

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED · 1881

EDITED BY CHAPMAN COHEN ■ EDITOR 1881-1915 · G. W. FOOTE

Registered at the General Post Office as a Newspaper

VOL. XLIV.—No. 35

SUNDAY, AUGUST 31, 1924

PRICE THREEPENCE

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page
<i>Religion and Science.—The Editor</i>	545
<i>Is Christianity "Dope"?</i> —J. T. Lloyd	547
<i>In a Roman Cemetery.—Mimnermus</i>	548
<i>Dawes Hicks and Wildon Carr.—Arthur Lynch</i>	549
<i>The Soul of Mudcombe-on-the-Slosh.—Vincent J. Hands</i>	550
<i>A Remote Corner of the World.—F. J. Gould</i>	553
<i>Chemical Energy: The Key to Life and Evolution.—</i>	
<i>Keridon</i>	554
<i>Any Child to Any God.—J. Driscoll</i>	557
<i>Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.</i>	

Views and Opinions.

Religion and Science.

We have it on the authority of the Rev. Principal Griffith-Jones that between the theory of evolution and the Christian faith there is complete harmony. The statement would be the more interesting if some better ground were stated than that representative theologians find no difficulty whatever in accepting the "assured results of evolutionary thought." For on reflection one remembers that "representative theologians" always have accepted a scientific generalization as quite harmonious with their creed—when they found it impossible to oppose it with profit to themselves. I do not know of a single exception to this from the fifteenth century onward. In astronomy, in biology, and in geology, to take the more striking cases, this is true. And it is also true of social reforms and of new ideas generally. So one would be the more impressed if Principal Griffith-Jones could show that new discoveries in science and new ideas in sociology had been received by these same theologians, if not with acclamation, at least without hostility. And it would be still more impressive if it could be shown that these scientific—and more accurate—views of the world had resulted from theological teaching, which had claimed to know so much of God's purpose in creating the world and the plan on which he had made it. After all, it does not seem a wise or practical plan to maintain very many thousands of parsons with many thousands of churches, and give these parsons a position of privilege and importance, only to find that the teaching with which they started was admittedly wrong, that all they can do is to oppose new ideas when they are first enunciated, and after a long and bitter struggle discover that they are harmonious with what they believe. If we have discovered the truth without religion, we should like to know just what useful part Mr. Griffith-Jones considers religion plays in enabling man to know the truth about the world in which he is living?

Evolution and Christianity.

Principal Griffith-Jones believes that the theory of evolution and the fundamental truths of Christianity are at one. What is the fundamental truth of evolution? We should be told that this is development, and that the Christian theory is that God's plan is being carried out in the development of the world, of

which plan evolution shows us the working. But that is altogether wrong. Development is no part of a scientific theory of evolution; development is a creation of our own, a "fiction" which is created by us for our own convenience and so that we may draw up a mental plan of a process. The bottom fact of evolution is change, and the "law" of evolution expresses the conditions under which change occurs, and also the conditions which determine change in one direction rather than in another. The same law of evolution that makes for the growth of a more complex structure here makes for a less complex one there. What is called for convenience sake development is no more and no less a part of evolution than is what we call "retrogression." In each case we are erecting a standard and calling it development in the one case and retrogression in another. The notion that evolution means an "unfolding" is an utterly unscientific idea. It belongs to, and is a survival of, that theistic reasoning which has been so generally and so universally discredited whenever it has had applied to it a genuinely logical test. Naturally, Christians seize on this misinterpretation of evolution, since by it they hope to show that, after all, God is working somewhere and somehow, and if his work cannot be seen directly, in what goes on around us, well, it may be that it can be found in the beginning of the process itself. And if it be shown that we know nothing whatever of a beginning, that is all so much to the good, for if we once get into a region where nothing is known there is room for the Christian theist in his attempt to tell us all about it.

* * *

God and the World.

So much for the fundamental idea of evolution. Now what are the fundamental ideas of Christian theism? The first is that the world, however formed, is the work of intelligent design. And whether it was made complete once for all, or whether it was made to gradually develop, God was responsible for it, and somehow or the other his hand must be traced in its working and his purpose expressed by it. And not alone must the world disclose a purpose, but it must be, in this all theologians are agreed, a moral and a sensible purpose. How does the process of evolution bear out this thesis? The earth has existed for very many millions of years, and some form of life for at least many hundreds of thousands of years—to take a very conservative estimate. Countless forms of life have arisen and passed away, and the theist assumes that all of this was for a definite purpose, that God aimed at producing a perfect form of life, and that this was man. Could anything be more absurd? If a perfect animal was God's aim what was there to prevent his producing it at once? What possible benefit would there be in a method of trial and error to one who knew beforehand the nature of the error and the outcome of the trial? It is beside the point to say that in the case of man he learns from his failures. In the first place it is not true. Man as an individual does not reap the benefit of his failures. In many cases he is crushed out of existence by them. The lesson learned, when

it is learned, is mastered by those who have not gone through the experience of learning. It is learned by the race, but it is the individual who pays the price. And, secondly, it was as easy to make the perfect man to begin with as it was to arrange forces that by their action might one day produce him. Man has to work by this method of trial and error because it is the only way in which he can work. But a man who could get what he aimed at at once, yet deliberately went through a series of failures to get what he could as easily have got at once would be thought to be little better than a fool. And it is only a Christian who can deliberately call wisdom in God what he would denounce as almost criminal folly in man.

* * *

The Mystery Monger.

But Principal Griffith-Jones' great consolation, and the direction in which he finds the real hope for religion is that science does not yet know all about the universe. A large part of his article is a song in praise of ignorance, and an expression of devout thanks that there is sufficient ignorance left to form a firm ground for religious belief. Thus, evolution does not deal with origins, but only with processes, and so has done nothing to lessen the "mystery behind the world of phenomena." "Nor is the element of mystery eliminated from the phenomenal aspects of the universe." Who has yet solved the nature of matter and mind? Has science banished from the world the mystery of beauty? There is mystery into which all lines of investigation disappear, etc., etc. That is the one thing which gives Principal Griffith-Jones undiluted cause for rejoicing. There is plenty of mystery left, and so long as we can hold on to that religion is safe. But to say there is a mystery tells us nothing. After all, mystery is only another name for ignorance. To say there is a mystery surrounding the nature of life and matter and beauty, is only another way of saying that we are in a state of ignorance concerning them. So that in the long run the reconciliation of religion with science is effected by a demonstration that there is considerable ignorance with us all about the world in which we are living. And the other side of this argument is that if we only had knowledge where mystery—or ignorance—now prevails there would be no need and no room for religion. In this, at least, I am in agreement with our preacher. Religion lives now, as ever, upon human weakness and human ignorance, and the two may be reconciled if science will only confess that there is a region of ignorance which it can never hope to conquer, and will lease this to religion on a lease for eternity.

* * *

God and Evolution.

It is admitted that there is no room for God in "the method of the developing process," at least there is nothing for him to do, and a God who does nothing might as well be non-existent. But God is supposed to have a chance with origins, for the reason that science is assumed to know nothing at all about origins. But, after all, "origin" is a relative word. A table has an origin, the wood of which it is composed has an origin, the physical structure of man has an origin, as also have his ideas, and beliefs, and feelings about things, and about all these science is able to tell us a great deal. There is only one "origin" about which science can tell us nothing, and that is the metaphysical conundrum of the origin of existence. How did *anything* come into existence, or did it come into existence at all? Principal Griffith-Jones is here indulging in a species of mental thimble-rigging that is common with parsons of every shade and colour. Because science has nothing to say on this unthinkable metaphysical nightmare—any more than it can tell us

what will happen when an irresistible force meets an immovable object, it is assumed that it can tell us nothing about the origin and meaning of anything at all. But that will not do. It may impose upon the students of the theological seminary over which this gentleman presides, but it can hardly deceive anyone with a desire for truth or a capacity for thinking. For about the origin of *things* and forms of thought science has a great deal to tell us. It can tell us, and does tell us how a great many of the ideas and beliefs with which Principal Griffith-Jones juggles came into existence and what is their approximate value in the social and intellectual development of the race. And that explanation, if accepted, is fatal to his glorification of mystery as affording ground for belief in a god.

* * *

The Origin of "God."

In chemistry and physics science traces back the cosmic process and shows a planet developing from a homogenous fire mist. In biology it travels backward and shows the existing complex forms of life developing from earlier simpler ones. And in the intellectual sphere it shows how mankind begins in a sea of error, and only discovers what is true after countless blunders and the acceptance of almost unbelievable stupidities. Now, Mr. Griffith-Jones, as the head of a theological training college, would do those under him a real service if he would inform them that science makes no "mystery" at all of the way in which religious beliefs—God, a soul, an after life, etc.—came into existence. They are the first guesses of the uninstructed mind as to the nature of cosmic phenomena. There is no doubt whatever about that. Those with whom religious beliefs began were not in the least concerned with any purely metaphysical question. There were certain facts before them, and a definite explanation of them was attempted. The facts upon which the primitive mind built religion are with us to-day, but we have a different explanation. The gospel Jesus took the fact of epilepsy or insanity and explained it by demonical possession. We take the same fact and explain it in terms of mental derangement. That is the whole issue in a nutshell. Religion consists in the retention of the primitive, savage interpretation of things and the rejection of a later and a more enlightened one. The choice before us is really that between the savage and the scientist. And all the talk about the mystery of origins is so much calculated rubbish which only serves to delude the foolish and prevent even the more sensible ones realizing the nature of the problem before them.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The wild fellow in Petronius that escaped upon a broken table from the furies of a shipwreck, as he was running himself upon the rocky shore, espied a man rolled upon his floating bed waves, ballasted with sand in the folds of his garment, and carried by his civil enemy the sea towards the shore to find a grave; and it cast him into some sad thoughts: That peradventure this man's wife in some part of the continent, safe and warm, looks next month for the good man's safe return; or it may be his son knows nothing of the tempest; or his father thinks of that affectionate kiss which is still warm upon the good man's cheek ever since he took a kind farewell, and he weeps with joy to think how blessed he shall be when his beloved boy returns into the circle of his father's arms. These are the thoughts of mortals, this is the end and sum of all their designs: a dark night and an ill guide, a boisterous sea and a broken cable, a hard rock and a rough wind dashed in pieces the fortune of a whole family, and they that shall weep loudest for the accident are not yet entered into the storm, and yet have suffered shipwreck.—*Jeremy Taylor.*

Is Christianity "Dope" ?

THE Rev. John A. Hutton, D.D., of the Westminster Congregational Church, Buckingham Gate, has been for many years a more or less regular contributor to the *Christian World*, and his articles are always readable and often display a considerable amount of subtlety and ingenuity in defence of the Christian Faith. At present he is contributing a series of articles under the general title of "All Things Considered"; and in the issue for August 14 the subject discussed is "the charge that our religion is 'dope.'" It is but fair to note that in most of these articles Dr. Hutton maintains a conciliatory attitude towards those who differ from him, and that even his severest criticism of their views is wholly free from bitterness and rancour. He wishes that Christians generally should see themselves as others see them. "A good man," he says, "will never resent or try to evade such a test." But what about the Church? Is she willing to see herself as the world outside sees her? Has it not been her invariable habit to sit in judgment upon the world, to characterize it as a world lying under the consuming wrath of Almighty God, and to describe herself as the temple of the Holy Ghost and the very body of Jesus Christ? Dr. Hutton, speaking of the Church, says:—

She should not be too anxious when the world dissents from her principles; but she should be concerned to repel any charge which impugns her moral character and intention. The Church never discussed with the world her own esoteric doctrines; but she did defend herself against grave charges made against her good name—Atheism, feasts of human flesh, unnatural human relationships.

Is that true? Did the Corinthian Church defend herself against the grave charges made against her good name by her own founder, the apostle Paul? His first letter to her bristles with the gravest possible charges against her good name. As a matter of fact she possessed no good name to defend. And is not the same thing true of the Church in almost every period of her history? Why was the Council of Nicæa called and held? Simply because the Church was rent asunder by never-ceasing factional strife. Peace was a total stranger within her gates. Let any one read Dean Stanley's account of that notorious council in his great work entitled *The Eastern Church*, and then affirm, if he dare, that the Church had a good name in the eyes of the world. Her name had been tarnished from the very first; and it became more and more sullied throughout the Dark Ages. Dr. Hutton proceeds thus:—

It is a charge which is made generally against us Christians these days, and especially against the organized Church, repeated so often that it has become a catchword: that religion is a kind of anæsthetic; that the effect of religion—and religion amongst us means the Christian religion—is to dull the more active and protesting side of human nature; that it silences complaints, because it regards all complaining as sin.

The great preacher meets this charge by partly admitting its truth. According to him, Christianity is, within specific limits, what may be called dope. It is a drug which, taken with discretion, calms the spiritual man's nerves and makes him forget the troubles and sorrows of the present life. Now and then, he allows, but not constantly, a Christian may profitably take a spiritual drug. Dr. Hutton declares that "there is a sense in which religion is not ashamed to be reckoned as God's blessed alleviation of some intolerable human condition." He is prudent enough to admit, however, that he is not stating accurately the charge against Christianity that it is dope, and

that the charge is not really met by the observations he has already made. It may be perfectly true that for the Christian believer "there are maladies of the soul and spirit and conscience more terrible, more lonely, more desperate, than physical pain, and that for these there is no anodyne, no place, no moment of forgetfulness, except on the vast and permeating hypothesis of Catholic Christianity." To a so-called natural man, to an intelligent man of the world, to a non-Christian believer, on the contrary, those maladies of the soul and spirit and conscience are purely imaginary, from which he never suffers at all, and consequently the remedy provided for them in "the vast and permeating hypothesis of Catholic Christianity" is equally so.

At this point Dr. Hutton commences to deal with the charge in the sense attached to it by those who make it. He understands thoroughly how such a charge has arisen. It owes its origin to the fact that Christianity places its supreme emphasis upon two words, namely, the word "future" and the word "faith." Both words, it is frankly conceded, "sound offensive to the more daring spirits of our time." Furthermore, the reverend gentleman admits that "wherever there is passion there is truth," and that the charge "is made in some quarters passionately." After making those two admissions, however, he audaciously pens the following sentence: "And yet the charge, which may claim this superficial justification, is essentially and fundamentally a false charge." Is that assertion justifiable on any ground whatever? Take the Christian conception of life beyond the grave, and can we honestly regard it as anything better than a "vast and permeating hypothesis of Catholic Christianity"? Now the question is, why did Christianity adopt this strange, unproven, and absolutely unprovable hypothesis of a hereafter? It is well known that in some older religions—Judaism for example, there was no doctrine of a future life. For many centuries the supreme emphasis of the Old Testament was put solely on the present life. The law of rewards and punishments was to be administered here; the righteous were to be prosperous and happy, and the wicked poor and miserable, in this world; but the law remained unadministered through all the ages. The psalmist saw "the wicked in great power and spreading himself like a green bay-tree in its native soil" (xxxvii, 35). The promise was that the righteous should inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever; but in all history it has never been fulfilled. Consequently, before the Old Testament closes we see the hypothesis of immortality slowly creeping in. From the very start Christianity built itself upon and gradually gained enormous power over the hearts and consciences of its multiplying adherents from its confident and incessant insistence on the belief in a future life. Even in the Sermon on the Mount we find such words as these:—

Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Elsewhere we read: "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." Paul informs believers that their citizenship is in heaven, and solemnly urges them, in consequence, not to mind earthly things, but to set their affection on the things which are above. In Hebrews, God's people in all ages are described as "strangers and pilgrims on the earth," whose one quest is for "a better country that is an heavenly," on which account God is said to be proud to be called their God, "for he hath prepared for them a city" beyond the stars. Totally ignoring all these Scriptural

utterances, Dr. Hutton has the temerity to give expression to the following conviction:—

Far from it being true that Christianity is a defence of things as they are, it would be nearer the truth to say that according to Christianity things as they are have never been and are not now as God would have them.

From an argumentative point of view that statement is wholly beside the mark, and the question it suggests is: if things have never been and are not now as God would have them, then why, in the name of all wonders, are they as they are? Whose fault is it? It may be true that "there is no body of literature in the whole world so full of denunciation of everything which ordinary men call wrong as is the literature of our faith, the Old and New Testaments," or it may not; but that is not the point at issue. The charge which Dr. Hutton is trying to rebut is that Christianity acts as dope upon believers in it by making them imagine that they are citizens, not of this world through which they are passing as strangers and pilgrims, and for the state of things in which they have no responsibility, but of a better country farther on, towards which they are supposed to be hastening with all possible speed. Indeed, one would naturally infer from certain words in the first Epistle of John that God himself has abandoned the world to its fate and is utterly unconcerned about it:—

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever (ii, 15-17).

J. T. LLOYD.

(To be Concluded.)

In a Roman Cemetery.

Death, not armed with any dart,
But crowned with poppies.

—Julian Fane.

It might make one in love with death to think that one should be buried in so sweet a place.—Shelley.

It is strange that, even among the unnumbered wonders of the Eternal City, the tree-clad Protestant burial ground outside the Porta San Paola holds a place apart. Pilgrims come from remote corners of the earth to linger in the quiet corner where John Keats lies beside his friend, Joseph Severn, his gravestone bearing the bitter words: "Here lies one whose name was writ in water." Not far away rises the slope where the heart of Percy Bysshe Shelley lies buried beside the body of his friend, Edward Trelawny. When Shelley visited the place years before his own death he described it as "the most beautiful and solemn cemetery I ever beheld"; and in the preface to *Adonais*, he says: "It might make one in love with death, to think that one should be buried in so sweet a place." Nor is this all, for Shelley's little son, William, was buried in the same cemetery, which afterwards received the body of Keats and his own ashes. No stone marks the child's grave, for Shelley and Mary were unable to superintend the erection of a tombstone.

Shelley's death was untimely. He was drowned in the sea he loved so well, and whose praises he had so often sung. From his early years the sea had ever a fascination for him. Even in his boyhood days he loved to watch the drifting of paper boats down a stream, and thought that drowning would be the most beautiful of deaths. Three times he had narrow

escapes from shipwreck. Once, flying with Mary across the English Channel, once with Byron on the Lake of Geneva; and, again, with his friend, Williams, in Italy. Shelley was luckless with all the boats he owned. His young first wife, Harriet, sought the same mode of death which at last overwhelmed the poet. Shelley prophesied his own end, though few have noticed it. In *Julian and Maddalo* he makes Byron ("Count Maddalo") address to him a jesting warning:—

You were ever still,
Among Christ's flock a perilous infidel,
A wolf for the meek lambs.

And the warning concludes:—

Beware, if you can't swim.

This prophecy is the more sinister for its levity, its unconsciousness of hastening destiny. The recurrence of this thought in Shelley's poetry is extraordinary. The last lines of *Adonais* might be read as an anticipation of his own death by drowning. In *Alastor* there is the same thought, and the *Ode to Liberty* closes on the same fateful and pathetic note. The *Stanzas Written in Dejection, near Naples*, echo the same idea; and in a dirge, written in 1817, he gives vent to the same thought:—

That time is dead for ever, child—
Drowned, frozen, dead for ever.

What Shelley might have done had he lived longer, or whether he would have lived much longer if he had not been drowned, are idle questions. His friend, Trelawny, who was a keen judge of men, was of opinion that the poet would have lived to a good age, as his father did. Shelley himself, shortly before the end, said, "I am ninety," meaning that he had lived and felt so intensely that he felt older than his years. Nor was it an idle boast, for he was himself the "Julian" of his own poem:—

Me, who am as a nerve o'er which do creep
The else unfelt oppressions of this earth.

Shelley was the poet of the Great Revolution, and the poet and the Revolution were actually contemporary. On Shelley's birthday, August 4, 1792, it was decreed by the French National Assembly that all religious houses should be sold for the benefit of the nation; and Louis XVI was no longer recognized as King of France. It was on this same day of August that the Emperor of Germany and the King of Prussia issued their famous manifesto announcing their mission to put down the Revolution and "console mankind" by giving up "the city of Paris to the most dreadful and terrible justice." Nor is this all, for Mary Wollstonecraft, the mother of Shelley's Mary, had just published her *Vindication of the Rights of Women*. This was the world in which men were living on that quiet August day when the poet of the Revolution first saw the light in that little chamber looking out on the peaceful Sussex pastures.

Talk of miracles! What marvel is like to real genius? In that room, in that quiet country house, from a rough Sussex squire, and from a mother who was nothing remarkable, sprang *Adonais*, *Prometheus Unbound*, and some of the loveliest lyrics of a thousand years of English literature. If, instead of Shelley, an infant Squire Western had been produced on that August day, everyone would have thought it natural, but instead of a bucolic squire we have a master of poetical music, and a thinker five hundred years ahead of his own time. His own generation hated him, trampled upon him, and cast him out; but in exile he still delivered his message in deathless song, which a few brave spirits heard and treasured, and which will in due course alter the face of the civilized world.

John Keats's grave is the older in this Roman cemetery. Shelley sang his brother-poet's death-

song in *Adonais*, having in the immortal rhapsody coupled the name of Keats with his own for ever. When Keats was dying of consumption, his friend, Severn, cheered his last days. "Poor Keats," he wrote, "has me ever by him, and shadows out the form of one solitary friend; he opens his eyes in great doubt and horror, but when they fall on me they close again, till he sinks to sleep." Is not this the true pathos and sublime of human life? Is there a diviner thing in the world than pure affection shining through the mists of death? At the last, Severn held his dying friend in his arms for seven hours. Severn outlived Keats for fifty-seven years, and his remains were removed from their original resting-place and buried beside those of Keats. It was well done, for in life they were not divided.

Because of these infidel graves, generations of English and American visitors to Rome make pilgrimage to where they lie beside the Pauline Gate at the opening of the Ossian Way. Even Italians recognize the sacredness of those acres. It is a public confession that the two great Freethought poets confer glories upon one of the greatest cities of the civilized world, and that even the Eternal City is made more honourable and illustrious by their presence.

MIMNERMUS.

Dawes Hicks and Wildon Carr.

We always read history backwards, and so when the College of Cardinals condemned Galileo, we have a vague impression that the report was sent to the newspapers, or to what represented them at that time, that a great thinker had been muzzled by a band of imbeciles. Had that been the verdict, the sentence would have been promptly reversed, for the mob is stupid, but not intentionally wicked. It is often unjust, but that is another matter. The report went out that having appeared before a body renowned for its learning and wisdom a prating fool had been silenced, and that not only because his pretended science was false, but that it might be dangerous to established institutions. And the mob was content.

Well, that College of Cardinals is still with us; remember that *Thousand Years of Night*, and note that, in default of a scientific method, philosophy has, of all forms of intellectual exercises, longest remained under the shadow. Mr. Dawes Hicks is a respectable Cardinal of thought, both in ability and temperament. He has all the qualifications of a thinker; that is to say, he occupies a high position in the Hierarchy, for he is Professor of Philosophy at University College, he figures prominently at Academic functions, he never emits a sentiment which is not a smug endorsement of official sham, he stands at the portals of the manufactory of reputations, for he helps to run the Aristotelian Society, and he is assistant-editor, I believe, of *Hibberds*.

"But you spoke of the qualifications of a thinker?" Yes; but is not that already sufficient? Perhaps I should have said "official thinker," but for contemporary purposes they mean the same thing. A thinker who thinks? Whose thought has thought out anything? O, that is another pair of sleeves! Dawes Hicks is not a Galileo, he is respectable and established; he is a Cardinal. Listen to this on the Resurrection from a laudatory preface to a work devoted to a certain Dr. James Drummond:—

In the first place, the primitive attestation is itself by no means clear, and there are manifest traces of vacillation of view. The body which at one time has flesh and bones and is capable of being handled seems at another time to lose these characteristics. It appears and disappears in a mysterious way and

finds no barrier in closed doors.....Whilst, then, rejecting the view that the dead body was restored to life, Dr. Drummond was inclined to explain the appearance, not as the offspring of fevered imaginations, but as self-revelation, made in some way we know not, of the immortal Christ.

I scarcely feel myself able to comment on this; I have seen terrible sights in my day, mountains of corpses and rivers of blood, but nothing so sad as this. I have lived through some difficult passes, but I think I would rather go to the galleys than have written these lines. Even a galley-lean, if we may call him so, who has killed another in anger, may yet find some solace in the exercise of a normal mind; but here would seem to be a brain in deliquescence.

But do you think that Dawes Hicks lost the consideration of his fellows when that book appeared? No. On the contrary, his shares went up; had he not been capable of writing in such a strain, had he not shown the qualities corresponding, he would never have risen to his present height in the academic world.

He has written very little, and in the whole circle of the contemporary Mahatmas of knowledge I know no one who has succeeded on so small an output, even of material. No. His strong points are quite of another category, and he has known how to profit by his deficiencies.

I was about to leave him when just one touch caught my eye—also from the Drummond book:—

In particular, as the outcome of very complete and exhaustive examination of the available evidence, he reached the conclusion that the Logos, as Philo conceived it, was not a distinct personality, but the thought of God, a mode of the divine essence, which, while a characteristic indeed of the infinite Mind, was also planted out and made permanently objective in the order of the Universe.

If I were to say that the Bolshie carpenter had gone high, I might be accused of blasphemy; but that, except for forms of expression is what is contained in this statement, for we are told that the Logos is Christ, and that Christ was a carpenter who taught certain doctrines which are certainly communistic of an exaggerated type.

Wildon Carr is also now a high Mahatma of the realms of thought. He is, compared to Dawes Hicks, an industrious man, but I will not delay with these writings, for they are nearly all explanatory, bedizements, or glosses of Bergson, and we have already seen the sources of Bergson's power, and noted how little there is, in his whole body of speculations, of great formative thought, of clear and wide illumination, of deep, trenchant analysis, of the faculty of important classification and generalization that arises from it. Therefore—like master, like valet—we must not expect much of value from Wildon Carr, and we will not be disappointed.

There is another whom I promised to add as a third to make a fair corpse; but he is hardly worth naming.

I wonder at my audacity, and I remark that though it is beyond the ninth hour, I am not drunk; I am only intensely sad and desperate, and I hardly mind what I say, if only it is true. The way in which this gentleman comes into the question is that in his position of principal, rector, or whatever they call it, of a great university, he replied to a former protest of my own, by saying that it was not the business of a university to teach young men true philosophy, but rather, during a difficult period of their growth, to protect them from wrong influences.

I can produce this interview, but I want to spare the man's name—he may have relatives. Think of it! Of the enormity! For remember that the universities do, all the time, teach philosophy, even psychology.

What is really implied is that any stuff will do in the way of thought as long as it keeps the young men

in question either from tight corners or from loose women. So that—and here the secret is out of the bag—Wildon Carr and Dawes Hicks, and if it comes to that, Bradley, are not really thinkers at all, in any true sense, they are the proctors, who with their intellectual bulldogs chivy the young men off from the forbidden path of pleasure, or from the works that demand a masculine exercise of brain and which favour that development.

They are the mutes of the seraglio; but there is a phrase “strangled by the mutes of the seraglio,” and that, but for a certain fighting spirit, had like to be my own fate.

These intellectual—I want my old friend Byron to supply the word, he used it for Castlereagh—are not only the guardians of the harem; they are the law givers of the little happy hunting ground of thought as they know it. They stand at the entrance of the magazines which disperse opinion, and reputation, in philosophy; they are the providers of professors for universities in the Dominions; they are the preface-writers for books, even sometimes of value, issued in academic circles or appealing to such.

They are unfortunately the product of a sort of intellectual in-breeding which has been going on so long that it has resulted in high-strained crises of thought or feeling, such as we have seen in the few haggard examples we have quoted from men of the Dawes Hicks or Bradley type.

Do not think this is wonderful or surprising. What else could be expected? Has there been since the foundation of Oxford any moment when thought was not dangerous to the tone and the politics taught at that seminary of social influence. If a professor has to name a successor, or recommend a pupil, will he choose one of original thought whose ideas must necessarily be anathema, or whose existence therefore seems like an affront or a menace? No. He will choose the cunning, or subservient, pupil who has learnt the knack of paraphrasing his own nonsense.

Do not think I am too sweeping. Remember that Thousand Years of Night!

There are two ways of becoming a thinker. One is to select orthodox parents, a respectable school, and then a fashionable university; to show one's self assiduous in class, but never original or even enterprising in thought, never to question established beliefs, establishments of any kind; to flatter one's professor, and to carry off prizes; then to write dissertations or glosses on Kant, or Hegel, or Schopenhauer; then to form a log-rolling Society, and get a footing on an exclusive and authoritative magazine; to invite to London some great Continental celebrity, and to bask in his reflected glory, to be obsequious to powerful politicians; to praise but with discretion, that is to say, to eulogize the authorities, and to economize consequently on merit; then at some big official dinner offer homage to some big official, receive the reward in his praise, and then aspire to honours and to the reputation of Great English Thinker.

In all this I have said nothing of thought; I affirm that it is not necessary.

But of the other thinker; how will you make him? I will not say just now. My process would prepare him for an unhappy life, and I have been already unkind enough.

ARTHUR LYNCHE.

All the great theologians in the Catholic Church have denounced reason as the light furnished by the enemy of mankind—as the road that leads to perdition. All the great Protestant theologians, from Luther to the orthodox clergy of our time, have been the enemies of reason.—*J. M. Robertson.*

The Soul of Mudcombe-on-the-Slosh.

IF a visitor had wandered into the village of Mudcombe-on-the-Slosh on a certain October's day in the year nineteen hundred and twenty-three, in all probability there is nothing that would have suggested to him that it was a red-letter day in the annals of the place. The church was perhaps a little more ostentatious, the public-houses more numerous, and the cottages more dilapidated than is even usually the case in our English villages. Even if our imaginary visitor had strolled up to the hut that served as a club and institute, and read on the notice-board that a debate was to be held that evening between Ebenezer Scraggbody and Richard Kenworthy, B.Sc., on: “Is it reasonable to believe in God?”—even then, I say, it is doubtful if he would have realized its full significance. And yet, to the initiated, it was a sign that beneath the sleepy exterior of this old-world village the heart of Mudcombe was athrob. The soul of Mudcombe was awake. Oyez!

Before introducing the speakers the Rev. Tittering-Simpleton, who took the chair, said that it gave him great pleasure to preside on such a notable occasion. “It was a sign that Mudcombe-on-the-Slosh was abreast of the times. (Applause.) To those parishioners who doubted the wisdom of such a discussion—who, indeed, regarded calling into question the existence of Our Heavenly Father, even for purposes of debate, as little less than blasphemy, he would say: ‘The truth is mighty, and will prevail.’ (Applause.) We have in Mr. Scraggbody, whom we all know and respect as an excellent butcher and still more excellent churchwarden, a worthy defender of the proposition before you. (Loud applause, started and continued by Job Todd—whose meat bill is considerably in arrears.) In Mr. Kenworthy we have a learned gentleman from our local college whose scientific attainments are sufficient guarantee of his ability. I have much pleasure in calling on Mr. Scraggbody to affirm the proposition.”

Mr. Scraggbody (who was received with loud applause), commenced by reminding his hearers of the text: “The fool hath said in his heart there is no God.” (Applause.) After giving several instances of remarkable adaptations in Nature (in such a way as to almost make one think he was personally responsible for them), Mr. Scraggbody said it passed his comprehension how anybody with a grain of sense could say there is no God. He was extremely sorry for his dear brother-in-debate, who, animated by good intentions no doubt, was led astray by false learning. Apart from the question of debate, he sincerely hoped his dear brother-in-God would make it a matter of prayer—“for the Lord is very good,” added Mr. Scraggbody, “and if only our dear brother will make it a matter of prayer, and cast his bread upon the waters, some of it is sure to fall on good ground and then there will be great rejoicing and gnashing of teeth.” Being called to order by the chairman, the speaker returned to his argument, and pointed out that the overwhelming majority of mankind had always believed in God. The belief was an indispensable factor in a nation's moral stability (this was a phrase Mr. Scraggbody had committed to memory), and without it we should all be cutting one another's throats. If there was no God, then we were mocked, etc. He assured Mr. Kenworthy that the Soul of Mudcombe-on-the-Slosh was not to be corrupted by a little learning imported from outside. (Tremendous applause.) To put blasphemous vapourings (another phrase committed to memory) into the chaste minds of his fellow-villagers was an impossible task; it was

like pouring water on a duck's back, it went in one ear and out of the other. "So long as I have the strength," concluded Mr. Scraggbody, "I shall be ever to the fore in defending all that we cherish; all that we hold dear; all that makes for the greater glory of the incorruptible soul of Mudcombe-on-the-Slosh." (Loud and continued applause.)

Mr. Kenworthy (rising amidst faint applause) said he was happy to find himself so soon in agreement with his friendly opponent. He had always felt that the man would, indeed, be a fool who said there was no God. There had never been a shortage in that direction; and the lower we descended in the evolutionary scale the more the gods flourished. Subjectively the gods might well be said to exist; in fact, their influence on the course of human history had been as great as it had been disastrous. That God had any objective existence, however, was what they were there to discuss; and, unfortunately, Mr. Scraggbody had effectually prevented them from coming to grips with the problem by failing to define what he meant by "God." There was nothing quite so barren of results as to discuss a proposition the meaning of which was left to individual interpretation. He gathered, however, that what Mr. Scraggbody had in mind was a "Personal Being" who created and sustained the universe. Dealing with the "Design Argument" as advanced by his opponent, the speaker endeavoured to show its inadequacy and utter irrelevancy. Design in Nature, merely meant design in human nature. "Why," he continued with a smile, "there are even people who will see evidence of design in the association of local butchery with a churchwardenship." (At this point Job Todd developed what appeared to be a violent fit of coughing.) The speaker then traced the origin and development of the God-idea, and showed how it afforded a decisive criterion to the truth of the belief. "We have been told," continued the speaker, "that if there is no God, then we are mocked. But, surely, if there is no God, there is no one to mock us. If there is a God—a God who watches our trials and struggles and offers no help—then are we mocked indeed." The question of morality raised by the previous speaker was a side-issue. He could only hope Mr. Scraggbody was speaking for himself; and not for the audience. Nevertheless, it was a little disconcerting to be told that were it not for Mr. Scraggbody's belief in God, he (Mr. Scraggbody) would start cutting his fellow-villagers' throats with as little impunity as he now slaughtered the lower animals. As for the soul of Mudcombe-on-the-Slosh—"if it is as impervious to outside influences as its intellect is impervious to the impression of new ideas, then its incorruptibility is for ever assured."

On a vote being taken the meeting did nobly—

Vindicate Eternal Providence
And justify the ways of God to man,

by 38 votes to 1.

The chairman in his closing remarks observed that it was gratifying to find that the Soul of Mudcombe-on-the-Slosh was still sound.

At which Mr. Richard Kenworthy was seen to smile, as if in quiet enjoyment. VINCENT J. HANDS.

Search the records of the whole world, find out the history of every barbarous tribe, and you can find no crime that touched a lower depth of infamy than those the Bible's God commanded and approved. For such a God I have no words to express my loathing and contempt, and all the words in all the languages of man would scarcely be sufficient. Away with such a God! Give me Jupiter rather, with Io and Europa, or even Siva, with his skulls and snakes.—*Ingersoll*.

Acid Drops.

We are wondering whether this journal will appear after November 27! Our reason is that we see Gypsy Smith has made up his mind to convert London by a "great evangelical campaign from November 16 to November 27; and as he has thus given God Almighty due notice of what he intends doing, we may presume it will be done. And if it is done, then the *Freethinker* is done. And yet we fancy that anyone who has an intention to send in their annual subscription for the *Freethinker* may do so without much fear.

Seriously, if one did not know the mental make-up of the class to which men like Gypsy Smith appeals one would feel surprised at the way in which the old game is played and the success with which it is played. They are always converting the world, they are always ready with tales of the great results following their campaigns, and their dupes seem to learn nothing from the fact that church attendances steadily decline and the volume of unbelief increases. As part of the advertising for this campaign, Gypsy Smith told a *Daily Chronicle* representative that in America whole towns were shut down so that people might attend his meetings. We should like to know the size and whereabouts of these towns that suspended all business in order to hear Gypsy Smith. Also what number of converts were made, and are they at present on earth, or were they caught up in a cloud and transported to heaven? But we would advise Gypsy Smith not to be too conceited over it. If the Home Secretary would only permit Mahon to tour the country and exhibit himself he would knock Gypsy Smith's crowds into a cocked hat. And what business he would do in an evangelistic campaign telling how he committed the murder and how happy he feels now he has given himself to Jesus!

A Rangoon message to the *Exchange* states that a procession of the party of U. Ottama, a monk and a Burmese Home Ruler, were escorting him to the famous Arracan Pagoda when serious riots occurred. A request by the police for the leader not to proceed along a certain highway, on the ground that there might be a clash with a rival party, was followed by an attack with brickbats and stones by the priests and villagers who formed the procession. The police were overpowered, and military police, armed with carbines, were rushed to the scene of the disturbances. A sharp conflict ensued, and two policemen and two priests were killed, and a considerable number of persons injured. The same cause produces the same effect, even when conditions are somewhat different. Religion always has been, and from its very nature always must be, the fruitful cause of hatred and violence.

Mr. Morgan Tud, in the *New Age*, takes the dole as a unit of currency:—

So he went to a fellow
In surplice and stole
Who would bury him gladly
For just double the dole.

There is many a truth spoken in the public-house of verse, and what the clergy do for nothing would not aggravate the unemployed problem.

Customers in a public-house at Brentford, Middlesex, listen to church hymns and a sermon, broadcast each Sunday. A delightful blending of the spirituous and the spiritual.

We see that the *Daily Herald* protests against the action of Church people who have refused to allow the Covent Garden strikers to hold their meetings on the steps of a church in the vicinity of the market. "What kind of Christianity can it be that these Church people profess?" it asks. "Certainly not that of Christ. He was a poor man and always threw in his lot with the poor. He told the rich plainly that when the Kingdom of God was

established on earth there would be no place in it for them. Yet these Church people will give no help to men who are striving to escape from the misery and brutal unfairness of casual labour. They may profess to be impartial, but they are really on the rich employers' side." Here is another illustration of the contention we have made before: the average Christian idealizes Christ and makes him typify all that he considers best in humanity. We take it that by the Kingdom of God on Earth the *Herald* means a Socialist State. Hence, Christ must be conceived as a Socialist. But the *Herald* is not fair in this presentation of the Master. Certainly Christ seems to have despised the moneyed classes of his day—but, then, he despised all wealth, material and intellectual as well. So too did the early Christians, who may, we can fairly assume, have been better acquainted with Christ's social ideals than is the twentieth century leader-writer of the *Herald*. To them this world was of the nature of a dream—or rather nightmare. There was no good in it, and no hope for it. The one thing that mattered was the next world, where under the despotic rule of God the Father, everything was going to be as it should be. We take it that no Socialist can believe in royal despotism; and yet the Kingdom of God is such—and a more firmly established despotism than anything we have ever experienced on earth. And quite apart from this, Christ could have had very little sympathy with the Socialist's ideal of assuring to every man, woman and child in this life a decent standard of material comfort. As we have already said, he despised such things. The Socialist never suggests that capital is bad; but only that capitalism—the economic form under which society to-day employs capital—is bad. Christ and the early Christians denounced wealth, or capital *per se*. Comfort in this life was of no consequence to them. To attempt, therefore, to claim Christ as an early Socialist is manifestly absurd. And as for his immediate followers—well, every one knows Paul's advice to the slave-class of his day.

There would, of course, be no particular harm in symbolizing one's social and political ideas in an ideal personality, but for the fact that such an action is often misleading. When the leader-writer of the *Herald* writes as though he were a Christian, one naturally assumes that he holds certain metaphysical and ethical beliefs, taught by the Churches. If, as is probably the case, he is only an admirer of a Christ of his own creation, his attitude in this matter scarcely clarifies political and social discussion. It would be far better, we suggest, that religion and everything associated with it be left in its own sphere, rather than be dragged into the discussion of social problems. Quite apart from anything else, the ethical teachings of a man who lived some two thousand years ago (assuming that Christ *did live*, and the principles contained in the Sermon on the Mount are his teachings), in a social system that had its own peculiar problems, can be little guide to us who live under totally different conditions. No man living in the first century could possibly have visualized our complex society, and the exceedingly delicate problems that it presents to those who desire social progress. Hence, we shall all of us be more usefully employed if we study the conditions of our own age, and listen to what our contemporary teachers have to tell us, than if we study what a religious teacher of twenty centuries ago had to say concerning the social injustices and absurdities which he saw around him.

The Royal Fine Art Commission, which was instructed to enquire into "the æsthetic problems connected with the proposed St. Paul's Bridge" over the Thames, has issued its report. Regarding the safety of St. Paul's Cathedral as "by far the most vital of the many difficult problems raised by the proposal," the Commission points out that the piers supporting the dome are in a precarious condition, and serious fears are entertained for the safety of the dome itself. To intensify existing dangers by adding a fresh source of vibration at the eastern end of the cathedral—along which the proposed bridge road would run—causes the Commission such grave apprehension that they "earnestly beg immediate attention may be given to this serious aspect of the problem. Further

shaking of the cathedral may lead to a catastrophe. Every one will agree that the destruction or partial destruction of such a building as St. Paul's Cathedral would be a disaster. And every one will agree that whatever steps are necessary to preserve Wren's masterpiece should be taken at once. But we trust that the Christians will perceive the moral. To save a Christian church from destruction prayerful intercession with the Deity by the bishop and his assistants should surely be sufficient. Since the cathedral is one of the houses of God he should be the person most keenly interested in its preservation. And being all-powerful the mere buttressing up of cracking walls, and the repairing of a dome is a ridiculously easy matter. And yet the dean and chapter turn quite naturally to secular institutions for help—to builders and engineers, bricklayers and carpenters, the majority of whom are non-Christians. Truly a deplorable exhibition of lack of faith on the part of these professional Christians, although a very sane and practical attitude to adopt. After this the Church cannot reasonably blame us if we prefer to use common sense and social science in the attempt to solve social problems, instead of relying upon religion to effect the changes we desire.

For the invention of a kettle with a lid that will not fall off, Mrs. E. M. Bolton, of Gerrards Cross, Bucks, tied for first place with Mrs. Routledge, of West Hampstead, who showed a portable fire at the first exhibition of inventions held in Aldwych House, London, under the auspices of the Institute of Patentees (Incorporated). We commend this second invention to the notice of some of our Calvinistic friends. It should enable the "meenister" to give a thrilling sermon on the hereafter of unbelievers and the undevout, with life-like illustrations.

It would appear that the Deity is a prohibitionist. At any rate, a large hop garden between Tonbridge and Hildenborough was levelled flat by lightning, which apparently ran along the wires which support the hops, causing the whole growth to collapse.

Mr. George Hill, of Bristol, died and left £4,119. There was nothing remarkable in this, but Mr. Hill made a will in which he said: "About March, 1921, I suffered from a fit of religious enthusiasm which took the form of writing a pamphlet on religion, the religious enthusiasm increased and later unquestionably developed into religious mania. But about the 25th of July, 1923, I recovered my ordinary common sense." Now what a godsend to Gypsy Smith Mr. Hill would have been between March, 1921, and July, 1923? But then he recovered his common sense, so that after July, 1923, we expect the Gypsy would have regarded Mr. Hill as a backslider! Still, Mr. Hill's case shows that none of our deeply religious friends need despair. They, too, may recover one of these days.

A writer in the *Weston-super-Mare Gazette* wonders what would happen if the residents and visitors in the town suddenly decided to go to church. He points out that the normal population of the town is about 30,000, and there must be an equal number of visitors. But nothing like this number could be accommodated. He is distressed at the prospect of about forty thousand people unable to get into church, and suggests huge open-air meetings as a way out. We really do not imagine there is any immediate cause for anxiety. So far ministers in the town have not had to complain of overcrowding.

The *Church Times* is not quite at its ease concerning the Pageant of Empire at Wembley. It says, "It is not so clear as we should like that those who organize the pageant have any sense that the Empire ought to exist for the advancement of God's glory and the benefit of his church." We have often pointed out that when Christians talk of national advancement they often mean no more than the gaining of some mere sectarian advantage, but it is not often that it is put so bluntly as that. The Empire should exist for the good of the Church. Nothing else matters very much.

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.

E. LECHMERE.—Thanks for cuttings; always useful.

J. BROWN.—Received with thanks.

F. A. HORNIBROOK.—Many thanks. Will prove useful later.

A. B. MOSS.—It is good to hear you speak of the time you have spent in fighting for Freethought as amongst the happiest in your life. That kind of service usually does bring a reward that nothing else can give.

M. BEESLY.—We quite appreciate what you say, but it takes all sorts to make a world, and one must allow for wide differences and sharp contradictions.

J. A. REID.—Glad you appreciate the critical articles of Colonel Lynch. Many of our readers join you in this. They are certainly stimulating, and there is as much need for fearless criticism of accepted philosophical teachers as there is for frank criticism of religious ones.

S.M.—Theological questions will only trouble those who permit them to do so. A healthy mind would not be bothered with any of the questions that appear to worry you. We would suggest you leaving religion alone, and adopting some other mental pursuit for awhile.

G. BEDBOROUGH.—We quite agree with your criticism, but we never interfere with a contributor's MSS, unless such revision is imperative.

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

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When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, giving as long notice as possible.

Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4., by the first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

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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.

From a Manchester friend who is putting his back into getting new readers for the *Freethinker*:—

I am happy to report that I am making progress (slow, but I think sure) with the sales of the *Freethinker*, and have received appreciative comments on the paper, all of which makes one realize the truth of your oft-repeated assertion that there is vast field of prospective readers if they can only be got at.

We are more than ever convinced of the truth of this last statement. And if only all our friends would put their backs into the work for two or three months we should find a very marked difference.

We were pleased to see in the *Wanganui Chronicle* (N.Z.) a lengthy report of an address on "The Belief in Personal Immortality," by Mr. P. O'Dea. Mr. O'Dea made no secret of his thorough-going disbelief in this ancient superstition, and cited a great many prominent

scientific men who were with him in his disbelief. This in itself would be illuminating to the average Christian reader, for his own teachers take good care to keep him in the dark as to the movements of advanced thought, and in the English-speaking world these same prominent scientific men are not at all in a hurry to make public what their opinions on religion really are. But the fact of a newspaper publishing the report of the lecture is evidence of the amount of Freethinking that goes on in our colonies and dependencies, and also an indication that Freethinkers are beginning to organize themselves. We congratulate Mr. O'Dea on a very excellent address, and feel sure it will be productive of much good.

Mr. F. P. Corrigan is undertaking a week's open-air campaign for the Manchester Branch, from August 31 to September 7 inclusive. Full particulars will be found in our Lecture Notices. We hope that all Manchester Freethinkers will do what they can to support these meetings. It may serve to check any rowdism that is attempted.

The West Ham Branch has arranged an excursion to Uppminster on Sunday, September 7. The train will leave Plaistow at 10.5, and will call at intermediate stations. The return fare is 1s. 6d. Tea will be provided. All Freethinkers and their friends will be welcomed.

A Remote Corner of the World.

SOME parts of this remote corner are hilly and snow-capped; some low and hot; some very barren, and some fruitful in corn and cotton; and in one region a hot wind, dark with flying sand, blows for a hundred and twenty days. The people of this remote corner of the world—East Persia, lying west of Afghanistan—number some 2,000,000, and live in dome-shaped mud-brick houses, or wood huts, and industriously grow crops, and make carpets; and their religious ideas betray survivals of very old beliefs and practices. General Dickson, from whose recent book I borrow,¹ relates that a certain local Governor, who had resolved to suppress robbers, made a public exhibition of the execution of four men who had been arrested. He issued a card of invitation to an "At Home, on the Execution Ground at 4.30 p.m., Hanging and Throat-cutting." Special guests were entertained at ten in a tent, and the general public were allowed to assemble on one side of the ground, a band playing before the chief event. The four robbers were brought out. One was hanged, the second's throat cut, the third shot, the fourth flung from a cliff. The band played in the intervals.

Visitors to the British Museum must often have paused before the remarkable sculpture of Mithra slaying the bull; the figure symbolizing the relation between the Sun—God and King—and the life-force of the animal world, and indeed of all the animals and plants upon which human existence depended. To sacrifice a living animal was to acknowledge the power of the God. General Dickson saw a partial illustration of the ancient worship. A Shaukat, or Governor, invited him on a four-days' tour among the villages. At the Shaukat's approach to a village, the people came out in a crowd of welcome, and with the multitude was borne a wooden platform on the shoulders of sixteen or more men. On this platform lay a bullock tied down by ropes. A man dressed in red garments, and with face smeared red, stood by the bullock and waved a sword and shouted salutation to the Shaukat, the crowd acclaiming in occasional chorus. Then the red-robed official pulled a long knife from his belt, and made as if he would slit the

¹ East Persia: a Backwater of the Great War, by W. H. R. Dickson (Arnold, 279 pp., 15s.).

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bullock's throat. The Shaukat, however, signified that the sacrifice need not be completely fulfilled. At each village a similar ceremony took place. Another bit of ritual was the presentation to the Shaukat of a tray of corn-grains which had been set on fire, in token of the lordship, for safety, or for destruction of the Shaukat over the folk and their food. I will say, in passing, that readers who would like to find numerous examples of this worship will discover a rich treasury in the volumes of Frazer's *Golden Bough*.

A detachment of the small British force which General Dickson commanded placed milestones along a newly-made road, and were surprised at the stones being knocked down by unseen persons. The local Governor told Dickson the reason. He said:—

If a man journeyed along the road, and read on a stone that it was such-and-such a distance from this or that place, he would decide that he could reach the spot in an hour. But no man can truly tell whether, by the will of Allah (God) he will be able to carry out any human plan. It is impious to reckon on the future, and impious, therefore, to take milestones as a guide. God's will be done.

In certain cases, where no attempt was made to remove the naughty stones, another use was invented. A dab of white colour was smeared over each stone, and village women would, at times, go to the stones—which were now holy and magical—and suck off some of the white coating. They were women who wished to bear children, and hoped by thus repairing to the symbols of creative power, to conceive and bear sons. This practice also carries us very far back into primitive ages and primitive animism.

I fancy General Dickson looked on at these singular activities with a slightly ironic, but not at all unkind smile; and I fancy that, with the same smile, he watched incidents that brought him nearer to our own age of mingled faith and doubt. He tells of a British officer who had a good knowledge of the Arabic tongue, and was on easy and pleasant terms with native labourers employed in the British service. This officer had previously worked in Egypt, where, on a certain day, a gang of labourers (fellahs) told him, with apologies, that on the day before, a sacred day, God had willed their absence from duty.

"God would not let us come," said they, "we poor human beings are helpless in face of the Divine will. We are but as worms in the eyes of the Almighty."

He answered politely that their action was correct, for nobody ought to oppose the Divine will. This treatment delighted the Egyptians, and for several days running more and more of the navvies stayed away from business; and so the last day of the week came round, and all assembled—by the will of Allah—for pay. Thereupon the officer said:—

My friends, my heart was simply burning with joy at the prospect of giving you money to-day, but, alas, what can I do? The Almighty will not let me. You yourselves know well—no one better—how helpless we all are in face of the Divine will.

And so, not for the first time in history, the doctrine of the Divine will was used as an instrument of human trickery or human wit.

The smile which I have already detected playing over the features of General Dickson reappears in his account of the burial of a European lady in the presence of representatives of a variety of religious creeds. It took place at the city of Meshed in East Persia. The General writes:—

The funeral was that of a much-respected old Italian lady who had been a good many years in Meshed; so practically the whole European community attended it. The only clergyman who could officiate at Meshed was a member of the American Medical

Mission, so we had the spectacle of an American Presbyterian minister reading the Church of England burial service over the body of an Italian Roman Catholic; while, as if to make assurance doubly sure, some Russian friends of the deceased, armed with long sprigs of evergreen, kept sprinkling holy water over the grave during the service, in accordance with the rites of the Russian Orthodox Church. In truth, a veritable tragi-comedy of creeds, but, as far as I remember, it excited no particular comment at the time. It was all accepted as being in the natural order of things in the cosmopolitan atmosphere of the place.

Yes, the General is undoubtedly smiling!

Blessed smile! The Cross may or may not have saved peoples in the Past. The Smile saves not a few of us in the Present. Voltaire knew that precious secret. Foote knew it. Our sprigs of evergreen may be as foolish as the religion of the white-washed milestones. But we who sprinkle holy water with them in 1924 are exposed to the deadly attack of the smile—a menace that was unknown to the Stone Age or Bronze Age, and only known to a few Greeks of the classical ages. To-day the smile threatens—thank Progress!—to become universal. With the smile comes in the light.

That latter word, "light," reminds me of one more item in General Dickson's interesting pages. He mentions the ravages of a verminous insect called the miani. This pest conveys fever, and the miani fever caused no small discomfort among the British troops in East Persia. At length a happy discovery was made, namely, that the miani hates rays, whether of the sun, or lamp, or even a modest candle. And now the camps enjoyed sweet sleep. Near the soldiers' beds a light was placed, and the enemy appeared not.

Thus also will it wholesomely and merrily fare with us if, amid a swarm of ancient and obsolete ideas, we trim the little lamp of common sense and smiling science. The wretches will crawl away; and so good night!

F. J. GOULD.

Chemical Energy: The Key to Life and Evolution.

MATTER, however it came into being, is a thing of perpetual motion. This restlessness springs from three distinct and permanent sources, viz., (1) its various inherent tendencies to self-motion; (2) its collisions with other moving masses; and (3) its inertia, in virtue of which it retains any motion acquired from either of the other two sources. In consequence of its motion, or its tendency to move, matter is said to possess energy because in virtue of it it has a capacity to change, in magnitude or direction, its own kinetic state or that of other bodies. But whatever change these "other bodies" experience, the causal agent of it endures one of an equivalent value, but of the opposite order or sign, so that the amount of energy in the system is unaltered. In other words, whatever happens in the material universe it is simply a case of a redistribution of energy—an exchange often denoted in text books as a rise or fall of potential.

The Impermanence of Material Energy.

Matter seems to be nothing but whirlpools scattered throughout the infinite ether, arresting and localizing its energy and preventing it for a while from undulating away to the to the infinities at the speed of light.

The tendencies to self-motion just alluded to are of three kinds: *gravitational, cohesive, and chemical*. By their very nature these are transitory sources of material energy, for as they take effect and make the

bodies or particles mutually approach, the space element between them (essential to movement) disappears, and their energy necessarily ceases to exist, at least, in a positive form.

But matter has another fundamental characteristic known as inertia, which originally means "inactivity, idleness, or laziness." This gives it the appearance of being inert and powerless, and probably accounts for the grotesque fatuities in which the Gnostics and early Christians indulged as to the nature of matter. This property of inertia is, in every respect, the very antithesis of its basic and immanent impulses. It acts as a drag to be moved and offers resistance to be stopped. Moreover, it tends to conserve energy in matter instead of dissipating it as is done by the forces. Whatever energy mass possesses in virtue of inertia, remains in it as long as it is given *free space to move in*—a fact that brings out in a very marked manner the absolute difference in the effect of their respective action. For the impulses, through being mutual urges, tend to agglomerate the matter of the universe into world masses, whereas the momentum of moving mass tends to scatter it.

Now, confining our attention to the solar system, it is therefore obvious that when this amassing was completed, the stock of energy with which it started its celestial career had all returned to its etheric home except that presented by the axial rotation of the planets and their revolutions round the sun. These energies are permanent, and their permanency accounts for the stability of our system: rotatory motion, which is the joint effect of inertia and the cohesive forces, virtually gives the spinning mass a free path to move in; and in the case of orbital revolution, inertia and gravity play battledore and shuttlecock with each other and so prevent the catastrophic fall to the sun that would be otherwise inevitable.

If we now deal with molecules as distinguished from molar masses, or matter in the aggregate, we find that inertia tends to conserve energy in it only in the case of gases. Solids and liquids, if in that molecular state called "hot," instead of conserving it, act as outlets, through which it flows back to the ether as through an open grating or sluice. And but for the fact that these molecules act as a "reversible engine" and can take up and transform the radiant energy emanated from a source like the sun, this earth would have been, æons ago, as devoid of it, in any active form, as the desert of Sahara is of life.

The Three Impulses Compared.

If now we compare the three essential impulses of matter with one another, we shall discover an intrinsic difference between chemical affinity and the other two. Gravity or weight tends simply to amass matter, to bring it all into contact. And the cohesive molecular forces are much the same, save that they act only in close proximity, whereas gravitation is effective at all distances. So gravity and cohesion are jointly responsible for the solidity and rotundity of the earth as well as for those of the entire host of heaven. But all this work of amassing and solidifying means only approximation and linkage, whereas the results of a chemical union are coalescence, or wedlock, in which the constituent elements are lost in a new-born substance. Chemical energy is not due simply to the presence of a mutual urge to approach and unite, but to the fact that the atoms of the elements are counterparts of each other, like lock and key, or screw and nut, impelling them to unite and be one.

Let the reader try to conceive of matter as a homogeneous, structureless thing, consisting, say, of microscoping particles all absolutely alike which, in turn, had no structure or component parts and pos-

sessed no energy except that due to gravity and cohesion, and he cannot fail to realize how transcendently momentous is the fact that matter essentially consists of different elements driven by mutual affinities to unite. It is no exaggeration to say that *chemical energy is the creative source of all.*

The yawning gulf that separates a sandbank from the Wembley Exhibition is but a trifling difference in comparison with that between an earth without its atomic elements and our present world. The other element, nitrogen, which forms the major part of our atmosphere is unwedded simply on account of its weak affinity, as is evident from the great instability of most of its compounds.

But we remarked above that molecular energy is restorable because the molecules can act as a "reversible engine" and absorb radiant energy from the ether. It is therefore a matter of no little significance that chemical energy is not restored in this way. The sun's rays will heat the waters of the ocean and melt the snows on the Alpine heights, but they cannot re-solve a single molecule of it into oxygen and hydrogen. It will warm the rocks, but it cannot rend asunder one particle of limestone into its chemical constituents—carbon, oxygen, and calcium. That is to say, when atomic energy vanishes in chemical union it returns to the ether for good.

The Rôle of Living Substance.

We are now in position to understand and appreciate the meaning of living substance and the part it has played in the history and destiny of this planet. It came into being—how, we know not—to assist the sunbeam to perform what it cannot do alone, viz., to restore to the atoms of the principal correlated elements some of the energy they had for ever lost in molecular wedlock. Protoplasm acts as a wedge or lever, so to speak, to enable the solar beams to wrench apart the atomic constituents of water, carbon-dioxide, and ammonia, and thus impart to them a portion of their lost heritage. But what endows this feat with paramount importance is the fact that the restored energy is accumulated in such a way as to provide a continuous supply of it, after the manner of a mill-pond. As, however, the energy of a pond is available only once, and is therefore soon used up unless there be some means of keeping the pond always full. Now, in the process of evaporation, i.e., the conversion of a liquid into a vapour or gas, the sun restores to water the energy it lost in condensation, and so enables it to ascend and mix with the air. Then the return part of the cycle begins: the vapour cools, falls in potential and floats as clouds, descends as rain, flows as rills and rivers, re-fills the ponds and continues to work our mills.

Wonderfully similar is the circulation between the etheric ocean and matter in respect to chemical energy. The separation effected is not a complete one. The carbon, oxygen, and hydrogen are not liberated as free elements, but as compounds possessing more or less of the energy of the constituent elements themselves—a very common fact and one upon which the bulk of chemical reactions depend. The abundance or numerousness of such compounds, as the studies of organic and physiological chemistry show, is so great that their name is legion; and are, moreover, so widely variable in point of energy and instability, the two cardinal properties, as to offer a fine field for *the principle of Natural selection to exercise itself.* This is probably the first opportunity given by Nature to this principle, in the long process or task of evolving living substance and forms. These organic products roughly correspond to cloud, lake, pond, pool, and marsh as halting stages in their descent to the lowest level. But there would be no "lower level" if there were no free oxygen in the atmosphere. It would be

one uniform stagnant "marsh"; and the restoration of the energy to the elements would be without meaning. Atmospheric oxygen is the wheel-race of the life-mill, and is *sine qua non* to its working.

The ascending arc in this life-cycle, corresponding to the lifting process of evaporation, are in the activities of *plant life*. The *raison d'être* of the vegetable world is to act as "chemical elevator" and restore to carbon and its correlates some of their natural energy by tearing them apart from their combinations in water and carbon-dioxide. The leaf is Nature's factory where this all-essential operation is carried out, and the green substance within it is the living lathe and chisel that works the miracle. In short, to manufacture the living out of the lifeless is Nature's one object in annually clothing the world in a mantle of green.

It would, however, be disingenuous to leave the matter without pointing out that living substance has two basic impulses—to eat and to procreate—which cannot at present be subsumed under chemical or physical forces. A remote analogy of the former is supplied by the way the wick feeds the flame, and the rotating spindle draws its "nutrient" fibre from the heap to "build" its thread. It is, however, scarcely more than an analogy. KERIDON.

Correspondence.

WHERE ARE YOUR HOSPITALS?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Having been away from civilization for some weeks, I have only just been able to peruse Brother Dorrity's letter in the *Freethinker* of June 15, which, by the way, I enjoyed, as it afforded another good example of the mentality of the clergy we have among us.

The first thing that tickled my fancy was my reverend brother's reasons for a "prattle" with his personal god. The Hindus out here—especially their priests—are adepts at this sort of business, but pay little or no attention to sanitary arrangements or hygiene, so that terrible epidemics of cholera and plague break out among them with disastrous results, until the medical authorities step in and enforce sanitary conditions, which in ordinary times are anathema. During a famine, too, irrespective of the "prattle" of millions of priests and people, no manna falls from the sky as of yore in lieu of rain, the absence of which caused the famine, but the governing authorities have to import food from elsewhere, and dole it out to those still alive; this, however, is never done in a hurry, so that the toll taken by the famine can well be realized. Grand arrangement this! A really decent god would be ashamed of such gross neglect and callousness; readily retire from business, and leave man to look after himself.

I notice that Brother Dorrity gives Christianity the credit of the hospitals, orphanages, rescue homes, etc., but very conveniently leaves out the jails and lunatic asylums. Possibly these were included in the "et cetera" and if not, to whose credit should they be placed? It is certain that Freethinkers do not fill them, so have no necessity to build them.

On landing in North Japan a few years ago I noticed the absence of jails and hospitals in this portion of the land of the "Rising Sun," and on enquiry was told that there was no necessity just then for such "benevolent institution, but that they would undoubtedly be necessary as soon as the white missionaries were permitted to introduce their creed and customs, drink and diseases. How very true this was I had already learned from personal experience in India. Strange to say that while I lived among these Japanese "infidels" and "barbarians" I occupied a house with paper doors and windows without the slightest fear of robbery or molestation. I wonder if I could have occupied similar lodgings in a land teeming with Christians!

During my wanderings in Bengal I noticed a similarity between the actions of the authorities out here and our clerical brethren everywhere. These authorities periodically import large numbers of up-countrymen for government service. Their new habitat being very malarious, one would imagine that these men would be housed in mosquito-proof houses, and the surroundings kept thoroughly sanitary and free from the mosquito, which is the sole cause of this scourge. But no attempt whatever is made in this direction, but vast sums of money are spent in building and staffing hospitals instead. In due course these hospitals naturally speedily fill up with malaria-stricken patients, who continue to get admitted and discharged, until finally they are sent home on sick leave. These people, having become absolute wrecks, invariably die in their homes before completing their sick leave.

"What the dickens has this got to do with the clergy?" I think I hear someone asking. Well, just let me tell you. Practically from the day of our birth onwards the clergy make it their particular business to inoculate us daily with the deadly virus of superstition on the pretext that such inoculations are exceedingly beneficial and necessary. But what happens after such treatment? We, naturally, become intellectually weaker and weaker, and repeatedly fall into vice and wickedness of all descriptions, get "converted" and backslide times out of number, until finally we fall easy victims to Old Nick, who has no difficulty whatever in capturing the majority of us for himself. Now this is a very sad state of affairs, is it not? And how do our pastors and masters meet this terrible situation? Do they make efforts to destroy Old Nick, who they allege is mainly responsible? Do they agitate for more schools for those most needing a rational education? Oh dear no! The people continue to wallow in ignorance, vice and crime, while vast sums of money are spent in erecting churches to do a little more "prattling" in; meanwhile the people are sinking deeper and deeper in the abyss of vice, misery and degradation. Jails, hospitals and lunatic asylums speedily fill us; more have to be built to meet the increase of crime, disease and lunacy; while our large and expensive army of Sky-pilots and Devil-dodgers, instead of being thoroughly ashamed of themselves, strut about and boast of their hospitals, rescue homes, etc., carefully making no mention whatever of the jails and asylums they alone are responsible for. And this disreputable business is continued from day to day.

En passant, just as I was about to close this epistle, the following paragraph, which appeared in the *Calcutta Statesman* of July 22, has been brought to my notice:—

The new cathedral at Liverpool was consecrated on Saturday, July 19, in the presence of their Majesties the King and Queen. The Archbishop of York presided over the service, at which 8 archbishops, 40 bishops and 25 deans were present. The King's speech and the service were broadcasted. The portion of the cathedral consecrated is one-third of the whole, which will be one of the largest cathedrals in the world when it is completed. It will cost £2,000,000.

The above piece of news is apropos of what I have already said. With the housing problem being so acute at present in England, £2,000,000 is a huge amount for another building to do a little "prattle" in. Surely, in these hard times, this money could be better spent without annoyance to the "heavenly father." But I suppose Brother Dorrity thinks quite differently.

JOHN HARRINGTON.

A LOST POEM.

SIR,—Looking through the pages of the *Oracle of Reason* some little time back, I came across the following in the "Notes to Correspondents" in No. 68, dated April 1, 1843:—

What does Hydrocephalous Higgs take us to be? Men whose anti-religious nerves were forged in brass by Vulcan himself? Was his pen inserted, the *Oracle* readers would certainly faint and forget to pay their penny for the number—from which misfortune we should never recover, if they did from their fit. Just to hint how they would be "shocked," the sixteenth stanza is inserted. Eve has spoken in her own and Adam's defence to "his lordship," the landlord of the garden, to very

little purpose, and this is the poet's account of her wasted eloquence:—

Alas! 'twas vain she spoke, the thing was done
My lord grew angry and refused to listen;
And sternly ordered them to cut and run,
When Eve's soft eyes began to glare and glisten.
"Is this your justice?" she again began
"To sack us in this destitute condition?"
Adam get up, my cock, it's no use kneeling,
I'm damned if this old brute has common feeling.

The 16th stanza of

"The Apple: a Legend of Paradise."

Translated from the Egyptian of Cornelius Coppnose by Hydrocephalous Higgs.

A. G. BARKER.

FAITH AND FOLLY.

SIR,—In reply to Mr. Cutner's open letter in your issue of August 17, let me say that a large number of cuttings from various papers are sent out weekly from this office to Boston, U.S.A., some of which appear in the column entitled "Signs of the Times," in the *Christian Science Sentinel*. In the incident referred to, the headings on two cuttings were inadvertently transposed, and this is the explanation of the mistake. It has its comic side, of course, which we appreciate as much as our critic.

It would take far too much space to answer all the questions Mr. Cutner has plied me with, therefore I cannot deal with them all.

Mrs. Eddy rightly claims to have discovered the divine principle which was the basis of the works of the prophets, Jesus Christ, his disciples, and the early Christians. This divine principle never varies, and is capable of being demonstrated at all times by anyone who gains the spiritual understanding necessary, and obeys its rules.

Our critic is not correct in supposing that Jesus did not heal the sick who were at a distance. The centurion's servant, and the nobleman's son are cases in point where he did so.

Mr. Cutner quotes the incident of the blind man healed by Jesus, mentioned in John 9: 6, 7, but evidently he has not seen the spiritual significance of this incident. When Jesus spat on the ground and made clay, he was conforming to the Jewish custom of showing his contempt, in this case of material means of healing. Neither the spittle nor the clay had anything to do with the healing. If they had, the blind would be healed by the same method to-day, but they are not, and cannot be. Jesus' method of healing the blind was clearly revealed in other cases, such as the healing of blind Bartimæus in Mark 10: 46, and the healing of the two blind men in Matthew 9: 27-31.

I mentioned that Christian Scientists study the King James' version of the Bible, which is the authorized Protestant version, to refute the mistaken belief that the Christian Science text-book, "Science and Health, with Key to the Scriptures," by Mary Baker Eddy, is the Christian Science Bible. Through the study of the Christian Science text-book the spiritual interpretation of the Bible has been revealed. Christian Scientists are perfectly aware of the mistakes in the authorized versions of the Bible. Mrs. Eddy herself declares, on page 139 of "Science and Health," "The decisions by vote of Church Councils as to what should and should not be considered Holy Writ; the manifest mistakes in the ancient versions; the thirty thousand different readings in the Old Testament, and the three hundred thousand in the New—these facts show how a mortal and material sense stole into the divine record, with its own hue darkening to some extent the inspired pages. But the mistakes could neither wholly obscure the divine Science of the Scriptures seen from Genesis to Revelation, nor the demonstration of Jesus, nor annul the healing by the prophets, who foresaw that 'the stone which the builders rejected' would become 'the head of the corner.'" Christian Scientists through practical demonstration are restoring "the authenticity and credibility of the Gospels," which the "higher critics" are supposed to "have knocked into smithereens," according to our correspondent.

The teachings of Christ Jesus are practical and can be proved to-day as they were nineteen centuries ago. What evidence have we of Euclid's existence, except the demonstration of his theories in geometry?

Mary Baker Eddy has revealed the Truth to the world in Christian Science, and her life-work proves that she lived the Truth that was revealed to her to the highest of her ability.

With regard to the statement that she gave her age a forty when it was fifty-six, this is not correct. Mrs. Eddy had no cognizance that such a mistake had been made by her husband when giving the required particulars.

CHARLES W. J. TENNANT.

[We should agree with Mr. Tennant that if one can accept the New Testament stories there is little fault to find with Mrs. Eddy. After swallowing the colossal stupidities of the New Testament miracles, it seems over fastidious to haggle over others. But how is Mr. Tennant going to deal with those who will not take the first step?—ED.]

Any Child to Any God.

LORD! a little unspoiled child am I
With childish fancies in my baby mind,
And I am taught that thou art kind,
Yet thro' the paths that wind and wind
I must beseech thee! I know not why.

I am to ask for grace from thee
To make me pure and keep me fair,
Each day to offer thee a prayer
And so assure thy love and care
So, Lord, I ask, and pray you answer me.

Lord, save me from the beasts that stalk
The country lanes in human form
Save me, Lord, from all the rage and storm
Of human passion. Wilt thou reform
The ways in which my baby feet must walk?

O! Lord, stay hands that bruise and burn,
And make them tender to caress!
Teach wanton lips that curse, the way to bless,
And make the pain and suffering less
In illness, when to thee I turn.

O! Lord, I am so frail and small;
I know not why a child has fears
Of parents' wrath. Nor any tears.
Tho' wisdom comes but with the years
And thou above, Lord, knowest all!

O! Lord, thou art so good and great;
Yet crippled mites still walk in pain,
Some babes are tortured—many slain
Whilst all their pleadings seem in vain
And cannot reach thy golden gate!

O! Lord, thou hast so much of Love
What I would take thou wouldst not miss.
A word of understanding—and a kiss,
a hand to guide—not strike—and this
Would reflect glory on thy throne above.

J. DRISCOLL.

Tribunals for heretics were erected all over Europe, yielding unnumbered victims whose torments seemed only to fill their persecutors, with all their Christian charity, with a peculiar satisfaction. The power of Rome was directed mercilessly for centuries against everything that stood in its way. Under the notorious Torquemada (1481-98), in Spain alone, 8,000 heretics were burnt alive, and 90,000 punished with the confiscation of their goods and the most grievous ecclesiastical fines; in the Netherlands, under the rule of Charles V, at least 50,000 men fell victims to the clerical bloodthirst. And while the heavens resounded with the cry of the martyrs, the wealth of half the world was pouring into Rome, to which the whole of Christendom paid tribute; and the self-styled representatives of God on earth and their accomplices (not infrequently Atheists themselves) wallowed in pleasure and vice of every description. "And all these privileges," said the frivolous, syphilitic Pope Leo X, "have been secured to us by the fable of Jesus Christ."—*Haeckel*.

Mr. G. Whitehead's Mission.

Our report from Newcastle last week is exceedingly satisfactory. By dodging the rain, seven well-attended meetings have been held, the speaker finding the audience waiting for him at every one. Mr. Carlton has acted as chairman and Mr. J. G. Bartram and Miss Bartram have worked indefatigably over the collections and sales of literature, the latter being good. A pleasing feature has been the absence of acrimonious opponents and police interference, the opposition received being quite good-natured. This week Mr. Whitehead is in Leeds. The meetings will be held in Victoria Square. Further particulars will be found in the Guide notice.

Obituary.

DEATH OF DR. C. R. NIVEN.

It was with a great shock that on the afternoon of August 18 I received news of the sudden death of my old and dear friend, Dr. Charles Ritchie Niven, of Liverpool. Of Scotch extraction, Dr. Niven had been for many years settled in Liverpool, and his work and character had won him the respect and admiration of a very wide circle of friends and acquaintances. He was a man of very wide interests, of sterling honesty, and who brought to his studies a detachment of mind and an independence of view that marked the genuinely scientific thinker. But with an independence of view there went also a genuine reverence for the pioneer work of others, and in his readiness to pay them homage there was often scant justice done to his own contribution to the end achieved. A few weeks ago Liverpool medical men presented him and his wife with a gold watch and chain, a cheque, a silver salver, and an address as an indication of their appreciation of his work in the city.

He was never of robust health, and to all pain and suffering he displayed a sensitiveness—amounting almost to womanliness—that was usually marked by an affected brusqueness that never deceived his friends. Nor did it deceive his patients. For many of these he was both Father Confessor and medical attendant, and of my own knowledge I know how deeply many of these are indebted to him. None will miss him more than these.

Unlike the majority of men engaged in public work in this country, Dr. Niven never disguised his hostility to religious beliefs. He was an uncompromising Freethinker, although ever ready to recognize the good in all men whatsoever their beliefs. Some of his oldest friends were staunch Christians, but his intense hatred of shams, formalities, and, above all, of intellectual make-believes, prevented his hiding his opinions on a subject on which so many practice dissimulation. I should be surprised to learn he ever lost a friend on this account. After all, character tells in the long run, and his sterling qualities won him respect and affection in spite of differences of belief.

His death occurred suddenly on the night of August 17-18, and the interment took place in Anfield Cemetery on the 21st. I went to Liverpool as soon as I had got rid of the current issue of the FREETHINKER, and on Thursday conducted a secular service in the presence of a large number of people, many of whom had learned of Liverpool's loss from the wireless news that was broadcasted on the Monday evening. For myself I can only say that I found speaking in such circumstances no easy task. When one does not feel speech is robbed of its vitality; and when one really feels one is more inclined to silence than to speech. Still, it was only fitting that someone should try and put into words some of the respect and the affection felt by those present, and that some public tribute should be paid to so brave, so fine, and so essentially gentle a character. The feeling that one was doing this helped to make a little easier the twenty most trying minutes I have ever experienced.

Dr. Niven leaves behind him a widow and two daughters—both of the latter following the profession their father loved.

They have lost a good husband and parent, and I mourn the death of a very dear friend.—CHAPMAN COHEN.

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.

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, 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. H. C. White, a Lecture.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 3.30 and 6.30, Mr. R. H. Rosetti will lecture.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY.—Ramble to Orpington and Knockholt. Conducted by Mr. F. M. Overy. Trains: Charing Cross, 10 a.m.; London Bridge (S.E. & C.R.), 10.7 a.m. Cheap return ticket to Orpington, 1s. 10d. Ramblers bring own lunch.

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

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

LEEDS BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Square): Friday, August 29, at 8.15, Mr. Lew Davis; Saturday, August 30, Mr. George Whitehead; Sunday, August 31, at 7; Monday, September 1, and each evening during the week at 8.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S.—Mr. F. P. Corrigan lectures as follows: August 30, Corner of Claremont Road and Park Avenue (Alexandra Park); August 31, Stevenson Square; September 1, Devonshire Street (All Saints); September 2, Clopton Street (Hulme Town Hall); September 3, Devonshire Street; September 5, Medlock Street (The Dolphin). All meetings at 7.30.

MR. G. WHITEHEAD'S MISSION.—September 6, Wolverhampton; September 13 and 20, 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.

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