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## Views and Opinions.

*(Continued from page 674.)*

### Religion and Morals.

We left off last week with the remark that so far as Christianity was concerned it was much oftener a case of a good man worsened by his creed than a good creed put to evil uses by a bad man. That point is important enough to bear a little elaboration. It is often assumed that we Freethinkers believe Christians to be mainly bad. The assumption would be both stupid and untrue. From our own point of view we should have less fault to find with Christianity if it only got hold of the stupid and the vicious. Our chief complaint is that it often gets hold of good men and women and turns their better qualities to bad uses. It takes the sense of loyalty to the group and contracts it so that it functions as loyalty to the Church or to the sect. It takes the healthy man's hatred of wrong and gives to wrong a theological meaning and again uses a social feeling to sectarian ends. And on the other side it finds a vent for some of the lower aspects of human qualities under guise of a religious duty. The root fact here is that man is a social animal and his nature is such that there are very few who dare to be deliberately and openly anti-social. Although it sounds paradoxical it is strictly true to say that there are very few who have the moral courage to be openly, deliberately, consciously dishonest. They must have some excuse for what they are doing, something that will hide from themselves the real nature of the wrong they are perpetrating. I think Bernard Shaw says somewhere that his chief quality is that he sees and describes things exactly as they are. But very few men—particularly when they are doing something which is generally declared to be wrong—have the courage to see themselves as they are. They must find some excuse for what they are doing, some justification to themselves for the evil they are committing.

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### The Christian "Dope."

It is at this point that Christianity has played, and still plays a powerful and demoralizing part. It has given to many of the evils of life just that moral cloak which made their performance comparatively easy, and even praiseworthy. To take the case of persecution

as an example. It can scarcely be gainsaid that the tendency of things on the secular plane is to breed toleration. Men and women are bound to live together; affairs which are the accepted consequences of natural operations easily become the topic of discussion, and a mutual give and take is established. No one is surprised if the other person differs with him, and in this way difference of opinion comes to be taken as an established fact. But in religion the tendency is all the other way. There is no admitted test of what is true such as is found in secular matters; dogmatism and assertion takes the place of argument and evidence. It is at any rate certain that if Christians could have looked at the fact and the act of religious persecution fairly and honestly they would scarcely have persisted in it as they have done. The stark brutality of it would have appealed to many. But Christianity gave persecution the sanction of moral endeavour by making persecution a religious duty. The persecutor was not indulging a primitive, anti-social feeling of intolerance, he was purifying society, protecting the honour of his god, preventing the immortal ruin of the people. In this way those who persecuted were prevented realizing the nature of their actions. And to add to the damage done Christianity used some of the best natures to this end. It seized upon the sensitiveness of those who really wished men well. It took the affection of men and women and turned it to God, and then held the heretic and the unbeliever up for execration as the enemy of God and mankind. It used their own better nature to their own brutalization and to the brutalization of others. Christianity provided the moral and religious sustenance necessary to keep the evil fact of persecution alive, and to make, so far as it could, intolerance one of the ingredients of our social life.

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### Distorting the Moral Values.

Much the same fact meets us in the case of war, although here there are other complications. Still, it is beyond doubt that had the clergy in their capacity as the moral guides of the people kept the real nature of war before them, had they taught that whatever be the occasion that brings it about, the same demoralizing consequences must always follow, by this time the conscience of the civilized world would have been sufficiently educated to have made war almost an impossibility. But in this case the part played by the Christian clergy in all ages has been to supply just the required moral sanction for war, and to have surrounded it with the religious justification that has kept the spirit of militarism alive. More than that it enabled man to gratify the lower passions of his nature, the unreasoning and primitive dislike of an outsider, sheer blood lust, etc., again under the guise of the loftiest motives—the love of country, and the wish to defend the weak and helpless, etc. Professions of peace and brotherhood amount to very little if all the time there is going on a very much stronger, even though surreptitious appeal to an exactly opposite set of passions. Lying during war becomes part of the national strategy, belittling of the "enemy," picturing

him as a very monument of wickedness, the deliberate cultivation of hatred of the foreigner, all these are part of the established machinery of war, and set going for this purpose it is not surprising to find these things playing their part in social and political life. The harmful reaction of religious influences on social life should form a very fruitful source of investigation for the historian of the future.

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#### Moral Compensation.

Still one more illustration of the same point. In their interesting and highly instructive series of books on the position of the labourer in town and village Mr. and Mrs. Hammond dwell upon the enormous importance of the changes that took place in this country from 1760 to 1832. The worst features of the factory system were developed during that period, the slave trade was active, children and women were employed in mines, workhouse children were being practically sold into slavery for the benefit of the mill-owners, and the people of England were finally driven off the land to supply the labour armies in the towns. Another writer, Lord Beaconsfield, put it that during this period the English people lost almost every shred of genuine freedom that they possessed. But a point which has not been stressed—probably because most writers still seem afraid of the power of the Churches—is that during this same period there was seen an almost unexampled burst of religious activity. The Wesleyan movement came to its greatest activity, and most of the large evangelical and proselytising societies were formed. I do not mean by this that there was a deliberate conspiracy in this matter and that religion was deliberately used in order to “dope” the people. I am always suspicious about these alleged plots of either the governing or the working classes. Neither possess the superlative cunning that such plots credit them with. Besides the amount of conscious villainy is never so very large. It is the villainy that is perpetrated under a cloak that is chiefly responsible for the trouble in life. What I do mean is that it was precisely because Christianity provided an outlet for what the Churches called man’s religious and moral nature that such wholesale wrong-doing was possible. A compensation was set up, and the man whose money was gained from the labour of nearly naked women in mines, or the murder of little children in factories, found himself soothed by his support of a Society for Propagating the Gospel, or one for sending the Bible to the peoples of the world.

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#### Christianity and Human Nature.

When one speaks of the brutalization of human nature by Christian influences, one is reminded of the splendid characters that have been associated with that religion. That may be admitted, and it is equally true of nearly any organization that one might name. But it is not quite clear why the goodness of any man or woman belonging to a Church should be treated as a product of that sect any more than their goodness should be attributed to the theatre they visit or the morning paper to which they subscribe. Goodness is not, after all, confined to a particular sect, in some measure it is common to the whole of the race, and even to the higher animal world. And if it is not peculiar to any one group there is very little ground for attributing it to the influence of one in particular. Clearly it cannot be held that Christians possess virtues that others do not, nor that they have particular virtues developed in a conspicuous manner. Christians are not more sober than Mohammedans, they are not more tolerant than Buddhists, they are not kinder to children than the heathen Japanese or the uncivilized Esquimaux, they are not more truthful nor

more honest than non-Christians. They do not outshine others in any of the virtues, they are simply more boastful about their own alleged superiority. And, as a matter of fact, the existence of super-sensitive people within the Christian Church is quite compatible with all I have said as to the demoralizing influence of Christianity. Everyone must have observed that the contemplation of cruelty breeds two opposite consequences. In the one direction it will harden the character until it becomes brutalized in turn, and in the other it will create a sensitiveness to suffering that is not far removed from the morbid. So it has happened in the history of Christianity that we have these two opposite results from the Christian creed. On the one hand we have had the sensitive person made still more sensitive, and when worked upon by his creed may do things which he would not otherwise do—at one moment torturing himself in the belief that he is benefiting others, the next torturing the heretic in order to keep his creed pure. And on the other hand we have had whole masses of people kept more brutal than they would otherwise have been. These are not contradictory consequences, they are the normal results of the one thing acting upon different characters and temperaments. Christians may point to the first without understanding it, they also lament the latter without seeing that their own creed has a large share in its perpetuation. It is left for the Freethinker to point out that but for the age-long influence of the Christian creed the development of mankind might have followed a more rational path than it has done. Of all the forms of slavery that have afflicted the race man’s bondage to his gods has been the most disastrous. It has distorted his virtues and exaggerated his vices. He has been in bondage to the enlarged image of his less civilized self. It is the earliest form of slavery known to the race, and it is the hardest of all to overcome.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

### Rev. T. Rhondda Williams and the Knowledge of God.

EVER since the retirement of Mr. R. J. Campbell from Congregationalism into Episcopacy, in which he had been trained from childhood, little has been heard of Mr. Rhondda Williams beyond the sole fact that he became Dr. Campbell’s successor as minister of the Congregational Church at Brighton whose work there had made him famous and opened his way to the City Temple. On being re-ordained as Priest of the Established Church Dr. Campbell publicly disowned the views contained in the *New Theology* (1907) and returned to such orthodoxy as is represented in the Catholic Party in the Anglican Church. We do not imagine that Mr. Rhondda Williams relinquished his views as a New Theologian, but he kept them in abeyance for a while, so far at least as his articles in the Press were concerned. In point of fact Mr. Rhondda Williams was a New Theologian long before Mr. Campbell. It was soon after Mr. Campbell became minister of the City Temple that the *New Theology* became an enthusiastic and popular propaganda, and while it lasted there was no movement like it. But its life was brief, and now we hear nothing of it, though it still lives under another name. Mr. Rhondda Williams has undergone no radical change. Whether he has a flourishing church or not we do not know, and possibly his style of oratory is not such as to easily fill a building with eager crowds.

In the *Christian World* of October 18 there is an article by him entitled “On Knowing God.” At the very start he makes a definite attack upon a popular

error of the Christian Church cherished by the orthodox. He says:—

It is difficult to understand how the Christian Church, with the writings of Paul before it, could ever have claimed at any time to be in possession of a full and final revelation of the mystery of God. Paul certainly made no such claim himself. In the Epistle to the Romans, when he is considering the rejection of the Gospel by the Jews, and trying to find a place for it somewhere in the great plan of God, he ends up by saying, "O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God. How unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past tracing out.".....In the Epistles to the Philippians, though he claimed to worship by the Spirit of God, and to the glory in Christ Jesus, and to count all earthly things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord, in spite of all this he says: "I count not myself yet to have apprehended."

It is true that many New Testament writers are wonderfully humble in the claims which they make for themselves. Paul did not claim to possess actual knowledge of anything. All the things we now have, prophecies, tongues, they all shall be done away. Love is the only thing that is immortal. "Now," Paul says, "we see in a mirror darkly." This is equivalent to a confession of ignorance. Let Alford, a Christian commentator, be our guide as to the meaning of 1 Cor. xiii, 12: "For now, in our present condition, until the Lord's coming, we see in a glass, literally through a mirror, according to the popular illusion, which regards the object, really seen behind the mirror as seen through it. We must think not of our mirrors of glass, but of the imperfectly reflecting metallic mirrors of the ancients." According to so conservative a commentator as Dean Alford, all the spiritual knowledge the early disciples thought they possessed came to them through a metal mirror, and things so seen no one could be quite sure what they were. Preaching on this text a few years ago in a London Church, Dr. John Hutton frankly admitted that through his metal mirror Paul acquired no knowledge whatever, that he lived entirely by faith, and not by knowledge at all. Even Mr. Rhondda Williams practically agrees with Alford and Dr. Hutton, saying:—

Now we see as in a mirror (metal mirror) darkly, but then face to face. In spite of having the Christian revelation, and of believing in it with all his soul, he declares that that which is perfect is yet to come. He has no manner of doubt as to the nature of God that it is love; but his perception of God is dense and obscure, it is not a full direct vision, he can look but at reflections of God as in a mirror.

Mr. Rhondda Williams says that if this was the case with the great apostle it is no wonder that we often feel how obscure our vision of God is. Mr. Rhondda Williams maintains that anything like a clear and unobscure vision of God is not possible in this life; but at this point two difficulties meet us, namely, what grounds are there for believing that a clearer and more inspiring vision will be granted us in a future life? and secondly who has a right to assure us that there is another world? Mr. Williams is in serious doubts on many points, but whence does he obtain his security on those two points? Not from his inner consciousness, not from any visit paid to or received from the Great Beyond, but from his readiness to believe what he cannot know, from his imagination working without reference to the intellect, from ignorance and superstition depending upon emotionalism.

Quoting largely from Baron Von Hügel, Mr. Williams introduces no new idea. Fancy anybody saying at this time that "the intellect of man was never given him for the purpose of discovering the spiritual nature of the universe," but was given him

"for practical purposes, for purposes, that is, of the practical life. Logic by itself is not a sure instrument of spiritual discovery, the organ of revelation is the whole soul of man. Humble-mindedness, then, is of first importance in this sphere, and should always accompany the desire to know now of God."

Baron Von Hügel does not think that a perpetually clear vision of God is desirable. He says that it is only in regard to numbers and special things that we have clear knowledge:—

Let me take an illustration of my own. Here is this book. If I say that it is six inches long, four inches wide, one pound in weight, all those notions are perfectly clear. But if I say, "This book is a real existence," then I immediately open up all sorts of controversies, and the meaning of what I say turns out to be not clear at all.

J. T. LLOYD.

(To be Continued.)

## Raising Cain.

The Articles of the Church of England are out of date; its services are out of date; and its ministers are men to whom such things do not matter because they are out of date themselves.  
—Bernard Shaw.

It is a far cry from Walt Whitman to Bernard Shaw, but the most brilliant of contemporary dramatists must be regarded, like the "tan-faced poet of the West," as a pioneer. Shaw's latest play, "Back to Methuselah," produced at Birmingham, began on Tuesday and continued in serial form until the following Friday evening. It was sufficiently lengthy to satisfy even that legendary Biblical figure of old age. A suspicion of this garrulousness seems to oppress the author, for, in a prefatory note to the published edition of the play, he says:—

I am doing the best I can at my age. My powers are waning; but so much the better for those who found me unbearably brilliant when I was in my prime.

Of course, this is but "pretty Fanny's way," and must not be taken too seriously. There is in the play a veritable Niagara of words and ideas. Moreover, the work is not so much one play as a panorama, somewhat on the colossal scale of Victor Hugo's *La Légende des Siècles*. So far as the plays are concerned, the author starts with the mythical Garden of Eden, including the talkative snake, and flying leaps are taken to the years 2,170, and 3,000, finally reaching 31,920, which is facetiously described "as far as thought can reach," though a figure more or less should make but little difference.

Shaw's object is not, as was Victor Hugo's, to show something of the progress of humanity, but simply to supply a pictorial criticism of the evolution hypothesis, and a score of other things. For scientists are really much more modest than the author of *Back to Methuselah* allows; and it is he, not they, who regard evolution as a "dogma." There may be true and false theories of evolution, but it is very doubtful if a series of imaginary and highly-coloured conversations, however brilliant, will finally decide the matter. Not even a cardboard and tinsel snake, nor "Adam" and "Eve," and "Cain," all wearing tights and talking the best Bernard Shaw, can displace Darwin, Haeckel, and other careful and trained students of Nature. Science is more than a coruscating collection of brilliant epigrams. Science is, in the last analysis, ordered thought; an organized and well-built structure on a deep foundation. Shaw is far safer when he is talking on art, on vegetarianism, on society, and on religion. He understands aesthetics, but he knows little beyond the vocabulary of science.

Bernard Shaw, despite his chameleon-like changes, always maintains stoutly the rottenness of the prevailing ideals. He raises Cain in *Back to Methuselah*, and he has been "raising Cain" all through his literary life. He has proved himself a merciless critic in his novels, his musical, sociological, and theatrical reviews, no less than in his plays. He possesses an uncanny gift of seeing all round a subject, and this has often proved disconcerting to friend and foe alike. Is he writing to Benjamin Tucker, the apostle of Individualism, he will tell him that true Anarchism can only be reached through Socialism. When addressing Socialists, he warns them of the dangers of Socialism to personal liberty. He jibes at religious people for their barbarism, and scoffs at Freethinkers for their devotion to Science. When he belonged to the Shelley Society, he told the members bluntly that he expected all the members were Atheists, Republicans, and Vegetarians, and nearly broke up the organization on the spot. He has proclaimed himself an Atheist, and preached acceptance in the City Temple. He has written a Free Love novel, and is happily married himself. And he has consistently advertised himself at the top of his voice. Sometimes the audiences have been near lynching him; but the brilliant Irish wit has come to the rescue, and the most audacious of jesters has been forgiven for his antics and buffooneries.

After all, Shaw's plays contain his best work. His genius shines everywhere, but it is brightest in his plays. Even his fugitive newspaper articles retain an evergreen freshness and survive the test of republication. Shaw's comedies, however, are the best seen on the British stage since the Restoration dramatists. And, remember, the main secret of Congreve's and Wycherley's interplay of character is not mere wantonness and depravity. It is the absolute equality of equipment with which men and women pitch their battles of wit.

Bernard Shaw is, indisputably, the most brilliant living dramatist. His plays have crossed so many frontiers, and have been played in all the chief cities of the civilized world. The purely parochial success of an ordinary writer sinks into insignificance beside a reputation of this kind. It is well that this is so, for he has for two generations given real stimulus to thought, and challenged so many lies of our civilization. His life work is a most worthy monument of the value of iconoclasm.

MIMNERMUS.

## The Exodus From Egypt.

There is in the Egyptian inscriptions no mention whatever of the Exodus of the Children of Israel from Egypt.—*The Oxford, Helps to the Study of the Bible*, p. 171.

We have, indeed, no record of Joseph's administration, or of the oppression and the Exodus.....No positive mention on any Egyptian monument of the slavery of the Hebrews has yet been found. We know that the great works of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties, and especially the latter, were in part at least executed by foreign slaves. It has been argued that one race so employed, the Aperu, correspond to the Hebrews. The identification is, however, philosophically faulty, and Dr. Brugsch has rejected it on historical grounds.—R. S. Poole, "Ancient Egypt." *Contemporary Review*, January, 1879.

WHEN Champollion, in the early part of the nineteenth century, began to decipher the meaning of the Egyptian hieroglyphics, great interest was manifested by the public, who confidently expected to find among the inscriptions confirmation of the events recorded in the Scripture. Confirmation then sorely needed to combat the uncompromising attack delivered by Thomas Paine in the *Age of Reason*, published in 1794 and quickly circulated throughout England, France and America. Many unsuccessful attempts had been

made to make the inscriptions deliver up their secrets. One gentleman, in 1810, held the opinion that the inscription of the portico of Dendera contained a translation into hieroglyphics of the Hundredth Psalm.

Dr. Wallis Budge says:—

Still more absurd statements were made: it was gravely asserted that one text contained an account of a battle between the wicked and the good in the early days of the Egyptian Empire about 4,000 B.C.; that portions of the Bible would be found in another, and that a third contained abstruse philosophical ideas. It is sad to see what an amount of learning and energy was utterly wasted in the attempt to prove these absurd theories.<sup>1</sup>

For nine years—between 1818 and 1827—Champollion worked at the problem that had hitherto defeated the utmost efforts of the scholars of Europe, and ultimately success crowned his efforts. Since that time many thousand Egyptian inscriptions and papyri have been translated, but, notwithstanding the multitude of books issued since then, claiming that the monuments confirm the Bible, the fact remains that not a single reference has been found to any of the events recorded in the first five books of the Bible.

But, exclaims the Bible apologist, "What about the great archæologists, like Naville, Professor Sayce, and other great authorities, who declare that the monuments do confirm the Bible record? They tell us that the Israelites entered Egypt under the Hyksos, or Shepherd Kings, and the Exodus took place four hundred years later, during the reign of Meriempthah or Meneptah. And further, what about the finding of the store cities of Ramses and Pithom, built by Hebrew slave labour, and the illustrations upon the Egyptian monuments showing the Hebrews at work, and actually mentioning them under the name of Apeiru, which scholars tell us is the equivalent for Hebrew, and the actual name of Israel is found upon a stone inscription of the reign of Meneptah the Pharaoh of the Exodus?"

The only piece of truth in this list is the last. It is a fact that the name of Israel does occur as stated, and it appears at the most awkward moment possible to prove the truth of the Bible story. All the rest is guesswork, surmise and conjecture.

Prof. T. Eric Peet, who is Professor of Egyptology in the University of Liverpool, in his book, published last year, has gone carefully into the question of the bearing of the latest discoveries in Egypt, upon the statements recorded in the Bible. Professor Peet puts the results into plain language, free from technicalities, easy for the plain man to understand. He does not ask you to take anything upon trust, he places all the evidence before you, and is absolutely free from bias to one side or the other. It is by far the best book yet written upon the subject. We propose to give our readers some of the results at which the Professor has arrived.

We are told by Bible apologists that bricks have been found in Egypt, dating from the time of the captivity of the Hebrews, made without straw. These bricks, it is claimed, are some of the veritable bricks made by the Hebrews, when Pharaoh declined to supply them with the necessary straw. Prof. Peet thinks the argument is based upon the statement of Mr. Villiers Stuart, who visited the site of Pithom during the excavations of 1883. He says:—

I carefully examined round the chamber walls, and I noticed that some of the corners of the brickwork throughout were built of bricks *without straw*. I do not remember to have met anywhere in Egypt bricks so made.

Prof. Peet remarks upon this:—

The implication obviously intended is that here we

<sup>1</sup> Wallis Budge, *The Dwellers On the Nile*, p. 30.

have a proof of the accuracy of the Bible narrative, for here in the walls of Pithom, a store-city built by the Hebrew bondsmen, are the very bricks which they were forced to make without straw. It is almost inconceivable that any traveller in Egypt should make this statement with regard to the use of straw in bricks, for though straw has been used both in ancient and modern times, its use is somewhat rare, more particularly in ancient times. What is more, the writer of this passage in the narrative is certainly under some strange delusion as to the function of the straw when used. Its purpose is to bind the mud more tightly together, though as a matter of fact the Nile mud coheres so well of itself that no binding material is really necessary. Consequently the refusal of the task-masters to provide the Israelites with straw would not in the slightest degree increase the difficulty of their labours. As a piece of local colour the whole incident is unsatisfactory and goes to prove the writer's ignorance of Egyptian customs rather than his close acquaintance with them, as is so often averred.<sup>2</sup>

But the best part has yet to be told, for the Bible says nothing about the bricks being made without straw. In Exodus (v. 7) Pharaoh is represented as commanding the taskmasters: "Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore; let them go and gather straw for themselves." And at verse 12 we are told: "So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble instead of straw." The stubble, of course, being the remaining stalk, after the corn is cut. The worst of Christian apologists is that they don't know the contents of their own Bible.

Then there is the argument from the Egyptian names found in the Old Testament; the Professor observes:—

For many years biblical students insisted on believing that the names Potiphar, Poti-pherah, Asenath and Zaphenathpaneah were good Egyptian names of the Hyksos period or thereabouts, and it is only quite lately that the efforts of Egyptian philologists have really succeeded in dispelling this illusion, which indeed still lingers on in the minds of the uncritical. Potiphar and Potipherah are two spellings of a common Egyptian name which means "He whom Ra has given." Names of the type "He whom such and such a god has given" are unknown in Egypt before the twenty-first dynasty, and do not become at all frequent before the twenty-second, roughly the ninth and eighth centuries B.C.<sup>3</sup>

But if the Exodus took place during the reign of Meneptah, as most of the apologists hold, then the argument collapses, for Meneptah came to the throne 1225 B.C., and these names belong to a period three or four hundred years later.

There are four other Egyptian words, besides names of people, in the story, and we are told:—

The Egyptian words actually used in the Hebrew of the Joseph story gives us no help whatever. In the first place they are all words which were commonly used in Hebrew, and which occur in other passages of the Old Testament; and in the second place they are all words which had a very long life in Egyptian and can be taken to point to no one period more than any other (*Ibid.* p. 103).

One of the words "Pharaoh," literally "The Great House," was commonly used as an official designation of the king from the eighteenth dynasty onward; and corresponded to our terms of Sultan, or Shah.

The writer of Exodus never once mentions the name of the Egyptian king ruling at the time of the oppression, or the Exodus, he always uses the term Pharaoh.

W. MANN.

(To be Continued.)

## Dying Like a Dog.

"DOTH God care for oxen?" asks Paul, and the question does him great discredit. Why should not God care for oxen? Why should he not care for all his creatures? It may not be true that the beetle crushed beneath our feet feels a corporal pang as great as when a giant dies. Nevertheless it feels it in its degree, according to its position in the scale of existence. Consideration to what we call the lower animals should not depend upon their intellectual powers. It was well remarked by Bentham that the question is, not do they think, but do they feel? If they are susceptible to pain, they are morally within the scope of our regard. And if we are under an obligation to consider them, how much more so is God, who called them into being, and who should not only be wiser than the wisest man, but better than the best.

This exclamation of Paul's puts Christianity, in this respect, on a lower level than the higher Judaism. Even the Mosaic Law forbids the muzzling of the ox that treads out the corn. It is also said in the Old Testament that the good man is merciful unto his beast. Christianity has ever been remarkable in its disregard of the rights of animals. In fact, it allows them none. God gave Adam dominion over them, and that lordship has descended to his posterity. No ill-treatment of them is a sin, although it may be regrettable. Now and then a Catholic saint, like St. Francis, overflowing with an invincible sweetness of nature, recognizes the brotherhood of the winged and four-footed creation; but the Catholic Church has never recognized it officially; on the contrary, it still teaches the opposite doctrine. They have no souls. Only man has a soul. And it must be admitted that sometimes he has only enough, as Ben Jonson said, to save his body the expense of salt.

It is strange how the Bible insults dogs. Certainly they have objectionable features. Their habits are liable to be offensive when they have not been properly trained—though the same may be said of human beings, and especially of savages. They are devoid of sexual modesty. But then again there are many millions of men and women, and some whole tribes and even nations, that are not overburdened with this virtue. When all is said against him that can be said, however, the great fact remains that the dog has been an invaluable friend to mankind. It is difficult to see how men could have passed from the nomadic to the pastoral state without the dog's assistance. The shepherd still knows his worth. Moreover, it must be allowed that the dog is generally brave, and nearly always faithful. He sticks to his master in all weathers and all fortunes. He will not forsake a tramp for a millionaire. He usually resents the lifting of a man's hand against a woman, and he puts up with endless worries and indignities from children, because he knows their helplessness, and feels they do not mean him any harm.

A few weeks ago, in the city of Hertford, if we recollect aright, half a streetful of people kept snugly indoors while a brutal ruffian was slowly murdering a poor woman outside. They heard his blows and oaths, they heard her pleas and groans, but they did nothing. They left the matter to the police, who were naturally engaged elsewhere. Had there been a dog in the street, it is ten to one that he would have interested himself in the affair. Very likely he would have flown at the ruffian. Anyhow he would have uttered a vehement protest, which might have brought some backing.

The human is higher than the canine, but sometimes the dog is the nobler animal of the two. Yet the Christians have always used the dog's name to express

<sup>2</sup> T. E. Peet, *Egypt and the Old Testament*, pp. 99-100.

<sup>3</sup> T. E. Peet, *Egypt and the Old Testament*, pp. 100-101.

their deepest sense of contempt. How common it is to hear them say of an Atheist that he "dies like a dog," when a dog has often died sublimely, fighting against desperate odds, and pouring out his heart's blood for his master, or his master's children, or even his master's property. What could be more touching than the story of the dog whose master succumbed in the snow? When they were found, the man had still some living warmth about his heart. But the dog was frozen dead. He had shielded his master with his own body. He had died inch by inch to save the one he loved.

Byron had a favourite Newfoundland dog, whose memory he has enshrined in famous verses. "Boatswain," the poet wrote to his friend Hodgson, "is dead!—he expired in a state of madness, after suffering much, yet retaining all the gentleness of his nature to the last; never attempting to do the least injury to anyone near him." Boatswain was buried in the garden of Newstead, and his virtues were celebrated in an inscription on his monument. Then came the verses, from which we extract the following:—

But the poor dog, in life the firmest friend  
The first to welcome, foremost to defend,  
Whose honest heart is still his master's own,  
Who labours, fights, lives, breathes for him alone,  
Unhonour'd falls, unnoticed all his worth,  
Denied in heaven the soul he held on earth:  
While man, vain insect! hopes to be forgiven,  
And claims himself a sole exclusive heaven.

This is the finest part of Byron's poem on Boatswain. The rest is marred by the poet's extravagant and affected misanthropy.

A hundred years before Byron, another great satirist—not the greatest, but the most finished—had put in a good word for the dog. Pope's splendid *Essay on Man*, whatever the admirers of "true poetry" may say against it, is full of good sense and philosophy, and marked by astonishingly fine versification. And although this has nothing to do with our immediate subject, we cannot resist the temptation of saying, by the way, that Ruskin has done justice to Pope in his beautiful *Lectures on Art*. Ruskin brackets Pope and Virgil as "two great masters of the absolute art of language." "They are," he says, "the two most accomplished Artists, merely as such, whom I know in literature." He notices Pope's "serene and just benevolence," which placed him, in theology, two centuries in advance of his time, and "enabled him to sum the law of noble life in two lines which, so far as I know, are the most complete, the most concise, and the most lofty expression of moral temper existing in English words." This is grand praise, but, if we may corroborate Ruskin without impertinence, it is richly deserved. Here are the two lines in question:—

Never elated, while one man's oppress'd;  
Never dejected, while another's bless'd.

Think over these lines, dear reader, and the more you reflect upon them the more they will fill you with admiration. If they do not, there is something wrong with you, and you had better consult a doctor.

But let us get back to the dog, and quote the lines of Pope already referred to:—

Lo, the poor Indian! whose untutor'd mind  
Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind;  
His soul, proud Science never taught to stray  
Far as the solar walk, or milky way;  
Yet simple Nature to his hope has giv'n,  
Behind the cloud-topt hill, an humbler heav'n;  
Some safer world in depth of woods embrac'd,  
Some happier island in the watery waste,  
Where slaves once more their native land behold,  
No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold.  
To Be, contents his natural desire,  
He asks no Angel's wings, no Seraph's fire;  
But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,  
His faithful dog shall bear him company.

Call this poetry or not, according to the catholicity or limitations of your taste—it is certainly magnificent writing; and nothing could be more masterly than the way in which the most terrible satire is flung, without producing the least chaos, into the midst of that pastoral scene.

The poor Indian—not the Hindu, mark, good reader—the "savage" of North America, not the "barbarian" of India—believed his faithful dog would bear him company in the happy hunting-grounds of Paradise. With his dog he might be happy, particularly as he escaped the Christians who enslaved him on earth, tormented him like devils, and drove him to the death-in-life of their gold mines. Talking to him about dying like a dog would have invited the retort that he would sooner die like a dog than live like a Christian.

Pope is said to have been a Catholic, but he was really a Freethinker. In the *Essay on Man* he versified the philosophy of the sceptical Bolingbroke. Everyone knows that Byron was a Freethinker. Let us now take another Freethinker—the late Matthew Arnold. He also wrote beautiful verses on a dead dog. *Geist's Grave* is one of the later poems which showed that he had not altogether lost his singing voice while drudging as Inspector of Schools, and writing volumes of controversial prose. "Dear little friend" he calls the dead Geist, and praises his "loving heart" and "patient soul." After remarking that Nature, with all her infinite resources, never quite repeats the past, nor reproduces a personality, Arnold continues:—

Stern law of every mortal lot!  
Which man, proud man, finds hard to bear,  
And builds himself I know not what  
Of second life I know not where.

But thou, when struck thine hour to go,  
On us who stood despondent by,  
A meek last glance of love didst throw,  
And humbly lay thee down to die.

Well for all of us will it be, when the end comes, if we only die like that dog; with a last glance of love on dear ones around us, and a serene submission to the fiat of Nature. We like that word "humbly." It is foolish to resist the inevitable, like a kicking, spluttering child in the grasp of a giant. Death should always bring resignation. This, indeed, is all that religionists mean when they talk of bowing to the will of God. There is a world of wisdom in the old proverb that "What can't be cured must be endured"; or, in the great language of Shakespeare:—

But let determin'd things to destiny  
Hold unbewail'd their way.

We may even go beyond that. For death comes to all, and will come, in spite of our unwelcome. Often at last it comes as a deliverer; and then we may cry with brave Walt Whitman, "Come, lovely and soothing Death!"

Men die and dogs die, and a living dog is better than a dead man. Let the Christian cease his foolish talk about the Atheist's dying like a dog. When his time comes he will have to die in just the same fashion. Meanwhile he might ponder the words of one of his own "sacred" writers:—

For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them; as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath.....All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?

Ah, if the clergy only wrote like that! We should read them oftener. But let us not omit this "sacred" writer's conclusion:—

Wherefore I perceive that there is nothing better than that a man should rejoice in his own works; for

that is his portion; for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?

There, good Christian—you who whimper about dying like a dog—you are answered out of your own Book. And don't reply that the Atheist, like the Devil, can cite Scripture for his purpose. Why should he not? He accepts a good thing wherever he finds it.

G. W. FOOTE.

June, 1899.

### Acid Drops.

The American Methodist Church claims to be making headway in China. We have come across these claims before, and they will seldom stand careful examination. But it is interesting to note the methods employed. The last report says:—

With the doctor, the nurse, the hospital, the dispensary, the travelling health exhibit, the City sanitary campaign, the agriculturist, the forester, the orphanage, the training class for mothers, the day nursery, and with many other aids, the Christian Church is coming to bear its part in conserving the health of China.

Which leaves us wondering as to where the power of the Gospel comes in. It seems as though these missionaries are making headway with everything except Christianity. And we can imagine those who supply the funds picturing the "heathen" Chinese listening hungrily to the preaching of the Gospel, when all the time those who do listen are only interested in forestry, or sanitation, or something of that kind.

There seems to be some trouble over the anniversary of Armistice Day this year. November 11 falls on a Sunday, and naturally the clergy do not like to encourage gatherings round war memorials, which would have the tendency to keep people away from church. So it was decided that there should be no official gathering round the Cenotaph in Whitehall this year, but the two minutes silence should be observed in church. This would have the dual effect of not doing anything to keep people away from church, but of inducing some to go. But there are complaints, so it is just possible that the order may be revised between now and November 11.

We should ourselves think very much more of these anniversary services if they were devoted to the useful end of teaching the world to turn against the horror and the barbarity of war. If it were pointed out that these men died in a war that was proclaimed to be a war to end war, and that the real lesson to be learned from their death was that war should be banished from civilized society we could appreciate it. But everyone knows that is not the case. What takes place is the glorification of the soldier, and the sometimes silent, sometimes vocal, inducement to young men to see that our armies and navies are kept at full fighting strength or these men would have died in vain. In this way Cenotaphs, war memorials, military monuments and the like all serve as a means of giving new strength to militarism. We are not honouring the dead so much as betraying the dead when we use their sacrifice as a means of perpetuating the very evil which many who died thought they were fighting to destroy. We would like to see more monuments to the heroes of peace, and fewer to those of war.

Viscount Grey of Falloden has no illusions on the imminence of war. His letter to the *Times* is a resumé of his recent speech in the House of Lords, and when the Bishop of London has adjusted matters in Hyde Park, we hope he will make an effort to join Lord Grey and all sensible people who can see the end of a civilization. There is no question of individual morals in this problem, but as war is now reduced to an absurdity, with financiers laughing in the background, we will forgive the Bishop everything if he will put his real shoulder to the real wheel—if only to spare us the sight of little children gassed.

The Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem, speaking at Church House, Westminster, said that Christians had at first welcomed the Zionist movement as a fulfilment of prophecy, but five years later they find the whole thing barren. This worthy prelate will require a military escort to protect him from rival religious bodies when he returns to the land "flowing with milk and honey."

Mr. Granville Bantock, the composer, whilst in Canada, stayed at a Trappist monastery. The Trappists are a silent order of monks, and Mr. Bantock said: "I wanted quiet, and where else could I have found it so well?" The composer might have gone to the nearest cemetery.

Unconscious humour is often excellent. In a Pater-noster Row shop a book entitled *Beauty in Religion* was placed next to a picture postcard of the Bishop of London wearing full ecclesiastical war-paint, including a metal pastoral crook.

A short time ago the Billposters' Association banned a poster at Islington depicting a figure of Christ straddling over a brick tabernacle. The billposters need not have worried, for smaller copies of the tabooed advertisement have been displayed since in the windows of private houses in the neighbourhood. It should serve, however, to show the billposters that they are not the only pebbles on the beach.

The police guarded Dumbarton Parish Church on a recent Sunday following the rector's action in voting against feeding necessitous school-children. Over four hundred unemployed men and women demonstrated outside the church. This is a striking example of Christian charity in practice.

"All for Love; or how the Rev. H. O. Cavalier raised the wind," should make a good sketch. This gentleman, possibly through a study of the financial papers has issued a notice in the village of Great Bridlington, Northampton, to the effect that artificial wreaths and globes must be removed from the churchyard at once, and that he will not allow them to be replaced unless a fee of ten guineas is paid. Thus the sceptic will see that not everything is without money and without price in a profession that is following in the wake of Trades Unions. We trust that this reverend gentleman will make a charge for jam jars, and thus demonstrate to the world where we may find the gross materialist with pious other-world prattle.

The Prime Minister in his speech at Northampton might have made a happier choice in mentioning movements that sprang from the heart of the people. If, as he stated, the Boy Scout and the Salvation Army movements had their origin in the heart of the people, most people who do not mistake noise for sense, would prefer something for a change that springs from the head of the people.

A left-handed recognition of Atheism is to be found in a report by Miss Forrest who was a delegate at the Fifth International Congress on Secondary Education held at Prague. We read in this report that some delegates "had found it possible to give ethical teaching to children of different faiths and offend neither Roman Catholic nor Protestant, Jew, Mahomedan, or atheist. Either the printer's devil or pettiness is responsible for the small "a," but in any case the form is less important than the meaning of the word.

There is quite a mediæval-Christian flavour about the announcement of the Blackburn Corporation that the public baths will be entirely closed on Sundays. Bathing was once denounced by Christian leaders as a heathenish custom, and for centuries there were no dirtier people in the world than Christians. All the same we wonder whether the Blackburn governing authorities really think

the Lord would be *very* angry if some Christians took a bath on the Lord's Day?

A "medical correspondent" of the *Evening Standard*, commenting on Mr. Justice Darling's curious remark that in his young days people did not suffer from neurasthenia, says that "Many of the violent outbursts of religious fanaticisms which disfigured the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were due to the excessive number of neurasthenics in the population." This is quite correct, but there is no reason why the survey should be restricted to the two centuries named. It is a phenomenon that is common to all ages of religious history.

It is this side of religious history which forms the main theme of Mr. Cohen's *Religion and Sex*. This is the only work in this country which deals at length with the part played by morbid mental states in the development and the perpetuation of religious beliefs. Mr. Cohen shows that from the earliest ages, particularly during the Christian ages, what men and women took for religious illumination and intercourse with God or Jesus Christ was no more than a misunderstanding of abnormal or morbid mental states or of distorted and misdirected sexual feeling. The evidence for this is large and extensive, but although a writer here and there has indicated the truth it has never been made the subject of extended study—at least in this country. Mr. Cohen's work on the subject is still available for those who are interested in such matters, and no one can really understand religion while leaving this aspect of it aside.

Rev. F. B. Meyer writes to the *Daily Express* that he is heartily in sympathy with the proposal that a special day should be set aside for united intercession for those suffering from cancer. There is nothing like leather, and Mr. Meyer is naturally in agreement with any proposal that will bring him and his fellow parsons to the front. But we wonder whether he really believes that a day of intercession will do anything to cure cancer? And if he believes that his Mumbo-Jumbo can cure cancer in response to prayers, what opinion does he expect other folk to have of this fetish of his for not curing cancer without waiting to be prayed to? Many medical men have worked for years to try and get a cure for this and other diseases, and many have not hesitated to inoculate themselves with a disease in order to help to find a remedy. Put a doctor of that kind at the side of a deity who can cure if he will, but he will not unless there is a day of united intercession to ask him to do it! A deity of that kind is not fit for decent human society. It is enough to make a man sorry for creating him.

There is a preacher in Quincy, Ill., U.S.A., who stands well over six feet. He advertises that the tallest preacher will give the shortest sermon. If that sort of thing takes on there will be enquiries on the part of some congregations for preachers ten and twelve feet in height. And some would not object if the preacher used stilts—that is if the sermon were in the inverse ratio to his height.

Canon Sewell is afraid of finding the names of clergymen on the list of shareholders in breweries. A correspondent of the *Daily Sketch* tries to cheer the Canon by telling him that their names on the list would probably have the effect of "preventing any pushing of the sale of the alleged evil article." The idea that anyone before selling drink would look to see whether clergymen held shares in that particular brewery is almost as ridiculous as imagining that a clergyman would not wish the dividends to be as high as possible, and therefore, the sales as great as possible. So far as our observation goes clergymen do not care much from what source their dividends are derived. What they are concerned with is the public knowing too much about it. At any rate we think we are correct in saying that there was never any protest from the clergy against other parsons holding such shares until it was pointed out that there was something curious in clergymen denouncing the drink traffic in sermons and

at the same time drawing dividends from the trade. Moreover, to be thorough the clergy would have to refuse to take money made in selling drink. And when were clergymen known to refuse money—whatever was the manner in which it was gained?

Having laid down very strict regulations as to the dress of women who shall be honoured by approaching his sacred person, the Pope has now issued a further order that women who use perfume are to be excluded from the Vatican. We may remind his Holiness that the lavish use of perfumes during the Middle Ages was made necessary by the filthiness of Christians. Something had to be done to drown the smell, and perfumes offered an easy method of doing this. But to-day one can conceive the peddling character of the intelligence that has nothing better to concern itself with than the kind of dress women wear and the kind of perfume they use. Meanwhile we would suggest that the smell of incense is also a kind of perfume, and the Pope should be logical and exclude that from the churches.

Prayers were offered in Birmingham for the recovery of the Bishop of the City from his illness. We notice that the Bishop did not trust wholly to this. Doctors were also in attendance. The Bishop evidently agrees with Voltaire that prayer is useful in cases of illness provided they are accompanied by a proper amount of physic.

The British people, says Lord Guisborough, can claim to be God's covenant people. So may anyone. But for our part we wonder why anyone ever wants to make the claim. Judging by those who do claim to be his chosen we can see in it nothing complimentary to either his judgment or the ones that are selected.

Prebendary Reynolds, of St. Mary Aldermary, Queen Victoria Street, is in favour of kinema services in the churches. He thinks it may induce some people to come to church "out of curiosity to see what it is like." So much for the glorious gospel and man's thirst for religion! They are to be brought there out of mere curiosity to see a picture show. The price they are asked to pay is to listen for a little while to the parson. Is there any wonder that the calibre of the clergy sinks steadily lower? Self-respecting men, who really believed in their creed would hardly care to hawk it about in that fashion. May we suggest that if the parson promised a good "tip" for some forthcoming horse-race he would be sure of a crowded church—so long as he gave winners. And with God Almighty behind him that should not be a matter of great difficulty.

A bearded journalist boasted that he had been mistaken for the king. A younger reporter capped this by saying that he himself had been addressed as the Prince of Wales. Whereupon, a witty Irishman joined in, and said he had been mistaken for a far more important person than either, for, as he was walking along the street, a friend came up to him, exclaiming: "My God! Is that you?"

There is always a pleasing diversity in that vast field of verbiage called Christianity. For five good shillings, the Bishop of Pretoria writes on the *Returning Tide of Faith*, and at the same time our ears and eyes are daily assailed by the charges of Paganism which emanate from the modern John Knox in all the glory of a collar fastening at the back. The trade of religion is funny, sometimes vulgar, but never dull.

Speaking at a meeting of the British Israel Congress at Westminster, Lord Guisborough, who presided, said Bradlaugh was wrong in stating that there was no race of people to whom the Bible promises applied. This is interesting! As Charles Bradlaugh has been dead thirty years, and the statement was made long before then, Lord Guisborough cannot be accused of undue hastiness in his reply. He has made quite certain of avoiding any sort of answer from the great Freethinker.



## Our Sustentation Fund.

THIS Fund was opened on September 24, the purpose being to meet the deficit incurred in maintaining the paper. In deference to the wishes of those who have already subscribed we do not wish to close the Fund until all who desire to subscribe have had a full opportunity of doing so. There are always some who put off sending until the last moment, not, we believe, because they have any hesitation about sending, but simply because they are built that way, and will never do to-day what can be put off till to-morrow. However, as we dislike seeing the appeal in these columns longer than is absolutely necessary, we think it advisable to fix a date for its closing. The Sustentation Fund will close on November 25, which will give it a level two months. When that date is reached we may have something further to say on the question.

Previously acknowledged: £507 2s. Javali, 10s.; Watson Walker, 4s.; J. Hardie, 2s. 6d.; J. W. Fitch, £1; J. Devine (Detroit), 4s. 6d.; W. D., 2s. 6d.; J. H. L., 2s.; S. Waring, 1s.; T. Roberts, 1s.; Paddy, 6d.; J. D., 1s.; H. W., 1s.; J. C., 1s.; L. M., 5s.; Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Finney, £1; E. W., 10s.; Mrs. Ballard, 5s.; U. Ballard, 5s.; E. Wilson, 10s.; J. Chapple, 2s. 6d.; W. Bailey, £3; Bobbie and Mickie, 15s.; A. Hawkyard, 10s.; I. Rowland, £1; A. Goodman, £1; T. How, 10s.; J. E. King, 5s.; A. B. Moss, 10s.; T. J. Thurlow, 2s. 6d.; per J. Fothergill—W. Hopper, £2 2s.; J. Richards, 2s. 6d.; J. Hannan, 2s. 6d.; Mrs. Hopper 10s.; R. Chapman, 2s. 6d.; J. Chapman, 2s. 6d.; E. Chapman, 2s. 6d.; Mr. and Mrs. J. Fothergill, 5s. 6d. Total, £523 13s.

Corrections: 10s. from "Javali," and 10s. from A. B. Moss in above list should have appeared in an earlier one. "T. F. Greenwell" in last week's list should have been J. F. Greenwell.

We shall be obliged if subscribers will point out any omissions or inaccuracies that appear.

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.

SINE CERE.—Very many more people than will publicly admit it are influenced by the *Freethinker*, which is read in a very much wider circle than is generally known. We have no doubt but that your efforts at spreading liberal ideas during so many years has borne fruit.

A. ROWLEY.—We do not think there need be any fear of the Freethinkers of this country allowing their paper to go under. It is too highly appreciated for that to ever occur. It is kept going largely for the benefit of Christians, although these do not appreciate the fact till they have ceased to believe in the "glorious" Gospel.

"ONE WHO WAS THERE."—We do not notice anonymous letters as a rule, but make an exception in your case. On the whole we are pleased to know that you did not agree with what we said in the lecture, and are not at all alarmed at being told we talked like an old woman. We prefer to have Christians listening who start in that way. We have had them before, and finished with them as warm supporters of Freethought. You see we are quite frank in warning you of the danger you are running in attending our lectures. Your own parson will endorse this.

E. A. PHIPSON.—We could not adopt the method you suggest. Articles and letters are inserted if we consider them suitable for publication at the time, and although we may decline good things as well as bad ones every editor has to act on his own judgment in such matters.

W. J. EASTERBROOK.—We do not believe that the power to locate water with a "divining rod" has been proven, and it would be useless hazarding an explanation till the fact is established. So far as we know there are as many—or more—failures as successes, and that would make it a case of counting the hits and ignoring the misses. If true there would be an explanation of it along strictly naturalistic lines. Shall be pleased to hear from you on the other matter. Several have written asking about the suggestion.

T. H. HOW.—Specimen copy has been sent to the address given.

R. CHAPMAN.—See acknowledgments. Thanks, we are all quite well. Glad to hear the same of you and yours.

J. HARRINGTON.—See letter.

J. FITCH.—Cash received. A copy of Draper's *Conflict Between Religion and Science* will be sent as soon as copies are received from the binders. We are expecting them daily.

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 (October 28) Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester, at 6.30. His subject will be "Are We Civilized?" On Sunday next (November 4) Mr. Cohen will speak in the Town Hall, Stratford, under the same title. A longer course would have been arranged, but there were difficulties in the way of getting the hall. Stratford Town Hall is easily accessible from all parts of London, and there should be no difficulty in packing the building.

The National Secular Society has also arranged a course of lectures to take place during November at the Friars' Hall, Blackfriars Bridge Road. The first lecture will be delivered by Mr. G. Whitehead on November 4. Mr. Cohen will take the second date, and other speakers will follow.

We are sorry to record that Mr. Lloyd found it impossible to travel to lecture at Manchester on Sunday last. The present state of his health made the long journey inadvisable, and very reluctantly he was compelled to cancel the visit. Naturally those present regretted Mr. Lloyd's absence very much, and many expressions of appreciation of his work in the movement were heard. In his absence the gap was filled by Mr. Ginder in the afternoon, who spoke on "The Single Tax Solution," and in the evening by the President of the Branch, Mr. Monks, who lectured on "The Divorce Problem." Musical selections were given by Misses Horne, Cupit, and Stringer, and Messrs. Davies and Pagson. Mr. Bayford occupied the chair on both occasions.

We publish this week the promised cheap edition of Draper's *History of the Conflict Between Religion and*

*Science*. Although a copyright work and issued at a low price, it is an exact reprint of the work, extending to about 400 pages, well printed and on good paper. We have no hesitation in saying that it is the cheapest bit of publishing done this side of 1914, and it can only be sold at this price because it is issued as a propagandist effort by the Secular Society, Limited. We draw particular attention to the advertisement on the back page. The cost of the work is 3s. 6d.—the price of the book as published by Messrs. Kegan Paul is 7s. 6d. Those who do not care to send for it direct may order it through any bookseller in the kingdom. Those ordering it direct must enclose 5d. extra to cover postage. We are expecting a large sale for this work. It should be in the hands of every reader of this paper.

The new pamphlet by Colonel Ingersoll, *What Is It Worth?* is selling steadily and well, as we expected it would. It is, in our opinion quite equal to the famous *Mistakes of Moses*, and in some respects better suited to propagandist work. It has never before been issued in pamphlet form. Many are taking advantage of our offer to send twenty-four copies post free for 2s.

Mr. Sidney Gimson, in the course of a letter to us on another matter, says: "I am very glad to see how well the *Freethinker* Sustentation Fund is getting on; even in these times of tightness there is money for a cause that men have faith in and for the paper which continues its able and honourable advocacy through hard times as well as through the easier years. (One could scarcely describe any of them as 'easy.')

We are very proud of the hold the *Freethinker* has upon its readers, and we greatly value the appreciation of so old and earnest a friend of the movement as Mr. Gimson. That name has for two generations stood high in the annals of British Free-thought.

We are not surprised to learn that the debate between Mr. Shaller and the Stratford Vicar turned out to be very unsatisfactory. The Vicar seemed to resent being expected to deal with the remarks made by his opponent, with the result that one speaker laid down arguments and the other one preached. We repeat we are not surprised. Nowadays clergymen who have the intelligence to debate are usually cute enough to decline the encounter. It is left for those who cannot see the weakness of their own case or the strength of that of their opponents to stand forward. With the result noted.

We are pleased to hear from the Secretary of the Birmingham Branch that Mr. Moss had a large and appreciative audience on Sunday last to listen to his address on "Darwin, the Shakespeare of Science." Good audiences at the beginning of the season does much to encourage a Branch, and our Birmingham friends, in common with the rest of the country, do not find that existing conditions make their work easy.

"Are the Gospel accounts of the Resurrection Contradictory?" There would hardly seem to be two answers to that question, but Mr. Cutner is to take the affirmative in a discussion on that subject with Mr. W. Mills at the St. Pancras Reform Club to-day (October 28). We believe Mr. Cutner to be an able debater, we know he is a shrewd one, and North London Freethinkers should bring along their Christian friends to listen to the discussion. Full particulars will be found in our lecture announcements.

Small service is true service while it lasts;  
Of friends, however humble, scorn not one;  
The daisy, by the shadow that it casts,  
Protects the lingering dewdrop from the sun.  
—William Wordsworth (1770-1850).

Philosophy, like medicine has an immense number of drugs, very few good remedies, and hardly one that is specific.—Chamfort (1741-1794).

## Totemism.

### II.

(Continued from page 557.)

THE members of a totem clan call themselves by the name of their totem, and commonly believe themselves actually descended from it. Indeed, not knowing their own fathers they have no other ancestors. Thus the turtle clan of the Iroquois are descended from a fat turtle, which, burdened by the weight of its shell in walking, contrived by great exertions to throw it off, and thereafter gradually developed into a man. The savage treats his kin and them alone with respect. To kill and eat the sacred animal is an impiety of the same kind with that of killing and eating a tribesman. Sometimes the totem is supposed to contain, or be intimately bound up with, the individual soul.

One day one of the blacks killed a crow. Three or four days afterwards a Boortwa (crow) named Larry died. He had been ailing for some days, but the killing of his *wingong* hastened his death (Fison and Howitt, K. and K., 169).

In totemism laws of forbidden food and forbidden sexual intercourse are a chief part of religion and form a criterion by which the members of one stock and cult are marked off from their neighbours. It thus serves a purpose of great social utility even though mixed with gross superstition. Man stumbles in many wrong ways before he finds the right; but in totemic signs he was finding the path from animal to man.

The totem is the symbol or device of a gens, and gathers round it the devotion afterwards accorded to the flag of a nation. But it is more than this. It represented the guardian spirit and god of the family. It is the object in which the family soul is supposed to reside, sometimes for protection against malignant spirits. Plutarch refers to the idea "that the gods being afraid of Typhon, did as it were, hide themselves in the bodies of ibises, dogs, and hawks" as "a foolery beyond belief." We shall find it was excellent foolery. Diodorus, too, tells us that the gods were at one time hard pressed by the giants, and compelled to hide awhile under the form of animals which in consequence became sacred. Fintann, the Irish salmon-god, is fabled to have transformed himself into a salmon during the Noachic deluge. On Tara he was left dry by the retiring flood and renewed his human form. Cian transforms himself into a pig to escape the wrath of the Sons of Quireen; showing that "the gentleman who pays the rint" was carefully guarded, till the time came for sacrifice. The ambrosia of the Irish gods was plain pork and ham, and perhaps it was that with the Greek gods also. To early Irish fishers the salmon constantly changing its habitat seems to have symbolised the perfection of cunning, and Fintann, the salmon god, reincarnates himself in a succession of clever bards and medicine men famous for their incantations and charms.

Arnobius, the Christian Father, sneers:—

Temples have been erected with lofty roofs to cats, to beetles, and to heifers; the powers of the deities thus insulted are silent; nor are they affected with any feeling of envy because they see the sacred attributes of vile animals put in rivalry with them.

Clement mentions that the Egyptians are divided in their objects of worship. The Syenites worship the braize fish, the Heraclitopolites the ichneumon, the inhabitants of Sais and Thebes a sheep, the Leucopolites a wolf, the Cynopolites a dog, the Memphites Apis, the Mendesians a goat. And, continues Clement, the Thessalians pay divine homage to storks in accordance with ancient custom; and the Thebans to weasels for their assistance at the birth of Hercules. "And again, are not the Thessalians reported to wor-

ship ants, since they have learned that Zeus, in the likeness of an ant, had intercourse with Eurymedusa, and begot Myrmidon? He then refers to Apollo and his epithet of Sminthian in connection with the worship of mice by people who inhabit the Troad.<sup>1</sup> Arnobius, too, ridicules "an ant into which Jupiter, the greatest of the gods, contracted the outlines of his vastness." Everyone has heard of the amours of Zeus, as bull with Europa, swan with Leda, a quail with Latona, eagle with Ganymede, etc., etc. Heathens like Plutarch, the Christian fathers, and modern mythologists have spent much labour in explaining away such damaging legends, but the passage in Clement gives us the clue. Clans claiming descent from these totems, when Zeus became greatest of the gods also claimed to have sprung from him, declaring that in this form he visited the mother of the tribe. They thus accounted for their animal worship by making it a divine incarnation, as in Samoa, Egypt, and India. Mr. Frazer mentions that Attic maidens between the ages of five and ten had to pretend to be bears, they were called bears and imitated the action of bears. No man would marry a girl who had not "been a bear." But let none sneer at animal worship till he has learnt what we really owe to animals.

Peruvian civilization was the highest reached on the American Continent before the Spanish conquest. But their traditions show a primitive barbarism. Many of their tribes descended from animals, some tracing their ancestry to the eagle, the condor, etc. Other animal forms were used as heraldic designs. Acosta describes them as venerating the celestial archtypes of certain animals and birds found on earth. "They believed that a like one lived in heaven in whose charge was their procreation and increase." Shepherds venerated the constellation called Sheep, another called Tiger protected men from tigers. This, Acosta said, approached the dogma of platonic ideas, which gives celestial origin to all earthly things. We can see, too, that it explains the constellations and signs of the Zodiac, and the development of astrology from totemism, as illustrated in Brinton's *Nagualism*. These twelve signs were totemic with Egyptians and Babylonians as they are with the Chinese, who have the rat for Aries, ox, Taurus (an indication the sun was in Taurus, when they migrated east); tiger for Gemini; hare, Cancer; dragon, Leo; serpent, Virgo; horse, Libra; sheep, Scorpio; monkey, Sagittarius; cock, Capricorn; dog, Aquarius; bear, Pisces. So the signs of the Zodiac were the totems of the twelve tribes of Israel. The Rabbins said every plant has a presiding angel and assigns this as the motive of Levitical prohibition of mixtures among animals and plants. It is not more than three or four centuries since, in England, the Zodiac was called the "Bestiary." The sun then passed through the bestiary, as he did in Egypt (Massey, i, 74).<sup>2</sup> Totemism thus develops into astrology, the guardian animal, or tutelary genius, into the presiding star and guardian daemon or angel.

The Yezidis, or "devil worshippers" of Asiatic Turkey, preserve in their highland glens interesting survivals of a totemic faith. They carry in their processions a peacock as the sign of the one they worship, and who in the present form of the legend introduced himself in that shape to the mother of all living. (With the Kols of Bengal, the peacock is the king of the agricultural feast, the sign of the sun in splendour. The throne of the Great Mogul was in the shape of a peacock spreading its gems.) Yezidis keep at their temple cave-stalls for seven holy white cows, sacred to the sun. Their worship begins at sunset, when

they bend their heads to the ground. At the ceremony of initiation, a corpse is necessary, as well as a neophyte, who has spent forty days and nights in fasting, clad in the white cere cloths of the dead. The living body is placed beside the dead one in front of a kind of altar. At a sign from the "Kak," or chief, the corpse and the candidate are disrobed and solemnly invested with each other's clothes. Thus the life is supposed to be transferred, and is tied with a sacred black cord which must never leave him night nor day. We are reminded of the order of Jahveh to Moses (Numb. xx, 25-26): "Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them up unto mount Hor. And strip Aaron of his garments and put them on Eleazar his son; and Aaron shall be gathered unto his people and shall die there." As in this case the order was given while Aaron was still alive, it was suggested by no less a man than Goethe, that this was an alleged command to kill, and that Moses may really have killed Aaron. But I take it both the Yezidis and the old scriptures preserve an interesting memorial of the time when the sacred life was supposed to be transferred by change of garments. As our boys say: "I'm in my skin; when I jump out you can jump in"—unwitting of the tragedies behind their comic phrase. We are reminded by the ceremonies which yet take place in Kurdistan how "Moses brought Aaron's sons and put coats upon them and girded them with girdles and put bonnets upon them, as the Lord commanded Moses," and how Elijah cast his mantle on Elisha.

J. M. WHEELER.

(To be Continued.)

## A Portrait of Judas.

As Satan, the Prince of Darkness was the most interesting figure for Milton in *Paradise Lost*, so Mr. Sturge Moore apparently finds the subsidiary character of "Judas"\* worthy of a long poem in free verse. Coleridge wrote, among many other fine things, that there was nothing worse than remorse without hell. Judas is the foundation of a Janus argument from those who regard this figure as one having lived in history. He was necessary; yet his name is always used as a reproach. Mr. Moore, in his work steers clear of those questions that give one half of the motto for the Salvation Army, and, with the grace and ease of an artist paints a problem picture, beautiful, fascinating, yet, in many ways short of a dynamic that could have had tremendous significance for the modern world.

A feeling of pity is created similar to that engendered in the following of Don Quixote's adventures; the author of Judas in many fine passages illuminated by striking figures of speech, imagery, and word painting, bends our mind towards this real or imaginary figure of history so that his sufferings appear real. If we apply common-sense to religion, although these keep little company together, the deed of Judas should have been one for rejoicing, but Mr. Moore keeps closely to the theological version except where he introduces the idea taken from Sir James Frazer in the *Golden Bough*, wherein it is suggested that Jesus may have died as Haman in the Feast of Purim. This gives Judas a gleam of hope, but it is soon dissipated by the rough reception he receives from the apostles.

In many parts this narrative poem will remind readers of *The Temptations of St. Antony*; Judas, the outcast, sceptic, believer, betrayer and instrument of Destiny, suffers all the tortures of hunger, sees his dead wife and son, and cannot end his life by hanging,

<sup>1</sup> See "Apollo and the Mouse" in Lang's *Custom and Myth*, pp. 103-120.

<sup>2</sup> Bower, in his *History of the Popes* (i, 7), says that when the Papal Chair was cleaned in 1662, the twelve labours of Hercules was found portrayed upon it.

\* Judas, 7s. 6d. net. Grant Richards, Ltd., 8 St. Martin's Street, W.C.2.

but, rather through exhaustion and mental torture, Mr. Sturge Moore despatches his victim.

As a work of art we can appreciate this arresting and vivid poem, and we admire the artist's clear-cut and vigorous style; there appears to be a preference now for chips from the old block as instanced in minor characters being taken for central themes. *Christopher Sly* and *The Wandering Jew* were a rummaging in the rag-bag of history—with varying degrees of success. Distance may lend enchantment to the view, and we do not even ask artists to make their art utilitarian, but disgust with the present may turn the mind backwards to those scenes and places now churned to dust by time. The present will only have a value that the living stamp upon it; the earth now groans, but Christianity cannot deliver nor mitigate the sufferings of Man. There were Judases who sold the Englishman in bondage to the Insurance Act imported from Prussia; there were Judases who asked men if pretty little houses (on paper) were worth fighting for, and then arranged an Emigration Act, and if clear thinking was as plentiful as bell clanging on Sundays, these things would not need to be pointed out.

The painting of Madonnas does not, at this time of day, constitute the sole means whereby the artist may live, and we sincerely wish that Mr. Sturge Moore had lavished his undoubted gifts on a story about the Ascent of Man—not the degradation of him. We require from artists other things than our daily bread, we require from them the very substance of intellectual life; they are in the front in battle with the powers of darkness, and should be the means of thrusting off the stage of human life those gods that man has suffered so long. A song of Man, we pray you, Mr. Moore: a song that shall be sung by our descendants when they have realized that this earth is but one of many, that dead and buried civilizations and murder and militarism are but smudged pages of history, transient and not so beautiful as the rainbow, and that thirty pieces of silver was the price of the foundation of the reign of Fear—rightly deserving the kicks, blows, and derision of all who valued the human race above all those promises of crowns of gold in an age of paper currency.

WILLIAM REPTON.

## Correspondence.

### THE DOUGLAS SCHEME.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—As a Freethinker from my youth and an admirer of Shelley's verse, which I first read in the library of my old Alma Mater, University College, London, I was pleased to read in the *Freethinker* of 2nd instant the article on the centenary of Shelley. The following, anent the last sad memories of the bard, may interest your readers.

Some may remember certain publications in the *London Times* and other metropolitan journals in 1875, about a reported confession by an aged Italian fisherman, dying at Spezzia, to the effect that it was himself and his crew who had piratically attacked Shelley's boat in stormy weather in the Gulf of Spezzia, on her fatal voyage from Leghorn to Lerici, in 1822, and that the violent impact of the two boats had sent Shelley's to the bottom. This was contradicted and ridiculed in the *Athenaeum* by no less a personage than Professor Gubernatis, the eminent Italian writer, then well known at Oxford University. Nevertheless, Shelley's friend Trelawney gave credit to the alleged confession, communicated to him by his daughter from Rome, mainly on the ground that Shelley's boat, recovered from ten fathoms of water, had her stern smashed, a result hardly attributable to the rough sea.

It may not be generally known that since the middle of the nineteenth century there was erected, and that there still is, a beautiful white marble cenotaph, depicting the lifeless, drowned body, by Weekes, A.R.A., in Christ-

church Priory, near Bournemouth, in Hampshire, where I saw it in 1909.

Some years ago, travelling westward to the Riveira, I had the opportunity of stopping at Villareggio, in the Gulf of Spezzia, on the sandy beach where Shelley's corpse was washed ashore, some three miles from that of his hapless companion, Captain Williams, the actual owner of the wrecked boat. In the accounts of the cremation of Shelley's remains, in the presence of his sorrowing friends, Byron, Leigh Hunt, and Trelawney, the fact is generally overlooked that Shelley had been previously buried on the spot by the Italian authorities, and was exhumed by special permission.

As far back as 1892 I visited the Campo Santo Protestante, close to the Porta San Paolo, and the pyramid of Caius Cestius. The tomb of Keats is near the entrance and conspicuous, but I had great difficulty in discovering Shelley's last resting place, which I found after a long and fatiguing scramble in the dense brushwood of the cemetery, so lamentably neglected at that time. Beating down high and stubborn weeds, I at last found my reward in the shape of two slabs, only a few inches above ground, in a remote corner of the cemetery, right under the outer wall adjacent to the timeworn pyramid outside. A good deal of detergent work had to be done to enable me to decipher the inscriptions on these memorials of the dead, which lay side by side in that lonely and forgotten spot. And I had the good fortune, before it was dark, to transcribe carefully into my notebook, in the twilight of that September day, the last graven records of Shelley and his life-long friend Trelawney. They appear as under respectively:—

P. B. S.  
Cor Cordium.  
Natus iv Aug. MDCCXCII.  
Obiit viii Jul. MDCCCXXII.

Nothing of him that doth fade,  
But doth suffer a sea-change  
Into something rich and strange.

Edward J. Trelawney,  
Died in England, August 13th, 1881, aged 88.

These are two friends whose lives were undivided  
So let their memory be now they have glided  
Under the grave let not their bones be parted  
For their two hearts in life were single hearted.

F. STERNS FADELLE.

Dominica, B.W.I.

SIR,—Mr. Barnard really overwhelms me. I asked a simple question. If the Douglas Scheme brought about general prosperity, then in my opinion the birth-rate was bound to go up and the death-rate to go down. How would the extra food required for a rapid rise in the population be got? Mr. Barnard answers thus: "The evidence that Sir William Beveridge has produced in answer to Professor Keynes is so conclusive as to remove Malthusianism from practical consideration." This makes the worst time Malthusianism has been removed from practical consideration, but it has a nasty habit of bobbing up so often that the 2,000 mark not out will be with us, I'm sure, before long. "War destroys more subsistence than population." I expect the population which has survived the war will get exceedingly fat on the subsistence that has been destroyed. "Dr. Stopes, etc., have anticipated the objection of Mr. Cutner to the Douglas scheme." To hurl Dr. Stopes at me like that is crushing, but who are the "etc.," and where can I find the anticipated objection? Lastly, Mr. Barnard invites me "to demonstrate that the poverty of the people in the past has been due to over-population." I suggest, very kindly like, that Mr. Barnard should read Malthus of whose doctrine he is evidently completely ignorant.

Mr. Coleman is a writer of different calibre, and I must thank him for his extremely courteous letters to me privately and for the pleasure his able articles always give me. The population question in relation to the Douglas Scheme does not worry him, however. Mr. Pell, with his *Law of Births and Deaths*, has come to his rescue, and Mr. Coleman is willing to base the success of the Douglas Scheme on the statement that "increasing sterility is a natural accompaniment of a higher standard of living." Let us take a practical example. A healthy, young, normal, couple living now, struggling to earn

enough for mere existence would, it will be admitted, have at least six or seven children if Nature were allowed to take its course. If, however, we adopt the Douglas Scheme, say in two or three years, and the above couple were to find mere existence changed into genuine prosperity, they would lose their fertility! Does Mr. Coleman really believe this? If not, how long will the Douglas Scheme have to be in operation before the country scraps its contraceptives? I would also like to know what Mr. Coleman estimates will be the *survival rate* under the Scheme, and will three hours' work every day on the part of our agricultural labourers give us all the food we shall require? Perhaps Mr. Coleman can persuade Major Douglas himself to deal with the population and food question in connection with his scheme.

H. CUTNER.

SIR,—*Vide* Mr. Marriot, absurd or not, "confutation" and "refutation" are the same. *Ergo* he confirms me. If population, as Mr. Marriot says, "treads on the heels of subsistence," literally subsistence must be in front or ahead of population. Such is the case: 1812, population, M. 17; wealth, M. £2,700; 1919, population, M. 46,982,000; wealth, M. £24,000. The balance in favour of subsistence is very roughly as 12 to 3. The theory is utterly fallacious; for the other factor present, the stupidity and ignorance of the mass of men resulting in non-production and faulty distribution, is adequate to account for poverty. Certain countries have at times had their population practically halved, but no improvement in the lot of the masses has resulted. Town congestion is a matter of transport. Mr. Marriot says the principles of Malthus are as "rigidly true as the first four rules of arithmetic." Were this so there would be no more controversy over the one than the other. No one disputes the principle of addition, etc.

M. BARNARD.

#### THE DEVIL'S CHAPLAIN.

SIR,—I noticed Mr. Cutner's reply to me in your columns of October 14. Although I am quoting only from memory, and Mr. Cutner seems to have read the *Diegesis* just before writing, I am quite certain that my impression is correct. As a matter of fact I could reproduce the entire argument of Taylor's splendid introductory chapter in which he states the case to be discussed. That chapter alone fully justifies my contention that Taylor attacked the finished Christ myth.

Mr. Cutner says that Taylor attacked the Jesus of the Gospels. Well, well! Seeing that the Gospels were preserved by ecclesiastical authorities, that they were forged and interpolated, and finally preserved *after* the Christ myth had been completed and stereotyped, I fail to see how this statement refutes my assertion. The Gospels did not exist prior to the finished Christ myth, but rather rounded off that interesting product of greed and imposture.

Mr. Cutner says Taylor quotes authorities prior to the sixth century. Well! well! The Christ myth was growing between the first and sixth centuries. But neither Taylor nor anyone else can prove that the Christ believed in in the sixth century was the Christ believed in in the first century. I again quote from memory, but I challenge Mr. Cutner to re-read *Diegesis*. What Taylor proves is: (1) Some early Christian heretics believed in the Christ principle, held there was a sort of divine phantom, but no historic person. (2) Others denied the Christ but held that Jesus was human. As a matter of information, I should be quite pleased to state clearly in the columns of the *Freethinker* the opinions and propaganda activity of every Christian sect from the first to the sixth centuries.

When Mr. Cutner refuses a debate on the ground that the only Jesus he knows anything about is the Jesus of the Gospels, the argument is too Christian to be an argument at all. The Gospels are a growth and still the history. There may have been a Jesus and still the Gospel records may be so false and misleading that he bears no relation to the Gospel Jesus. All men, I beg again to remind Mr. Cutner, become myths both to their friends and to their enemies. Wise biography seeks to discard the falsehood and unearth the truth. Suppose I was to say: "I will not discuss whether Thomas Paine

existed, but the only Thomas Paine I know is the Thomas Paine of such and such a book," knowing that the book was inaccurate either from malice or affection. Suppose I argued like that about Cæsar, or Napoleon, or Cromwell. It may be that there never was a Jesus. The only true way of settling that problem is to discover (a) how much of the alleged miraculous Christ is stolen from the Pagan deities; (b) how much was engrafted by interest during the centuries; (c) exactly what, generation by generation, did men believe and understand about a teacher called Jesus. This has no relation to a Jesus Christ emanating from my brain for I am quite impartial in the matter. It would discover, that is, exhibit, the actual growth of the Christian idea. To do this is to be useful and scientific. To remain stagnant, accepting the Bible as a perfect and absolute book, just to worship it by our attacks, is to make no progress whatever.

Mr. Cutner should know that my pamphlet on *The Rebel and His Disciples*, published in 1912, has been re-issued, entirely rewritten and republished as *Communism and Religion*. There are some important variations and corrections. But the main conclusions stand.

I distinctly deny that Jesus was a Communist in the scientific sense, and I explain that he was a theo-maniac. Mr. Cutner should note points like these when striving to build up an extravagant house of cards. I pay no excessive adoration to Jesus. I applaud one characteristic—sincerity, integrity, single-eyedness of purpose. I applaud that equally in Richard Carlile or any other agitator, martyr, or philosopher. It is a custom of Freethinkers to applaud Socrates as against Jesus. Well, Nietzsche attacks Socrates and ridicules the adoration paid to him. The attack is clever and may be well taken. I admire and applaud it. But it will not cause me to think any the less of Socrates as an honest old nuisance and brave enquirer after truth. Nevertheless, in common with other Freethinkers, I may be wrong and Nietzsche may be right. Jesus falls into a similar category if he lived. If he did not live, the argument cannot be concluded by dancing a jig in the light of the Gospel records only.

I have not read Canon Cheyne. I will do so. If he converts me I will say so. What matters it to me to believe that Jesus lived if he did not? Mr. Cutner is not causing me any anxiety. Of course, Canon Cheyne is only regarded as an authority for the perverted reason that his scholastic declarations are contrary to his ecclesiastical standing. I think that kind of "authority" humorous. But Mr. Cutner may deem it solemn and impressive.

It is nonsense to argue that I give no authorities. Part of my argument is based on a critical analysis of the biblical text. Obviously no authority is needed here. Part is based on the decisions of the Church Councils. As all historians are agreed on these councils, their dates, and controversies, authorities are not necessary. One has only to look up the various records and standard references. Part of the argument is based on the opinions of the heresiarchs. These also can be looked up. If my statements are false they can be challenged. The truth is I have not made the most of my data. Eusebius, for example, with all his forgeries, did not believe Jesus to be God nor the Son of God. I merely put these facts of early Christian thought together.

Gibbon quotes authorities. They may impress novices, but do they help anyone? Many of his authorities are gibberish. Buckle wearies one with his authorities that merely make another book. Discrepancies can be challenged always and authorities cited or discussed. But to have a running commentary of authorities argues an ignorant reading public, a suspicion of one's own case, and a jargon of learning that may impose more successfully than naked statements. The discussion of authorities may prove a useful appendix to a book. But there is no need to include them otherwise. I can cite authorities, the very best, for all my facts. But Mr. Cutner can unearth the same facts himself without any trouble.

Mr. Cutner thinks he has said the last word when he objects to my toast to Jesus—which is only a rhetorical flourish eulogising humanity. Has he never read Max Stirner? Stirner argues very well that *humanity* is a myth, and insists on his right to have no myths, not even humanity, but to live for his *own* ego. Stirner thinks

that *that* is Atheism. And perhaps Stirner is right. Mr. Cutner should not destroy one myth to substitute another. He should remember the magnificent fable about the fetters on the right and left leg told by the immortal Robert Louis Stevenson.

Thought and speculation should make us tentative at times in our reasoning. And when we destroy gods we should smash them all. Humanity, the abstraction, may prove as intolerable as Jesus, the emanation of excited imagination. I make Jesus in my image and Mr. Cutner makes humanity in his. We will destroy both and strive for egoism. What says Mr. Cutner in the name of Atheism?

GUY A. ALDRED.

#### GOD AND EVOLUTION.

SIR,—Whatever objections you may find to the contradictory theories of a perfectly good and yet all-powerful deity as declared by religion, it seems to me that equally valid ones can be adduced against those of evolution. If the best results of billions of millenniums of development can only show a population chiefly composed of "muddled oafs" with nothing better to do than spend every minute of their leisure in kicking a ball about like overgrown infants, it stultifies itself at least as much as the pitiful outcome of two thousand years of Christianity. On the other hand, with the hypothesis of a god whose obsession is the rescue of sinners from their evil ways, it is evident that he must provide a sufficient number of sinners to be thus reclaimed, and the whole Christian scheme is perfectly explicable. When will the human race become even moderately sane?

E. A. PHIPSON.

#### Some Comments.

We have an old copy-book 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—*Chapman Cohen*.

This maxim much ante-dates copy-books. It is a literal translation of "*Magna est veritas et praevalet*" (usually misquoted "*prevalebit*"), which words may be found in the Old Testament Apocrypha at 1 Esdras, iv, 41.

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. It is now mainly read by students who are interested in the origin and history of Christianity.—*Mimmermus*.

So far as the *practice* of the Established and Dissenting Churches of England go this is quite correct; but only so far, for—

1. The Apocrypha is not separated from the rest of the Old Testament in the Douay Version which follows the Latin Vulgate used by the Roman Catholic Church. It is an integral part of it.
2. The Established Church in theory still considers the Old Testament Apocrypha as an integral portion of God's Word, as may be seen by a reference to its sixth article of faith.

Consequently, no Bible is complete without the Apocrypha, and although there is much in it that any intelligent man should be ashamed to accept for truth, Freethinkers do not act wisely in acquiescing in its withdrawal from the scene by any section of Christians. They must not be allowed to ignore Tobit and his highly dangerous bride, nor the very peculiar way in which his father lost his eyesight.

This deduction could be enlarged upon, but sufficient is here to show the trend of thought.

An edition [Apocryphal Gospels] was issued by Hone and sold for many years, but it was a *cumbersome* volume, etc.—*Mimmermus*.

The writer must be very "finicky" who can call this volume "cumbersome." I have copies of the first issue and a few years ago gave away my copy of the 187—reprint. Copies of both editions may often be met with secondhand. I should call it a nice handy volume, printed in clear, attractive type, with just sufficient in the way of notes to guide without confusing the ordinary reader.

G. J. BAYFORD.

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

#### LONDON. INDOOR.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (160 Great Portland Street, W.): 7.30, Mr. J. H. Van Biene, "What I do not know about the Einstein Theory."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, Debate—"Are the Accounts of the Resurrection recorded in the Four Gospels Contradictory?" Affirmative, Mr. W. Mills; negative, Mr. H. Cutner.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W.9): 7, Mr. A. Hyatt, "Poets and Dramatists."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7, Mr. William Platt, "Beethoven—Man and Musician."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11, John A. Hobson, M.A., "The Outlook for Internationalism."

#### OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 4, Mr. F. P. Corrigan, a Lecture.

FINSBURY PARK.—11.15, Mr. G. Whitehead, a Lecture.

#### COUNTRY.

##### INDOOR.

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S. (Shop Assistants' Hall, 297 Argyle Street): 6.30, Mr. McLean, "From Plymouth Brethrenism to Rationalism."

LEEDS BRANCH N.S.S. (Youngman's Restaurant, Lowerhead Row, Leeds): 7, Mr. Lew Davis, "Why I Believe in Jesus."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. Chapman Cohen, "Are We Civilized?"

NOTTINGHAM COSMOPOLITAN DEBATING SOCIETY (Mechanics' Minor Hall, North Church Street): 2.30, Mr. Vincent J. Hands, "The Philosophy of Secularism."

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Plymouth Chambers, 1st floor, No. 7 room): Friday, October 26, at 7.30, a Discussion.

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