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Views and Opinions.

Defending the Faith.

A *Freethinker* reader sends me an article by the Rev. Clement F. Rogers entitled "The Case for Christianity," and suggests that I might devote a little time to a criticism thereof. I have no objection, although I should have been better pleased had the address been of a higher order. If I am not mistaken Mr. Rogers spends a deal of his time in controverting Freethinking attacks on Christianity, so it may be as well to see how the case for Christianity stands when put forward by one of its professional champions. And here one of my first comments is that Mr. Rogers appears to be at least a couple of generations behind the times. The case he puts forward is stated in a way that I am sure a really cute and informed champion of the faith would not adopt. I know I am open here to the retort that an acute and informed champion of Christianity would not engage in controversy at all, being aware that he stands to lose all and gain nothing, and with that I am inclined to agree. In the second place Mr. Rogers evidently does not understand the case for a scientific Freethought. His arguments simply do not touch the real case against Christianity and against religion in general as I understand it. He imagines that Freethought is where it was in the days of Thomas Paine or in the early days of Bradlaugh. He appears to be quite unaware of the immense strides that have been made since then, of the better knowledge we have of the nature and origin of religious beliefs, and of the real character of Christian beliefs in particular. I have no doubt that Mr. Rogers prefers to deal with the Freethought that was rather than with the Freethought that is. Although even against the form of Freethought which was prevalent a century ago his arguments are quite inconclusive.

* * *

Pseudo-Science.

Mr. Roger's hopelessly unscientific bent of mind is indicated by his repetition, as though he were stating axioms, that the "necessities of thought demand a first or originating cause," when the necessities of thought prove that the sentence itself is mere clotted nonsense. "It is impossible to think that all things come by chance," is another brilliant sentence, seeing that "chance" is, scientifically, only another word for the state of our minds regarding a special causa-

tive process or is quite meaningless. Then comes the further profound observation that science tells us the world is intelligible, which implies the existence of a mind behind it, and therefore the world is rational. I would, if I had a class of young men—very young men—like to set that sentence before them and test their ability by the quickness with which they exposed its fatuity. For "intelligible" here only means that science is able to arrange phenomena in an understandable order, and for a thing to be intelligible there is really no need that it shall be intelligent. And the proposition that Mr. Rogers wants to establish is that it is intelligent, not that phenomena can be arranged in an intelligible order. Intelligibility is really a consequence of the first law of motion—of inertia. When we say that a thing will persist in its present state until it is deflected, or interfered with, by some other force we are saying all that is needed to make things intelligible. And, as I have so often pointed out, it is not an order in Nature, but a disorder, an interference with the properties of things that would argue the operations of a designing and controlling mind. There would be no disgrace in not being able to reply to the arguments of scientific Atheism, but Mr. Rogers might at least try to understand it.

* * *

Imaginative History.

Mr. Rogers defending Christianity is—well, I had better not describe it in words. Readers may judge for themselves from the following excerpts. It is, he says, "a plain matter of history" that there was a Jesus of Nazareth who taught in Jerusalem, who worked miracles, who declared himself to be more than man, who vindicated his claim by rising from the dead, and whose death and resurrection had just the effect we should have expected it to have had in founding a Church that has existed ever since and has changed the face of the world. And all this "is supported by ample contemporary evidence, evidence good in itself, evidence detailed, full, independent, coherent." There is more of the same kind of thing, and one wonders whether in any profession save that to which Mr. Rogers belongs, a man could be found who would trade upon the ignorance of his hearers or listeners to that extent, who would father a series of statements which brand one as either wholly ignorant of the facts or careless what statements he makes so long as he can retain the faith of a certain number of people in what is being placed before them? I need not say that there is not one of these statements that is true, it is enough to show the character of Mr. Roger's argument to point out what no responsible person will deny, that there is not a single statement that is not subject to the gravest doubt, and the truth of which has not been questioned from the earliest times. If it were a plain matter of history that all these things occurred how comes it that there has been such violent controversy as to their reality? And far from the evidence being full, detailed, and independent, Mr. Rogers must know—for there are limits to even clerical ignorance—that the evidence is scanty, it is not independent, and outside the pages

of the New Testament, written a long time after the events recorded, every piece of evidence has been impeached by competent critics as forgeries by the Christian writers to support their claims. Of course, there should be evidence if such things really occurred. It was surely not such an ordinary everyday affair for a man to be born without a father, to walk on the water, and to perform other wonderful things, to raise people from the dead, and then walk about himself after he had been killed and buried; surely these were not such everyday affairs as to pass without notice. The civilized Roman and Greek world would have stood aghast at such wonders. But as Gibbon pointed out, the philosophers and scientists, the statesmen and writers of the ancient world went calmly about their business as though these things were of no moment whatever. That would be a miracle worth considering. I confess I could not explain this silence if these things really occurred.

* * *

Missing the Point.

But all this is only of moment as illustrating the clerical way of dealing with truth, and the clerical habit of trading on credulity. I have still to illustrate how hopelessly beside the real point is Mr. Rogers. For suppose one were to give Mr. Rogers all he asks for, suppose one were to admit that down to the year A.D. 33 there exists an unbroken chain of persons who believed the complete story of Jesus as told in the New Testament; suppose that to be granted, Mr. Rogers is exactly where he was. He has proved nothing except that people have believed these stories, and that no one outside of an idiot asylum could possibly doubt or deny. But it is not belief in these tales that needs establishing, the mere fact of controversy proves that what needs proving is their actual occurrence or their credibility. For the benefit of Mr. Rogers let me take a parallel case. Centuries after the alleged death of Jesus there lived an archbishop of the English Church, Thomas a'Beckett. There is no doubt as to his life and death, or the manner of his dying. Mr. Edwin Abbott has, in his life of Beckett, gathered together all the miracles worked by Beckett before and after his death. They make a goodly list, and are given with great detail, far greater detail than are the Gospel occurrences. Later still, there exists a whole mass of testimony, from educated men as well as from uneducated ones, that certain old women did work miracles with regard to cows and children and storms, and were actually seen flying through the air on broomsticks. The evidence here is contemporary, it is "detailed, independent, full, and coherent." Now Mr. Rogers does not believe these tales, hardly anyone else will believe them—we exclude Sir Conan Doyle, who like Habakkuk, seems capable of anything. Why not? Well, the reason is that we all recognize that the essential point is not whether certain stories are believed, but what kind of stories it is that are believed. If Mr. Rogers were to be loyal to the canon he lays down for guidance when dealing with the New Testament he would believe anything and everything. And that would be too much even for him.

* * *

A Question of Psychology.

For the information of Mr. Rogers I must repeat that the question of the authenticity of the Gospel writings is not vital, any more than the authenticity of a seventeenth century document recording a witch trial is vital. The question of whether a certain Jesus lived is not vital. The question of whether Tacitus, Pliny, Lucian, and Josephus do or do not refer to Jesus Christ is not vital. The utmost that could be proved here is that people believed in these wonders. But people have always believed in wonders, they

believe in them still, and on that line the evidence of a Salvation Army soldier is as good as that of the Apostle Paul. The vital question is not one of history, but of psychology. It is a question of taking these stories as culture stories, illustrations of the phase of culture which a people or an individual have reached. If the four evangelists actually lived with Jesus, if our Gospels are trustworthy transcripts of his actual words, if crowds of historical characters actually add their testimony to that of the Gospel writers, all these together are no more proof that a man was born of a virgin and rose from the dead than are the ravings of a contemporary Methodist evangelist. It is not evidence of belief that we want, any fool will supply that, it is evidence of credibility we require, and that cannot be given because we know the mental conditions that induce belief in the things by which Mr. Rogers swears. And if Mr. Rogers will devote his next lecture to the question as put, he will at least show that he understands what the issue really is. At present he does not seem to understand it at all.

* * *

Where's Yer 'Orspitals?

I do not think I need spend more than a few words on Mr. Rogers' remaining counts in his "Case for Christianity." These are concerned with the goodness of Christians, and the deal of good they do in the world. Well, we know Christians, and we are not at all overcome with the superlative goodness shown by them. But we may be blind. Mr. Rogers says that the best men he meets in public life are Christians. That may be true of his experience. I do not know, but in that case his experience is unique. I meet in public life good men who call themselves Christians and good men who would resent the title as an insult. But how cheap, and how common, how tawdry it is! It is an insult to ordinary intelligence to argue at any length that as there are good men and women found all over the world, in connection with every kind of creed, and some apart from all religion, therefore it cannot be that goodness, desire and work for the public good can be peculiar to Christianity. That is a simple logic that should be plain to a schoolboy. Besides it is not the goodness of Christian men and women that is in question, but the reasonableness of their beliefs. And I do not see in what way the fact of a Christian feeding a hungry stomach can prove that a man rose from the dead two thousand years ago. Really, it is time that Christian Evidence lecturers got beyond this stage. When we can get the issues between the Freethinker and the Christian properly stated there will still be any amount of room for genuine difference and sensible discussion. But one wonders whether it is quite inevitable that a Freethinker should approach a Christian controversialist with a justifiable and not to be concealed contempt for the fairness and the intelligence displayed? It rests with the Christian to prove that any other approach is reasonably possible.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

THE UNIVERSE VOID.

Revolving worlds, revolving systems, yea,
Revolving firmaments, nor there we end;
Systems of firmaments revolving, send
Our thoughts across the Infinite astray,
Gasping and lost and terrified, the day
Of life, the godly interests of home,
Shrivalled to nothing; that unbounded dome
Pealing still on, is blind fatality.

No rest is there for our soul's winged feet,
She must return for shelter to her ark—
The body fair, frail, death-born incomplete,
And let her bring this truth back from the dark;
Life is self-centred, man is nature's God;
Space, time, are but the walls of his abode.

—William Bell Scott (1811-1890).

"The Fear of God."

THE Bible represents God as an object of fear, and man's attitude towards him as one of never ceasing dread. In 1 Peter ii, 19, we read: "Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king." In Psalm ii, 11, we are urged to "serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling." In Hebrews xii, 28, these remarkable words occur: "Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire." From beginning to end the Bible describes the fear of the Lord as the supreme attribute of religion. Recently Dean Inge preached a striking sermon upon the text, Jeremiah xxxvi, 24: "And they were not afraid, nor rent their garments, neither the king, nor any of his servants that heard all these words." To understand the text we must know the context which we now supply in the Dean's own words:—

A very few words will suffice to recall to your minds one of the most vivid pictures in Old Testament history. The vicious and foolish king Jehoiakim orders Jehudi to read the scroll of prophecy which Baruch had written down at Jeremiah's dictation. The king and his courtiers are sitting round a burning brazier in the winter palace. He listens impatiently to three or four columns of the tremendous indictment, and then he snatches the roll out of the reader's hand, deliberately cuts it up with a penknife, and throws the fragments into the fire. "And they were not afraid, neither the king, nor any of his servants."

Thus we see that even in Old Testament times only a few of the people really feared Jehovah. The constant complaint of his prophets was that his own chosen people were not loyal to him, nor obeyed his commandments as transmitted to them by his various prophets. He was practically ignored by the overwhelming majority of the nation. Speaking of the present times the Dean frankly admits that "there never was a time when the fear of God played so small a part in the real religion of men and women as it does now." The Dean goes further still when he says that "the modern church-goer is not afraid when he listens to warnings of God's judgments." The meaning of such admissions is that to the majority in all ages God and his judgments are not realities—do not even exist. American psychologists, who are so fond of conducting extensive inquiries into all sorts of subjects by means of printed lists of questions circulated chiefly among university and public school students. Professor Starbuck, having conducted an inquiry on religion, found that only fourteen per cent of those who replied to his questions mention fear as a motive power in their religion. The Dean thinks that in his own Church "the proportion would be even smaller still." He says:—

I do not wish to speak now much about future punishment, but rather about sin and repentance, and I have begun in this way because the decay of fear as an element in vital religion is one of the most significant features of our time. It is a new thing. The change that I speak of is mainly a matter of the last sixty years, and the extent of it can only be realized by those who have compared the representative preaching of Anglican divines down to and including the Tractarians in the first twenty years of Queen Victoria's reign. The disappearance of warning from the pulpit is a remarkable phenomenon, however we may account for it, and whether we approve of it or not. Pick up any book of sermons by a celebrated preacher who is thoroughly in touch with the younger generation of to-day, and you will see that fear of God's judgment is hardly ever ap-

pealed to.....In so far as it means that we no longer dread injustice and savage cruelty at the hands of God, it is wholly a change for the better. The hell of Calvinist theology—yes, and the hell of Catholic theology, too—are I venture to say, a blasphemy against the God whom Christ has revealed.

Now what Dr. Inge is anxious to emphasize is the supposed fact that fear has so conspicuously disappeared from the religious life because the sense of sin has so strangely and so rapidly decayed during the last fifty years. The Dean expresses this opinion very tersely when he says: "The plain fact is that we are not afraid of punishment because we do not think that we deserve it." There is more truth in that statement than the preacher himself imagines. In our estimation there are neither rewards nor punishments awaiting us beyond the grave. Death puts an end to our individual existence, and the Dean possesses no evidence whatever that such is not the case. But he believes in sin and elaborates strange definitions of it. Sin, he tells us, is partial separation from God, or, rather, alienation from God, which means a state of exile or banishment. It is the absence of peace with Heaven. Sin is also a disease by which we are to understand the soul is out of harmony with itself. "Yes," the preacher declares, "sin is disease, not weakness. We need the physician, probably even the surgeon, and not only the trainer." Sin is also a transgression of the law; but of what law? There is in reality no such thing as the Moral Law described by the Dean. Listen:—

The law which we transgress when we do wrong is no arbitrary enactment, but the eternal law of right. God did not create it; it is as eternal as he is himself; it is part of himself. The moral law is the revelation of God's own nature.

The Dean of St. Paul's possesses no knowledge to justify his assumptions about God's nature and doings. He does not know even that he exists, much less that he has given being to a law which is part of himself. He has omitted to tell us what God's other part is which is not the moral law. He has ventured far beyond his depth, and he has no clear conception of the meaning of the words he employs. Take the following:—

Are we only not yet in perfect union with God, or is there a solid obstacle which separates us from him and hides his face from us? Are we only not yet arrived at our full strength, or is there a disease in our nature which threatens our very life? Are we only not yet in perfect harmony with our environment, or are we transgressors, rebels even, against the laws which we know and understand? Are we not yet perfectly self-determining agents, or are we bowed down under a humiliating yoke?

We were under the impression that Dean Inge is an evolutionist; but in the above extract evolution as applied to man is the very opposite of true. Strangely enough, it is to man alone that the law of development does not seem to apply and work as it does in the rest of the universe, and man is the only animal which has a disease within him, with an irresistible disposition to go wrong rather than right. Some law, of which we know nothing, keeps him in a state of miserable bondage, and he can win freedom only by becoming the slave of Jesus Christ.

It is wonderful that as a preacher Dean Inge is often amazingly orthodox and blind to the plain teaching of Nature. Much of the Evangelical Gospel is unacceptable to him, in regard to which he is perfectly loyal to Nature; but some portion of it appeals to him as true, and this he defends with moving eloquence, even at the expense of contradicting and rejecting firmly and well-nigh universally established scientific truths.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Bad Boy of the Church.

Talk about it as we like, a man's breeding shows itself nowhere more than in his religion.

—*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

Dost thou think because thou art virtuous there shall be no more cakes and ale?

—*Shakespeare.*

CANON JAMES ADDERLEY is one of the most remarkable of present-day parsons, and, unlike the Bishop of London, does not require a sixth-century dress and the aid of the picture-postcard photographers to keep him before the public. Canon Adderley is a peer's son who has flirted with the Socialist movement, and he has attained considerable prominence in the Church of England. He has enjoyed living in high society, and his sympathy with the democracy is genuine and unaffected. Whether he was among the "upper ten thousand" or the "submerged tenth," life has interested and fascinated him. His sense of humour is not the least excellent of his many gifts, and his open description of himself as "the bad boy of the Church" disarms criticism.

It is this engaging frankness which lends interest to his volume of reminiscences, *In Slums and Society* (Fisher Unwin). It used to be said that the only books of reminiscences worth reading were those of players, because they were never expected to be respectable. Nowadays actors and actresses are far more respected than parsons, and, unless the human interest is in evidence, even prelates may go unread, and their books find their way to the waste-paper merchants. There is no fear of this sad fate for Canon Adderley's book, which is crowded with interest from cover to cover, and which appeals far beyond the narrow and fussy folk who regularly trouble the pew-openers.

What many elderly spinsters may find very undesirable in an ecclesiastic is often a popular asset in a literary man, and the Canon's cheerful budget of good things makes most pleasant reading. A capital story is told of Canon Liddon, who wrote to a clergyman who had confessed to the "borrowing" of a sermon: "Dear friend: It is a pleasure in these days to hear two clergymen saying the same thing." Bishop Temple, who had been the august headmaster of a great public school, and the terror of two generations of scholars, figures here in his most dictatorial and magisterial manner. Canon Adderley once had a letter from him consisting of two short words, "Thank you"; and on another occasion the more expansive and familiar communication, "Your second letter shows me that my first was right." A better story of the gruff bishop is his reply to the gushing lady parishioner who asked him, "Oh, my lord, I do believe you haven't seen my last baby?" "No, and I don't believe I ever shall!"

Unlike so many parsons, Canon Adderley is a genuine and unaffected humourist. He tells us of a fidgety archdeacon who visited a certain church and asked if the statue of the Virgin had miraculous qualities. "If you put down half-a-crown," said the priest, "I daresay she'd wink."

Some of the freshest and most telling jests are Adderley's own. He writes of the present bejewelled and gowned Bishop of London as "the Sunny Jim of the Church"; of the "eminent dogmatism" of his own brother; and of the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England as "a very provoking volume." But, after all, the stories that are likely to attract the general reader are those concerning the busy, noisy world, and not the quiet backwaters of the Church. Very neat is the story of Sir Andrew Clark and Sir James Paget, two famous physicians, who breakfasted at the same house. Sir Andrew remarked: "I see, Paget, that you haven't many

patients; there are few letters." Sir James glanced cautiously at the other, and said: "I notice most of your correspondence has a black edge."

Two good stories concern that ill-fated genius, Oscar Wilde, whom Adderley visited in Reading Gaol. "Have you ever visited a prisoner before?" asked Wilde. Adderley confessed that he had not. "Then, criminal that I am, I have made you obey your Master!" was the reply. To the ready and brilliant wit of Wilde the Canon bears further testimony. Wilde boasted that there was no subject on which he could not speak at once. Someone suggested "the Queen." Like lightning came Wilde's answer: "She's not a subject." The Canon has something of this gift of repartee. A bishop once roundly accused this Socialist Canon of "playing to the gallery." Adderley retorted: "It is high time the Church left off playing to the stalls and the dress-circle."

Canon Adderley is a priest of the Government Religion, but he "wears his rue with a difference." He has very wide sympathies, and some of his reflections are quite good in their way, and bear quotation, such as "Converted Tories make the best Socialists"; "Extreme Protestants entirely lack humour"; "Since the divorce between religion and amusement we have had to pay for our amusement"; "The way of theology is marked by shaking milestones."

Unconventional as the book is, there is not a particle of malice in it. Indeed, this is one of the very few books of clerical memories which an ordinary book-lover finds readable, and its justification is that its author, like the Reverend Stewart Headlam, is so much more of a man than a petticoated priest.

MIMNERMUS.

The Exodus From Egypt.

IV.

(Concluded from page 709.)

There are writers, too, both among excavators and among biblical students who, in their anxiety to prove by means of archæology, the accuracy of the Bible narrative, display a zeal which proves their own undoing. They make identifications of place-names which can be shown to be incorrect or at least unjustifiable, and in some cases they go so far as to make statements with regard to Egyptian history and religion which any serious student knows to be inaccurate. Such writers instead of vindicating the narrative of the Old Testament, merely discredit it by a disingenuousness which is bound in the end to be exposed. The truth is that there is in Egypt singularly little evidence which bears directly on the Bible narrative.—*Prof. T. E. Peet, "Egypt and the Old Testament," pp. 6-7.*

ACCORDING to the Bible, after Joseph had interpreted Pharaoh's dream, Pharaoh gave Joseph a new name, "and he gave him to wife Asenath, the daughter of Potipherah, priest of On" (Genesis xli, 45). Now this, as Prof. Peet points out, creates another very serious difficulty, for:—

On is the town of Heliopolis in the Delta, and was the centre of the Egyptian worship of Ra the Sun-god. The very name of the priest Poti-pherah means "He whom Ra has given." The Hyksos, who certainly occupied the whole Delta and even a considerable portion of Upper Egypt, were worshippers of Set, and, as we have seen, were especially hateful to the Egyptians because "they ruled in ignorance of Ra." If we suppose with most commentators that Joseph was a Semite who rose to favour under a Hyksos (Semitic) king, and that the oppression only began after the expulsion of the Hyksos, when the Egyptian kings of the Eighteenth Dynasty reconquered the Delta, we must admit that the Hyksos king not only allowed the worship of Ra to continue

at Heliopolis, but even encouraged his favourite Joseph to marry the daughter of Ra's priest. All that we know of the Hyksos occupation of Egypt from the Egyptian side makes such an admission very difficult, and it is almost beyond doubt that the story of this marriage, like the names of the priest and his daughter, cannot date from Hyksos times, but is a later colouring.¹

Another contradiction in the Bible narrative relates to the "Land of Goshen." As we have seen, this has been identified—without the slightest historical evidence—with the "Wadi Tumulat," a strip of pasture land lying outside Egypt proper, but under Egyptian rule. Now, as Prof. Peet points out:—

There is a curious geographical confusion underlying the early chapters of Exodus. At one moment the Israelites are conceived as living aloof from the Egyptians in the Land of Goshen, while at another they are clearly represented as in the midst of them. Thus the swarms of flies and the plague of hail did not visit the Land of Goshen "where the children of Israel were," but at the same time Moses could "rise up in the morning and stand before Pharaoh."

As Prof. Peet further observes:—

It is hardly likely that Pharaoh would be in residence at some petty town in the Wadi Tumulat, which was, as we have seen, semi-foreign ground.

And again:—

The Hebrew women were instructed each woman to "ask of her neighbour, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold and raiment," above all, if the two races were separated, why the need to mark the Hebrew lintels and side-posts with blood that the Lord might "pass over the door."

Then again, when we come to consider the actual Exodus, says the same authority:—

Difficulties beset us on every side.....As for the numbers of the Israelites we cannot for a moment entertain a belief in the two millions suggested by Ex. xii, 37. It is incredible that this vast people could have maintained themselves in the desert between Egypt and Canaan for the forty years demanded by tradition, and extremely doubtful, in the light of modern experience, whether they could even have made the direct march from Egypt to Kadesh.²

Even if the Israelites could have overcome this difficulty, another one would have confronted them, for Sinai, where, according to the Bible, Moses received the Tables of the Law, before passing into Palestine, Sinia had been in the hands of the Egyptians since the time of Snefru, more than two thousand years previously, and continued down to the time of Ramesis III, who reigned one hundred years after the time of Meneptah, in whose reign the Exodus is said to have taken place. Professor Sayce himself admits it. He says:—

There is an historical reason which makes it impossible for us to believe that the western side of the Sinaitic Peninsula could have witnessed the giving of the law and the wanderings of the Israelitish people. In the days of the Exodus it was an Egyptian province. Since the time of Snefru, the last king of the Third Egyptian Dynasty, it had been garrisoned by Egyptian soldiers, who protected the officials and workmen at the mines of copper and malachite. In the reign of Ramses III, of the Twentieth Dynasty, it was still a valuable possession of the Egyptian state.³

The last name found is that of Ramses IV, the successor of Ramses III. But Prof. Sayce is in no way

disconcerted by such a trifle as that; he has a faith that can move mountains, therefore he calmly moves Mount Sinai into the region of Seir. Like the prophet Habakkuk, Professor Sayce is "capable of anything" in defence of the Bible. Of his identification of Melchizedek, "King of Salem," with a certain Ebed-tob, found on the Tel el-Amarna tablets, Canon Driver says:—

The inference is not justified.....moreover, the letters relate to a period (if Amraphel in Gen. xiv, 1, is rightly identified with Khammurabi) *nine hundred years* subsequent to the age of Melchizedek.⁵

The fact is the story of the Exodus, as told in the Bible, cannot be fitted into the framework of Egyptian history. The facts of that history, which have been so slowly and laboriously collected, have demonstrated that the Israelites could not have entered Palestine because that country was in the power of the Egyptians as well as Sinai.

Take the period of 400 years between the expulsion of Hyksos and the reign of Meneptah, which comprises the time the Hebrews are said to have been in Egypt. Fifty years after the expulsion of the Hyksos Thotmes I conquered and overran Palestine. Fifty years later Thotmes III, during the twenty years of his reign, visited almost yearly every part of Palestine. Rameses II, the immediate predecessor of Meneptah, marched through Palestine and defeated the powerful Hittites at the battle of Kadesh. All this time except for sporadic outbreaks, Palestine was in the grip of Egypt. It is in the reign of Meneptah that we have the first mention of the Israelites in an Egyptian inscription. In the spring of 1896 an inscription was brought to light containing an account of a campaign conducted by Meneptah in Syria, and among other conquered people are included Israel. It is an astonishing fact—if it is possible to be astonished at anything of which the Bible apologist is capable—but the religious papers and even the daily Press, hailed this piece of evidence as a complete vindication of the Bible! Here, they said, was the long sought for testimony of the Monuments. The infidel was now definitely routed, and the faith of our grandmothers vindicated.

The lines of the inscription relating to Israel run as follows: "Canaan is captured with every evil circumstance (?) Askalon is carried captive. Gezer is taken. Yenoam is brought to nought. Israel is destroyed, its seed is not. Syria has become as the widows of Egypt. All the lands together are at peace." Prof. Peet remarks upon it:—

It is almost incredible that in some minds the discovery of this new document merely served to clinch the belief in the dating of the exodus to the reign of Meneptah. Cooler heads, however, were much more concerned to note that, so far from confirming the Meneptah (Meneptah) date it made it practically impossible, for obviously, if the Israelites left Egypt in Meneptah's own reign and wandered forty years before reaching Canaan, he could hardly have found them settled there as early as his fifth year.⁶

Of course the apologists were ready with plenty of explanations. These wretched Israelites, they said, must have been left behind when the others went to Egypt. Or they must have left Egypt before the exodus. In that case how is it we hear nothing of them when Thotmes I, Thotmes III, and Rameses II, were overrunning Palestine? Moreover, how comes it that the Pharaoh and his army, who, according to the Bible, are reposing at the bottom of the Red Sea, are very much alive and conducting extensive operations in a foreign country? As Prof. Peet observes of these

¹ E. T. Peet, *Egypt and the Old Testament*, pp. 98-99.

² *Ibid.*, p. 84.

³ *Ibid.*, 106-107.

⁴ Rev. A. H. Sayce, *The Higher Criticism and the Monuments*, p. 265.

⁵ *Authority and Archaeology*, p. 73.

⁶ E. T. Peet, *Egypt and the Old Testament*, pp. 109-110.

apologies, "it is hardly worth while going to all this trouble to defend the theory of the exodus under Merenptah for which there is so little to be said on other grounds."⁷ One hundred years after the reign of Menepthah, Rameses III swept through Palestine and defeated a great confederacy at Migdol. How is it there is no mention of this in the Bible? Because the early books of the Bible are unhistorical and the story of the oppression, and the exodus is a myth.

W. MANN.

The Unconscious Wish.

A Study in Psycho-Analysis.

I.

CHARLES DARWIN, as every bright schoolboy knows, first formulated the theory of Evolution with regard to the world of plants and animals. Later, the theory of Evolution was applied to every branch of science. Similarly Freud originally elucidated his theory of the Unconscious Wish as explaining and applying to a very limited sphere of scientific inquiry, namely, dreams. Since then his theory has been extended to almost every branch of human conduct and mental activity. In this respect these two theories present an historical parallel. There are great dissimilarities, of course, and it is pertinent to note that whereas the theory of Evolution is referable to astronomy, biology, sociology, and in fact to every department of scientific investigation, the Freudian theory of the Unconscious Wish extends, at the very most, merely to the conduct of sentient life and to certain important phases of mental activity, including thereby such things as dreams, so-called "unintentional" mistakes, poetry, art, collecting manias, sadism, religion, and various forms of insanity. Evolution, obviously, is wider in its application than the theory of the Unconscious Wish. On the other hand, Freud's theory of the Unconscious Wish applies to matters more closely connected with our everyday life, and, as such, may be considered of greater significance.

The validity of this claim is still a matter of controversy. This much, however, is certain, that the theory of the Unconscious Wish is claimed by many scientists to be one of the greatest, if not the greatest, intellectual contribution since the exposition of the theory of Evolution. This being so, a simple and concise (even if didactic) outline of the Freudian theory of the Unconscious Wish, showing what it is rather than what are its why's and wherefore's, would, it seems to me, be highly acceptable to those Free-thinkers who are as yet unacquainted with its salient features and everyday application. It is with this motive that these articles have been written.

It may be that I can most propitiously begin by stating the two propositions upon which the Freudian theory appears to rest. The first is this: There is a region of the mind normally inaccessible to consciousness. A little reflection on human behaviour, as we experience it ourselves and as we see it all round us in the world, should suffice to convince us that many human thoughts and actions have no consecutive antecedent in the stream of consciousness and for which no conscious cause can be discovered even upon subsequent introspection. This portion of the mind is termed by Freud the "Unconscious." Here are stored various memory traces which ordinarily cannot gain access to consciousness because they are repressed by special repressive barriers. These repressive barriers are erected, generally speaking, because the repressed elements are painful or otherwise out of

harmony with the rest of the mind. The repressed elements principally consist of those primitive and archaic desires and wishes which civilization requires to be repressed, which, to the individual, are made to appear ugly, wrong, or at least unattainable, by the usual home training, education and social life of our day.

The second proposition is this: About eight-ninths of our conduct is motivated by the "Unconscious" portion of our mind. (If the reader is inclined to a contrary opinion I would urge him to defer his judgment until he has acquainted himself with the arguments advanced on its behalf or at least until he has finished reading these elementary articles). As something of a corollary to this, conscious mind is considered as being essentially a superficial phenomenon whose chief function is perception and whose attempts at reasoning largely consist of finding (or manufacturing) conscious justificatory "reasons" for acts whose true causes lie hidden away in the realm of the "Unconscious."

Now, the judicious and careful reader will have noticed that the "Unconscious" part of the mind chiefly consists of repressed "desires" or "wishes" and, as our conduct is strongly motivated by the "Unconscious" portion of our mind, the Freudian thesis must be apparent. Freud's thesis is this: Our conduct is fundamentally motivated by the repressed "wish." This, briefly, is what is meant by the Freudian Wish or the theory of the Unconscious Wish. Before elaborating the abstract and general theory it would be well to consider some specific instances of its application. The particular should precede the general. We will, therefore, consider the theory of the Unconscious Wish with regard to dreams, the subject in respect of which it was first formulated. Later we will note its application to other phases of human conduct. After that we will be in a better position to consider the general theory's validity, import and significance.

II.—DREAMS.

Importance and meaning have always, by primitive belief and popular superstition, been ascribed to dreams. But it was not until 1900, the year of the publication of Sigmund Freud's *Traumdeutung* (translated as *The Interpretation of Dreams*, by A. A. Brill, London, 1913), that a consistent scientific theory of dreams and their relation to the waking life was propounded. The dream, according to this theory, represents the fulfilment of a wish.

In some instances the dream clearly embodies the fulfilment of an open and undisguised wish. Children, who do not normally repress their wishes during waking life, often dream that their overt wishes are fulfilled, and the same thing may happen to grown people. For example: one of the members of Peary's North Pole expedition dreamt, while subsisting on the limited diet provided during part of the journey, that he was enjoying some of the many much-missed things he was accustomed to enjoy at home. Such dreams are termed "convenience" dreams, and represent the open fulfilment of undisguised wishes.

In the case of adults most dreams represent the symbolic fulfilment of repressed wishes. Social training has made many of our normal desires appear ugly and wrong. Such desires are thus often rendered painful, and generally remain unrealized and even unexpressed. Even in sleep, adults remain under the pressure of this social training, and unconsciously and automatically repress the expression of certain desires. But in the dream the mind works more freely than in the waking state, and these repressed wishes often gain expression in a round-about manner by symbols. The true significance of such symbols is often difficult to determine, and the dreams in which they are contained

⁷*Ibid.*, p. III.

are often saved from giving offence to one's "better self" by the fact that their true meaning is concealed. Such dreams represent the "hidden" fulfilment of repressed wishes. According to Freud, their "hidden" meaning can be adequately determined by the method of "psycho-analysis." This method consists, essentially, of eliciting and evaluating as many as possible of the ideas associated in the dreamer's mind with the ideas of the dream.

Take this example (from Brill's *Fundamental Conceptions of Psycho-Analysis*): A young lady dreams that she sees Apollo holding Venus in his arms. A subsequent psycho-analytic investigation reveals, among other things, these facts. She used to keep a picture of Venus in her room and sometimes, on retiring, would argue with her room-mate as to which of them most resembled the goddess. On the evening preceding the occurrence of the dream she had been escorted to the place where she was staying by a young man who was about to leave for over-seas. When they were about to part he asked her to allow him to kiss her good-bye. She refused, but afterwards, when in her room, she regretted her action. She was too refined a girl to permit herself to think that she wished that So-and-So were here to court her. But the deep-rooted desire was there and demanded at least partial expression. Even in the dream state her training would not allow her to imagine the open fulfilment of her unexpressed wish. But in the dream her mind worked more freely than when she was awake and gave expression to this repressed wish symbolically.

The dream of being naked is quite common. This, states Freud, represents the desire of exhibitionism retained from childhood, but rendered disagreeable and embarrassing by our social training. The almost universal dream of falling is similarly explained when we note that falling, considered principally as motion, is allied to rocking which was one a pleasant but now a tabooed and unpleasant experience, and the desire for which has been repressed by social pressure.

In some cases it is difficult to apply Freud's theory but the theory may be none the less valid because it requires, in some instances of its application, the exercise of skill and ingenuity.

Most dreams, as the reader may have noted, are motivated by a repressed "sexual" wish. With the rise of Christianity and the spread of its pernicious teachings the sexual (using the term in its Freudian sense so as to include the entire love-life of the individual) instincts have been repressed in such a perverted manner that the whole impulse has become most pitifully distorted. The many weird and unnatural dreams common to-day give us something of an index to the extent of this evil. With the adoption of a more enlightened attitude things would be immeasurably changed for the better. To do so we would (it seems to some Freethinkers of my acquaintance, at least) first have to attain and then surpass the healthy and philosophical attitude of the cultured Pagans of classical antiquity. Meanwhile, though Christianity stands indicted, we will continue to dream strange dreams.

O. J. BOULTON.

(To be Continued.)

The Pagan temple was as graceful and joyous as a nuptial bed; the Christian cathedral is as sombre as the grave. The one was dedicated to life, the other to death.

—Alfred de Vigny (1787-1863).

We harden ourselves against the indifference and injustice of men just as we harden ourselves against cold. But if the temperature goes down too low the result is death.—Jean-Baptiste Say, (1767-1832).

Acid Drops.

A great many wondering comments have been made on the suggestion of Mr. Lloyd George, while in the United States, that Jews and Christians should hold a religious service together. As they both profess to worship the same God the wonderment is a testimony to the feelings engendered by religious belief. On the other hand these two bodies have different ideas about their God. One accuses him of being the father of a son born of a young Jewish woman, the other denies that God has ever done anything of the kind and insists that he is a bachelor deity. So the real difference consists in the belief on one hand that God Almighty is a bachelor, and on the other that he is a wifeless husband with a son the same age as himself. And we decline to attempt any reconciliation of the two views.

The editor of the *Radio Times* says that he has received hundreds of letters in praise of the sermons broadcasted on Sunday evenings. That may be quite true considering the millions of Christians there are in the country. Our own criticism was first, that the parsons had no business there at all, they butted in just to keep it in hand so far as they could, and had the impudence to arrange that the broadcasting should not commence till after church time; and, second, that the sermons that were broadcasted were hopeless drivel for the most part. We repeat both statements, and we invite the editor of the *Radio Times* to publish one of these sermons weekly for, say, three months. And we cannot conceive any intelligent man or woman coming to any other conclusion as to their quality. It is not a question of not agreeing with the views expressed, it is simply that whether one is religious or not the things broadcasted read like an advertisement for a ready made home for idiots. It is an insult to ask intelligent people to listen to them.

Three cheers for the Navy! Rear-Admiral Drury-Lowe, speaking in the City, stated that "The security of this country and of the world would be best brought about, not by increased armaments, but by increased understanding." The hearts of John, Jacques, Ivan, Fritz, or Tony, are all the same—when religions and military passion play on them, then only are they different.

The Deputy-Mayor of Swindon is following a remorseless logic that may be popular in a few years time. In a letter he has asked all lovers of peace and fraternity to keep outside churches on Armistice Day. The present age sees the churches having the argument both ways; they cannot retain this position for ever, for in addition to frontal attacks from Freethought, they now have to fight Sunday games and Sunday concerts, and their glaring disconcert over the elementary necessities of mankind is giving them more limelight than they want. When the plain religions are dead we may have a few scuffles with the fancy ones, and then Freethinkers may prepare their pens and speech for something better than chasing the imbecilities of those who flourish on the use of words such as Fear, Sin, and Salvation.

We are sometimes accused of belittling the mentality of the clergy. We do not plead guilty, because we honestly think that we have never said anything about their intellectual quality that might not have been said much more brutally without straining the truth. Take for example so prominent a clergyman as the Rev. Dr. Garvie. Dr. Garvie was one of the speakers at the annual meeting of the Christian Evidence Society. In the course of his remarks he had something to say of certain psychologists whom, he said, tried to reduce human life to the level of animal existence. And he let himself go in this way:—

Think of what animals have remained and man has become. Man has attained a soul, has built cities, shaped science, philosophy, literature, art, and has formed ideals of truth and holiness, beauty and love. Man has risen

above all visible phenomena to apprehend invisible and eternal reality. What monkey or dog has done that, or even approached to that?

The perfect stupidity of that passage defies controversy. You could no more enter into argument about it than you could set about proving Einstein's theory of Relativity to a congenital idiot. Just look at the mentality of this leading parson. He is attacking a theory which says that man is a member of the animal world, and has developed out of animal beginnings. But, says this pulpit Solomon, if that is so show me an animal that does what man does—in other words, show me an animal that is a man. But, if the animal becomes a man, he ceases to be the animal he was. What Dr. Garvie asks is for a thing to become something different from what it is while still remaining the same. The perfect stupidity of that compels admiration. Yet Dr. Garvie is, we think, concerned with the training of young men for the pulpit. Is it any wonder that the pulpit is what it is when men like Dr. Garvie set the pace?

Anything appears to do with the Churches so long as it will bring grist to their mill. We are approaching the centenary of Byron's death, and endeavours will be made to commemorate the event. The Vicar of Hucknall Torkard, Canon Barber, suggests in a letter to the *Times* that a fitting way to signalize the date would be for 20,000 admirers of Byron to subscribe one pound each to pay for the erection of a screen in Hucknall Church. We quite believe that Byron, the Freethinker, would have enjoyed the unintentional satire of the suggestion, and for our part we suggest that if the screen is erected it might well be decorated with some selected passages from the *Vision of Judgment*, and perhaps from *Cain*.

Seriously, one wonders whether it will ever be possible for Christians to develop sufficient self-respect to cease scrambling for the dead bodies of famous Freethinkers, or honesty enough not to suggest lies about them to future generations by surrounding their memories with Christian monuments and symbols? Byron's contempt for Christianity was deep and often expressed. The clergy of his day knew it; the clergy of our day find themselves reduced to such straits that they are willing to accept their deadliest enemies—when they are dead. What a creed!

Three brothers appeared respectively as prosecutor, defendant, and informer at Hull in a case in which one brother was sentenced to three months' hard labour for stealing a gold watch and chain from another. The evidence was so bewildering that it seemed like a farce based on the Tangle of the Trinity.

In one week three clerical wills were proved at £37,524, £20,981, and £17,097. What humourist was it that said "religion is without money and without price."

Religious riots have started again in India. In one case a party of Moslems attacked a Hindu temple, threw out the worshippers, and annexed all the articles of value. This association of business and bigotry is by no means singular.

The State of Oklahoma has decided that no copyright shall be purchased by the State and no text book adopted that teaches evolution as against the Bible account of creation. So much for culture in some of the American States in the year 1923. We do not pretend, nor do we claim, that this law represents the better class mind, even of Oklahoma, but it does show the prevalence of a very poor type of intelligence. Probably some light may be thrown on the situation by the reflection that a careful enquiry carried out, after subjecting the men to some very moderate mental tests, concluded that about seventy per cent of the men who volunteered for service in the war were at a standard represented by boys of fourteen years of age. They had reached that stage and there they stopped. In all probability the same condition of things,

or something very near it, exists in this country. But the prevalence of this type explains many things, and its existence makes the perpetuation of religion pretty certain for a long time to come.

Revision of the Church of England Prayer Book will be further considered at the forthcoming session of the Church Assembly. If this process goes on much longer the volume will be unrecognizable.

A dangerous lunatic, whose delusion was that he was the deity, escaped from Nottingham City Asylum, and a few days later gave himself up. Perhaps this particular deity found himself despised and rejected of men.

The committee that has been sitting to consider the servant question says that next to parsons the servants are the most ridiculed class in the community. We beg to observe that the servants do not deserve the ridicule, if the statement is true. Domestic service is not usually the happiest of occupations, and our sympathy is with the servant who, while in a house, is not always treated as a member of the household. As to the parsons—well, that is a ridiculous occupation, very often filled by a ridiculous person, and, to use a colloquialism, he is "asking for it."

Sir Marshall Hall, who would be much better employed sticking to things he understands rather than speaking upon things he does not, told a Bournemouth audience the other day that he has thousands of sheets of paper written on by a woman in circumstances which prevented the possibility of collusion. These sheets of paper are to him proofs of spirit communication. The simplicity of it! We may inform Sir Marshall Hall that in psychological laboratories there are also thousands of sheets of paper written on in exactly the same circumstances as his own sheets, but which are not at all connected with spirit intercourse. We commend to Sir Marshall Hall a course of study of experimental psychology, with special attention to its abnormal aspects.

The Devil can quote Scripture, and the Rev. W. Noël Lambert, St. Gabriel's Vicarage, E.14, can quote Karl Marx when it suits him to ask for £10 in the *Morning Post*. At four shillings per line this reverend gentleman's advertisement works out at forty-four shillings each insertion. God, who made the world in seven days, brought the Israelites out of bondage, along with many other superhuman feats, could surely save this expenditure, and at the same time furnish this clerical beggar with £10 to help kill Bolshevism. We should like to remind this aspiring gentleman that this word of abuse is out of date, and that the British Government has begun to trade with Russia, which appears to be of more importance than dealing in prejudice and passion and killing Bolshevism with subscriptions at £10 per time. Is it quite good form to mention money matters in this manner?

Some time ago we were treated in the newspapers to lengthy yarns about the revival of religion in Belfast. "Gunmen" and similar fry were reported to be rushing to the Churches in crowds, and if crowds were rushing that is the type we should expect to see affected by revivalistic religion. The whole history of Christianity is full of records of its attractiveness to a low mental type, without any development of character—something like the professional burglar who swears off drink during the time he is engaged in a burglary. But now we see from the *Belfast Telegraph* there are laments that the masses in Belfast are not being attracted to the Churches. But we do not expect that this will teach the Belfast parsons to be a little more truthful or more sensible about the next revival that is set going. The clergy will preach the same kind of sermons, the revivalist will draw more percentages on his returns, and the paper will circulate the same lies. So the game goes on.

Our Sustentation Fund.

Previously acknowledged: £553 2s. J. L. Vickary, £5; Evan Davies, 5s.; A. D. Guest, 5s. A. W. Morrison, 5s.; Jersey, £1; R. Wilson, £3 3s.; J. D. Drewey, 2s.; J. T. Jones, 10s. 6d.; J. Bishop, £1; T. Humphrey, 5s.; Rijksdaalder, 5s.; R. L. Bertram, 4s.; F. T. D., 5s.; Mrs. Christian, 2s. 6d.; H. White, 2s. 6d.; N. Rose, 5s.; H. Harland, 2s. 6d.; Charles Shelley Mayer, £2 2s.; F. Cox, 5s.; J. Adam, 5s.; J. Williams, 5s.; G. Stichland, 2s. 6d.; C. Jones, 2s. 6d.; Andrew Millar, 2s. 6d.; J. E. King, 5s.; D. Marr, 2s. 6d.

Per F. Collins—D. Aberdeen, 4s.; F. Howell, 2s.; B. Smith, 2s. 6d.; V. Collins, 5s.; W. Andrews, 2s.; F. Edwards, 2s.; F. Sullivan, 2s. 6d.; A. Vanderhout, 5s.; F. Collins, 5s.

Total, £571 5s. 6d.

This Fund will close on November 25.

Corrections: J. E. King, 5s., and D. Marr, 2s. 6d., should have been acknowledged in earlier lists.

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.

JAVALI.—We agree with you as to the sanity of the *Standard* article on Sunday games. But we wonder whether an article like that would have appeared in a daily paper had not the fighting Freethinker been hammering away at the Christian superstition in and out of season? We should say not.

H. BARBER.—Article received. Thanks. Sorry to know that Mr. Gordon failed. Perhaps it may leave him free for more useful work. After all, there are any number of people who can do the other kind of work.

E. EGERTON STAFFORD.—Thanks for articles. We hope to publish in a week or so.

J. FORBES.—The booklet on *Foreign Missions* was by Mr. Cohen, but it has been out of print for some years. We do not know how you could procure a copy.

L. MASON.—Certainly cuttings from religious papers are useful. Otherwise we must leave it to the judgment of those who are good enough to send as to what they think will be likely to be of interest to readers.

J. T. JONES.—We are glad to have your high commendation of the *Freethinker*. As one of its oldest readers you are in a position to form a judgment. Hope you and your family are quite well.

W. L. ROGERS.—The information you require can be obtained at any Registrar's office.

S. T. ELLIS.—You are expecting too much. The Churches will never tell the truth about either their doctrines or their propaganda. This has always to be done for them.

F. COLLINS.—We are obliged for your interest in the success of the Fund.

R. L. BERTRAM.—Will bear your suggestions in mind when the occasion arises for adopting them. You will find a section dealing with the growth of humanitarian feelings towards the animal world in Lecky's *History of European Morals*. The Christian Church never concerned itself about the matter as animals were without souls, and nothing else mattered. The gradual brutalizing of life by Christian influences also tended towards encouraging brutality towards animals.

R. MAVER.—We are gratified at having the warm support of yourself and your son. Freethought brings good friends as some compensation for any inconvenience that one may experience.

J. COLLIER.—We remember receiving the larger amount and so must have received the smaller one. Sorry it was omitted from list of subscriptions.

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.

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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.

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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.

There was a greatly improved audience at Friars Hall on Sunday last, and Mr. Cohen's address was listened to with evident appreciation by those present. Mr. Moss occupied the chair, and there was a deal of questioning at the close of the lecture. To-day (November 18), the third of this course of lectures will be delivered by Mr. Moss on "Darwin, the Shakespeare of Science." The lecture is certain to be interesting and we hope that London Freethinkers will see that the hall is well filled.

A course of Tuesday evening lectures, to be followed by discussion, has been arranged by the Executive to take place at the East Islington Labour Club, 16 Highbury Grove, Islington. The second of this course will be delivered by Mr. Moss on Tuesday, November 20, at 7.30. It is hoped to set going a Finsbury Park Branch of the N.S.S., and North London Freethinkers might put in a little extra work in the shape of personal advertising in order to give the venture a good chance of success. We believe the hall is very easy of access, trams and motor buses being very frequent.

On Sunday, November 11, there were thousands of serious and sober-minded people who passed the Cenotaph. Visitors reported that the effect was depressing. As Atheists we witnessed what in our opinion was the resurrection of the dead, and this phenomenon, we think, is not quite that which is required by those who serve the God of War. It also ratifies much of the plain sense uttered by Lord Grey. It may be the first faint flush of dawn on a Golden Age in which the Cenotaph shall be the last memorial to the fight for the right of road between two blades of grass. Freethinkers will receive inspiration from the recollection of those who fell in the Great War, and Mars shall only be served and worshipped in future by bipeds only capable of destruction. Events are throttling these latter creatures, and their power is being dissipated. If two million dead can bring the same number of living to remember them after five years of hog-wash from Press and Pulpit, we say, Glory to Man in the Highest!

Mr. Corrigan lectures to-day (November 18) in the Brassworkers' Hall, 70 Lionel Street, Birmingham, at 7 o'clock. His subject is "From Roman Catholicism to Secularism," and Birmingham friends might make this an occasion to bring some of their Christian acquaintances to the meetings.

We are asked to call the attention of North London Freethinkers to the meetings being held at the St.

Pancras Reform Club every Sunday evening. To-day (November 18) Mr. Rosetti will open a discussion on "Is Freethought Important? If so, how can it best be promoted?" There will be no hesitation in Freethinkers answering the first question, although there is room for difference of opinion as to the second. It is a topic on which much might be said and much ought to be said.

Will Manchester friends please note that the lecturer to-day (November 18) at the new hall in which the local Branch holds its Sunday meetings, the Engineering Union Hall, 120 Rusholme Road, will be Mr. J. B. Hannay. If we mistake not, this is the gentleman who read a scholarly paper before the Church Congress, and we feel sure that the local friends will be well advised in attending the meeting. The lectures will commence at 3 and 6.30.

Feeling Their Way.

It is interesting to watch the manoeuvres of the clerical gentlemen, who only a short time ago announced their acceptance of the doctrine of Evolution, and who desire their fellow Christians now to understand that they are much too enlightened to believe in the old doctrine of the special creation of man. Nevertheless they take precious good care not to go into the church and proclaim from the pulpit that their brethren of the cloth have been misleading their humble-minded and credulous followers from generation to generation down to the present time. For ages the Holy Bible has been accepted by the Church as the inspired and infallible utterance of the one and only true God. It is true that Bishop Colenso and a few other heretical critics called in question some of its teachings many years ago, but the majority of the clergy have accepted them and preached them as the unquestionable utterances of the God they worship. Now, however, Canon Barnes, who in addition to being a clergyman of the Church of England is also a Doctor of Science, has on several occasions during the last twelve months declared himself in favour of the evolution of man from lower forms of animal life, and discarded altogether the old Christian teaching that man was made by the Hebrew God from dust in the Garden of Eden, less than six thousand years ago; but he very carefully refrains from telling his hearers that Christian clergymen had been throwing dust in the eyes of their followers on this subject for ages. A month or so ago he again referred to the subject, this time at Liverpool, and said that "Men of science can do much to help the community through the period of transition. They should show how in their minds Christianity and Science interact, but it is unreasonable to demand that their language should be orthodox." What a wonderful concession! It appears now that men of science are expected to help Christians out of the morass of ignorance into which the clergy have plunged them by teaching that the Bible was God's inspired word; and further, that these scientists must not be expected in their attempts to teach the truth, to employ language which would only be acceptable to the orthodox. Very nice indeed! Under the circumstances most of the men of science with any independence of character will decline the offer with thanks. When we remember how the clergy denounced Darwin soon after the publication of *The Origin of Species*, how they ridiculed his theory and slandered all those who had sufficient courage to accept it, men of science will not, I should think, be too ready to trust the clergy in the future. But if Canon Barnes is prepared to speak on the question of the Evolution of Man at the Cathedral at Liverpool before the Lord Mayor and a special audience of Christians, would he also be prepared to deliver a similar address before a

congregation of Christians in a village church? Or is he only prepared to speak on such a subject before the most educated and well-informed members of the Christian community?

Canon Barnes frankly admits that the doctrine of the Fall of Man as taught by Genesis is merely an allegory. But if that be so, what need for the atonement by the death of Jesus four thousand years later? And if Jesus did not die on the Cross nearly two thousand years ago, then the whole creed of the Christian Faith is a fraud and a deception, and the priests and parsons of every denomination have been guilty of misleading and deceiving their credulous followers for ages.

The Lord Bishop of Woolwich, and the Rev. Wade-Gary share the view of Canon Barnes on the question of the alleged Fall of Man. They also acknowledge that the doctrine of Evolution does not point in the direction of a Fall—but of a distinct Ascent of Man. And if they are anxious to be accurate in their science on this question, why should they not be logical and throw over the doctrines of the miraculous conception and the virgin-birth of Jesus, which are decidedly unscientific and irrational. But they do not. They know that they can repudiate the teachings of the Old Testament with scorn and still remain clergymen of the Church of England. Indeed, they may say that belief in the Old Testament is no necessary part of the Christian Faith; in fact, that it is merely Judaism. But if they deny the Miraculous Conception or the Virgin-Birth, they are denying the fundamental teachings of their faith, and rendering themselves liable to a charge of heresy and seriously jeopardising their position in the Church. Both the Bishop and his friend, the Rev. Wade-Gary, deliver addresses outside the doors of St. Saviour's Cathedral during the year on the subjects mentioned above, but I doubt whether either of them would speak with the same freedom inside the cathedral on these subjects for fear of disturbing the beliefs of many sincere Christians who have accepted the old teachings without question, and who, no doubt, wish to end their lives "confirmed in the faith of their childhood." But is Christianity, as a creed, to be considered true only according to the education and position of the members of the congregation? Is it one creed for a congregation in St. Paul's or Westminster Abbey, and another for an obscure church in Bethnal Green or Poplar? Are we to suppose that the story of man being made out of dust and woman out of a spare rib of man, to be good enough for the poor people of Bermondsey, but not up to the intellectual level of their rich brethren of South Kensington? And is this kind of policy to continue in the Church until all Christians are of equal intelligence and equal knowledge on all the controversial points existing in relation to science and religion? If so, then the preaching of Christianity is not a matter of principle at all, but merely a question of expediency.

After deceiving their people for ages, clergymen like Canon Barnes now ask men of science to break the news about the Evolution of Man from anthropoid apes very gently to Christian people while the clergy try and reconcile this teaching with the story of the miraculous birth of Jesus, and with his death on the Cross as an atonement for the sins of mankind. No. It will not do. Bishop Colenso was quite right when he said that if the clergy went on propagating these errors, the time would come when they would be regarded as the enemies of the people. And it seems to me that this prediction is becoming nearer fulfilment day by day.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

There are periods in which public opinion is the worst of all opinions.—*Chamfort (1741-1794)*.

An Atheist in Literature.

THE scene was the opening of the local "Literary"; the subject, Mark Rutherford; the essayist submitted a round, fair, and well informed estimation of the author and his work; it was impossible, he said, to do justice to this writer without reference to his religious opinions—a most "distasteful" subject for an audience such as he was addressing: while I, sitting happy in my corner, would fain have demanded, "Why?" The speaker very tactfully deplored Rutherford's religious views; as though we had all been saints and angels, safe in the arms of Jesus, and this gentle and sincere and clear and earnest writer been the ruffian disrupter of our safe anchorage and pious peace of mind! At the close of his really fine lecture, after my own mild expression of opinion, the speaker laughingly said I was still "the old stalwart"—a compliment to me, certainly, but as surely a wholesale condemnation of the rest. Speak nothing but good of the dead, of a man or a religion; their ghosts may come and haunt you, Molly Riley, O! or you may fall to breaking heads, or your pleasant little society may cease to exist; in which I suppose we are to see the harmony and goodwill produced by religion. After all it is not fear of God, but fear of man, that is responsible for the timidity of public speakers—not fear of man himself, but of the religion in him, or the savagery left in him by his once having possessed it. A natural humanism, more slowly, but as surely as Nature heals a wound in the body or on the face of the landscape, is always at work eliminating the warring, sectarian, and superstitious elements of society, so far the main disturbers of the peace and progress of man and of the world. The leading, or misleading, "critic" of the evening, with the scantiest information, but with lots of respectable, muddled piety, blathered beautifully. He was not, of course, enthusiastic, and thought the writings of Mark Rutherford "lacked colour," and suffered from not being "conversational." Mr. George Underwood or the Editor of the *Freethinker* would have enjoyed this critic's remarks: Mr. Cohen in finding an excellent subject for psychological suggestion; the other, like Nietzsche, enjoying the pleasure of finding his direct antithesis. The critic discovered a likeness between Mark Rutherford and the theological Samuel Rutherford! But after all one must not be too severe; there is something in a name; I myself once had a "debate" with a young "Bible student" called Rutherford. He was great on prophecy, and "Thus saith the Lord." So was the earlier Sam. I was completely vanquished. I never could make any headway against Prophecy; was it foretelling the Great War, or the Japanese earthquake; or greater wars to come, when all the world will be a cemetery, and the corpses piled mountains high; all vouched for, all certain, in the calm and reasoned researches of "Bible Students," in the Divine Plan of the Ages: No wonder the poet said of the stars:—

For ever singing as they shine;
The hand that made us is divine!

Not Ingersoll, Bradlaugh, nor Foote, could have answered my adversary, nor the great Voltaire. Here was the miracle of faith against which the greatest sceptic strives in vain. One could only groan inwardly: "What a worshipper, and what a God!" To return to our "Literary": Significant and interesting was the maiden speech of a very young member, the son of a clergyman, who said he had just read Rutherford's *Autobiography* "at a sitting," was half-way through a third volume, and found them all intensely interesting. One wonders at the clergy keeping such "dangerous" books within reach of

their unsuspecting offspring; and one wonders, also, will the mind of this young man widen out as did that of Mark Rutherford? Like the young man, I also, had been reading, for the first time, and at a sitting, the *Autobiography*. What a rare book, how commendably brief, how clearly and happily phrased; the minister's son could have picked on nothing better—nor could any other son of man. If Rutherford became at last an out and out Atheist, my title notwithstanding, I do not know, and I do not care. Sufficient for us he was a moral and intellectual hero at last. Like so many other great spirits, he had wrestled with a stupid but beloved theology that had well nigh suffocated heart and brain—wrestled with it, and against overwhelming odds, overthrew it, and emerged upon a saner, cleaner, wider, happier world. The struggle was severe, but by virtue of his sterling honesty of soul and clarity of intelligence, less protracted than that of some others; yet a titanic, and a more triumphant struggle than in his modesty he might consider it to be. He never quite lost his reverence for the real or imaginary figure of Christ, and he retained a liking for the Bible. This, of course, is not surprising, since a Freethinker like Leopardi could praise the first, and a Shelley extol the poetry of the Hebrew Scriptures. I myself might write a eulogy of the Holy Bible—or of the *Arabian Nights*—or of any book of any merit at all. The best things said about the Bible have been said by Freethinkers. Well weeded out by a committee of free and really educated thinkers it might remain a flower garden of folklore and philosophy. As the much vaunted Bible stands, it is but a compendium of the most stupid superstitions of the lowest religions.

The genius of Mark Rutherford occasionally flames up in a passage like this—speaking of an empty and ill-favoured, simpering clerical colleague of his, who became a "popular minister.....much visited by the sick," he says:—

I disliked him—and specially disliked his unpleasant behaviour to women. If I had been a woman I should have spurned him for his perpetual and inane compliments. He was always dawdling after "the sex," which was one of his sweet phrases, and yet he was not passionate. Passion does not dawdle and compliment, nor is it nasty, as this fellow was. Passion may burn like a devouring flame; and in a few moments, like flame, may bring down a temple to dust and ashes, but it is earnest as flame, and essentially pure.

As a half-way house our heretic found inspiration in Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads*, in which, he says:—

God is nowhere formally deposed.....his real God is not the God of the Church, but the God of the hills, the abstraction of Nature.....substituting a new and living spirit for the old deity, once alive, but now hardened into an idol.

Passing thus from the merely artificial and miraculous, with no inner meaning, however externally imposing, he remarks: "A little Greek mythological story was of more importance to me than a war which filled the newspapers." As Shylock might have said: "I would not have given it for a wilderness of monkeys!" On a senior cleric advising him to stick to the simplicity of the "old, old story," he says: "His words fell upon me like the hand of a corpse, and I went away much depressed." A dear old lady, recounting to him her girlhood's romance and tragedy of an ill-mated marriage, affords him opportunity for this perfect pen picture:—

"I will show you what I was like at nineteen," and she got up and turned to a desk, from which she took a little ivory miniature. "That," she said, "was given to Mr. Heaton when we were engaged. I thought he would have locked it up, but he used to

leave it lying about, and one day I found it in the dressing-table drawer with some brushes and combs, and two or three letters of mine. I withdrew it and burnt the letters. He never asked for it, and here it is." The head was small and set upon the neck like a flower, but not bending pensively. It was rather thrown back with a kind of firmness, and with a peculiarly open air, as if it had nothing to conceal and wished the world to conceal nothing. The body was shown down to the waist, and was slim and graceful. But what was most noteworthy about the picture was its solemn seriousness, a seriousness capable of infinite affection, and of infinite abandonment, not sensuous abandonment.....but of an abandonment to spiritual aims.

This is only equalled, and surpassed I think, by the description of Miss Mardon, the Atheist's daughter. What said our critic about "Colour?" Here are not only paintings in oil, but veritable flesh and blood and spirit. It may be our critic was but clay himself, clumsily and confusedly compounded, I fear not even "divinely inspired!" Anyhow he does not matter. I had not known, I said, that Mark Rutherford had died so recently as 1913 or I would have looked upon his demise as a more important event in the world's history than the Great War that shook the world a year later—there was lots of "colour" there, and picturesque trappings, all the pomp and circumstance of organized savagery. Our literary essayist, amidst many activities, is organizer of the boy scouts in a neighbouring village—in my eyes "a grievous fault" that some day the world may again have to grievously answer for. The revolt in my own breast finds its reflection in the pages of Mark Rutherford—the revolt of an ever growing humanism against an ever more apparent barbarism.

ANDREW MILLAR.

Writers and Readers.

TWO TRIBUTES TO THE GENIUS OF SHELLEY.

For the last hundred years we Freethinkers have been ardent, if not always intelligent, admirers of Shelley. All spoken and written praise of his verse, his personality, his romantic and revolutionary idealism we have agreed to regard as ever pertinent and reasonable. In the main we have distrusted, or even rejected the impersonal critical method when applied to the life-work of this Ariel among the poets, this "spokesman of the *a priori*." We have refused to acknowledge that his dream of a future golden age of human perfectibility is but the aftermath of eighteenth century sentimentalism, that much of his verse is little more than beautiful verbal patterns, as unsubstantial as a web of gossamer, and that as an artist he is often less satisfying than Keats. We have remained incorrigible, even after giving due consideration to Mr. J. M. Robertson's weighty indictment. We have wilfully shut our eyes to all that is unpleasant in his character, to the curious mixture of tenderness and cruelty, stability and vacillation, clarity and obscurity. We have forgotten or ignored Peacock's discriminating estimate of the man, and we have set aside as singularly inept the description of the poet which concludes Matthew Arnold's cool and illuminating essay: "A beautiful and ineffectual angel, beating in the void his luminous wings in vain." On the strength of his youthful Atheism we have claimed him as the greatest poet of Freethought, forgetting that he had himself repudiated the French Atheism of the eighteenth century, averring that it allowed its disciples to talk and dispensed them from "thinking." We have forgotten, too, that he went out of his way to insert a Christist ode in his *Hellas*, and professed a sort of religious and moral dualism absolutely inconsistent with Atheistic determinism.

However, my intention here is not to expatiate on the extravagant claims for their poet put forward by my Freethinking friends, or their equally extravagant eulogies, but simply to direct the more thoughtful reader to a couple of recent essays which have happened to come my way. The one I shall deal with first is Mr. J. Cuming Walters' *Shelley: A Centenary Tribute* (Manchester, Sherratt and Hughes, 1s. net).

Manchester, it would appear, is a sort of forcing-bed for startling and distinctive variations in our English prose. It has presented us with the most vigorously original writer of modern times in Mr. C. E. Montague, whose example, however, has not been always for good. Mr. Walters, I imagine, is well outside this influence. What he has of sobriety, felicity and distinction of style is either congenital, or due, perhaps, to the example of Mr. C. H. Herford. However that may be, Mr. Walters is always worth reading on any subject he elects to handle. On Shelley he says some things with which most of my readers will agree, and others which will make them think. He begins by noting the poet's hypnotic effect on the intellectual multitude. "His admirers," he says, "find that they have constantly to check themselves, to guard against excess." If this applies to the general reader, it applies even more to the Freethinker. We need to make a violent effort to get outside the magic circle of this enchanter. Even Mr. Walters does not always work himself free. He finds it difficult not to take the poet at his own valuation, although he must know that it is the critic's business to see things as they really are. The violent contradictions in Shelley's character, and in his actions, we are told, were the outcome of his idealism. But this very idealism, unstable and contradictory, was the outcome of his nervous and cerebral erethism, the abnormal irritability of consumption. If Shelley had come from a healthy stock he would not have been seduced by sentimental idealism; he would not have talked so beautifully about the need of loving mankind in general, but would have been contented to love those who had the first claim on his affection. He would not have deserted his young wife and his children for the first woman who attracted him. His poetry would have had more of substance and of shapeliness. There would have been less profusion of sexual imagery.

I am prompted to stress the unpleasant and anti-social side of Shelley's temperament because the poet's eulogists are too ready to accept his protestations of moral worth as strictly veracious. Even a level-headed critic like Mr. Walters can bring himself to write in this way: "The vindication of Shelley (he avers) is not so much in his acts, which are often wild and ill-ordered, but in his motives, which were pure and elevated." In my opinion it is hopeless to try to vindicate Shelley; all we can do is to explain him as the product of heredity, education and environment, controlling the intensely subjective accounts of his mental and moral states which we get from the poems, by objective information. Then only shall we obtain the maximum of inspiration and genuine aesthetic pleasure from his verse.

What I fancy the reader will find of most value in Mr. Walters' little tribute is his whole-hearted appreciation of Shelley's incomparable lyrical genius. Here he takes the true lover of poetry all the way with him, but not, I think, when he overstates the importance of the poet's so-called mission. However, for the pleasure and profit of those who happen to share the critic's ethical prepossessions, I quote one passage:—

Sometimes with Shelley we seem to have the magical beauty of words without a clue to the meaning; sometimes the ecstatic music without the link of song. But though he is at times baffling, though he soars to the dim cloudy heights, he is seldom beyond intelligibility—now and then he eludes us, but even then the fault may be ours rather than his. The fact is, Shelley is among the poets who amid all their raptures retain distinctness and purpose. Swinburne may enmesh us in a maze of sound, and Browning may perplex us with harsh vociferation—but Shelley, with the sweetness of the one and the profundity of the other, has always the desire to convey his message, nay, more, to make it convincing.

The other centenary tribute I have before me is *Percy Bysshe Shelley, 1792-1822* (Lytham, N. Ling & Co., 1s. net). Of the work of the writer, the late Mr. F. W. Orde Ward, I know nothing except that I read some while ago a good essay of his on a rather ungrateful subject—the poetry of George Eliot. Our essayist begins by telling us that few poets have been more unfortunate in their critics than Shelley; that William Godwin was his evil genius to the end; that “demonic minds like his refuse to be criticised by stereotyped standards and common rules; that they are a law to themselves; that to judge them by the current codes of right and wrong is to misjudge them entirely; that Shelley embraced all that was universal and permanent in Christianity, and rejected only the provincialisms.” These point blank assertions are either dubious or wilfully wrong. He was not unfortunate in his critics simply because he was incapable of profiting by anything they could say in praise or censure of his work. He was impervious to education in any form, Godwin was no more his evil genius than were Locke, Spinoza and Plato. “In all the more formal and graver utterances of Shelley’s genius from *Queen Mab* to *Hellas* (the voice of Godwin) supplies the theme, and Shelley writes the variations.” This is the considered opinion of Mr. H. N. Brailsford, whose *Shelley, Godwin, and his Circle* should be in the hands of every student of the poet. Now with regard to “demonic minds” (whatever they may be), it is no doubt foolish to criticize them by ethical standards; but a poet’s actions are just as amenable to criticism as any other man’s for they must be either social or anti-social. To talk of a man as being a law to himself is foolishness or worse.

Yet Mr. Ward is not always so wide of the mark. He notes, what the Shelley enthusiast always misses, that the poet lacked the sense of humour. “He never laughed nor smiled like others, and his gaiety had a grave note. He learnt nothing from history, and was positively a stranger to humanity.” This is true and it helps us to understand why so much of his poetry is not more than a splendid failure. With a keener and surer objectivity of spiritual vision Shelley would have been contented with verbal melodies of a less quintessential quality than those we turn to with ever increasing joy. The intellectual content would have been clearer, the emotion less vague and diffused; but we should have had no poems like *Lines to an Indian Air* or the two stanzas called *A Lament*, the most perfect poetry in the whole range of English verse.

GEORGE UNDERWOOD.

Correspondence.

RELIGION AND SCIENCE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE “FREETHINKER.”

SIR,—Mr. J. Arthur Hill fails to discriminate between a “scientist” and a “scientific thinker.” There are scientists who, outside their own specialized province, exhibit slipshod methods of thinking and reasoning which they would disdain to use in connection with their own scientific researches. Much of the widespread belief in spiritualism, telepathy, etc., is traceable to an obsession prevailing among a certain type of mentality that because a person is an authority in one particular department of science his utterances in other departments are necessarily of worth. The weight attached by the unreflecting to the psychic dicta of the author of *Man and the Universe* is a typical case in point. Doubtless there is “evidence” for telepathy in the Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research. Before me are 180 records of alleged telepathic communications collected by the astronomer Flammarion, but not one of them exhibits any verified evidence that could satisfy any scientific thinker. Sir Oliver Lodge has adduced “evidence” of the existence of post-mortem discarnate intelligencies not averse from whisky and cigars; Sir Conan Doyle has adduced “evidence” of “ectoplasm” performing astounding feats in a darkened room, and Lady Blount has published similarly defective “evidence” of the flatness of the earth. The mere assertion by Mr. Hill that my statement,

“there is not a tittle of scientific evidence for telepathy,” is either “deliberately mendacious” or “the result of ignorance,” is nothing else than *his* evidence that I am a dolt or a liar. Types of evidence such as these, however, are not scientific and must be taken at their face value.

Mr. J. A. Hill, in contending that only a “scientist of reputation” is competent to criticize or pass judgment on the evidence for and against “telepathy” exposes the cloven foot of the mediæval *argumentum ad hominem*. Experience again and again has proved that scientists are frequently less competent than ordinary hard-headed business men to pass judgment on what is or is not trustworthy evidence. The dilettante theories of an eminent physicist upon matters pertaining to psychology may be of value in his own and his admirers’ estimation, but when those theories have been discounted by experts in the anatomy, physiology and pathology of the human brain they are, very properly, rejected by those who do their own thinking.

Sir Ray Lankaster, F.R.S., says that:—

Telepathy is simply a boldly invented word for a supposed phenomenon which has never been demonstrated. It is an unfair and unwarranted draft on the credit of science which its signatories have not met by the assignment of any experimental proof. There is not one man of science, however mystic and credulous his trend, among those who pass this word “telepathy” on to the great unsuspecting, newspaper-reading public, who will venture to assert that he can show to me or to any committee of observers experimental proof of the existence of the thing to which this portentous name is given.

Authorities such as Sir Bryan Donkin, Sir Thomas Clouston, Sir James Crichton Browne, Dr. Mercier, Dr. Maudsley and others have challenged all the evidence hitherto given for the existence of “telepathy” as described by its so-called discoverers. Again, offers from £50 to £1,000 for one single proved instance of telepathic communication have from time to time been published in the Press, but invariably with negative result. As Mr. Mann remarks in his *Follies and Frauds of Spiritualism*, the telepathist offers tons of evidence on paper, but ask him for one test case and he turns a deaf ear.

Mr. Hill is nervously anxious to impress on us he is neither “arguing for telepathy” nor is a “spiritualist.” Our friend, methinks, “doth protest too much.” A writer of a book on *Spiritualism* who therein describes the human mind as a “wondrous entity” is, to say the least of it, a very good imitation of a spiritualist.

JAVALL.

SIR,—I observe that a correspondent, in your issue of the 14th ult. credits me with being less hysterical than another, but suggests something akin to insanity about my suggestion that some scientists are under the influence of clerical domination. “The fool clamours that he is as wise as the sage, and the sage shrinks from saying that it is not so.”

I have been on both in my time, and do not resent his criticism. What I desired to suggest was that scientists, as a body, are not immune from clerical domination any more than are other enlightened people who, having worked out their own salvation with fear and trembling, do not hesitate by word and action to support the game of the Christian superstition. “Truth is the only object worthy of the research of every wise man, since that which is opposed to it cannot be useful to him.” No man may claim to be a Freethinker who cannot accept truth when it is demonstrable in any form, and whether it comes through spiritism or through the Christian superstition. To Freethinkers neither of these channels has furnished such demonstration, and what is objected to is the pretence of scientists and clerics to reconcile science and religion. “Faith is the substance of things hoped for.” Science is exact knowledge. Your readers will discern a wide difference between the two. Scientists, whatever their eminence, will not succeed in reconciling the two to the practical man of Nature, and it is idle to try to bluff him.

Your own journal, Sir, has shown from time to time that the almighty Mother Church suppressed scientific advancement, and now, when she is powerless to pursue that wicked policy, she claims science as her handmaid.

All deference must be paid to honest scientific investigation. The consciousness of acting otherwise towards

eminent scientists would become unbearable, but when such men confuse their eminence with blind superstitious beliefs, founded on either spiritism or Christianity, they must not complain if the plain ordinary man rejects their pretensions with impatience.

If the manifestations of spiritism can be demonstrated to have a foundation in fact, Freethinkers will readily accept truth; but in the meantime the superstitious belief in the communion with so-called departed spirits will be rejected with the scorn that it deserves.

It will be another matter if, and when, the causes of spiritistic manifestations have been revealed by scientific investigation, but that is no reason why, in ignorance, we should be invited to believe in any new or already existing superstition, and scientists will be well advised to stick to their own job—the discovery of fact in Nature.

SINE CERE.

Obituary.

We deeply regret having to record the death of Mrs. Myram Kate Wood, the beloved wife of Mr. George Wood of East Ham, after a lingering illness borne with great fortitude. During her married life she had at all times been a constant source of courage and inspiration to her husband in his association with advanced movements. We cannot help but sympathize with Mr. Wood that such a sad blow should be received at a period of his life when her affection and help are most needed. As wife, mother, and neighbour she was deeply beloved and greatly admired. The burial took place on Friday, November 9, in the East Ham Old Church Cemetery, and a Secular Service was conducted at the graveside by the undersigned.—F. P. C.

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By CHAPMAN COHEN.

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LONDON.—INDOOR.

EAST ISLINGTON LABOUR HALL (16 Highbury Grove): Tuesday, November 20, at 7.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, a Lecture.

FRIARS HALL (236 Blackfriars Road, S.E.1): 7, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Darwin—The Shakespeare of Science."

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (160 Great Portland Street, W.): 7.30, Mr. Maurice Mowbray, a Lecture. The Discussion Circle meets every Thursday at 8 at the "Laurie Arms," Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, Mr. R. H. Rosetti, "Is Freethought Important? If so, How best can it be Promoted?"

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W.9): 7, Mr. A. D. McLaren, "A Freethinker Looks at the World."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7, A. D. Howell Smith, B.A., "The Ethical Movement and Religious Reconstruction."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11, Sir George Paish, "Can Poverty be Abolished?"

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Upton Labour Party Hall, 84 Plashet Road, Upton Park, E.) 7, Mr. E. Burke, a Lecture.

OUTDOOR.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY.—Freethought Lectures every evening at Marble Arch, Sundays at 3.

COUNTRY.—INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Brassworkers' Hall, 70 Lionel Street): 7, Mr. F. P. Corrigan, "From Roman Catholicism to Secularism."

BOLTON SECULARIST SOCIETY (Borough Hall, Corporation Street): 10.30, Mr. G. Black, "The Relationship Between Secularism and Psychology."

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S. (Shop Assistants' Hall, 297 Argyle Street): 6.30, For particulars see Saturday's *News and Citizen*.

LEEDS BRANCH N.S.S. (Youngman's Restaurant, Lowerhead Row, Leeds): 7, Mr. W. Crossley, "Archæology in Yorkshire."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Amalgamated Engineering Union Hall, 120 Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, Manchester): Mr. J. B. Hannay, 3, "The Evolution of Man's Creative Gods"; 6.30, "Sun-Worship in Modern Religions."

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