

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. 42

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19, 1924

PRICE THREEPENCE.

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page
<i>Freedom of Opinion.—The Editor</i> - - - - -	657
<i>The Value of Personal Testimony in Religion.—J. T. Lloyd</i> - - - - -	658
<i>A Doubter's Dream.—Mimnermus</i> - - - - -	660
<i>Thomas Carlyle.—Arthur Lynch</i> - - - - -	661
<i>Inspiration; Education; and Other Matters.—Vincent J. Hands</i> - - - - -	662
<i>Our Sustentation Fund.—Chapman Cohen</i> - - - - -	665
<i>Lord Parmoor's Mistake.—F. J. Gould</i> - - - - -	666
<i>The Holy Child.—C. Clayton Dove</i> - - - - -	667
<i>Chats With Children.—George Bedborough</i> - - - - -	668
<i>The Way of the World</i> - - - - -	669
<i>Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letter to the Editor, etc.</i>	

Views and Opinions.

Freedom of Opinion.

We are not concerned in this paper with purely political issues, and we are not going to pass any opinion upon what is called "the political crisis" that has just arisen. We are to have another election, and in a very little while the country will be called upon to select a new Government of either high-minded, virtuous gentlemen or low-down unscrupulous adventurers. But which is which depends entirely upon the kind of politics that one favours, or—so far as large numbers of the electors are concerned—the colour of the daily paper that is read. But the defeat of the Government arose on a matter that involves a principle in which Freethinkers are specially concerned, and which this journal is maintained to vindicate. The Government had instituted and then withdrawn a prosecution against a man for writing an article urging soldiers and sailors to form committees that should be ready to fight on behalf of a certain class. And in explaining why the prosecution was withdrawn, the Attorney-General, Sir Patrick Hastings, remarked that all prosecutions for opinion must necessarily be undesirable. The Prime Minister added that he did not like the prosecution because it advertised the party responsible for the article. And the Attorney-General, too, explained that he went into the matter, after the prosecution had been ordered, and found that the prosecuted man's antecedents, with other circumstances, made a successful issue rather doubtful. So the matter ended so far as the courts were concerned.

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Our Need for Free Expression.

To all who value freedom of opinion it would have been far more satisfactory had both the Prime Minister and the Attorney-General said that they were against prosecutions for opinion and had done with it. That would have proclaimed a plain and intelligent principle, and one which we need proclaiming more to-day than ever. But had this been the case the prosecution would never have taken place, and the statement of principle would have been made when the question was first asked about the article which formed the subject of the prosecution. And there was never a time during the past two centuries

at least when the principle of intellectual freedom needed to be more strongly emphasized, and more clearly recognized by the mass of the people. When the Christian Church stood as the obvious champion of intolerance, and when it threatened social and political activities in the name of religious purity, the need for toleration was so plain that it could easily be recognized by anyone interested in the progress of society. But, on the other hand, now religious organizations have learned caution in the matter of open and avowed persecution, there has been a noteworthy and a great extension of Government activity in the political and social spheres, and during the last fifty years this has involved continuous attempts on the part of the Government of the day to manipulate opinion in this or that direction. And precisely because this attempt to regulate opinion is concerned with immediately practical issues, and also because the action of Government officials familiarize the general mind with the exercise of authority by appointed persons, we have had a decided weakening of the attachment to the principle of intellectual freedom which the avowed intolerance of religious organizations unconsciously did so much to foster.

* * *

Opinion and the State.

There is no great difficulty in stating to-day the case for intellectual freedom in matters of religious belief. Dogmatic religious doctrines have been so riddled by criticism, the belief of educated men and women is of so nebulous a character, and Freethinkers themselves are so numerous, that those in authority hesitate to deny freedom of belief in theory, even though they may resist it in practice. But in the field of politics there is an appeal to the unthinking which imposes upon numbers, one which Governments have always resorted to, but which, when analysed, is not different in principle to that on which religious opposition to freedom of thought was based. Commonly it is assumed that in the case of teachings which it is said attack the foundations of the State the State is justified as a measure of self-protection in suppressing them, and also in punishing those who disseminate such opinions. But who is to say what teachings are actually destructive of the State, bearing in mind that what is nearly always meant by the term is the form which the State happens to have at the time? It is the party in power that must decide, or at most those who are in agreement with the form of the State then existing. No attention whatever is paid to the fact that in nearly every case they who are accused of destroying the State are actually aiming at building up a better State than the one they are attacking. Logically one might as reasonably accuse those who declaim an existing water supply as impure or inadequate as wishing to prevent people getting water at all. The rebel is much more often one with a perfect passion of building than for destruction. His misfortune is—in the eye of authority—that he wishes to destroy as a condition of reconstruction. And when we analyse the justification for attacking an opinion put

forward by authority it usually amounts to no more than that it does not like the opinion in question.

* * *

New Presbyter and Old Priest.

Now I know of no reason that will justify the suppression of opinion by the State that will not also justify it by the Christian Church. Nay, every argument that is used by the State was used by the Church. The Christian Church did not suppress an opinion because it was an opinion different from that which it proclaimed itself, but because of the consequences such an opinion were likely to produce, either in this world or the next. The justification put forward by a Government on behalf of its attempts to suppress an opinion is that it strikes at an orderly state of society—or would demoralize the army, or the navy, or rob men of respect for particular institutions, or teach them to disobey constituted authority, etc. But these are substantially the arguments of the Christian Church. The Church said—I put on one side any argument about man's immortal soul—that disbelief in religion tended to destroy social order. This is not an unheard-of argument to-day, although not many will publicly go so far as the Rev. R. F. Horton, who once wished to ostracise unbelievers from human society. But as it was said that unbelief made morality impossible, would destroy marriage, and so forth, the Church said it was its moral duty to crush it. Catholic legislators were in deadly earnest when they said Protestantism struck at the roots of the existing social order, and even a Protestant like Milton wished to deny Roman Catholics the right to freedom for exactly the same reason. It is a plain historical fact that whenever it has been thought necessary to justify the persecution of an opinion it has been done on the very grounds to which purely secular governments appeal. The names the Church called its opponents, a government calls its critics. And in either case examination shows that the opinion is one with which those in power are in fundamental disagreement.

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A Missed Opportunity.

Of course, I place in a category by itself the publications of opinions about individuals. They might properly come under the head of assaults on the person. Nor am I seriously concerned with those who so long as freedom of discussion is permitted advocate the use of force as a method of bringing about desired changes. They who wish to apply force to others should be the last to complain when it is applied to themselves. My point here is that I do not know of any argument that will justify the suppression of an opinion in the field of politics that will not also justify it in the field of religion. But so far as an opinion is concerned with the existence of a God, or the soul, or the monarchy, or the right to refuse to take part in war, or with any existing social institution or practice, and so far as suppression is concerned, they all seem to me to be upon the same level. Mr. Macdonald said he objected to this particular prosecution because it would advertise the parties prosecuted. That seems to me a very poor reason. It implies that Mr. Macdonald would have had no serious objection to it if it had been possible to seize and imprison the writer of the article without the public being aware of it. In my opinion Mr. Macdonald missed a golden opportunity of saying boldly and straightforwardly that he did not believe in prosecuting anyone for an expression of opinion, and that so long as he was at the head of the Government he would be no party to putting the law into motion for such a purpose. That would have been an object lesson to the rest of the world, it would

have disarmed criticism, it would have left the opinion to the court of public opinion for judgment. It would have been a statement of principle and of courage. The political world needs such a lesson. And many are inclined to forget that most men and women admire courage, while not a few will respect the affirmation of a principle, even though they may disagree with it.

* * *

Opinion as a Social Force.

When we get rid of the none too clean atmosphere of party politics and religious controversy, it is not difficult to appreciate the grounds upon which objection may be raised to the suppression of an opinion. This is not that the opinion suppressed is correct, or that it is not one which if carried into practice would lead to evil. The root reason for demanding free expression of opinion is that its denial strikes at all healthy mental growth and social progress. Whether natural selection be the important factor that it was once claimed to be, or not, it is certain that evolution proceeds by the utilization of variations, and in human society there is no force of greater value than opinion. It is the solvent of old institutions and the creator of new ones. I have said often before, but it would appear to be worth saying again, that whatever may be the strength of the reasons for permitting the free expression of opinions that may be right, the reasons are much stronger for giving that privilege to opinions that are most likely to be wrong. The fuller the expression the easier and the quicker the disproof. This applies all round—to religion, to politics, and to all social customs and institutions. There is not a single institution we have that would not be better for the air of free criticism blowing round it. The plea that ignorant people may be misled by an argument they have neither the ability nor the learning to rebut, is really an indictment of the social order which permits so much ignorance to exist. The protection against false opinion is not the policeman but a better educated public. And no question of religious conviction or of political trickery should permit us to lose sight of this important truth for a single moment.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Value of Personal Testimony in Religion.

DR. WILFRED T. GRENFELL, C.M.G., M.D., of Labrador, is an exceptionally remarkable man. Forty years ago he was living in Bethnal Green, and working in the London Hospital. He was there for a number of years; but over thirty years ago he began to labour among deep-sea fishermen of Labrador, and there he has been ever since, rendering enormous services for the people to whose welfare he has dedicated his life. During the war he served as a doctor at the front. A few Sundays ago he was induced to preach in the City Temple, and the subject of his address was "What Christ has done for me." He said: "I am neither a theologian nor a politician. My rôle in life has been that of a very ordinary surgeon, and largely amongst seafaring people." He tells us that we "cannot go to a scientific man to-day and say, 'Well, what about the matter of which this body consists?' He would say, 'It consists of Atoms.' 'Yes, and what do atoms consist of?' 'Oh, they consist of the nucleus system that we believe in now, electrons moving round a central proton.' You say, 'Yes, but what about the proton?'" This is very interesting and playfully stated; but, after all, Dr. Grenfell is more of a theologian than a scientist. As a specimen of his scientific unfairness take

the following treatment of "proton" which, he says, a scientific man calls "a form of motion":—

Well, is it something moving or nothing moving? We have had a great many discussions of this sort in America, and the general impression is rather that it is nothing moving round in a circle which makes up this body. So we must not expect to get absolute truth that we can hand out in a way to convince others or ourselves if it has not been our actual experience in life.

There is no such thing as absolute truth in the universe, truth being a relative term. What science offers us is not absolute truth, but theories which account for and explain most of the known facts concerned. Evolution, for example, is a theory of the origin, nature, and manifestations of the universe, and though at first it was violently denounced and opposed, it is admitted now that all the facts discovered since its introduction have distinctly tended to the confirmation of its truth. Now, quite illogically, though no doubt with perfect sincerity, Dr. Grenfell exclaims "That is why I venture to take as my subject, What Christ has meant to me." That is to say, because science cannot give him absolute truth he flies for refuge to Jesus Christ. The truth about the good doctor is that he is a simple-minded Christian. To him the Bible is the very Word of God. He even treats the Book of the Acts as verbally inspired, and believes every word of it. He believes the story of the healing of the lame man related at the beginning of the third chapter. He represents Peter and John as saying:—

You may say what you like, but I tell you we saw this man healed, we were witnesses of it. We had not a cent of money in our own pockets; neither of us can read a word; but you know this man was lame from his birth and now he walks. We did not do it. You know we tried several times and only made things worse. But now, by the power of Jesus Christ, this man got up and walked.

As already hinted, Dr. Grenfell is a man whom we highly respect and esteem. He is no egotist, neither has he the dogmatic disposition. Listen to the following:—

I always thank God that when I read my Bible to try to make up my mind about these questions, I read these words: "He that follows me shall have the light of life." He never said we should get it from current science, whether from Bradlaugh, or Oliver Lodge, or any other scientific man of the world. Of all the men in the world they are the last to say: "We are infallible like a Pope, or other types of people who say: If you do not believe as I do you are going to hell." Scientific men are not of that kind. They are not dogmatic.

The amazing fact is that in some mystic sense Dr. Grenfell regards Christ as infallible. No one who did not imagine that he was infallible could possibly have declared: "He that follows me shall have the light of life." The doctor says: "Thank God, he did not say: Do as the preacher says. He said: Do as I do. Try it out, we can all do that." As a matter of fact, multitudes have faithfully followed Jesus without finding the light of life, while, on the other hand, those who heed the dictates of reason have no lack of that serener light. Without fear of hell or hope of heaven they bravely lead lives of high-toned morality and noble-minded unselfishness and vicarious service. "Try it out," cries the Labrador missionary, but is he not aware of the fact that millions have tried it out and found it wanting? They have minutely examined the Gospels in the light of modern criticism and learned that as historical documents they are wholly unreliable. Even the Modernist party in the Anglican Church have nearly all come to the same conclusion. What did Christ

teach? Assuming his historicity, he never wrote a line, and Dr. Grenfell states that Peter and John could not read a word, much less write. Granting that Jesus was a great teacher, how were his sayings preserved? None who heard them could have taken them down. It is also a well-known fact that not one of our Gospels was composed by one of the twelve disciples. Furthermore, it is absolutely certain that the Jesus depicted in the Four Gospels never lived at all, being a positively impossible being. With all these stupendous difficulties of belief staring him in the face Dr. Grenfell innocently asks us to "try it out." Let him bear this fact in mind and ponder it seriously, that Christianity has been tried out by myriads who are now morally bound to reject it as the greatest and worst of all superstitions; and among these rejectors are many of the most enlightened and intelligent people in this and other lands.

Dr. Grenfell informs us that the day before he delivered this sermon he went to see his old club playing football at Richmond, and then adds:—

There were six thousand people looking on, and it was a great game. If there had not been anybody looking on and taking interest I do not suppose there would have been any football. We all help by going and doing our best, and I can assure you such an audience as this to-night is a great inspiration to anybody, and many a man will go when you tell him he can put something in who won't go when you say, It is a soft job, and you can get something out of it.

Are we to infer from that passage that if there were no church attendance the Church would cease to be and Christianity with it? We are not quite sure that the Doctor means that. All we know is that if the Church were to die out Christianity could not long survive it.

We have not clearly learned from this discourse what Christ means to Dr. Grenfell. Is he anything more to him than an inspiration? Of course, we must not forget that he professes to be neither a theologian nor a politician, but we venture to assert that he is both, and that he is a much more efficient politician than theologian. No one can be a follower of Christ without having formed some conception of his person, work, and character, and the possessor and advocate of such a conception is of necessity a theologian. What we strongly doubt is the practical value of any public testimony concerning it. This is because we disapprove of all theology, looking upon it as an evil which has always exerted a malignant influence in the world. In spite of that unalterable conviction we are glad to recognize Dr. Grenfell as a genuine lover and benefactor of the people among whom he lives, whose zeal in the work of elevating and ennobling them both socially, economically, and morally knows no bounds. He is hard at work in supplying the Labradorians with sound education and civilization. He builds orphanages and hospitals, and the need of wholesome education is fully realized. He says:—

I went round the Universities in America; I said, we have no money. You are going to take holidays and will probably spend a lot of money. Why not come and give us a hand in Labrador? I wanted fifty men, I had over a hundred offer to come. The overseer was the Professor of Higher Mathematics of the University of Princeton, and a very admirable boss he was. He was my cook on the hospital ship the next year, and a better cook I never had. A man that can make an omelette for six people out of one egg is a cook.

J. T. LLOYD.

Man is greater than all phantoms. Humanity is greater than all creeds, than all books.—Colonel Ingersoll.

A Doubter's Dream.

This mystery of vending spiritual gifts is nothing but a trade.—*Jonathan Swift.*

Liberty, a word without which all other words are vain.—*Robert Ingersoll.*

MARK TWAIN, during his lifetime, was regarded in England as a humorist, and justly so. He was, however, so much more than that, for he was a great man, a great citizen, and a great writer. Mark Twain was the national author of the United States in a sense in which we in England to-day have no national writer. The feeling for him among his own people was like that of our grandparents for Walter Scott, or like that of our fathers for Charles Dickens. There was admiration in it, gratitude, pride, and, above all, affection. This was shown at one of the last public dinners Mark Twain attended. When he came in he was escorted to the table, and the whole company, in which no man was undistinguished, rose to greet him, and remained standing till he had taken his seat.

This full flame of personal affection went out to Mark Twain for what he had written and what he had done. His brave and fiery dashes against tyranny, humbug, and corruption attracted men no less than the irresistible laughter of his humour. The incident of his financial failure, which, like Walter Scott's, was wholly the work of others, raised him to the rank of the world's heroes. For he assumed a moral where there was no legal responsibility, and he worked hard for years to pay off the huge debts of others. It takes an uncommon man to engage in and win such a fight with fate as that. Such a man's humour was bound to be interwoven with seriousness. "Papa," said his young daughter, "can make bright jokes, and he enjoys funny things, but still he is more interested in earnest books and earnest subjects."

Mark Twain, in private life, was a thorough Freethinker, but he always wrote under the restraint of a family full of Puritanism and religious prejudice. His pious wife edited his jokes, his equally pious publishers pruned them, until his readers scarcely realized the extent of his Freethought. Some of his serious attempts at philosophical writing, such as "What is Man?" were suppressed, or else withdrawn from circulation by the unseen hand of piety. We shall never know what we lost by this pious procedure, or what we missed by this kindly philosopher being trammelled by the critic on the hearth, and censor in the office.

Fortunately, Mark Twain's literary executor, Mr. Bigelow Paine, was anything but a narrow-minded Puritan, and to him we owe the publication of some highly interesting manuscripts, which would otherwise had seen the fire instead of the light of day. *What is Man?* has been issued by the firm of Chatto and Windus, and *The Mysterious Stranger*, a more important volume, has been published by the house of Harper. The latter book is the strongest expression of Mark Twain's views on religion that has appeared, and will prove of unusual interest to all those who share the author's philosophical and sceptical views.

The book deals with religion in a spirit of what old Rabelais calls "sanglante derision." The mysterious stranger is Satan, who appears as a handsome youth named "Philip Traum." A fierce attack is made on the god-idea, which is described as so monstrous that Satan himself wonders why man does not regard the universe as a nightmare. The profanity is not veiled, for "Philip" goes on:—

Strange, because they are so frankly and hysterically insane—like all dreams; a God who could

make good children as easily as bad, yet preferred to make bad ones; who could have made every one of them happy, yet never made a single happy one; who made them prize their better life, yet stingily cut it short; who gave his angels eternal happiness unearned, yet required his other children to earn it; who gave his angels painless lives, yet cursed his other children with biting miseries and maladies of mind and body; who mouths justice and invented hell—mouths mercy and invented hell—mouths Golden Rules, and forgiveness multiplied by seventy times seven, and invented hell; who mouths morals to other people and has none himself; who frowns upon crimes, yet commits them all; who created man without invitation, then tries to shuffle the responsibility for man's acts upon man, instead of honourably placing it where it belongs, upon Himself; and finally, with altogether Divine obtruseness, invites this poor, abused slave to worship him!

The sceptical "Philip" sums up by saying:—

You perceive now that these things are all impossible except in a dream. You perceive that they are pure and puerile insanities, the silly creations of an imagination that is not conscious of its freaks.

So Mark Twain holds the noses of his readers to the grindstone of thought, forcing them from complacency to discontent, stinging them into sensitiveness. Under the relentless rhetoric we are pierced through and through with a sense of the contrast between what life is, according to religious ideas, and what it might be.

What use is "religion" in life? That is really Mark Twain's question, and it is a serious one. Christians may retort that there are many ways in which "religion" manifests itself. Listen to Mark Twain's denunciation of another and older superstition than the Christian Religion:—

Within the time of men still living eight hundred Indian widows willingly and rejoicingly burned themselves to death on the bodies of their dead husbands in a single year. Eight hundred would do it this year if the British Government would let them. India has two million gods, and worships them all. In religion all other countries are paupers; India is the only millionaire.

Writing such as this is like corrosive acid that cats into religious complacency. It shows us another and more serious Mark Twain than we knew, the Mark who loved Robert Ingersoll "this side idolatry." It was, indeed, fortunate that the great humorist's literary executor was a man of integrity like himself. Otherwise, ordinary readers would never have heard of this book. It is highly significant that this attack on Godism was written by one who was, in his generation, the most eminent man of letters in the United States, and whose books are still a large asset of national pride. The volume shows Ariel turned Prospero, and shows in the transformation how impressionable and extraordinary a spirit Ariel was. When Mark Twain died, the event eclipsed some of the gaiety of the English-speaking peoples. Despite his motley dress, he was ever a knight-errant charging down the wind at the hosts of superstition. Honour was his shield, and truth tipped his sharp lance. The lustre of his fame must deepen with the progress of the years:—

What good is like to this
To do worthy the writing, and to write
Worthy the reading and the world's delight.

MIMNERMUS.

It is as foolish to pray for rain as it would be to pray that the sun should set in the middle of the day.—*Winwood Reade.*

Thomas Carlyle.

THOMAS CARLYLE was a great and noble man, the profoundest thinker of our day, who having soared to the heights of German philosophy rendered it in his own flashing style and wondrous touch familiar even to us all; one of the most brilliant historians of all time whose intuition of human nature was only equalled by his vast knowledge of the movements of the world, whose graphic picturing brought with the vividness of reality to our minds the strange scenes and the great characters of the French Revolution, and of the reign of Frederick the Great, but who even in the flaming intensity of his prophet-like utterance remained always true and scrupulously exact; who left the imprint of genius on all his work, and who gained—such is the reward of good principles and devoted life—the approval, in as far as it could be extended to a man of letters, of the great Queen Victoria herself.

I tremble with a strange fear when I write these words for they reproduce the dope of Oxford which was so sedulously doled out to us till we could hardly think in other terms; and becoming infected I, too, accepted this sort of utterance as gospel truth. I have survived, but even now I feel the vague terror in my bones as one who had passed through the plague One day I asked Rodin, the sculptor, what it was that made the Greeks so great in sculpture, and I suggested two or three reasons at which he shook his head, and then he said: It is we who are bad sculptors, because it takes us forty years to work out of the false teaching of the schools, and the great majority fail even in that preliminary.....

And now to return to Carlyle. I have worked out of the star-struck stage of literary hero-worship, but I hope still to deal fairly with Carlyle; I only desire to see him as he was, in his proper setting, and to estimate his character and performance in the true perspective.

Sartor Resartus is still a great book to me, for I have read it more often than any other I know, and still with fresh delight, but the glamour of its mystic philosophy is gone. On that score I think Carlyle the best part of a humbug. The story of his philosophy in *Sartor* is this: Infatuated with most things German he had imbibed—without thinking, as one imbibes religion—the mystical doctrines of Kant. Now the little Königsberger, wishing to keep his Pure Reason unspotted from the world, found a habitation for her in the dubious but inaccessible realm of the Ding-an-sich—the Thing-in-itself; and from this safe seclusion the lady in question delivered her Categorical Imperatives, though how she got them over the foothlights neither Kant, nor any one of his deluded followers, has ever attempted to explain.

Fichte, a disciple of Kant, was by temperament a hot gospeller, but his capacity for clear thinking was not on a par with the buffeting violence of his mental activity. Fichte, then, tried to humanize the Ding-in-sich, and, as with most religionists, creating a god after his own image, he made the Ding-in-sich energetic certainly, but futile. The principal virtue became *Entsagen* (renunciation), and this doctrine he handed down to Carlyle, who, mixing it up with a medley derived from other sources, even from Comte, made it the spinal marrow of his *Sartor Resartus*. This title means the Tailor Rehabilitated; that is to say, since the ultimate reality is the Ding-in-sich, and we behold only the superficial appearances that cover it, so too in the details of our daily lives we are governed by the symbols, the dress of things.

Carlyle works out this theme for us in his book, charming in its idyllic pictures, astonishing in fine

flaming passages, irresistible in its humour—yes, truly a work of genius—for it is under its own whimsical guise the spiritual autobiography of Thomas Carlyle himself. In this book too he displays artistry not only in the parts of rare inspiration, but in the structure of the book. There is something of a subtle cunning here, for Carlyle's weakness as a philosopher was that he lacked the essential; that is to say, consecutiveness of thought and cogency of argument; but in the form which he has adopted of giving impressionist touches of his *Teufelsdröckh*, he can give flashes here and there that are quite illuminating, and he can cover the lack of order, or organic structure, in his thoughts simply by skipping off to a new movement.

Of course, he leads us nowhere, and if an admirer of Carlyle's were asked, as the mathematician asked about the ballet, what does it prove? I hardly think he could give a very convincing answer. Yet *Sartor*, once you cease to remember Carlyle as a thinker, is a little work of delight.

I have dwelt upon it to some extent because it contains in its matrix all that he afterwards accomplished. We generally find in an author one book—the *Endymion* of Keats, or the *Queen Mab* of Shelley, for instance—which is essential in the sense that if it be removed the others are less intelligible, if it be preserved the others could be foreshadowed or developed. And so in *Sartor* I see the *French Revolution*, *Frederick the Great*, *Heroes and Hero-worship*, *Past and Present*; even the fact of Carlyle's essential weakness. Carlyle, weak? Yes, strong language does not imply a strong character. I know that he was always clamouring for the "strong man"—I have seen too many of these fakery to have much faith in them—but that is usual with neurotics, from Carlyle to Swinburne to Kipling, to the lady novelists who soar into fame on the wings of best sellers.

In his school days he tells us, from behind his mask, that he was "Der Weinende"—the weeper. That chimes in with his adoption of Fichte's nonsense about *Entsagen*, for if you care to look around with this hint, you will find that people cleave to their religion not by reason but by temperament—the Asiatic takes to Brahminism or Buddhism, the dour Scot to Calvinism, egad, there's something there to scorch your throat as it goes down!

And so Der Weinende took to *Entsagen*, and never through life did he show that he could stand the gaff. *Entsagen* is the doctrine of a quitter, and as between the two thinkers and moralists give me Tom Sayers who, when his seconds suggested throwing up the sponge, opened his flickering eyes and growled, "Bring me my coffin first."

Carlyle was violent, intolerant, cantankerous, rude, vehement, flamboyant, hysterical, but he was not strong. Moreover he was a sycophant. There are some words which it hurts me to write, and this is one of them. All the misery and wrong I have seen in the world—disease, famine, slaughter—that has filled me with what Voltaire called a "male tristesse" (the sadness of a man), but it has never overborne me, but sycophancy—that reeks of decadence. Certainly I have been so familiar with it in politics that I have become tolerant in a measure, that is to say, I put politicians in a place apart; I can stand a tame Prime Minister, a tame Chancellor of the Exchequer, a tame General, a tame Admiral—we must get used to these if we are going to live at all—but an Author! that is to say, one of those gifted and superlative beings that Carlyle himself in his *Heroes and Hero Worship* talks of; a tame Poet! I think of Carlyle and Tennyson; I veil my eyes, I drop my pen..... I think of Robbie Burns, or of my old friend Byron; either makes the beam kick even with

the whole congregated petty brood of laureates sitting on the other scale.

Carlyle's *Frederick the Great* was in its inspiration an offer of sycophancy to Queen Victoria. The secret of his social life was that he had hoped to be taken by the Queen and the Prince Consort as a sort of intimate counsellor, a power behind the throne. The whole conception was ridiculous, for Carlyle had no constructive ability nor the flair of the man of common-sense; he was much inferior to Albert the Good in either of these attributes. But note, he never had the pluck to put himself forward, to stand as candidate, so to speak; but in his sensitive vanity-tortured soul he squirmed and postured and yearned; and incidentally wrote abysmal stuff praising the German character as above all others.

All that was not only admissible, it was laudable in those piping days, and so—I thought I would come to Oxford—from the great seats of official cant came some after some, some couched even in scientific form, of which the purport was that the German was the salt of the earth, the Celt a rascally little degenerate, and we, they cried, we British, weren't we, the major part of us, and all that was good of us, German, from the Great White Queen downwards?

If of late we have changed all that the reason is that according to our political exigencies so also vary the eternal verities. And thus we have Carlyle's *Frederick the Great*, in which he carries us along through all the dreary gossip and petty slaughters of his delectable heroes, amongst them notably that drunken, brutal drill-sergeant, Frederick's father; while at the same time he sneers at Voltaire.

I say by way of proviso that I do not speak disparagingly of Germans; I read the great German men of science day by day; but Carlyle in his sheer perversity in his later life talked of science in a manner as silly as Berkeley himself, for indeed the root was the same in both—that mystic spirituality of overwrought brains of monkery that has descended to us from the Thousand Years of Night.

Carlyle did not know the Germans, for it never occurred to him to study them *in situ*; and still less did he know the French. His *French Revolution* is an epic wonderful enough, but it is an epic of Scotsmen, or as a Gallic wit said, French written with a Scotch accent. I did not always think so, but I am reminded how after seeing Charles Warner in "Drink," taken from Zola's *l'Assomoir*, I saw that play in Paris, and kept involuntarily nudging myself, "How French they are!" So when after Carlyle I read Michelet.

I hate it that I have to write unappreciatively of Carlyle, so high was he at his best, such a fund of the Scottish ore of goodness was in the man; but then he failed us, like an office-seeking politician, in all where principle alone was at stake. After that let him take what he will, along with his Prussian O.M., his wonderful mimetic gift, his power of portraiture, of caricature more seizing than life, of riant humour, withering scorn; yet Carlyle was not a great man, not a strong man; he will live in history as a "character," a wit, and in a peculiar sense an amuseur of the Court.

ARTHUR LYNCH.

It is not growing like a tree
In bulk, doth make man better be;
Or standing long an oak, three hundred year,
To fall a log at last, dry, bald, and sear:
A lily of a day
Is fairer far in May,
Although it fall and die that night;
It was the plant, the flower of light.
In small proportions we just beauties see;
And in short measures life may perfect be.

—Ben Jonson.

Inspiration; Education; and Other Matters.

It's a funny thing. I sat down with the intention of writing something really good; something inspiring; something elevating; something that would leave the world a little better than I found it (my pious friends are always telling me I should leave the world a little better than I found it. It seems to me that's God's job. I'm a union man, I am); I felt I could do it too, I was bubbling over with inspiration. I always know when I'm inspired, I get a worked-up sort of feeling in my inside—the wife says it's indigestion. She is like that. Anyhow, I've been sitting here for two hours waiting for the spirit to move me and it hasn't moved me yet. It's my opinion there's no reliance to be placed in spirits since the war. I did nearly make a start once, but a crowd of rowdies passed the window singing something about a girl that men forget, and it put me off my stroke. At first I had an impulse to rush outside and join them. I am like that. I'm like the Irishman who, seeing a crowd collecting, sent his young daughter out to enquire if there was going to be a fight—" 'cos if there is, father would like to be in it."

Then I thought I'd try my hand at poetry, with the following result:—

WILD OATS.

(In the Thomas Hood manner.)

Gracie Gladeyes was a dancer
In the Kiss Me Quick revue;
A dainty, dark-eyed prancer,
And she knew a thing or two.

Her carmined lips, and swaying hips,
The rage of all the halls,
Enchanted Percy Tiddletwit:
A curate in the stalls.

So Percy when the show was o'er,
His face with wonder lit,
Made his way round to the stage door;
It led him to the pit!

'Twould be an act of mercy
To leave the rest, in case
Sweet Grace she fell for Percy,
And the curate fell from grace.

That's not bad, you know. When I say not bad, I mean it's a change from Tennyson and the hundred best books. But it isn't elevating. It wouldn't elevate a cow. Somehow I'm afraid I'm going to disappoint my friends of the Ethical Society once more. I know they cherish hopes of my ultimate salvation. It all comes of being so attractive, as the old lady said when she was struck by lightning. I do wish they'd let me go to hell in my own fashion. Even as a lad I resisted all attempts at setting my feet in the straight and narrow path. Viewed from the standpoint of moral rectitude I fear my education was hardly a success.

Speaking of education reminds me of the story of the very good little boy who wanted to go to sea. And the captain asked him what he could do. He said he could do the multiplication table backwards, and paste seaweed in a book; that he knew how many times the word "begat" occurred in the Old Testament; and could recite "the Boy Stood on the Burning Deck" and Wordsworth's "We are Seven."

"Werry good—werry good indeed," said the man of the sea, "and ken yer kerry coals?" And thereby hangs a tale.

In the particular scholastic establishment in which I had my mind warped (you have probably noticed there was something wrong with me by now), the gentleman who bathed me at wisdom's font for five guineas a term, boasted the possession of several letters after his name. If you want really to impress

people and get a reputation for erudition, you *must* have letters after your name. I'd like the whole alphabet after mine. If, however, you wish to learn something of value, shun be-lettered men as you would poison. They only know what they've been told.

As I was saying, at the particular school where I received my education preparatory to being let loose on an innocent and unsuspecting world, there was an imposing array of items in the curriculum which—now I come to look back upon them—it was sheer waste of time to study. There was Algebra, Old Testament "history" and New Testament mythology; then there was court scandals and royal intrigues, dignified in the curriculum as History. (The only historical fact that comes to me out of the past with any distinctness is "Battle of Hastings, 1066"—a phenomenon I have found in others whom I have consulted.) There was nothing really useful in the battle of life, such as "Do others or they will do you"; how to draw the dole while working; or, how to float a bogus company. The present system of education seems designed to fill the ranks of the clergy, or provide them with dupes.

There was one subject, however, which I thought *would* be useful—French. It was a subject on which I flattered myself I was *au fait*. It was not until I went to France and found that no one understood me that my disillusionment began. Like Jerome K. Jerome, I had been led to believe that the French nation attached a quite inordinate importance to pens, ink and paper.

Says Mr. Jerome:—

"Have you pens, ink, and paper?" is the first question asked by one Frenchman of another on their meeting. The other fellow has not any of them, as a rule, but says that the uncle of his brother has got them all three. The first fellow doesn't appear to care a hang about the uncle of the other fellow's brother; what he wants to know now is, has the neighbour of the other fellow's mother got 'em? "The neighbour of my mother has no pens, no ink, and no paper," replies the other man, beginning to get wild. "Has the child of thy female gardener some pens, some ink, or some paper?" He has him there! After worrying enough about these wretched inks, pens, and paper to make everybody miserable, it turns out that the child of his own female gardener hasn't any. Such a discovery would shut up anyone but a French exercise man. It has no effect at all, though, on this shameless creature. He never thinks of apologising, but says his aunt has some mustard.

In reality I found things were not a bit like that. And so my last, lingering feeling of respect for our English educational system vanished before the stern realities of life.

One of these days, when I can work up sufficient indignation, I intend writing to *John Bull* about it. Meanwhile—as Billy Williams used to say—"Good-night everybody!"

VINCENT J. HANDS.

Did God make matter? If so, there was a time when matter was not: and God must have existed alone through a great eternity, in the absence of air, light, and heat. Did the idea of making the universe originate in God's brain? No, because he had none; matter was not made yet; brain is matter. Then God must have been immaterial. What a stupendous task it must have been for God to make the universe, and not a single grain of sand to form a nucleus around which to build. Matter could not have been made out of nothing; it is eternally changing form, but in quantity it is always the same.—*H. M. Fisk.*

Acid Drops.

The notorious Hickson, who has been conducting "Healing Missions" in South Africa and elsewhere is now giving Bradford a turn, and as the Church is always ready to take up with anything or anyone who is likely to "draw," he has been given official patronage. The newspaper side of the business is being attended to, and there are appearing the usual accounts of "cures," without any catalogue of the number of failures, and statements about people suffering from cancer, spinal complaint, etc., are printed on anyone's authority, without the slightest attempt at discrimination. The whole thing is a striking illustration of the enormous amount of superstition still current, and is an apt rebuke to those who because the priest no longer goes abroad with a chief tormentor in attendance, are fond of assuring us that Christianity is dead. On the contrary, the prevalence of this mass of superstition, common among the so-called educated classes as well as among the uneducated is one of the gravest dangers that confront us. The tactics of politicians who play to Church and chapel for the sake of votes, show how easy it is to use this force, and one of these days we may find ourselves in the midst of a violent reaction before we are aware of it.

Canon Dorrity, of Manchester, is promoting a memorial asking that the Bishops shall discuss the question of whether the whole of Europe was not collectively responsible for the war, even though there might be a greater degree of guilt with some than with others. We do not know what will be the use of this, save to serve as eye-wash for the general public. Of course, now that the war is over the Bishops will use a lot of cant about the evil of war, and will declare that we are all miserable sinners on this matter as on others. But the time when the clergy should have stood out as moral guides to the nation was when the war fever was in the air. Had the clergy in all the war-nations done this, things would by now have worn a very different complexion. But what they did—all over the world—was to fan the flame even more lustily than the elderly fire-eaters who were willing to carry on the war till every young man was sacrificed and everybody else's money had been spent.

The *Western Gazette* is publishing a series of interviews with ecclesiastics, dealing with "weighty and vital problems of Religion and Life." In the first of these, the Rev. J. Wilson-Steele is reported as saying, "There can be no question of State supremacy within the Church. The Church is not established and never has been, but through weakness in the past, the State has been allowed to usurp ruling power, and, as a result, the child rules the mother. There can be no hope of an ideal church until that assumption has been destroyed." In these days when much lip-service is paid to democracy, this frankness may not commend itself to Mr. Wilson-Steele's colleagues. But it only expresses the age-long spirit of Christianity, as every student of ecclesiastical history is aware. Its earliest adherents looked askance at the political and civic institutions of their day, and so brought upon themselves the justifiable repression of the Roman state. As St. Paul himself declared, the state to which they owed allegiance was not of this world, but a heavenly one. Later, as everyone knows, the Catholic Church in its heyday became a kind of super-state, the head of which claimed all secular rulers of Christendom as his vassals. Nor were the reformed churches any better in this respect. True in England a virile monarchy for a time made the church subservient to secular authority, but elsewhere the Protestant churches very largely usurped most of the secular authority, and used it with a fanatical indifference for everything save their own advancement. And even in England, during the Puritan protectorate of Cromwell, the Protestant sects seized supreme power, and made state institutions inferior to sacerdotal ones. And to-day we have no doubt that

the majority of sincere believers would welcome a like religious dictatorship, or at least, as a prelude to that, a Church completely free from any secular control and supervision.

The late H. W. Massingham said in the *Spectator*, "The Churches accepted Capitalism; they accepted war; what would they not accept so only they could retain their hold on society? To the sceptical eye of the journalist, the Church lacked all power. It was a make-believe." Others, besides journalists, have seen that the Church is a make-believe, although they might be disinclined to agree that it lacks power. Spiritual power perhaps—to borrow from the Christian phraseology—the power to enable men and women to realize their best potentialities; the power to carry through social reforms; the power to fight and destroy shams and tyrannies. That power the Church never has possessed, nor, in the very nature of things, can it ever possess it. The man who either honestly or cynically bases his life upon false ideas and principles, and who abrogates his reason in certain important matters, can never make a good citizen. Intellectual feebleness or cowardice is usually accompanied by moral cowardice. Most Christians have been too much concerned with getting a good place in the next world, and with leading a conventionally correct life here, to have time or inclination to risk social censure by advocating unpopular causes, or by denouncing injustice and the worst vices of society. And the churches as institutions have been too much concerned with their material advantage to risk opposing reactionary political or social movements. Of power for human betterment the churches certainly always have been devoid, from the day when they preached an unnatural anchorite life as the most saintly form of existence, down to the present day when they look on unprotesting at industrial strife and international war, or the exploitation of native races by white entrepreneurs.

But the Christian churches have never lacked political power. Christianity was sufficiently powerful for Constantine to find it advisable to become converted to the faith; in the Middle Ages the Church overshadowed almost every monarchy in Europe, and its princes and officials were royal ministers; in the period following the Reformation, the Protestant Churches dominated the States of Europe, and in the days of the "grand monarchies" the Church was one of the royal bulwarks, and was rewarded accordingly. During the industrial revolution which proceeded during the closing years of the eighteenth and during the nineteenth century, the older churches lost ground, but the new evangelical bodies—e.g. the Wesleyans—sprang up, mushroom-like, among the new factory and mining communities, and dominated the intellectual and social life of most of the more virile workers of that period, as a study of the *Hammonds' Town Labourer* and *Skilled Labourer* will show. And to-day the churches still number their adherents by the millions, can still compel politicians to profess a false piety, and can still in many parts of the country impose a gloomy Sabbatarianism upon everyone. Political power the Christian churches always have sought and obtained. To-day they are fighting to retain that power.

How has organized Christianity used the power which through the ages it has possessed. At any period of history since the days of Constantine, at least, the Christian religion has been politically powerful enough to carry through any measures that it has desired. It could have given humanity political liberty, liberty of thought, education, and social liberty. But always organized religion has stood on the side of reaction and has opposed all attempts to enlarge popular liberties and amenities. To make a complete indictment would take a volume of the *Freethinker* at least. But a mere study of the history of education in this country, or the history of industrial movements during the last century is sufficient to expose the reactionary character of the churches. Never once, as bodies, did they lift voices

in protest against the iniquities of the mechanical revolution; and with all their strength they opposed educational reform. And if to-day parsons here and there are voicing liberal opinions on these and other matters, the Churches as a whole—as the sentiments uttered either by their best known representatives, or by the rank and file of the clergy—are still fighting strenuously against all wholesome reform, and every attempt to uplift mankind.

"The Church of Christ was not intended to be a nursery for children, but a brotherhood of free men," said the Rev. W. R. Matthews, vicar of Isleworth, at the Church Congress at Oxford. This is a very gratifying announcement for Christians, from one who ought to know. But unfortunately the founder of Mr. Matthews' creed remarked, that except ye become as little children ye shall in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven. And since the Church changeth not, the reverend gentleman must be wrong. One can, of course, understand and to some extent sympathize with the Christian's disinclination to admit the puerility of his beliefs. But if one desires the soporific effect of narcotics one must pay the price, whatever those narcotics be, whether physical or intellectual. And the price is the loss of one's manhood.

As an illustration of the effects of religion we notice that Orange lodges in Liverpool are enrolling volunteers to fight for Ulster if the "call" comes, they say. The Rev. H. D. Longbottom stated that his Bible class would join "to a man." The church school room has been placed at the disposal of the company for use as a drill-hall. Let brotherly love continue. Jesus would never have left Galilee if he had thought that his teachings would be mixed up in the Irish Question.

The enthronement of Dr. Barnes was not allowed to pass without incident. A man who evidently took seriously the fiction of theology, disturbed the procession by shouting out, "A man who says we descended from monkeys is a liar, and it is a sin." It is very gratifying to note the gnawing of a bone that is absent by people who are more interested in the origin of man than the direction in which he is moving.

"Shun inhabitants are generally very religious," says the Rev. J. E. Rattenbury, of the West London Mission. What else does he expect? He distributes the coals, blankets, and other inducements.

A notice-board outside a Weston place of worship bears the invitation: "Hallo everybody. God is calling. See Proverbs viii. 4, Isaiah v. 18. You are cordially invited to listen-in to the good news." This adoption of American methods of "pushing" wares will not work in the case of religion. As we have suggested before the moment priests place religion on the same basis as somebody's meat extract, or someone else's soap, there will be a heavy slump in their sales. Religion has got to be treated with due ceremony and reverence. Otherwise everybody will see it for the absurdity that it is.

The Dean of Bristol at the Church Congress declared that the Church "at present suggests not the brother so much as the heavy uncle, with touches also of the maiden aunt." Which is, to say the least of it, distinctly discourteous to heavy uncles and maiden aunts.

After contemplating the inscrutable relations between brain and consciousness, and finding that we can get no evidence of the existence of the last without the activity of the first, we seem obliged to relinquish the thoughts that consciousness continues after physical organization has become inactive.—*Herbert Spencer.*

Our Sustentation Fund.

Previously acknowledged, £182 18s. J. and J. C. (Manchester), £5; H. Dawson, 10s.; E. C. Round, 2s. 6d.; A. Shiel, 2s. 6d.; J. Ralston, 10s.; E. Hassell, 10s.; O. T. Cordwainer, 5s.; A. B., £1; J. R. White, 5s.; J. Wearing, 5s.; J. Breese, £2 2s.; R. W. Blakely, £1 1s.; J. S. Buckle, £1; H. Alderson, £1; T. J. Thurlow, 5s.; "General Practitioner, £2; E. Pariente, £2; G. Lunn, £1; Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Finney, £1; D. Dawson, 2s. 6d.; E. C. Cornett, 5s.; Dr. A. W. Laing, £7 7s. Total, £210 10s. 6d.

We shall be obliged if subscribers will point out any errors that appear in the above list of acknowledgments.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

To Correspondents.

Those subscribers who receive their copy of the "Freethinker" in a GREEN WRAPPER will please take it that the renewal of their subscription is due. They will also oblige, if they do not want us to continue sending the paper, by notifying us to that effect.

B. C. CORNETT.—We should be pleased to visit Liverpool, but we must depend upon the local friends getting together and looking after the necessary arrangements. It is a shame that so little is being done in so large a centre.

J. BREESE.—It is the best policy never to miss an opportunity of ventilating our opinions in the public Press, and it is good to note that you never do so. Some of the good seed is certain to drop on fruitful soil.

J. S. BUCKLE.—Thanks for good wishes.

R. WILSON.—The bookseller should have seen to the matter. If you require a copy we could procure one for you. Thanks for cutting.

H. ALDERSON.—Thanks for subscription. We note your opinion that there must be at least another 499 other readers of the paper who could well cover your own donation of £1 and so raise £500 without delay. The curious thing is that it is more want of thought than lack of willingness to give that prevents this being done.

J. T. THURLOW.—Pleased to have the congratulations of so old a Freethinker and reader of the paper as yourself.

H. DAWSON.—Is the address you send us full enough? We do not know what district it is in, but shall be glad to make it known if you will let us have it. Hope to see you on the 26th.

J. RALSTON.—The work of mental emancipation is naturally slow, but it is encouragement to know that it goes on. Hope you are well.

F. B. (Dundee).—Very pleased to hear from a new reader and to learn that the paper is so much appreciated. Thanks for cuttings.

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

The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 62 Farringdon Street London, E.C.4.

The National Secular Society's office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

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

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

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4., and not to the Editor.

All Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to "The Pioneer Press," and crossed "London, City and Midland Bank, Clerkenwell Branch."

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

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

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office at the following rates (Home and Abroad):—
One year, 15s.; half year, 7s. 6d.; three months, 3s. 9d.

Sugar Plums.

To-day (October 19) Mr. Cohen commences his winter lecturing with two meetings in Glasgow. In the morning at 11.30 he will lecture in the Saloon, City Hall, on "The Expansion of Man," and in the evening at 6.30 in the large City Hall on "Things Christians Ought to Know." We hope to be able to report next week that there were good meetings, in spite of the election turmoil. The elections are bound to have a disturbing effect on other meetings, but we hope that London Freethinkers will bear in mind Mr. Cohen's meetings on Sunday evening next (October 26) in the Parkhurst Theatre, Holloway Road. Trams and buses from nearly all parts of London will put people down at the door, so there will be no difficulty on that head. The Nag's Head is a stopping place for both vehicles, and the hall is right opposite. Early application should be made for reserved seat tickets, which can be obtained at this office or at the office of the National Secular Society.

An interesting letter comes from "General Practitioner," who encloses a subscription to our Sustentation Fund. He says:—

In no quarter is the *Freethinker* more appreciated than in the ranks of the medical profession. It must give you considerable satisfaction to know that the greatest of causes is making so much headway. It is a regrettable fact, however, that the *Freethinker* is not better known. I am acquainted with hundreds of Freethinkers and can safely say that many of them do not know that such a paper as yours is in existence. This should be altered.

We quite agree with this last remark. The *Freethinker* has a wide circulation among the more thoughtful and educated classes in the country, and the task always before us is how to get it before likely subscribers. Extensive advertising would do it, but that is quite beyond our power. We have perforce to fall back upon the good offices of our friends to see that the paper is better known. If this were only done by all for a year we fancy that the disagreeable task of appealing for financial help would be done with. And we would give something to do away with that. That is why we are always singing "Everyone another one." It would help to break the boycott as nothing else would.

We have room this week but for one more quotation from letters received. We print it because we believe that most of our readers are as interested as we are in knowing how the paper stands in the estimation of subscribers. Mr. E. H. Hassell writes:—

I certainly agree that the *Freethinker* never stood higher in the esteem and affection of its readers. I am inclined to hope that that wealthy reader does not take it into his head to endow the paper, for it is a great pleasure to be able to do something in return for the inspiration one receives from its pages. I find self-expression in its weekly message, it becomes part of one's life; it gives our ideals in a courageous and fearless manner, and expresses my thoughts far better than I am able to do myself.

We appreciate very much the sentiment expressed by Mr. Hassell, but the ten years we have spent during which we have been responsible for the maintenance of the paper, have been among the most worrying of our life, and we should greatly appreciate the lightening of the burden in the future. What we should like would be to be relieved altogether of looking after the financial side of the business. We do not suppose that is at all likely to happen, but one has enough to do in the ordinary way in attending to matters of propaganda.

There will be a tornado of electioneering speeches during the next fortnight, and a perfect torrent of promises from would-be legislators. We are in this place concerned only with two issues—Secular Education and the repeal of the Blasphemy laws. We sincerely hope that Freethinkers all over the country will not let

candidates lose sight of these two questions. We have the promise of the Home Secretary that he would support a Bill for the repeal of the Blasphemy laws, and whatever happens at the poll that promise should be made good use of. And unless Freethinkers show that they are ready to make a fight for what they want they must not expect politicians to pay any attention to them. And, after all, the question of intellectual freedom and a sound educational system are questions of first-rate importance, and may have no small bearing on less material issues.

We are asked to announce that a Freethought Debating Club has been opened in Wolverhampton. Particulars may be had of C. T. Shaw, 10 Villiers Street, Wolverhampton.

To-day (October 19) Mr. Corrigan lectures, at 3 and 6.30, in the Engineers' Hall, Rusholme Road. Mr. Corrigan has made many friends in the district, and we trust that preoccupation with the elections will not seriously interfere with the success of his meetings.

Alderman F. L. Combes will open a discussion this evening (October 19) at the St. Pancras Reform Club on "How Shall We Reform the Criminal?" It might not be a bad way to begin by reforming some of those who do not technically come under that head. The Christian opponent who was expected to take the affirmative on last Sunday evening failed to put in an appearance. Mr. Ratcliffe "carried on" in his absence, and Mr. Whitehead "rested" after holding two open-air meetings by taking the chair.

Mr. Percy Ward left England on October 13 for Chicago, and gave us a call at the office, with his wife, before leaving. The illness of his mother and other engagements had kept him from coming to London earlier. During the fifteen years he has been away from England he has become very grey, but otherwise has changed but little. We were pleased to see him again, and to know that his work in Chicago is meeting with increasing success. He is as keen as ever in the Freethought cause, and as he is still a young man, there is every reason to assume that he has many years of useful work in front of him. It is good also to know that he has a very zealous and capable co-worker in his wife. That is a factor of first-rate importance in any man's life. His friends in England will join with us in wishing him continued health and success.

The death of Anatole France at over eighty years of age leaves little cause for sorrow, as he would have been the first to remark. Standing in the front rank of European letters, his work was done, and it was a work with which he might well feel content as his last moments approached. He seems to have outgrown his religious beliefs very early in life, and in his own family he had the traditions of Freethinking that had come down to him. Although conveyed to the world with a genial satire and a broad humanity that was ready always to recognize the human element that lurked in the shadow of the most stupid superstition, there was no disguise as to his hostility to the Christian religion. We notice, however, that with characteristic evasion the newspapers refer to his attitude towards religion as that of an anti-clerical. It would not do to inform the British public that he was an avowed Freethinker. To call him an anti-clerical may keep alive the illusion that he was merely opposed to the rule of the clergy in secular affairs. But the *Garden of Epicurus* and *Penguin Island*, to say nothing of many parts of his other works, were not written by a mere anti-clerical. They were penned by one who saw quite clearly what sham and reversion to a lower type of intellect religion in modern society really is.

As a rule we are not very much concerned or interested in deathbeds. It is a question to which Christians

pay a deal of attention, because there is no greater coward in the face of death than a genuinely sincere Christian. His religion has made what comes after death such a source of terror that he cannot conceive anyone dying peacefully without some assurance that he is secure in the horrible hereafter that Christianity created. And when we are told of the deathbeds of men like Bradlaugh or Foote, and how they died calling on Christ to save them, we are not greatly interested and are never very indignant. These stories are the natural outcome of a religion such as Christianity, and should be accepted as such. But there are two or three reported sayings of Anatole France that are perhaps worth recording. Two or three days before his death he remarked to those around him, "So this is death!" and a little later, "It will be to-day." Finally, he called on his mother—probably in a semi-conscious state—and said, "I am dying." Of the three reported sayings the first is of interest. It is evident that he was experiencing what we fancy most people experience, what an easy thing it is to die. We believe it is so in the vast majority of cases, a mere sinking to sleep. It is Christian terror, Christian cowardice, and Christian lying that has created the legend of the deathbed scene, and the terror of death where there is no belief in Jesus to support the dying man.

Lord Parmoor's Mistake.

EVER since the League of Nations was first proposed by Woodrow Wilson, in 1919, I have supported its central aim. To very many assemblies of young people, up and down England, I have commended the League and its Covenant; and, health and strength permitting, I hope to go on doing so. I am perfectly well aware of objections to the League, raised by some Conservatives on one side, and by many Communists on the other, and I could easily write down these objections in the fields of proletarian economics, or of political and racial relations. Nevertheless, I see in the League an engine, growing in power, for checking the evil of war. The simple fact that, when the Fifth Assembly opened at Geneva, on September 1, 1924, fifty-four nations constituted the membership, is a striking witness to its increase. Some people gloomily remark that several great nations are still outside. Yes, but I think it true to say that the United States and Germany do not feel proud of that outside position.

I suspect, however, that one of my reasons for warmly advocating the League's claims is not shared by a large number of people. The Covenant admits all nations—Protestant, Catholic, Moslem, Hindu, Confucian, Buddhist, and the rest—on a basis of equality. In short, the basis is purely Humanist and secular. Note the preamble. It is of extreme importance:—

The High Contracting Parties,

In order to promote international co-operation and to achieve international peace and security, by the acceptance of obligations not to resort to war; by the prescription of open, just, and honourable relations between nations; by the firm establishment of the understandings of international law as the actual rule of conduct among Governments; and by the maintenance of justice, and a scrupulous respect for all treaty obligations in the dealings of organized peoples with one another—Agree to this Covenant of the League of Nations.

Nothing is said of God, or Divine Law. No appeal is made to any of the creeds that unfortunately divide nation from nation. It is safe to affirm that, no matter what changes may hereafter be introduced, the Covenant will never be consecrated to God. But it is, by its very essence and plan, consecrated to humanity. It therefore follows that, if any supporter of the League tries to tie up the League's ideal to

any specific creed, he is disloyal and anarchist. I deeply regret that some Branches of that excellent Society, whose objects I cordially approve, namely, the League of Nations Union, should sometimes be associated with prayers, theological hymns, and theological addresses. However sincere and well-meaning they may be, the persons who practise this sort of ritual are anarchists towards the League. Their ritual is actually a bar to the presence of citizens who hold no theological views. What folly! to adopt a disuniting means for the promotion of human unity! To post spiritual police at the door of the temple of World-Brotherhood, who will exclude anybody who worships not Theos, Yahweh, Allah, Brahma!

Lord Parmoor made this mistake, which is brutally sectarian. This Labour Party peer (and ex-Conservative) is a devoted member of the Church of England. So be it; this is a free enough country, I rejoice to think, to allow citizens to stand on as low an intellectual level as they please. But he went to Geneva in September as an official British representative at the League Assembly. And he behaved as an anarchist. On September 5, M. Herriot, Prime Minister of France, spoke, and spoke in proper terms, on the tremendous issues of Disarmament, Security, Mutual Assistance, and Arbitration. Lord Parmoor immediately followed. In the course of his speech, he made the following improper observations:—

Although we may have to wait in patience, we can look forward to the certain success of those great principles of Christian ethics and Christian charity which alone can bring peace and comfort to the various nations of the world.....I say for myself that I do not despair. I believe in the divine guidance of the Prince of Peace.

The words imply (even if the speaker did not intentionally imply) that the Christian ethic is superior to the ethics of Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Confucianism, etc. They also imply that delegates who reject theology suffer a disadvantage as compared with this self-satisfied British lawyer. Take, as two examples, the French delegates, M. Aristide Briand and M. Léon Bourgeois. It was M. Bourgeois who first coined the actual term, "Société des Nations" (League of Nations). Briand and Bourgeois are Rationalists. They are to be dictated to by the Anglican Parmoor, who discourteously shoves his theology into their faces! Take another example—Dr. Nansen. No man on earth has laboured for the League as Nansen has done. Nansen is a Rationalist. Though I have followed the League movement with considerable attention, I never heard of Parmoor's association with it till this year. That does not prove he did nothing; but it is singular that I did not catch sight previously of his respectable figure. But Nansen has laboured, ever since the birth of the League, valiantly and incessantly for its fraternal objects, particularly in respect of the succour of refugees and prisoners of war. Hundreds of thousands of men, women and children have been, so to say, touched by his hand of blessing. And he is to be told, by a British official delegate, that the friend of the homeless and of the victims of prison-camp typhus must needs do his beneficent work by "Divine guidance," and in obedience to the groan and drawl of Christian ethic. These bad manners may, or may not, be endorsed by bishops and deans, and Church Congresses. They are certainly an offence against the international code.

I am not now discussing the relation of Christianity to war. It is a very complex question, and one not to be settled by merely quoting texts, or by a glib reference to the Crusades, the 'Thirty Years' War, or the Massacre of Huguenots on St. Bartholomew's Day. In such a problem, I fear the influence of

economic and geographical factors has not been adequately weighed by debaters. But my present proposition rests on other grounds. I assert that, as the Covenant of the League is neutral to all creeds, and as nations are enrolled in the League on purely human considerations, no orator at Geneva has any right to offer his form of theology, or any theology at all, as an authority binding on the delegates to the Assembly. He has no right to throw out smug and piously impolite hints that they who possess not "divine guidance," as he himself does, lack a very vital instrument of League progress. Lord Parmoor is, I quite believe, an ornament to the Church of England; and, for all I know, he is admirably fitted to lead a British Labour Cabinet in prayer. He was not a fit and proper delegate to Geneva.

F. J. GOULD.

The Holy Child.

ACCORDING to Tischendorf (*Evangelia Apocrypha*) Justin Martyr, who towards the end of the first half of the second century mentioned a great many of the facts recorded in the first three Gospels, though without naming those works, also mentions something recorded in a Gospel ascribed to St. Thomas, but likewise without naming it. Tischendorf further states that this Gospel is named by Irenaeus who flourished at the end of the above century; and that the *Philosophumena*, a work dating from the first quarter of the next century, refers to it as having been held in honour by the Naassenians, a sect which is known to have existed in Justin's time.

Tischendorf published three texts of the Gospel of Thomas, two in Greek and one in Latin, these occupying respectively 241, 116, and 300 lines of his work, which is a collection of such documents. These texts, and fragments of other texts occurring in the notes of the editor, differ to a certain extent; and it is clear that the work has suffered expurgation at the hands of persons shrewd enough to see that some of its statements might give offence. The chief purpose of the book appears to have been to refute those, who, distinguishing between Jesus and Christ, held that before his baptism, Jesus was only a human being. I propose to translate two stories, first from the longer Greek text, and then from the Latin text:

And the child Jesus, being five years old, was playing by a stream of water; and he gathered the running waters into pools, and made the same straightway clean, and commanded them with a single word.....And the son of Annas the scribe was standing there with Jesus; and he, taking the branch of a willow, let out the waters that Jesus had gathered. But Jesus, seeing what was done, was sore displeased, and said unto him, Unjust, impious, and senseless one, what harm did the pools and the waters do unto thee? but even now thou shalt be altogether withered up like a tree; and thou shalt never more bring forth leaves, or root, or fruit. And straightway this child was wholly withered up. And Jesus went away, and came into the house of Joseph. And the kinsfolk of him that had been withered up bore him away, lamenting his youth, and they brought him to Joseph, and they accused him because he had such a son doing such things. Thereafter he was walking again through the village, and a child who was running, knocked hard against his shoulder. And, being exceedingly wrath, Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt not go thy way. And immediately, falling down, he died. But some that beheld what was done, said, Whence is this child for every word of his is a finished work? And the kinsfolk of him that was dead spake against Joseph, saying, Thou that hast such a child canst not dwell in this

village; or else teach him to bless and not to curse. For our children are dead. And Joseph, calling his child to him, apart, admonished him, saying, Why dost thou kill such children? These people suffer and they despise and persecute us. But Jesus said, I know that these words are not thine. Nevertheless, I will be silent because of thee. These, however, shall see their punishment. And straightway they that were accusing him became blind. And they that saw it feared greatly and knew not what to do. And they said concerning him, Every word he spake, whether good or evil, was a work and became a wonder. But, seeing that Jesus had done such a thing, Joseph, becoming aroused, took him by the ear, and pulled it soundly. The child, however, being much vexed, said to him, It is enough for thee [to see them] seek and not find me; and most of all thou hast not done wisely; knowest thou not that I am thine? it giveth me no pain.

The first of the above stories is interrupted by a tale which I omit, and which the shorter Greek text has at the end of the first story. From a reference in the omitted tale, it appears that Jesus made his pools on the Sabbath which explains why the son of the scribe attempted to spoil them. At these points the two Greek texts agree in essentials; but a Paris manuscript of the longer one has an important addition. For there we read:—

Then Jesus, having been exhorted by all, healed him, leaving a certain number wholly inactive for them to beware.

There is a similar case in the Canonical Gospels. All the four say that an ear of the high priest's servant was cut off in defence of Jesus; but only "Luke" says that Jesus replaced it. With respect to the second murder, the shorter Greek text declares that the child threw a stone at Jesus, and hit him on the shoulder. Here is further evidence of attempts to make moral improvements in the narratives.

As regards both stories the Latin version presents some interesting deviations from the Greek texts:—

But when Jesus was five years old, there came a great rain over the land, and he walked through it. And the rain was terrible, which he gathered into a pond, and commanded by his word that it should become clear. And immediately it was made clear A Pharisee, however, who was with Jesus, took the branch of an olive tree, and drew off the source which Jesus had made. When Jesus saw this, being troubled he said to him, Impious and ignorant Sodomite what harm hath this source of my making done unto thee? Behold, thou shalt become like as a withered tree, having neither roots, nor leaves, nor fruit. And straightway, being dried up, he fell to the earth and died. His kinsfolk took him away dead; and they chided Joseph, saying, Behold what thy son hath done; teach him to pray and not to blaspheme. And after a few days, while Jesus was walking with Joseph through the village, one of the children ran against Jesus and knocked him hard on the elbow. But Jesus said to him, Thou shalt not go thy way. And immediately he fell to the ground and died. They that saw it cried out, saying, Whence is this boy? It besecmeth not that such a boy should be with us. But Joseph went away and took him. And they said to him, Depart from this place, and if it becometh thee to be with us, teach him to pray and not to blaspheme; but our children are dead. Joseph called Jesus and began to teach him, Why dost thou blaspheme? The people of this place hate us. But Jesus said unto him, I know that these words are not mine, but thine, still, I will be silent on account of thee: they themselves may see in the wisdom. And straightway they which spake against Jesus were made blind. And walking hither and thither they said, All the words which come from his mouth have force. And when Joseph saw what Jesus had done he seized him with fury by the ear. But

Jesus being troubled said to Joseph, Suffice it for thee to see me not to touch me. For thou knowest not who I am. And although I am now with thee, I was before thee.

C. CLAYTON DOVE.

Chats With Children.

CONCERNING CONSISTENCY.

I READ the other day that some Moslems went to Wembley. At the railway station they bowed themselves to the ground and recited prayers and passages from the Koran.

A number of Moslems engaged in this country refused to eat, drink, or smoke, or take any pleasures between dawn and sunset during the Great Fast of forty days.

I am not praising them. I think their religion is wrong, and they are wasting precious opportunities of happiness.

I think the Christian religion is wrong, too.

Christians, however, are not consistent. They do not carry their religion into extremes inconvenient to themselves.

Is this a gain or a loss to the world?

I think it a distinct advantage.

If Christians really lived up to all the awful teachings of their creed, life would be unbearable in Christian countries.

Is it right then to respect religious people for being consistent, if the world is better off for their inconsistency?

It all depends!

Consistency is only another word for sincerity. Its opposite is hypocrisy. To profess things you do not really believe in, has evil effects far beyond anything you would calculate unless you knew a great deal of history.

You must think of how mankind becomes, very slowly, wiser and better. Mankind progresses by being sincere. It is a sad aspect of progress perhaps to realize that man becomes better by believing sincerely even evil things.

So long as you find sincerity—and sincerity can only show itself by making our actions agree with our belief—there is free play for human intelligence to correct all mistakes. The commonest of all proverbs is that we learn by experience. But we cannot profit by experience if we do not act consistently.

If you take a wrong road you can retrace your footsteps when you find it is leading you downhill when you want to go upward. But if you have *no* leading, if you don't stick to the way you intended to go, if your path is crooked instead of straight, you will never know whether you are right or wrong.

Knowledge, intelligence, brain-power—whatever name you give to the scientific side of you, will not always direct you rightly. There are so many roads, and so many of them are wrong roads, and there is a lot of difference between the quality of various people's brains. There is also ever so much difference in our experiences. An old traveller is said to have "a sense of direction"—just as on the cricket field an old hand at the game can calculate where to jump up and catch a flying ball. An inexperienced cricketer has "butterfingers." The man who never learns cricket is the man who when he loses a "catch," blames the batsman.

If we see that our work or our play is bad we can turn over a new leaf. Politics and history and all the records of men's experiences are full of new beginnings. A great historian¹ tells us that all history is a

¹ Rawson Gardiner.

story of men's discontent. We find out that we are on the wrong path and we try a new road. It is by this means that man increases his happiness.

One of the chief reasons that religion fails to serve man's best needs is that, unlike other branches of experience, men are not consistent about its results. Their inconsistency takes several forms. The Moslem does not see how badly his religion stands in the way of improved morality, nobler national ideals, finer standards of art, greater personal liberty. There are, of course, Christians and Christian sects of whom this may also be said. But on the whole Christians to-day have had the facts forced on them and can no longer be ignorant of the barrenness of the "Rock of Ages" of which they boast.

Christians show in a hundred ways that they know their religion to be an enemy of science. They no longer claim that Genesis is true, or Exodus historical, or Leviticus geographically accurate, or Numbers mathematically correct, or Revelation zoologically reliable.

Christians no longer put on airs about the possession of Jehovah. (In my childhood this bloodthirsty monster was praised for his ferocity.) The Avenging Fire is seldom now used as a happy description of deity.

Christians have left off asking us to believe in Adam and Eve (with the talking serpent), Jonah (in the whale's belly), Balaam (although talking donkeys are still found), and it is safe to say that nowadays a man may silently disbelieve every dogma of the Christian Church and yet remain a bishop, priest, or churchman.

The important point to bear in mind, however, is that not a single word of any of the old creeds has ever been rejected, corrected, or admitted to be false. That inconsistent refusal to state plainly their own disbelief is the enemy of honesty and progress.

To take only one clause of a creed. I do not know a single member of the Church of England who believes in the Resurrection of the Body. Yet twice every Sunday and at every Morning and Evening service, every Christian present stands up and says:—

I believe in the Resurrection of the Body.

Inconsistency of this kind merits ridicule and contempt. Its dishonesty does not need proof. There is not a child of seven who does not know better.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

There are who, bending supple knees,
Live for no end except to please,
Rising to fame by mean degrees;
But creep not thou with these.

They have their due reward; they bend
Their lives to an unworthy end—
On empty aims the toil expend
Which had secured a friend.

But be not thou as these, whose mind
Is to the passing hour confined;
Let no ignoble fetters bind
Thy soul, as free as wind.

Stand upright, speak thy thought, declare
The truth thou hast that all may share;
Be bold, proclaim it everywhere:
They only live who dare.

—Lewis Morris.

MR. G. WHITEHEAD'S MISSION.

In spite of being obliged by the rain to abandon one meeting Mr. Whitehead managed to hold six good meetings at Highbury Corner. There was a certain amount of opposition, but this only served to keep the interest and the collections and sales of literature were very fair. The meetings will be continued all this week.

The Way of the World.

IS HE A MISFIT?

One meets Professor J. A. Thomson in the popular papers as inevitably as a policeman in the Strand, but I have a hard mental skin which is proof against the penetration of science, and hitherto I have managed to bear up.

I do, however, feel it is time to protest when all the paper-shops sport the cheeky poster:—

Are you a misfit? By Professor J. A. Thomson.

If this sort of thing is allowed, we shall find placards growing intolerably personal, asking questions like this:

What's Happened to Your Face? By Owen Nares.

How Can You wear Such Dreadful Clothes? By Dennis Bradley.

It will be a nightmare for any sensitive person to walk through the streets. Stop it!—*Daily Herald*.

[Professor J. A. Thomson is a tame scientist employed by Fleet Street, because he can be trusted to say nothing disrespectful to religion. But the great drawback, in his case, is that he has a leaden style that is guaranteed to render the most interesting subjects deadly dull. But what would you? Tame scientist, tame style.]

TWO CLASSES IN HEAVEN, ETONIANS, AND THE OTHERS.

"A correspondent to the *Times* has suggested that even in the next world the Old Etonians will be distinguished by a tie, perhaps, or by some less material sign, from the rest."—*The Outlook*.

[So far as we know, Jesus Christ never went to Eton—Etonians may dispute this—therefore he would not be entitled to wear the Eton tie. Perhaps it would save fighting if the Old Etonians had a little Heaven (and Hell) of their own.]

INFIDELITY IN THE CHURCH.

A new *Bible for Youth* is published to-day. It is edited by Rev. R. C. Gillie and Rev. James Reid. This is the way doubts are removed:—

THE CREATION.—"The first chapters of Genesis are an old-fashioned picture of how God made the world."

THE FALL.—"The days of scientific accuracy had not begun.....When this writer makes the serpent talk and speaks of God walking in the garden, that was the natural way to make early hearers understand big things about sin and temptation."

THE FLOOD.—"Another example of a legend concerning some early event which a writer, guided by God, made use of to set forth the character of God."

LOT'S WIFE.—"Stories of disaster happening to people who look back are common in early times. There is near the Dead Sea a high pillar of crystalline salt. The story may have been to explain this rock."

CHRIST'S KNOWLEDGE.—"Did He know everything? That is to make too large a claim. His ideas of science, for instance, were those of His own time. He does not give any evidence that He knew any more of these matters than other people of His own day."—*Daily News*.

DISTRESSING CASE OF HEART DISEASE.

"When I die you will find the words 'Grocery Trade' engraved on my heart."—*Lord Leverhulme, in a speech at the opening of the twenty-eighth Grocers' Annual Exhibition.*

OUR FATHER WHICH ART IN HEAVEN.

A Scottish preacher, endeavouring to lead his congregation along the right path, told them of some lost souls who from the flames of the Bottomless Pit cried upon the Lord for mercy because their sins were due to ignorance.

"Oh, Lord," they wailed, "we didna' ken, we didna' ken."

"And then," said the preacher, "the Lord leaned over the edge of the pit and in tones of infinite maircy replied to them: 'Awcel ye ken the noo.'"

AN ADMIRABLE GOSPEL!

The spread of Christianity in Europe coincides with the development of the fair barbarian peoples of the north in their progress of conquest. They found it an admirable instrument in crushing and pacifying weaker peoples.....they expended enormous energy in preaching it to other people and in thrusting it on the races they subjugated. They looked at the matter in what they considered a practical spirit, and it seemed to them perfectly natural that—for the benefit of other nations—the wealthiest and most insolent nation of that time should be specially devoted to preaching the religion of poverty and meekness. There was no disguise about this, and the king, the hereditary chief of their armies, was at the same time the supreme head of their Church. One can imagine with what immense satisfaction the English and allied races who had pillaged, slaughtered, even exterminated the most feeble and fragile peoples in all quarters of the globe carried with them a Gospel which bade men, on pain of eternal damnation, never to resent being robbed, and always to turn the cheek to the smiter. It is difficult not to believe that they were themselves the inventors of a Gospel so obviously suited to their purposes; there is, however, no ground for this supposition.....When they had crushed some small nation they always presented it with a large stock of Bibles, which were printed and published by a national fund established for that purpose; and as all sense of humour had been killed out of the conquered race, the Bibles were generally accepted thankfully, whether in order to save their souls, or to obtain a free supply of waste paper, was not always clear to those who supplied the Bibles.—*Havelock Ellis, "The Nineteenth Century, a dialogue in Utopia."*

Correspondence.

THE LIVERPOOL CATHEDRAL.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Home papers contain long dry accounts of the opening of the Liverpool Cathedral, but one aspect of the question that appeals to me I have not seen referred to. If God said, "Let there be light and there was light," and created everything else by similar words of command, could he not just as easily have said, if he really wanted a Cathedral, "Let there be a Cathedral," and, if the Bible is true, a Cathedral would have instantly appeared superior in every way to anything that imperfect man could make.

Liverpool is a city with many vile slums and the money used for the building of the Cathedral might have been expended with far greater advantage in improving the habitations of the poor people. The building of this Cathedral is a wicked crime against humanity. The lines which appeared in the *Freethinker* by Sir William Watson are well worthy of being repeated:—

City of festering streets by Mersey trod,
Where half-fed, half-clad children swarm unshod,
While thou dost raise thy splendid fane to God.

My point is a very simple one, that the merest child could understand, namely, that if God had wanted a Cathedral he should have been left to create one for himself. If we accept the teachings of those men of God who dress in holy garb and draw high salaries for pretending to know all about him, he could, without any trouble to himself, have created a much better Cathedral than the "miserable sinners" who had to toil so hard to raise the sacred pile.

What untold misery and suffering might have been spared the human race if God had always been left to mind his own business, such, for instance, as counting sparrows and the hairs on people's heads, and if no heed had ever been taken of the ravings of half-cranked humbugs. Surely if God wanted anything he could say so himself without the impertinent interference of a lot of sick'ning wasters.

J. E. ROOSE.

Kafue, Northern Rhodesia.

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 postcard.

LONDON.
INDOOR.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (174 Edgware Road, W.): 7.30, Mr. E. C. Saphin, "Solar Origin of Christianity. (With Lantern Illustrations.) The Discussion Circle meets every Thursday at 8 at the "Lawrie Arms," Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W.): 7, Alderman F. L. Combes, "How Shall We Reform the Criminal?"

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (New Morris Hall, 79 Bedford Road, Clapham): 7, Mr. A. D. McLaren, "The Economic Interpretation of History."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7, Mr. Arthur Linecar, "Some French Stories."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11, S. K. Ratcliffe, "Geneva and the Hope of Europe."

OUTDOOR.

FINSBURY PARK BRANCH N.S.S. (Highbury Corner, Islington): 8, Mr. G. Whitehead will lecture every evening.

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

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY.—Freethought lectures and debates every evening in Hyde Park. Speakers: Messrs. Baker, Beale, Brayton, Hyatt, Harris, Hart, Keeling, Knubley, Saphin, Shaller, Stephens, 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): 3.30, Mr. G. Whitehead, a Lecture.

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

COUNTRY.
INDOOR.

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S.—Mr. Chapman Cohen, 11.30 (The Saloon, City Hall), "The Expansion of Man"; 6.30 (Large City Hall) "Things Christians Ought to Know."

LEEDS BRANCH N.S.S. (Youngman's Restaurant, 19 Lowerhead Row, Leeds): 7, Mr. Vincent J. Hands, "The Twilight of the Gods."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. Joseph McCabe, "With the Moors in Spain." (Lantern Illustrations.)

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Engineers' Hall, 120 Rusholme Road, All Saints, Manchester): Mr. F. P. Corrigan, 3, "Where Are We?" 6.30, "What Time Is It?"

MATERNITY NURSE, formerly general clerk, middle-aged, young looking, wants change. Can do good plain cooking and light housework. Would like to help business woman or similar where no children. Could a Freethinker give her a job?—Miss Cope, 4 South Parade, Bath.

SAMSON SALUTING Philistines with the jawbone of an ass is just the sort of tale you expect to find in a book like the Bible. Jawing to bone the credulity and the cash of asses is the Bible business. Our business is to make clothes you will be proud to say were made by fellow Freethinkers. This is the one and only reason why we are so deadly anxious you should write to-day for any of the following:—*Gents' AA to H Book, Suits from 54s.; Gents' I to N Book, Suits from 99s.; Gents' Superb Overcoat Book, prices from 48s. 6d.; or Ladies' Absorbing Autumn Book, Costumes from 60s., Coats from 46s.* The only firm advertising in the Freethought Press—MACCONNELL, & MADE, New Street, Bakewell, Derbyshire.

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