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Views and Opinions.

God's Advisory Committee.

When I was quite a boy I remember being puzzled by one aspect of Theistic belief. Usually people profess that it is the vastness of Nature with its complexities and curious adaptations that force them to believe in a designing and controlling mind. Perhaps I was peculiarly constituted but it was exactly these things that acted as a stumbling block. The world seemed to me far too great to be the product of mind as I understood it, and mind as I did not understand it was not mind at all. It might be anything. But I could not picture to myself an intelligence, no matter how great, planning and controlling the world as ordinary intelligence controlled things. And even as a boy I had the good fortune not to be led away by mere words, or to imagine that when I was in a difficulty I could get out of it by using a lot of words that merely disguised the problem without solving it. But being only a boy there were, of course, many things I did not understand and others of which I was not aware. Everything was not known "down in Judee." I was not aware that there were others co-operating with God Almighty in the management of the universe, that there existed an advisory committee which every now and again looked over things and pointed out to the Lord that his attention was required in this direction or no longer needed in that. Had I known that I might have ended some of my early difficulties and might now have been writing in a religious paper instead of in so wicked a journal as is this one.

* * *

Addressing the Deity.

When I grew older I learned that there were several things I had overlooked. In the first place I had ignored the fact that the prayers which people are in the habit of offering are all more or less in the nature of advice. When a man prays to God that he will send rain to a particular part of the world, or that he will give victory to one army over another, or that he will clear away a disease, they are really advising him how to act. Of course it is not given as advice, that would be rude. When a constitutional king is asked to sign a measure he is not told that he must do it, he is asked to graciously condescend to do something that he dare not refuse. When people go down on their

knees and advise God Almighty how to do certain things, or call his attention to some things that he has left undone, the proprieties must be observed. We must pretend to believe that we are not advising him, but only reassuring ourselves concerning his wisdom and goodness. That was one thing I realized as I grew older. Another was that this advice was sometimes tendered on what may be called a collective scale. There is for example a body called the National Assembly of the Church of England which for some time has been trying to make up its mind what advice to give the Lord in the course of the prayers which they offer him. This body has been busy with the ten commandments and other parts of the Bible, and it is now busy with the Prayer-book. It is generally agreed that certain parts of this are quite out of date, and that some of the expressions used are revolting to modern decency. These things have been duly brought to the notice of the Lord's Advisory Committee, otherwise known as the House of Clergy of the Church of England, and they have agreed to certain alterations in the Litany which will put matters more clearly before the Lord. We hope he will be grateful for the advice given.

* * *

Asking for a Miracle.

It is only due to the clergy to first note their unselfishness in the matter. They ask the Lord to bless "all who serve mankind by labour, commerce, or learning." When the clergy intone that in church it will not be open to anyone to charge them with thinking about themselves. Such a spirit of abnegation deserves notice. Another noteworthy alteration is the one put in place of: "That it may please Thee to endure the Lords of the Council and all the nobility with grace, wisdom, and understanding." Perhaps some of the clergy have had it pointed out that results hardly offer an unmistakable proof of the power of prayer. Or it may be that they now desire to bring other people up to the level reached by the "Lords of the Council and all the nobility." At any rate, the prayer has been altered to "the High Court of Parliament, and all the Kings Councillors." That raises rather a clear issue, and we shall be able to note by watching the conduct of these gentlemen any otherwise unexplainable increase in their grace, wisdom, and understanding. I should be the last to say that there is not room for work of this kind to be done, or to deny that to give some of the members of Parliament wisdom and understanding would almost convince one that the age of miracles had not passed. All that one has to say further on this point is that if the Lord had the power to give our legislators and rulers wisdom and understanding it would have been better had he given it them long ago. If he imagined he did it the belief does not say much for his judgment.

* * *

God and the British Empire.

The Church of England is a national Church. We do not mean by that that all the people in England believe in it. All we mean is that all the people in the country, whether they believe in it or not have to pay

for it. It is the Church all the nation pays for and which a small part of the nation use. It is a delightful notion which carries us back to the time when every little tribe had its own joss and expected that particular joss to help it against all outsiders. This primitive spirit is not at all dead, and as is to be expected it flourishes in such assemblies as the Church of England's Advisory Committee to God Almighty. We have always been told that there is a certain brotherhood of the sea among those who go down in big ships. A common calling and a common danger brings those sharing it into what one may call "spiritual" communion; but the Advisory Committee cannot agree with this, at any rate, if it exists it is none of its business. So it proposes to insert in the Litany a prayer for the "seamen of the British Empire." It does not propose to bother the Lord with advice as to what he shall do with regard to the seamen of other nations. The Church of England Assembly is not concerned with them. It is our seamen to whom he must pay special attention. There is also another prayer to be inserted for "the forces of the King by land, by sea, and air." Someone present objected that these prayers looked rather narrow. To this the Archdeacon of East Riding said that he thought first of our own seamen and those of other nations afterwards. In other words the Lord is advised by his committee that he must attend to the British Empire first. If he has any time left on his hands after he has done this he may then have a look at other people. But charity begins at home, and the proper home of the Lord is the British Empire. In case he should get confused—for Empires expand or contract from time to time, we suggest that the committee should insert a geographical outline in their prayers pointing out exactly where the Empire begins and ends. One might as well be thorough in one's prayers while one is about it.

* * *

Visualizing the Savage.

It is admittedly difficult to put oneself in the place of another person, and never having believed in any of the nonsense stories that go to the make-up of the Christian theology I find it rather difficult to picture the mentality of men and women speaking a civilized tongue, wearing civilized dress, having round them all the evidences of scientific development, and yet speaking of the world in terms that are reminiscent of the Stone Age. Is it possible that these people really believe—believe that is to the point of relying upon their belief in practice—that their petitions will actually have the effect of making the "King's forces" more effective, will protect our seamen when at sea, or will endow our legislators with a greater measure of wisdom than that which they have by Nature? If they do believe this, in what respect are they superior to the savage petitioning his joss for exactly the same things? It is useless saying that the distinction lies in the fact that the God of the savage is a myth, while the God of the Christian is a reality. Every God is a reality to those who believe in him, and every God is a myth to those who do not. And every believer brings forward exactly the same proofs of the activity of his God and of the benefits of his belief. The pity of it! The world is still trembling on the brink of a scarcely averted disaster, distress and distrust is everywhere, and in all directions the world calls for reorganization in terms of human foresight, human co-operation, and developed intelligence. In the midst of it all we have crowds of men discussing with the utmost solemnity the kind of prayers they shall offer to God, what they shall ask him for and how they shall ask for it. As though a God who was worth bothering about would require the petitions of the House of Clergy to get him to do what he ought to do. The root lesson of this discussion, with the space given it in the Press, is that

we still have the savage with us in spite of the veneer of civilization he is wearing. We have the savage enthroned in high places, given an official status, and the community is implored to bow down to him and to do him honour. And so long as we do this the world will remain awry, for we can hardly keep the savage exalted and behave in a completely rational, or even decently humane, manner in our social life.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Resurrection of Christ.

A NEW work on apologetics has just been published by Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton, Ltd., London, which the *British Weekly* has pronounced one of the very best of its kind. It is entitled *Nevertheless We Believe (A Scottish Minister's Belief)*, by the Rev. A. Boyd-Scott, M.C., B.D., minister of Lansdowne Church, Glasgow. The title is a grand admission, altogether the most suggestive and damaging ever adopted by a Christian apologist. It is in fact a mournful confession; that believing is a supremely difficult achievement; that the path of faith is crowded with seemingly immovable obstacles; in fact that the arguments against supernatural belief cannot easily be answered. Indeed, as the *British Weekly* reviewer puts it, the very title implies that the author has "a constant sense of the fact that faith would lose its character if it ceased to be difficult." There are difficulties all along the line, the presence of which he frankly recognizes, and which he honestly endeavours to meet. With the temper of the book no fault whatever can be found, and we cannot doubt the perfect sincerity of the author in his attempt to "construe the Faith in terms of modern thought for the guidance and establishment of his people, and especially of the inquisitive among young men and women." And yet, having carefully read the book and examined all its arguments, the conclusion to which we are irresistibly driven is this: *Nevertheless We Disbelieve*.

As one sample of the book's apologetic method, let us take Chapter VI, the subject of which is "The Resurrection of Jesus." The first curious admission here is that "the first witness we would call, and the best witness, is not Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John, but Paul." Mr. Scott's estimate of the evidential value of the Evangelists is surprisingly low. He says:—

Among the Gospel narratives there is confusion, not a destructive confusion by any means, but enough to lead such a one as the late Dr. Denny to say that, if we did not have grounds for believing the Resurrection outside the Gospel narratives, we should have difficulty in accepting it at all. "The evidences for the Resurrection," writes he (in *Jesus and the Gospel*, p. 110 f.) "have so often begun at the wrong end. People have started with the narratives in the Evangelists, and become immersed in the details of these.....It is no exaggeration to say that if we do not accept the Resurrection on grounds which lie outside this area, we shall not accept it on grounds presented here."

To members of the Bible League and to American Fundamentalists such teaching is rank, unforgivable blasphemy; but Mr. Scott's blasphemy enters into audacious details, thus:—

In the Four Gospel narratives there are two sources of perplexity. First of all there are contradictions of detail, as, for example, in the happenings at the tomb—who were there and in what order; how many angels were seen; also in the order in which the risen appearances of Jesus are given; also in the accounts of the belief and disbelief of the disciples—one Gospel saying they believed at a point at which another Gospel says they disbelieved. The second chief source of perplexity has to do with the bodily form in which

Jesus reappeared. In the four Gospels there are two strains of tradition as to his bodily form. The one makes him intangible: "Do not touch me," he said. The other makes him tangible. He is represented as saying, "Has a ghost flesh and blood like me?" He is further represented as eating part of a fish. All this is certainly confusing. I think a good and satisfactory explanation of it can be attained, or at least approached. Nevertheless it is just to say with Denny that if we had none but the Gospel narratives, we should not have sufficient ground for belief.

This denial of the historicity of the Gospel narratives of the Resurrection is a new note in Presbyterian preaching. Professor Denny was one of the greatest divines of modern times, and yet even he unblushingly averred that if the Gospel narratives had stood alone he could not have believed the Resurrection of Jesus! Now, Mr. Scott presents Paul to us as the very best witness for the Resurrection, whose evidence is recorded in 1 Corinthians xv. Mr. Scott calls this "a very wonderful and convincing evidence, not merely in what it says, but also in what it implies." What it says is that Paul had been preaching the Resurrection for many years and in many places; that Jesus had been seen by Peter, James, John, by a multitude of some five hundred, and last of all by Paul himself, to whom he spoke most gracious words. From this record of appearances Mr. Scott comes to the following conclusion, which to him seems inevitable, namely, "that Paul and Peter and the others really and firmly and unshakably believed that they had seen the risen Jesus." Then he adds: "The fact is, no fair-minded student of this document and its implications nowadays has any doubt whatever about this."

It is candidly granted by many modern divines that the New Testament accounts of the Resurrection are marked by numerous contradictions and a certain amount of a palpable overgrowth of legend; but among them are some who assert that "no criticism can assail the essential fact that something happened shortly after the death of our Lord, which sufficed to convince his disciples that he had arisen and was still alive." That statement is now positively incorrect, for it is well-known that not a few Modernist theologians disbelieve the dogma of a physical resurrection, and disbelieve it in the case of Jesus as well as in that of all mankind. Freethinkers are convinced that nothing happened after the alleged death of Jesus to justify the belief in his resurrection a few days later. Paul adduces no evidence of any kind except the floating rumour that certain people declared that they had seen him. It is true that there always are abnormal individuals who see marvellous visions or are subject to the most absurd hallucinations; but there is nothing to show that the belief in the resurrection of Jesus arose in that manner. In this case the wish was father to the thought. It had been a common doctrine that salvation was possible only through faith in and union with a resurrected saviour-god, such as Osiris, Adonis, Attis, Mithra, or another. Consequently the Gospel Jesus had no chance of a future as Redeemer without a resurrection, and so the old Pagan doctrine came to be applied to him. It is quite possible, even probable, that the founders of the Christian religion verily believed that Jesus was still alive and sat on the throne beside his Father; and we know from history that once a belief is passionately held and proclaimed, it spreads like wild-fire before the wind.

Mr. Scott is of opinion that the Gospel accounts of the appearances of the risen Jesus are not to be taken too seriously, many of them being materialistic exaggerations chiefly supplied by Luke. Then he concludes with the following paragraph which expresses the doctrine in terms which are an intolerable travesty of modern thought:—

In such an interpretation of the emergence of Christ

after death, we do not shake our belief in the rising of our Lord. We strengthen it. It was indeed a vision which the disciples had; but not a vision generated by their own imaginative minds. Not that, but a vision projected upon their souls, yea, upon their eyes and ears, from a world of which we can at present have no knowledge at all, except by such a vision, accommodated to our senses, this brain, these eyes, without which we cannot know any outward thing. But that vision, thus projected, had a projector. And the projector was the living Jesus.

This is not modern thought, but mediæval dogmatism, supported by not a single scrap of evidence. It is merely a mystical theory not even on speaking terms with practical life.

J. T. LLOYD.

Robert the Devil.

I claim no place in the world of letters; I am, and will be alone.

—Landor.

The crime of inquiry is one which religion never has forgiven.

—Shelley.

ROBERT BUCHANAN always bulked largely upon the literary horizon of his own generation. He was a most versatile man, a literary steam-roller. In addition to being a poet, he was an accomplished playwright, a successful novelist, and a slashing critic. Even during the most strenuous part of his life, he never forgot his high aims, and he always put good work into what he did. Once, perhaps, in one of his articles, he uttered something like a cry of despair, and quoted Alfred De Musset's biting line: "The dead poet whom the man survives." This line, pregnant with meaning, and sad in the extreme, would apply to so many writers who have started on their careers full of enthusiasms, but who have outlived their early ideals. Buchanan, notwithstanding his strenuous career, was always full of enthusiasm, and he retained his youthfulness to the last.

In Browning's expressive phrase, Robert Buchanan was "ever a fighter." Cradled in poverty, he fought his way at the pen's point to a very enviable position in the world. At the zenith of his career he had five companies travelling with his plays, his novels were in every library, and he was the subject of an eulogium at the Royal Academy Banquet at the hands of Lecky, the famous historian. Much of Buchanan's tenacity he owed to his father, who was a Chartist and a militant Freethinker in those dark days when it was really dangerous to hold advanced views on politics and religion.

Buchanan's privations were real. Once, while waiting in a publisher's office, he fainted from want of food. Nor was it an isolated instance. David Christie Murray has told us that in those days, when pressmen had not ceased to be pariahs, in a group of well-known journalists, himself included, each admitted having had, at one time or the other, to sleep in the open air, or at the "Hotel of the Beautiful Star," as he wittily expressed it. Henry Murray, his brother, also recounts that at one time he was compelled to share a room with another man, and, when money was short, they had only one suit of clothes between them. Since the other man was the bigger, and that suit was his, it was a case of David in Saul's armour.

Buchanan had a good conceit of himself. One publisher said: "I can't stand that young fellow. He talked to me as if he were Almighty God, or Lord Byron." Buchanan had the defect of his qualities, but he won through, unaided. A literary Ishmael, every man's hand was against him. This position has its advantages. Buchanan kept his sword sharp, and he always struck hard. His appearance in the literary arena always meant hard fighting. When, for instance, he attacked the Christian superstition it was

in no half-hearted fashion. He threw himself against the personality of the Nazarene, and penned in *The Wandering Jew* the most tremendous indictment of Christ in English literature. In the noisy dialectical encounter which followed, Buchanan held his own bravely, and his opponents left the arena wounded and hurriedly.

Always a humanitarian, Buchanan's objections to the Christian superstition were as much ethical as intellectual. Indeed, he often got some very startling effects in his writings by this union of intellect and emotion. Listen to these biting lines entitled, "*God in Piccadilly*,":—

Poisonous paint on us, under the gas
Smiling like spectres, we gather bereaven,
Leprosy's taint on us, ghost-like we pass,
Watched by the eyes of yon pitiless heaven!
Let the stars stare at us! God, too, may glare at us
Out of the void where He hideth so well—
Sisters of midnight, He damned us in making us,
Cast us like carrion to men, then forsaking us,
Smiles from His throne on these markets of Hell.

Equally startling ideas are elaborated in his striking sonnet, "*Our Father in Heaven*":—

Oh! Thou art pitiless! They call Thee Light,
Law, Justice, Love, but Thon art pitiless;
What thing of earth is precious in Thy sight
But weary waiting on and soul's distress?
When dost Thou come with glorious hands to bless
The good man that dies cold for lack of Thee?
Where bringest Thou garlands for our happiness?
Whom dost Thou send but Death to set us free?
Blood runs like wine—foul spirits sit and rule—
The weak are crushed in every street and lane—
He who is generous becomes the fool
Of all the world, and gives his life in vain.
Were Thou as good as Thou art beautiful
Thou could'st not bear to look upon such pain.

This mocking attitude annoyed the Christians exceedingly, and they regarded Buchanan as being a tool of Satan. They saw quite clearly that the underlying ethical appeal in his works was a more dangerous weapon than if he had written with the calm, impartial manner of Herbert Spencer. Here is another example:—

Oh, what have sickly children done to share
Thy cup of sorrows? Yet their dull, sad pain
Makes the earth awful; on the tomb's dark stair
Moan idiots, with no glimmer in the brain;
No shrill priest with his hangman's cord can beat
Thy mercy into these—ah nay, ah nay!
The angels Thou hast sent to haunt the street
Are hunger and distortion and decay.
Lord that mad'st man, and sendest him foes so fleet.
Who shall judge Thee upon Thy judgment day?

Buchanan was as outspoken in his later works as in his earlier ones. The judgment of Christ in *The Wandering Jew* is as fiery and impassioned as Swinburne's corrosive *Lines Before a Crucifix*:—

With all the woes of earth upon thy head
Uplift thy cross, and go! Thy doom is said.

Buchanan always rated his poems more highly than any of his other work. Certainly his *City of Dream* is a beautiful piece of work, and expresses his joy of life, his passion for Nature, in most melodious language. Nothing came amiss to him. *The Wandering Jew* is pure propaganda, but it is also magnificent and sonorous rhetoric. Buchanan blew all things to melody through the golden trumpet of his genius.

This brave-hearted Pagan was buried in the loveliest month in the year, while the fragrance of the June roses was in the air. The lilac was still lingering and waving its white and purple plumes, the laburnam dropping its golden chains, the may perfuming the ways, and the birds singing in the tree-tops. The poet lies there always, within sound of the sea he loved so well. As the summer returns our thoughts go to the grave of one of the most romantic and striking personalities of our time.

MIMNERMUS.

Immortality.

III.

(Continued from page 422.)

II.—THE PHILOSOPHICAL ARGUMENTS.

1.—*Some Contentions Relating to the Existence and Nature of the Soul.* It is alleged that self is soul, and soul is deathless. According to some teachers, parents propagate the souls as well as the bodies of their offspring, but others say that God creates a soul for every human body. The soul is described as immaterial, and, since what is immaterial is indivisible, and therefore incorruptible, it is argued by some that the soul is naturally immortal; but others reply that what is incorruptible may still be destructible, and that God, who created the soul, has the power to annihilate it. In proof of the existence of the soul it is urged that as different effects must have different causes, therefore thoughts and feelings being unlike the products of the liver and similar organs, are evidently due to another sort of principle; and that as the nature of the effect shows the nature of the cause, therefore a material cause is indicated by a material effect such as gall; and an immaterial cause by an immaterial effect such as pain. Everyone, however, who has kept a cat or a dog, everyone who has watched the monkeys at the Zoological Gardens, knows that these creatures behave in a manner which proves their possession of mental faculties. According to naturalists, a rudimentary trace of these powers is discoverable even in the lowest forms of animal life, and they become more and more apparent as the stages rise. If, then, like effects have like causes, man and beast owe their intelligence to a common source, and if this be immaterial, and therefore incorruptible in the case of man, it is also immaterial and therefore incorruptible in the case of beasts. The Cartesians perceived the full force of this argument, and to avoid it they pretended that the lower creation acts automatically, the cock feeling no rage in the pit, and the hen no grief at the loss of her brood, however much the conduct of the two may seem to prove the opposite. The alternative evasion is to suppose that the souls of the other animals will be destroyed. But the truth is that the similarity existing between man and beast, with respect to their experience of the psychic phenomena, tends to prove that if these are referable to a psychic principle, this is nothing more than a general law, operating like the law of gravitation over a given class of subjects. If so, then the psychic differences forming our inward identity are due, not to everyone of us having a particular psychic principle, but to the special conditions under which the general psychic principle operates in individual cases; just as the difference in the descent of bodies is due, not to their having particular causes of gravitation, but to the general cause thereof operating under diverse circumstances.

This theory of individuation is strikingly attested by the analysis of self-consciousness. For the self we perceive is made up of our present sensations, especially of visual ones relating to the body, whilst the closest introspection never makes us conscious of anything save the particular acts and processes of our mental experience. These, however, by their very nature are transitory and follow one another like the drops of a flowing river. Hence the psychical self resembles the physical self in that both of them are momentary unities composed of elements assembled under fixed laws.

The body does not exist independently of its members, for these constitute it, and therefore without them it is a nonentity. The same applies to the soul, for this has no existence apart from that of the psychic

phenomena constituting it; and even as the body is a transient result of a universal power working physically, so also is the soul the transient result of a universal power working psychically, whilst there is every reason to believe that one and the same power works in both cases. This is the only view tenable under the dualistic system. However, on behalf of Materialism it should be noted "that although it is true that *like* produces (causes) *like*, it is also true that *like* produces *unlike*; thus fire produces *pain* when applied to our bodies, *explosion* when applied to gunpowder, *charcoal* when applied to wood;"² and as is well known, all Theists who are not Idealists affirm that an immaterial Deity has produced a material universe. Moreover, it is just as difficult to see how mind can influence matter, as how matter can influence mind; yet, nevertheless, every time a man brushes a fly from his forehead, a mental process with a corresponding material process duly transpires; so that either both processes have their source in matter, or the mental gives rise to the material; unless indeed we accept the hocus pocus of a pair of clocks, the one to strike the hour and the other to point it. Nor is this all for it is a thing of common observation that our mental vigour is not so great in bad as in good health; that it is affected beneficially or otherwise by certain drugs; and that some kinds of sickness ruin it completely. Again, the outward and the inward man, after a time, never very long, begin to perish visibly even before death. The frame shrivels and drops, the teeth fall out, the steps totter, the senses become feeble, the memory fails, the reason loses grasp, and thus the poor relation of the angels is found to be in his totality of mind and body, just as much the subject of disintegration and decay as is the rotting tree or the crumbling stone. The circumstance, however, that the mind suffers when the body suffers, and declines when the body declines, points clearly to the dependence of the mind upon the body for its existence. The only escape from this conclusion is to agree with the Idealists in regarding body as a figment of mind. According to their theory, all our experience is experience of mental states. The so-called sensible qualities are found upon analysis to be only sensations; and therefore the universe which they are said to compose is nothing more than a mental reality. Now, although a *thing* may exist unperceived, an *object* unless perceived cannot exist, because it is the correlative of a subject or thinking substance. Thus, whilst the world of the Materialist is formed of matter ruled by force, the world of the Idealist is formed of mental phenomena produced by psychic energy. For the Materialist, Nature results from the interaction of two eternal principles; whilst for the Idealist, it is the incessant product of one eternal principle. The psychic energy admitted by the Idealist may, for want of a better term, be called *soul* or *spirit*. But this entity being infinite is necessarily impersonal, and therefore although it appears under the form of individuality, the individuals in whom it is manifested are nothing else than its transient modifications, unstable as the single waves of a shoreless sea.

2.—*Arguments Derived from the Supposed Claims of Morality.* The naive belief that the mysteries of our present existence will surely be compensated by the joys of a future life, has its counterpart in the philosophical plea that we are under a moral system the perfection of which is reserved for another world; and hence that we must somehow or other exist after death to meet the ends of the economy in question. For the above purpose, the soul, according to those who acknowledge it, will survive death, and, as most of them assert, be reunited to the body; whilst those who admit only the body say that it will be restored

after corruption and raised again to life. This latter view is attributed to Jesus in a passage of the Fourth Gospel where, speaking of the Son of Man, he declares:—

The hour cometh in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done ill, unto the resurrection of judgment (v, 28-29).

The general argument may be thus presented. God who is a moral being infinitely perfect and infinitely powerful, has created men as moral beings to live under his government, whence it follows that human conduct must receive the reward or the punishment due to it; but since no such dispensation of justice transpires in this world, it is evidently set apart for a world to come; and therefore man will have to exist after death. It is only from experience, however, that we can decide whether God is or is not a moral being; and whether man is or is not under a moral economy. In like manner, if God be a moral governor, we cannot judge of his government otherwise than from the part of it which comes under our perception. Now, it will be observed that although both the present and the future worlds are said to be under the moral rule of God, yet it is from the anomalies of this rule in the case of the present world that the existence of a future world is concluded. This procedure is directly opposed to our common way of reasoning. For, if two countries be subject to one and the same ruler, those who have been wronged in either with impunity will have little thought of going to the other in search of compensation. But what hope does the present offer for the future as respects the justice of the divine government? How can it be supposed that the Great Non-interventionist who has calmly witnessed so many scenes of oppression, so many rivers of blood, so many tears of widows and orphans, will finally bring order into the turmoil occasioned by his previous disregard? Moreover, whilst the certainty of swift and just punishment is the best means of deterring people from crime, anarchy in the form of lax or capricious administration of penal law is the surest encouragement of evil conduct. This principle applies to every species of authority. Thus a judge who condemned the guilty only now and then, and this under the most unintelligible circumstances would soon fill his district with offenders; and if a schoolmaster were to let his scholars run wild during the first half of their schooling, he would find it hard work to reform them in the second period; and, if he were to punish them for their misdeeds and vices due to his former bad discipline, he must be condemned as very harsh and unjust. Supposing, however, that instead of being a judge or a schoolmaster, the person at fault were a father, his case would certainly be much worse. Imagine that, although wise, rich and mighty, he left his numerous offspring to themselves to get their knowledge as best they could, and arrange their affairs by kicks and cuffs; should we not say that he had failed terribly and culpably in the discharge of his paternal obligations, and that having thus neglected the education of his children, he had no right whatsoever to make them accountable for their conduct? This, however, is exactly the case between God and man as concerns moral government. For man had to grope for his knowledge and to fight for advantages ever since he came into existence, the result being the confusion that universally prevails. Hence to hold him responsible for his errors would be absurd, and to punish him for them, immoral. He ought to have been given a wiser head and a kinder heart. He would then have found better ways of improving his condition than injustice and war. Thus the history of man from his first appearance right up to this very

² A Biographical Dictionary of Philosophy, by G. H. Lewis.

hour flatly contradicts the belief that he possesses the faculties necessary for the member of a moral economy designed by God, and that he is under the superintendence which must exist in such an economy. This, of course, has no bearing upon the existence of morality, either as an artificial conventional system, or as the necessary outcome of inherent tendencies. Providence has never taught man how to build himself a shelter from the inclemency of the seasons; but this fact does not lessen the value of houses, or imply that a cottage is the same as a palace. If morality, like architecture, has evolved out of a series of experiments made under various circumstances, it certainly affords no indication of a future life; whilst if due to connate impulses it is a natural principle, and therefore restricted to the realm of Nature. On the latter theory, moral law, like physical law, is an impersonal energy, which, as such, involves no system of rewards and punishments apart from the proper effect of the conduct pursued. Hence it does not work out the perfection of moral beings, either here or hereafter, but simply develops their characters in accordance with their actions, so that right-doing brings moral gain, and wrong-doing moral loss. But this gain or loss is just as indifferent to the law under which it is effected as the safety or the ruin of an Alpine village is to the law of gravitation which brings down the avalanche with equal certainty, no matter whether the village be in the way or out of it.

C. CLAYTON DOVE.

(To be Concluded.)

Writers and Readers.

THE RETURN TO THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY AND THE PERMANENCE OF VOLTAIRE.

Some while ago a young friend of mine, a novelist of distinction, sent me an ambitious essay he had written on a difficult subject—"Literature and Progress." I saw at once that his acquaintance with literature was fairly extensive, if not very profound; but his notion of progress I found, as I had expected, naively indefinite. He began bravely by positing a sort of Spencerian evolution of literature from the simple to the complex, a gradual and prolonged movement towards perfection, each age adding something that tended to bring the æsthetic organism nearer to the ideally desired end. Before, however, my friend had gone very far he had to admit that although a progressive growth may be observable in sporadic and relatively short periods for certain types of literature, for the drama from Marlowe to Webster, or the novel from Defoe to Scott, there is really no evidence of an unbroken continuity of movement towards a clearly defined goal throughout the whole of our literature. What we see is not so much progress as change. The Romantic movement which dominates the creative literature of the early nineteenth century did not build firmly on the century that went before it, on the contrary it scornfully rejected "the age of enlightenment," and turned back to the more spacious times of Elizabeth and James. In the same way we despise and reject what we are pleased to call the mid-Victorian period, and find pleasure and inspiration in some alien or exotic literature, or return with relief, perhaps, to the more equally balanced art, to the philosophic rectitude and common-sense of the admirable eighteenth century. Our interest in this period, it may be objected, is not of yesterday. Morley's studies of the big figures of eighteenth century France were written close on fifty years ago, and it was in 1881 that Leslie Stephen completed his survey of English thought in that period. These and other writers did something to awaken a sympathetic interest in the great age of reason; but unfortunately they were only half-hearted Freethinkers who had never got completely outside their religious environment, whether Comtist or Anglican.

Those who stood most in need of enlightenment, the leisured and cultured readers, were contented to accept

Morley's estimates of Voltaire, Diderot, and others. They were not, I imagine, prompted to read and digest for themselves. With the proletarian Freethinker it was different. He did not need the dubious assistance of Morley and Stephen. He had been brought up on Voltaire. His daily reading had been *The Philosophical Dictionary*, the *Miscellanies*, and the incomparably witty *Romances*. He had assimilated the Atheistic materialism of Diderot and La Mettrie, and recognized both the weakness and strength of Holbach's *System of Nature*. He had read and pondered over the deistic Freethinkers from Toland to Thomas Paine, not as a task but an intellectual pleasure. It is not, I fancy, too much to claim that popular Freethought never rejected the "age of reason." Indeed it was so broadminded that it embraced with equal fervour the clairvoyant scepticism of *Candide* and the platonic idealism of Shelley's *Hellas*.

However that may be, there is plenty of evidence to show that, for the general reader, the eighteenth century had little, or practically no existence. Even an emancipated thinker like Rémy de Gourmont accepted the great Voltaire rather as a name than a living force. It was not until the war came along that he saw in the writer of *Candide*, *Zadig*, *Micromegas*, a creator of new intellectual and moral values. It was found also that his work in another field had seminal value. The historian of religions and culture-history accepted the lead given by Voltaire in his *Essai sur les Mœurs*, which has been justly described as the clearest and most logical history of civilization. We might, perhaps, have expected the French reader to return with pleasure to the good sense, the irony, wit and broad humanism of Voltaire, which were part of the French tradition, but we also find that Voltaire is getting back from the modern English reader something of the same interest which he certainly aroused in the eighteenth century reader. We have had four or five editions of *Candide*, and now we are to have the bulk of the philosophic romances in two volumes. The first volume is just published by Routledge in their "Broadway Translations" series at 7s. 6d. net. It contains *Zadig*, *Micromegas*, the *Simple Soul (L'Ingénu)*, and the *Princess of Babylon*. The version is by Mr. H. I. Woolf, who has done his work with a fair amount of care and intelligence. We have noticed a few awkward expressions. Voltaire would not, I am sure, talk about answering in the negative, nor, if he were writing English, would he have spoken of mathematicians as "people of unending public utility" instead of "a set of people always useful to the public." Nor would he have talked of "enjoying a miserable" state of existence. In the third chapter of *The Simple Soul* he has this sentence:—

The good dame Kerkabon trembled lest her nephew... might not perform the operation very clumsily.

But on the whole the version is quite readable. The introduction is not quite as careful a piece of criticism as one could have wished. Whatever Mr. Woolf may say, Voltaire did care for the immense publicity he enjoyed. Much of his work was, no doubt, published anonymously, but the secret was not intended to be kept—Voltaire himself took good care that everyone knew it. Mr. Woolf has a note on Voltaire's religion and is seemingly anxious to assure the good reader that the author of *Candide* was a believer in some sort of divine ruler. "There is no question," he says, "but that Voltaire was one of the most deeply religious men who have ever lived. His whole life was spent in trying to help the suffering, his vast writings almost all designed to remove the cause of suffering, prove it abundantly." I cannot imagine anything further from the truth. Voltaire was not religious; there is no trace of mysticism in his nature; his attitude is purely Secular, and it is precisely this Secularism that made him so intense a lover of justice, toleration, and humanitarianism.

There is another volume of Voltaire's *Romances* published by Geo. Bell and Co., at 2s. net, a re-issue of a volume in the famous Bohn series. It contains all the more important tales, and the translation by Mr. Bruce Boswell is far and away the best we have.

GEORGE UNDERWOOD.

Acid Drops.

The United Council for Sunday Protection issues a leaflet against Sunday games depicting 40,000 football enthusiasts cheering a game of football on a Saturday, and asks whether we want our Sunday to be like that. Well, why not? That is the only way to reply to a silly question of that kind. To argue that Sunday will not be made the occasion of games is to deepen the feeling that these religious bigots have about their taboo day. If games are allowed on Sunday young men and women will no more play them with a tin-tabernacle sort of a face on a Sunday than they will on any other day. Nor is there any reason why they should. If there is rowdyism displayed by the onlookers during a game it is just as reprehensible on Saturday as it is on Sunday. If the enjoyment takes the shape of enthusiasm and applause, that is as healthy on Sunday as it is on any day in the week. What we have to kill is the idea of a "sacred" day. Any day may be put to a good or a bad use, but the belief in "sacred" days is just a survival from the Stone Age or thereabouts.

When that is said, it only remains to add that the thousands yelling themselves hoarse at a football match are really spending their day in a much cleaner and healthier manner than if they spent it in the traditional way of eating, drinking, and sleeping, or in the case of the younger ones, hanging about the streets picking up bad habits and bad companions. If anyone cares to look back to the social records of a century ago, when the Christian Sunday existed with all its original demoralizing power, they will see its effect on the lives of the people. And then they need only bear in mind that the improvement in morals and in manners have gone on side by side with the breaking down of the taboo on Sunday and the opening up of avenues of healthy and educative enjoyment. After all, the question of the right use of Sunday is not fundamentally a religious question—it is a social one. It is whether the people shall be permitted to spend one-seventh of their lives in their own way when it is a perfectly rational and healthy one, or whether we are to return to the narrow and demoralizing beliefs and practices of Puritanism?

The *Leeds Mercury* solemnly remarks that belief in evil spirits still survives in many parts of South Eastern Europe. That is very ingenuous, considering the vogue of the same belief in this country. If the *Leeds Mercury* will investigate it will find that the people of this country still profess belief in a book which is full from beginning to end with that teaching, and that this book is placed in the schools by the Government, and with the complete approval of the *Leeds Mercury* itself. It will also find that the Roman and the Episcopalian Church give special powers to their ministers to exorcise these same evil spirits, and that there are thousands of people, including men such as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Sir Oliver Lodge who sit down to commune with spirits both good and bad. Superstition is not confined to South Eastern Europe. Our own society is honeycombed with it. Only we have reached the stage of turning up our noses at any superstition that may differ in form from our own.

The *Leeds Mercury* very strongly reminds us of an experience of a medical man who visited a northern lunatic asylum. He was chatting with one of the inmates who, as is often the case, was quite rational on most subjects. Observing a patient standing all alone in the corner of the building he enquired what he stood like that for. "Why," said the patient, "he has a most peculiar delusion. He actually believes that he is Jesus Christ, which is absurd, because I am he." There are any number of very pious people in this country in that condition.

"The worst curse of this country," says Colonel Wedgewood, M.P., "is snobbery, which means being afraid of what somebody else will think of you." We are

not quite sure the definition is accurate, but it will pass for the moment. It is certainly true that it is one of the besetting sins of people, and as it comes out most strongly in connection with religious beliefs than with anything else, we earnestly commend the statement to Colonel Wedgewood's fellow members in the Parliamentary Labour Party—not forgetting its chairman and leader. If all of these spoke out instead of playing to the chapel there would be some surprises.

But one may be afraid of what other people may think of one for reasons that cannot be called snobbish. It may arise from sheer timidity of character, to mention only one cause. The essential feature of snobbery seems to us to consist in the desire to be taken for what one is not, and in social life that usually means a desire to be taken as belonging to a class above or different from one's own. Thus the poor man who goes about aping the airs of a rich one is a snob. The working man who desires to give his neighbours the impression that he is "something in the City" is a snob. The ordinary man who passes himself abroad as a man of title is a snob. Invariably that feature accompanies genuine snobbishness. Of course it involves a valuation of the opinion of other people, but that is really a manifestation of the social life and by no means a bad thing in itself.

Following the matter a little further it is plain that in this country a king cannot be a snob. He may be a fool, or a rogue, or a scoundrel, but he cannot be a snob. He cannot pretend to belong to a higher class than the one to which he belongs. In a country where caste is absolutely rigid, snobbishness cannot exist either. Each man is what he is, and there can be no alteration. In England there was little or no snobbishness during the mediæval period. This was not because people did not care for one another's opinion, they were more sensitive about it than we are. But classes could not glide one into another. Snobbishness can only exist in societies where there is no sharp line between the classes, and where a man born in one class may get into another one. That is the reason why snobbishness began to be a feature of European life with the breakdown of mediævalism and class barriers.

If what we have said is correct it follows that snobbery is a product of democracy, or a breaking down of barriers that definitely separate people into classes or castes. It is the price we pay for democracy, and bad as snobbery is, we think it is worth the price we pay for it. But the ultimate choice is between a society which allows classes to merge one into the other, and so permits snobbery, and one which is definitely divided into set castes and classes.

So it will clearly not do to talk as though snobbery is a peculiar feature of middle class life. It is not. It is as common with the working man as it is with others. The working man who is ashamed to be taken for what he is is as much a snob as the City clerk who poses as a financier, or the man with a moderate income who will give himself the air of a millionaire. And the cure of snobbishness is to be found in the cultivation of a greater sense of intellectual independence. If Colonel Wedgewood would like to see snobbishness diminished—and we fancy he would—we suggest that he pays attention to this work. Among his fellow members of Parliament he will find plenty of material for experiment. For unless it be with the clergy, there is less genuine mental independence among members of Parliament than with any other class engaged in public life.

In Dr. Glover's new book, *Progress in Religion to the Christian Era*, there is a passage which says much more than the average reader will be likely to note. The author says:—

It is in some ways a great deal harder to follow the course of the story of Hebrew religion than of Greek because the history has been confused. The Greeks theorized about their ancient history, but they never deliberately rewrote it.....But in Hebrew literature the hand

of the reviser is everywhere; nothing escapes him by accident.

If we read "never deliberately rewrote it" as "never deliberately lied about it," we shall be getting a much plainer statement of the truth. And yet, unless Dr. Glover means that, his statement is a mere meaningless jumble of words.

To understand the position thoroughly one must bear in mind that the Greeks had no "sacred" book on which their religion was built. They had stories about the Gods, stories that were more or less protected by custom, and in a sense by law, but they had no book written by the gods, and to alter which was a crime. A greater disaster than the possession of a "sacred" book no people could have. It prevents progress, puts a bar to freedom, and drives its defenders to lying, trickery, and general dishonesty. The truth of this is seen in the history of the Bible with both Jews and Christians. To suit the positions of its champions the text has been "revised" from time to time, passages omitted or inserted, and fresh meanings read into it as circumstances made it desirable. The Bible has in this way upheld and condemned slavery, witchcraft, demonism and anti-demonism, polygamy and monogamy, heresy hunting and toleration, eternal damnation and salvation for all, just as occasion made one or the other desirable. The body of men whose whole position in the social structure depended upon the maintenance of the belief in the sacred character have taken care of this.

The outcome of all this was the growth in the Christian Church of a spirit which paid less regard to truth than was paid anywhere else, and this extended to other literature besides the Bible. To support its claims the Church has falsified literature in all directions. The famous passages in Josephus and Tacitus are examples of this. But worse still has been the influence of the traditions of the Church on writers who have been dealing with the history of the Christian era. To suppress the truth about the Christian record, while lying about men and movements that opposed Christianity or even the form of Christianity in power, became a religious duty. It meant a general lowering of the mental character of those engaged in the teaching of religion, with its reflex action on the rest of the community. So that finally we may rewrite the concluding words of the passage from Dr. Glover in some form such as this: "Other peoples theorized about their early history, but in Christian history the work of the professional falsifier is everywhere. The truth is never permitted to emerge when it will injure the faith; a lie is never untold when it will advance its credit." We do not think that any impartial student of the history of Christianity will seriously challenge the truth of this summary.

Since February, when a fire took place at St. Jude's Church, Herne Hill, nine fires have taken place in South London churches. Providence may be suffering from old-age, but Satan appears to be still quite youthful and vigorous.

The Anglican Church is not only the wealthiest church in the world, but, being the Government religion, it enjoys unusual facilities. For instance, under the Welsh Church Act a number of commissioners were appointed, and two of the number receive salaries not exceeding £1,500 and £1,000 respectively. Yet religion is popularly supposed to be "without money and without price."

The Dean of Windsor, speaking at a garden party at Windsor Castle, said he had collected £40,000 for the St. George's Chapel repair fund. Yet the Bishop of London will have it that the clergy are starving. Do they care more for stone than for flesh and blood?

With a great parade of learning, a writer in a daily paper declares that human faces do not tell the vocation

of their owners. He must have overlooked the faces of the clergy. From the horse-shoe mouth of the curate to the slight droop of the higher ecclesiastics they are easily recognisable.

As a proof that Eastern civilizations are inferior to Western ones, a writer in the *Sunday Chronicle* asks with reference to India, "What are you to think of a community in which.....one half daren't kill a cow, and the other half won't eat pig?" We think it is silly, about as silly as another community where large sections of the population consider themselves in danger of eternal damnation if they eat either pig or cow on Friday, and half believe that by muttering some words over some flour and wine it is changed into the blood and flesh of a Jewish peasant who is believed to have died nearly two thousand years ago. In a competition for absurdity the East will have to work very hard to beat the Christian communities of the West.

Britain has narrowly escaped another disaster. The National Assembly of the Church of England has been discussing the Athanasian Creed with its delightful warning: "Which faith, except a man keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly." There was a debate as to whether these words should be retained or not. Some thought that a man should be permitted to "defile" that delightful fantasy without being damned everlastingly. But in the end the proposal for deletion was defeated by 122 votes to 83. So that for the future whoever does not keep the Athanasian Creed whole and undefiled will go straight to everlasting hell—by a majority of 39. We suggest that a label be placed on their corpses, "Damned by the gallant 122." All the same one wonders what kind of intelligence it is that can seriously take that farrago of absurdities as being sufficiently important to send a man to hell.

Games on the Sabbath.

You want games on the Sabbath?—
Good God!—what next?
Some folk would violate every text!

Now, there's six days for labour,
And one set apart
To rest and praise God deep down in your heart.

Oh!—there's six days for Mammon—
Only one for the Master,
So if you play then, why, you'll go to hell faster!

Just hallow the Sabbath
By going to church,
Or the good Lord 'll leave thee in the lurch.

Oh, why seek amusement?
So unspiritual—
So lacking in ceremony and ritual!

The Lord's Passion Play's best—
Come, fall into line—
March to the performance, celestial, divine!

Think, think of the sin
Of your frivolous Sunday—
Your shocks to the morals of poor Mrs. Grundy!

What?—Games on the Sabbath!—
Let's write to the Council;
Let's up and assert the sabbataire will!

Games on the Sabbath!—
Good God!—what next?
The clergy do seem to be growing quite vexed!
If the wrath of the Lord is full vest in the Parson—
Good God!—what next?

C. B. WARWICK.

The National Secular Society.

THE Funds of the National Secular Society are now legally controlled by Trust Deed, and those who wish to benefit the Society by gift or bequest may do so with complete confidence that any money so received will be properly administered and expended.

The following form of bequest is sufficient for anyone who desires to benefit the Society by will:—

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.

Any information concerning the Trust Deed and its administration may be had on application.

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.

F. ROBINSON.—Articles received with thanks. Shall appear as soon as possible.

H. EMERSON.—There is always room for help in a cause such as ours. We will deal with the matter later in the year.

R. YOUNG.—We do our best, but we have only one pair of hands, and as we have to depend upon ourselves for the work, we are apt to get a little behindhand at times.

A. L. SUMMERS.—Article received. Hope to publish in the course of two or three weeks. Thanks.

W. ROGERS.—Pleased to hear of the work you are doing. Hope it will bear good fruit.

C. HARPUR.—Unfortunately for your argument the story of Jack the Giant Killer is much older than the period you name and is of wide geographical range. Regret your letter too lengthy for insertion.

A. BOTT.—"Atheist" stands for one who has reached a definite position with regard to the idea of God, "Freethinker" for one who claims to exercise his mind on all problems without being influenced by external and non-essential forces. We know of no better or more appropriate title for this journal than the one it bears.

H. ELLIOT.—It is good to keep pegging away at these people. It lets them know at any rate that Christians do not quite monopolize the surface of the earth.

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 at the following rates (Home and Abroad):—
One year 15s.; half year, 7. 6d.; three months, 3s. 9d.

Sugar Plums.

As we are preparing this issue of the *Freethinker* for the press the London County Council will be settling the question of whether the Sunday games in the parks shall continue or be stopped. We fancy they will continue. The petitions for their continuance have been far more numerous than those asking for them to be stopped, and the members of the Council are not likely to ignore the hint. We may, indeed, take it for granted that members have for the most part no personal objection to the games, and now that the way is made clear by an expression of public opinion they are likely to do the right thing. We congratulate all concerned on the expected result, and incidentally, we may remark that we congratulate ourselves. We have put a good deal of unadvertised work into this question and have had more to do with procuring this result than many would think. A great deal of the work done by the *Freethinker* and the National Secular Society is done quietly and without blowing of trumpets.

But it would be a mistake to consider the fight over. The Sabbatarians will not cease plotting to close this health giving element to the people in order to drive them into church or chapel, and the only genuine protection against this is to go on making Freethinkers. We should never have got so far as we have in the work of humanizing Sunday if the influence of the Christian Church had not been broken, and that would never have been done but for the persistent work of militant Freethinkers.

Several of the clergy have written to the papers protesting that they have no objection to healthy Sunday games. We are pleased to see the confession, but it comes rather late. This should have come when Puritanism was enforcing its unhealthy and immoral Sabbath upon the people. But they held to the miserable Sunday so long as was possible, and now that a happier one is in sight and can no longer be completely denied, their endorsement smacks more of opportunism than it does of conviction.

We were pleased to see in the *Daily Herald* a very pleasant note from one who signs himself "D. L." on the late Mr. F. W. Walsh. From a letter sent to the writer of the article we quote the following:—

And then we have this ghastly war going on day after day. The world is intoxicated to madness by blood lust and fear. But after all force is no remedy and the war will only end when sanity and reason are once more enthroned in the hearts of men. Men and women are learning, I hope, that to die for a cause is worse than useless; it is sheer madness. The true test of a man is whether he can and will live for his ideals, and give himself heart and soul for the uplift and enrichment of all men of all creeds and colours and races.

His continued interest in the affairs of a world he was doomed never to mix with, save in thought, should be an inspiration to those more fortunately situated.

Mr. Partridge writes us that the urn containing the ashes of Mr. F. W. Walsh has now been placed in the family grave at Lodge Hill cemetery. Mr. Partridge conducted a brief service in the presence of a small gathering of relatives and friends.

Mr. E. Clifford Williams has been elected President of the Birmingham Branch of the N.S.S., and Mr. W. J. Collins has taken up the work of secretary in place of Mr. Partridge. Both Mr. Williams and Mr. Collins are very hard working members of the Branch, and we congratulate the rest of the Branch on the election of these two gentlemen.

Mr. A. B. Moss lectured in Victoria Park on Sunday last. We are glad to learn that he had a good audience and that his lecture was received by those present with the greatest appreciation. He will again occupy the same platform to-day (July 15).

"Signs of the Times."

I THINK it was Mr. G. K. Chesterton who said somewhere that Christianity was a "jolly" religion. Had he said "jolly funny" he might have been nearer the mark for it would be difficult to find anything much more unconsciously funny than the particular branch of Christianity he now adheres to. Surely the spectacle of a number of people of all ages and degrees of intelligence solemnly waiting for a wafer to change into a deity merely because they are told that a few Latin words mumbled by a priest can do the trick, is humorous enough in all conscience. At all events I should have given the palm to the Roman Catholic religion, but the other day some unknown benefactor who has great hopes for me, sent me a copy of the *Christian Science Sentinel* for reasons which will be presently apparent. After reading it I really feel that Christian Science must share whatever prize could be given for being funny with Roman Catholicism. I haven't chuckled so much for some time. There are about fifteen articles to commence with and they form such sad reading that one can't help laughing. Even Mr. Max Beerbohm could not write for a new *Christmas Garland* a better parody of Christian Science than a column from this paper—which is a complete parody in itself. Most of the writers are women, and they never fail to quote Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy and her precious book *Science and Health*, and a good many of them also mention the only less precious *Miscellaneous Writings*. As the gifted authoress herself says, in *Science and Health*, page 340, "The First Commandment ('Thou shalt have no other gods before me') is my favourite text. It demonstrates Christian Science." We can all, I think, appreciate how much the dear old lady loved that text and how indelibly it has been impressed on the minds and in the hearts of her devoted followers. For Christian Science has certainly no other God or Gods than Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy. She was too keen a business woman to countenance any other rival either in the Heavens above or on the Earth below. The name of Jesus is simply a mascot, and his "inspired" Word is hardly ever quoted. Mrs. Eddy, you see, puts the same idea or thought in so much better language that it isn't necessary. I don't know how many people have tried to tell us exactly what Jesus means, but they must run into many thousands, and we are as far off as ever from understanding his profound thoughts. How many books will be written to elucidate the even profounder thoughts of Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy in the next 2,000 years I shudder to think about, but it won't be for want of triers.

Anyhow, after wading through a number of articles and editorials with such sublime titles as "Why, and How," "Enough," "Achievement," "Spiritual Refreshment," etc., and columns of gush entitled "Testimonies of Healing," I came at last to that portion of the journal specially directed to me. It is such a gem that not for worlds must you miss it, so here it is—unedited and complete:—

SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

[Rev. Charles Brown, in the *Freethinker*, London, England, Feb. 18, 1923.]

You read of old that the spirit of the Lord came upon men. Why not now? We would all have done a great deal more and better work if we had remembered and believed in the fullness of Christ..... "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things." The resources of God are inexhaustible in quantity and variety..... Because there has been a spring, there will be a summer and a golden autumn. I am not to go on my way fearing that I shall fail and fizzle out at last—so I keep near to Christ. "The righteous also shall hold on his

way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger."..... The secret of immortal freshness and power is the living Christ and the immediate and constant contact of the obedient soul with Him..... "Ask, and ye shall receive." There the word is again. Once again it is God's great desire to bestow. To give is His joy. "God so loved..... that he gave..... that whosoever believeth..... should..... have....." You may venture. You have received grace to help. It is always there. The memory of past receivings should draw or drive us to His feet again saying, Because Thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of Thy wings will I rejoice. He hath delivered. He doth deliver; therefore in Him we trust that He will still deliver.—*Christian Science Sentinel*, May 5, 1923.

Now, if I were a Christian Scientist, my heart would bound with joy on reading such magnificent thoughts couched in such magnificent prose. That the hard-headed, blatant, materialistic and atheistic *Freethinker* should have invited the Rev. Charles Brown to write on the fullness of the living Christ would be to me the most wonderful, the most marvellous transformation in the world. Think of the number of convinced Atheists this rousing sermon would convert! Why—if I were a Christian Scientist—I could even picture the Editor and his most infidel contributors going in a body to Westminster Abbey to be properly baptized and confirmed, and from that fine old cathedral it is not such a far cry to the First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, Massachusetts, is it?

The only beetle in the jam—why, oh why do beetles find their way even in the most aristocratic of jams?—is that in the number of the *Freethinker* for Feb. 18, which I have religiously kept, I cannot find a word about the Rev. Charles Brown or his extraordinary masterpiece on the fullness of Christ. This is quite as sad as some of the articles on "Enough," or "Why, and How," but it is a fact, nevertheless. And the intricate problem which has to be faced now is, on whom rests the awful responsibility of having pulled the legs of the respected editors of the *Christian Science Sentinel*? Can such a blasphemous crime be committed on a Christian Scientist? Is it possible for mere mortal man to take in, to kid or to bamboozle an honoured journal stamped with the insignia of the renowned Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy? Can Sin Prevail against Righteousness, Error against Truth? But if Truth is always master of Error, whence comes this sermon of the Rev. Charles Brown? Did the rev. gentleman himself send it? For I'll lay a nicely bound copy of *Theism or Atheism?* to any of Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy's *Miscellaneous Writings* that you won't find it in the number of the *Freethinker* for February 18, and that is odds enough to satisfy even the most devout Christian Scientist.

It seems difficult to convince the worthy members of the First Church of Christ, Scientist, and its branches that about the only thing in which we Atheists agree with Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy is the statement expressed on page 341 of her *Science and Health* that "In Christian Science mere opinion is valueless. Proof is essential to a due estimate of this subject." If she had added that proof is essential for the due estimate of every subject she would have given additional value to her expression. And proof is the one thing we never get from Christian Science. It is all mere expressions of opinion couched very often in language which can mean anything or nothing and more often than not is sheer drivel. If the Bible and God and Jesus form the basis of Christian Science, then its devotees should at least make some attempt to grapple with the difficulties set forth, let us say, in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, even if they run away from such a book as Mr. Chapman Cohen's *Theism or Atheism?*

Until works like these are seriously tackled and replied to with some measure of skill, it is hopeless for the average Christian Scientist to delude himself with the idea of making converts of Atheists through the aid of bogus sermons, especially when such sermons represent about the lowest level of twaddle ever printed. And the only advice I can give to the dear anonymous brother or sister who is so anxious to see me roped into the fold of Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy is—

H. CUTNER.

George Santayana.

FEW desires are stronger than the reluctance of humanity to accept the actual if they do not understand it. The most absorbing preoccupation of man has been to explain, entirely for his own satisfaction, the environment to which he owes the possibility of existence and the ultimate reality of himself. And in spite of all the efforts that have been made, failure to discover a satisfactory philosophy of Nature, or of himself, has scattered the pages of history with the ruins of systems conceived and superseded as the human powers of reason and co-ordination have developed.

Two methods of approach to the elusive reality have been formulated—science, modern and prosaic, poetry, ancient and imaginative; but man is still reluctant to accept these two methods for what they are. He must explain to himself why he has used them, and, if possible, he must discover what relation they bear to each other in the cosmos of mind.

It is the latter preoccupation which inspired the work of George Santayana. He has made the attempt to discover the reason for the creation of poetry and of systems of religion, their relation to one another, and their effect upon man, their creator. Consequently he is not concerned or pleased with the slighter poetic works, which yield so complete an æsthetic satisfaction to the majority of modern men. For him the only poetry that is justified, except as a preliminary exercise in the training of the poetic powers, is the religious epic or the poetic philosophy which is employed in rationalizing a system of mythology. At the same time, he is satisfied that the slighter work is of some service to the poet, although "such poetry is not great; it has, in fact, a tedious vacuity, and is unworthy of a mature mind; but it is poetical and could be produced only by a legitimate child of the Muses."

As a natural consequence of this predisposition, the fictions about the past, which men have agreed to call history, become, in Santayana's mind, a series of arcs, the end of the one being imposed upon or cutting through the highest point of its immediate predecessor, and being in turn cut through by its successor when it has reached its highest point and is declining by the sheer necessity of its form.

Greek poetry, for Santayana, is Homer. The epics methodise mythology, and give it concrete shape and direction, and Greek religion develops out of Homer through Plato to its glittering term in Plotinus. Throughout this time "Men looked attentively on the face of Nature; their close struggle with her compelled them to do so; but before making statistics of her movements, they made dramatizations of her life. The imagination enveloped the material world, as yet imperfectly studied, and produced the Cosmos of mythology." And this mythology was a complete and satisfactory religion.

Men were not yet self-conscious; they had not yet assimilated the empiricism of their environment, and they were concerned with the adequate explanation of

those things which they perceived to be external to themselves. They knew nothing of mechanism, except the animal mechanism which they were themselves, and their explanation of external phenomena with its rhythms and recurrences they necessarily described in terms of their own creative powers. This simply meant that those things, which they could not really explain or control, were regarded as the productions of a creative art similar in kind to their own, but more powerful and more developed, and by this belief, which was the highest truth they knew, their own creative powers were expanded and developed. "When natural phenomena are conceived as the manifestations of divine life, human life itself, by sympathy with that ideal projection of itself, enlarges its customary bounds, until it seems capable of becoming the life of the universe."

While the conceptions which form the mythology extant at the time remain unvisualized completely, the work of the great religious poet is still to be done, but when the work of a Homer has been given to the world, and the half-realized mysterious conceptions have been crystallized in immortal phrases, the apotheosis of a system has been reached. So soon the inadequacy of any mental system or set of categories becomes apparent to the wisest of the time, and the mechanical and material mythology is subjected to the criticism of philosophy so that in completing his function the great religious poet sounds the death knell of the system he sings. Man desires more than precision in his estimate of phenomena and of his consciousness. Homer's work was the apotheosis of Greek mythology; Plato was the critic who attempted to reintroduce the fine mystical element, and Plotinus at the other end of the arc lost himself in a maze of intellectualization, which the simple mythology of the early poet was not constructed to support.

Meanwhile the upsurge of self-consciousness in man had turned his curiosity inwards. No longer satisfied to make Nature the only manifestation of the divine, he examined his own impulses, and found them divisible into two incompatible classes. His gods became the impersonations of these contradictory impulses, and he called them God and the Devil, visualizing them as in conflict for the possession of his soul. "This human life is not merely animal and passionate. The best and keenest part of it consists in that very gift of creation and government, which, together with all the transcendental functions of his own mind, man has significantly attributed to God as to his highest ideal."

This was a direct change from "that early habit of thought by which our ancestors peopled the world with benevolent and malevolent spirits; what they felt in the presence of objects they took to be a part of the objects themselves." The renewal of the world under the influence of Hebrew religion was just that man turned away from the consideration of the nature by which he was surrounded to the impulses which he felt within himself. He began to realize that the world was ruled by two opposing forces of his mind, which he impersonated under the good and evil but all-pervading spirits, and when he, later, felt that some mediation was necessary before the face of the good but coldly just, he created the Son of God.

The world itself, in its relation to himself, was antagonistic. It must be striven with and overcome before he could obtain wherewithal to sustain his life. He turned away from this inimical power and created a new religion of abnegation that would, he hoped, alter the complexion of nature. When he found that it did not, he gave up the contemplation of the possibility of complete well-being during his mortal life, and painted the picture of immortal rewards and punishments. For Santayana the highest point of this

religion was reached when Dante, in the Divine Comedy, systematized and made concrete its mysteries.

Again the life of man found its explanation inadequate, and the Reformation created Christianity anew. It is surprising that Santayana did not consider Milton, but passed on to Goethe, whose work was an intellectualized version of the Divine Comedy. Possibly Santayana will deal with the epic of Puritanism at some future time.

The essay on Shelley shows yet another phase. No religion here but the religion of humanity. The world seemed to Shelley, as indeed to all these great poets of change, to be wrong, harsh, immoral, and cruel. It was consequently ripe for change, and its very crimes seemed to indicate that the time of change was immediately at hand. Shelley wrote in words of fire of the conquest of evil, and declaimed the powerful good that man should make himself. Santayana finds the same transcendental quality in Shelley as in his other philosophical and religious poets, but he is uncertain that Shelley's appeal to man to realize himself on a basis of himself is the clarion call of the new and ripest religion, or whether it is a fantastic illusion. This uncertainty will not be felt by more material minds. The time has passed when man viewed the sinister and dexter forces of Nature through the projection of his own imaginings as personalities vindictive or kindly.

G. E. FUSSELL.

(To be Concluded.)

The Monthly Visitor.

THOSE of us who have been fully awake for the last quarter of a century have witnessed great changes in the teaching from the Christian pulpit. Hell's out and the Devil's dead, and all the miracles have become but vague abstractions. Especially as Ingersoll says: "The doctrine of eternal torment to-day has become absurd—low, grovelling, ignorant, barbaric, savage, devilish—and no gentleman would preach it." The clergy are surely more enlightened than their congregations, but tacitly concur in the most primitive superstition among their hearers. The best proof of this pious humbug is shown in the Tracts and the Monthly Visitors distributed by the Scottish Churches, free and established. These are concocted in Drummond's Tract Depot, Stirling, or Hanover Street, Edinburgh, sold at so much (too much) a thousand, emphasizing always the need of salvation, never in this world but always in the next, incidentally perpetuating Othello's occupation and giving the printer a job, who, poor fellow, cares little what he prints so long as conditions are tolerable and his wages secure. Both preacher and printer might be better employed.

Still they come, these tracts, unchanged from fifty years ago, telling of "changed hearts," and souls saved from perdition—if, in our opinion, damned in every other way. One of the latest I have seen is entitled, "Through Crime to Christ," the story of a defaulting clerk, caught in the act by his sorrowful and compassionate employer, imprisoned, met on release by his Christ-like master, trusted again, and an honest Christian ever afterwards in the strength of one who said: "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions, and will no more remember thy sins." Such a double affirmative is extremely comforting, and enables the wicked to begin again at any time, "while yet the lamp holds on to burn." What has the stern philosophy of the Secularist to offer in exchange for such a full and facile, ever-ready, redemption? Nothing, nothing only Arnold's "Stern law of every mortal lot." Hallelujah! What a Saviour!

The other tract deals with "A Wordless Book," with leaves of black, red, white, and gold; simple, ingenious, suggestive; verily, the way of salvation is made plain and easy! We have all heard of the pack of cards used for devotions, but this supercedes "the Devil's picture buiks." Black, of course, is for sin; red, for the atoning blood; white, for redemption; gold, for the heavenly home. Nothing could be more appropriate—especially for the illiterate savage, at home or abroad.

Among the noisy and sometimes naughty girls in a Sunday-school there was one dark-eyed fragile-looking lassie of about twelve years of age. The teacher often noticed "a far-away look in the child's eyes"—and no wonder, as it turned out that Florrie was suffering from tuberculosis. On learning this, "the teacher naturally felt *additional concern* regarding her spiritual welfare, and the mother, a Christian woman, shared his concern."

My God! one exclaims, the imbecility of this. Is it not incredible of the brain of anything but the lowest savage? Naïvely edifying, also, is that "additional concern" of the teacher, as for a soul so much nearer hell fire than the rest. Smitten by God in this life with a dread disease, the poor child must be prepared for "the wrath to come." By aid of the wordless wonder book the dying girl at last sees her sin and her Saviour—both non-existent by the way—and expires in radiant happiness and hope.....And the trees wave over another little grave, and in the impartial benison of Nature, shower their crystal drops upon the green churchyard. The hoary old lie lives on also, hardening human hearts, and desecrating the sacred sod.

Perhaps we are playing it rather low down upon the clergy, imputing to them even tacit concurrence in those savage survivals; but it is the game they play, as witness those "Monthly Messengers," so we excuse ourselves. After all, it is the point of view, the attitude of mind. Our attitude is one of sympathy and scorn; sympathy for the betrayed teacher and taught, scorn for the betrayer. Meanwhile, to even a half-awakened mind any one of those tracts must be more negatively revelatory than the most positive exposure in the *Freethinker* itself. So diseases tend to cure themselves; but slowly in this case, for religion is a deep-seated disease.

ANDREW MILLAR.

Barnsley Branch N.S.S.

MR. GEORGE WHITEHEAD has given fourteen lectures in Barnsley during the last two weeks. His lectures were packed with sensible matter, and the lecturer established himself as a general favourite. To persuade people to join the local branch of the N.S.S. has been his nightly endeavour, and if the desired result is not achieved, it will be no fault of Mr. Whitehead's. He has worked hard. Two foolish attempts by witless Bible-class youths to disturb the harmony of the meetings during last week were strangled by cries of "Respect the meeting or get out." Literature went well for these times, but a greater variety should accompany a fortnight's lectures in one town. We gave away 200 copies of the *Freethinker*. Six hundred people—a low estimate—attended last Sunday night at the concluding lecture. Some Salvationists tried to hold a meeting with singing and screeching on the fringe of the crowd, but the audience made it plain that better manners must prevail. They subsided. Afterwards one old lady Salvationist in uniform came on the platform and gave an unblushing recital of a mutual love between herself and Jesus. What would Jesus say? Mr. Whitehead had a great send-off by the huge crowd. Mr. Whitehead did not just give Freethought lectures. He embodied all he expounded with the principles of the National Secular Society, and impressed his audiences with the idea that only through Secularism would discord and evil be diminished.

H. IRVING.

Mother Told Me So.

I AM not going to say anything against mothers. I remember the sweet soul who gave me birth. How often in moments of trouble, of weariness, of disgust, have I longed for a soothing look of those tender eyes that never fell upon me except in love! Despite the long interval of all those years since I stood by her open grave, I see her still in the moonlight of memory. He who has had—alas that one should ever say *had!*—a good mother can never quite lose his reverence for women. That sacred affection will soften all his feelings; and amidst all the disillusionings, the bitterness, and perhaps the cynicisms of life, he will be refreshed by the waters of a pure and holy fountain, springing up perpetually from the depths of his own heart. He will also be in touch—perhaps unconsciously, but none the less surely—with the central fact of human civilization; for the smile of a mother, bending over her child, was the first ray of sunshine on the red struggle of existence.

Let us honour the mothers of the race—the *true* mothers; the women who love, and strive, and sacrifice, and eat the bread of carefulness, and stitch and mend little garments, and sometimes taste the saltness of tears in the silence of the night. I do not despise the Frenchman—I honour him—who is smitten to his knees at the sound of the words "*Ma mère.*" Cant clings about all our emotions, as the ivy clings about the oak, sometimes smothering and killing it; but the oak itself is grand and noble, and so are our natural emotions. *Ma mère*—my mother! When a man says that tenderly I would pardon even his kneeling, for he is in Nature's holy of holies.

Love is the greatest thing in life, and the mother is its first priestess and missionary. But love it not all. It may even be dangerous if misguided. Thought is necessary too. The head is wanted as well as the heart. And in the past, owing to the affective element in life, while the man has done most of the hard thinking. Not *all* men, of course; the majority of them have been mere plodders and acquiescers; but the minority of them have made the valuable discoveries and promulgated the fertilizing truths. That is a fact too patent to be ignored. And it is perfectly natural. We are all subdued to what we work in; environment determines organization; and the greater originality of man has been caused by the greater enterprise of his social functions.

But the very fact that the woman stayed at home more than rectified the balance of power. It gave her the greatest influence over the children. The man saw them occasionally; she saw them every day and all day long. She taught them to walk, she taught them to speak, she gave the first direction to their minds and the first impulse to their characters. For this reason it has been said that the hand which rocks the cradle rules the world.

One class of man stayed at home with the women, while the other man tended cattle, hunted, or fought. These were the priests, and thus they laid the strong foundations of their empire. The priest still rules through the women and children. "The mother, the wife, the sister," as I wrote many years ago, "shield him and his creed; and their white arms and soft eyes are a better guard than all the weapons in the armoury of his faith." The mother is the priest's proxy. She rears her children for the Church. "She whispers of God," I wrote, "with accents of awe, that fall solemnly on the little one's mind. She trains the knee to bend, the hands to meet in prayer, and the eyes to look upward. She wields the mighty spell of love, and peoples the air of life with phantoms." She moulds

the child for the priest, who burnishes it with catechisms and stamps it with dogmas.

When scepticism comes in later life the priest has always a ready warning. "Don't forsake the religion of your mother." He tries to throw the doubter back at his mother's knee. Occasionally he has the audacity to ask, "Would you call your mother a liar?" And the worst of it is that this irrational appeal is too often effective. Yet this same priest has no hesitation in begging for subscriptions to Missionary Societies, whose agents go through the "heathen" world, which is the largest part of it, endeavouring to make its inhabitants forsake the religion of *their* mothers.

"Mother told me so" is a very good reason up to a certain point. She is likely to tell her child the truth as far as she knows it. But outside the sphere of her interests and affections she is very rarely a thinker. Even in religion it is the worship, and not the doctrines, to which she is really attached. The truth is, she tells the *child* what the priest tells *her*. She is an unwitting instrument of deception. She unconsciously promotes a wretched imposture. She enslaves the beings she loves to an enfeebling superstition. She does not know that she is a tool in the hands of designing priests, who prey upon her and, at the same time, use her to rear a fresh generation of victims.

Well, if the mother's influence is so potent, Freethinkers should recognize the fact as well as the priests. I have no patience with a Freethinker who goes to a Secular meeting and leaves his wife at home, or lets her go to church. Of course he must respect her freedom. He must not try to govern her will. He must refrain from every shadow of coercion. But he is bound to use every possible persuasion, without being ostentatious or offensive. And if he is a good husband, and a tender father, she is very likely to listen. If a woman both loves and respects a man she will go a long way with him. It was a woman, not a man, in the old story, who said: "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." And if the Freethought husband can make his wife a Freethinker, he will make his children Freethinkers too. Surely this is worth a strong and patient effort. I invite all my readers who need the invitation to commence this experiment. It is idle to talk about converting the world unless you make a beginning at home. G. W. FOOTE.

Man and His Immortal Gods.

BEHOLD the man,
Weak, puny, insignificant,
Living out his life span of a day,
Upon the breast of this puny, insignificant planet,
That he glorifies so greatly, and calls his mother
earth.

And yet, puny and insignificant as is his home,
Weak and puny, insignificant and ephemeral as is
his life upon it,
Lo, he has long outlived hundreds of thousands of
"immortal" gods that he created,
And set on high in heaven to rule the immeasurable
universe forever,—
And by the same sure token he will survive the rest.

HOWELL S. ENGLAND.

The Jew is an old trunk which has produced two branches that have covered all the earth; I mean Mohammedanism and Christianity. Or rather, she is a mother who has brought two daughters into the world, who have overwhelmed her with a thousand wounds, because in matters of religion the nearest are the greatest enemies; but, however badly she has been treated, she cannot cease to boast of having given them birth.—*Montesquieu.*

"Dr. Djimm."

ACCORDING to the *Daily Express* Dr. Weston, Bishop of Zanzibar, "is convinced that evil spirits wander over the earth, possess human beings, and wreck houses":—

I have been in a mud hut.....and have seen great pieces of plaster torn from the walls and hurled about.....Several pieces came hurtling through the doorway; one piece hit me on the head.

I re-entered the hut and said prayers. The disturbance stopped immediately. The hut was repaired, and nothing of the kind has happened there since.

Natives came to me saying they were possessed of the Devil. Some evil spirit.....had certainly taken possession of them. They had two voices, their own natural voice and another weird, unearthly voice.

I said prayers over them and this seemed to chase the evil spirit away.....This is probably a type of spirit which has never had a human form. It is known as the "Djimm."

Dr. Weston has come to London to preside over the Anglo-Catholic Congress, and we must not treat lightly statements coming from such a quarter. Dr. Weston is regarded as an exceedingly able man. Is it to be thought that Dr. Weston would publish to the world a circumstance of such nature were he not convinced of its truth? Would the *Daily Express* give prominence to this report if it did not think some great truth underlies it all? Indeed, is not Dr. Weston supported by everyday occurrences, the inner meaning of which is ignored, the causes of which are often placed in the category of the common-place?

Take, for instance, the incident of plaster detaching itself from the hut and hurtling through the doorway. One sceptical friend to whom I showed the report said, "The natives threw mud at him." I cannot accept that. We know plaster does act like this. I have experienced it myself. On one occasion a bed-post came through the floor in my house, and the plaster of the ceiling below smashed to the floor, and some hit me on the head. I cursed the structure and age of the building—with what result? A second time the same thing happened. Was the "Djimm" of the house annoyed? Who can say? I had the floor repaired, and nothing of the kind has happened there since.

Again we have an analogy in the possession of two voices. Do we not know of similar cases where people are possessed of the spirit "Djin" (possibly of the family of "Djimms"). It is common knowledge that in these cases we observe a difference in the voice, there is a certain huskiness which differs from the natural tones. A total cessation sometimes takes place, and is commonly known as being "speechless." When the "Djin" is cast out the patient's speech becomes quite normal. It is evident that "Djin" and "Djimm" come from a common stock of evil spirits, because in the last condition we have the phrase applied "Djimm-Djamms."

There is nothing new nor startling to the educated man in Dr. Weston's report. One thing puzzles me, however. To whom did the gentleman address his prayers? To "Djimm" or to "Djoss"?

I can hardly imagine Dr. Weston making an appeal to the "Djimm"; rather would he approach "Djoss," and as "Djimm" was the cause of all the trouble, how would praying to "Djoss" affect the situation? "Djoss" not being mentioned in the matter, I can but imagine that "Djimm" and "Djoss" work together and one prayer does for both.

This is the one thing in the report which is not quite clear; perhaps we shall have the pleasure of reading Dr. Weston's solution in the *Daily Express*.

J. DRISCOLL.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

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

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park): Near the Fountain, 6.15, Mr. A. B. Moss, "The Brain and the Soul."

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Hyde Park): 6-10, Mr. Saphin, Mr. Mowbray, Mr. Blady. Wednesday, July 18, 7-10, Mr. Saphin, Mr. Miller, Mr. Keeling, Mr. Baker, Mr. Shaller. The Debating Society meets every Thursday at 8 at the "Laurie Arms," Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.1.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 3.30 and 6.30, Mr. F. Shaller will lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Outside Technical Institute, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7, Mr. F. C. Saphin, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S. (Town Moor, near North Road entrance): 7, Mr. F. Carlton, a Lecture.

BOOKS FOR SALE.

	s. d.
"History of Materialism," Lange, 31s. 6d. (as new) ...	15 0
"Arabic Thought, Its Place in History," 1922, O'Leary, 10s. 6d. (as new) ...	5 6
"Erasmus and Luther," 1920, Murray, 25s. ...	12 0
"Renaissance (Revival of Learning)," Symonds, 16s. ...	6 6
"Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius," Dill, 18s. ...	9 0
"History of the Romans under the Empire," 7 vols., Merivale ...	10 6
"Religious Beliefs in Babylonia and Assyria," Jastrow ...	4 0
"Mysticism and Logic," Bertrand Russell, 7s. 6d. ...	4 6
"Crises in the History of the Papacy," McCabe, 12s. 6d. ...	5 6
"First of Empires" (Babylonia), Boscawen ...	5 9
"Life of Jesus" (George Eliot's translation), Strauss, 15s. ...	5 6
"That Other World," Stuart Cumberland, 10s. 6d. ...	5 0
"The Non-Religion of the Future," Guyau, 16s. ...	6 6
"The Future of Science," Renan ...	5 6
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