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Views and Opinions.

Heresy.

Canon Barnes, Dean of Westminster, is to be translated—I think that is the correct word—to the See of Birmingham. Henceforth he will be a full-blown Bishop, and will be entrusted with the government of a diocese. This item of news would be of small interest to readers of the *Freethinker* but for the circumstance that only a short time back the religious and general press was busily discussing what it called the daring heresy of the Canon. From one point of view the description of what the Canon had said as a "daring" heresy was enough to make the most "respectable" of Freethinkers smile, from another point of view the description was enough to make any really intelligent person weep. It was such an implied indictment of the intelligence of a large section of the British public. Not that the newspapers who so described it intended it as such. They were themselves prepared to discuss with all solemnity whether the story of the Virgin Birth, or of the Resurrection, or of the Creation of Man from the dust of the ground, and of Woman from a bone taken from the side of man, were scientific truths or not, and were all ready to assert that in any case these stories should be treated with the greatest "reverence." They were also prepared to write yards of rubbish as to their literary and ethical value, even though they were shown to be mere fragments of a general mythology. The best that can be said of these gentlemen of the press is that they understand their audience and are prepared to write for it. As deep calls unto deep, so is the unintelligence of large numbers of the public reflected in the columns of the large, or largest, circulation.

* * *

An Immature Heretic.

It is now four years since Canon Barnes preached a sermon before the British Association at Bristol, and followed it up by one or two other addresses, in which he issued what is described as "revolutionary teaching," "a challenge to orthodoxy," etc. In the British Association sermon he threw over the Genesiac story of creation, and described it as mythology. And in another address he is reported as saying:—

The Old Testament is Jewish literature. In it are to be found folk-lore, defective history, half-savage morality, obsolete forms of worship based on primi-

tive and erroneous ideas of the nature of God, and crude science. To attempt to use such allegories as the Creation of Woman, the Fall, Daniel, or Jonah for didactic purposes is highly dangerous, it encourages the prevalent idea that religious people have a low standard of truth.

Of course, all this about the Old Testament has been said many times during the past two hundred years—and very many have paid dearly for saying it; but not one of the newspapers in reporting the utterances of this dare-devil Dean had the decency to offer a word of recognition of those men and women who had made it safe for a Church of England dignitary to say as much. One could have forgiven them that had they, instead of writing headlines on these "daring heresies," pointed out the one important significance of such utterances being treated as revolutionary. They said they were proofs of the fearless character of the Dean's mind. But the important thing is that their reception was a revelation of the low mentality that goes to the make-up of a genuine and sincere Christian. For we are living in the twentieth century, not in the fourteenth. Astronomy, chemistry, geology, and biology have for several generations been proclaiming the doctrines of uniformity in their respective departments, and a scientific philosophy has welded their conclusions into a coherent view of the universe. And to find a repudiation of the Biblical stories of the creation of man, of the origin of language, etc., treated as daring and revolutionary, is to frame an indictment of the intelligence of large sections of the British public. One would like someone to point out in what respect the mentality of this section differs from that of a tribe of Central African savages. It is true they dress differently from recognized savages; but do they *think* differently? And it is the mental outlook that really differentiates the civilized human being from the savage.

* * *

Heresy and the Public.

A couple of illustrations that lie to hand may be noted before I continue with Canon Barnes. Bishop Gore—who many years ago was also noted for his heresies, before he became a Bishop—has just been reminding his fellow-believers that an actual resurrection of the material atoms of the body is an impossibility. The earth could not supply the materials, as the atoms of the body are used over and over again. Wonderful! But those who have read the amusing romances of the seventeenth century by Cyrano de Bergerac will find the same criticism of the Christian doctrine there; it is found over and over again in eighteenth century sceptical writings. What kind of an intelligence does the Bishop think the average Christian possesses that he needs these things pointed out to him? Again, the *Daily Herald* pokes fun at certain newspapers for declaring the heresies of Canon Barnes to be daring, and says that the discovery of these stories as myths is on a par with discovering that Queen Anne is dead. But is the mentality disclosed here really different in substance from the *Daily Herald's* own discovery of Jesus Christ—a mythical saviour—a sun god—as a

Socialistic reformer? Does the clinging to one myth show a more virile and a more independent intelligence than does clinging to the other one? With what degree of information or reasoning power does it credit its readers? How long will it be before the *Daily Herald* discovers, and admits, the real nature of the Jesus legend? For the truth there is known quite as clearly as is the truth concerning the biblical story of creation. In the case of the heretical bishop and the newspaper man what is the real truth of the situation? Does the indictment lie against their own understanding, or are they impeaching the intelligence of their followers by the kind of mental food they serve out for their sustenance?

* * *

Why Not the Whole Truth?

To return to Canon—soon to be Bishop—Barnes. He speaks of the stories of the creation, the Fall, etc., as allegories. But he must know that they were never intended to be allegories, but were written as matters of sober fact. Religious stories do not commence as allegories, but as exact statements of what they set out to describe. The Old Testament is not alone in its stories of creation, of the origin of man, of language, etc. They are paralleled in religions all over the world. Sir James Frazer, who has done so much for the science of comparative mythology, has brought together a large collection of these stories in his *Folk-Lore in the Old Testament*, without anything like exhausting the field. And in none of the instances given are they narrated as a fable, or an allegory. They are the methods by which the uneducated primitive mind explains what it sees. It believes in gods and it believes these gods do something. It says that God created man from dust, from his saliva, from the sweat of his brow, or in some other fashion. And the primitive mind goes on to explain other things in a similar fashion. Fashioning allegories does not belong to religion in its virile stage; it is characteristic of a religion that is undergoing disintegration. It is when a more accurate knowledge of natural processes is making the primitive theories of things impossible and absurd that professors of religion begin to find they are profound ethical or sociological allegories. Christian preachers would do exactly the same for "Old Mother Hubbard" or "Jack o' the Beanstalk," had either of these stories been in the Old Testament. Neither of these tales is less absurd than the story of the Tower of Babel, or of the creation of woman by the same method that one makes a brace-button or a knife-handle. Why, then, does Canon Barnes call these stories of the Bible allegories? Why not set his fellow-believers an example of genuine mental fearlessness and intellectual honesty? What is the good of rejecting one myth and immediately setting up another in its place? Why not tell the truth, the whole truth, about the Bible stories? It is strange, indeed, if Canon Barnes does not know it.

* * *

The New Testament.

But the Old Testament is not the whole of the story. It is only half. The other half is the New Testament. And about this half—and the most important, so far as Christianity is concerned—Canon Barnes and our "dare-devil heretics" are quite silent. But what is the essential difference between the two? Is the one more believable than the other? Will not the description of folk-lore, defective history, and half-savage morality apply quite as clearly to the New Testament as it will to the Old? Are the stories in the former less incredible than those in the latter? In the one case we have admitted savage morality, but what are we to call the teaching of the sacrifice of an innocent person to gratify an alleged ruler of the universe? Or

the doctrine of an eternal hell? There is admittedly "defective" history in the Old Testament. But what of the official slaughter of the first born, or the darkening of the sun for a lengthy period at the crucifixion? There is folk-lore and "crude science" in the Old Testament. But what of the Virgin Birth, the belief in evil spirits as the cause of epilepsy and insanity, the activity of devils, and the miracles recorded in the New Testament? Why is Canon Barnes silent about the one and vocal about the other? Why do not the advanced parsons speak out about the New Testament? Why is even a man like Sir James Frazer silent about the New Testament? It is simply impossible to believe that while they see so much they cannot see more. They must know that the light thrown by studies in primitive beliefs applies to the stories told in the New Testament as well as to those told in the Old. One cannot help suspecting the honesty or the ability of men who throw over the Jewish scriptures because they can no longer be defended with profit, and yet continue to mislead the people by either their silence about, or their assumed belief in, another set of writings that ethically, historically, and scientifically are substantially upon the same level.

* * *

The Work of Freethought.

An attempt to establish the reputation of a daring and original thinker on the lines followed by men like Canon Barnes will not do. It will impose only upon those whose minds function in a pre-scientific atmosphere. To the great mass of even the general public the authority of the Old Testament as an authority in science, ethics, or history has gone, and is hardly likely to return. The work of the pioneer Freethinkers has been well done in this direction. It is now quite safe and quite respectable for anyone to talk of the Old Testament as does Canon Barnes. It can lose them nothing. It may even—in a priesthood where flashes of intelligence above the ordinary stand out with the attractiveness of a first-rate intellect—lead to preferment. For saying far less than does Canon Barnes Freethinkers, less than 200 years ago, were placed in the stock, had their ears cropped, or spent years in Christian prisons. Canon Barnes mildly repeats what these men said, and receives a bishopric! And Christians ask, What has Freethought done? Well, it cannot, of course, make Christian preachers completely honest or wholly intelligent, but it can offer them opportunities of being either or both. But the question of the New Testament and of Christianity remains, and sooner or later it must be dealt with. There is no dividing line between the two. More, there is no dividing line between the Christian religion and the more primitive religious beliefs that are found all over the world. The present-day gods are the ghosts of the more concrete deities of earlier days. Our metaphysical "souls" are the survivals of the "double" of the primitive savage. The admissions made by men like Canon Barnes represent the minimum of truth that has to be told the people. Their apologies and glosses are the means by which they strive to perpetuate the old superstitions in substance, even while they repudiate them in form. One day the whole truth must be told. And we may expect the clergy to tell it when it is no longer profitable for them to act otherwise.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

A careful study of the history of religious toleration will prove that in every Christian country where it has been adopted it has been forced upon the clergy by the authority of the secular classes. At the present day it is still unknown to those nations among whom the ecclesiastical power is stronger than the temporal power.

—Buckle.

"The Biology of Prayer."

II.

THE Rev. Mr. Passmore's second discourse on the above subject deals with "prayer as an education." We have already seen that the reverend gentleman's attempt to prove the reality of prayer as a law in constant operation throughout the universe and its history was characterized by bewildering vagueness, and necessarily resulted in a stupendous failure. In this second sermon, published in the *Church Times* for July 25, he endeavours to establish the reality of prayer "as an education." In order to ascertain whether or not this effort is crowned with success we must critically examine the whole statement of the case. Mr. Passmore begins by defining Christian prayer, which, he says, "transcends all prayer," as "a function of the Body of Christ." It follows, therefore, that "structurally, before the Word took Flesh, there was no prayer." Here is some exceedingly refreshing fruit from the tree of sheer dogmatism:—

One of the few things we know of God's absolute existence is the fact that he is "Simple"; that is, he is a Unity without parts. The sacrifice of this prerogative is the greatest thing he has done for man. He has, to save us, become a Complex. He has stooped into our sphere and drawn our life upon him. Taking up into himself our creature-soul and mortal flesh, and bearing it up through death into the perfection of a spiritual humanity, he has become the living nucleus of an Organism whose countless cells are souls. This is the Body of Christ, which grows by drawing men and women to itself and making them part of its living substance, as our bodies grow by assimilating food. For, though we are more familiar with the thought of feeding upon God, the whole end of our doing so is that God may feed upon us and incorporate us into himself. Thus is formed, and forming, to God's glory and our salvation, the Body of God.

This is mysticism, naked and unashamed; here is audacious dogmatism placing a crown of glory upon its own head. It is really marvellous how extremely loquacious ignorance easily becomes when addressing a credulous audience! We know nothing of God's absolute existence, whether as "Simple" or as "Complex," and we naturally wish to discover by what means Mr. Passmore and his Anglo-Catholic friends have acquired such wondrous knowledge of it as they claim to possess. To us the God whom they claim to know so intimately appears to be an inconceivably absurd being. Fancy him as actually existing for countless millions of ages without body, parts, or passions, and then for the first time, less than two thousand years ago, taking humanity up into corporate contact with himself in the person of his incarnate Son. Why, the very idea is so laughably ludicrous that it is impossible to allow it intelligent lodgment in the mind even for a second. During the long periods supposed to be covered by the Old Testament, God was still without a body, and the people whom we used to recognize and be proud of as Old Testament saints are now declared to have been but unfortunate pilgrims of the night. Until God assumed a body at the Incarnation, "prayer was not":—

Men prayed, but not organically. The prayers of an Abraham, a Solomon, a Daniel, were drafts upon a pending order; advances granted on the kindness of the Cross. With Christian prayer, save casually, kindness has nothing to do; it is functional; it is the working of a law of life....Not so of old. Man was but the lifeless soil, waiting the thrust of the Root of Jesse. A day would come when flesh and soul, assumed into Life, would live; when man, ingested into Christ, would serve in conference a common interest with God. Till then, our cry was but mute

earth's appeal for tillage, God's care for the patient labour of the husbandman.

Old Testament saints have now completely lost caste. They have been ruthlessly pulled down from the high niche in the Temple of Fame which they formerly occupied, and are looked down upon as nothing better than lifeless soil. But when the fullness of time had arrived, what happened? Mr. Passmore supplies the necessary and all-satisfying information in the following strange words:—

In this long-lifeless soil God sowed himself. Descending into Flesh, he drew it into interpenetration with his own, the only, Life, and became in his own Self the unity he planned to set between himself and man. Made vulnerable in virtue of a mortal nature, he opened a wound in himself that all human kindred grafted into God, might drink the life that unifies with Life. Here is more than fellowship, and infinitely greater than favour; here is embodiment. Here is man the food of God and fed by him; here is every mode that can be conceived of oneness, and immeasurably more; here is the "gathering together upon Christ" of which St. Paul speaks; here is the Vine, the Bridal, the Living Shrine, the Kingdom, the Body of God.

Have we not touched the acme of absurdity? Not quite, yet. Already lost in nebulosity the mystic soars higher and higher among the clouds, whence he drops down to us the following gems:—

Less and more amazing becomes our Lord's ambition for us, when with a few faithful sons of men he planned this mighty matter. *He covenanted to secure us Prayer, not as a privilege, nor as a speculation, but as a right.*

At last we have arrived at the summit, the topmost point, towards which we have been gradually climbing for a long time. At last the preacher treats exclusively of Christian Prayer, and regards it as the true believer's right. To do him justice we present his own words:—

We have inherited a claim on God. More than a claim, for in a claim there is the advantage of one will over another; but the means and the measure of the power of prayer is the victorious sympathy of man's will with God's. The aim and strength alike of prayer are in the adaptation of that which prays; the pulse that learns its rhythm from the Sacred Heart has caught the Body's harmony; attuned by prayer, its own eternal music is both prayer and answer. The prayers of the perfect—Mary's prayers—are automatic. They answer themselves.

Here we are, face to face with dogmatic assertions unsupported by a single fact. The Anglo-Catholic system of theology consists of a vast structure of theories built on theories, or, to change the metaphor, of a huge storehouse crammed to the ceiling with all sorts of wholly imaginary and fantastic objects, the last of which is the most fanciful of all, namely, the hypothesis, which is introduced as a logical deduction from all the other hypotheses, that "we have inherited a claim on God." That is to say, God is in justice bound to give us certain things or to do certain things for us, in virtue of what his incarnate Son has done and is doing for him on our behalf. If we ask him, he must deliver us from the wrath to come and the fear of hell-fire, and he must give us clear titles to mansions among the Blessed. He is under an infinite obligation to do all this for us, and all we have to do is just to remind him of that fact. When we have done our part the risen Christ is at his side on his throne ready to confirm our claim. In fact, he is present for the very purpose of acting as our intercessor before his and our Father. If our feet are resting on the summit of the mountain of theories, Mr. Passmore is generous enough to suggest that we may pray for the things we need, for the things that we desire; but at this point he tells us that there is a most important condition which must be complied with before there can be

achievement as the result of praying. He says to us:—

But praying, remember that your attainment depends upon your knowledge, and that your knowledge will be in the measure of your likeness. The art of prayer lies in the knowing what, and what not, to pray; and this knowledge is itself the fruit of prayer, and the consummate end of it. For this is the knowledge of the character of God; and that is life; and if a thousand refusals teach me one page of such a science, I am a thousand times the gainer: for its experts reign with God.

What, then, is the educational value of Prayer? What is the sum total of the knowledge it imparts? The passage just quoted supplies the requisite answer. The only educational value of prayer lies in the fact that prayer itself is ultimately, to those who have been accustomed to resort to it, its own refutation. There are hundreds of thousands of men and women in Christendom to-day who twenty, thirty, or forty years ago used to pray with the utmost regularity and earnestness, but who no longer pray at all, because their own experience brought home to them the utter futility of the rite. There still remains a question, however, which demands a more detailed consideration, namely, Wherein and how has the power of prayer been manifested in the history of Christendom?

J. T. LLOYD.

Peacock, the Friend of Shelley.

Life runs not smoothly at all seasons, even with the happiest; but after a long course, the rocks subside, the views widen, and it flows on more equably at the end.—
Landor.

AMONG all the friends and acquaintances of Shelley, the name of Thomas Love Peacock stands first and foremost, for no influence with which the young poet came in contact was so healthful, and none so sane and unselfish. Peacock was seven years older than Shelley when they first met at Nant Gwilt, near Rhayader, Wales. Shelley had recently been expelled from Oxford University for Atheism, and he had just eloped with Harriet Westbrook. The young couple were scarce out of their honeymoon when they made the acquaintance of Peacock, which soon ripened into a real and lasting friendship which showed no diminution with the years. It was Shelley's misfortune to be misunderstood, his biographers tell us; but his greatest misfortune was in misunderstanding himself, and the people who professed to be his friends. They were a curious crowd, and Peacock stands head and shoulders above most of them, both mentally and morally.

Peacock's life was a long and busy one. The only child of a prosperous London merchant, he was born in fortunate circumstances. At twenty-three years of age he was under-secretary to Sir Home Popham, Commander of H.M.S. "Venerable," but threw up this position because it interfered with his literary ambition, which was to be a poet. But when Peacock began to know Shelley he began to know himself, and he realized that he would never do more than graze on the lower slopes of Parnassus. After reading *Alastor*, Peacock elected mainly to write prose. His writing so far had been imitative, henceforth it should be original; it had reflected books, it should now reflect men. The first fruits of this change was Peacock's *Headlong Hall*, followed by *Melincourt*, *Nightmare Abbey*, and those other books which distinguish Peacock from other authors, and on which his reputation rests.

Peacock's stories are not novels, but they are a succession of scenes in English country houses. The people, united by the ties of friendship, have enough

in common to like each other heartily, and enough individuality to differ from each other widely. Peacock's prose is what Matthew Arnold maintained that poetry should be—a criticism of life—the social, political, national life of his own people. Peacock was very English, certain of present, but doubtful of future, good. Shelley admired these satires, and he forgave the author the kindly caricature of himself as "Scythrop" in *Nightmare Abbey*, a sketch all Shelleyans should read.

Following his naval appointment, Peacock was offered a clerkship in the East India Company's offices. At his examination, his papers were returned with the unusual endorsement: "Nothing superfluous, and nothing wanting." It is to the everlasting credit of the directors of the East India Company that they were not averse from employing clever men. Peacock was sarcastic, but he was singularly sane; whilst Charles Lamb, who was also in their employ, kept all his whimsicality for home consumption. At the end of three years Peacock was promoted, and fourteen years later he rose to the post of chief examiner, succeeding James Mill, the author of *The History of British India*, and being succeeded by his more famous son, John Stuart Mill, "the saint of Rationalism." After thirty-seven years active service, Peacock was retired with a substantial pension. He died in his eighty-first year, having lived to see his daughter married to George Meredith, the poet and novelist. Few men could have more truthfully echoed Landor's proud farewell: "I warmed both hands before the fire of life. It sinks, and I am ready to depart."

Peacock seems to have known more of the relation between Shelley and Harriet than any of their other friends. He certainly sympathized with her, and he defended her memory long after her death. He was not the man, however, to take sides with either; for, knowing both as he did, he probably thought they were both to blame. Peacock was a real friend. After Shelley returned to England with Mary Godwin, many of their friends and relations forsook them. Peacock was not of the number, for he often used to pass his evenings with them. Shelley's chief employment at this time was the raising of money on his expectations from the race which Byron called "Jews and their fellow-Christians." Peacock was very staunch; and, unlike so many of Shelley's friends, he never borrowed money from him, nor abused him.

Peacock has reaped a rich reward for his devotion. His name is forever entwined with that of one of England's greatest poets, and readers will always be curious to know what manner of man he was. Peacock may have missed popularity in his literary career, but he certainly achieved distinction. Unknown to the crowd, his works are yet read by discriminating lovers of literature. What more can any author want?

MIMNERMUS.

MR. G. WHITEHEAD'S MISSION.

The opening meeting at Alexandra Park, Manchester, was one of the liveliest yet experienced; well-dressed rowdies singing, shouting and attempting to upset the platform. This did not deter our campaigner, who held his own from 7.30 to 10 p.m. The Sunday meetings held on Stevenson Square were attended by large and sympathetic audiences, who remained until a late hour. On Monday, the police having refused to allow the advertised meetings to be held at Alexandra Park on the ground that the pitch had been promised elsewhere, the platform was transferred to Tibb Street, where the rest of the week was spent with most satisfactory results; eight meetings in all being held. Our special thanks are due to Mr. David Mapp for his usual kindly hospitality and help. To-day (August 17) the morning meeting will be held on The Sandhills, Newcastle-on-Tyne, at 11 o'clock, and the evening meeting on the Town Moor at 7 p.m.

Faith and Folly.

AN OPEN LETTER TO MR. CHARLES W. J. TENNANT.

SIR,—It is always with pleasure and a great deal of amusement that I read any one of your many letters to the press. Why, I do not know—perhaps you can tell me—but your contributions to *Christian Science* always remind me of the articles of our latest humorist, Mr. Wyndham Lewis, who, as you know, can write such delicious nonsense so shamelessly, while you somehow write it so innocently. But as you have once again made your appearance in the columns of this paper, I really feel it my duty, so to speak, to butt in and see if I can nail you down to a few very hard facts.

Before doing so, however, I must say that I fully expected you would do me the honour of replying to one or two of my own little criticisms of your creed which appeared in the *Freethinker* in the past, but quite possibly you never saw them. So I am sure you will now tell us the meaning of the very extraordinary extract, under the title of "Signs of the Times," which appeared in the *Christian Science Sentinel* of May 5, 1923. It purports to be taken from the *Freethinker* of February 18, 1923, from an article by the Rev. Charles Brown, and is about as big a piece of utter twaddle as I have ever read. Its distinguishing characteristic is, however, that it never appeared in this number of our paper—nor in any other number, as far as I am aware; and I want you to tell us who it was that hoaxed the honoured editors of the *Christian Science Sentinel*? Can a Christian Scientist be hoaxed? Was Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy ever hoaxed? And are you going to admit in the columns of the *Christian Science Sentinel* that you were hoaxed? If not, why not?

Now I am sure you will admit that the very particular feature of *Christian Science* which singles it out from the 500 odd other Christian sects is its claim to cure illness exactly as Jesus is said to have cured. Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy tells us, and her disciples and apostles tell us, that she discovered the secret and that she and they can cure and have cured thousands—nay, it might be millions—of sick people, hopelessly incurable, many with one foot in the grave, and most of them on the point of going to heaven; or, if they haven't made their peace with God or Mrs. Eddy, being pushed into hell. I quite agree that your papers teem with such cures, and if they are all true, I really can't understand why there are any sick persons at all in the world. Perhaps you can tell us. Of course, a good many of the convalescents are very difficult to get hold of. When Mrs. Foolualotofvich, of Nowatolski, somewhere in the wilds of Siberia, tells us she has been cured of a terrible cancer by a healer residing in Ohio, simply through having prayers wafted across—I do feel such an extraordinary tale rather difficult to swallow. Even the all-powerful Jesus didn't do that sort of thing; now, did he?

Before me lies Mr. Charles Herman Lea's *Plea for Christian Science*, and I feel fate has been very unkind in not letting me see it before. This big-hearted business man actually offered £100 to be given to a hospital if anyone could "prove the philosophy of *Christian Science* to be unsound." I should love to have won that sum, if only to confound Canon Dorritty. For, if his book is all I should have had to answer, my task would have been a joke. I open it at random, and this is what I find (p. 54):—

Now in whatever way it may be possible for these "higher critics" to explain away or modify the accounts of them (the miracles) given in the New Testament (as, for instance, by writing some down as legendary and others as exaggerated statements

made by the worshippers of Jesus Christ) it is probable that none would dispute the fact that Jesus Christ did heal the sick, that his power knew no limitation, and that it operated in cases of organic disease as well as in functional disorders.

Can anything be funnier? If it were proved that all of the miracles were legendary, none would dispute the fact that Jesus did really heal! I suppose if Mr. Lea, who has had forty years business experience in the city, had it clearly proved that Jesus never existed at all, he would still go on telling us that no one could possibly dispute Jesus healing the sick. He must have done so, otherwise Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy would have been actually wrong; and, from such a calamity, may the good Lord save us!

The cream of the joke is, however, that after telling us it is probable nobody could possibly dispute the fact that the power of Jesus "knew no limitation," Mr. Lea goes on to tell us that the power was limited—and what do you think by? *Unbelief!* I hope you will now laugh as heartily as I did.

Let me now call your attention to the two following paragraphs:—

When he (Jesus) had thus spoken, he spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go wash in the pool of Siloam..... He went his way, therefore, and washed and came seeing. (John ix, 6-7.)

I think you will agree with me that this method of healing the blind is very clearly stated. The second paragraph is from Miss Ettie A. Rout's *Two Years in Paris*, p. 47:—

A tiny baby sitting all day in its chair before the window waving its little hands to and fro—to and fro—to and fro—between the light of heaven and what should have been its own bright eyes. Just a blur was all the babe could see. Blind from birth. Its father—syphilitic!

If you have read anything more heartbreaking than that, I should like to see it. And even a Christian Scientist would admit that there ought to be no such cases in the world—not a single one! Well, what have you done in curing inherited syphilitic blindness? How many have you cured? Mind, I want genuine authentic cures. I want to see a specialist's certificate that the case was absolutely incurable. And I want to see his admission that the case is now absolutely cured without any other aid than the prayers of a Christian Scientist. And I want a case that I can investigate here in London. If you have no such cases, will you tell us why? Are there none in London? But I want something further. I want the names of half a dozen *Christian Science* healers to whom I can go who cure blindness by the method Jesus used, as described above. Either I or Miss Rout will then be able to take the healers to some blind people, and we can then see the whole operation performed before our own eyes—the spittle on the ground mixed with clay, and the blind eyes anointed and then washed and the blind able to see forthwith. Can you or Mr. Lea do this? If not, why not? I submit it is merely wasting our time and yours to write to the *Freethinker* unless you can do some cures just as Jesus did. And by the way, did Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy ever cure a blind person in the same way that made the welkin ring with the fame of Jesus?

When we have satisfactorily settled some cases of blindness, we can then turn to some cases of cancer, advanced tuberculosis and Bright's disease, and really have a thoroughly good time in making a crowd of hopeless incurables as well as you or I. We could do no better work, could we?

And this reminds me. I was lately introduced to a very happy lady—all smiles and radiating with good health. She was a convinced *Christian Scientist*, and

she attributed her splendid health to Christian Science and to nothing else. Years ago (of course) she was more or less of an invalid—never knew what it was to have a day without some awful bodily ill. A course of *Science and Health, with a Key to the Scriptures*, by Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy, did the trick—at least, as far as I could gather; for I was neither able to get her to explain what certain passages in the book meant nor to tell me what she had exactly suffered from. Now this lady has a grown-up son, who, from childhood, has been what doctors politely term a “mental case.” A “mental” home did him no good, so during the past five years he has been under the care of Christian Science healers. Of course, he *may* be cured in another five years—who can tell the mysterious workings of Providence? But he is *not* cured so far. Perhaps you can tell me why? And (to show my good faith) I will gladly give you the necessary name and address.

Let me conclude with one or two more questions. When you tell us that “Christian Scientists acknowledge the King James version of the Bible,” what is it you exactly mean? Do you believe it is historically true? Do you believe it to be *faultless*? Do you not know that the authorized version is so hopelessly imperfect that a dozen versions have been made correcting its absurd and fraudulent translations, and that these versions not only contradict each other, but contradict the “original” Scriptures in thousands of places? Have you ever studied a Variorum Bible? Do you not know that the “higher critics” have knocked the authenticity and credibility of the Gospels into smithereens? Do *you* believe in the Virgin Birth on the evidence of the Gospels or on the evidence of Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy? What do you mean by the “spiritual meaning” of the Bible’s pages? Explain particularly with reference to Lot and his daughters and similar tales? What is the Christian Science proof that Jesus really existed?

And, lastly, do you believe that Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy always told the truth? If so, explain why it was that, as Mr. Mangasarian points out, when she married Mr. Eddy, she gave her age as forty when she was fifty-six? Will you also explain why, though she herself was married three times, she called marriage “legalized lust.”?

I am sure, judging from the way in which you are always ready to do battle for your adored (I really can’t say *adorable*) Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy, you will not fail me this time, and I hope to get a long and clear reply from you.

Hoping you are well, as it leaves me at present,

Your well-wisher,

H. CUTNER.

On Running Away from the Lightning.

I HAVE a lingering affection for the *Night Thoughts* of Doctor Edward Young, that gloomy Dean—or son of a Dean—of the early eighteenth century, finding that in my youthful struggles with the same theological nightmare I had much in common with “this celebrated and excellent writer,” this emulator of Pope’s seer:—

He, who through vast immensity can pierce,
See worlds on worlds compose one universe,
Observe how system into system runs,
What other planets circle other suns,
What varied beings people every star.
May tell why God has made us as we are.

The conclusion of whose great thoughts and their great expression was the impotent, but eminently

religious one—perhaps the only one possible to the religious “reasoner,” namely: “Man was not made to *question*, but *adore*!”

Well now, dammit all, after wrestling with the suffocating problem for nine mortal “Nights”—perhaps as many years—*some* conclusion had to be come to; any port in a storm; there is a limit to human endurance. But I am far from laughing at the mental struggles of the reverend and learned Doctor. I never run away from the lightning; I would not tempt Providence any more than when a boy I feared to hurry home from the fields in a thunderstorm lest he who wielded the thunderbolt should, for my temerity and timidity, dash me in pieces. No; I welcomed the furious, but more harmless, rain and hail in the open, assuring me the wrath was spent, that papa was pleased again, or gone to sleep, or reserving me for remoter vengeance—what consolations in religion! Ah, mocking Atheist, even now as you write you have misgivings, qualms, that all is not well with your soul! The Church and the atoning blood may be your only refuge and restoration still. You may be damned when all is done, for the saving grace would not be so precious were it not so rare! Also, new suits of clothes were rare with me in my young days, but I was happy as the famous shirtless beggar—but never too happy, for fear of the lightning. When a new suit arrived in the evening—what shining buttons, smart seams, fragrance and freshness, what anticipations, what fears of being snatched away to heaven in the night, or a worse place, what earnest but fearful prayer: “This night when I lie down to sleep!” No, I never ran away from the lightning; at least, I pretended not to run! But the searcher of hearts, was he deceived? No b— fear! [B. Shaw.]

And those boots that arrived with the suit, whose bright hobnails would make such fine markings in the clay in the morning! Would I be spared to wear them? Yea, and many more in many years while vengeance sleeps or passes by, while “Johnnie’s clogs” or tackety boots of old may sing:—

We twa hae ran about the braes,
Frae mornin’ sun till dine;
While mony years ha’ fled between,
Since Auld Lang Syne!

(Burns’ adapted.)

No, I never ran away from the lightning; I never allowed myself, under God, to feel too confident of anything—perhaps that is why I am not a member of the Labour Government, or a great man in some other sphere. Yet many, many “blessings” have been mine, some beyond my most sanguine dreams; but somehow, after every exaltation, I have to come to earth again, often with a dull and sickening thud. It seems to me that the egotism of even a Simon Stylites, in the rude shocks of reality, must have its nemesis; man, proud, indomitable man, must descend from his pillar at last, or his pedestal will crumble under him, leaving him naked to his enemies. Looked at wisely, it is a wholesome descent, if only in the Browning sense of those who—

Fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake.

To be thus dispossessed is better for the world than to remain one of those “possessed persons” of whom it has been said: “Nothing but evil can flow from their activity, for there is not human salt in them, but the relentless desire for destruction based on the devouring arrogance of their self-esteem.” There is always the “greater liberty” of what, for want of a better word, we call Freethought, which is the gospel of this world, of reason and common sense, unobscured and undistorted by fanciful other worlds, the creations of the primitive mind, or the “findings” of the modern religionist.

Doctor Young, in praising the Pagan religionists,

the Stagarite, Plato, he of Tusculum, of Corduba, etc. (immortal names!), exclaims:—

In Christian hearts, O, for a pagan zeal!
A needful but approbrious pray'r.

.....Scarce more strange.....

A sun that froze or a star that warmed.

As warm as narrow was this Christian zeal. But the sage of science has measured and analysed the stars. Even he can do no more. Of ultimate origin, creation, control, he knows nothing, and may never know. But as a whimsical essayist has said: "Man is a knowing animal: he is very slow to confess that he does not know everything." And about the Carlylean Infinites, etc.—"sonorous euphemisms for the ineffable name"—the Archbishop of Canterbury knows as much and as little as the simplest layman or "ignorant Freethinker."

Such reflections may seem trite and obvious: all the more so is the whole assumption and imposture of the "man of God." What! without him, would the world sink back to savagery? Why, with him, we have lately witnessed a degree of savagery, on a colossal scale, lower than anything that has gone before; and the portents are, that under the same Christian regime, the same or worse may occur again—if prevented, it will be owing to something less confusing, less accommodating, less hysterical and stupid than the Christian Church. In the late world war Science, the saviour, became the destroyer (and the Church blessed it in its most lethal and cruel forms); the religion of love inspired the hymns of hate; patriotic militarism (is there any other?) wrapped itself in the mantle of religion, and in the name of peace and brotherhood made both impossible. Cenotaphs and other memorials to those "poor, poor, dumb mouths" are still being dedicated with civic military and religious ceremonies—three superstitions in one—and while this spirit lasts, so long will the world be unredeemed from the twin barbarisms: religion and war. The soldier's duty is to obey—whom? The Christian's duty is "not to question, but adore." Admirable sentiments! Admirably calculated to keep the human race in mental and physical slavery and wretchedness.

ANDREW MILLAR.

Acid Drops.

The *Church Times* views with great misgivings the appointment of Canon Barnes to the Bishopric of Birmingham. But it consoles itself with the reflection that the new Bishop will be brought into touch with the "self-sacrificing zeal of priests and the devoted piety of the laity." We have no doubt that this will have its influence. Canon Barnes will not be the first who has forgotten his heresies when given a high post in the Church. The orthodox will forgive him the past if he doesn't do it again. By the way, the *Church Times* again refers to the Presbyterianism of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald. We should like someone to inform us whether Mr. MacDonald does really profess a genuine belief in Presbyterianism.

An international convention of the negroes of the world has been meeting in America and demanding the independence of the negro race. The convention claims Africa as the seat of the new negro State. The *Church Times* does not like the "menace" to the dominance of the white race. Our pious contemporary quite believes in the brotherhood of the black and the white—so long as the black keeps his "proper" position and allows his white brother to rule the roost. They are brothers in Christ, but when it comes to political rule, that is quite another question. After all, we are fairly certain that the rule of the whites by the blacks could not well be worse than

the rule of the blacks by the whites. And perhaps an easier way out of the trouble might be found if these good Christians would cease talking of the dominance of the white over the black and the brown, and the yellow, and apply a little more common sense and humanitarian feeling to the question.

In the procession through the streets of New York the negroes carried a figure of Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary—both black. And why not? If Jesus ever lived, he was a Jew; but whoever sees either a Jewish looking Jesus or a Jewish looking Virgin Mary. And whether the Jesus carried about is Jewish, Caucassian, or Mongol, whether he is white, black, brown, or yellow, it is all the same. Each is equally true to the original. Where fancy rules, who shall lay down hard and fast lines? Gods are made in the image of man, and change as the model alters.

According to a Scottish newspaper, the Duke of Atholl charged the Socialist Sunday schools with "urging the children to rebellion and immortality." Perhaps the printer had champagne with his lunch.

The Rev. J. W. Potter, of Forest Hill, has written to a daily newspaper to say that he has seen angels in his church. He had better look at the labels on the bottles of communion port in future.

Sheltering under a tree near Clacton, two young men were struck by lightning. One was killed and the other taken to hospital. Too much Providence!

A despatch from Rome states that the Vatican has annulled the marriage of Count Boni de Castellane and Anna Gould, daughter of Jay Gould, the American millionaire. This is the Church which sets its face against divorce in the case of poor people.

The Dean of Westminster has had the final word about the Byron tablet in the Abbey. According to a letter in the *Spectator*, the Vicar of Hucknall, Notts, has been overlooked in the decision. This gentleman informs us that thousands of people visit the church every year to pay tribute to Byron's memory; a beautiful memorial, in the way of a chancel screen, has been designed for erection in the church, and contributions are being received. We can only suggest that the vicar, as a *quid pro quo* for this to Byron, should preach a few sermons on what the poet thought of Established religion, or organized piety, or some of the ecclesiastical lights contemporary with one who could at least see life out of two eyes. A canto of *Don Juan* each Sunday might prove a good advertisement for a congregation tired of penny sermons.

The Hon. Robert, E. Lee Saner, who, needless to say, is an American, writing of the wonderful dignity and ceremonial, the gorgeous robes and uniforms, etc., in which British legal institutions are shrouded, states that Americans get on very well without them. We hope that he does not mean anything unkind by the use of the word *shrouded*; after all, the distinguished American is a lawyer and not an undertaker—but probably this will be lost in the country that gave birth to the saying that "a nod from a lord is a breakfast for a fool."

According to Williamson's *History of the Temple, London*, the church contains "two crosses of the wood on which Christ was crucified, and a silver vessel containing some of the blood of the Lord." This is decidedly interesting. If all those pieces of wood in European churches were put together, the cross of Christ must have been as high as Saint Paul's cathedral.

Tons of tobacco, some bearing the mark of the Young Men's Christian Association, shipped to France in 1918

for the soldiers, but never distributed, have been used for road-making. Like so much Christian charity, it never reached its destination.

If anyone should think that revising the Prayer Book is as easy as kissing your hand, it is a great mistake. An Anglo-Catholic correspondent informs a perspiring world that the—

Revision is not yet effected, nor are the decisions of the House of Clergy final. They have first to be considered by the House of Laity, by the National Assembly as a whole, by the Bishops, by the Convocations of Canterbury and York, by the Ecclesiastical Committee of York, by the Ecclesiastical Committee of Parliament, and by the Lords and the Commons.

Side by side with this, six people living in one room is a question that is a mere bagatelle. Let us reverently bow the knee to futile stupidity.

Mr. Richards, Under-Secretary of State for India, in reply to Sir C. Yate, recently said :—

No change is at present contemplated in the Government of India's policy of general exclusion of Germans, including missionaries, from India for five years from the official date of termination of the war. The prohibition may be relaxed in the case of individual missionaries under very stringent safeguards, including a condition that the head of the mission in India in which such missionary would work must be a British subject.

A striking object-lesson for the Indian heathens of the International spirit of Christianity.

During the time when journalists turn on the journalistic ecclesiastical tap over Liverpool Cathedral, and also when a small army of religious generals are considering the revision of the Prayer Book, 400,000 farm workers are each drawing as wages 27s., or less, a week. The Lord's vineyard is more profitable than the labourer's turnip field—and Hodge may think twice before doffing his cap to the parson.

Going all out as it were, the followers of gentle Jesus in Wandsworth Road have a huge placard with the following wording: "God must be reckoned with in Life and at Death." The advertisers no doubt are in the know, but reading between the lines one may conclude that business is very bad with the perpetrators. There is no difference between that squeal and the modern advertisers of quack medicines who convince readers that they have all the complaints on the catalogue and can only be cured by forwarding the necessary five shillings.

Mr. Oshert Sitwell, one of our modern poets, has been seen in the Abbey taking notes—presumably as a means of qualifying for residence there when it does not matter where he resides. We shall doubtless be treated to a squib at an early date by this mirror of our age, and the keeper of Westminster Abbey may awake one morning and find himself famous.

Although three former premiers—Lord Balfour, Mr. Asquith, and Mr. Lloyd George—signed the petition for the placing of a tablet to Byron in Westminster Abbey, it is curious that no mention is made of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald doing so. Vote-catching is an uncertain game; and some Socialists might reflect that the vote of an "intellectual" is equal in value to the vote of a Roman Catholic. It is at least more reliable.

The Bishop of London has been trying to get the Bishops to think over the truth there is in Christian healing. We would advise the Bishop (1) that it is rather dangerous to invite parsons to think, (2) he must be well aware that Bishops are not selected because of their capacity for thinking. That is not in the bonds. But he would probably reply that in asking the Bishops to reflect upon the truth in *Christian* healing he is not giving them much to deal with.

Bishop Gore has now explained himself on the subject of the resurrection of the body. He says that he does believe in the resurrection of the body—that is, a material organ—but he denies the "recollection at the Day of Judgment of the material particles of our dead body." Now that is a very good "explanation" if only one knows what it means. If it is not *my* body that is resurrected, whose body is it? It is neither my body nor anyone else's, but merely a body that is brought together; how can this be called a resurrection? And if I am to go through eternity dressed in a body that does not belong to me, how will my friends know me, or I them? Why, oh why, cannot Christian bishops be reasonably honest, or honestly reasonable? Christians, when they talked of the resurrection of the body, meant what they said. They did not call the miraculous bringing together of particles to form a "material organ" a resurrection. They may have been foolish, but they were sincere.

A gallant ally of Lord Danesfort now appears in the person of Mr. George Goodman, who is the author of a book entitled *What to teach and how to reach the young*. The author has chosen his Gethsemane in the work of Seaside Services of the C.S.S.M., but we are told by a reviewer of this guide-book for catching em young, that some of the methods of appeal will not commend themselves to everyone. The use of acrostics in illustration of religious matters is deprecated. We do not agree. As the whole of Biblical study appears to be nothing more than a game of hunt the slipper, the author might have gone further and introduced "limericks." Mr. G. K. Chesterton nearly reached that stage when he wrote Biblical history in verse :—

And Noah would often say to his wife
As he sat down to dine,
I don't care where the water goes
If it doesn't get into the wine.

"Newsmen," in the *Daily News*, has had some information from a colleague just back from Rome. Here it is :—

He was much impressed by the brisk, businesslike attitude displayed by the Pope. He firmly checked any tendency to emotional excess on the part of a few of his visitors, and not one of the Italian working women present was allowed to hold his hand for more than a fleeting second. The agility of the Alpine climber revealed itself in each of the Pope's movements; even the Papal benediction at the close of the audience was bestowed with the gesture of an athlete. The Pope speaks 30 languages, and dialects, a circumstance which explains the ready way in which, at private audiences, he makes his visitor feel at home. He is the least formal of Pontiffs, and in cream satin cassock and skull cap cuts quite a simple figure in the midst of the Guard of Nobles, who follow him with flashing swords.

This leaves us with the impression that it is either an account of a football match, Olympic games, or a military review. We presume the flashing swords were to keep the flies away. At any rate, if man is a fallen creature, the above flummery will keep him so by God's help and the Pope's.

The question of the right use of Sunday is still agitating the godly in various parts of the country. Recently the Cleethorpes Urban Council discussed whether boatmen should be permitted to ply for hire on Sunday. In the voting, six voted for and six against. The chairman gave his casting vote against the boating; and the matter was settled, for a time. One curious point was raised by a Mr. G. S. Watkinson. He said he had no objection to Sunday boating, so long as he was assured that the boatmen would not tout for custom and would behave in an orderly manner. But if boating is had on Sunday, it is quite as had on Monday, and the same applies to disorderliness. Or perhaps Mr. Watkinson doesn't care how the devil people behave all the rest of the week if they will be properly demure on the Lord's Day. At any rate, Mr. Watkinson voted against the proposal; so visitors to Cleethorpes will have no boating on Sunday, and the boatmen will be unable to earn an extra shilling or two. What a world this would be if Christians only had their way.

EVERY ONE ANOTHER ONE—To Gain a New Reader for the

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.

A. MILLAR.—We believe that "B. V.'s" translation of Leopardi is out of print, but it should be easy to get a second-hand copy.

H. BLAKE.—Good humour will go a long way in controversy, and one can be thorough without being over-solemn. After all, laughter as well as tears belong to life, and is healthier in its consequences. That is one of the many truths the Christian Church overlooked.

S. M.—Of course you are at liberty to interpret the Bible as seems best to you—you are also at liberty to say that three times two are five. It is getting other people to agree with you that is the difficulty.

W. COLLINS.—We are aware that it is never an easy matter to get new readers for a paper like the *Freethinker*, but that makes us the more appreciative of the efforts of those who give their time to the task. There is a great change in the keeping of the "Sabbath" in some parts of Scotland, but there is a lot to be done yet. On the whole there is far more latitude in England, but wherever sabbatarianism can rear its ugly head it does so.

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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Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London E.C.4.

Friends who send us newspapers would enhance the favour by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office at the following rates (Home and Abroad):—

One year, 15s.; half year, 7s. 6d.; three months, 3s. 9d.

Sugar Plums.

We hear from our old friend, Mr. A. B. Moss, that he gave what he intends to be his last address in the open air on Sunday last, at West Ham, to a large and appreciative audience. Mr. Moss has done very many years hard work for Freethought, and he has perfect right to take it easier now should he feel so inclined. He was at the work long before we were, and as we have now completed thirty-four years, we leave the reader to guess at the length of Mr. Moss's services. We are not quite certain that the old warhorse can remain quiet when the sound of battle reaches him, but whether he does or not, it is but due to drop a word of appreciation of the many years hard fighting he has done for the good old cause. As we have so often said, Freethought calls for the best that is in man, and usually gets it.

Mr. Corrigan visited Failsforth on Sunday last, and we are glad to hear he had two capital meetings. During the week Mr. Whitehead had been lecturing in the open air at Manchester, but as he had to leave for Hull on Saturday morning, it seemed a pity to lose the crowds

who had by that time got into the habit of coming to the meeting place, and so Mr. Corrigan kindly filled in his Saturday evening by lecturing there. We hear that Mr. Corrigan had the same experience that Mr. Whitehead had had during the week in the shape of persistent rowdyism from a group that had apparently come there for that purpose, but their tactics were defeated by the readiness and good-humour of both the speakers. Mr. Bayford writes very appreciatively of the work done by both Mr. Whitehead and Mr. Corrigan, and we are glad to have his report. Mr. Corrigan is to give a course of open-air lectures in Manchester early in September, and we hope the local Freethinkers will give the meetings their fullest support.

With the assistance of the members of the South London Branch, Mr. Corrigan is holding a series of meetings every Tuesday evening on Clapham Common at 8 o'clock. The meetings will be held at the "Pavement," which is well known to South Londoners. We trust that Freethinkers will give the meetings every support. The Secretary of the South London Branch reports continued good meetings at Brockwell Park; at which news we are naturally pleased. Good meetings seem to depend always upon good speakers, good humour, and common sense on the part of all concerned.

Our valued contributor, Mr. H. G. Farmer, writes:—

Again we see the healing hand of Father Time. During a visit to the Bodleian Library at Oxford recently, I renewed my acquaintance with the "Shelley Relics," which were donated to the famous library of the University by Jane Lady Shelley in 1893. Here we see relics of the poet of all kinds, from the tinkling rattle that was clutched by his frail fingers as a baby, to the copy of Sophocles that was taken from his hand after death. There is also a volume of pamphlets which, readers of the *Freethinker* will be pleased to learn, is open at the title page of *The Necessity of Atheism*. For this work Shelley was expelled from his college. To-day his *alma mater* sings with rapture the praises of her child, and that *odium theologicum*:—

.....Time has swept
In fragments towards oblivion.

Time, truly, has a way of adjusting matters, but obscurantism is a relative term, and the obscurantists of to-day are as busy as ever in slandering and obstructing those who step off the beaten path.

The *Church Times* recently noticed a book on *The Conservative Mind*, by "A Gentleman with a Duster" (Mills & Boon), and quoted the following remarks by the "Gentleman" with evident approval:—

Examine the mind of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald and the mind of Mr. Stanley Baldwin, and you see in a moment the most vital characteristic of the present situation. Both men are earnest and unquestioning Christians. Both men are inspired with the idea of lifting up the human race from the squalid and destructive materialism of recent times. Both men are solicitous that such should be the conditions of human life that the soul of man may become naturally conscious of its spiritual nature and its spiritual destiny.

Probably the description of Stanley Baldwin as an "unquestioning Christian" would have applied to him as well 25 years ago as in 1924, but Ramsay MacDonald's mind has undergone (as revealed by the "Duster," anyway) a change which might be called conversion.

The cruelty of a Fijian god, who, represented as devouring the souls of the dead, may be supposed to inflict torture during the process, is small compared with the cruelty of a god who condemns men to tortures which are eternal; and the ascription of this cruelty, though habitual in ecclesiastical formulas, occasionally occurring in sermons, and still sometimes pictorially illustrated, is becoming so intolerable to the better-natured that while some theologians distinctly deny it, others quietly drop it out of their teachings.—*Herbert Spencer*.

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Dean Inge.

Not long ago I beheld a sight that filled me with a vague but great terror; it was a book of exploration, and the authors had given maps of the world as known at various periods of history. It was the sight of the little spot of the days of Homer that had caused me this powerful emotion, for I let myself float into the ideas of a man of that time, when the earth was flat and moveless, and the Pillars of Hercules were only a strange far-off legendary tale; then I imagined the state of mind of the man when told that the earth was a ball in space, moving round the sun, and that beyond the Mediterranean, beyond the great seas that men would one day traverse, lay lands of enormously large areas and of potentialities unlimited—No. Imagination refused even to supply the pictures. I ceased to think. I quaked.

Now this little experience was not altogether without compensation; it enabled me to understand Oxford, and to sympathize with Dean Inge. Their brains are the product of their environment. They are beyond the reach of mere reason; to be other than they are they need to be born again, though on that score I would not impede the natural process of evolution.

William Ralph Inge has made me sad, of a sadness that no light wind of pleasure will carry away. It is not the current writings of the "Gloomy Dean" that have brought me to this condition of melancholy; were there nothing more than that I could vote him even an "agreeable rattle," as he bumbles on in his superficial little way on all the iniquities of an age that is forgetting Queen Victoria.

I find an agreeable exercise in noting the number of points on which I can anticipate him, and my trick is simply this: I take the ideas that I know to be minted in Oxford and passed over the counter to its worshippers, and without question I apply the stereotyped opinions to each circumstance as it arises. I wonder are there any people in the world who live lives in so narrow a groove and in such a stagnated atmosphere as the scion of a superiorly-respectable English family, who goes to Eton and wears a top hat at twelve, and, never having imbibed an idea that would seem unfitting to a tweeny-maid, passes on to that don-ridden metropolis—I had almost written necropolis—of learning, Oxford, and emerges in the world at length incapable of intellectual movement except in the corsets and splints that have become almost part of the organism. That some survive even all that and, after having knocked round the world a bit and come in contact with men, turn out good fellows, that speaks volumes of hope for human nature. But the good Dean has always been above that sort of salvation.

As a set-off against the depression which I know will soon overtake me, I stop for a moment to imagine Christ come to earth again, and calling on Dean Inge. He has not had an introduction, and he has not brought a card. That already puts him beyond the pale of the butler, who, though not so learned at the Dean, shares the same soul. But then he says the Dean knows his name. That is true, as the butler knows, but neither of them has ever for a moment attached this name to a living person, still less to such a type as the person who stands at the front door.

After hesitation, the butler consents to report, but the good Dean is surprised, pained, indignant. The Dean cannot possibly admit him. He feels as the politician when he sees a returned soldier to whom he has promised a home fit for heroes.

But the Dean overcomes his scruples and, magnanimously and meekly, goes to the door. He finds

there one of the lower classes—a carpenter, not to put too fine a point on it—who has ceased to work at his trade, and who, having joined the ranks of the Unemployed, is followed by a little band of ignorant tramps, fishermen and what not, and a larger rabble of nondescripts, who, the papers said, were becoming dangerous, and an abominable nuisance at best.

The good Dean had in fact been just reading of this man's subversive speeches, which he was hardly able to distinguish from Bolshevism, except, indeed, that they were more pernicious. The fellow wanted to abolish war, for example!

The Dean finds him much worse than he imagined. His clothes, for instance—no; there's a limit. And then his impudence. He stood arguing with the Dean, just with that "loose-tongued disloyalty" and cheap-jack sharpness of wit which "that class" learn at their Communist meetings.

The meeting ends by the butler slamming the door, and the Dean ringing-up for the police. He has been wounded in his dearest feelings, outraged in every proper sentiment. He retires to his study in deep dejection; the world seems crumbling. He glances at his books and hesitates between Plotinus and the History of the County Families of Herefordshire.

But let us hear the Dean for himself. "Our reverence for the character and genius of Charles Darwin," he says, "need not induce us to lay aside either our Shakespeare or our New Testament."

Unless, indeed, the fact counts for anything that the teaching of Darwin is inconsistent with the whole body of writings of which the New Testament forms part; and that it might seem, except to the conscience-mongers, fraudulent to base one's religion on a book without believing what it said or attempting to follow its instructions.

The Dean's religion "can tell us that Christ is risen and that he will live for evermore, but not that he rose again the third day." Unless, indeed, one more, that the last statement is offered as the main proof of the first.

In another of these writings, that read like wind on the stomach, he says:—

It is not claimed that Mysticism, even at its widest sense, is, or can ever be, the whole of Christianity. For religion must have an intellectual as well as a mystical element. Just as if the feeling of immediate communion with God has faded, we shall have a dead Church worshipping "a dead Christ," as Fox, the Quaker, said of the Anglican Church in his day; so, if the Son and prophet expel the priest, there will be no discipline, no cohesion.

He might have added "no salary." After long and earnest study I am convinced that there is the pith of the whole matter. I do not mean that these holy men can be briefed like lawyers, with their pay resting on their instructions; but I will express it otherwise. People do not now believe that the earth is flat; but if the Flat-Earth religion had been richly endowed and if a dynasty or privileged class depended for their existence on the maintenance of that religion, and if great universities and colleges had been established in defence of that doctrine of the social order in question, and if a safe and comfortable profession with hosts of prizes had been provided for its upkeep; then, I affirm, that the Flat-Earth religion would be as living to-day as that of any Christian Church, and its professors would be capable of splitting straws of conscience on their righteousness, or of whipping themselves up to mystical ecstasies of "spirituality" in defence of the Flat Earth; and the Dean Inges would find in their mighty intellects grounds for holding that the real rotundity of the earth was the surest buttress, in the high, true, mystical sense, of the Flat-Earth doctrine.

In the Paddock Lectures delivered at the General

Seminary, New York, in 1906, the learned Dean discoursed on the Trinity:—

Jesus Christ came to earth to reveal the Father, and the Holy Ghost came to reveal the Son. Nevertheless, there is no question of a dynasty of three reigns, that of the Father before the Incarnation, that of the Son during the Incarnation, and that of Holy Ghost from Pentecost onwards. Neither the Son nor the Holy Ghost speaks of Himself.

The Son is the "Word" of the Father; and the Holy Ghost, in our Lord's words, "Shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you."

The Son is the Word, and the Word is Logos; let us see what is Logos:—

In one aspect it is the same as fate or destiny, or, rather, it is the rational principle which exhibits itself as unvarying law. It is the hidden harmony which underlies the perpetual strife in which the life of the world, as we know it, subsists. It is the underlying truth of the world, and it is by participation in it that we come to ourselves.

I came to myself with a struggle after reading these words; and remembering that this same Logos was our Communistic carpenter lately mentioned, I—well, I sat back, and I felt my pulse, and I took my temperature, and I examined my reactions. I did this because I concluded that either the Dean or myself was insane; and as I am glad to say that controversialists have once or twice attributed that condition to myself—it only meant that I differed from them, hence my content—I was willing to put the question to a physical test. The result was that I found everything normal.

Now it is conceivable that a like examination may have failed to discover abnormality in the Dean; and such cases of old came to me as problems in psychology. The solution runs on these lines: there is no real, deep, thinking power in the Dean at all. His brain, moreover, has been overcrowded by the mass of false learning which he has tried to assimilate; but all these ideas of his come really from that Thousand Years of Night when man speculated as to the number of angels who could stand on the point of a needle.

These men do not really think down to the ground on anything, they simply paraphrase and recombine each other's nonsense.

And then fell upon me that pall of sadness I had been promised. I was as a frail little Jack o' the Beanstalk carrying a precious thing—my Psychology in this case—to the ends of the earth, forced to walk in a darkened place overgrown with weeds—the opinions of the man-in-the-street, choked with miasma—the doctrines of the churches that preach brotherly love, assaulted by armed hosts—the professors and their following, cast out from the cornfield—this, the papers that had refused my articles, and finally receiving a mandate to attack, and with one delicate weapon—reason—the colossal fortresses of the City of Moribund Thought—I think this is Oxford—whose battlements overhung and menaced the Road of Good Hope which pointed to the Way of Life.

ARTHUR LYNCH.

The modern doctrine named "the struggle for existence" is the old difficulty known as "the origin of evil" presented in a new shape. It is rendered more formidable as a stumbling-block to the benevolence of the Author of Nature, by making what was considered exceptional the rule. It gathers into one comprehensive statement the scattered occasions of misery, and reveals a system whereby the few thrive at the expense of the many. The apologist for divine goodness has thus an aggravation of his load, and needs to be freed from all unnecessary trammels in the shape of his creed.—
Professor Alexander Bain.

East and West.

III.

(Concluded from page 502.)

I have wandered through the Imperial Treasure House at Mukden, fingering rare draperies, handling beautifully worked specimens of old-time jewellery, poising priceless pieces of airy eggshell china on my palm, and I have asked what of civilization the men could bring to the Orient whose guns I heard faintly booming in the distance.—*Douglas Story, "To-Morrow in the East" (1907), pp. 244-5.*

I do not see any reason to believe that the Chinese are inferior to ourselves; and I think most Europeans who have any intimate knowledge of China, would take the same view. If intercourse between Western nations and China is to be fruitful, we must cease to regard ourselves as missionaries of a superior civilization; or, worse still, as men who have a right to exploit, oppress, and swindle the Chinese because they are an inferior race.—*Bertrand Russell, "The Problem of China" (1922), p. 11.*

In judging the Chinese, as a nation, we should not take the type found at Limehouse. Any more than we should judge the Italians by dwellers in Saffron Hill, or the itinerant barrel-organ players, and the ice cream vendors; although, doubtless, there are many excellent men among them.

A few years ago the press was engaged upon one of the pharasiacal moral stunts it indulges in when things are dull and there is no war on or sensational murder and divorce news—it was upon the subject of the marriage of English girls to Chinamen. One of the papers sent a reporter upon a mission of enquiry to find out why the girls married Chinamen in preference to their own noble countrymen. After many interviews with these innocent victims of the wily Chinese, he returned with the incredible but unanimous verdict that they married them because they made the best husbands. Perhaps it would have been as well to have made the enquiry first and then written about it after.

In no country in the world are found so devoted and loving nurses for children. Lady Hosie, who was born and bred in China, records how—

Our Amahs (Chinese nurses) have crooned us to sleep. The house-coolie has fashioned kites and astonishing toys out of clay for our pleasure, and run, almost too submissively, on our childish errands. The cook, convinced that "cows milk," "yellow oil"—videlicet butter—and foreign food in general is no suitable diet for any child, white or yellow, has surreptitiously thrust into our willing hands forbidden delicious Chinese dainties.....The boy has carried us, when ailing in the hot weather, so patiently and proudly in his arms, allowing us, in the days of pig-tails, all manner of liberties with that sacred appendage.¹

In another work we read of how the little English girl, far from being repelled by the old, parchment face of the Chinese manservant, runs to him with shrieks of delight and jumps into his arms.

Bertrand Russell observes that—

One of the most remarkable things about the Chinese is their power of securing the affection of foreigners.In spite of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, I can recall hardly a single Englishman in the Far East who liked the Japanese as well as the Chinese. Those who have lived long among them tend to acquire their outlook and their standards.²

In this connection we may draw attention to Lady Hosie's book, *Two Gentlemen in China*, where she reveals the inner life of an aristocratic Chinese family to whom she did a service during the late revolution. How she was invited to live with them, and became one of the family, where she became the object of

¹ Lady Hosie, *Two Gentlemen of China* (1924), pp. 30-31.

² Bertrand Russell, *The Problem of China*, pp. 199-200.

affection which, transcending the barriers of race and religion—which remained unchanged—enveloped her in a love stronger than death, greater than sex. Those who could read this book without emotion would be callous, indeed. It will come as a revelation to those who believe the Chinese to be the impassive, stolid, unfeeling and inhuman beings too often depicted in popular fiction. Lady Hosie tells us that the greatest compliment she had paid to her was when her hostess asked a Chinese lady visitor to let her bring the English lady with her upon her next visit to her, assuring her: "You know, you need not fear her. She is good and kind, just as if she were Chinese." Lady Hosie also shows that there is as much fun and laughter in the Chinese home as in any European, and a great deal more than in most.

The missionaries have hitherto found an insurmountable obstacle to the propagation of Christianity in the ancestor worship, or cult of the dead. Says M. Hovelague:—

The cult is the base of all Chinese civilization. The day on which its foundations are shattered, the entire fabric of this civilization will totter, just as the civilization of antiquity crumbled away when its beliefs decayed.

The Chinese feel this, and it is this feeling that inspires their passionate conservatism. And why should it be destroyed to be replaced by the superstition of Christianity, which has been discarded by all European thinkers, and only survives through the money that has been invested in it. For, as M. Hovelague points out:—

The hostility shown to missionaries is thus less blind than one might think, and more justifiable. For this civilization has proved itself. It has ensured to myriads of men their earthly and their spiritual food. It has been a school of virtue and of moral beauty, of kindness, gentleness and wisdom. It has given China an amount of happiness, and to her life a stability and a harmony which no other civilization has surpassed, nor, say the Chinese and certain of their panegyrists like Eugène Simon, even equalled. A purely human religion, without metaphysics, without mysticism, without a church, without priests, other than the father of the family, without any God other than humanity, without a Heaven or a Hell, finding on this earth and within this life its principle, its ends, its sanctions and its rewards, unquestionably it is of all the solutions which man has given to the problems of existence, not indeed the highest, but the one most closely adapted to his condition, the one by which its soundness, proved by its immense duration, has procured him the greatest sum of blessings. It is thus one of the most important facts in history. None is worthier of all respect, or more deserving of study and meditation. (Emile Hovelague, *China*, pp. 144-115.)

Confucius, the great teacher, who lived 500 years before Christ, introduced no innovations, all he did was to clarify the thought of previous ages and bring it within the reach of all. He was a genius by dint of sheer good sense and force of human reason. Says M. Hovelague: "No inspiration was ever more devoid of mystery; nor belief—one cannot call it a religion—less complex." His doctrine is purely human, his method intellectual, his conceptions social—

The highest virtue seemed to him not the mystical adoration of some incomprehensible deity, but the love of one's fellow-men—charity. There is no trace in his teachings of any metaphysics or mysticism. Man's life on earth was in his eyes the whole of life—it is to man and not to some remote and mysterious god that he dedicates himself—he knew no other religion than that of humanity: harmony of life was for him the sole end of life....One finds no trace of egotism, of conceit, of harshness in this search for perfection, nothing inhuman. It is full of indulgence and kindly

moderation in all things. It is refined and noble. It is the instinctive gesture of a well-born soul, of a gentleman, of a man of taste, affable and sociable. This religion has never known the solitary ascetic the saint who spurns the world and despises life. (Ibid., pp. 118-121.)

Why should the Chinese forsake such a cult for Christianity; a faith which, as Morley remarked, has shed more innocent blood than any the world has known? Bertrand Russell says that the evils produced by indolence in China seem to him far less disastrous than those produced by the domineering cocksureness of Europe and America. The Great War showed that something was wrong with our civilization; and his experience of Russia and China has convinced him that we can learn from those countries what it is that is wrong.

The Chinese have discovered, and have practised for many centuries, a way of life which, if it could be adopted by all the world, would make all the world happy. We Europeans have not. Our way of life demands strife, exploitation, restless change, discontent and destruction. Efficiency directed to destruction can only end in annihilation, and it is to this consummation that our civilization is tending, if it cannot learn some of that wisdom for which it despises the East.*

And further, the same author gives his deliberate opinion that after making all deductions for poverty and disease the Chinese life brings more happiness to the Chinese than English life does to us. He also says that when he went to China he went to teach, but every day that he stayed he thought less of what he had to teach and more of what he had to learn from them. He found that among Europeans long resident in China this attitude was not uncommon. The newly arrived energetic European wishes to set about reforming the manifest evils that do exist, and of course ought to be reformed, but the Chinese manifest a vast passive indifference to his excitement, and wait for it to go off, like the effervescence of soda water. And gradually strange hesitations creep into the mind of the bewildered traveller—

He begins to doubt all the maxims he has hitherto accepted without question. Is it really wise to be always guarding against future misfortune? Is it prudent to lose all enjoyment of the present through thinking of the disasters that may come at some future date? Should our lives be passed in building a mansion that we shall never have leisure to occupy? (Ibid., p. 200.)

The Chinese answer these questions in the negative, and therefore put up with their evils, but they are compensated for this by having retained—

The capacity for civilized enjoyment, for leisure and laughter, for pleasure in sunshine and philosophical discourse. The Chinese, of all classes, are more laughter-loving than any other race with which I am acquainted: they find amusement in everything. (Ibid., p. 200.)

A young American, on the other hand, will work so hard that by the time he has made his millions he has lost the capacity to enjoy the result—

He has become a dyspeptic, compelled to live on toast and water, and to be a mere spectator of the feasts that he offers his guests. But he consoles himself with the thought that he can control politics, and provoke or prevent wars as may suits his investments.

It is true no doubt that by means of hygiene the lives of many Chinamen might be saved, says Bertrand Russell, "but at the same time make them not worth saving."

W. MANN.

* Bertrand Russell, *The Problem of China*, p. 18.

The World of Science.

Mars.

On August 22 the planet Mars will approach more closely to the earth than it has been at any time since before 1800, and astronomers are preparing to make a concentrated and systematic observation of it. On this date the red planet will be 34,630,000 miles away from us—a mere nothing, astronomically speaking.

Of all the heavenly bodies only the moon, Venus, and the tiny asteroid Eros ever come nearer to us.

Particular interest attaches to the forthcoming opposition of Mars. A planet is said to be in opposition to the sun when it rises at sunset, reaches the meridian at midnight, and sets at sunrise. In consequence, the most favourable time for seeing an exterior planet, whose orbit encircles that of the earth, is at the time of opposition, when the planet is a prominent object in the evening skies.

As the orbit of Mars departs considerably from the circular form (being much more eccentric than that of the earth), all oppositions are not equally favourable for terrestrial observers. If the opposition occurs when Mars is near its perihelion (or point of its orbit nearest the sun), it is favourable; if near its aphelion (the point most distant from the sun), it is unfavourable. The nearer an opposition is to the end of August, the more favourable it is; the nearer to the end of February, the less favourable. Thus, in February, 1916, Mars was 62,680,000 miles from us.

Mars is about four times brighter at a favourable than at an unfavourable opposition, and then far outshines the brightest of stars. At the present opposition Mars is brighter than Jupiter, and is excelled only by Venus. It will dominate the evening skies in August and September.

Mars has always been of particular interest to earth-dwellers, due to the fact that the conditions on the red planet are more favourable for the existence of life as we know it than they are on any other planet. Two American professors were recently credited with the intention of attempting to communicate by means of wireless with Mars, taking a 15,000 metre long wave transmitter to the summit of the Jungfrau, where the clear Swiss mountain air was expected to offer a minimum of impediment to the passage of the waves into outer space. But the project, if ever seriously entertained, has been abandoned. As a matter of fact, it is a very rash assumption to make that there is any life, quite apart from intelligent life, on Mars at all.

Steel Age in Aviation.

The current number of *The World To-day* contains an interesting article on this subject by Mr. H. Harper, Technical Secretary to the Civil Aerial Transport Committee. He says:—

A fierce controversy reminiscent irresistibly of the romantic history of the sea, is raging among those concerned with our newly conquered ocean of the air..... On the sea we began with ships of wood; so also in the air. On the sea, after bitter resistance from conservative minds, wood as a method of construction had to give place to metal. And to-day in the air—duplicating almost precisely what happened in marine history—the growth of craft of wood and fabric are about to be replaced by machines built throughout either of steel or of some lightweight metal alloy..... We are approaching the dawn of an era which will utterly transform flying as we know it now; which will effect such revolutions that what has hitherto been costly will become by degrees astonishingly cheap; which will give us air travel with speeds twice as fast as those of ground transport—and bring aviation within the reach of all.

There are two factors, according to Mr. Harper, which will give aviation a new commercial future. One is the rapidly improving system of metal construction of machines; the other, the production and improvement of a semi-Diesel type of engine for aeroplanes—an engine which will use crude oil fuel at a few pence a gallon, instead of the 2s. 3d. a gallon now paid for aviation petrol.

Some interesting details are given of the development of metal construction for 'planes.

When one of our first single-seater fighting aeroplanes was built throughout of steel, it was made as an exact duplicate, so far as the metal system allowed, of a wooden machine of precisely similar type. Then, as they stood—before wings and hulls were covered with fabric, these two aeroplanes were lifted—and weighed. And the steel 'plane proved to be 5 per cent. lighter than the one of wood, besides having all the advantages of durability which the metal system provides.

Later on, profiting by this experience, another machine was built of metal, which was something like 10 per cent. lighter than any similar machine of wood.

Mr. Harper says:—

What the steel worker can do in a small 'plane like a fighter, he can improve upon surprisingly if set to build a really big machine. By the most expert estimate it is reckoned that in large troop-carrying aeroplanes or big machines for the transport of mails in bulk, improved metal construction will enable a saving of more than 30 per cent. to be obtained over any similar craft built on a wooden construction system. And as such big metal 'planes have now been designed, and are to be produced, we shall soon see the wonders of this era in a form which will turn a new and vital chapter in the history of world progress.

The Coal Age.

"Our civilization will collapse when our fuel resources disappear," said Mr. B. F. Haanel, a Canadian representative at the first World Power Conference, held at the British Empire Exhibition, to consider the scientific use of world sources of power. The Conference was keenly alive to the prodigal fashion in which the fuel resources of the world are being used; and Sir John Snell, chairman of the Electricity Commissioners, expressed the view that too much coal was being consumed in Great Britain. Sir Richard Redmayne, late Chief Inspector of Mines, said that although British production was at present rising, he believed the maximum would soon be reached, and there would be a drop. Output in Great Britain would probably not exceed 200,000,000 tons a year. At the present rate of output the U.S.A. coal supply would last for about 2,000 years; whereas in Britain the supply would be exhausted in 600 years.

Professor Gibson pointed out that the potential water-power resources of the British Isles were "not so small as they may appear in comparison with those of other countries." "In the not far distant future it is probable that the strength of the Severn will be harnessed. If that is done, the power installation will be one of the largest in the world." Already in such districts as the Alps and the Pyrenees, and even more so in the American continent, the energy of the mountain streams is used to drive electric railways, and furnish electric light over wide areas.

Electrical Progress.

Professor Elihu Thomson recently delivered an extremely interesting lecture on "Electrical Progress and its Unsolved Problems" at the Institution of Civil Engineers. He ranged from such natural phenomena as thunderstorms and the aurora, to the electronic theory, wireless, the transmission and utilization of power, electric welding, electric lamps, and storage batteries.

In conclusion, he asked:—

Who is there to tell us of the momentous issues and events which may arise out of the studies in pure science, of atomic and molecular structure, and the energy relations involved, which has become in large measure the chief study in physical science of our day? Perhaps our comparatively feeble beginnings in thermionic emission and the manipulation, so to speak, of electric ions, infinitesimally small though they be, coupled with the knowledge of the electric structure of matter in all its forms, may be the foundation of a greater or super-science of electricity of enormous importance to the future achievements. May we not hope through such work to reach the solution of many problems, as, for example, the direct production of electric current energy from the rays of the sun, by some form of absorbing ionic vacuum apparatus, and thus add greatly to the habitable areas of the world?

The utilization of the resources of the world is the work of the future engineer, and becoming more necessary in the future than in the past. The objections once raised to the drawing upon large waterfalls, such as Niagara, for power were aptly answered by Kelvin, when he remarked many years ago that he saw more romance and poetry in the growth of great industries, the lighting of towns and cities, the supply of electricity over a great area surrounding the falls for miles away than in the spectacle of a stream of water falling over a precipice. He rightly regarded the saving of valuable irreplaceable resources in coal and oil fuel, made possible by the use of the power of the great falls, as a distinct and permanent benefit to humanity.

W. H. M.

Correspondence.

BERGSON.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—When on a visit to Paris to see the Exhibition of 1890, the Courier of our party, in a reply to a question, described the gorgeous concern as "glorified brown paper," a phrase not easily excelled for happily and pithily summing up the substantial essence of a gaudy affair. Some time afterwards it occurred to me that possibly that laconic remark was as applicable and apposite to Bergson's writings as it was to the exhibition. Even "brown paper" would not hold up and stick together without some solid pillars, props, rafters, and struts to give it apparent solidity.

Mr. Arthur Lynch, who has evidently paid more attention to his writings than I have, corroborates this view, and what was formerly an impression is now a conviction. Mr. Lynch's contributions in the *Freethinker* are so piquant and stimulating, like a breath of pure oxygen, as to awaken the desire to read his *Principles of Psychology*. I should, therefore, be glad to know price and publisher.

At the same time may I thank Javali and Vincent J. Hands for their virile and sane letters; to read them was as refreshing as to breathe the sea air on deck after being confined for hours in a stuffy, hot cabin.

KERIDON.

SINCERITY, Etc.

SIR,—In a private letter to myself, an old friend of yours and mine, one for whose opinion I, and I feel sure you, have the profoundest respect, an upright and honourable man concerned only for the truth in social life, threatens to tackle me in the *Freethinker* for a repetition of my recent views in the paper (article "Sincerity," of a week or two ago), which he considers mere "praise of Bolshevism," and points out the many fallacies in the argument, of all of which I was fully aware in the writing. I have no illusions about "sincerity," D. Kirkwood, the Labour or any other Government. Perhaps at the next General Election we shall have a change over, which will be no change! Two things were uppermost in my mind when I wrote the article: one was, "the sincerity of crowds"; the other, that we had "solved production," even to seventy times seven. I was concerned also to indicate the pure platform style of, say, the President of the N.S.S., as compared with the eloquent, enthusiastic, rugged, but ill-informed directness of "D. K." "It requires no courage," says our friend, "to tell people what they want to hear." Now even here fallacy is involved: What of the Glasgow audiences addressed by Mr. Cohen twice a year? Purely intellectual necessity makes them listen with so much respect. Those others listen to the Kirkwoods and Maxtons—quite small fry comparatively, I admit—goaded into wrath by economic injustice, believing in their leaders, hoping for better things. As for mere "courage"—the commonest of human qualities; to our credit be it said; recall the great war!—between the Kirkwoods and Cohens there is nothing to choose. As for Bolshevism, it is surely no worse than was Czarism! The fault of Labourism here is that it is no different from Toryism and Liberalism—or perhaps that is its saving grace! I hate tyranny, whether under Ramsay MacDonald or the Soviets; and I don't think it is necessary; but we must always re-

member that in the blackest midnight of the stupidity of the late world war the Russian Revolution was the first gleam of light in the blackness of Russia's despair. What followed may be judged adversely—but even that was determined in the process of evolution, in the inexorable law of Cause and Effect—what followed may be questioned, but in its inception more worthy of an apostrophe than Milton's imagined illumination:—

Hail! holy light! offspring of heaven, first born!

A significant emergence from "the bloody sawdust of the ratpit of ten thousand years."

I am, of course, at one with our friend when he says: "We ought to guard against any Plymouthistic sectarianism and narrowness in the *Freethinker*."

I reiterate, if he will not in his magisterial dignity hold them in light esteem, my profoundest regards.

A. MILLAR.

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.—The Discussion Circle meets every Thursday, at 8, at the "Lawrie Arms," Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 6.15, Mr. Marshall, a Lecture.

FINSBURY PARK BRANCH N.S.S. (Highbury Corner, Islington): Every Friday at 8 p.m., Mr. F. P. Corrigan, a Lecture.

FINSBURY PARK.—11.15, Mr. F. P. Corrigan, a Lecture.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY.—Freethought lectures and debates every evening in Hyde Park. Speakers: Messrs. Baker, Beale, Hyatt, Harris, Hart, Keeling, Knubley, Saphin, Shaller, Dr. Stuart, M.A., Mr. Vincent, B.A., B.Sc., and Mr. Howell Smith.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Regent's Park, near the Fountain): 6, Mr. F. P. Corrigan, a Lecture.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 3.30 and 6.30, Mr. A. D. McLaren will lecture.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY.—Ramble to Epping Forest, High Beech, Monk Wood, Amesbury Banks. Conducted by Mr. and Mrs. F. James. Train: Liverpool Street, 10.5 a.m. Take cheap return ticket to Chingford, 1s. Ramblers bring own lunch.

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

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

LEEDS BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Square): Mr. Lew Davis, Tuesday, August 19, at 8.15, "The Evolution of God"; Thursday, August 21, at 8.15, "The Why and Wherefore of Religion"; Friday, August 22, at 8.15, "Jesus, the Lover of my Soul."

MR. WHITEHEAD'S MISSION.—Newcastle—Saturday evening, August 16, The Monument, Westgate Road, 7.30; August 17, The Sandhills, 11; The Town Moor, 7; August 30, Leeds. September 6, Wolverhampton; September 13 and 30, Swansea.

HAVE you read the humorous description of the meeting of the poetasters at a Cheshire Cheese supper, followed by a true description of Heaven, and what may happen therein? You will get it in *THE EVERLASTING GEMS*, which THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 Farringdon Street, E.C.4, will send you, post free, for 3s. 6d.

JACOB WRESTLING through the long hours with the Lord is not analogous with the performance of self-measuring. If this thought has hindered your ordering all these years, forget it. Our system is Mr. Macconnell's own invention, and as easy in operation as it is accurate in results. As in the Moses case, we don't ask you to believe it. We'll send you a Measurement Form by itself, if you like; but, as it never fails to convince, it is wise to ask as well for one or other of the following: *Gents' AA to H Book, suits from 54s.*; *Gents' I to N Book, suits from 99s.*; or our *Ladies' Costume and Fashion Book, costumes from 41s., frocks from 36s.*—MACCONNELL & MARE, New Street, Bakewell, Derbyshire.

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