

The

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## Views and Opinions.

### Christmas and Christians.

Christianity was called by one of the wittiest—and therefore one of the wisest of writers—the great lying creed. In sober truth it is all that. Its claims are rooted in falsehood, and its whole history is a tissue of elaborated lies, fought for just so long as they could be sustained. Christianity begins with an attempt to foist upon the world as sober historical happenings a series of events which every one who reflects upon the matter impartially knows could never have taken place. It tells us of a child born without the agency of a father, that this child was man and yet God, that he caused men to rise from the dead, that he had conflicts with devils, that he was crucified, and after being buried, rose again from the dead. Every person who uses his common-sense on these stories knows them to be false. There can only be a pretence, even to one's self, of believing them so long as a number of more or less elaborate acts of self-deception are performed. Every student of comparative mythology knows that all the stories of the Gospel Jesus were related of other saviour-gods long before this particular one was heard of. They know that the festival of Christmas is not in its origin a Christian festival at all, and that it is no more a celebration of the birth of an historical Jesus than it is the birthday of an historic Mithra, or Bacchus, or any of the other numerous saviour-gods of antiquity. Christianity itself is only part of a world-wide mythology, offering to the world nothing new, and nothing peculiar except the barefaced falsehood of the life of its saviour-god as being an account of an actual historic personage.

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### A View of Christmas.

Christmas is a season of good-will and merry-making. It was so thousands of generations before the very name of Christianity was heard of. It is to-day celebrated as a Christian festival, and one may truthfully say of it that it owes its pleasant features to its pre-Christian heritage, while Christianity has associated it with much that is gloomy, miserable, and disastrous. What is there ennobling or comforting in the Christian story of a dead man who was crucified

as a victim to that very spirit of intolerance which is enshrined in the heart of Christian teaching. If the story were true it should be remembered by Christians as an anniversary of sorrow and lamentation. To rejoice over the death of a victim to religious intolerance is a curious affair, and to find an excuse for rejoicing in the fact that the rejoicer benefited from the death is not morally above that of a son rewarding his father's murderer because the parent's death has led to his enrichment. Of course, the Pagan believers in what afterwards became the Christian story were not so ridiculous as to treat the tale as a piece of literal history. To them the rejoicing at the turn of the year was a gladness that the Sun had begun to signalize its victory over the winter cold, and that men might look again with confidence to the birth of spring, to the sowing of the seed and the ripening of the harvest. As a nature festival there was dignity and poetry about the Christmas story. In the hands of Christians it became a grotesque tale, and only the degradation of intellect which resulted from the rule of the Christian Church could ever have gained it credence.

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### What We Owe to Christianity.

There is some doubt—even in religious circles—as to the date at which the Gospel Jesus lived, and there may well be that seeing that the date was not fixed till nearly 500 years after he is said to have died. But, accepting the chronology of the Churches, Christmas Day becomes the anniversary of the beginning of one of the greatest disasters that ever overtook the human race. It involved the death of the ancient civilization. For a thousand years Christianity rode rough-shod over the learning, the science, the culture of antiquity. Literature was replaced by monkish legends, social life by religious exercises, medical science by miracle-cures, the conception of a healthy, useful life in this world by that of man as a doleful wanderer on his way to another state of existence such as could only commend itself to the diseased imagination of an emasculated monk. Against every scientific discovery it resolutely set its face, to every move on behalf of progress it opposed the prison, the rack, and the stake. And for the past five hundred years the story of European development has been, broadly, an attempt to curtail the power of the Christian Church. First directed against the Catholic Church, then against one or the other of the Protestant Churches, and finally against Christianity itself. But always there has been the recognition, more or less open, that if civilization was to endure and develop the power of the Christian Churches over secular life must be strictly curtailed.

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### Christianity and Peace.

Christianity has preached peace and made war. It has preached brotherhood and sown the seeds of hatred and dissension. The cant of Christian peace has been so sustained and has become so confirmed that even in the midst of the Great War, when millions of Christians were fighting each other, and praying to the same



god for victory, it still continued. It was a world dominated by Christians, littered with Christian churches, that for four years waged the most brutal, the most bloodthirsty war known to history. And it is the same Christian-soaked world that so soon as the war was over turned to the manufacture of new weapons and to new preparations that could have no other end but war. There is not a single social or moral end on which we could hope to see the Christian Churches working in unison. But recent experience showed that they could unite for the purpose of helping on a war, while its ministers claimed exemption from a conflict in which they urged their fellow-countrymen to take an active part. In the whole of its history there has never been a war fought in any country against which the Christian clergy have presented a united front. More than that there is no organized religion that has so exalted the soldier as Christianity has done. Its chief temples are plastered with the effigies of warriors; shot riven flags decorate church walls, tablets commemorate the deeds of warfare of the men who are enshrined therein, and it was quite fitting that on a certain occasion, at the close of the war, there should be mounted under the dome of St. Paul's a cannon as an object lesson as to the kind of peace which Christianity encourages. For the militarism which has brought Europe to the verge of ruin Christianity cannot escape responsibility. There are enough Christians in the world to *command* peace if they only would. If the fifty thousand parsons in this country set themselves resolutely against war and warlike preparations, for how long could the rest of the people stand out against them? There are enough Christians in the world to see that war should not occur were they so inclined. Unfortunately, there has always been enough to make sure that warfare should be a permanent feature of our national life.

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#### Christianity's Failure.

From the point of view of all that really matters the world can show no such gigantic failure as Christianity. Christ came, we are told, to convert the world. Has he done it? Only a portion of the world believes in him after all these centuries, and the number of genuine believers is steadily dwindling. While as to what Jesus wished men to believe there is not and never has been anything like general agreement as to what it was. Christ came, say the Churches, to spread abroad the gospel of human brotherhood. How has he succeeded? There is no other subject on which men dispute with so great a bitterness and hate, with such ferocity as on that of Christian belief. This is so generally recognized that in scores of clubs and debating societies up and down the country it is a standing rule that discussions on religion are prohibited. Those responsible are forced to recognize that while men may differ on politics, art, science, literature and a score of other things, and yet retain each other's friendship, you cannot for long have friendly discussion on differences in religious belief. In other directions the social bond is strong enough to stand the jar of differing opinions. In connection with religion even the deep-lying social bond is often too weak to stand the strain. But all the argument in the world will not make the advocates of the "Great Lying Creed" forsake their historic lies so long as people are stupid enough to believe them. Christmas will hear them repeated as though they had never been questioned or as though their truth were demonstrated in the lives of those around us. And against that kind of persistent lying there is but one protection. This is that which comes from enlightenment under the coercive pressure of human sympathy.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

## Christmas.

ONCE again what Christians call the Happiest Day in all history is close at hand, and even on this fourth Sunday in Advent the pulpits of Christendom will indulge with great enthusiasm in its glorification, while on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day streets and churches will ring with carols, anthems, hymns, and innumerable discourses in its honour. And yet, curiously enough, primitive Christians knew neither the day, the month, nor the year of their Saviour's birth. The only Ante-Nicene writer, Clement of Alexandria, who vaguely refers to such a festival as that of Christmas in the first Book of his *Stromata*, says somewhat sarcastically: "There are some who *over curiously* assign not only the *year*, but also the *day* of our Saviour's nativity, which they say was in the twenty-eighth year of Augustus, on the 20th of May." Clement was not really interested in the question at all. Hence Adrien Baillet, an erudite French critic of the seventeenth century, felt justified in assuring the readers of his *Lives of the Saints*, alluding to Christmas, that "there can be no reasonable doubt that it had its rise after the Council of Nice." With these facts in mind we need not hesitate to affirm that Christmas is an institution of neither apostolical nor Primitive Church origin. Even to this day it is a dubious point when the observance of the 25th of December as Christmas began. It may be true that one or two, here and there, more or less acquainted with mythology such as Hippolytus about the year two hundred, had fixed upon the 25th of December, but the festival of Christmas was not officially observed prior to the Nicene Council in 325.

We must now inquire why the Christian Church chose the 25th of December as the nativity festival of her Saviour-God. The only natural answer to that question is that it was done in order to bring Christianity into line with older Oriental religions then fighting for supremacy in the Roman Empire. But let us look at this point through the eyes of a distinguished Free Church divine. Until quite recently Dr. John A. Hutton was a brilliant pulpit star that shone in the City of Glasgow, and shone so wondrously there that some of its rays penetrated into England, with the result that it was frequently invited to come south and shed its light upon Free Church Councils and other Nonconformist conferences. At last this star was bodily removed from Glasgow to London in order that its light might become more powerful and shine more radiantly still. Dr. Hutton is an extraordinarily clever man; but he is a Christian minister, and suffers from most of the limitations and prejudices of his profession. He holds a brief for Christianity and naturally he minimizes the defects of his own religion and magnifies the faults of Paganism. He was the author of the leading article, entitled "Christmas," in the *British Weekly* for December 6. In the first place he takes it for granted that Jesus was born on the 25th of December, saying:—

We do not know what would have happened had it pleased God that our Lord should have been born in some country south of the equator; but born as he was north of the equator, he was born in a latitude where during these days through which we are passing the sun ceases to fall away from the earth, and begins to come back. Days which have been shortening and shortening—until, had the process continued further, the world would have descended into eternal night—suddenly begin to recover strength; the light begins to come earlier and to linger longer about the Western sky. It must have seemed to the first observers of such phenomena as though a doom had been stayed, as though the curse of darkness had been withdrawn, as though another opportunity were given



to the human race to take up life and to make of it some better thing.

If true, that would have been a beautiful and extremely well expressed paragraph, but even then it would have been horribly unjust towards the countless myriads who happen to live south of the Equator. Dr. Hutton's Saviour is a Saviour for the northern hemisphere only, and had he been born south of the Equator the whole human race would have been doomed to go down to endless night. Fortunately, the whole paragraph is entirely false, and its beauty withers away like a leaf in autumn. It is now admitted by practically all accredited theologians that Jesus was not born on Christmas Day; and even boys and girls at school are fully aware that the sun never passes away from the earth, but shines on it all the year round. In reality it would not have made a particle of difference where a genuine Saviour of the world had been born. So far as the earth is concerned the sun never sets; when it is winter in the north it is glowing summer in the south, each getting the full sun in its turn. We fear the new minister of Westminster Congregational Church is so busy talking and writing that he has very little time for thinking, and so such paragraphs as the above slip only too easily from his pen.

Dr. Hutton grants that long before Christianity appeared, the turning point from winter to summer had given rise to certain natural celebrations of the joyous event. The people turned their eyes towards greater light and fertilizing heat, and rejoiced. It was perfectly natural to do so, but Dr. Hutton tells us that naturalism led inevitably to harmful excesses, "excesses which the transport and passion seemed indeed to justify," and he tells us further that when the Christians beheld these natural festivals their desire was to put an end to them by brute force; but being wonderfully superior people, who looked down upon the world around them, "it was their charity and their genius to see that that could not be done." We fail to see where the charity came in at all; but the fact that what they desired could not possibly be accomplished was clear enough to the dullest mind. Then the reverend gentleman informs us how the missionaries of Christ went to "those rude heathens," many of whom dwelt in the dense forests of Europe into which the sun seldom entered in winter, with this amazing message:—

Yes, sirs, a wonderful thing it is, how when the whole world seemed sloping down into darkness, suddenly there was a change. But we have come to tell you of something even more amazing. We have come to tell you that this which you see in the natural world is a picture of what happened once for all in the heart of God. This whole world of ours was going down into darkness; man had abused and neglected the very powers which God intended for his guidance, and in consequence man in his own heart and in societies was moving on towards a day of utter darkness, when suddenly something happened from the side of God to change it all. You ask me what it was that happened? You shall hear. There is a little land to the south where for more than a thousand years God had been speaking to favoured men, confiding to them his secrets, until at length he caused to be born amongst that people One whom he has appointed to be the Saviour of the world. His name is Jesus, and Bethlehem is the name of the place where he was born.

This second passage is equally false and misleading as the first. For one thing no one delivered such a message to the Pagan world, nor anything like it. The Pagans were never spoken to in that tone of voice. Prior to the adoption of Christianity as the State religion by the converted emperor, Constantine the Great, the Christians hated and denounced the Pagans

in almost unquotable terms. Read the writings of the Ante-Nicene Fathers and the truth of this statement will be abundantly demonstrated to you. Consult the description of the Nicene Council by the late Dean Stanley in his excellent work, *The Eastern Church*, and you will see what vile characters most of the bishops were in the year 325. The early hatred of the heathen continued after Christianity came to power, and manifested itself in the spoliation and destruction of their temples, and giving the worshippers, in the majority of instances, the choice between Christian baptism and death by the sword. No wonder that a Church capable of such odious conduct did not grow in virtue, but for fully seven centuries kept sinking lower and lower in the moral scale. The sudden change for the better caused by the birth of Jesus on Christmas Day has never taken place yet, nor is there at present any prospect of its ever taking place by the power of the falsely named Prince of Peace. We are surprised at the extreme audacity in writing such an article when Christendom is morally, economically, and politically in an unspeakably worse state than the Roman Empire ever was under its Pagan rulers. From a religious point of view the Christmas message is the most gigantic failure the world has ever seen. It is only as an event in the natural world that we can hail it without stint, and wish one another merriment as the result of its advent.

J. T. LLOYD.

## Christmas Reading.

The creed of Christendom is gradually melting away like a northern iceberg into southern seas.

—G. W. Foote.

The things sacred to the generation that is passing are not sacred to the generation whose day is now.

—General Booth.

MUCH is said of the enormous output of Christmas books, of the glut of the literary market; but with all the activity of writers there is one department of literature which shows a falling off. During the past two generations a steady and continuous decline has taken place in the production of religious books. To what is this decline due? There are several reasons; the first and the most important being the growing indifference of the large reading public to religion.

In his day, Macaulay noticed the singular periodic manner in which the British public took up questions of religion. John Bull now no longer remembers that he has a soul to save. Indeed, he is indifferent as to whether he has a soul or not. Meanwhile, he reads novels, books of travel, facetious biography, magazines, and newspapers, especially the latter. Another reason is the lower mentality of the clergy themselves. There are no longer any great ecclesiastics, and it certainly cannot be said that the Churches show much intellect in the production of religious books. Not for present-day clergymen are the rolling harmonies of Jeremy Taylor, the subtle cadences of Milton, the austere utterances of Newman. They cannot even echo Baxter or Bunyan. There is not an original idea in their books, everything is second-hand and threadbare, and the paucity and poverty of the prose emphasizes the emptiness of their heads. Yet another cause of the decline of religious literature is the diffusion of Freethought. The force of Priestcraft has spent itself, it no longer inspires, but it merely irritates. Even the force of Puritanism, once so potent, is seen more in politics than in religion.

The decline began a half century ago. About that period there was a real and unmistakable interest in devotional literature. The Rev. J. R. Macduff rivalled the foremost novelists in popularity. The sale of his works was to be reckoned in hundreds of thousands of



copies. He was to the great religious public what Charles Dickens was to secular-minded readers. For years Dean Goulburn's *Thoughts on Personal Religion* had an annual sale of many thousands, and Bishop Oxenden's works were equally popular. Newman Hall's publications ran into a sale that present-day writers on theology can only dream of. Spurgeon's sermons sold like hot rolls, and were preached without acknowledgment from many pulpits the Boanerges of the Newington Tabernacle never heard of. Dr. Joseph Parker had hosts of admirers who bought his books eagerly, and his output ranged from a voluminous annotated edition of the Bible to ordinary sermons. In looking through the old publishers' catalogues one is surprised at the very large number of works of a devotional nature. Familiar as household words a generation or so ago, how many of these once famous preachers are known even by name to the present generation? The Victorian era was a serious one, and was, indeed, a golden age for religious books.

Not only was there a steady and constant demand for the works of individual authors, but there was a sale for such libraries as *The Biblical Cabinet*, *Sacred Classics*, *The Christian Family Library*, and many another series. The most formidable of these works was the *Patrologie*, edited by the Abbé Migne, an exhaustive reprint of the works of the Christian Fathers, beside which the *Encyclopædia Britannica* was but a pocket volume. The taste for such reading has gone. Nor is it supposed that fresh life can be given to works like Gladstone's *Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture*, which served a temporary purpose, and, having served it, has passed from men's minds. In the many volumes on Victorian literature which have appeared, no mention is made of numberless religious or devotional books, "thick as leaves in Vallombrossa," which were once thought indispensable in tens of thousands of homes. The circumstance is highly significant, and illustrates with startling clearness the changed attitude of the great reading public towards religious literature.

MIMNERMUS.

### Holy Water from the Tap; Or, Miracles Up-to-Date—Too Late.

I shall tell you a pretty tale; it may be you have heard it; but, since it serves my purpose, I will venture to scale't a little more.

THE many cases of Faith-healing which obtrude themselves upon us serve to show (*inter alia*) the still remaining strength of Christian superstition. True, it is dying out. The advance of knowledge and the force of Freethought are eradicating the mental disease of religion from the minds of men and women, just as physical disease is steadily being overcome in their bodies. But the process is slow—as is Nature herself. Often, the more horrible the disease, the harder it is to wipe out. Syphilis, cancer, and tuberculosis, are instances of this in the body. In the same way, the worst forms of that mental and social malady—the Christian religion—appear to be most tenacious of existence. Hence, the necessity for the incessant activity of Freethought and the Freethinker.

We have, from time to time, recrudescences of Christian superstition. It adapts itself (somewhat) to changed conditions—and then works further havoc. A little time ago, in one day, I came across three cases of this. The first was, perhaps, the most interesting. It was a marvellous instance of adaptation. It constitutes another triumph for Christians in our modern civilization. Glasgow made a great step forward when she tapped Loch Katrine and brought it to the Christian "homes" of her poor. Manchester established another advance in our material civilization when she

piped her lions' drink from the Welsh hills. Both these feats of engineering, however, fade into insignificance before the latest achievement of the Christian religion in the land that is said to be "stern and wild." If there be any "Wee Frees" (not political ones) still left, they must surely have felt sterner and wilder than ever, when they heard the wondrous tale. On the other hand, it is evidence that the Christian God will not be put to shame by any merely human hydraulic engineers of Glasgow or Manchester—religious though both these towns may be. He "moves in a mysterious way, his wonders to perform." Now, he has put holy water itself on tap. Granted, it is only *one* tap—not *any* tap—much less *all* taps. Yet, it is a beginning (anew). It suffices to prove that the "Good old German God" (as the Christian Kaiser called him) can still do something (or somebody). He caused Moses to produce water by tapping a rock with a rod. He made water to stand on end in the Red Sea, stiffer than the prophet's hair when he was carried up to heaven. He plants his footsteps on the sea (sometimes heavily, hence the waves). And he now proves he was not dead—but sleeping. If the earthquake in Japan was his work (as it must have been, if he is), it is more than a pity that he did not sleep for ever.

It is (almost) amazing that this wonderful revelation of the Christian God has attracted practically no attention. In face of that indifference on the people's part, it is not strange that poverty and hunger stalk the land, and that unemployment is so wretchedly rife. Making a humble effort to remedy this, I am proclaiming it here. Perchance, consideration of this great, new, and up-to-date evidence that "there is a God" may reclaim some "back sliders." It may even convert some sceptics, disbelievers, unbelievers, Atheists, Agnostics, and other disgruntled folk, who ought to stand (or kneel) dumbfounded at this latest display of omnipotence plus omniscience. Had Mr. Shaller but heard of this, never would he have dared to face the Vicar in debate. If greater publicity *may* only convert a few to believe, the wrath of the Christian God *may* be averted, and hungry children *may* find food. If not it is as true as Gospel that our miserable condition is likely to be worse. "Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow. Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg."

This addition to the Gospel miracles was reported in the daily paper. Already, it has been broadcasted more widely than ever were the canonical miracles in their time. Still, unbelief is greater. The first sentence of the new Gospel report was in this wise (or unwise):—

There is a report of another cure in connection with the use of the water from the virgin grotto, Carfin, Lanarkshire.

The last sentence read:—

The water at the Carfin Shrine *has no special value* and is drawn from the ordinary supply. Carfin is a mining village in Lanarkshire.

The italics are mine, and one would almost believe that the Devil had got among the printers to set up that phrase, for we cannot believe that any truly inspired epistler writing such an addition to the Gospel story would ever permit any Didymus doubt to creep into (or out of) his typewriter. I do not know Carfin, but if it be anything like some of the mining villages I *have* known, the inhabitants must need all the faith and all the water (holy or otherwise) that they can get to make existence barely endurable at all.

The report stated that two (lady) visitors to that holy tap took home a supply of the holy water. A lady friend, stricken with rheumatism, unable to use hands or legs, treated by doctors without avail and wheeled about in a chair, used this holy water "internally and externally." "She can now (or then) move about without help and is able to knit and sew."



"He that believeth on me, the works that I do SHALL he do also." The subject (or object) of this miracle did as good as take up her bed and walk, because, "For three years she was unable to lift anything, but she can now raise a chair with ease." No sae bad, for bonnie Dundee! That alone ought to settle the hash of any "dirty little Atheist," and prove that there is a Christian God. Even greater wonders have been performed by this holy water from this holy tap, in spite of that scurrilous journalistic fellow describing it as of "no special value." I believe that another lady, who had never been able to do anything of the kind before, drank some of this holy water—and afterwards was able to raise a family. One lady, after drinking, could raise a chair, the other could raise a family. I feel inclined to raise a cheer—for that tap. It is indeed "some" tap! Thus do miracles enable devout believers to carry out the Christian God's command to multiply, while at the same time confounding the advocates of Birth Control—and all other unbelievers:—

Can such things be  
And overcome us like a summer's cloud,  
Without our special wonder?

After all, from what I see around, this latest up-to-date miracle will fail to convert rational people—even as other Gospel-true miracles have failed. But the miracle itself is a revelation of the persistence of the disease of Christian superstition. There are big vested interests depending on its continuance. The spiritual vested interests are more dangerous to social life than the spiritous kind. The officials of these interests—priests, parsons, ministers, and rabbis—will continue to resist every rational effort to exterminate the disease, just as their predecessors opposed the use of soap and cleanliness against bodily disease. They will try many stunts yet before they are finally put out of business. The relation of the believer to the priest or parson has been well and succinctly stated by the master writer:—

Why am I a fool?  
Make that demand to the Creator. It suffices me thou art.

The Freethinker will carry on the fight against ignorance, fear, poverty, and misery. He will continue his work to educate the fool out of his folly and to free him from these agents of superstition who watch and prey upon his ignorance. The Freethinker can burst every bubble of the wonders of the Lord, because with miracles and faith—

To vouch this, is no proof,  
Without more certain and more overt test  
Than these thin habits and poor likelihoods  
Of modern seeming do prefer against him.

ATHOS ZENO.

## The Lost Lollypops; Or the Misadventures of Sherlock Holmes.

It is impossible not to notice the vast change that has taken place in my friend Holmes of recent years. Not only has he quite lost his old powers of observation and deduction, but he even shows signs of irritability with me—I, who have for so long been his staunch friend and ardent admirer. He seldom, now, refers to me as "My Dear Watson." Only last week he called me an obtuse idiot because I failed to guess that a client of his was a Scotsman—and this on the slender evidence that his client's jack-knife contained two cork-screws! When I protested, he said that he was tired to death of my infernal questions, and added that he wished I would cultivate a little intelligence instead of following him about with a childlike docility that would put Mary's lamb to shame. Truly, things

have come to a pretty pass. And all because I do not share his enthusiasm for the occult.

When I called on him yesterday in his rooms in Baker Street, I found him experimenting with a Ouija board, a practice that has become a mania with him of late. I sighed softly, and took down a volume of the Rev. Vale Owen's from the bookshelf, and settled myself in an easy chair until such time as he was pleased to notice me. I had not long to wait, for we were interrupted by the sound of someone mounting the stairs.

"A client, Watson," observed Holmes with half-shut eyes. "A one-eyed man of the labouring class, obviously in a state of great distress, come to ask me if I can trace the whereabouts of his trade union secretary who has decamped with the union funds. Show him in!"

The visitor turned out to be a slim young girl of about nineteen years. (I have explained that Holmes' powers of deduction are not what they were.) The story she unfolded was a piteous one. It appeared that she was a nurse-maid in the employ of Lord Fitzwarren De Vere, and had been discharged from his employ on the heinous charge of having eaten the young De Vere's lollypops. The charge, she declared between her sobs, was an entirely false one. She had merely taken the young De Vere out to play in the adjacent woods, and the lollypops—a present from his aunt Sophia—had probably been lost in the foliage. As the gamekeeper had failed to discover them, Lord De Vere, in great anger, accused the maid of having eaten them, and without staying for an explanation, had turned her out into the blinding snow without a roof to her mouth!

Holmes was visibly affected by this touching story, and declared that he would establish her innocence, and return the lollypops within twenty-four hours. No sooner had the door closed behind the girl than Holmes turned to me in a state of great agitation and said: "Watson, a taxi quickly!"

"But—"

"We are going to visit Madame Seer the wonderful medium of West Kensington."

"Then you suspect—"

"The FAIRIES!" he shouted, excitedly.

Leaning back in the taxi, Holmes, his fine æsthetic features pale with inward excitement, propounded, with close shut eyes, his theory.

"I believe, Watson," he said, "you have heard me say that I have definite proof of the existence of fairies."

"You have said so," I replied, non-committally.

"I have also told you that they frequent such places as woods and dells."

Again I assented.

"Then what is more natural, my dear Watson, than that they should—prompted by a pure spirit of devil—er, I beg pardon, fairymen—steal the lollypops of young De Vere?"

"What, indeed," I echoed.

"If therefore I can get in touch with them, through the mediumship of Madame Seer, I may prevail upon them to materialize them and return them, and so establish my client's innocence. Do you agree?"

"As a medical man——" I began, when the taxi drew up at the abode of the great psychic.

[Note: for the critical London reader. Yes! We did make the journey quickly. Holmes had taken the precaution of pressing a fifty million mark note into the taxi-driver's hand, with the injunction to drive like hel—er, summerland.]

It is with regret that I record that our journey was abortive. Madame was out. She would remain out indefinitely. A friend of Holmes from Scotland Yard



had apparently been making enquiries in the neighbourhood, and Madame, on the urgent advice of her "guides," had left for the Continent. We returned home disconsolate.

On our return a telegram awaited us. I opened it and read:—

Young De Vere confesses to having eaten them.  
Maid forgiven.—De Vere.

Holmes sank into a chair and buried his face in his hands.

"Well?" I queried.

"The fact that upon this occasion the sweets disappeared by purely natural means by no means vitiates the probability of my hypothesis," said Holmes, slowly. "It is indeed possible that such an occurrence might happen as I suggested, and the fairies might, under similar circumstances, spirit them away by some psychic means as yet unknown to us. We must remember to always preserve an open mind, my dear Watson."

There are times when—as a medical man—I fear the worst!

VINCENT J. HANDS.

### Tennyson To-day.

Even as Copernicus had displaced the earth from its central position in space, so did the first half of the nineteenth century displace man from his predominant position in the scheme of animal creation. Instead of the old simple authoritative conceptions, it was now suggested that man was but a recent, but an unimportant, sport of Nature; that far from being God's deliberate and crowning achievement, it was at least questionable whether man had been meant to exist at all. The implications of it were terrible. The Victorians, the great mass of the Victorians, refused to listen to them. Troubled and unhappy, they turned their backs upon these sardonic suggestions; defiantly they insisted upon the pre-eminence of human personality. The more the scientists succeeded in shaking their belief in God, the more did they invest their own leading contemporaries with divine attributes.

Of these many mythologies it was perhaps the Tennyson legend which attained the most exaggerated proportions.—*Harold Nicolson, "Tennyson," pp. 4-5.*

AFTER all the incense offered at the shrine of Tennyson by the adulatory lives written by his relatives and worshippers, we have at last a rational and sane estimate of his work, in two studies of the poet, issued almost simultaneously this year by Mr. Nicolson and Mr. Hugh P'Anson Fausset, between them they place the poet in his proper perspective.

There are few who would deny that Tennyson is a great poet; it is the use he put his genius to that is the matter. If he had been a great thinker he would have been a very great poet indeed. He allowed himself to be fettered by the conventionalities of his time; he frittered away his great gift in trivialities and the attempt to bolster up a falling creed.

When the present writer was a boy, the poets in our bookcase consisted of Young's *Night Thoughts*, *The Thousand And One Gems*, Cowper, Longfellow, Mrs. Hemans, and Tennyson. It is needless to say that neither Byron nor Shelley were there, they were regarded as violent, dissolute and atheistic men whose sulphurous writings were only read by immoral people. That may be taken as typical of the Nonconformist shop-keeping, and lower middle-class taste in the middle of the nineteenth century, that is, in the few houses where poetry was read at all. It is difficult for this generation to realize the admiration and devotion with which the Victorians regarded Tennyson's poetry. They lived in a harassing time, they had not long left the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars behind them, and they craved for peace, and they could not find it. The Industrial Frankensteins and Robots

which they had evoked to work in their mines and mills and which they regarded and treated as so many cattle, were beginning to get out of control, forming trades unions and becoming Chartists. And although they professed to be very proud of the developments of science, as exemplified by the railway, the telegraph and the steamship, yet so many changes were brought about by these innovations that they had hardly time to adjust themselves to one before another was upon them.

Then there were those other sinister discoveries of science which threatened to overthrow religion altogether, and reduced the Bible from being the Word of God to a budget of fairy tales. The spade of the archæologist had brought to light civilizations which were flourishing long before the time when, according to the Bible, the earth was created. Then the geologist produced the evidence of the vast antiquity of man before civilization, and of the still vaster antiquity of the earth. Then the astronomer took up the tale and traced the process by which, during a wholly immeasurable interval of time, our sun with its attendant planets evolved from a nebulous gas by the same natural laws which we see at work to-day. The telescope revealed the existence of many millions of stars, until then unseen, some of which were giants compared with our sun. Man was dethroned from his proud position of being the crown and centre of creation and reduced to an insignificant by-product of Nature, lost in the immensities of time and space. Further, the law of evolution, as it worked out in the animated world, revealed Nature "red in tooth and claw"—not at all what we should expect from a heavenly father who loved and cared for us.

Into a world torn and bewildered by these problems was Tennyson born on August, 1809, at the small village of Somersby in Lincolnshire, of which his father was the rector. He was educated at home, and at the age of nineteen entered Trinity College, Cambridge, where he became one of the set known as the "Apostles," a title first applied in derision, but which they gladly accepted. The Apostles used to meet every Saturday night to hold discussions, to the accompaniment of coffee and tobacco. A paper would be read, and a discussion would follow. Dean Merivale, who was one of them, says:—

We soon grew, as such youthful coterie generally do, into immense self-conceit. We began to think we had a mission to enlighten the world upon things intellectual and spiritual.<sup>1</sup>

The bright particular star of this coterie was Arthur Hallam, who arrived at Cambridge during Tennyson's second term. The two immediately struck up a firm friendship which was to have a far-reaching effect upon the poet's life. Tennyson, who had secured the Chancellor's medal for poetry, was welcomed into the circle and at once installed as *their* poet. As an Apostle he was not a success, he took little part in the debates, and when it came to his turn to read an essay, he let the Apostles down badly. When the members arrived they found Tennyson in a mood of obstinate embarrassment; he had torn up his paper, and the evening was a disaster. But he lent a willing ear to Hallam's orations, watching him with love and admiration. In later years when he joined the Metaphysical of London, he never took part in the debates, but he was a good listener and made use of what he heard. The truth is that Tennyson was a good poet but no thinker, and, as Mr. Nicolson points out:—

Hallam shares with the Cambridge of 1830 in general, and the Apostles in particular, the blame, if blame there is, of instilling into Tennyson those convictions as to the applied purposes of poetry, as to

<sup>1</sup> Nicolson, *Tennyson*, p. 73.



his "message" or his "mission," which played such havoc with his later compositions.

It caused him to assume the rôle of a prophet and teacher of morality, a rôle for which he was totally unfitted.

It was at Cambridge, and probably among the Apostles, that Tennyson first became acquainted with Bible criticism and the new theory of evolution; ideas which had not penetrated the little Lincolnshire village. The Bible criticism does not seem to have disturbed him greatly, or if it did, there are no traces of it. The problem that did arrest his attention and which he brooded over for the greater part of his life, was the question of immortality. When we died was that the end, or did our personality survive to continue its career in another sphere? That and the cruelty of Nature seem to have been the two great questions that occupied the greater part of his life. For all his gruff voice and magnificent physique—he was six feet in height and broad in proportion (Carlyle called him the "Life Guardsman")—Tennyson was of a nervous and timid disposition; he was afraid of God, afraid of sex, afraid of Mrs. Grundy, afraid of life, and above all and everything, afraid of death and of the life after death. As Mr. Nicolson observes:—

With the strong, full blood of his yeoman forebears mingled the black and bitter strain of some obscurer ancestry; through the arteries of an athlete fluttered the frightened, sensitive pulses of a mystic; and under the scent and music of delicate and tender things pierced the coarse salt savour of the wold and marsh.

Tennyson hated all critics and criticism. "I am thin-skinned," he told Tyndall, "I remember all the malignant things said against me, but little of the praise." Moxon, his publisher, told Browning that he had been instructed by Tennyson to hide from him all but the most favourable reviews. During the frequent readings he was in the habit of giving to friends and visitors, all criticism was forbidden, says Mr. Fausset:—

They might express their approval; they might even loudly applaud. But of disapproval there must not be a word. Silence, to so exquisite a sensitiveness, was criticism enough.<sup>2</sup>

For venturing to say that the later poems lacked the old "champagne flavour," Fitz Gerald was estranged for forty years. Patmore, who "followed Tennyson about like a dog," was dropped for ever for showing independence of judgment. A similar fate nearly overwhelmed Jowett, the Master of Balliol; Tennyson was staying at Balliol and was asked to give a reading. After the reading, a respectful silence fell upon the company who looked to Jowett, the host, to voice the emotion. The silence, which was long and painful, was at last broken by Jowett saying: "I wouldn't publish that, Tennyson, if I were you." Poor Mrs. Tennyson, sitting there with her pulses fluttering in anticipation of the impending storm; and, oh dear, that nice Mr. Jowett, who was so fond of Lionel and Hallam. But the thunder, when at length it crashed, glanced off miraculously into comparatively impersonal directions: "If it comes to that, Master," beloned the Laureate, "the sherry you gave us at luncheon to-day was positively filthy."<sup>3</sup> Ever after that, if Jowett did not like a poem, he remained silent or "broken down."

Tennyson had good cause to dislike the critics, they described his early poems as in the "Baa-lamb" style, and one critic of some of the weaker lines of *In Memoriam*, which was published anonymously, observed: "These touching lines evidently come from

the full heart of the widow of a military man." Tennyson's weakness has been traced to his training and environment, but Byron, Shelley and Swinburne were brought up in an aristocratic and conventional environment, but had the strength to break away. The fact is Tennyson's weakness was constitutional, he was lacking in virility. Mr. Nicolson says:—

It appears he was himself very sorely exposed to the physical temptations to which he was endeavouring to minister. It is rarely that we can detect in his poems any convincing note of physical passion..... indeed it was painful for him to contemplate even the possibility of any relation between man and woman other than the conjugal.

He did not marry until he was forty-one, after an engagement of thirteen years, for which there was no real necessity. The truth is, Tennyson's fine physical proportions and deep voice masked the fact of his essentially feminine type of mind.

Now, as Havelock Ellis has pointed out, "Our highest activities arise out of what we are accustomed to regard as the lowest." The driving force behind scientific discovery and creative art is in the first place curiosity, the desire to know; and this desire first arises, in its full intensity, in the young, in sexual curiosity:—

The creative and critical habit of thought, the scientific mind generated by this search, is destined to be of immense value.....it streams over into another larger and more impersonal channel. It is indeed lifted to a higher plane.....In the most magnificent achievements of poetry and philosophy, of art and of science, it is no longer forbidden to see the ultimate root in this adolescent development.<sup>4</sup>

It was just in this creative force that Tennyson was lacking. If Christianity had succeeded in its aim of stamping out the sexual instinct, it would have been able to keep the world permanently at the level of the Dark Ages.

W. MANN.

(To be Concluded.)

## Acid Drops.

Henry Purkiss has been sent to prison for six months for venturing in a Christian country to carry out New Testament teachings. His offence was that his child being ill he trusted to the New Testament promise that the Lord would save the sick through prayer and declined to call in a doctor. But the child died, the Lord was deaf or dumb, and a Christian judge sent him to prison for being fool enough to trust in the Christian God. We have no time to write at length on the matter this week, but it will keep till our next issue. All we desire to say now is that the sentence of Henry Purkiss brands the thousands of parsons in Great Britain as so many hypocrites and humbugs. It is their teaching the man was carrying out, it is on people's faith in prayer that these men live. And they stand idly by while a man is sent to prison for doing as they advised. These black-coated feeders on credulity and ignorance have not the common decency to stand up for a "pal" when he is in trouble. And a Christian judge should have declined to take such a case, but in this matter the hypocrisy of the pulpit is reflected in the hypocrisy on the judicial bench. We shall deal with the subject at length next week.

We note that *Reynold's Newspaper*, in reporting the case of the man and his wife charged with manslaughter of their child for carrying out the New Testament teaching, gave the heading "Peculiar Parents." But they were not peculiar parents at all. There is no evidence but that they were very good parents. Their sole offence was that they were Christian parents, and it is the other

<sup>2</sup> Hugh Fausset, *Tennyson; A Modern Portrait*, p. 28.

<sup>3</sup> Nicolson, *Tennyson*, p. 202.

<sup>4</sup> Havelock Ellis, *The Dance of Life*, pp. 99-100.



Christians who call them peculiar because they happen to be honest enough to practise what other Christians profess. That is their sole peculiarity.

Canon Briggs, of Loughborough, is alarmed at the shortage of curates. He says he has advertised for several weeks for a curate and has not had a single reply. He is distressed at the outlook, and wonders where the higher officers of the Church will come from in the future. We do not think he need alarm himself on that head, there will always be plenty of applicants for the higher paid offices of the Church. What will suffer in an increasing degree is the mentality of those who fill the posts. This has been steadily going down for some considerable time, and is still on the decline. The Churches have to-day reached a position where no man of real ability and sound character can take up with the job of preaching Christianity. One need only take the leaders of the Church to-day and compare them with the leaders of fifty years ago to see the truth of this.

For the rest it is suggested by Christians themselves that the reason why curates do not come forward is because the job is not well enough paid. That may be quite true, and a curate, like other men, must live if he is to do his work. All the same when the supply of curates is reduced to a question of the size of the salary that is to be paid, it helps to place the profession on the same level as any other trade in the community, and the casual observer is not slow to draw the obvious inference.

We suggest that it is to cancel the effect of Miss Ethel Carnie Holdsworth's serial story in the *Daily Herald* that our sometimes pious contemporary has a text from the Gospel of Matthew at the head of a leading article. This is not so bad, but when the writer goes on to explain what Jesus meant, we are left wondering whether the space used would not be better utilized in advertising Pear's Soap or Trips to the North Pole. The *Daily Herald's* case against poverty is quite strong enough and can gain nothing by being smarmed over with theology.

A Primitive Methodist Church at Darwen has just managed to clear off the mortgage on its building, and one can excuse rejoicings on the occasion. But was there any real necessity for this kind of thing:—

Intellectual Atheism was to-day as dead as Protection, the arguments and the evidence upon which it was founded having all been swept away. Indeed, he believed that if some of the old adherents, like Charles Bradlaugh, were here to-day they would be found inside the Church. One after another, the rivals to the truths of Christianity had been destroyed, and to-day the Bible, its truths having been investigated by the world's greatest scholars, stood as the book to meet the present day needs of the world.

We wonder whether the speaker has ever come into contact with "intellectual Atheism," and what he thinks it is? We can, of course, understand a speaker in a chapel disliking Atheism, but to tell an audience that intellectual Atheism is dead, is to depend upon their ignorance to a very dangerous degree. Better observers in the Christian camp would tell the speaker that never in the world's history was Atheism so common as it is to-day. There is not a civilized country in the world in which they cannot be found in numbers that are frightening all the longer heads in the churches and chapels. As to the old adherents of Bradlaugh being found in the Churches, if they were alive, all we can say is that there are still very many of them alive and they are as firm supporters of militant Freethought as ever. And on this subject, at least, we may claim to know the facts better than an irresponsible speaker at a chapel celebration.

The gentleman who gave the address from which we have quoted is the Rev. H. J. Pickett, Principal of the Hartley (Theological) College, and it is worth noting as a sample of the way in which education is dispensed.

His hearers, one may assume, seldom read any kind of literature that deals with current Freethought, they sedulously avoid going to a Freethought meeting, and it is quite easy to tell them from the platform the kind of tale that Mr. Pickett chooses to tell them. They have been trained to that kind of thing, and consequently it is the kind of thing they look for. The Atheist is to them a very curious but rare sort of an animal, a dwindling species that was common some years ago but is now disappearing. Is there any wonder that when some of the younger ones look at the world now and again with open eyes they find out how they have been misled? And as Mr. Pickett presides over an institution that has for its main purpose the turning out of Primitive Methodist preachers, one can hardly be surprised at the poor quality the modern pulpit presents us with. After all, the favourite name for Christians is sheep, and when Christians are trained like sheep they cannot be expected to think save in a sheep-like manner.

The Lord is in for trouble, or worry, or both. From midnight December 1923 till midnight December 1924 the Anglo-Catholics of this country will pray continuously for the conversion of England. For twelve months the Lord will be bothered with the prayers of the Anglo-Catholics to get us converted. He is to have no rest night or day. It is a mass attack on a scale hitherto undreamed of. It is probably hoped that for the sake of peace and quietness the Lord will give these lunatics what they want. But suppose he does not? Suppose he uses some sort of celestial ear-plugs and shuts out the nuisance? What will these praying fiends do? Will they have the pluck to throw the whole thing overboard? We doubt it. Christianity does not breed that kind of mental sturdiness where the Lord is concerned. Christians and camels both take their burdens kneeling.

Now we venture to suggest a plan to these Anglo-Catholics that might be worth trying. Hitherto the plan has been merely to ask the Lord to do things and whether he did them or not to continue laddling out the sweet incense of prayer and adoration on which the Lord lives. But why not change the method and issue an ultimatum? Would it not be worth while informing the Lord that unless the prayers are attended to there will be a closing of all Catholic Churches for, say, twelve months? It is a plan that might do some good. After all, demand notes with no power to enforce the demands made are not very effective. As the case is the Lord stands to gain all and lose nothing. Whether he does what is asked or not he knows that his followers will go on praising him for what he has not done and thanking him for gifts that are not bestowed. And that kind of thing is likely to demoralize anyone. So we strongly advise the Lord's followers to show a little manliness in their dealings with him. Make it quite plain that unless he really does something he will not be worshipped. And all gods die very quickly when the sustaining food of worship is denied.

One other thing. In this work of bothering the Lord to do this or that the Atheist takes no part. In fact an Atheist might be defined as one who never bothers God. He never blames him and he never troubles him. It is his followers who do both. There is scarce a catastrophe that occurs that some bunch of his worshippers do not put down to his work. There is not a disease that afflicts us in which some of his followers do not detect his handiwork. The Atheist is not built that way. He is the one person on earth who never charges God with producing earthquakes and storms and diseases. He defends the character of God all along. He says I do not know what God is, I do not know where he is and I do not know what he does, but I decline to believe that he did these things, and I will not trouble him with all sorts of requests for this, that, and the other. In a world of worshippers the Atheist is the one person who gives God no trouble and blames him for nothing that occurs, and if there is ever a day of judgment God will surely remember him and reward him accordingly.



### 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.

W. A. HOLROYD.—See "Acid Drops." The quality of the true Christian does not undergo much change.

Y. OYAMA.—Greetings received "From the Indian Sea" makes us feel quite envious reading it in London in a November fog.

E. A. PHIPSON.—There is no use keeping on repeating that teachers in elementary schools are not allowed to inculcate ordinary morals and manners. Why not pay a visit to some schools and see what is actually being done. The picture of children in abject servility to teachers is not generally true, whatever may be the facts in individual cases.

M. BEESLEY.—You probably come across many more unbelievers in Christianity than you are aware of, but the habits of deception bred by Christianity prevent many from saying exactly what they think about the current religion. Hypocrisy is the price that is always paid for enforced conformity.

H. BARBER.—We do not think it worth while bothering with your Christian friend who is of the opinion that Mr. Cohen goes about the country lecturing only because he finds it profitable. Those who do the arranging of the lectures know how very profitable it is. In many cases it means getting nothing and even paying expenses.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—J. O'Dea (N.Z.), £1.

B. TRUETOVE.—Thanks for parcel which reached us quite safely. Afraid we are rather late in acknowledging, but the matter was overlooked.

L. MASON.—Thanks for cuttings and for season's good wishes, which we reciprocate. Letter will appear in next issue.

D. PEYLOW.—You are misinformed. We have received nothing from Mr. Clement Rogers replying to Mr. Cohen's criticisms. The only communication from that gentleman was his somewhat misleading letter, which was duly published.

H. SILVERSTEIN.—We agree with you as to doubting whether a daily paper will act up to the ideal of self-expression and complete honesty in its articles. Still, it is, as you say, something to get them in a leading article pleading for it. Thanks for good wishes. We value them from an old friend.

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

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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.

Mr. Cohen had two very fine meetings on Sunday last at Nottingham. In the afternoon the hall was crowded, every inch of standing room being occupied. And in the evening there was a fine gathering in the large hall of the

Victoria Baths. Both lectures were followed with the closest attention and there was much discussion and questioning at both meetings. Mr. Mosely occupied the chair in the evening, but we did not catch the name of the gentleman who so ably officiated in the afternoon. There was also a good sale of *Freethinkers*. More could have been disposed of had they been there. Messrs. Farmer, Wilson, Hands, Mosely and others had worked very hard to make the meetings a success, and they received the reward for which they craved.

We are glad to see a second edition issued of "Keridon's" *Life, Mind and Knowledge*. It is a very thoughtful piece of writing, as is everything which issues from Keridon's pen. He writes nothing unless it is clearly thought out, and as he usually deals with topics on which there exists a terrible amount of confusion, that is a quality which is beyond praise. We reviewed the book when it first appeared and we can only repeat the good wishes we gave it then. The published price of the work is 3s. 6d.

We have often pointed out that a man who is capable of leading the people as a thinker has no right to waste himself on politics, where the thought is altogether of a lower order. We see that Mr. Wells, after trying several times to get elected to enter Parliament, has come to the conclusion that the political field imposes too many barriers on freedom of thought and speech for him to make another attempt. Of course, there are not wanting those who will say that Mr. Wells would have come to some other conclusion had he been successful at the poll, and they may be warranted in so saying. But whether a man is driven to see truth by the pressure of events or from pure thinking does not make any difference in the truth involved. And it is quite evident that if Mr. Wells were to speak his mind openly on religious and other subjects there is hardly a constituency in the country that would elect him. Plain speaking and clear thinking are the qualities that serve the electioneering agent least. Mr. Wells will do much more valuable work outside the House of Commons than he would ever do inside it.

Mr. Moss had a very appreciative audience at the new meeting place of the West Ham Branch to listen to his lecture on Sunday last. Interest was shown by the questioning at the close of the address. Mr. Moss will be lecturing there again before the season closes.

We are pleased to learn that Mr. R. H. Rosetti had very good meetings last Sunday at Manchester and that his lectures were greatly enjoyed by those present. The last fact does not surprise us. As we said before, he usually has something to say that is worth listening to, which cannot be said of everyone who mounts the platform. We should like to see him lecturing much more frequently than he does.

Some of the letter writers to the *Daily Express* have been expressing the opinion that the clergy would attract more people to church if they permitted questions after the sermon. That is quite probable, and we should like to see it done—not as it has been done with questions written down to be answered as the parson thought fit on the Sunday after, but on the spot. And if it were done it would be disastrous for what is known as the "religious atmosphere." It would make plain the fact that religion was, after all, a matter of opinion only and one on which many different views might be held. And that would never do. Religion lives largely by its being marked off from the rest of life as something special, and to discuss (as one might) the much more important matter of drainage, would be to destroy its "sacred" character. And what would the parson do then, poor thing?

Experience is the sum total of our deceptions.—Paul Anguez.



## The Early Scottish Church and the Papacy.

### II.

(Concluded from page 791.)

THE regal claim to the personalty of deceased bishops was condemned in the Bull of Alexander VI in 1259, which said that there was neither right nor custom for the existing practice. That the Pope was wrong so far as "custom" is concerned is borne out by the declaration of Edward I in his claim to overlordship in 1292, where the procedure is distinctly stated to be "according to the custom of Scotland." At any rate, the Bull made little impression on the Scottish Crown, and even another Bull issued in 1282 was equally impotent. For half a century the Crown continued to claim these moveable estates. During the reign of David II (1329-71), however, the injustice of the custom seems to have been recognized, and this monarch formally renounced his claim to episcopal property in this respect, and this was confirmed by a Papal Bull in 1372. Strange to say, in 1403, Robert II asserted his claim to the "personalty," and from this it was clear that in spite of the renunciation of David II, the claim of the Crown still held good. In 1450 the matter was brought before Parliament, when it was agreed to waive the regal claim to moveable property, but expressly reserved "the old and praiseworthy privilege enjoyed by the Crown from time immemorial" of right to the "real estate" during a vacancy. This was confirmed by a Provincial Council in 1457, and became an Act of Parliament in 1462.

Here again the line of cleavage between Church and State was not merely antagonism to the Papacy, but was actually an insistence on feudal rights. The King claimed feudal right to dispose of vacancies to bishops in precisely the same way as he would deal with a vacant lay barony. It was his right as feudal superior. As it was, the bishops claimed certain exemptions, as we find in the *Regiam Majestatem* that bishops-elect were not bound to do homage, but only fealty.<sup>7</sup> Clearly, the crown had to defend the body politic in insisting on its feudal rights.

The support of the Anti-Papacy, notwithstanding the Papal fiats and thunders that it was "schismatic," was nothing more than the result of Scotland's foreign policy. The "Babylonish Captivity" of the Popes at Avignon brought the election of Anti-Popes (1378-1417). At this time Scotland renewed its ancient alliance with France, in order to weaken the influence of England. This alliance brought in its trail the support of the Anti-Papacy, which had the recognition of France. Urban VI (1378-89) promulgated fulminations against the heresy in Scotland, yet the country stood by its national policy, its independence of England, which was to Scotland the "one thing needful." Scotland's support of the Anti-Papacy was, in short, an answer to England's support of the Papacy.

Parliament's first serious interference with Papal legal rights was in 1401, when it enacted that anyone considering himself unjustly excommunicated could make certain appeals. Probably, the reason why Parliament took upon itself a question of this sort was simply that the continual feuds between the nobility were not favourable to the holding of the Provincial Councils. That the schism over the Papacy was also responsible for this is evident from the fact that we are told that the clergy consented to the Ordinance of Parliament "as long as the Papal schism should continue." More important, however, was a law passed

in 1427 for expediting civil cases before ecclesiastical courts, which was ordered to be enacted by the Provincial Council. The Papacy immediately considered that this was an infringement of the right and privileges of the Holy See, and the promoter of the statute, the Bishop of Glasgow, was summoned to Rome to answer for his breach of discipline. The King (James I) naturally treated this as an imputation on himself, and would not let the bishop go, but sent instead two of the clergy to remonstrate with the Pope. The Holy See would accept no explanations or pleas, and a nuncio, who happened to be the Archdeacon of Teviotdale, was dispatched to Scotland to formally cite the rebellious bishop before the Roman Court. The nuncio came, and served his citation, but hurried back to Rome. The King, however, would not allow this to pass unchallenged, and he tried the nuncio (*in absentia*) for "rebellion and treason," and deprived him of all his benefices in Scotland. The Pope pronounced censures on the King and Parliament for this proceeding in a Bull of 1435, but without effect. In this year the famous Æneas Piccolomini, afterwards Pius II, came to Scotland, probably to influence the king to meet the Papacy in this matter. At any rate it is recorded that he came in order "to restore a certain prelate (?) to the favour of the King." The result was that in 1439 a nuncio, in the person of the outlawed archdeacon, came with letters of absolution for the Bishop of Glasgow. By this time, however, the king (James I) was dead.

The last important objection by Scotland to Papal wishes was on the question of archiepiscopal and metropolitan rights. In the year 1472, York raised its old claim of jurisdiction over the Scottish Church, but Graham, the Bishop of St. Andrew's, well defended the independence of the Scottish Church before the Roman Court, and the result was that a Bull was issued erecting St. Andrew's into an archbishopric with metropolitan rights over the Church of Scotland. This immediately brought a sea of trouble to the Papacy. In the first place, there were dioceses which were subject to foreign control, such as Galloway, which came under the jurisdiction of York, whilst Orkney and the Isles belonged to Drontheim in Norway. Further, there were abbeys and collegiate churches which had been exempt from diocesan control like Kelso, Holyrood, St. Giles, etc. Apart from the objections raised by these, neither the King nor the episcopate of Scotland had been consulted. Further, the new archbishop had been commissioned to raise a tenth-tax on benefices for a new Crusade, and this added fuel to the fire. Soon, the Roman Court was inundated with complaints, petitions, and accusations. In 1473 the Pope found it necessary to exempt Aberdeen from the metropolitan jurisdiction, and pressure was used to induce the Pope to depose the Archbishop of St. Andrew's from office. In 1487, a new Archbishop of St. Andrew's got his metropolitan rights confirmed, which gave him the same privileges as those enjoyed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, making him "Primate of all Scotland and *legatus natus*." No sooner had this Bull been issued than Glasgow, with the support, if not the prompting of Parliament, protested, with the result that the Pope was forced to concede the same exemption which had already been granted to Aberdeen. This was in 1488. The following year, Glasgow was raised to the dignity of an archbishopric. This compromise did not prove satisfactory, and the rivalry of these prelates so thrust itself upon matters political that Parliament intervened in 1493, when it was decided that the whole matter be laid before the Holy See for decision.

One of the main factors which contributed to this quarrel was undoubtedly the rise of the higher clergy as a political force in Scotland. The original objection

<sup>7</sup> Dowden, 191. Robert II (1371) compelled the bishops to do homage as well as fealty.



to the metropolitan dignity was not an ecclesiastical one connected with that old claim of "independence" which even the individual sees wished to preserve, but really a political one. The real trouble was the opposition of the nobles. In the struggle of the King against the barons, the Church had come into favour as supporters of the Crown, and throughout this period they were elevated at the expense of the nobles. The result was that so long as the barons persisted in their claim for "independence," so long would the clergy fight for similar rights.

It is necessary to take particular note, therefore, that throughout almost the whole of the period under discussion, when Scotland appears, to all intent and purpose, definitely Anti-Papal, there is never a word of disagreement on questions of doctrine. It is always a secular quarrel, which can invariably be explained by the social and political circumstances.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, we find Scottish ecclesiastics taking part in most of the important Church Councils on the Continent, whilst the methods of the Scottish Church in suppressing the Lollards, conclusively prove that it was "a true daughter" of the Mother Church on points of doctrine. But new ideas are dangerous things to meddle with, for as Cardinal Newman said, that "roving intellect of man" never knows when to stop. Once you admit the new idea, it assimilates all that is agreeable to it. This is precisely what happens throughout history. "In Scotland," as Buckle says, "everything is linked together; nothing is casual or accidental." The independence of the Church from Papal dictation and the independence from English overlordship are causally bound together. In the same way the baronial struggle finds its counterpart in the pretensions of the clergy.

H. GEORGE FARMER.

## Jesus Christ and the Masses.

No man prays about a broken-down motor-car or a broken-down monetary system. —Professor Soddy.

IN the Wesleyan *Methodist Recorder* of November 29 there appeared an article, entitled "Jesus Christ and the Masses," which is, one fears, only too typical of the attitude of the Christian Churches to-day to the great problems of this twentieth-century civilization.

In the course of his argument, the writer, J. P. Veall by name, tells us:—

The people of England just now are suffering from disillusionment, and, as always, it is proving a very trying and painful process. In the early part of this century we had reached such a pitch in our material civilization, with all the progress and discoveries of modern science, that we were tempted to look upon ourselves as altogether self-sufficient. The mastery of man over the powers of Nature was never more wonderful and more pronounced. Think, for instance, of the hundred and one things for which we have come to use electricity, of the application of motor-power to transport and industry.....All this, and many other phases of modern life, of which these are but illustrations, tended to give man an inordinate sense of his own sufficiency, with the result that he went about with a sort of strut of superior self-confidence, and with an air that banished God as altogether superfluous and irrelevant.

He then tells us that this belief has been shattered by three great tragedies; the Great War, the failure of Peace, and the present problem of unemployment.

He says that multitudes of people to-day are asking:—

If man is self-sufficient, if he is capable of creating

and maintaining a perfect civilization, why have we had upon our hands such ghastly problems and tragedies as these? And the answer is because man, with all his skill and all his cleverness, cannot master Sin.

The question is strangely worded. The idea that man is capable of creating a perfect civilization is not a little astounding. To begin with, he is quite incapable of *creating* anything. He can work upon existing material in numberless ways and enormously modify the course that events would otherwise take. But creation is unknown to science; it is the function of gods. Further, a "perfect civilization" is necessarily unattainable. As ideals are always ahead of performance, an ideal that might appear perfect in one age would appear defective in a later age which had attained to it. Moreover, a perfect civilization should have an overall efficiency of unity, which—on this planet—is an impossibility.

However, the author of the question might plead that he was not straining after mathematical accuracy of expression, and that what he intended to convey was reasonably clear. Let us then paraphrase his question as follows: If man has within himself the ability—by harnessing all the forces of Nature to his own service—to produce all the material requisites for a high state of civilization for every man, woman and child upon this earth, why is he now plagued with strife, enmity and unemployment?

When stated thus we do not need to search long for the answer. We shall not find it where the theologian imagines it, although perfectly willing to admit that there is no great lack of rascality on all sides. The answer is because mankind is saddled with a hopelessly defective and anachronistic monetary system, which is inherently unable to distribute the material requisites for a high civilization amongst the people engaged in producing them.

Readers of the *Freethinker* are probably sufficiently aware of the main contentions of the "Douglas analysis" in this connection, and there is no need to labour the point.

The chief point in connection with the theologian's answer is that, if all the sinners could suddenly be converted into saints, the financial system would still fail to provide sufficient purchasing-power in the hands of the people to buy the whole product of their labours, thus necessitating forced export. Strife and enmity are a necessary outcome of such a system. And as to the last of the three plagues, we have yet to realize that unemployment should be the hall-mark of industrial efficiency.

Toward the close of his article our theologian says:—

With the mind of the multitude disillusioned through the failure of civilization to save itself, there is presented a new opportunity for proclaiming the way of Jesus Christ as the only alternative to the prevailing confusion and chaos.

This is, of course, only to be expected. The misfortunes of the multitude are to be turned to account by the black army; and just as the early followers of John Wesley dealt with a similarly disillusioned proletariat and doped it with salvation, so his later followers are urged to make a similar onslaught.

Throughout its history the Christian Church has batted on the misery and poverty and distress of the people. It has taken as its maxim, "The poor ye have always with you," and whilst always preaching—and not infrequently practising—almsgiving and philanthropy, the Church in its official capacity has consistently opposed genuine constructive and scientifically planned reform. Busy readers desirous of obtaining a bird's-eye view of this aspect of the Church's activities will find an illuminating presenta-

<sup>8</sup> Bellesheim, the Catholic historian, blames schism in the Church for the political ills, but it is more likely that this should be stated conversely.



tion in Mr. Joseph McCabe's *The Church and the People*.

The tragedy of the situation, however, lies in the genuine sincerity and earnestness of the writer of the article under notice and of large numbers of those who think as he does. These good folk are quite convinced that all the causes of the world's maladies can be removed by belief in the existence of their particular saviour-god, which belief will so act upon people's emotions as to make them peaceable, unselfish and altogether virtuous.

It is probably correct to say that, in spite of the brutalizing and demoralizing effects of the war and the so-called peace, there is quite a large enough percentage of kind, unselfish and peaceably disposed folk—of all creeds and no creed—in this country to-day to effect almost any improvement in material conditions if those virtues were all that was required.

Unfortunately, we have to deal with a problem for which charity and loving kindness and such good things are almost useless; the essential requisites in dealing with the subtle defects of the existing financial system are clear, acute and mathematically-trained brains; and these have ever been at a discount.

We are told that unless we become as little children we cannot inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. That may be so; but our urgent need to-day is to inherit the Kingdom of this Earth, and we shall not come within sight of that until we have "put away childish things" and undergone a rigorous training of mature brain-power.

A. W. COLEMAN.

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### The Mourner.

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It was a sordid crime. The young man murdered his paramour and then committed suicide. The pair had lived together for a few months. The first burst of passion was followed by indifference on his part and coldness on hers. Increasingly violent quarrels ensued, till in a fit of exasperation the man picked up his razor and cut the woman's throat with such force as nearly to sever the head from the body. He then served himself in like manner. The horrified neighbours found his body lying across hers in a pool of blood, both dead. The verdict at the inquest was "Wilful murder and felo-de-se."

The ceremony of burying the two corpses was of the simplest. There was no funeral service. The one grave had been dug overnight. Whilst the morning was yet early the two coffins with their sad contents were wheeled to the graveside on a bier. There were no flowers, no wreaths, and no mourners, only the lingering grey chilly fog of the autumn morning, the still, silent air, and the sombre cypresses of the cemetery in their stiff rows made a mournfully appropriate setting to the final consequences of the little tragedy which had ended in extreme horror and negation.

The ceremonial was performed by the cemetery officials in swift but unhurried silence and a machine-like efficiency that accentuated the atmosphere of unrelieved pathos.

After the grave was filled in the sods of turf were replaced, leaving a mound only of sufficient height to cause the surface to be level at a later period when the loose soil had subsided to firmness, so that eventually the site would be indistinguishable from the surrounding area of grass-grown graveyard.

Yet in spite of the early hour and the extreme privacy and secrecy observed there was a group of onlookers. Not mourners or in any way personally connected, but sightseers, the usual knot of morbid or merely curious idlers who seem to have an instinct to be present at this sort of thing. Some had followed all

public details of the tragedy through, and wished to be present at the final scene. It gave them a sense of dark and solemn satisfaction. Others were of the casual looker-on-type—people who spring up from nowhere in particular when anything happens in a street or public place.

The curiosity of these people being satisfied, or at least having no further matter to feed on, they began slowly to disperse. They lingered in the process, a few talking in whispers, others staying to glance at other graves and read the inscriptions on the tombstones, and some simply loitering aimlessly. The cemetery officials picked up their spades and wheeled away the bier.

At this juncture there came a fresh person into the scene. A middle-aged woman, clothed all in black and wearing a heavy veil that obscured her features, walked through the cemetery gates. She hesitated by the chapel and looked anxiously about. Advancing with quick and nervous yet silent footsteps, she scanned the new part of the cemetery, and at length came to a standstill beside the newly made grave. After hasty and apprehensive glances all round, the solitary figure in black stooped and placed on the mound a bunch of wild flowers tied together with black thread and having a card attached.

The woman straightened herself and stood with bowed head and clasped hands, a figure of suppressed but complete woe.

Some of the loiterers, ever keen for fresh diversion, came back quicker than they had gone. Soon there was quite a little crowd round the woman in black, who moved not; did not even look at the spectators.

These were unfriendly. A thin seedily dressed man with a straggling beard mouthed and gesticulated excitedly, but uttered no sound. A bare-armed, untidy woman raised a shrill protest, "It isn't right as anybody should show respect to people as live like they did and end up with murder. It's scandalous!"

A stout red-faced man muttered thickly, "I can't understand the state o' mind o' some people."

The little crowd murmured and shuffled, but came no nearer to the woman, avoiding her indeed as though she had a plague, keeping their eyes fixed greedily but unintelligently on her. They were indignant but aimless, feeling only a moral swelling in the breast which led to no definite action. They were as helpless and useless and incapable of movement as a flock of sheep round a dying member of their kind.

Now the cemetery attendants came up, and with short sharp words urged the onlookers away, shepherding them out of the cemetery with peremptory orders to "Get off away."

All the while the woman in black did not move.

A young attendant in uniform came back to the grave and, stooping, read the inscription on the card of the home-made wreath. It ran: "Although he has done great wrong he is some mother's son."

The young man regarded the woman steadily and keenly. She gazed firmly back at him. A look of understanding came into his intelligent brown eyes. Quietly and sympathetically he spoke, "You are his mother?"

"Yes," replied the woman. It was more a sigh than a word. Her heart was not broken but crushed irretrievably, incapable of recovery.

The young man could not find suitable words. But some rare instinct prompted him to take off his peaked cap and bow his head. Darting him one sorrowfully grateful glance the woman walked slowly away.

A. R. WILLIAMS.

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Philosophers are anatomists rather than physicians; they dissect and do not trouble about curing.—*Rivarol* (1754-1801).



## Correspondence.

## RELIGION AND SCIENCE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Like the squid, Mr. J. Arthur Hill seeks refuge in a cloud of ink concealing and distorting facts. In the *Freethinker* for December 9 he says:—

"Javali".....quotes Sir F. Ray Lankester and others approvingly on subjects outside that in which they are specialists! Because they are great in biology, "Javali" seems to accept their opinions on a branch of psychology.

Note the artful manner in which Mr. Hill links Sir Ray Lankester to "others" and then proceeds to make out that the latter were all biologists. Putting on one side the fact that a biologist, that is, one versed in the science of living matter, is, *ipso facto*, abundantly better qualified to opine upon alleged "psychical phenomena" than is a physicist, that is, one versed in the science of non-living matter, it will be seen, if my letter be referred to, that the five "others" were not biologists but world-renowned mental experts.

"Psychical Research"—a misnomer for "Occult Research"—has not advanced the cause of psychology one whit and has no justified claim whatever to a branch of that science, indeed, the pretentious use of this word "psychical" by occultists is deeply resented as an insult by real scientific workers. Physicists would call to strict accountability any biologists or psychologists who, without any adequate training, should presume to broadcast pontifical enunciations upon abstruse questions of physics. Yet "Psychical Researchers," ninety-nine per cent of whom possess practically no knowledge of the physiological and pathological phenomena of the brain, develop righteous indignation when attention is drawn to the ludicrousness of their claim to be "specialists" in "psychical investigation."

Mr. Hill says that Sir Ray Lankester has not spent years of study on "psychical things," but he does not enlighten us as to what "psychical things" are. If by "things" he means the alleged occult phenomena so beloved by the "psychical specialists"—

Whose nimble souls  
Can spin an insubstantial universe  
Suiting their mood, and call it possible,  
Sooner than see one grain with eye exact,  
And give strict record of it,<sup>1</sup>

it may be replied that our leading zoologist has, fortunately for the advance of truth and science, devoted his laborious years of study and investigation to facts, not fancies. But let me remind Mr. J. Arthur Hill that Sir Ray Lankester's investigations into the "occult" are not quite so barren of result as he would have us believe. When the notorious spiritist Slade was receiving—as he said and as his dupes believed—messages from the spirit world written on a slate, he gave a séance to Sir Ray Lankester and Sir Bryan Donkin. The former seized the slate before the message was supposed to be delivered by the spirit and found it *already written upon the slate*. This particular "spirit message" cost Slade three months imprisonment!

JAVALI.

## MEDICAL SCIENCE IN SINHALESE HISTORY.

SIR,—In reply to your correspondent J. R. Bhatia, I would point out that the reference in my article was to the "achievements of modern Western science," not to the moderate though highly creditable advances in medical knowledge made by the Greeks and Saracens. And as to what he rightly calls "the absurd claim that the East knew all this long ago," I can assure him that such claims are sometimes made. For instance, I was once gravely informed, in the course of a newspaper controversy, that the use of electricity as a motive power was known in the ancient East. My critic's allusions to the ancient medical science of the Hindus do not, therefore, affect my contention, even if they were to be unreservedly accepted, which I am not quite prepared to do in the absence of any direct references to the original Hindu texts.

<sup>1</sup> Adapted ex George Eliot's *The Gypsy*.

But even admitting, for the sake of argument, that this amount of scientific knowledge was really possessed by the Hindus, such an admission would be scarcely to the credit of their ancient civilization. For the obvious inquiry arises: Why did this knowledge, once acquired, so completely disappear and cease to be of any practical use? Why had it all to be learned over again from the scientific culture of the West? The causes of the intellectual decadence of the ancient civilizations cannot be discussed here, but are fairly well known to social science, and their study makes it clear that the fundamental principles of these civilizations were incompatible with the true progress of mankind. Hence those who claim that the ancient civilizations of the East exhibited a high degree of scientific, artistic, or social achievement, do by that very claim condemn the system on which those civilizations were founded.

As regards the failure of educated Orientals—especially those whose education has been little influenced by Western culture—to admit the existence of "Dark Ages" in the intellectual history of the East, I can only repeat that this is a matter of fairly common observation. A thorough course of Western education may to some extent modify the Oriental's habitual veneration for his ancient culture, but as a rule one misses that critical judgment and that rational estimate of values which enable the Western mind to view the past stages of his civilization in their true perspective. Perhaps this is due to that bias towards mysticism which seems to be more or less inherent in the Oriental mind.

I do not quite understand what your correspondent means by his closing remark about "the use of applied science to keep the East in a state of political and economic subjection." If he is referring to British authority in India and Ceylon I must—despite its irrelevance to the subject under discussion—meet this challenge with an emphatic dissent. India and Ceylon, so far from being kept in a state of subjection, are at this moment being granted as wide political powers as can safely be entrusted to communities so thoroughly dominated by caste prejudice and racial antagonism. These conditions make the British power the only guarantee for social order and humane government among these peoples, and so long as such conditions prevail full powers, of "Self-determination" would be inconsistent with the true welfare both of themselves and of humanity in general.

A. E. MADDOCK.

## The Ass and the Sick Lion.

AN Ass mistook the echo of his bray  
For a celestial call to preach and pray;  
And his own shadow, big upon the wall,  
He deemed the everlasting Lord of All.  
Besides he had some notions how to treat  
Sinners and fetch them to the mercy seat.  
So in a broad-cloth tailored coat, combined  
With a white collar buttoned up behind,  
He got himself a parish. In his flock  
Was a sick Lion, panting on a rock.  
(It was an arrow from a huntsman's bow  
That laid this miserable Lion low.)  
Him on his pastoral rounds the Reverend Ears  
One morning thus addressed: "These groans and  
How base and craven in the King of Beasts! [tears,  
You need a moral tonic! Godless feasts  
And midnight games and evil Lionesses  
Have brought you, brother, to these sad distresses;  
Think not that I will comfort or condole—  
My cure is drastic, but 'twill save your soul."  
Whereat he turned and in the Lion's face  
Planted his hoofs with more speed than grace,  
Knocked out the teeth, and blinded both the eyes,  
And left him, dying, to the sun and flies.

Moral.

This little fable, children, is a proof  
That no profession, purpose, or disguise  
Can change the action of an Ass's hoof.

ÆSOP AND HYSSOP (WILLIAM ELLERY LEONARD).



### Obituary.

On Sunday, December 9, death claimed, in the person of Mary Samuels, wife of Mr. S. Samuels, one of the most loyal and amiable adherents of our Cause. After years of suffering, she passed away peacefully in her sleep in the 57th year of her age. Mr. Samuels, affectionately known to his numerous friends as "Solly," who has been a member of the N.S.S. Executive for many years and a director of the Secular Society Limited, had the loyal co-operation of his wife in his tireless work for Free-thought for the past twenty-five years and they were never both absent from a London meeting. Some of our readers may recollect that about twenty years ago Mrs. Samuels had a terrible fall from a high window and was taken to hospital with nearly every bone in her body fractured. On recovering consciousness after her admission to the ward, she announced that she was a Secularist and required no religious consolation. She remained in hospital for six months and returned home permanently crippled but nevertheless continued to work for the Cause she loved as far as possible, attending the London indoor meetings, selling literature and taking up collections, bearing her sufferings with cheerful fortitude and inspiring others by her courage, enthusiasm and amiability. As a wife she possessed all the domestic virtues. To her friends she was the essence of sweetness and generosity, both in thought and action, and only a few who knew them as intimately as the writer realized the intense devotion of Mr. and Mrs. Samuels to each other. His loving care did much to lighten the burden of her suffering, and she repaid him with all the affection of her loving nature. No words can console him for her loss, but from the President to the humblest member of the Society, who knew them both, we would convey to him the most heartfelt sympathy. A special Secular service, very beautiful and touching, was composed by and read at the Norwood Crematorium by our old friend and colleague, Mr. William Heaford, when the bodily shell that had contained the brave and loving spirit of Mary Samuels was committed to the flames. Amongst the mourners were noticed her old Freethought associates, Mr. and Mrs. H. B. Samuels, Mrs. Brandes, Mrs. Williamson, Mr. and Mrs. Leat, Mr. G. Rolf, Mr. Hammer Owen, Mrs. Annie Smyth, Mrs. Sharp, and representatives of the family of the late Mr. Fred Wood. Miss Kough and the undersigned represented the N.S.S. Executive.—E. M. VANCE.

All *Freethinker* readers will learn with the deepest regret of the death of Mr. George Underwood on December 13. Mr. Underwood has been a fairly constant writer on literary subjects for the past seven or eight years, and his notes and articles, we have the best reasons for knowing, have been greatly appreciated by all. His knowledge of European literature was wide and thorough, and his judgments were never hastily given nor lightly formed. His criticisms of writers, living and dead, were never in the least affected by their being either general favourites or the reverse. In width of knowledge and fearlessness of judgment he must certainly rank as one of the best writers on purely literary subjects who has ever used his pen in the service of this journal. His notes were always eagerly read, and many found them a valuable guide as to what to read as well as a help towards forming their own critical judgments. Mr. Cohen did not know that he was seriously ill until he received a letter from his wife on the morning of the 11th. Although it was press day he went to see him immediately, and also on the two following days, but it was too late for anything to be done more than had already been done. The cause of death was acute gastritis. Mr. Underwood leaves behind him a widow and four little girls, the eldest of which is only thirteen years of age. Unfortunately, there is no provision made for their future, and that makes, for the widow, the outlook darker, where it must be gloomy in any case. We are quite sure that the family have the sympathy of all readers of this journal in their great sorrow.

Mr. Edward Jackson passed away last week in his seventy-fifth year, the Manchester Branch thereby losing

one of its oldest members. He began work at nine years of age. Having been brought up as a Unitarian, he soon found the position untenable. Conversing with the writer only seven weeks ago, he proudly volunteered the information that he had been a Secularist for almost half a century. He could tell a good many stories of the stirring days and times in which Bradlaugh lived; he had also a deal to say about Holyoake and Symes. It cannot be too clearly emphasized that Mr. Jackson died, as his relatives affirm, a Secularist, no matter what is said to the contrary. Deceased was interred last Monday at Mossley—the scene of his early activities.—H. I. B.

### SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

#### LONDON.

##### INDOOR.

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

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.—No meeting.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY.—No meeting.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Upton Labour Party Hall, 84 Plashet Road, Upton Park, E.13): 7, Mr. R. H. Rosetti, "An Evening with the Golden Bough; a Study in God-making."

##### OUTDOOR.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Marble Arch): 3, a Lecture.

#### COUNTRY.

##### INDOOR.

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S. (Shop Assistant's Hall, 297 Argyle Street): 6.30, Mr. R. Mitchell, "Money." The Committee will meet after the lecture.

LEEDS BRANCH N.S.S. (Youngman's Restaurant, Lowerhead Row, Leeds): 7, Mr. Rifken, "What is Art?"

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## Principles and Objects.

Secularism teaches that conduct should be based on reason and knowledge. It knows nothing of divine guidance or interference; it excludes supernatural hopes and fears; it regards happiness as man's proper aim, and utility as his moral guide.

Secularism affirms that Progress is only possible through Liberty, which is at once a right and a duty; and therefore seeks to remove every barrier to the fullest equal freedom of thought, action, and speech.

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