its companions, that God was a bad God. Which, then, was the clearest moral sense? The children who, in defiance of all rules of common-sense, declared good one who had just done something that was bad, or the child who applied to God the same moral judgments that it saw applied to men and women? We do not think there can be much doubt as to the correct answer. The incident well illustrates the distorting effects of religious teaching on the developing moral sense of children. We should have a healthier and more intelligent generation if children were allowed to grow up without being dosed with religious teaching.

We note there is still going on a lively discussion in America concerning the anti-evolutionary statements of W. J. Bryan. The gravity with which it is discussed would lead one to believe that there is a very large number of supporters of Bryan in the States, and as he takes the most orthodox view of the Bible, and believes in the absolute accuracy of the doctrine of special creation, etc., it gives one furiously to think. It should also serve as a reminder to those who are so fond of assuring us that Christianity is dead and that the fight is over. The truth is that both in America and in this country there are very large numbers who are—so far as their thinking on religion is concerned—away back in the middle ages. It is these people who represent an ever present danger to civilization. The early Christian Church came to power because it commanded the support of the more ignorant and the more superstitious section of the population, and

the Church to-day may possibly recover some of its lost influence by the same means—that is, unless we are active enough to prevent it. It is idle to blink the fact that between us and that catastrophe the only protection is a strong and militant Freethought. The profession of an amiable liberality, and the discovery of some hidden beauty in the old religion will not avail. It is on such things that old superstition feeds.

The *Chicago Tribune* publishes the following advertisement from one of the estate agents in the city:—

Male and female
Created he them
Four and five room
Create we them.

It looks as though the firm is entering into competition with God Almighty. All we can say is that both produce a fair number of jerry built articles.

There is another storm in America over the heresy of Dr. Grant, to which we referred a few weeks ago. In the *Irish World* a Catholic writer is amazed at Dr. Grant saying that the conversion of St. Paul followed an epileptic attack. But there is nothing new in that. To one with the slightest acquaintance with the phenomena there cannot be the slightest doubt but that the vision of St. Paul which led to his conversion was a consequence of an epileptic attack. Many others have had celestial visions from the same cause or from similar causes. If mental disorders had been properly understood in the early ages what a difference it would have made in the number of prophets and inspired characters. It is quite wrong to say that God ceased to inspire people. He did not. It was the observers who came to understand what was the matter with these prophets of God.

If we are rightly informed by the Press, British agriculture is in a bad way. May we suggest that one way of giving it relief would be to abolish the compulsory tithe which agriculture still pays to the Church. It is not as though the Church earned the payment by guaranteeing good weather and a good harvest. There is hardly a farmer in the country who would pay half-a-crown a year for the prayers of the most eloquent parson in the country. But we suggest that so long as the farmer is unable to pay the agricultural labourer his pitiful thirty shillings a week, it is almost criminal to compel them to pay tithe to a parson.

The Rev. Cotton Smith, of Grimsby, is of opinion that there will be smoking in heaven. Mr. Smith seems to have got his notions of things mixed up a bit. It is in the other place that smoking is said to be: "For the smoke of their torment shall ascend forever." Perhaps he meant that the people in heaven will smell smoke. Earlier generations of Christians thought so, and took it that it would add to the pleasures of the saved.

"No one," says Professor J. A. Thomson, "likes to wear second-hand clothes, but people are always ready to garb themselves in second-hand opinions." It is all a matter of fashion. If it were as fashionable to wear second-hand clothes as it is to wear second-hand opinions the one would be as common as the other. And even Professor Thomson himself is open to the charge of walking about with second-hand opinions, for his frequent deliverances on religion are not his own in the sense that they are born of his scientific investigations. They are nothing more than the attenuated remnants of the religious opinions of previous centuries that have been handed on to him and on behalf of which he invents a number of excuses. He is carrying about the second-hand mental furniture of several centuries ago, or of even the most primitive ages. That he may not be aware how old and threadbare his opinions on religion are does not alter the fact. If he brought the same independent thinking, and the same openness of speech to bear on religion that he brings to bear on matters of pure science, the religious world would open its eyes.

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.

OWING to unexpected calls on the editor's time some letters are held over till next week.

S. BETTS.—We do not think our readers are sufficiently interested in "Hickson the Healer" to justify the insertion of so lengthy a letter. If Hickson comes to England it will be another matter, and we will reserve your communication in view of the possibility of that event.

AGNOSTIC.—Thanks for letter, but it seems to lack "occasion," and just now we have very many demands on our space.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—Mrs. C. M. Renton, £2.

L. SMITH-KYLE.—Sorry we are unable to use the suggestion sent. We hope that the Salford bigots will find they have roused a hornet's nest. On that time will tell. Perhaps it will rouse Freethinkers elsewhere to a sense of the injustice under which we labour all the time and every time.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

The last of the Sunday afternoon course of lectures at South Place Institute will be delivered to-day by Mr. Cohen. He will take for his subject "The Psychology of Faith," and it should prove of interest to both Christians and Freethinkers. The lecture commences at 3.30 and admission is free. Mr. Cohen will not be lecturing in London again until the autumn. The lecturer on Sunday last was Mr. Corrigan, who gave a most interesting lecture to a very appreciative audience.

Branches of the N.S.S. that have not yet sent in the names of their delegates to the Leeds Conference should do so without delay and send in the forms to the general secretary. We must also remind intending visitors that if they require accommodation over the week-end, a statement of what they require should be sent to Mr. R. H. Youngman, 19 Lowerhead Row, Leeds. A Conference luncheon has been fixed at the Guildford Hotel, tickets 3s. 6d., but all who intend partaking must give notice to Mr. Youngman not later than Wednesday, May 16. Further announcements will be made next week.

We are not surprised that many of our readers are very indignant over the bigotry of the Salford Library Committee. But an expression of indignation at an injustice will not carry us far on the road towards its removal unless it is followed by action. We must make the bigots feel that we are not to be treated unjustly with impunity. In the case of the last blasphemy prosecution we said that we must make the bigots pay, and it has been followed by the introduction of a Bill into the House of Commons, and in the course of the next two or three weeks we have every expectation of seeing a discussion on the matter raised in the House of Lords. That is what we mean by making the bigots pay. And if all our friends in and around Salford will set themselves to work we fancy it will soon bring the Library Committee to a better frame of mind.

From the letters received we take as a specimen of many an offer of Mr. J. Breese, of Birmingham, to pay for the distribution of 100 copies of the current issue in Salford. We could, as we said last week, send plenty of copies of the *Freethinker*—not necessarily of one week's issue—if friends on the spot would see to their distribution. The distribution would involve some expense, but we have no doubt but that this could be met. Or another plan would be to write a special leaflet and have that well distributed about the town. We may be able to decide definitely what is to be done by the time the next issue of the paper appears. From an old reader of the paper—a solicitor—we receive the following:—

I notice in this week's issue the scandalous intolerance in Salford. It seems to me that at the bottom of all Christian activity there is either self-interest or mere commercialism. Your rational criticism of the clergy and other ministers of religion is "asked for" by them and richly deserved. Some of them are obviously dishonest, and the more honest break away. If I were that millionaire you are looking for I would come to your aid, but as I am comparatively poor, with many responsibilities, I must ask you to accept the "widow's mite" when the spirit moves me.

The question raised by these Salford bigots is much larger and more important than the incident with which we are dealing. In some form or other we are up against this game of suppression or slander all over the country. It is the greatest difficulty we have to fight. Without the boycott this paper, instead of losing money weekly, would be paying its way, and those responsible for its maintenance would find the task a little easier than it is at present. Somehow or the other we must break the boycott. And we are quite convinced that a quiet expression of opinion, provided it were public and made in the proper manner and at the proper time, would persuade the bigots that much of their own power was due to the silence of Freethinkers, and not to their own inherent strength. One thing is certain. Christians will never give the *Freethinker* justice while they believe they can safely withhold it.

The funds of the National Secular Society are now governed by a Trust Deed, with legally appointed trustees. For the benefit of all concerned a summary of the Trust Deed has been prepared and will be forwarded to anyone on application. Those wishing to benefit the Society by will may find the following simple form of bequest adequate:—

I hereby give and bequeath (*Here insert particulars of legacy*), free of all death duties, to the Trustees of the National Secular Society for all or any of the purposes of the Trust Deed of the said Society, and I direct that a receipt signed by two of the trustees of the said Society shall be a good discharge to my executors for the said legacy.

The question of the legality of bequests to the National Secular Society is now settled beyond dispute. Nothing but a new act of Parliament declaring such bequests illegal could bring us back to the situation that obtained for so long.

One clause in the Trust Deed is of considerable importance. It empowers the Trustees to accept bequests

for particular purposes and for expenditure in particular places, so long as the purposes come within the scope of the Principles and Objects of the National Secular Society. By this means any person who leaves a bequest to be spent in a particular town, and for a particular purpose may rest assured that his wishes will be carried out. The Trustees will be legally responsible for its administration. Something of the kind has long been wanted in connection with our movement, and it is now there for use. If we only live long enough to see Secular Education established in the public schools, and the Blasphemy Laws repealed, we shall feel that we have not worked in vain.

Having finished its winter campaign the Birmingham Branch is arranging its usual summer rambles. The first will be held on Saturday, May 6. The place of destination will be the Botanical Gardens, and Mr. C. H. Smith will act as botanical guide. Members and friends will meet at the entrance to the gardens at 3 p.m.

Under the auspices of the Executive Mr. R. Atkinson is commencing an open-air campaign on Tyneside. He will lecture to-day (April 29) on the Sandhills, Newcastle-on-Tyne, and in the evening on the Town Moor. The rest of his movements during the week will be indicated in our Lecture Guide. In London, Mr. George Whitehead, also under the auspices of the Executive, commences a week's campaign in Finsbury Park to-day at 6.30. He will lecture at Westbury Avenue, Green Lanes, on Monday evening at 7.30, and at Westbury Avenue, Green Lanes, on Tuesday. Other meetings are announced in our "Guide" notices.

Richard Carlile.

III.—THE FAMOUS 1819 TRIALS.

(Continued from page 251.)

CONTINUING his speech Carlile said:—

The learned Attorney-General had urged that it would be a waste of the jury's time for him to enter into any defence of blasphemy. But why should it be deemed a waste of time to defend a system of religious opinions said to emanate from God? He had said, further, that the jury had pledged themselves by a solemn oath to support religion. They had done no such thing. Their oath only called on them to decide from what motives he published the *Age of Reason*. Was it a malicious motive? Then he was guilty according to the charge of the Attorney-General. But he acted from a deep conviction that he was aiding the public mind thereby in its search for truth. There was nothing immoral, nothing which could be productive of the least injury to the public in Paine's work. Indeed, it possessed more moral truth, more just sentiments of reverence for the Deity, than could be collected from all the detached precepts and moral injunctions to be found in the voluminous pages of the Bible.

Crown lawyers were bad judges of the progress of human improvement. Their minds were cramped and confined to the studies connected with their profession. So they paid no regard to the march of human intellect. Consequently, the prosecution had cited as authoritative Sir Matthew Hale's opinion. But that judge was a believer in the now exploded doctrine of witchcraft, for which he caused two women to be burned. To call religion a cheat was said to be an offence in the sight of God. But it was not said what religion was meant. The Jews looked on the Christian religion as a cheat; the latter on the Mahometan; and all combined in regarding that of the Hindoos as such.

Paine had commented upon the murders, atrocities, and assassination of infants which the Bible said Moses committed by the command of God. He had

cited several verses from Numbers in support of his criticism. Had he (Carlile) written and published and imputed to God such blasphemy as this Bible chapter contained, he could not appear before them and ask for a favourable interpretation of his motives. Even the very persons who now prosecuted him would impeach his moral feelings and objects with great severity of invective.

His object was to defend himself from the charge of malicious intention. To do that he must show that he rejected, for its falsehood, the Bible and the Christian religion, and to reject on that account was not to revile. The Unitarians had published a new version, in which they wholly rejected the chapters relating to the incarnation of Christ, as laid down in the writings of the established religion. If they rejected why should he be debarred the right of rejection? They were legally upheld in their right to reject for its falsehood the supposed divinity of Christ, that was their right to revile that doctrine and to describe as false certain parts of the legalized translation of the Bible and the main teaching of the Christian religion.

His case was comparable to that of Galileo, who was imprisoned for asserting a doctrine afterwards believed by the civilized world. The sole motive which actuated his persecutors was similar to that which had kindled the flames in Smithfield, and kept alight the blazing torch of persecution for the last 1800 years. The same disposition inspired them as agitated the persecutors of the intrepid reformer Luther. If his lordship and Attorney-General could not justify the conduct of the persecutors of Luther their conduct towards him (Carlile) was not justifiable. If no persons had resisted the continuance of error and offered themselves even as victims, falsehood always would have prevailed. The persecutors of Luther and of himself executed their designs in the same manner. The Popish Inquisitors (like the present Court) would listen to no justification, they refused all discussion, they had their law to uphold their religion and not allow its authority to be impugned. Had their ancestors not resisted superstition, the jury would not now be sitting in that box, and he would have been delivered up to the Inquisition for his opinions.

If Christianity was, indeed, part of the law of the land, he regretted that it had so little influence upon the tempers of those around him. The New Testament itself deprecated the doctrines of persecution in almost every page, and Jesus himself had been called the disturber of the people, and was persecuted in his time for blasphemy, and finally suffered as the founder of Christianity acting in defiance of the established religion of the country. A judge was then found base enough to condemn him at the instigation of the priests and elders of the Jewish nation.

Carlile's speech concluded on Thursday, October 14. The defendant then addressed the judge. He intended to have brought before the jury the leading characters of the thirty or forty different sects, whom he had subpoenaed for the purpose of showing that some of them approached very near himself in their profession of faith, that they were all tolerated, and that consequently he himself ought to be tolerated. He intended to take their opinions on certain parts of the Old Testaments and put it to everyone whether they conceived that Christianity required the aid of the secular arm to support it.

The Chief Justice could not allow any such evidence. The jury knew very well that there were many denominations of Christians, and it would be most irrelevant and improper to call on them to explain the particulars of their faith. He could not allow a Unitarian to explain that he did not believe in the immaculate conception.

The Attorney-General rose to reply. The powers of the repealing statute that exempted Unitarians from

certain disabilities cautiously left untouched all provisions against general attacks on the Christian religion. It was the intention of the legislature to give the fullest toleration to the followers of Christ, but at the same time no one was empowered to scoff at and revile religion, to say that the Bible was a fable and Christianity an imposture. He must insist on the dreadful consequences of letting in a torrent of blasphemy and revilings upon society, not because it would injure Christianity, but because it might injure the minds of individuals.

The Chief Justice summed up the arguments on both sides, and pronounced the law to be against the defendant. The latter had pursued an improper defence and the jury had interrupted it rightly.

The jury, at half-past four o'clock, retired. A little after five they returned with a verdict of "Guilty."

Carlile left the Court when the jury retired. He was taken into custody in the evening.

On Friday, October 15, Carlile came into Court attended by two officers. The cause was called on. It was an indictment instigated by the Vice Society for the republication of *The Principles of Nature; or a Development of the Moral Causes of Happiness and Misery*.

Mr. Gurney was counsel for the prosecution. He went over the same grounds with regard to the law as the Attorney-General had done the two days before, and quoted several passages from the work in question, in which Mr. Palmer reasons against the credibility of the Christian religion from the barbarity of the times in which it was first professed, and the violences to which it has given rise.

Carlile repeated his former arguments respecting the law and the perfect morality of opinions against the Bible. In allusion to the charge in the indictment of his being a malicious and evil-disposed person, he said: "Unless it can be proved that I published this work with the view of demoralizing the public mind, you cannot charge me with a malicious intention."

The Chief Justice summed up against the defendant, and the jury without retiring, pronounced a verdict of "Guilty." Two similar prosecutions against the defendant were withdrawn.

On Tuesday, November 15, the Attorney-General having prayed the judgment of the Court on Carlile, the Chief Justice read his notes of the trial, omitting all the matter which he thought offensive. Mr. Denman, to the apparent surprise of the Court, said he had a motion to make an arrest of judgment. The common law had been improperly resorted to in the case of the defendant since his offence was provided against by the Statute 9 and 10 of William III, which fixed certain pains and penalties for the offence. The Court could not travel out of this Statute without virtually repealing it.

The Chief Justice expressed his opinion that the statute referred to did not alter the Common Law. He pronounced sentence. For the publication of the *Age of Reason* Carlile would pay a fine of £1,000 and be imprisoned in Dorchester Gaol for two years, and for the publication of the *Principles of Nature* he would pay a further fine of £500, and be imprisoned for another year. He would be imprisoned until the fines were paid and until he gave security, himself in the sum of £1,000 and two others in the sum of £1,000 each, that he be of peace and good behaviour for the term of his natural life.

Carlile bowed, and was then conducted out of Court. He was handcuffed immediately and hurried away to Dorchester Gaol.

With no less speed a writ of *levari facias* was issued

to take possession of such of the defendant's property as could be found upon his premises in Fleet Street. Within an hour of sentence being pronounced £600 worth of books, besides loose cash, was seized, and next morning the "Temple of Deism" was completely closed.

Abridged from Carlile's own writings by

GUY A. ALDRED.

(To be Continued.)

Is Religion Persecuted in Russia?

A SECTION of the Press has been hurt in its most sensitive feelings by the Russian Government's action in executing a priest of the Roman Church, imprisoning for ten years an archbishop, and holding for trial the Patriarch of the Eastern Church. This conduct is deemed to be an affront to religious liberty, and in raising the alarm against what it terms "religious persecution" it was at first supported even by the Labour daily and representatives of the Labour Party, who in the House of Commons did not oppose the Bill dealing with seditious teachings on the ground that it did not affect Labour but only the Communists. Actually this Bill attacks "infidelity" and proscribes what is termed "blasphemous" as well as "seditious" teaching to the youth, thereby establishing the religious right to capture the child-mind in orthodox Sunday-schools. I think one would be safe in asserting that it is just this desire, combined with an anxiety for retrieving its lost prestige that calls forth the cry "persecution." I wish I might convince these champions of freedom—in Russia—who so conveniently forget the merciless war that has for years been waged against Freethought by the Church, which now expects privileged treatment at the hands of a Secularist Government—that religious persecution does not exist in Russia.

Comes to mind the murder of Francisco Ferrer by the Roman Catholic Church in Spain. Who spoke of freedom then? Would the susceptibilities of the Press have been equally roused on behalf of, say, a Jewish Rabbi found guilty of an act of treason? In all truth little enough was said of the Czar's acts of barbarism towards the opponents of his regime—or the pogroms against the Jews which are still regular occurrences in those parts of Russia not under Bolshevik control, wherein innocent old men, women and children are mercilessly slaughtered at the instigation of the Church.

How is it that no protest was ever raised either by the Press or the Labour Party against the punishments inflicted upon social revolutionists and anarchists guilty of political offences under the Soviet regime—some of whom also paid the extreme penalty? No creed should stand in the way of our defending liberty whenever it is attacked. I personally hold that the infliction of the death penalty is wrong under all circumstances. You cannot vindicate the justice of your cause by putting your opponent to death; you merely place the halo of martyrdom around him. But then, I am in a minority, and I doubt if a government exists which does not make use of capital punishment, especially in time of crisis. The Catholic Church most decidedly does not agree with me, and since its own record shows so plainly that it has never accepted the pacifist doctrine it should be the last to complain of the treatment it has received at the hands of the Government of Russia.

Considering that the latter are materialists who have found the primitive, almost mediæval superstitions of the people a huge stumbling block in the way of establishing the new order in Russia, the complaint

that *no privileges* are given to the religious elements becomes absurd. We might just as well raise the cry of persecution of science because the hospitals are not receiving a State subsidy.

It has been stated as evidence of "religious persecution" that during Easter, when the churches were packed with worshippers, no steps were taken to prevent Secularists from holding meetings outside. I presume the proper steps from the Catholic point of view would have been to call out the troops against the infidels! Clearly freedom is a principle alien to the orthodox religious mind. What would the average religious person say if I complained that every Sunday my intelligence is insulted three times, at 11 a.m., 3 p.m., and 6 to 7 in the evening, by the ravings of illiterate disciples of "General" Booth, who pitch just outside my window, knowing me to be an Atheist, for no other purpose than to reveal to me their oft-times shady pasts, and the happiness they have found in the arms of the Lord! To the destruction of my nerves and what musical sense I may possess, I am compelled to hear the discordant blasting of trumpets, without which they evidently could not give adequate praise to their God. That is freedom, and as a believer in free speech I submit gracefully.

I believe anyone from Western Europe visiting Russia would be as much impressed as I was by the amount of indulgence the Church receives there. True, the teaching of religion is no longer a part of the school curriculum. But that, surely, is an advantage from everyone's point of view. I could understand that there would be very good cause for complaint if the children were taught religious dogmas contrary to those of their parents, but what harm is done in leaving their minds quite free and unbiased?

Primarily the duty of a government is to concern itself with the well-being of its subjects, and this the Soviet Government endeavours to do to the best of its ability. The development of the body is of vastly greater importance to any nation than the cultivation of a soul—indeed, it is difficult to conceive how a healthy soul can exist in an unhealthy body—and in concerning itself with the physical needs of the children and their mental development along scientific lines Russia is surely serving religion—if it can be a doctrine of health and reason.

If religion is a natural thing and not something acceptable only to warped minds distorted from childhood, then every healthy living being will take to it naturally. Why then should the Church fear the development of unbiased intelligence in the child? Why this great anxiety to capture the child's mind before it has learnt to think or reason for itself? No one who has been to Moscow with its "forty times forty" churches, not a single one of which has been damaged in any way, will have any patience with those who talk of persecution as applying to religion there. I know from personal experience that religious processions take place daily throughout the city without hindrance of any kind, even when they to some extent conflict with the arrangements of the government itself. To judge from the queues of poor old men and women lined up each day outside kiosks at the gates of the Kremlin with their offerings to the priest the Church doesn't seem to be doing at all badly. In this present case the facts speak for themselves, making it almost unnecessary to produce argument to show that neither the execution of the priest nor the imprisonment of his colleague were acts of religious persecution. These agitators were punished not for their religious beliefs, but on account of certain activities which amounted to acts of conspiracy against the Soviet. The archbishop was in fact found to have been guilty of co-operation with the Polish Government during a period of armed hostility and to have carried on propaganda against the Church

policy of the State in such a way as to provoke civil disorder.

Divines should not engage in affairs mundane. Men believing in law and order should not oppose existing governments. But if they must fight with an existing order, at least let them fight honestly, accepting the fortunes of war, and not claiming immunity from punishment on account of their religious beliefs.

ROSE WITCOP.

A Book of Verse.

VIEWED from the outside the poetical anthologist's job seems a ridiculously easy one. Yet it is not as easy as it looks. Your true anthologist, like your true poet, is born, not made. Some of our literary readers will no doubt remember the charming "Oxford Garlands" arranged with exquisite taste by R. M. Leonard, the doyen of the anthological faculty. Every one of these little volumes is a thing of beauty, and a joy for ever. If we look at all carefully into their structure we shall find that they demand as much critical energy as the most imposing of literary studies. It is curious also to note that the smaller the selection the greater the difficulty. We are reminded of this law of inverse proportion which appears to govern the making of poetical anthologies by a "lyric garland" we have just received by the Vine Press, Steyning, Sussex. We hasten to congratulate the anonymous editor on his literary discrimination and artistic skill in so arranging the blossoms as to bring out their qualities by contrast and comparison.

The title *Larkspur* (the "*Delphinium ajacis*" of our English cottage gardens) indicates the homely quality of the bulk of the poems. For the general lover of our verse they will come as a pleasant surprise and a promise of success if he venture on a voyage of discovery into the *terra incognita* of *Chalmer's English Poets*. Here he will rejoice in the "Country Man's Delight," by Thomas Durfey, Charles II's favourite singing man, and a rare maker of frolicsome ditties, in "Canticles," by John Norris, in an invitation to amorous pleasure by Mistress Apha Behu, who carried her wide and profound knowledge of sexual psychology with a lightness which we are sure our ponderous psycho-analysts must envy. Indeed the light-hearted judicious reader will find to his taste all the things the editor sets before him. Especially will he thank him for the following verses by John Keats, which we fancy must have shocked even Leigh Hunt, who was the sort of person that admired freedom of ideas at a long and safe remove. This is the poem, new, we fancy to most of our readers:—

SHARING EVE'S APPLE.

O blush not so! O blush not so!
Or I shall think you knowing;
And if you smile the blushing while,
Then maidenheads are going.

There's a blush for won't, and a blush for shan't,
And a blush for having done it;
There's a blush for thought, and a blush for naught,
And a blush for just begun it.

O sigh not so! O sigh not so!
For it sounds of Eve's sweet pippin;
By these loosened lips you have tasted the pips
And fought in an amorous nipping.

Will you play once more at nice-cut-core,
For it only will last our youth out,
And we have the prime of the kissing time,
We have not one sweet tooth out.

There's a sigh for yes, and a sigh for no,
And a sigh for I can't bear it!
O what can be done, shall we stay or run?
O cut the sweet apple and share it!

The snatches of verses which serve as prologue, epilogue, and colophon are anonymous, although, if we were put to it, we could make a pretty shrewd guess at the poet's identity. The poems that are quite new to us

are those by Christopher Crayne, Harold Stevens, Laurence Edwards, Paul Pentreath, and Arthur French. In thought and form and tone they speak of the new world, the world of to-day, but not so aggressively as to destroy the exquisite harmony of the whole. Mr. Stevens' "The Yellow Moon," we imagine, would not have been quite the same vision of compelling loveliness if Baudelaire had not written his "Les Bienfaits de la Lune." Mr. Pentreath's "Ballad of Lyonesse" is another example of a fusion of the modern spirit with the form of a less sophisticated age. The illustrations, which are roughly executed wood-cuts, take us back to the old chap-books. They underline the naive thought of the older poems, and serve as a suggestive commentary on somewhat simulated ingenuousness of the modern ones. They give unity to a selection which comes as near perfection as possible.

Correspondence.

A VICAR'S CURSE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—According to the Cecilized (Hugh and Bob) *Westminster Gazette*, April 16, 1923, the Rev. C. E. Russell (A. K. C.), once of St. Saviour's, Ealing, but now vicar of Manston, Leeds (net income £319 and a house, Dio. Ripon), last Sunday burned incense during the "procession."

As a protest against this *extra* folly two gentlemen, Messrs. W. H. Allanson and F. Spink, remained seated. *On dit* they had each assisted in taking up the collection. As the procession, "thro' gate and porch and columned aisle" found themselves close to the "sitters" the Vicar was heard to suggest that they "would be better outside." (Many a true word gets spoken in anger.) Allanson and Spink refused to "budge." Thereupon this eminently fit and proper person to serve in the sacred ministry, with a denunciatory gesture, anathematized his naughty boys in the following dulcet vernacular: "May the curse of God rest upon you both, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.—Amen!"

No sane reader of the *Westminster Gazette*, the *Guardian*, or the *War Cry*, for instance, subscribes to an idea that this brotherly, academic and charitable wish will affect Messrs. Allanson and Spink respectively after death.

But the "Curse of God!" fancy! Why it is supposed the greatest and mostly deadly handicap to mammon's goal that religion carries about in its punitive repertoire! Socially and commercially these "plate"-handing-round-toffs are ostracized now and for ever more. (Unless, of course, they go to Northampton.) Good old Charlie! Good old Anne!

Now I have never yet heard of a man, not even of a bishop, who was content to await arrival in the "next world" before asking about his stipend, screw, etc., and seeing that Saint Russell has played havoc with the immediate and *post mortem* chances of happiness for these disobedient members of his flock, I suggest an action for damages—for defamation of character—should be immediately launched against the Vicar.

What have those opponents of the Socialist Sunday-schools' curriculum to shout about over this peculiar brand of "Faith, Hope, and Charity?"

Oh, those empty pews!

FRED WHITBY-EDWARDS.

THE RELIGIOUS "PERSECUTION" IN SOVIET RUSSIA.

SIR,—As a radical individualist of many years' standing, I can scarcely be supposed to hold an unqualified brief on behalf of the politico-religious working hypothesis popularly known (and ignorantly abused) as "Bolshevism"; moreover, it so happens that I reject and condemn, all along the line, the current notions of law and order and morality, and protest on every possible occasion against judicial murder and legalized scoundrelism. Nevertheless, in regard to the late bloody business of butchering and jailing prominent Catholics, Orthodox and Jewish ecclesiastics in Russia (to the no small scandal

of institutional, or professional, religionists) there are certain considerations which should by no means be lost sight of or slurred over.

(1). It is a recognized matter of historical fact that the organized "religions" and their adherents and officers are invariably and inevitably reactionary and retrograde (to use no harsher terms) in their political, social, and cultural bearings, and that they constitute a formidable barrier to all freedom and progress, whether moral, intellectual, or material. The reasons for this need not be restated, they are obvious to every candid thinker who has ever given a moment's consideration to the matter. Christianity is one thing, "Churchiarity" is quite another. And it is as absurd to ask, or to expect, Churchmen to avoid meddling with matters political, as it is preposterous for them too loudly to protest that on all occasions they keep themselves unspotted from the world. They are human—all too human—when all is said and done, and Man is a political animal. And when their particular brand of politics happens to clash with that which is supported and imposed by the whips and bayonets of the majority, or of the dominant party in the body politic, they must grin and bear the inevitable consequences. Granting the accepted "Christian and civilized" conception of law and order, there is even a kind of poetic justice about making these people partake of their own medicine. What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander.

(2). It is asserted that these ecclesiastics have consistently and furiously opposed the attempts of the Soviet authorities to requisition the treasures of the Church—treasures in the main ill-gotten—in order partially to relieve the starving populace and to succour the women and little children dying like flies from the effects of famine and blockade. Far from denying this assertion, these strange pastors positively glory in their apostasy from the commandment of the sublime Prophet who taught that the Deity dwelleth not in temples made with hands, but within the bodies, filthy, starved, stunted and deformed, of the common people. "He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away." What solemn mockery and humbug it all is! Let us reserve our pity and indignation for worthier objects.

(3). It is asserted (and admitted) that these clerics have systematically refused to obey the Soviet regulation forbidding that children under eighteen years of age should be ruined by having their heads crammed with the dogmatic affirmations of catechisms, which they cannot possibly understand, and which serve only to deform, brutalize and addle their tender brains, and to arrest the development of their intellect and of their individuality. Now, all who have sympathetically studied and grasped the modern and scientific ideas of education and who, refusing to be hypnotized by goose-cackle concerning fictitious "parental rights," prefer to stand fair and square for the rights of childhood, will whole-heartedly agree that the Bolsheviks have shown great practical wisdom in making the teaching of catechisms a penal offence. The educational objections to *Catechesis* have been repeatedly set forth, and may be found, very fairly stated, in Rousseau's *Emile*—certainly not an "irreligious" work! Nay, the suppression of the catechism, so far as children of tender years are concerned, is obviously of enormous benefit to the cause of religion itself. For, arrived at years of discretion, the adolescent, freed from the trammels of tradition and of super-imposed mystagogic ideas, will accept the tenets of this sect or that Church (if at all) because they chance to agree with his taste or temperament, and not from vain superstition, expediency, or ape-like imitation.

Meanwhile, one can only deplore, with Nietzsche, that there is not enough religion in the world to destroy the religions.

SAMUEL F. DARWIN-FOX

(Professor; late of Pembroke College, Oxford).

Berlin.

SIR,—May I trespass on your valuable space to express, as an English Freethinker, my entire agreement with the Soviet's official statement of its attitude towards religion. I find it a well-reasoned, just, and justifiable document—one that not only any Freethinker, but a tolerant, modern-minded religionist can subscribe to.

The hysterical outburst of our orthodox Press against Russian religious persecution is, of course, entirely political, as Mr. C. Trevelyan said in the House of Commons, "because our ruling class hates the Soviet Government."

It would be hard indeed to find a more glaring caricature of religion—in the correct meaning of the word—than a State Church. The Anglican Church is Christianity edited to suit the ruling class—the class that has wealth, power and prestige—to further their interests, and flatter their prejudices, to assist them in the exploits of Imperialism.

The only times when the Church sides with the "people" is when public opinion backs up the people—so the Church finds it good policy to support the winning side.

Trotsky's biting phrase that "religion is the opium of the people" is profoundly true. If anyone still doubts it let him attend one of our popular mission services and hear the unspeakable twaddle (and lies) poured forth by the preacher, and note the kind of people who listen and drink it all in. It is not their fault that they are ignorant and uneducated, but the fault of those who teach them "to order themselves lowly and reverently to all their betters" including their "pastors and masters."

It seems that better days are dawning, but both the "big-wigs" and the bigots (as the *Freethinker* knows) will fight us to the death.

C. M. RENTON.

CHRISTIAN BROTHERHOOD.

SIR,—In your issue of March 25, 1923, appears a comment on an attack made on four "Mormon" missionaries in Nottingham. It consists only of two sentences, one of which is as follows:—

Common Christians are always so anxious to display the super-culture of their creed.

It is difficult to believe that men and ministers who participate in this tirade against the "Mormons" are not in any sense, except name, Christians. Such bigotry is not Christianity; it is sectarianism, base, blind and beastly!

Knowing as I do that almost without exception the lives of these Elders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are clean, honourable and upright, that they are travelling all over the world trying to establish the universal brotherhood of man, and paying their own expenses to do it, I join with you in feelings of contempt for the *un-Christian* attitude of so-called Christians. There is only one other thing which is equally surprising, if not so reprehensible, and that is the gullibility of the English people in regard to anti-"Mormon" slander, none of which, however, is the result of true Christianity.

DAVID O. MCKAY.

Liverpool.

SOUL AND BODY.

Where wert thou, Soul, ere yet my body born
Became thy dwelling-place? Didst thou on earth,
Or in the clouds, await this body's birth?
Or by what chance upon that winter's morn
Didst thou this body find, a babe forlorn?
Didst thou in sorrow enter, or in mirth?
Or for a jest, perchance, to try its worth;
Thou tookest flesh, ne'er from it to be torn?
Nay, Soul, I will not mock thee; well I know
Thou wert not on the earth, nor in the sky;
For with my body's growth thou too didst grow;
But with that body's death wilt thou too die?
I know not, and thou canst not tell me, so
In doubt we'll go together—thou and I.

—Samuel Waddington.

Man has always been his own saviour. His instrument is science, his wisdom is self-help. His redemption begins when he turns his eyes from the delusive Heaven and plucks up his heart from the fear of Hell. Despair vanishes before the steady gaze of instructed courage. Hope springs as a flower in the path of endeavour.—*Freethinker*, January 11, 1891.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (160 Great Portland Street, W.1): 8, Annual Meeting. Discussion Circle meets every Thursday at Laurie Arms, Crawford Place, W.1, at 8.

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. C. E. Ratcliffe, "Morality and its Problems."

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

SOUTH PLACE (Moorgate Street, E.C.): 3.30, Mr. Chapman Cohen, "The Psychology of Faith."

OUTDOOR.

MR. G. WHITEHEAD.—Freethought Mission: Finsbury Park, 6.30. April 30, Westbury Avenue, Green Lanes (opposite Queen's Hotel), 7.30. May 1, Westbury Avenue, Green Lanes (opposite Queen's Hotel), 7.30. May 2, 3, 4, 5, Spouters' Corner, Wood Green, 7.30.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

LEEDS BRANCH N.S.S. (2 Central Road, Duncan Street, Shop Assistant's Rooms): 7, Mr. Burby, "Astronomy."

OUTDOOR.

R. ATKINSON.—Tyneside Lecturing Campaign: On Sandhills, Newcastle Quayside, at 11, "The Lives and Deaths of Unbelievers"; on Newcastle Town Moor, at 7, "Why We Reject Christianity" (weather unsuitable—in the Collingwood Hall, 12a Clayton Street). Monday, April 30, Bigg Market, at 7, "Religion and the Masses." Tuesday, May 1, Bigg Market, at 7, "The Coquetting of Christianity with Labour." Wednesday, May 2, Town Moor, at 7, "Humanity's Gain from Unbelief." Thursday, May 3, Marlborough Crescent (near West End Cattle Market) at 7, "The Deadly Influence of Christianity." Friday, May 4, Bigg Market, at 7, "Present Day Atheists and Their Work."

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