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Views and Opinions.

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The Gospel of Suffering.

The repercussion of the Christian laudation of pain and suffering as designed for our development and the furtherance of truth is to be found in the intellectual sphere. We have an old copybook maxim which tells us that truth is mighty and shall prevail. We were taught it in our early days, and we hand it along to our children in the light-hearted manner of irresponsible parentage. But the maxim is certainly not true in such a way that it would furnish us with any dependable rule of conduct. If it were true the history of the world would be far different from what it is. For truth, instead of prevailing, has been defeated over and over again. The astronomical theory which we know by the name of Copernicus was propounded many centuries ago in ancient Greece, but it was crushed completely by the Christian Church until four centuries since. The best thought of antiquity had reached the point that all disease was the outcome of a disordered state of the human system, and must be dealt with on a naturalistic basis. But this was overthrown by the lie of the Church-taught doctrine that disease was due to demons, and for generations the insane were brutally treated as a consequence of this belief. The illustrations of the same truth that might be found would fill a volume. Truth is not always mighty enough to prevail over a lie. For lies may become incarnated in institutions, they may be taught to the young as the most valuable of truths, and they may command the support of powerful vested interests which will see that every possible obstacle is placed in the way of the truth being known.

* * *

Persecution and Truth.

One effect of this in our everyday life may be noted. It is a common saying that the minority must expect persecution and abuse, and they should be neither surprised nor annoyed when it comes. So far as a statement of mere fact is concerned there is nothing to find fault with here. But somehow we have come to regard this as quite the right state of affairs, and we encourage the belief that just as the Christian holds that human nature is purified by suffering so truth is made clearer

and brighter by being persecuted. And that is simply not true. It would indeed be curious if those who oppose and misrepresent the truth and persecute its champions were equal benefactors of society with those who preach it. Every so-called truth should be carefully tested and examined, but the way to test truth is not by knocking down its advocates or making it a penal offence to advance new teachings. A man does not rise stronger because he is knocked down, and truth when opposed and persecuted by an intolerant majority is not made clearer or purer to anyone. On the contrary, the tendency here is for truth to take on some of the intolerance of its persecutors and to adopt methods that are not always the best that can be conceived. In turn it has to look to numbers for some sort of protection and as a means of making headway. It begins to compromise in this or that direction and to take on some of the bad habits of its persecutors. No one can say, for example, that the theory of evolution has gained by the persecution or the opposition of the Christian Church. Had that opposition not been present the theory would have been established sooner, and it would be taught in a much clearer way than is often the case to-day. But the opposition it met with has given rise to the muddle-headed interpretation by which some seek to reconcile it with established Christianity, and the not less mentally confused attempts to derive from it some sort of agreement with a sentimental "religion." There is not the slightest doubt that were it not for the opposition which established teaching offers to truths, nineteenth-century science and religion would never be made. They are really attempts which timid souls who cannot bear to face the world alone make to accommodate themselves to the intolerant majority. And every such attempt means a lowering of the standard and the quality of the truth preached.

* * *

Authority and Truth.

The evil of the persecution of truth is still more marked collectively. The gravity of the persecutions of the Church have emphasized in quite the wrong direction the injury done. We have been over-impressed with the wrong done to the individual, whereas the greater evil has been to those who have not been made the direct victim's of the Church's malevolence. When a man like Bruno is burned for heresy, or some heretic is imprisoned for his teaching, the wrong done to the individual is grave enough, but a greater injury is done to those who are not directly selected for punishment, and, from the point of view of the Church, may have never deserved it. The ordinary man or woman shows no particular anxiety for the discovery of truth. Thanks to the influence of the Christian Church they have never been brought up to regard that as their business, and when they look round to see the treatment of those who do challenge orthodoxy they find but little encouragement to bestir themselves. It may safely be said that the men and women who concern themselves about the spread of ideas are regarded by the bulk of the population as at

best cranks, and at worst as being fools for bothering themselves about such impracticable things. Such a habit offers one no chance of getting on in the world. It can hold out no promise of public appointment, or popular favour, or worldly wealth. Truth becomes something that those in authority look after, the duty of the layman is to take it as given. The other day a young man who applied for a vaccination exemption order told the magistrate that his reason for not wishing his child to be vaccinated was that of his mother's, and he did not know what that was. Whereupon the magistrate told him that he was very foolish to ask for exemption and so fly in the face of medical authority. But as the magistrate did not tell him that it was his duty to understand the question, and then act upon his own conclusions, but wished him to follow the authority of some body of men, it is not clear in what way the one plan was intellectually superior to the other. The magistrate was quite clearly of opinion that truth was something served out by the authorities to the public, and we can quite imagine him sending people to prison for not obeying the orders so given, and feeling that he had done his duty. Even doctors are not infallible, and if it is a case of mere authority there seems little to choose between the two.

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A Bad Environment.

The great, the abiding evil done by the forcible suppression of heretical opinion is that it results in a lowering of the character of the environment and the encouragement of a poorer mental type. We often console ourselves against persecution by State or Church by saying that you cannot coerce opinion. That may be true of the few who are self-conscious in this matter, but it is not true of the overwhelming majority of the population. It is far nearer the truth to say that the bulk of the population have opinions prepared for them, and take them with very little questioning. The influence exerted by a cheap newspaper press over an imperfectly educated people, the manner in which religious opinions are forced upon children, the social arrangements by which obstacles to advancement are placed in the way of heretics, to say nothing of times and places where actual physical violence and torture are the penalties for heresy, are all so many examples of the way in which opinions are coerced. And all this means of necessity the creation of an environment that is fatal to mental independence and to human progress. Children grow up without the slightest appreciation of the part played by opinion in social movements, they become careless of how they form an opinion and attach but small value to one when it is formed. The timid, the unscrupulous, the time-serving, find the way made easy for them; the brave, the conscientious, the upright, are discouraged and suppressed. So far as it can be done the environment emphasizes the value of the worse qualities and suppresses the better ones. Shams and follies are perpetuated, not because the majority have a living and active belief in them, but simply because there is wanting the moral courage to speak out concerning them. It comes as near securing the survival of the socially undesirable as is possible.

* * *

Our Debt to Christianity.

There are other ways in which it might be shown how the Christian conception of man and of Nature has made for evil. If the pressure of religious authority and the practice of persecution involves the encouragement of a lower mental type with the general population, it also means the perpetuation of shams and follies that might otherwise disappear. Wrongs are continued and superstitions made almost

perpetual because either men dare not discuss them, or there is developed a carelessness concerning their existence. There is thus not merely a lowering of the sense of intellectual integrity all round, there is also a weakening of the sense of social responsibility. It is to no one's interest to search for truth, and it is certainly to no one's profit to proclaim it when found. There has been a tampering with both the mental and moral currency in the interests of the Christian Church, and the consequences of its long reign cannot be got rid of in a day. The modes of thinking, the standards of value it has introduced are all more or less fatal to a perfectly healthy social life. Something has been done during the past century and a half to diminish the evil, but it is still with us, hampering our best efforts and robbing even that which is accomplished of a portion of its value. CHAPMAN COHEN.

"The Savage Reality of Sin."

(Concluded from page 579.)

WE have seen that in the estimation of Mr. Boyd-Scott sin is a voluntary act of disobedience to the laws of the universe which are God's laws, in which case, of course, the sin is against God. That we frankly admit, if the disregarded laws are God's; but are they? Mr. Scott takes it for granted that they are without making a single attempt to prove it. In an early chapter in his book, *Nevertheless We Believe*, he confesses that we know very little about God; but he fails to demonstrate the reality of that little. His confession would have been more accurate had he said that we know nothing about any being higher than man. He goes as far as to ask, "Who are there to compare with those children and pursuers of that supreme adventure of Jesus, the adventure called God? Is not the use of the word "adventure" equivalent to a confession of entire ignorance? An adventure is always suggestive of chance, risk, disappointment; it is a hazardous, uncertain undertaking, a daring feat of the imagination. A believer in God, then, is an adventurer who has no security that the adventure will ever justify itself. Paracelsus aspiringly asks:—

Are there not, Festus, are there not dear Michael,
Two points in the adventure of the diver,
One—when a beggar, he prepares to plunge,
One—when a prince, he rises with his pearl.

It was a sheer adventure, and the second point might have been wholly different from the one predicted in Browning's poem. Well, then, the belief in the existence of God is a pure adventure, and nobody can tell how it will turn out, whether a glorious triumph of faith, or its final overthrow. Meantime, however, it is certainly premature to speak of God as the author of Nature and its laws, or as the director of the long evolutionary process, and to do so, as Mr. Scott does, deprives him of all right to be known as an all-powerful, all-wise, and all-good being. Science assures us that the universe is governed by physical and chemical laws with not the faintest trace anywhere of the active presence of Deity. If science is right theology is wrong, and to disobey any of Nature's laws is not at all a sin in Mr. Scott's sense, but an infallible sign of ignorance, weakness, inexperience, or foolhardiness. Whatever the cause of disobedience may be disobedience ends in suffering; and as a rule it is as the result of suffering that obedience is learned. A little child thrusts its finger into the fire and great pain ensues, and it is the pain that teaches it not to repeat the perilous experiment. It is the same with all other laws. It is by the blunders we commit that we acquire wisdom, and wisdom glorifies itself in the resultant adaptation to environment.

It is not true that human nature is in a fallen state through some initial catastrophe that cursed it long ago and has kept it under a curse ever since. Mr. Scott speaks of some awful perversity within us which impels us to rebel against the good and to choose the evil. Then he inquires concerning this "accursed perversity" in the following vague manner:—

How did it gain a lodgment within us? We do not know. It is said that it began with a Fall of Man in some time past. But we really do not know about it.....But if the Fall of Man is a mystery, the Fallenness of Man is an awful indubity. We know the laws by which alone our life can be itself, as surely as we know the laws of light and heat; and yet by some spite and crookedness within us, we choose and choose again to break them, and so maim ourselves and prevent our destiny.

Mr. Scott is now in a mythical region, wholly unknown to science and of which he himself really knows nothing. If God verily existed one of his first acts would be to strike dead the overwhelming majority of those who pretend to be his ministers, for the character they attribute to him as supreme worker of the world is so disgracefully bad that they would be intolerable in his sight. Happily for them, being non-existent, he takes absolutely no notice of their blasphemous utterances. They can say whatever they like about him and he keeps his everlasting silence. But when Mr. Scott describes man from an imaginary God's point of view, he is guilty of woeful misrepresentations of him. The "accursed perversity" said to be within him, preventing him from accepting Christ as Saviour and Lord and from becoming a spiritual man, is an invention of the theological fancy. It is not a perversity at all that keeps a man natural, but in innumerable instances a profound conviction that the pulpit is still the slave of superstition and deals almost exclusively with unrealities. These people are not perverted, but enlightened; not spiritually blind, but with the eyes of their understanding wide open, showing them most clearly that the man in the pulpit is as ignorant of the things whereof he talks so glibly as they are themselves. Believing that God is non-existent, they do not recognize the validity of any claim made in his name. A characteristic fault of Mr. Scott is, not only that he jumbles up all the laws, but that he regards God as the author and administrator of all of them, which if true, would exhibit the Supreme Being as guilty of the most heartless cruelty and injustice. Some divines conceive of him as acting in two entirely different and irreconcilable capacities; namely, as God of Nature and God of Grace. As God of Nature he is absolutely implacable, neither pitying nor forgiving, but inflicting upon every transgressor his appropriate punishment. As God of Grace he is represented as reversing many of his own acts as God of Nature, for he listens most sympathetically to the cries of the penitent and grants them complete absolution from all the penalties they so richly deserve. Mr. Scott does not make this distinction between the God of Nature and the God of Grace. His great point is that the laws are so numerous and so complicated that we cannot hope to obey them all. He proceeds thus:—

Is it not a hopeless struggle? Yea, the more we perceive of the laws of God, to which our life must conform, does it not become more and more hopeless? It does. Follow the discoveries that primitive man, and then peoples like the Hebrews, and peoples like the Greeks, made step by step into these laws, and you shall see that the more they learned of them, the more hopeless they became in the task of entertaining and fulfilling them. Higher and higher, more and more spiritual and exacting, were seen to be the laws by which man is meant to live. With every discovery, the scope of Sin was widened, its

intensity deepened, avoidance of it and escape from it more than ever difficult. When Jesus Christ came and made still further revelations of these laws, the situation became quite hopeless.....Christ Jesus has given us so deep an insight into the laws by which God means men to live that man is appalled. We cannot do it. We find the field of sin increased for us. We have more sins than ever opening up before our weak and wandering feet. Sin and the burden of sin become heavier and heavier still, the more we learn from Christ of the laws of life (pp. 150-1).

In no sense or degree is that long extract in harmony with the teaching of modern thought. It is Paulinism, Augustinianism, and Mediævalism, in all their glory or shame. It is certainly not present day teaching in any of its numerous forms. Furthermore, it is not even compatible with, but at least a gross exaggeration of, what the Gospel Jesus is supposed to have taught. We assert that the Gospel Jesus brought absolutely nothing new into the world. In point of fact we are not at all sure what the teaching of Jesus really was, for it was exclusively oral, and there was no one present to write it down. Referring to the moral precepts contained in the Gospels, whether Jesus uttered them or not, we find that they have no originality whatever, but are nearly all to be found in Judaism, Confucianism, or early Buddhism. Jesus revealed no new law of life whatever, and so it is sheer nonsense to maintain that because of his "still further revelations of these laws the situation became quite hopeless." It is reported that once a rich young man came to Jesus and asked him, "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" and Jesus answered, "Keep the Commandments," naming a few of them. The young man said unto him, "Master, all these things have I observed from my youth." "And Jesus, looking upon him, loved him" (Mark, x, 19-21). There is not a word said about the need of repentance and forgiveness, and no remotest allusion to the fallen and sinful condition of all mankind. Mr. Scott relies almost entirely upon utterances ascribed to Jesus in the Fourth Gospel, which by many theologians is pronounced the least historical of the four.

Our contention that the biblical and theological doctrines of sin, repentance, forgiveness, and regeneration are fundamentally false, is even strengthened by Mr. Scott's interpretation of them. The reverend gentleman is a supernaturalist pure and simple, whilst upon the present generation supernaturalism has almost completely lost its hold. Modern thought, as Sir Oliver Lodge admits, has led the highest minds among us to a disbelief in sin, repentance, forgiveness, and a new birth from above. Mr. Scott is as fully aware of this as we are, and yet he does not even attempt to construe his supernaturalism in terms of modern thought, but rather in terms of Paulinism and its successors. His style is rhetorical and emotional. Listen:—

"Come unto me and I will give you rest." Rest, O Saviour? Rest from this sinful restlessness of my will? "Come unto me and I will give you life." Life, O Saviour? The renewal of my perverted soul? If God himself could take a voice and speak to me, what more could he offer me than this? "As many as received him, to them he gave the power to become the Sons of God.".....They have been given a power by which they can do all things through him that strengtheneth them.

That is nothing but empty rhetoric, an emotionalism, of which the higher minds of to-day are sick and tired and can no longer listen to. It is a theological house built upon the sand of ignorance and superstition, and when the storms of scientific criticism beat upon it its fall is as certain as to-morrow morning's sunrise.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Tabooed Scriptures.

Be neither saint nor sophist led, but be a man.
—Matthew Arnold.
The lie at the lips of the priest.
—Swinburne.

FEW more instructive volumes could be placed in the hands of anyone interested in the Christian religion than the tabooed Scripture, known as the Apocryphal Gospels, of which few Christians, except professional theologians, have much knowledge. Concerning them the clergy maintain a discreet silence. Even the Old Testament *Apocrypha* has been pushed into the background by astute ecclesiastics, and when Queen Victoria placed a quotation from the once sacred volume upon the tomb of the Prince Consort she caused a storm in a teacup. Yet from the dawn of printing until the earlier years of the nineteenth century the Old Testament *Apocrypha* was considered as an integral portion of "God's Word," and worthy to be read for edification.

Since that time the *Apocrypha* has almost disappeared from the public eye, and is now mainly read by students who are interested in the origin and history of Christianity. The far more instructive *Apocryphal Gospels* have almost faded from public knowledge, and deserve to be reprinted. An edition was issued by Hone and sold for many years, but it was a cumbersome volume; and a more scholarly version, edited by a Mr. Cowper, published many years later, was too expensive for ordinary purses. Some day, we hope, an enterprising publisher will put a handy edition of these tabooed Scriptures upon the market at a reasonable price, for they form a most instructive piece of Christian evidence.

In these admittedly spurious accounts of Jesus Christ we find the Gospel legend in the making, the studies, as it were, for the completed painting of the "Old, Old Story," which has impressed so many generations of men and women by its apparent genuineness. The fact of the volume being taboo to the religious world is all the more reason why it should appear in an easily accessible form to the discomfiture of the clergy.

It must be confessed that tradition does make startling demands even on the child-like faith which is nurtured on the fairy-tales of the accepted Gospels. In the orthodox "St. John's Gospel," which all Christians are supposed to believe, there is this sober statement:—

There are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.

This is astonishing enough; but the cruder *Apocryphal Gospels* makes the reader feel like Alice in Wonderland. This feeling is induced by the fact that these spurious evangels cover unfamiliar ground, to which no odour of sanctity attaches. Here is a sample taken from the *First Gospel of the Infancy*. The author, who is gravely stated to be a "saint," actually states that the boy Christ, aged seven years, astonished his playmates by making, not mud-pies like other children, but mud figures of donkeys, cattle, and birds, which ate, drank, and walked as he commanded them. The story concludes:—

When at length the boys went away and related these things to their parents, their fathers said to them: "Take heed, children, for the future, of his company, for he is a sorcerer; shun and avoid him, and from henceforth never play with him.

Similar startling stories appear in the *Second Gospel of the Infancy*, which, of course, has an equally saintly origin, and which requires an equally robust faith to believe. These spurious gospels are full of

this sort of thing, which reminds the most hardened reader of *Grimm's Goblins*, or *Anderson's Fairy Tales*. But they are not associated with a carefully cultivated credulity which blinds criticism as in the case of the accepted Gospels. The Bible legends are poured into children's ears from earliest childhood, and the "Old, Old Story," has a familiar ring even when only half believed. The unblushing mendacity of the *Apocryphal Gospels*, being in an unfamiliar setting, should make the most bigoted believer rub his eyes.

One thing must be evident to every honest reader. The Christian religion itself is based upon similar nonsense, for Christianity is founded upon miracles. It is not platitudinous and nebulous talk of "love" and "human brotherhood" which has fascinated ignorant and half-civilized millions through the centuries and caused them to fill the priests' coffers with gold and to maintain the institution of priestcraft.

Let us face the facts. A handful of latitudinarian ministers may mouth religion in scientific jargon from fashionable pulpits, but the Roman Catholic Church, the most important Christian body, recognizes the importance of miracles, and even claims that its own miracles are a continuation of those alleged to be wrought in the Ages of Faith. They pretend that the cures at Lourdes, and elsewhere, and the questionable liquefaction of the blood of Saint Januarius, are precisely as genuine as the miracles in old Judæa. The priests of the Greek Church, the second most important body in Christendom, take the same attitude, and contend that the theatrical exhibition of the Holy Fire at Jerusalem every year is simply the latest link in a great chain that extends back to Biblical times. Thus, the two greatest Churches leave Humanity chained within the prison of Superstition. And a half-forgotten book, such as the *Apocryphal Gospels*, helps us to understand how the oracle was worked in the first instance, by means of which pious folk have been so long bamboozled.

MIMNERMUS.

Christian Conceptions of Hell.

II.

(Concluded from page 581.)

DREADFUL conceptions of endless torment continued to appal the human mind during the Middle Ages, and up to about the end of the seventeenth century. Buckle, in his *History of Civilization*, gives a vivid description of the teaching of the Scottish theologians on the subject during the seventeenth century. He says:—

All over Scotland the sermons were, with hardly an exception, formed after the same plan, and directed to the same end. To excite fear was the paramount object. The clergy boasted that it was their special mission to thunder out the wrath and curses of the Lord. In their eyes, the Deity was not a beneficent being, but a cruel and remorseless tyrant. They declared that all mankind, a very small portion only excepted, were doomed to eternal misery. And when they came to describe what that misery was, their dark imaginations revelled and gloated at the prospect. In the pictures which they drew, they reproduced and heightened the barbarous imagery of a barbarous age. They delighted in telling their hearers that they would be roasted in great fires and hung up by their tongues. They were to be lashed with scorpions and see their companions writhing and howling around them. They were to be thrown into boiling oil and scalding lead. A river of fire and brimstone, broader than the earth, was prepared for them; in that they were to be immersed; their bones, their lungs, and their liver, were to boil, but never be consumed. At the same time, worms were

to prey upon them; and while these were gnawing at their bodies, they were to be surrounded by devils, mocking and making pastime of their pains. Such were the first stages of suffering, and they were only the first. For the torture, besides being unceasing, was to become gradually worse. So refined was the cruelty that one hell was succeeded by another; and lest the sufferer should grow callous, he was, after a time, moved on that he might endure fresh agonies in fresh places, provision being made that the torment should not pall on the sense, but should be varied in its character as well as eternal in its duration.

Here are one or two typical utterances from these fervid religious fanatics:—

“Boiling oil, burning brimstone, scalding lead” (*Sermons by Eminent Divine.*) “Scorched in hell-fire and hear the howling of their fellow prisoners, and see the ugly devils, the bloody scorpions with which Satan lasheth miserable souls” (*Rutherford's Christ Dying*). “A river of fire and brimstone broader than the earth” (*Rutherford's Religious Letters*). “See the poor wretches lying in bundles, boiling eternally in that stream of brimstone” (*Halyburton's Great Concern of Salvation*). “Tongue, lungs and liver, bones, and all shall boil and fry in a torturing fire” (*Rutherford's Religious Letters*). “While worms are sporting with thy bones, the devils shall make pastime of thy pains” (*Abernethy's Physicke for the Soule*). “They will be universal torments, every part of the creature being tormented in that flame. When one is cast into a fiery furnace the fire makes its way into the very bowels, and leaves no member untouched. What part can then have ease, when the damned swim in a lake of fire burning with brimstone?” (*Boston's Human Nature in Its Fourfold State.*)

Hell, according to these wretched men, had been enlarged that it might hold the multitude of lost souls sent there. “Hell hath enlarged itself” (*Abernethy's Physicke for the Soule*.) Moreover, it must be remembered that they taught that the torment that awaited the vast majority of men, women, and children, was eternal, and had been prepared for them before the creation of the world. “Men wonder what he could be doing all that time.....Remember that which a godly man answered some wanton curious wit, who, in scorn, demanded the same of him, ‘He was preparing hell for curious and proud fools’” (*Binning's Sermons*).

One lacks words in which to express the loathing and detestation with which such evil doctrines fill one. Imagine, if you can, what must have been the terrible effects produced by such teaching upon ignorant people. Small wonder that, under the influence of their religious instructors, men and women often committed suicide in despair. For example, William Vetch, when preaching in the town of Jedburgh to a congregation, said, “There are two thousand of you here to-day, but I am sure four score of you will not be saved.” Three of his hearers afterwards killed themselves, their minds being unhinged by this gloomy prediction.

Many more instances and examples of the hideous warping of mind and morals that the belief in eternal torture produced might be cited, if space permitted. But before concluding I should like to make one more quotation—this time from Lecky's *European Morals*. In a footnote he says:—

Few Englishmen, I imagine, are aware of the infamous publications written with this object, that are circulated by the Catholic priests among the poor. I have before me a tract “for children and young persons” called *The Sight of Hell*, by the Rev. J. Furniss, C.S.S.R., published *permissu superiorum* by Duffy (Dublin and London). It is a detailed description of the dungeons of Hell, and a few sentences may serve as a sample. “See! On the middle of

that red-hot floor stands a girl; she looks about sixteen years old. Her feet are bare. She has neither shoes nor stockings.....Listen! She speaks. She says, “I have been standing here on this red-hot floor for years. Day and night my only standing-place has been this red-hot floor.....Look at my burnt and bleeding feet. Let me go off this burning floor for one moment, only for one single short moment.”..... The fourth dungeon is the boiling kettle.....in the middle of it there is a boy.....His eyes are burning like two burning coals. Two long flames come out of his ears.....Sometimes he opens his mouth, and blazing fire rolls out. But listen! There is a sound like a kettle boiling.....The blood is boiling in the scalded veins of that boy. The brain is boiling and bubbling in his head. The marrow is boiling in his bones.....The fifth dungeon is the red-hot oven..... The little child is in this red-hot oven. Hear how it screams to come out. See how it turns and twists itself about in the fire. It beats its head against the roof of the oven. It stamps its little feet on the floor.....God was very good to this child. Very likely God saw it would get worse and worse, and would never repent, and so it would have to be punished much more in hell. So God in his mercy called it out of the world in its early childhood.

To transcribe such revolting nonsense, fills one with an almost physical nausea.

These hideous, immoral doctrines have largely gone from the world, because the whole atmosphere of modern civilization is inimical to them, and also because, though the average person is a deal less religious than his ancestors of the middle ages and the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, his moral sense is sharper, and his imagination healthier. As Leslie Stephen says, with justifiable scorn:—

Now, at last, your creed is decaying. People have discovered that you know nothing about it; that heaven and hell belong to dreamland; that the impertinent young curate who tells me that I shall be burnt everlastingly for not sharing his superstition is just as ignorant as I am myself, and that I know as much as my dog. And then you calmly say again, “It is all a mistake, only believe in a something—and we will make it as easy for you as possible. Hell shall have no more than a fine equable temperature, really good for the constitution, there shall be nobody in it except Judas Iscariot and one or two others; and even the poor Devil shall have a chance if he will resolve to mend his ways.”

But although one may now speak jestingly of the doctrine of hell, it must never be forgotten that the Church of Rome, and the Protestant Churches have, in their prime, taught that doctrine with all the emphasis of which they were capable, thereby adding not a little to the pain and misery that is in this world. They have a heavy responsibility; surely no sincere Christians of to-day can regard the propagation of such teaching with anything but the deepest shame. They must consider the evil that that doctrine has done to men, when next they seek to convince us that Christianity has been the greatest boon the world has ever known.

W. H. MORRIS.

FAITH.

Let us have faith!
 Faith, which is patience when Time lags behind;
 The faithful mind
 Works calmly in the certainty of faith.
 Let us have faith!
 Faith which o'erbridges gulfs of wide disaster;
 Which can o'er master
 Most desperate odds; which doeth all it saith.
 Let us have faith!
 Even in our own attempt, our victory's pledge;
 The mighty wedge
 That rives the toughest obstacle is faith.

—W. J. Linton.

S. O. S.

I HAVE always been fond of Doris. Lately, however, her pathetic anxiety for the welfare of my soul has caused me not a little perturbation. When an elderly spinster armed with tracts and a repellent chastity besieges you in the park and endeavours to entice you into the paths of the godly, it is an easy matter to accept her tracts gracefully—and light your pipe with them. Or again, when a fervid revivalist tells you you will be damned if you don't embrace the Cross, you can reply brusquely, "I'll be damned if I do," and there's an end to it. But when one's best friends feel it their duty to make themselves personally responsible for the destination of your immortal soul, it is apt to be annoying. And Doris is such a dear girl that I view with feelings of dismay the estrangement that will inevitably ensue unless she abandons her attempt to save my soul.

A few days ago she favoured me with a call. I could see she meant business and I decided to be firm! As I helped her off with her cloak I noticed that she carried a booklet bearing the title *Theosophy Made Easy*. My spirits sank and my determination rose! I decided to attack: "If it is *me* you have come to see," I began, "I am more than delighted. But if it is my soul you want I'm afraid there's nothing doing. My *Karma* is in full working order; my *Aura* is turning a nice brown and will soon be ready for serving my *ego* —."

"George, don't be flippant" (I'm afraid my gravely paternal air is always lost on Doris), "you know we are all of us anxious about your unbelief." "That is very kind of you," I replied, "but I wish you'd let me go to hell in — er, I mean work out my karma in my own fashion."

"But your soul, George —"

"I assure you I haven't such a thing concealed about my person."

Ignoring my protest she went on: "Now I have here a little book on Theosophy which I want you to read."

"Theosophy," said I loftily, and with that air of finality which my friends find so irritating, "is a system—if indeed it can be called a system—of transcendental metaphysics, the chief charm of which lies in the complete inability of its devotees to understand it. If they once understood it they would cease to believe. The charm lies in the way they mystify themselves with words and meaningless phrases. They mistake obscurity for profundity."

"But Mrs. Besant is a theosophist, and she was once an Atheist; and I'm sure she's quite as clever as you are."

"I cannot be justly held responsible for the mental and emotional aberrations of Mrs. Besant," I retorted hotly, a little piqued at her reference to my intellectual ability. "Besides, prove to me the existence of my soul before you start talking about saving it."

This challenge gave her the opportunity she wanted, and, opening the booklet, she started reading in a triumphant tone: "The belief in the existence of the soul would not have existed throughout the ages, nor would it exist now, if the soul were non-existent."

"My dear, dear Doris," I interposed gently, "such faulty and erroneous reasoning quite shocks me. One could prove anything by such methods. Is the earth flat because millions have believed it so? Did old women ride on broomsticks and bewitch cows because the belief was at one time general? Furthermore, when your late lamented father described with such minute fidelity the snakes he declared were crawling on the bedstead, were they really objective existences,

or were they merely induced by over-indulgence in —"

"I think you might leave my father out of this discussion"—(this tearfully).

"Very well proceed with the proofs. Only I wish you'd leave *me* out of it as well!"

"There are many people who by careful cultivation of their spiritual faculties and by assiduous introspection can recall incidents that happened in their previous incarnation."

"How deliciously vague," I lamented. "Personally I have no recollection of a previous life, nor have I met anyone who has. Tell me: If I do not remember who I was before I was who I am, how shall I remember who I was when I am no longer who I am?"

"George, you're a fool! You call yourself a Freethinker, but you are not so free to think as I am. You move in one narrow groove."

"That is the unkindest cut of all," I retorted. "I have been your guide, philosopher, and friend during all your religious vicissitudes. I have listened attentively to Mormons, Revivalists, Anglo-Catholics, and Lord knows whom at your request. I have held your hand in the dark (and would willingly do so again!) while the ghost of Napoleon described—in an unmistakable cockney accent—the death of Socrates. I have wandered through the labyrinths of Christian Science, Roman Catholicism, Wesleyanism, and Pelmanism. Your people have been my people, your Gods— No! I draw the line at your Gods. And now you say I need to cultivate an open mind. It is too bad. And life is too short."

"But George, darling, Theosophy is so different, it —"

"Oh! Confound Theosophy," I shouted in desperation.

Between her sobs she told me I was a brute and a beast. I agreed. I said I was the worst type of Brontosaurus known to science. She said I had no feeling, no sympathy. Again I agreed. I would have agreed to anything—even to the possession of an immortal soul.

No one understood her, and she simply yearned to be understood. The sobs increased in volume and fury. I took her in my arms. I have always been fond of Doris!

VINCENT J. HANDS.

Acid Drops.

We notice that *John Bull* is very wroth with a gentleman who runs what it calls a "Prayer shop" in the West End of London. Apparently this gentleman has hit upon the idea of charging people so much for praying for them, and *John Bull* hints that he ought to be suppressed in the interests of the public. Now we consider that very cheap and paltry. *John Bull* must know that there are thousands of Catholic priests in this country who take money from people for saying prayers which are supposed to accomplish things. Yet their suppression is not called for. And beyond the priests of the Catholic Church there are the other parsons and ministers who take money for praying for rain, and for recovery from disease, etc., etc. Why is not their suppression called for? It is a very cheap kind of reform to demand the head of one man who runs a prayer shop and remaining silent concerning the thousands of other prayer shops that are scattered up and down the country. For our own part we challenge *John Bull* to prove that the Oxford Street prayer shop does not do just as much as the colossal prayer shop that stands on Ludgate Hill, or the very ancient one that is next door to the Houses of Parliament.

After all, if there is any evil in this business the root of it is to be found in teaching people to believe that the

course of Nature can be deflected by prayer. If you once teach people to believe in folly you must not be surprised if they act up to it. If *John Bull* believes that prayer is all humbug or self-delusion why has it not the honesty to say so? If it believes prayer is good, and will be answered when offered by such men as the Bishop of London, why will it not be answered when said by other people? The parties that are really responsible for the swindle worked by this unauthorized practitioner are the thousands of clergy who have been deceiving the people in this country for generations. Apparently *John Bull* believes in attacking only such impostures as are newly grown. Old established ones it passes by in silence.

In the same issue of *John Bull* we notice an article by Sir Hall Caine, with the inevitable portrait. Sir Hall Caine asks, "Has Christ Failed?" which is a question one cannot answer until one agrees as to what it is that Christ came to do. Sir Hall Caine would have us believe that he came to end war and to get people to live peacefully together, and that is certainly not our reading of the Gospel. At any rate, if he came for the first purpose named, then he very obviously has failed. It is said that he has not failed, people have simply not carried out his teaching. But that is saying the same thing in another way. If a commercial traveller sets out to get orders, he fails when he returns without them. It is no disproof of this for the traveller to say, "I have not failed, it is the people who would not buy." Whatever it was that Christ came to do he failed, and our own opinion is that the world would have been vastly better if he had never been heard of.

Incidentally Sir Hall Caine treats his readers to a little scrap of history which may be taken as an illustration of the way in which the religious mind runs to economy where truth is concerned. "Christ," he says, "was born a Jew when his country, suffering unutterable humiliations, was under the heel of the Roman Empire." Now we should dearly like to know what were these unutterable humiliations. The Jews were permitted to retain their religion and to practice all their religious and local customs. They had the same rights that all other units of the Roman Empire possessed, and no one was refused office on account of his religious opinions. They had to pay taxes, but so do we, and so do all those native tribes under our control, and we are not above collecting them with the aid of bombs. As a mere matter of history, the Jews under the Romans were treated quite as well as we treat any native race under our own control. Sir Hall Caine's history is as fanciful as his theology.

There is a purpose in Sir Hall saying what he does. He wishes to show that in spite of the temptation of a Jew to counsel force—he appears to forget that Jesus was only a Jew in form, actually he was God Almighty masquerading as a Jew—he nevertheless advised love and brotherhood as a means of overcoming force. This is an old plea, and the author of the *Manxman* might have found something better. A man without arms, or money, or many followers, does not usually go out to fight an army. What we should like to ask Sir Hall for is an explanation of the fact that so soon as Christianity was strong enough to use force it did use it, and it used it more mercilessly than any other religion has ever done; it has used force all along, it has given its sanction to the use of force by others, and it has been the cause of more wars than any other religion the world has seen. There must be something with the essence of Christianity for these results to have occurred. An attempt to answer questions of this kind would be far more interesting than writing three columns of pious balderdash which are intellectually not worth the space they occupy, and would not reflect credit upon a suckling curate.

Mr. Arthur Ponsonby, M.P., says that superstition is part of our daily make-up. Perhaps the spectacle of a Christian priest reading prayers in the House of Commons has impressed him.

Three small boys were ordered to be birched at

Southend-on-Sea for stealing a few plums. According to the Bible, poor old Adam and Eve got humanity into awful trouble through stealing some forbidden fruit.

M. Maurice Maeterlinck's conclusion, after many years' investigation, that there is nothing in Spiritualism, is a bit of a blow to the bogey-hunters. Even Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's "fairies" will hardly console them.

Canon Barnes says he is quite optimistic about the future of the relations between science and religion. As the Canon's salary is still paid with regularity, he has every right to be an optimist.

The Rev. G. T. Taylor, preaching at a Wesleyan Chapel at Derby, had just exclaimed: "I am up against it; you are up against it," when a stone came through one of the church windows.

Readers who have been interested in the Einstein theory of relativity may now bring their knowledge of it to bear on a public matter. The problem is, to measure the value of the rural walks in Hyde Park of the Bishop of London, to multiply it by the destruction of twenty lives (mostly children) at Corfu, and remember at the same time that this globe of ours is liable, without general warning, to split asunder. We have not the slightest idea of the answer, but would suggest that the Bishop of London would have distinguished himself by taking a piece of ice to Mussolini; or as an alternative to his badly arranged plan of notoriety, he might have taken vigorous steps to put down the evil of cigarette-picture collecting by little boys.

Are not the advocates of spiritual healing aware that by that very advocacy they are ascribing to their God the worst moral character conceivable? They describe a case of small pox which was cured in twenty minutes in answer to prayer. Not for one moment do we believe such a story, but we appeal to those who do to tell us in plain language why so many thousands of the victims of cancer are allowed to die every year. Is it because the saints neglect to pray for them, or is it because the loving Heavenly Father does not care what happens to them? We are convinced that if a God of love really existed he would either banish all diseases from his universe, or at any rate cure every such serious and painful case as cancer before any prayer from his people could possibly reach him, and his failing to do so would convince us that he never existed at all.

The following is too good for abbreviation. It is from a daily paper (September 9):—

At Portmadoc Council the other night, Mr. William Jones protested against cinema and other placards being exhibited on the Town Hall walls on Sundays, as they were an unsightly and disturbing element to people on their way to places of worship.

Captain Williams: Do you imply that people on their way to chapels are so affected by the placards that they are unable to listen attentively to the sermon?—Possibly.

Captain Williams: I think that is carrying the idea to a ridiculous extreme.

Mr. Jones: We decided years ago that the hoardings of the Town Hall be covered up or removed on Sundays. That resolution must be enforced.

The Council directed the surveyor to enforce the resolution.

Mr. Lloyd George and these people think the world of each other.

We trust that no one will be inclined to take the deliverance of Professor Cornish at the British Association on the subject of population as being in any way a scientific pronouncement. It is merely a lesson that everything said in the name of science is not science, and that a man may at a scientific assembly talk as foolishly as though he were addressing a gathering of bishops or of Nonconformist ministers. Professor Cornish's thesis is that we, the inhabitants of this country, are the guardians

of civilization. For that reason we must have as many children as possible—each woman must have at least four—and for two reasons. First to get a good supply of soldiers, second, so that we may populate the world and keep other races and peoples in their proper place. Apparently women are to be regarded as potential breeding machines, and society as a kind of hive which sends out annual swarms to overcome the rival swarms of other hives. We are to add to the competition of guns and ships a competition in the number of babies produced, and if other nations are animated by the wicked desire to see that *they* are on top then we must see that the number of babies per woman is increased to six, and so on to the extreme limit.

Now this kind of talk may be good politics, or good nationalism, or good religion, but it is an outrage on common-sense to call it science, and to those who are able to use their modicum of grey matter effectively should be considered as an insult to a scientific assembly. To begin with it by no means follows that because the world has agreed to take its meridian from Greenwich it must therefore take its morals and its art, and its standard of culture from Clapham. From a scientific point of view it is a piece of impudence and is decidedly wrong to talk as though there were only one civilization in the world. These are various, and civilization as a whole is advanced by the intercourse of different cultures, not by the imposing of one culture upon others. That was said to be the aim of Germany in the World War, and in that case Professor Cornish's "spiritual home" is the Prussia of 1914, and as Mr. Robert Blatchford endorses the Professor he might accompany him as spiritual adviser.

Secondly, the question of which race or nation is to rule the world may be a political question, or an economic question, or a newspaper selling question, but it is not in the least degree a question of natural science. All that is at issue is the emergence of the better type, and whether it be one race or the other is not to be settled by adopting, in the name of science, the theological attitude that we are the Lord's appointed. The taste of the Lord in other ways is not so impeccable as to unduly influence us in this direction. Other things equal, there is no reason for assuming that the balance of the solar system would be seriously disturbed if the white races went under to the yellow races, or if an entirely new race emerged and governed the situation. We all have a natural prejudice in favour of our own, and we generally prefer our own vices to the virtues of other people. But we ought to be able to see these things as prejudices, and not proclaim them as though they were the deliverances of pure science.

Mr. Ben Tillett will be getting himself into serious trouble. He informed an Exmouth audience that it was more important for the country to have healthy homes than it is for them to have churches and chapels. That is very irreligious. After all, if a man's soul is a detachable asset, and if that is to go on living throughout eternity, and if the way in which it lives throughout that dreary time will depend upon what we believe about religion while we are here, then the clergy are quite correct in placing more emphasis upon churches and chapels than they do upon homes. Besides there is the economic question to face. The clergy are very much interested in getting churches and chapels. They are their places of business, but they have no direct interest in homes. Moreover, if the Churches threw one quarter of the energy into the land and housing questions that they throw into the getting of new gospel shops they would offend those who are anxious for the people to have as much religion as they can swallow. What Mr. Tillett said was very good, but he might have said so much more without stretching the truth. So might most of the other Labour leaders, but then there is the question of the vote and the influence of church and chapel at election times, and that *does* make a difference.

The Rev. Hugh Jenkins, of Batley, Yorks, has been pondering on the subject of the earthquake in Japan, and on a recent Sunday he gave his congregation the benefit

of his meditations. He did not like to say how far the earthquake was a judgment of God upon Japan, but it was a "searching question." We should say that it searches God more than the Japanese, for a God who could bring that disaster upon a people would be unfit for decent human society. But, says Mr. Jenkins, God was not responsible for the deaths in Japan. Parts of the earth are unfit for human habitation, and if people build houses there they must not blame God for what occurs. So that it was not a judgment of God after all, it was the consequence of natural forces. But as God is responsible for the forces, the blame once more rests with him. What peculiar people these parsons are? So many of them mistake the spinal protuberance which prevents their collars falling off for a head.

Mr. Jenkins also says, to excuse the earthquake, that in Japan there is licensed prostitution, and that prostitution is blessed by the Buddhist priests. We do not think it would be polite to say as regards the Buddhists that Mr. Jenkins is a liar, but we can have our own private opinions on the matter. And as to licensed prostitution we advise Mr. Jenkins to turn to the records of our army regulations in India, and on the Continent during the War, and to France, and to many other places. What a type of character the pulpit does attract!

A very good Christian, Professor B. J. Wilden Eart, writes to the *Church Times* that the anxiety of those who have friends in Japan will be lessened by the consideration that "by the merciful dispensation of Providence this terrible visitation of earthquake and fire has taken place at a season of the year when most of the white people would have left such towns as Tokyo and Yokohama." We have said before that all religion is egotistical, but the unashamedness of this is enough to make one vomit. The deaths of thousands of Japanese does not matter. By the merciful dispensation of Providence it was arranged that the earthquake should take place while the Europeans were away. Providence either held the earthquake back till then, or arranged for it to come on. We do not know which it is, but we do know that a religion which can lead a man to write in that way, and to thank Providence for what it has done is unfit for men and women with any pretence to decency or humanity. The brutalities of the Christian creed are well summed up in that phrase "by the merciful dispensation of Providence." Many thousands of men, women and children were wiped out. Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

We have heard so much from the religious people here, and also from our great lying press, of the reign of Atheism in Russia, and of the brutal way in which religion is persecuted that our readers will be interested in the following which we take from the *Daily News* of September 14. It is given by Miss F. M. Wilson, of the Society of Friends, who has just returned from Russia, where she served on the Famine Relief Mission. She says:—

With religion the Bolsheviks interfere very little. The priests go about their religious duties unmolested, the churches have never been fuller than they are now, and the saints-days are kept everywhere as public holidays. Of course, the Bolsheviks dislike all this very much, and make vehement propaganda against it, but they are clever enough to know that persecution will only increase the power of the Church, so they confine themselves to impassioned speeches and to putting up in the village Soviets their little slogans, such as "Religion is the opium of the people." As few peasants can read, these notices cause little pain and do small damage to faith.

Altogether it is remarkable that religious toleration is so great. One has only to remember other revolutions and social movements to recall for instance, the iconoclasm of the Reformation and Puritan Revolution, to be astonished at the mildness of the methods of the Bolsheviks.

For our part we do not believe that any movement based upon purely secular considerations could ever be so brutally persecuting as one animated by religion. And in saying this we have the unbroken testimony of history behind us.

Our Sustentation Fund.

THE list of subscriptions to the "*Freethinker* Fund" would seem to indicate that we did not misjudge the situation when we said that we probably found it more painful to ask than others did to give. The response has been both prompt and generous, and the sum acknowledged is larger than has ever before been the case with a first list. Bearing in mind the times in which we live, this is a result of which we may all feel proud. I believe there are few papers in the country which create such devoted friendships and such hearty hatreds. The one is the counterpart of the other. If we were less outspoken, more time-serving in our methods and speech, we might not arouse so much antagonism, but we should not awaken such keen friendships, and we can smile at the one so long as we have the other. And, as I have said before, it is the consciousness that we have behind us the support of the real Freethinkers of the country that enables us to face hopefully a situation which might well discourage the strongest. I can only say for the moment that much as I appreciate the ready help given when it is asked for, I value much more the spirit it indicates, and the kindly feelings that have accompanied the subscriptions.

I have space for but a few notices of the many kind letters received, and even then must refrain from publishing those of the more personal nature. I will only say that I very much appreciate the kindly things said, and may add in extenuation of what some are good enough to call my devotion to the Cause, that it is my life's work, and that it gives me more satisfaction than anything else possibly could. I never cared for public honours or popular applause, and a taste for these things is not likely to grow as one gets older.

Our old friend, Mr. T. Robertson (Glasgow) writes: "In view of the factors operating against such a paper as the *Freethinker* you have done an able and a successful thing in keeping it going for three unprecedented years without an appeal for help." Mr. E. D. Side, staunch son of the staunchest of parents, says: "I beg to hand five guineas, two in memory of R. H. Side, two for myself, and one for luck. I know that my father would have quickly responded to your call because he knew as much as any man the value and meaning of liberty, being bred among those who stubbornly fought for it, and the value to us all of the *Freethinker* for its work in the gaining and maintaining of that blessing." Mr. S. Hudson hopes that every Freethinker will send as he has done. If every *Freethinker* did that we should have a colossal balance at the bank. If a very small proportion acted on the advice we should have far more than sufficient to meet our immediate needs.

There is considerable truth in the closing sentence of Mr. J. W. Wood's letter: "Apart from the Cause we should all feel it a duty to relieve you from the financial burden. We cannot relieve you of any of your work, and if we did you'd still find heaps to do and pleasure in the doing." We plead guilty. Mr. C. Bush offers the following suggestion: "I should like the Editor to leave this subscription list in the hands of the subscribers. At a low estimate we have in Great Britain 100,000 Freethinkers. Let us Freethinkers subscribe to the Fund for sustaining the *Freethinker* one shilling each, which everyone can afford, but the mark should be 100,000 shillings. This sum would admit the possibility of the Editor sharing his burden with an assistant, and we should all realize what one man has been doing these eight years. As a corollary to this proposal we 100,000 subscribers might take regularly one copy of the paper, and in the space of one year find one new subscriber."

We do not know exactly what our old friend means by leaving the subscription list in the hands of the subscribers, but, for our part, we should be only too glad to leave the financial side of the work to any committee of business men who would care to undertake it. That would certainly leave us free for our proper work, which is speaking and writing. For the rest Mr. Bush's suggestion of 100,000 readers opens up visions which look like fairy-land.

Mr. H. Emery writes: "Please accept a small contribution from one of those who are greatly indebted to you for the weekly treat provided. Unfortunately my contribution is bound to be small, but this is one of the occasions when the humbler ones of the party may do something to help the Cause, and I hope to see the rank and file of the party well represented before the Fund closes. If all sent their mite the Fund would soon grow to very pleasing proportions."

Mr. Sumner writes that: "All things considered, I think that to come out with so small an adverse balance reflects great credit upon the management of the *Freethinker*, which you certainly maintain at a very high level." Mr. F. Lee says: "You are fighting a great fight and I should be very sorry indeed to be deprived of the *Freethinker* and the hope, joy, and inspiration I get from it week by week." S. P., who has taken the paper since its first issue in 1881 sends a cheque "from one who very much appreciates the strenuous efforts you have made, and are still making, to keep before the public the *Freethinker*."

Mr. F. Lonsdale writes, "How you carry on, God knows! I don't." Perhaps if he did an earthquake might occur here. A subscription comes from Mr. R. G. McDonald, who first became aware of the existence of the *Freethinker* about twelve months ago. We receive this with peculiar pleasure. "When we consider," says Mr. A. W. Coleman, "that a weekly paper of the size and type of the *Freethinker* keeps its losses down to £400 per annum, one can only say 'bravo' to the Editor." Mr. D. Macconnell writes: "Judging by my own circumstances I should think it would be the easiest thing possible for one thousand others to make themselves happy by contributing a like amount." Mrs. C. M. Renton thinks it wonderful to carry on so well. Mr. Easterbrook wishes it were possible to raise a trust fund of £5,000 so that the investment would bring in enough to keep the paper going. When it pays its way the income could be used for other forms of propaganda. Mr. R. Wood says that sympathy and appreciation on the part of readers should provide all that is needed. We have no doubt from the response that it will. But our aim remains—that of making the paper pay its way. Mr. H. Dawson writes: "Enclosed is my mite. Many might if desirous; more might, and still more mites to your elbow." Finally Mr. R. Green takes the present as an opportunity to send along a contribution of 5s., and hopes that the five-bobbers will roll up in their hundreds.

We are obliged to hold over notice of other letters till next week as well as the acknowledgment of some few subscriptions.

First list of acknowledgments: J. A. Fallows, £50; C. Bush, £50; H. Jessop, £25; J. Pendlebury, £10; Sine Cere, £5 5s.; A. R. Wykes, 10s.; Dr. A. D. Thompson, £1 1s.; J. W. Wood, £1; E. Oliver, £3 3s.; R. Brown, £2; J. Sumner, £5 5s.; R. Allen, 5s.; C. H. Gronn, 5s.; T. Robertson, £5; F. Reed, £1; A. H. Harden, £2 2s.; A. Raymant, £1 5s.; S. Hudson, £1; G. F. McCluskey, £3 3s.; G. R. Harker, £1; J. M. Gimson, £10; C. R. King, £5 5s.; E. Pariente, 10s.; J. Withy, 10s. 6d.; E. D. Side (in memory of his father, R. H. Side) £2 2s.; E. D. Side, £3 3s.; James Davie, £10; F. Lee, £5; T. Dunbar, 5s.; S.

P., £5; T. C. Kirkman, £2; T. A. Mathews, £3; J. S. Buckle, £1; S. Healing, 10s.; J. Ireland, £2; F. W. Haughton, £5; D. C. Drummond, £1; J. A. Bates, £1; Derby, £1; R. Crumm, 10s.; C. Naylor, 2s. 6d.; R. Erle Side, 10s.; H. Bayliss, 10s.; W. J. E. Easterbrook, £5; H. W. Davey, 5s.; V. H. Smith, £3; D. Macconnell, £1; G. Lunn, £2; F. Taylor, 2s. 6d.; J. Almond, 2s. 6d.; M. H., 10s.; Mrs. A. Robertson, £1; F. W. Theobalds, 10s.; H. Barber, £1; J. G. (Glasgow), 10s.; H. Green, 5s.; J. Robinson, 2s.; Dorothy W. Coleman, 10s.; A. W. Coleman, £2; J. B. Palphreyman, £1; R. G. McDonald, 10s.; H. Dawson, 10s.; T. H. E., £2; F. Lonsdale, 5s.; A. Thoumine, 2s. 6d.; F. C. Wykes, 2s. 6d.; T. T. (Glasgow), 5s.; R. Wood, £1; J. R. White, 2s. 6d.; J. G. Finlay, £1 1s.; R. Green, 5s.; J. Farmer, 10s.; S. G. Leech, £1 1s.; Sydney A. Gimson, £2; The Taylor Family, 7s. 6d.; J. Tipping, 5s.; Peter Gorrie, 10s.; O. D., 2s. 6d.; R. P. Hunter, 5s. Total £253 6s. 6d.

We shall be obliged if subscribers will point out any inaccuracies or omissions that occur in the above list.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

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.

D. LEAHY.—Your interesting letter to hand. We have read with great appreciation your account of the hold that the Roman Catholic superstition has upon the mass of the Irish people. One can only hope that as settled political conditions arise the priest may lose a little of his power and a larger element of Freethought become diffused among the people. The papers have been sent.

J. E. LINNELL.—We do not see that your letter is any reply to Mr. Lloyd's article. The plea that the Churches do not represent Christianity is hardly one that will carry much conviction. You simply set your own interpretation of the New Testament against that given by the Churches. In any case we are far more concerned with the form Christianity has actually assumed than with a fanciful reading of some new interpretation.

H. CAIRNEY.—Thanks for good wishes. Mr. Cohen would no doubt enjoy a lecturing visit to Canada, if only for the holiday it would give, but he cannot accept the invitation of your society for the present. There is too much here that needs attention, and too few hands to do it. In another year things may be different.

R. H. LOVEKIN.—Thanks for *The Blind Men and the Elephant*, but we fancy we have seen it before. The mascot craze is one of the many illustrations of how near the savage we still are. But it is not mentally distinguishable from the dominant religion of this country.

G. LUNN (Liverpool).—Pleased to hear that some of you are paying attention to quiet propaganda in Liverpool. But why not arrange for something in the shape of public propaganda? There is plenty of room for it in the City. Thanks for contribution.

H. BAYLISS.—Hope to see you when we come to Nottingham.

J. IRELAND.—We are not at all disheartened. When we took up with this work we knew we were not picking out a bed of roses, and after thirty-three years of writing and speaking we do not regret our choice. We know of no work in which we could have been better engaged. We appreciate all you say none the less.

H. BARBER.—We are inclined to agree with you. It got in by a sort of oversight.

D. W. COLEMAN.—We are flattered to know that you think of us so often. We are afraid that your prayers would not be of much avail, but good wishes do act as some sort of an inspiration.

H. GREEN.—Shall be pleased to meet you and the other Glasgow friends on October 14.

W. V. CRESS.—We should not be the *Freethinker*, nor would its readers be what they are, if we did not both allow for differences of opinion and rival points of view.

T. H. F.—Give us a call when you can. All well at present.

S. A. GIMSON.—It is like yourself to offer to again subscribe if the Fund does not reach the required sum. But there does not appear to be much fear of that judging from the subscription list this week.

WEST HAM.—We are delighted to learn of Mr. Moss's large and attentive meeting at West Ham on Sunday last. As he was lecturing on Charles Bradlaugh the subject would lack nothing on the score of interest.

H. BAYFORD.—Sorry to hear of Mr. Selferian's illness. Hope he will soon be better. The thanks of the Branch is due to Mrs. Ballard for the help she gave the Society in providing the "Freethought Tea." Pleased to learn that it passed off so well.

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, 7s. 6d.; three months, 3s. 9d.

Sugar Plums.

To-day (September 23) Mr. Cohen delivers his first lecture of the season in the Birmingham Town Hall. His subject is "Are We Civilized?" and we fancy the lecture will be comprehensive enough to suit all comers. Birmingham friends should do what they can to induce their Christian and other friends to attend the lecture. Chair will be taken at 7 o'clock.

As the second oldest Freethought journal in the world we are delighted to be able to offer to our elder brother, the New York *Truthseeker*, our heartiest congratulations on having achieved something without precedent in the Freethought world. It has, this month, reached its jubilee. We know of no other journal devoted to our cause that has ever existed for fifty years, and although we hope to make that record more of a commonplace by 1931, the honour and glory of having established the record belongs to our American contemporary. It is something of which all connected with the paper may well be proud, and we feel proud of it ourselves, although we have had nothing to do with the labour of keeping the journal in existence. But we are fighters in the same army, advocates of the same cause, brothers in belief, and what benefits one must always bring satisfaction to the other.

To celebrate the event editor Macdonald has issued a special Golden Jubilee Number, enlarged to 64 pages, containing reproductions of the early issues of the paper, with numerous portraits of distinguished Freethinkers. It is a noteworthy number and reflects credit upon all concerned. But for our own part we lose sight of the issue before us in thinking of the fifty years that lie behind the Jubilee number. Fifty years during which to maintain a Freethought journal means a half-century of devotion to an ill-paid at best, an unpaid very often, task; it means fifty years of devoted and ungrudging service, of abuse from the general public, of struggle, despair and

hope, of passing defeats, and of permanent victories, a fifty years that appeals to all that is best in a man and brings out all that is strongest. Those who read this jubilee number should bear these things in mind, as we have no doubt they will, and we hope it may spur them to renewed efforts on behalf of the greatest cause that ever called for an expenditure of human energy and intelligence.

Mr. J. A. Bates, who will be remembered by many of our readers as one who was for some time on the Free-thought platform, but who now holds a government appointment in Shanghai, passed through New York on a holiday trip home, and through him Mr. G. E. Macdonald sends to all English Freethinkers his brotherly and birthday greetings. Mr. Macdonald says some very kind things about English Freethinkers, which we hope are deserved. At any rate we can all work to deserve them. We greatly appreciate Mr. Macdonald's good wishes, and warmly reciprocate them. We trust that the years before the *Truthseeker* will be less strenuous than those that have passed.

We publish this week on behalf of the Secular Society, Limited, a new pamphlet by Colonel Ingersoll. It is probably the last thing written by Ingersoll, and consists of running comments on the Bible which were found after his death. The pamphlet has never before appeared, and we venture to say that it should prove as serviceable as the same author's *Mistakes of Moses*. A full textual reference is given for every statement, and it thus serves as a small edition of the *Bible Handbook*. It should have a very large circulation. We are sending 24 copies, post free, for 2s.

The new edition of Draper's famous *Conflict Between Religion and Science*, which we announced a little time ago, is now in the Press, and we hope to have it on sale very soon. A volume of 400 pages, well printed on good paper, it will be sold at 3s. 6d. bound in cloth. That is a sensational price in these days, and specially so as the same work is sold at 7s. 6d. by the present publishers of the work and the holders of the copyright. It is by special arrangement with these that we are able to sell at the low price stated. There is no need to praise Dr. Draper's work, it is known all over the world, and ranks as an authoritative work. We prophesy a very large and steady sale for this book.

In consequence of "Winter Time" beginning earlier this year, will friends please note that the Regent's Park meeting will begin at 5.30 instead of 6 o'clock, as the Park will be closed an hour earlier.

Mr. Whitehead reports on Bristol as the most theological place he has yet struck, but in spite of adverse circumstances and the almost complete absence of local help, he has held good meetings and says he has shaken the dry bones a little. For the concluding fortnight of his mission, Mr. Whitehead will be in Plymouth, and the secretary of the Plymouth Branch, Mr. J. Churchill, is looking forward to two busy and successful weeks of propaganda.

We are asked to announce that a Rationalist and Ethical Society has been started at Hull, and will hold a public meeting at the Hull Co-operative Recreation Rooms, 25 Jarratt Street, on Wednesday, September 26, at 7.30. Admission is free.

The National Secular Society is holding a social gathering on Thursday, October 4, at the rooms of the Food Reform Company, 2 Farnival Street, Holborn, E.C. There will be music, conversation, and dancing from 6.30 to 9.30, and a little in the way of speeches. As the accommodation is limited, admission will be by ticket, and early application for these should be made to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, at the Society's offices. Each member of the Society may bring one friend. Evening dress optional.

Fighting Christians.

JESUS CHRIST is most frequently called the Saviour. Whether he will save us, or any of us, somehow and somewhere, in the next world, if there is a next world, is a matter of pure speculation. Whatever we find out on this point, we must die to do it. Meanwhile, it is pretty certain that he has not saved us in this world. All the salvation we get comes from the progress of science and civilization. England is a Christian country, and is well to the front in the race of progress. Abyssinia has been a Christian country ever so much longer, and is just as far behind. The difference between them is due, not to Christianity, but to secular causes. And the same rule applies in all cases. Every nation that has an advantage over other nations owes it to natural conditions, such as soil, climate, position, material resources, education, and good government. Of course the most advanced nations still profess and call themselves Christians. But profession is one thing and practice another. It seems to be generally admitted that real Christianity is only possible—if it is possible at all—on off-days, like Sunday, when business is suspended, and people are free to indulge in all sorts of sentimentalities, without the least hindrance to their prosperity. Indeed, an English bishop has openly declared that any State which tried to carry out the Sermon on the Mount would be ruined in a week.

Another inappropriate name of Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace. This is not only inappropriate, but positively facetious. Jesus himself said that he came not to send peace, but a sword; and this prophecy, at any rate, has been amply fulfilled. One can hardly find in all history a religion which has been so cantankerous and quarrelsome as his. All religions have been more or less bitter and contentious, and causes of discord and division. According to the Bible itself the first quarrel in the world was a religious one. Cain worshipped God in one way, Abel in another; they settled the dispute by one knocking out the other's brains; and this is the way in which religious disputes have been settled ever since. But the religion founded—whether in reality or only in repute—by Jesus Christ has been the most fruitful in hatred, malice, and uncharitableness. It has always been marked by bigotry, arrogance, persecution, and cruelty. Never has it truly served the cause of peace. Even if it aimed at doing so it has signally failed. The history of Christendom is a long record of war, bloodshed, and conquest. The map of Europe has always been adjusted on battlefields. And the fighting power of Christian nations is simply overwhelming. The late Mr. Gladstone, indeed, cited this fact as a proof of the divine origin and character of Christianity. Christian nations build all the battleships, manufacture all the guns, rifles, and explosives, drill and maintain all the great armies, and carry the arts of destruction to the highest pitch of perfection. Christian nations, too, are the chief disturbers of the peace of the world. Wherever war is going on they are in it. Even when China and Japan have a set-to the Christian nations look on longingly, and soon arrange to take part in any future quarrels in that locality. The commonest, twopenny-halfpenny Englishman talks about "our empire" and "the soldiers of the Queen," and quotes odds and ends of Kipling; and our kinsmen across the Atlantic have just been going mad over Admiral Dewey, because he performed the by no means miraculous feat of smashing up a number of ineffective Spanish ships in the bay of Manila. Millions would not have turned out to welcome the greatest genius who ever contributed to the world's highest civilization—to its science, its arts, its literature, or its industrial development. They go wild over

gunpowder and glory. Yet the vast majority of them are Christians, and are ready to talk by the yard (on Sundays) about the Prince of Peace. No doubt they think Dewey a far greater man than Ingersoll. Perhaps if Jesus Christ himself had turned up during the Dewey celebrations they would have voted him a nuisance and sent him to Sing-Sing.

Not long ago the Czar's Love-Feast was sitting at the Hague. The Christian nations, including the United States of America, were all represented there. Ostensibly their object was to promote peace. Really their object was to diminish the cost and risks of war. It was like a Conference of Burglars discussing how they might reduce the expenses of their profession. Even the expressed horror of Dum-Dum bullets, and new explosives, was not really humane. Christian rulers want to keep up armies and navies, and they see that war will cease altogether if science is allowed to make it too deadly. So they want to construct a ring, and have a good set of international Queensberry rules, in the interest of the noble art of slaughter. Anyhow, the chairs upon which the Hague Conference sat are hardly cold before another war is threatened. And of course it is the dear, good, peaceable Christians who are at it again. They have put the Prince of Peace in a cupboard in the joss-house, and have brought out and trimmed up the Lord of Hosts. Boers and Britishers are both worshipping this deity. The Boer has a Mauser rifle in one hand and a Dutch Bible in the other, while the Britisher has weapons in both hands and a Bible behind his back. Each relies upon the God of that book. Each prays to the God of that book. Each informs the God of that book which side he ought to take in the quarrel. And what does this God do? He sits silent in heaven and does nothing. He lets both sides take his name in vain. He reads them no lesson in honesty and charity; he does not bid them try justice and mutual toleration instead of fighting; he simply goes to sleep and leaves word for the victor to call him when the fight is over. Such a God is only fit for a museum. Some will say he is hardly fit for that.

It may be said that Christianity is not responsible for the fighting disposition of Christian nations. But this is a confession of its moral impotence. It means that Christianity must be supplanted by another regulating power—the Religion of Humanity.

October, 1899.

G. W. FOOTE.

Letter to Aunt Muriel.

I.

"THEN why don't you accept Christ as your Saviour?"

Your question, Aunt, shows no great sense of logic. I was stating the importance of personality. It is the personality of Christ, I said, that attracts. "Then why," you ask, "don't you accept him as your Saviour?" That is, why don't I accept the doctrine of vicarious punishment? First, Aunt, no one knows anything of one of the parties in the arrangement which that doctrine supposes; his existence is the guess of ignorance, and I cannot find that the other party, taking the Church-doctored records and legends, makes any reference to any such arrangement. But I will not trouble you with that. I take your bare doctrine. *God caused Christ to be crucified for our sins.* Put a parallel, Aunt. Tommy steals some cakes. His father brings out the whip. Little Mary interposes: "No! Don't whip Tommy, Dadda! Whip me!" And the father whips.....Whoever could have imagined such a god!

Your theologians explain with long faces. (Theologians would explain anything.) They tell you it is

the justice of God that requires that the sin shall be punished, if not in the person of the sinner, then in the person of the innocent. Either theology upsets all logic, or your theologians are laughing in their sleeves. And *Christ was God*, they tell you. What a muddle-brain of a deity! "This god who puts god to death to satisfy god!" (It is a fine laugh of Baron von Humboldt.)

Those who believe what the theologians tell them save their souls. The dear creatures! One may doubt—as that heretic cleric of Oxford commented, Aunt Muriel—one may doubt if such souls are worth saving.

And how do these souls comport themselves when they are saved? Yourself, Aunt, you are plump and sparkling; Venus and Juno both have been bounteous; but let religion come within the circuit of reference, let the heretic smile, only smile, then one sees the saved soul with no frills on.

Not less surely than your religion begets courtesy does it beget sincerity. Sometimes, Aunt, you make inquiry as to the faring of the heretic. Is it that, if you heard aught of ill, you would find something of satisfaction there, something to confirm you in your creed?

With Christian courtesy and Christian sincerity goes Christian humility. If you do the simplest thing of good, you do it, you say, out of love for the Lord Jesus Christ. Gratitude for saving your immortal skin, eh? No joy in doing good for the love of the good? Is this altogether self-deception, Aunt, or is it an advertisement for your parson? "He's so nice," you say.

H. BARBER.

A Fable.

GOD IS ON OUR SIDE
(*Gott Mit Uns*).

A GREAT battle was in progress between an army of red ants and an army of black ants. The object of the reds was to defeat the blacks, to carry them off and reduce them to slavery. The scene of the battle was a sandy piece of ground at the foot of an ant-hill behind which the sun appeared to be setting. A man who happened to be strolling that way found that by reclining on the side of the hill with the ditch at his feet, he could avoid the sun's rays which were overpoweringly hot, and could rest comfortably for a few minutes. He sat down on a patch of colourless grass, and continued, the more at ease, the meditation in which he was absorbed. He had not noticed the red ants who were marching up the hill, or the black ants who, with much commotion, were withdrawing into their galleries. Even if he had noticed them, he would not have paid much attention, for he knew them both to be harmless. As he sat down his foot struck the ground and broke down the entrance to the galleries in which the blacks had taken refuge. The leaders of the red army coming up with their troops just at this moment observed the providential movement of the giant's leg and the havoc it had caused. Filled with joy and puffed out with arrogance they shouted to the soldiers that pressed around them: "Victory is ours! Man is on our side!" The rank and file then took up the cry: "Man is on our side! Man is on our side!"

Great was the enthusiasm in the ranks of the red army. However, the man prepared to light his pipe. He threw the match on the ground, prudently stamping out the flame with his foot, in this way putting out of action a large number of black ants. This further increased the confidence and arrogance of the reds for they could not have had better proof that man was really on their side. By the time the man had finished his pipe the assault had been made, and the reds were coming out of the enemy's galleries with spoil and prisoners. Then the man stood up and vacantly scanning the blue sky with its fleecy clouds unloosed a formidable deluge which drowned indifferently both the reds and the blacks. Thereupon he went quietly on his way.

REMY DE GOURMONT.

From "*Pendant l'Orage*" (1915).

Townsmen's Country.

I do not know the myrtle and the celandine;
I know not where dog roses twine,
Or where to find the dainty columbine;
But I have seen the gorgeous sweep of line,
From the high hills, neglect the petty superfine.

I know the town and all its winding and wide streets,
Its shady gardens and retreats;
I know just where its pulse most wildly beats;
Those haunts where human beings strive for *all life's*
sweets,
And where their heat and clamour its own end defeats.

But when I seek refreshment from the countryside
I take the details in my stride—
The trees, and hills, and animals beside—
To know their names, and know them, I have never
tried—
Only to find a place where quiet has survived.

I see the rolling hills and fields, and hedge and ditch;
The lonely tree, like very rich;
I know the motor's road that smells of pitch;
I thread the lane; avoid the thorny bramble's twitch.
It's all I ask—would names make what I see more rich?

G. E. FUSSELL.

Correspondence.

THE DEVIL'S CHAPLAIN.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In Mr. Guy Aldred's otherwise excellent and timely paper on Robert Taylor, he says:—

A year later, February 19, 1829, he finished his *Diegesis*, an historical work, containing a mine of information, valuable even to-day, and showing that the Christian religion had its origin in the phenomena of the heavens, of the wonders and signs of which its so-called historical characters were but personifications.

Now as far as the latter part of this statement is concerned, it is just what the *Diegesis* does *not* show. There are, it is true, one or two references to the "phenomena of the heavens," but the book as a whole deals with the evidences of Christianity, and it gives in great detail a large number of extracts from all kinds of writers, in particular Christian apologists, whose damaging admissions of their faith are marshalled with great skill by Taylor to prove that the Christian religion is nothing but a mass of silly fables. On the other hand, the astro-myth theory will be found fully developed in *The Devil's Pulpit*—though whether this book would stand the test of modern criticism is an open question. In any case both works are intensely interesting, they exhibit Taylor's great linguistic abilities (of which he was justly proud), and they should never be forgotten by Freethinkers. Moreover, most of the arguments in the *Diegesis* still hold good, and the germ of many modern onslaughts on Christianity, thought by their propagators to be quite new, will be found in its pages.

Just one more point. I was glad to see Mr. Aldred notes that "No Christian apologist ever answered Robert Taylor's smashing indictment of the Christian religion." Now, one of Taylor's cardinal arguments was that no such person as Jesus Christ ever existed. Mr. Aldred, on the contrary, not only insists that "Jesus of Nazareth was born in Nazareth of Galilee, of non-Jewish (*sic*) parents, between 8 B.C. and 5 B.C., but he also believes that Jesus was "a Communist and an Anarchist." Apart from the simple little fact that it is by no means sure that such a place as Nazareth was in existence in 8 B.C. or 5 B.C., and the equally simple little fact that if Jesus ever lived his birthplace is generally given as Bethlehem, I am rather curious to know how Mr. Aldred would answer Robert Taylor as to the veritable existence of the Christian Deity? Perhaps he can succeed where Dr. Pye Smith, with his characteristic impudent bluster, so egregiously failed.

H. CUTNER....

PYTHAGORAS AND COPERNICUS.

SIR,—In your issue for July 1 I note a letter from Mr. Turney about Pythagoras and Copernicus. He says, "Nowhere in my letter did I say.....that Pythagoras believed in the heliocentric theory, but rather that he was the forerunner of someone else who did." This appears to me mere vague verbiage. To the best of my recollection what I stated was that Pythagoras was an out and out geocentrist and all the orthodox, platonist "highest science," in the words of Macrobius, "was so too." What has the question about Aristarchus and his—to the classical world—excentric theory to do with the question at issue any more than the fact that the Buddhist astronomers under Asoka (about the same time or perhaps a little earlier) had arrived at the more correct way of looking at things? There is little use in pursuing the correspondence further. Our minds work on different planes. I respect the late and learned botanical Professor Henslow and at one time corresponded with him, but did not on that account blindly accept his learned but mistaken Phyllotaxis theory, but pulled to pieces thousands of composite flowers and found out why and how it was quite wrong, in spite of high professional authority. One Hearn and Aristarchus, whoever they were, have nothing to do with the question, but Mr. Turney's extreme homage to "authority" is amusingly let out of the bag when he writes: (Hearn) gives all the classical authorities *even (!)* the work of Aristarchus himself. But who else should he cite, when he wanted to prove that Aristarchus knew all about our solar system? Mr. Turney has *no* right to say that I attempt "to belittle the great names of Tom, Jack and Harry." In the case of Darwin and Lyell, I merely proved from what they said themselves that one *explicitly*, the other *implicitly* denied being pioneers. I said no more. Did they "belittle" themselves? Having been much among different races I admit a preference for some peoples. The Buddhists are inclined I think to insist too dogmatically upon our feeling *identically* to all races. It is right and natural to have a "heart of love," as the Buddhist puts it, to all races and indeed all living things, but it is physically unnatural if not impossible to have the *same* sentiment to different races. It would be amusing to have Mr. Turney's inference as to my deplorable race prejudices (oh! horrible) per the sentence: "In what can the German, or rather German-Jew, Hersch or Herschell be considered as a pioneer." There is something to be said even for our deplorable idiosyncrasies. Coleridge I think it is writes:—

Trust him little who doth bring
To one level great and small,
And sets the shining crown of praise
Smiling on the head of all.

I forget the last stanza.

If Mr. Turney wishes to go to the source, let him study Macrobius' elaborate commentary upon Scipio's dream, but if he prefers to take things on trust from the compilations of, in general, somewhat muddled-headed English and German pedants, let him not forget that this fine gentry, *wir sach-männer*, some twenty years ago had demonstrated *with mathematical certainty* to their own satisfaction, that flying was a physical impossibility, and those who thought it possible insane! And 200 years after Leonardo da Vinci! W. W. STRICKLAND.

"THE VALUE OF SNOBBERY."

SIR,—If friend Fussell's paenegyric on snobbery is to be taken seriously, he finds admirable what most of us heartily dislike. There is a world of difference between snobbery and a permissible pride. The knut who swanks about town in his "plus-fours" (although he has never played a round of golf in his life) is a snob, whilst the maiden who, in the interests of sex attraction and racial survival, hides the dirtiness of her linen with that mysterious figment—one can hardly call it a garment—the camisole, is merely practising one of those artless deceptions on which our civilization is largely built. In emphasizing the prevalence of snobbery Mr. Fussell differs from Mr. Dennis Bradley who thinks it is now largely confined to "a few fortunate chorus ladies, who, by *strategic virtue*, have managed to climb from the foot-

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