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Views and Opinions.

The Belief in Immortality.

Sir James Frazer has now issued the third volume of his work on the *Belief in Immortality* (Macmillan, 18s.), and in this case it is almost superfluous to say that the volume is of supreme interest to all interested in religious origins and their bearing upon social development. The third volume, like the two preceding ones, is concerned with the beliefs of the "lower" races, although so far as this particular belief is concerned the terms higher and lower seem out of place. Sir James would be the first to point out that in cultural history higher and lower have not a time significance. The words refer to stages in development, and contemporary peoples may be as "low" in the scale as those that passed away thousands of generations ago. Of that more in a moment; for the present I want to express my regret—perhaps it is an expression of impatience—that Sir James has not yet come to deal with the belief in immortality among the "higher" races, which would of necessity take in Christianity. When he purposes reaching this stage I do not know, but one fears that if it is delayed too long the same fate may overtake that which appears to have overtaken Tylor's last Clifford lectures. One must assume that the trustees, acting up to their tradition of betraying the intentions of the testator in the interests of religion, have managed to suppress these, and one fears that a like fate may accompany the publication of Sir James' dealing with Christian beliefs if it is too long delayed. Christianity in this country has a long arm and a vigilant eye, and it does manage to suppress a great deal which, if it could see the light, would tend to injure its ridiculous pretensions. In spite of all that has been done it still remains true that it is more difficult to obtain an exposure of the imposture of religion than of anything else.

* * *

Why not Drive Home the Moral?

After all the chief value of these and similar studies lies in their bearing on current beliefs and practices. Unless they throw some light on the meaning and value of present-day beliefs these elaborate studies are of no greater importance than are the coloured pebbles to a child which it gathers during its ramble along the sea-shore. Sir James, again, would be the

first to admit this, and admitting this one would like to have seen, even in the volumes professedly dealing with the beliefs of only the lower races, some indication as to the light they throw upon the beliefs held by such representatives of lower forms of culture as meet us in the Christian Church. In a previous volume of this series Sir James explicitly disavowed any intention of applying his researches to the question of the truth or falsity of the belief in immortality. After pointing out that "even the question of the validity or truth of religious creeds cannot, perhaps, be wholly dissociated from the question of their origin," he comes to the somewhat lame conclusion that if on a review of the practices he has been describing, "any inferences can indeed be drawn from the facts to the truth or falsehood of the beliefs, and to the moral worthlessness of the practices, I prefer to leave it to others more competent than myself to draw them." That is an excessive and quite unjustifiable modesty. There is no one better able to draw the necessary, and, in this case, inevitable conclusion than Sir James Frazer. His position as an authority on this subject is unquestioned. And it is difficult not to believe that he fails to recognize that but for the light his researches cast on the truth and utility of religious beliefs his labours would be almost worthless. In this case the silence of one who knows opens the way for the loquacity of those who do not know, who do not wish to know, and who are chiefly anxious that others shall not know either. It is this refusal of leading men in this country to follow their researches to their logical conclusions that is the bane of our intellectual life. It gives colour to the Continental sneer that we are indeed a nation of hypocrites, and it causes the few lesser known men who will at all costs say what they believe to be true to pay the full price which established obscurantism demands they shall pay for their temerity. If Sir James Frazer and others in his position would speak out plainly and boldly, honesty might easily be a less costly luxury than it is at present.

* * *

The Reign of Superstition.

Sir James Frazer has pointed out in one of his lectures that modern civilization is threatened by the mass of crude superstition that is current within its confines. And it is perfectly easy to illustrate this by pointing to the vogue of the fortune-teller, the cult of the "occult," the wearing of mascots, etc. But when all this is said, there is little good done so long as one remains discreetly and obstinately silent concerning what is the master superstition of all. What is the use of denouncing the wearer of a mascot or the one who believes in conjuring good fortune out of nature by the use of certain formulæ, when one encourages either by silence or by participation the belief that the processes of nature are to be affected by repeating a prayer, that nature is controlled by a personal almighty intelligence, or that man has a double which can get away after he is dead and continue to live in the absence of all the

conditions that have made life possible here? This is the soil upon which all the other superstitions grow. It keeps alive the frame of mind upon which the minor superstitions feed. The one is not a bit more intellectually respectable than is the other. There is nothing better intellectually in taking one's trouble into a Church and entering into a one-sided conversation with an unseen Mumbo-Jumbo than there is in visiting a fortune-teller and paying seven and sixpence for a charm that is to ward off trouble. The one is socially more respectable than the other, but they are upon the same intellectual level. And fundamentally they are not even different superstitions; they are the same superstition differently expressed. If there is any meaning in the whole of Sir James Frazer's work it is this. If his work does not carry this implication, then I for one have escaped its meaning. And if that is the correct reading then surely one falls short in the discharge of social duty in maintaining silence when speech is so urgently necessary.

* * *

Baseless Theories.

Sir James admits that "the question of validity or truth of religious creeds cannot, perhaps, be wholly dissociated from the question of their origin," but while "we can hardly help suspecting that our own cherished doctrines may have originated in the similar superstitions of our rude forefathers," yet "it is perfectly possible that a belief may be true, though the reasons alleged in favour of it are false and absurd." Now there is a sense in which this may be true, as for example when the reasons stated for a practice are not the real ones which led to its adoption, although the practice may have been proved from experience to be beneficial. But this is not the case with religious beliefs, nor can it be so. For religious beliefs are, in the nature of the case explanations given of particular phenomena—of the existence of the world, of the nature of man, or of certain phenomena associated with man or the world. And an interpretation or explanation can only hold good so long as it is not displaced by a more satisfactory one. When the better explanation is forthcoming the other, for all reasonable people, ceases to exist. Now Sir James Frazer, in common with other investigators, shows us the beginning of the belief in a soul, and of the belief that this soul continued to exist after the destruction of the body. He also shows that every one of the facts upon which this belief was based—dreams, hallucinations, etc., are met with to-day, but as we understand them differently we interpret them differently. But it is completely absurd to say that though the savage got the idea of a soul from the figures seen in a dream, and that even though we all admit his interpretation to be a wrong one, there may be truth in it nevertheless. If the facts upon which a belief is based are shown to be capable of a different interpretation the belief based upon a mistaken interpretation must be discarded. Sir James knows as well as anyone that the modern belief in a soul can be traced back step by step without a single break to the belief of the savage. He must know that but for the savage originating this mistaken interpretation of his experience the idea of a soul would never have existed. And he must know also that modern apologies are not the reasons why people believe in a soul, but only so many excuses invented for interested reasons why people should be permitted to go on believing in it. We defy Sir James Frazer to offer a single alleged reason for the belief in immortality which cannot be proven to owe its origin to the desire to defend a belief which existed in the mind of the person defending long before he was aware of the reasons put forward.

The Silent Guns.

Many years ago Sir James Frazer hinted at the truth when he said at the close of an early edition of the *Golden Bough* that his labours and the labours of others had thus far only managed to place the guns in position in readiness for the final attack. That was an apt simile and many of us hoped that long before this some of our leading anthropologists would have taken their courage in both hands and fired the big guns at the citadel of Christian superstition. For it was quite clear that this is what was meant by the figure. Still, so far as the leading men in this country are concerned, the guns remain silent. The fiercest part of the battle is left to those who carry on the warfare, not with obsolete guns, but who have to fight from a position which places them at a serious disadvantage. To quit similes and to come to plain speech, what is needed to-day more than ever is for men like Sir James Frazer to speak out quite plainly so that the man in the street can understand what is said, more, so that he cannot mistake understanding what is said. Why does not Sir James say quite plainly: "In my eleven volumes of the *Golden Bough*, in my three volumes of *Folk Lore in the Old Testament*, in my volumes on *The Belief in Immortality*, I have been tracing the genesis of religious beliefs. More than that I have been tracing the beginning of *your* religious beliefs. I have been showing how the idea of a soul, of a future life, of a God, began in the ignorant and mistaken guesses of the primitive savage. All the religions of the world have this origin, none rest on a better or stronger basis. Later knowledge has shown us that every one of the data upon which these religious beliefs rested is false. Every one of the experiences which to the savage proved a soul or a god we know now prove nothing of the kind. There is your religion, here is the way it began; it is for you to say whether you will continue to look at the world through the eyes of the primitive savage or through those of the modern scientific thinker?" If that were done what a revolution would it create in the world of to-day? We should no longer have our civilization disgraced by the crude frauds and follies of men and women photographing fairies, or by pantomimic processions of religious devotees that are on all fours with the medicine dance of a tribe of Red Indians. Many, myself among the number, owe a debt to men like Sir James Frazer that can never be repaid. Their labours and their ability have been as lamps that have lit the road by which we have travelled. All the more are we distressed when we see that by their silence on the most important question of all they are permitting the continued reign of a superstition which is responsible for some of the darkest pages in European history, and which unless we be on our guard may inaugurate a second era of darkness and degradation.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The National Secular Society.

THE FUNDS of the National Secular Society are now legally controlled by Trust Deed, and those who wish to benefit the Society by gift or bequest may do so with complete confidence that any money so received will be properly administered and expended.

The following form of bequest is sufficient for anyone who desires to benefit the Society by will:—

I hereby give and bequeath (*Here insert particulars of legacy*), free of all death duties, to the Trustees of the National Secular Society for all or any of the purposes of the Trust Deed of the said Society, and I direct that a receipt signed by two of the trustees of the said Society shall be a good discharge to my executors for the said legacy.

Any information concerning the Trust Deed and its administration may be had on application.

"Is the World Getting Better?"

THIS is an old question which is ever new, and which, in reality, is discomfiting only to believers in a Supreme Being, who, it is alleged in Christendom has become incarnate in Jesus Christ, and who, through the life, death, and resurrection of his only begotten Son, has become the Redeemer of the world. Such is the unambiguous teaching of the New Testament and the orthodox Church in all ages. Hence the question naturally arises, has the world been or is being redeemed by God in Christ, or, in other words, is the world really improving and by what means? This is the subject discussed by the Rev. Professor David Smith, D.D., in his Correspondence Column in the *British Weekly* of November 13. A correspondent, "J. C.," addresses the learned Professor thus:—

Is the world getting worse, or is it getting better, and is the best yet to be? My personal view is optimistic. My belief is that spiritual advance is being made all along the line. I am aware that some hold the opinion that the world will become worse and worse before the end, and that the ebb tide has set in.

The most striking feature of that passage is its extreme vagueness. What does "J. C." mean by "spiritual advance," or by the phrase "getting better"? Dr. Smith's reply is vaguer still, if possible. He pokes his theological fun at those "impatient and truly faithless souls among us" who "bemoan the degeneracy of the time and sigh for 'the good old days'"; but he omits to tell us in what sense they are mistaken. Evidently they are Christians who are woefully disappointed at the slow progress of the Christian religion; and is it not undeniable that, from a religious point of view, their chagrin is fully justified? Dr. Smith cannot be ignorant of the fact that even sixty years ago Christianity meant much more to the generality of those who professed it than it does to-day. There is a small number in each district who still cherish as warm an affection for it as our fathers did, and it is these who have valid reasons for deploring the godless condition of the present age. Yes, they are perfectly right, Christianity is being gradually but surely displaced by science. So far has this process succeeded in this country that it is already practicable to appoint semi-Infidels as bishops in the Anglican Church. In the hitherto most conservative Nonconformist denomination in Wales, known in the Principality as the "Old Body," there is in progress just now a fierce conflict between the New Theology and the Old, and there is every probability that the former is destined to carry the day. Beyond dispute the New Theology, or Modernism, is a stage in the general drift towards the complete triumph of science over religion. This is said in justification of the Christians who, face to face with such an indisputable drift, "bemoan the degeneracy of the time." Clearly and fully realizing the true significance of this fact, Dr. Smith, securely seated in his theological chair at Belfast, writes as follows:—

It is surely amazing that such a notion should be entertained by any who profess themselves Christians; for it is nothing else than a confession that our Lord's Atoning Sacrifice and the ministry of his Holy Spirit are insufficient for the world's redemption.

Of course, no Christians have the remotest idea that their attitude, as described by the Professor, is a virtual confession of the utter futility of the Christian faith; but such it undoubtedly is. To non-Christians, whatever notions may be held and expressed by theologians, nothing can be more certain than that the so-

called Atoning Sacrifice of Christ and the ministry of his Holy Spirit are insufficient for the world's redemption. Indeed, the belief in them has proved a distinct obstacle to the world's progress, being a persistent discouragement of human self-reliance and vicarious labour.

Curiously enough, Professor Smith calls those who differ from him, "short-sighted men, ignorant or oblivious of the past," insensible of the fact that the same charge could truthfully be brought against himself. As an example, take this:—

If only we could be transported back a few generations into "the good old days" we would surely realize that they were very bad days, and we would recognize what God has wrought, and would not only bless him for the better days we live in, but strive more earnestly in our generation to make the world a still happier place for the generation to come. Who, for example, would wish to have lived in the days, not so very remote, when life was held so cheap; when sheep-stealing was a capital offence; when a starving woman was transported for the theft of a loaf; when food riots were frequent; when the poor rotted in squalor and neglect; when cock-fighting, bear-baiting, and pugilism were the popular pastimes? If it were not sheer ignorance, laudation of "the good old days" would be rank ingratitude to the ever-working Saviour and to the generous souls who all down the ages have laboured in his faith and love for the advancement of his kingdom and the amelioration of the world.

In that passage the Professor gives his case clean away. When he characterizes "the good old days" as "very bad days" he surely forgets that they were pre-eminently Christian days, in which the Church was almost universally regarded as the temple of the Holy Ghost, speaking on every subject with Divine and final authority. Now the point to be specially noted here is that the better days in which we live arose simultaneously with the gradual downfall of the Church and the secularization of the State. The Church no longer rules either in politics or in morals. Its voice is heard no more in the council of the nations or in the conduct of economic and social affairs. Its pretensions are as great as ever, but they fail to materialize in practice. The truth is that its Divine authority is being supplanted by common-sense, its ignorance by knowledge, and its faith by reason; and it is to this mighty change that we are indebted for the comparatively better times which we now enjoy, and for the more inspiring prospects which face us as we contemplate the future.

Detached from their supernatural connotations several sentences in Dr. Smith's article would be beautifully true. Here is one: "Let us strive more earnestly in our generation to make the world a still happier place for the generation to come." With a slight alteration, here is another: "The distresses which afflict humanity, painful though they be, are no (useless) calamities, but the travail-throes attendant on the emergence of a nobler order, the struggling of a new world into being, the realization of a higher ideal." Unfortunately, however, no such detachment is possible, for all the Professor's sentences are so closely incorporated with his supernaturalism that no separation is conceivable. God does everything, all goodness possessed by man comes from Christ, with the result that apart from the operation of God in Christ the world is doomed to eternal destruction. If this were true the God the Professor believes in would have every reason to be profoundly ashamed of himself, but the history of the world from the beginning until now is a solemn denial of the existence of such a being. Is Professor Smith proud of the world now, or at any previous period in its evolution? Can he look it in the face as it is at the present moment and honestly declare that it is a credit to his

God of order, justice, and love? If he can, then we sincerely pity him and attach no value whatever to his various declarations.

Thus we see that the answer to the question: "Is the world getting better?" depends entirely upon the answerer's point of view. Dr. Smith's answer is in the affirmative because he believes that God is working out deliverance from all sorts of thralldom and inaugurating a new order. Our answer, too, is in the affirmative, but on wholly different grounds. Our belief is that the world is slowly improving because it is emancipating itself from the fetters of supernaturalism and all the slavish traditions thereof, and beginning to walk on its own feet, guided by the wisdom of its own heart, and inspired by its own slowly awakening potentialities of growth and development which Christianity had for so many centuries caused to lie dormant within it.

J. T. LLOYD.

Bringing the Bible Up to Date.

The vain crowds wandering blindly, led by lies.—
Lucretius.

Learning is good, but common sense is better.—*G. W. Foote.*

THERE are about fifty thousand clergy in this country, twenty-five thousand of whom belong to the Church of England, and about the same number who are attached to the Roman Catholic Faith and the numerous Free Church bodies. In all this number it is hard to discover one priest who admits the fear of Free-thought. In public they are as bold as buckram can make them, and they never tire of the bold refrain, "Onward Christian Soldiers." Behind the scenes, however, they are more fearful, and they arrange quietly the means of retreat. Fortunately for progress and civilization, retreat is the order of the day, and will continue to be so. Since Freethought has been organized and well led the Army of the Lord has had to retreat all along the line. The clergy have had no rest. The continued frontal attacks of the Freethinkers are beginning to tell heavily, and the clergy are getting really nervous. Camouflage, however, is still the order of the day. Not long since the House of Convocation of Canterbury decided to abandon portions of "God's Holy Word," and to delete from the "Book of Common Prayer" some very objectionable features of the Old Testament. Now, in a single week, there has been published an expurgated edition of the Bible, and an entirely new "Children's Bible," with no word that would bring blushes to the cheek of the most innocent of little ones. This astute Christian manœuvre may deceive believers for a time, but its effect will be only temporary, and it will not save the Christian Religion from the fate of all its predecessors.

To prune the barbarities and indecencies of the Bible in special and highly-priced editions may soothe the feelings of a few Christian ladies and of young curates, but it is, what the Prayer Book calls "a work of supererogation." It is like attempting to cure a deadly disease such as cancer by means of a piece of sticking-plaster. It is not only a policy of despair in the particular instance, but a precedent which will exert, in the long run, anything but a happy effect upon the Christian position.

The commonly-used "Authorised" edition of the Bible has the authority of the British Parliament behind it, and it must be printed without alteration. Disobedience of this rule involves the risk of very heavy penalties. The Bible is by no means an ordinary book. It is regarded as a sacred scripture, and

is used as a fetish-book. In its complete form it is forced, with all its barbarities and indecencies, into the hands of millions of children at schools. It is used as a fetish for swearing upon in courts of law. Men and women have even been fined and imprisoned for venturing to criticise it. And now the clergy are reluctantly compelled to admit the force of Free-thought criticism. At present, it is true, the clergy are tearing unseemly pages from the Old Testament, but, before long, the New Testament will suffer equally with the older scripture. When the process is complete the Christian Religion will be a thing of shreds and patches. This Hebrew-Greek compilation will take its proper place among the many other so-called Sacred Books of the East, and the thousands of priests will have to look for honest employment. The mutilation of the Bible is not in reality a slight matter. It is the beginning of the end of the Christian superstition.

The theory of the clergy is that the Bible is declining in its influence because it is archaic in thought and expression. Hence the need of a thorough revision. What is it, however, that the clergy wish to hide? There are things in the sacred volume which are calculated to bring the blush of modesty to any face except that of an elderly priest. The account of Ezekiel's banquet, the story of Onan, and the adventures of the patriarch, Lot, and his daughters, are simply and frankly indecent. Nor is this all, for there are many pages of the Bible devoted to plain, unvarnished accounts of rape, adultery, and unnatural vice, written with all the nasty particularity, which is the peculiar birthright of all Oriental writers. The florid, heated rhetoric of "The Song of Solomon" leaves nothing to the imagination, and the least-educated reader can appreciate the glowing periods. The Bible is so different to modern publications and modern modes of expression that one might add that in this instance Oriental nastiness begins where Occidental pornography leaves off. No present-day novelist or playwright would dare to write as the authors of the Bible did. If he dared to fill the pages of his book with detailed accounts of incest, rape, and unmentionable crimes, he would be imprisoned and his works destroyed.

There are other things that the clergy wish to hide from their followers. There are barbarities as well as filth in the sacred book. Listen!—

The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance; he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous; verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.

The quotation is not pretty, or edifying, and it is not remarkable for its "spirituality." There are plenty of other passages in God's Holy Word open to objection, as for instance the following unlovely passage:—

Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.

It is nauseating to quote further, but the Christian fetish-book is full of savagery from cover to cover. From the first error in "Genesis" to the final absurdity in the Book of "Revelation" much of the writing is revolting to modern readers. In so many pages of the earlier books of the Bible there are accounts of the scuffles of savages, whose arrows are "drunk with blood," to adopt its own peculiar phraseology. There are also many pages which flatly contradict modern knowledge and modern science. As for the Gospels, the moral perceptions of the present day are shocked beyond expression at the awful doctrine that countless millions of the human race will suffer everlasting torment. The clergy know all these things, and are seeking to camouflage the bar-

barities, indecencies, and absurdities of their fetish-book so as to retain the respect of their congregations, without whom their living is gone.

The clergy batten upon ignorance. They know full well that a volume set in thirty thousand verses of tiny type, more like a dictionary than a book, is very likely to remain unread. They know further that when they omit deliberately from the public reading of the Bible all unseemly references that few members of their congregations can correct them. To class the Bible as a book of ordered knowledge is the last word in absurdity. Stout old Martin Luther saw this when he said the Bible was a nose of wax which could be twisted as one desired. The Bible is but a Salmagundi of riotous, exuberant, Oriental imagination, as full of fiction as the Arabian Nights, and not nearly so entertaining. If people would only read the Bible instead of worshipping it, such absurd veneration would be impossible. The first stage of the religious road to mental ruin is to throw oneself at the feet of a priest. The second stage is to regard the Bible as the repository of the truth, and nothing but the truth. If the Bible had not been associated with an organized priestcraft, and a very heavily endowed system of superstition, it would, generations since, have been consigned to the top shelves of the libraries in company with the many other so-called sacred books of the East.

MIMNERMUS.

Codding Commercials.

WHATEVER be the intellectual and moral shortcomings of the Christian faith and however loud its protestations of other-worldliness there is no doubt that as an organization it is wonderfully efficient—efficient, that is to say, wherever its interests are threatened and wherever an opportunity presents itself of extending its influence in secular affairs. Like a Parliamentary candidate, it has a keen nose for all organizations likely to afford it support, and loses no opportunity of currying favour with any organised body that there is a chance of dominating, or using as a means to its own aggrandisement. We have seen how it opposed scientific research and then, when opposition was no longer profitable, attempted to patronise it and demonstrate the essential unity of religion and science. Again, having opposed the aims of the Labour movement, many church members are now engaged in demonstrating that Christ was the forerunner of Karl Marx and Ramsay Macdonald. It is now even taking an interest in the pleasures of the people, pleasures which, a few years ago, it denounced. It organizes whist drives, socials, lotteries, and even dances—thus identifying the spirit of Christ with the spirit of jazz. Christ and terpsichore—surely a strange alliance! One would think that between the ascetism of the Bible and the lusty delights of football there was very little in common, but the Church with its usual artfulness even dominates this sport. It organizes junior football leagues (there is a Catholic Football League in my locality. One shudders to think what will happen when the Holy Family meets the Sacred Heart), and even arranges a Football Sunday in most large towns with a procession and service at which a professional footballer reads the lesson. The parson then points out that Christ wants us to “Play the game,” and, *voilà*, the reconciliation is complete. Footballers, although an unintelligent lot of men, are not particularly religious, but they recognize the need for gaining the patronage of an organization that might some day—in a fit of other-worldly zeal—place a ban upon their activities.

Another attempt of Christians to spread the faith has lately been brought to my notice. I refer to the Commercial Travellers' Christian Association. I learned of its existence through its monthly organ, *Good Lines*. *G.L.* is quite an excellent little publication from a commercial's point of view, because it not only contains the names and addresses of hotels and other accommodation all over the country, but also contains a very comprehensive list of towns and villages throughout Great Britain, showing market and early closing days, population figures, London mail, and other invaluable information. The rest of the book is composed of pious moral clap-trap, anecdotes, and propaganda.

The *objects* of the C.T.C.A. are:—

1. The promotion of intercourse amongst Christian commercial men.
2. The advancement by all suitable means of the moral and spiritual character of the entire body.

The *methods*:—

Over 18,000 Bibles have been placed in as many bedrooms of hotels throughout the United Kingdom, also 3,000 illuminated text-cards.

The *Basis of Association*:—

The acceptance of the Holy Scriptures as the authoritative and sufficient communication of the will of God to man, and simple faith in Christ as the ground of salvation.

One has to be a commercial traveller really to appreciate the humour of the foregoing. I can assure you it is rich. You will, however, appreciate the mental outlook of people who seek to advance the moral character of a body of men by leaving Bibles and text-cards about. The *Bible* as a moral uplift! Good, isn't it? There is one thing though, the leaves make excellent shaving paper. As for those text-cards, I've often wondered why hotel proprietors decorate their walls with these; I've always regarded their piety as suspect. I see now that it is a deep-laid plot to keep us in the paths of grace, and incidentally hide the bareness of hotel walls on a minimum outlay.

I wonder what the Modernists would think of the Basis of Association. “Simple faith” is particularly appropriate. I'm inclined to accept the Holy Scriptures as the “sufficient communication of the will of God to man” though. Viewing the matter impartially, and remembering the influence of that communication on our social development, I'm inclined to regard it as more than sufficient. I feel like the shy curate who responded to his host's enquiry as to whether he had enjoyed his lunch by saying,—“er, it was very nice, what there was of it.” Then, realizing he had made a mistake, stammered out—“er, plenty of it, such as it was!”

The C.T.C.A., like many religious organizations, owes much of its popularity to purely secular activities. Advantages of membership include a free Railway Accident Policy, free legal advice, various insurance policies at special rates, etc. The proportion of commercial travellers who are members of the C.T.C.A. is insignificant, and with the foregoing advantages one may assume that by no means all of these subscribe honestly to the Basis of Association. The majority are probably mere “rice Christians.” All the same, such an organization is one more support to idiotic doctrines, and, as such, is a barrier to progress.

The following two stories appear in the current issue of *Good Lines*, and they are worthy of reproduction here, although I think the attention of Lord Danesfoot ought to be called to the last one:—

A certain clergyman, very keen on cricket, was anxious to get away from a week-day morning service in order to attend a big match. So, in order

to save time, he engaged a taxi to wait outside the Church. Just before the service he asked the verger how many were in the congregation.

"Only one man," replied the verger.

"Ask him if a short reading would do for him," replied the vicar.

The verger returned to the vicar and said: "The man requires a full service and sermon."

After he had finished the vicar remarked to the verger how interested the man seemed to be during the service, and asked the verger if he knew who he was.

"Yes," said the verger, "he's your taxi-driver."

Finally:—

In a Wrexford church, the clergyman announced his text,

"Paul we know and Apollos we know, but who are these?"

Just then the verger was showing two strangers into a pew, so in an audible whisper he said, "Two commercial travellers from White's Hotel, your reverence."

I should rather like to meet those two church-going commercials, it would be something quite unique in my experience!

VINCENT J. HANDS.

The Myth of Judas.

THE gospel account of Judas will not hold water. It is full of discrepancies, inconsistencies, and absurdities. If Jesus was as well known as the stories make out, where was the necessity of his being pointed out by the traitor's kiss? In (John xviii.), 2-5, Judas is a mere bystander. He neither kisses Jesus nor points him out, but Jesus himself says to his arrester, "I am he." Yet it is John who is the most virulent against Judas; says he "was a thief" (xii., 6), and attributes to Jesus the words, "Have I not chosen you twelve and one of you is a devil?" (vi., 70.) The divine discernment displayed in the choice of a devil as one of Christ's apostles—he also applied the term Satan to Peter (Matt. xvi., 23)—may excite the admiration of faith, especially as he had promised these twelve that they should sit on twelve thrones judging the tribes of Israel (Matt. xix., 28). Jesus is said to have known who it was that should betray him, and speak of it as "determined" (John xiii., 21; Luke xxii., 22), yet he is said to have said "Woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born" (Matt. xxvi., 24), a sentence, by the way, which excludes the hope of final salvation for the man who was the immediate cause of the redemption. So poor Judas is represented as condemned to be hanged and damned in order to fulfil the scriptures. The motive of covetousness usually assigned for the betrayal of a God whose miracles Judas had witnessed, is so ridiculously inadequate—especially as he bore the bag, and presumably could have helped himself to more than thirty pieces of silver—that Archbishop Whately suggested he did it in order to force on the coming of the Messianic Kingdom; a supposition precluded by Jesus's own denunciations against him. And then the discrepancies as to the suicide. The account in Matthew is utterly irreconcilable with that in the Acts. Did Judas first repent, return the money and hang himself and afterwards buy a field with the money and burst asunder, or first buy a field and falling headlong burst asunder and then repent, return the money and hang himself? Papias, who lived in the middle of the second century, gives a different account of his end. He says that "Judas walked about in this world a sad example of impiety, for his body had so swollen that

he could not pass easily, so he was crushed by a chariot and his bowels gushed out." This is a proof Papias did not know our Matthew. From Paul's saying that Jesus appeared to the twelve (1 Cor. xv., 5) it is probable he knew nothing of Judas's suicide.

Such considerations show that the gospel story of Judas is as much a legend as that in the gospel of the Infancy, which relates that Judas when a boy was possessed by Satan, and endeavoured to bite Jesus (chap. xiv.). But how did this legend grow? It is evidently so entwined with that of Jesus that whoever shall unravel the one will go a long way towards explaining the other. I cannot pretend to do this, at any rate, in the limits of an article, but will throw out a suggestion or so for the disentanglement of a few points, which may give the clue to some others. If the reader will give patient attention to a somewhat difficult matter, I will make amends for what he may think the conjectural character of my suggestion by winding up with an anecdote.

In the first place Judas is wanted in the Christian story as "the villain of the piece." The function of the traitor is to set off the betrayed. An explanation was needed as to how the divine being came to get crucified. The treachery of a disciple was a natural suggestion. Jesus had been put to death, but of course he died a sacrifice, "our passover sacrificed for us." The first-born son was regarded by the Jews as devoted to God, and had to be redeemed by an offering (Exod. xiii., 13; Num. xviii., 15; Luke ii., 22). This offering Kitto tells us, in his *Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature*, was thirty pieces of silver. Here we have the origin of this portion of the Judas myth. The story of his hanging himself may well have come from the name Iscariot, since *Ascara* signifies strangling, and *iskarioth* means a leathern bag, and may have led to the legend of his being treasurer. Those who wished to know why the adversary of Jesus was named Judas may get a hint from *The Jesus of History and the Jesus of Tradition Identified*, by George Solomon. It is certain that the Christians were first known as Galileans (Acts i., 11; ii., 7; Luke xxiii., 6). Now the Galileans are mentioned by Josephus as a turbulent people, the followers of one, Judas of Galilee (mentioned Acts v., 37), who Origen informs us was regarded by his followers as the Messiah. The Galileans, says Josephus, were the latest sect which originated among the Jews. Their leader Judas was put to death, but his party still carried on his work (Antiq. xviii., 10; Wars ii., 8-1). Josephus be it ever borne in mind, knew nothing of the Christians, unless he intended them by the Essenes or this turbulent sect founded by Judas of Galilee. Mr. Solomon boldly surmises that this was so, and that the Jesus of the gospels was a mixture of Judas with the Jesus of whom Josephus tells as crying "woe, woe to Jerusalem."

As Christianity spread in the Roman empire, it was necessary carefully to distinguish its founder from the Judas who led an insurrection and was put to death. Judas became the antagonist of Jesus, though Irenæus, the first Father who mentions the four gospels, also mentions a Gospel according to Judas, and we know that an early Christian sect, called by their adversaries the Cainites, venerated him.

Now for the anecdote. A red-haired Freethinker once overheard a Jesuit remark, "Let me see. Is not Judas always depicted with red hair?" "That, sir," remarked the fiery-hued Freethinker, "has no warrant in your Gospels. But it is quite clear that Judas was of the company of Jesus."

J. M. WHEELER.

Put yourself in his place, and do unto another what you would have him do unto you.—*Confucius* 500 B.C.

Acid Drops.

During the ceremony in Whitehall a spiritualistic lady took a snapshot of the Cenotaph, and when the plate was developed, lo, there appeared numerous pictures of the spirits of the dead soldiers who had, apparently, come to see the proceedings! Unfortunately the *Daily Sketch* published a couple of pictures, with a key, pointing out that most of these portraits were not those of dead soldiers, but of living footballers. And it also explained how it was done and how anyone can get crowds of portraits of ghosts anywhere and at any time. Moreover, it followed up its exposure by offering £1,000 if the lady who was responsible for the living footballers masquerading as dead soldiers could produce a picture of ghosts at the Cenotaph under conditions that did not admit of the utilisation of living persons.

Of course, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle quite accepts the genuineness of the ghosts. Is there anything in this line he will not accept as genuine? If so we have failed to note it. But it should strike someone as remarkable that these photographs are always made by those who already believe in them. Yet the number of the dead is so great, there must be so many millions and billions of ghosts about that one would think it next to an impossibility to expose any plate without snapping a few ghosts. Seriously, with the ignorant antics of a Gypsy Smith at one end, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle with his fairies and other absurdities at the other, and the Hickson imposture in between, it does not look as though our civilization is anything to brag about.

Since writing the above paragraph we see that Mrs. Deane, who was responsible for the spirit photographs, has declined the challenge of the *Daily Sketch*. Her spirit guides will not submit to conditions. Strange! These spirits are not at all affronted when a charge is made for so much per head at a spiritualistic gathering, but they cannot stand it when the Middlesex Hospital stands to gain £1,000 by their appearance. The *Sketch* soundly retorts that Mrs. Deane is a fraud. But she may take heart. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle will probably still believe in her. What puzzles us is why if spirits can get themselves photographed in an open thoroughfare when the camera is held by a "medium" on the other side of the road, they are not sometimes photographed by some of the many thousands of amateurs who are taking "snaps" all over the country. Strange, shy things are these spirits!

A correspondent has been kind enough to forward us a tract from the Protestant Press Bureau, upon which we hope to comment later. For the time being we should like to note one thing. On the back of the tract is the following:—

The Press and Protestantism. Important. Roman Catholics utilize the Press of Protestant England to further the end of their Church. Ought not Protestants to use it in the interests of Truth? Whenever you see newspapers' attacks on Protestantism, however plausible, however mendacious, and from whatever source, send the papers, without delay, to.....

Then follows the address of the Secretary of the Protestant Press Bureau. How these Christians do love one another. After nearly two thousand years this divinely revealed creed is still the subject of bitter sectarian strife. Seemingly the Deity was not particularly clear in his revelation, since after hundreds of years of discussion no one is agreed as to what is Christian truth and what is the invention and pernicious interpretation of the "other chap."

It would be time well spent to study the late Joseph Conrad through his works, and then compare the conclusion with the remembrances of that gifted author now put in book form by Mr. F. M. Ford. What are we to make of this extract?

Out of the loyalty that is demanded of gentlemen we were both papists—but not the faintest glimmer of an

idea is in the writer's mind as to what might have been the religious condition of Joseph Conrad, except that, when out driving, he would turn back rather than meet two priests.

This statement is somewhat in the nature of betwixt and between, and the writer is no doubt doing his best, but Mr. Ford, when he writes without smudging lets in a little light when he mentions the passion of Conrad at the lack of imagination in all humanity:—

.....That imbecilities should be uttered as to the lot of the suffering maddened him." Now let Conrad, though dead, speak for himself: "Those who read me know my conviction that the world, the temporal world, rests on a very few simple ideas; so simple that they must be as old as the hills."

The elaborate humbug of all for which the Vatican stands could not be one of them, and the style of his biographer could not be another.

The Christianity of Mr. George Lansbury is like an inch of elastic that can be stretched to measure a foot or less. In the *Daily Herald* he now takes the physical Jesus, familiar to us through Renan, as the discoverer that mankind is made of one flesh and blood throughout the world. Paradoxical as it may seem, this discovery had the effect through Churches of making many cleavages in the world. From racial to tribal, from tribal to family, it divided with a deadly surety, and whether or not we take the exoteric or esoteric view of Christianity its results are such that no one envies its bloody pages in the book of history. Experience appears to be making many inroads in the ideas of Mr. Lansbury respecting the fundamental part of Christianity, and if he means by Jesus someone who was prepared to die to prove the unity of mankind he has brought the question within the limits of comprehension.

If we may hand out a bouquet from the flower-stall of Freethought one should certainly be presented to "Gadfly," of the *Daily Herald*. With his politics we are not concerned in this paper—although politics appear as real these days as a meal made of chewing cotton wool—but this writer, with his amusing banter to cover up seriousness of purpose, gives the Reverend Edward Arthur Guy Gwyn Johnson a good advertisement. This gentleman of the cloth on all fours with sycophancy towards Lady Downe is put in his period by "Gadfly" as follows:—

He would have been thoroughly at home, I think, in the eighteenth century, clad in wig and bands and gown, mouthing Erastianism in the pulpit and simpering respectfully at the Squire's jokes up at the Hall. It must be atavism or something.

The breadth of Freethought will include Touchstone as well as Jacques and still leave room for more politely to toe out of the room those who do not believe that mankind grows up.

Who says that the poor dear clergy are not useful? The Rev. C. F. Aspinwall, Vicar of St. Bartholomew's Church, Southsea, is an answer to this question. He is an authority on the bridal veil and how to wear it, and furthermore will insist upon all brides wearing veils which he has ready at the church in case of emergencies. This master of modes states:—

The bridal veil must be worn as a veil in the full sense, coming down over the face.

In case the bride should be in any doubt, or want to eat her breakfast through it, directions are given also:—

When the bridal pair are married the veil can be thrown back over the head. This old custom has become impossible except in rare instances, owing to the dressmakers knowing everything about dress and nothing about the Church and her services.

We can only hope that the reverend gentleman was wearing one when he made this pronouncement or we should imagine he was talking through his hat. *Vive la bagatelle!*

The celebrated author, Mr. Patrick MacGill, will be making the parsons jealous. He is poaching on their

preserves. In noticing his novel, *The Carpenter of Orra*, the reviewer drops into a coldly classifying style:—

This Cornish tale belongs to the class of "Christ-story," introducing, that is, a figure who resembles Christ in the simplicity of his life (in a hut on Orra Common), the endurance of insult, his magnetic influence, and so on.

We like the "and so on," and the reviewer's final judgment of the novel is that "the whole story is written and conceived on very crude lines." Perhaps Mr. Mac-Gill is envious of Papini, or Hall Caine; or perhaps he thought of the public that his story "is the stuff to give 'em." In any case, there is always the feather bed of theology to fall back on when inspiration runs dry.

Mr. Arthur Mee declares that the Bible "begins with a poem, and ends with a dream." We should prefer to say that it starts with a fiction and finishes with a nightmare.

There are twenty-two Roman Catholic Members of Parliament, ten of whom are Tories, ten Labour, and two Liberal. That is a very charming adjustment among the various political parties.

The advocates of Sunday games are about to press their point again in Leeds, and the City Council will soon be called upon to decide whether the Sunday use of the facilities for games which it provides in the public parks is to be permitted. Commenting upon this, the *Leeds Mercury* pertinently remarks: "The Sabbatarians who travel to church by tramcar—and there are many of them—are in no case to make a stand on religious grounds against a demand for opportunities of greater freedom in Sunday recreations, once that demand is shown to be real and widespread." This controversy about Sunday games in public parks throws light upon the real spirit which animates Christianity to-day in this country. Sincere belief in the weird paraphernalia of the creeds and dogmas is rapidly waning. But the religionists still insist upon a rigid convention. In the hey-day of Sabbatarianism in the early and mid-Victorian period it was the convention to be as dreary and depressed on the Sabbath as possible—or at least to act as though one fervently realized that one was a miserable wretched creature, probably condemned to hell fire, and at the best sentenced to the perpetual playing of a harp in a heaven chiefly furnished with clouds. And to-day this gloomy convention must be retained; if Christians dare to be openly cheerful what will become of their dreadful beliefs? What cheery person could honestly believe in hell-fire. Who could joke and smile when fearful that the Christian hell was his or her future dwelling-place? No, the Christians are merely logical when they are excessively doleful, and wish to make the rest of us equally dismal.

But with the accommodating spirit which has always characterized the sincere Christian, the Sabbatarian to-day can still realize the necessity for the "come let us be doleful" convention, while acting like a sensible creature and using the amenities of civilization just as much on Sunday as on any other day of the week. And so our Podsnaps and Pecksniffs ride to Church, agree there in unison that they are hell-deserving sinners, unless they have undergone a somewhat mysterious process known as being washed in the Blood of the Lamb, and return home to listen-in, in all probability. And the curious thing is, that they are probably more or less sincere in acting thus. Christianity, like all religions for that matter, demands strict adherence to the letter of its creed, rather than to the spirit. Besides, one can hardly expect the elderly deacon of a Little Bethel to have any hankering after a game of football, on Sunday—or Saturday either. But he does appreciate riding rather than walking through the slush. And, even logically-minded, thoroughly sincere people often unconsciously select arguments which justify their doing something which they greatly desire to do.

What the Christian Jeremiahs choose to do is no concern of ours—so long, at least, as they do not bother normal folk by singing dolorous and ghastly hymns at street corners, or scare an audience of kiddies there, by all sorts of gloomy, suggestive references to Blood and Fire, and Hell and Damnation, and a kind of three-headed monstrosity that is always peeping round the corner of a cloud to see if one is behaving properly. If they like to be gloomy together in their chapels and churches, well that is their business. Some people are never truly happy unless they are thoroughly miserable. Exactly how miserable they should be, and just what kind of penance they should perform for having been born miserable, hell-deserving sinners, is for the Christians to decide. What we object to is these people's endeavour to thrust their hobby upon normal folk. There are, for most people, plenty of real causes for unhappiness, without the creation of an artificial atmosphere of gloom. And we sometimes wonder whether our lachrymose Christians will ever learn good manners and cease their attempt to make other folk as completely uncomfortable as they are on Sunday, unless an offensive is undertaken against them. If Freethinkers and others by letters to the local Press, and in any other way, made it plain that they regard this attempt to create an atmosphere of gloom on Sunday, to prevent healthy recreation then, to turn people's thoughts from healthy enjoyments, to a morbid puzzling over an hypothetical future state—if Freethinkers made it clear that they regard this as positively immoral, our Pecksniffs might begin to consider whether after all Sabbatarianism is so completely "respectable." And once let them begin to doubt its eminent respectability, and they will quickly discard it, and allow decent people to be undisturbed over that one matter at least.

Dr. Beattie is a Christian. As such he believes in standing no nonsense from ridiculous people who dare to be sceptical of his faith. Writing in the *Recorder*, he says: "The Bible says, 'The fool hath said in his heart there is no God,' and I believe that no one but a fool would dare to say such a thing either in his heart or in the columns of the Press." Doubtless the doctor is an authority upon folly. However, he mixes this firm treatment of fools with the true Christian mildness. "I can understand," he says magnanimously, "I can understand people being ignorant of God's character, but even in darkest paganism men feel and know that there is a God." We suggest that if the worthy doctor told a "Pagan" this to his face, he would stand a very good chance of coming to a sudden and violent end. The "Pagan" feels and knows that there is a God? Why, he knows that there are dozens, or hundreds, or thousands, or tens of thousands of them. The Pagan is a whole-hogger, doctor, and would most emphatically not be content with one God, even though that Deity be three, or three hundred beings in one. No, the "Pagan" believes in real generosity in matters of Deities.

Having dealt firmly with us, the doctor proceeds to enlighten our darkness. "How is God comprehended?" he demands. Lest he should receive some such flippant rejoinder as "The answer is a lemon," he hastens to reply. "'God is a spirit,' and is therefore comprehended by the spiritual sense which God has graciously given to us, and by means of which we have affinity with Him." Well, we don't wish to be rude, or even to deal firmly with our Christian teacher. But really this explanation seems to us about as clear as mud. If Dr. Beattie would explain what he means (1) by God; (2) spiritual sense; (3) affinity with God, we might get some notion of the ideas he is trying to express. As it is we suspect the explanation is implied in another paragraph of his letter. "The great trouble to-day, sir, is that the Bible is either not read or read in a haphazard way and by men whose minds are already full of atheistic and agnostic destructive criticism." We can understand anyone who makes a practice of reading steadily through the Bible finding it somewhat difficult to be either polite or clear. The old book certainly provides a bad example in both those particulars.

Our Sustentation Fund.

Previously acknowledged, £345 3s. 3d. G. F. Shoults, £5; W. T. Allfrey, 5s. 6d.; J. Bryce, £1; Mr. and Mrs. Greenhall, 5s.; Mrs. D. Houston, 18s. 9d.; Javali, 5s.; Swansea, £2 2s.; H. Russell Phillips, 10s.; H. V. Templeman, £1; A. J. Marriott, 5s.; P. Lowe, 2s.; S. Waring, 2s.; T. Roberts, 1s.; Danett, 1s.; W. A. Williams, 2s.; D. P. Stichells, £1; S. Martin, 10s.

Per D. F. Gloak: Mr. and Mrs. McHenry, 10s.; Mr. and Mrs. Morton, 10s.; Mr. and Mrs. Martin, 5s.; Mr. and Mrs. Ross, 4s.; Mr. and Mrs. D. F. Gloak, 10s.; D. F. Gloak, Junr., 2s. 6d.; Chris. Gloak, 2s. 6d.; Ernest Gloak, 2s. 6d.

Total, £360 19s. 6d.

This Fund will close on December 7.

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.

J. STIRLING.—We should like to see greater activity among Freethinkers in Paisley. Perhaps close association with the Glasgow Branch might bring it about.

R. S. ATBURY.—If your Roman Catholic friend will consult the *Roman Catholic Universe* for one or two issues preceding the date of the "Acid Drops" he will find the speech as reported. We did not keep the cuttings, and it is possible that we did not give the Vaughan in question his correct ecclesiastical title.

J. HOUSTON.—Thanks for cuttings, both useful. We can only speak for ourselves. We have been Republican from boyhood, and leave the singing of "God Save the King" to those who desire it. There should be, and are, ways of expressing one's sense of duty to one's country other than this. Glad you so much appreciate the *Freethinker* notes on literary matters.

ANY good bookseller should be able to obtain a copy of Colonel Lynch's *Ethics*, if asked. It is published by Cassells.

J. MARTIN.—We appreciate the suggestion, but whenever the Fund is closed there would always be some who would subscribe had it been open longer. By December 7 it will have been running for two months, and that appears to give every reasonable opportunity to those who are interested in the Freethought cause and the future of the *Freethinker*.

TAB CAN.—Yes; "John Douse" was an obvious misprint for John Dunne. We have had his essay on suicide by us for many years. It is a fine piece of writing.

J. BRYCE.—Thanks for good wishes. Our job is not exactly a bed of roses, but it has to be done, and we are doing our best.

H. V. TEMPLEMAN.—We note your appreciation of articles, and are bearing in mind your suggestions for future articles. We are always glad to receive these. But we do not quite see the value of the distinction between "State" and "Relation" when applied to life. It appears to us to embody the difference between statics and dynamics. It is the relation which creates and perpetuates the state, is it not?

D. F. GLOAK.—Thanks for donations to Fund. We can always rely upon you doing your share.

SWANSEA.—Shall be very pleased to see the Swansea friends again. Our regards to all.

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

Stratford Town Hall was quite filled on Sunday evening last, and from the platform the meeting was quite an inspiring sight. So far as Mr. Cohen himself was concerned he was pleased to see, along with many friends of later years, a good number of those who listened to him when he first lectured from the Freethought platform, now nearly thirty-five years ago. To retain the respect and, one might say, the affection of men and women for that period is an unintentional compliment of the highest kind, and one which the speaker values highly. Mr. Rosetti occupied the chair, and he, too, seems to have made a place for himself in the respect of Freethinkers. Like others he will value that the more highly as he grows older. He made a strong appeal for support for the local Branch, and we trust that it bore results. The new plan of advertising had evidently borne good results, and the members of the West Ham Branch had worked hard to make the meeting a success. They were evidently satisfied with the results.

If we may be permitted to draw a moral from the success of the two recent meetings in London, the one at the Parkhurst Theatre, and the other at the Stratford Town Hall, it is that meetings can be made successful if they are set about in the right kind of way. The audience is there, and, to use a colloquialism, the Freethought speaker has "the goods." What is required is the right method of bringing the potential audience and the meeting into the proper relationship. This can only be done by hard work. A good meeting means hard work on the part of the organisers, and it is well to bear these things constantly in mind.

To-day (November 30) Mr. Cohen will visit Leicester, and will speak in the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, at 6.30. Leicester friends will please note.

A Paisley friend informs us that he asked Mr. Rosslyn Mitchell, Mr. Asquith's successful rival, whether he was in favour of a policy of Secular Education. The reply was, "Yes, and Religious." We have no doubt but that Mr. Rosslyn Mitchell considered this kind of shuffle "smart." To our mind it justifies our correspondent's description of him as a "religious wobbler." Still, we should say that if this evasiveness is characteristic of Mr. Mitchell, and if he is always ready to dodge awkward questions, and maintains the same disposition to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds, he has found in politics a suitable field for his energies. There could only be one better, and that is the pulpit.

There was a good audience at the North London Branch's meeting to listen to Miss Ettie Rout's address on "Freethought and Sex Problems." The lecture was excellent in both tone and matter, and evoked a lively

and interesting discussion—one of the most interesting of the season. To-night (November 30) the speaker will be Mr. C. Batchelor, who will open a discussion on "The Principles of the Communist Party." Will intending visitors note that the time of the meeting has been altered from 7.30 to 7?

To-day (November 30) Miss Ettie Rout will visit Manchester and will lecture for the Manchester Branch in the Engineers' Hall, Rusholme Road. In the afternoon at 3 her subject will be "Sexual Health," and in the evening at 6.30, "Birth Control." Miss Rout, as most of our readers know, has written a number of works on these subjects, and this, along with her lengthy experience in connection with public bodies, gives her the right to speak "as one with authority." We trust to hear that she has had the hall filled at both meetings.

The West Ham Branch is holding another of its popular "Socials" on Saturday, November 29, at 7, in the Earlham, Forest Gate, E. There will be the usual varied programme, and admission is free to all Freethinkers and their friends. There will be songs, dances, etc., so that the evening will lack nothing from the point of view of gaiety.

Will members of the Plymouth Branch please note that there will be a meeting of members held in the Labour Club, 6 Richmond Street, on Tuesday, December 2, at 7.30. As matters are to be discussed which are of vital interest to the Branch it is hoped that every member will make a special effort to be present.

Karl Marx.

III.—CAPITAL.

HEGEL still haunts me a little in writing this article: I had hoped to have disposed of him and left him in the limbo of forgetfulness, but Karl Marx won't let me. He quotes Hegel, he refers to Hegel, he infuses into his writings a spirit of Hegelism, so that in sheer exasperation at last one turns round and cries, who, what, why is Hegel here, still here?

All this I say without hedging on my previous statement that Hegel has really little to do with "Capital"; Karl Marx has done no more with Hegel than that for which he unmercifully satirises others—using the pom-pom of big names to cover ineffectiveness of thought.

I reserve certain criticisms of Karl Marx in this regard, but as we must penetrate to the bed-rock we will take Hegel on the way. Marx himself says: "My dialectic process is not different from the Hegelian, but is its direct opposite. To Hegel the life process of the human brain, *i.e.*, the process of thinking, which, under the name of 'the Idea,' he even transforms into an independent subject, is the demiurgos of the real world, and the real world is only the external, phenomenal form of 'the Idea.' With me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing else than the natural world reflected by the human mind, and translated into the forms of thought."

Of this passage I will only say, in passing, that no one ever built up a valid scientific structure, as one finds in mathematics or physics, on such modes of thought as here indicated; and the fact that Hegel or Karl Marx may appear to do so in philosophy is evidence less of the superiority of that subject than of the fogginess, reeking of fumes of the Middle Ages, with which it is still invested and which permit two contradictory statements to live together, when, indeed, neither have any real meaning.

Marx, who had within him a strong vein of contrariety and pugnacity, says in another place, in reply

to some disparagement of Hegel, "I, therefore, announced myself the pupil of that mighty thinker, and then here and there in the chapter on the theory of Value, coquetted with the modes of expression peculiar to him."

One notion which he derived from Hegel gave him a certain spirit of faith, though it does not add to the value of his analysis of economic conditions. This might be expressed as the principle of Determinism.

Marx became assured of the ultimate triumph of his ideas because he thought that they proceeded along the lines pre-ordained by the nature of things. There are certain flaws, however, in this mode of reasoning, for though Determinism may be acceptable in a scope large enough—that is to say when amongst the determining factors all manner of human emotions, desires, and voluntary efforts are also included—yet within a narrower range there is no ground for invoking this principle.

If, indeed, such ground existed then the writings of Capital and the whole work of the propaganda of Marx and his school would have been, if not nugatory, at least supererogatory; he could, instead of showing himself the strenuous combatant and champion of the proletariat, just as well, like a sated pasha, have folded his hands on a fat paunch and cried, Kismet; what is to be will be.

Putting the mere furniture of philosophy out of reckoning, therefore, let us look to the working of the machine. Now in Capital we find long valuable chapters on Machinery and Modern Industry, and incidentally on child labour, sweating and the like, which though interesting and informative do not make demands on any special theory. Finally, therefore, to cut the matter short we come to two main theses in the economic and sociological system with which he deals. These are the theory of "surplus value," and the theory of "centralization."

In very brief space the theory of surplus value may be thus stated: Profit is the equivalent of the difference between the selling price and the cost of the article. The price may be taken to be composed by (a) the value of the raw material, (b) value represented by the plant (c) new work bestowed on the article. Now of these three categories it is (c) which offers to the capitalist the opportunity of unfair pressure, and this opportunity he exercises in the most abominable manner. In other words, the gist of the matter is the fight between labour and capital for the fair apportionment of that part of enhanced value which has been actually added by the labourer's work.

The theory of centralization is that the process of competition, first seen as between capital and labour, will be carried on between capitalist and capitalist, until at length we will have the spectacle of our economic world containing a vast population of a cheated, exploited, exasperated proletariat and a few technically capable but morally imbecile capitalists. At this point occurs the explosion, the revolution, the clearing of the ground for a world Communism.

Here again Marx professes to found his work upon scientific principles whether of psychology, or philosophy, or sociology; but if it really depended on such support and if it had to be justified by his provisions, then the actual events of the history of civilization would show the falsity of his system. He has been proved wrong in all the particulars which he cites. It is not true, for example, that the bourgeoisie in its struggle for power must necessarily destroy the old aristocracy and the forms in which it was embodied; Marx has not allowed for what are the most powerful motives in human conduct, not love of gain for itself, but for display, the satisfaction of vanity, the exercise of what we have called by a short name in this country for its use is so frequent, snobbery. The profiteer

becomes the most powerful prop of the "Church and State"; it is he who seeks to send his son to Harrow or Eton; it is he who buys race-horses, not that he can tell one end from another, but because the owner of a classic three-year-old has the entrance into a certain society; it is he who having sold most things for money will sell his paltry soul for a paltry title.

Further, though the tendency is for the control of great businesses to fall into the hands of a few, yet the result is not the elimination of the middleman or the middle classes, and still less does it appear in any antagonism to the system. In this respect also that same principle of—it hurts my senses to pen the word, but unfortunately it is necessary—snobbery is so vital that it may be considered the very cement of the British Constitution. The exploited and sweated clerk does not realize himself in the tragic figure of Karl Marx's imagination ready to tear down the bastilles of iniquity; the very name of Karl Marx himself is detestable to him, he keeps his spats and his gloves—for he either wears these or hopes to wear them even as the adornment of his soul—unspotted from the world, and, adorning the old feudal forms, votes Tory and gives us Winston Churchill as his great economic paragon.

If then we reject in Karl Marx his high and tenuous philosophy, his economic theories, do we deprive him of substance? No. We simply cut away the accessories and we come then to the real thing. The main-spring of all his movement is not a reasoned ethical system; it is a matter of experience, of character, of temperament.

The dynamics of "Capital" may be found in passages such as this: "Englishmen, always well up in the Bible, know well enough that man, unless by elective grace a capitalist, or landlord, or sinecurist, is commanded to eat his bread in the sweat of his brow, but they did not know that he had to eat daily in his bread a certain quantity of human perspiration, mixed with the discharge of abscesses, cobwebs, dead black beetles, and putrid German yeast, without counting alum, sand, and other agreeable animal ingredients."

That terrible tirade which, let it sear the mind or revolt the stomach, is salutary nevertheless, that caustic sentence reveals the fierce undying hatred of Karl Marx for the sham, the hypocrisy, the fraud covered up in the glory of our high state functions.

From the same chapter, "The Working Day," I take another significant passage: "It dealt with the death of the milliner, Mary Anne Walkley, twenty years of age, employed in a highly respectable dress-making establishment.....This girl worked on an average sixteen and a half hours, and during the season often thirty hours, without a break. It was necessary to conjure up in the twinkling of an eye the gorgeous dresses for the noble ladies bidden to the ball in honour of the newly-imported Princess of Wales."

Karl Marx then is, at least according to my reading, not a great philosopher, not even a reliable economist; but he is the repository of all the griefs, the exasperation, the rancour of the abused, the spoiled, the rejected; he is himself the incarnation of the persecuted; he is the leader of the Revolt of the Masses.

How does he propose to rectify the system, to set our tottering civilization on its feet? The constructive part of his programme has occupied his thoughts much less than the destructive, and the presentation of his ways and means is singularly lacking in comprehensiveness, in circumspection, or even in vitality.

Briefly his scheme is to ask the proletariat to put itself into the hands of the Communist intelligentsia, so that it may be led as an army of assault against the strongholds of Capitalism.

In Chapter II. of the Manifesto he says:—

The Communists form no distinct party in opposition to other working men's parties. They do not propose any particular principles, according to which they would mould the proletarian movement.

The Communists distinguish themselves from other proletarian parties, in that they on the one hand bring into prominence in the national struggles of the Proletariat, the common interests of the entire proletariat independent of nationality, and at all times they represent the interest of the whole movement in the various stages of the struggle between the Proletariat and the Bourgeoisie. The Communists therefore are practically the most determined, the most advanced section of the working men's parties of all countries. They have theoretically the advantage of the great mass of the Proletariat; they have an insight into the conditions, the progress and the final results of the whole proletarian movement.

I could cite other passages to bear out what I have said about the leadership; but in the next instalment I will show this system in actual operation in Moscow, and I hope to enliven my exposition by strange pictures and graphic touches.

ARTHUR LYNCH.

Rev. Josiah's Retribution.

THE line of conduct adopted by the Rev. Josiah Stubbings over the affair of Simon Horsfield, the younger, puzzled me for many a long day, and the solution would probably have eluded me till now had not our little postmistress put me wise.

Josiah and young Simon had grown up together from boyhood, had attended the same Sunday-school, Bible-classes, and Chapel in our little town, where Simon's father, old Simon, who was a prominent member, class-leader, deacon and Sunday-school superintendent, kept a—or rather *the*—drapery shop.

When Josiah's mother, a widow, desired to find her son a place, what was more natural than that she should approach the worthy deacon and enlist his good offices. He responded, and gave Josiah a start with his own son in the drapery business.

Whether old Simon found Josiah to be a little sharper than his own son, and consequently favoured him unduly, I cannot tell, but an aloofness and coolness ensued, and the two young men who had hitherto been friendly were afterwards not on good speaking terms, treating each other with silent contempt.

After a while, Josiah began to find the drapery trade somewhat irksome and distasteful. Being very much in demand as a local preacher, and having the reputation of being able to move the Almighty by prayer better than anyone except the minister himself, he was encouraged by his fond mother and the older generation at the chapel to prepare himself to enter the ministry. In truth, he felt it was his true vocation, for he had memorized quite a harvest of biblical texts, was never at a loss for a quotation to clinch a dispute, and his education had not been conducted on such lines as would dim his religious zeal. In fact he could have admirably carried out the duties of a parson, whose qualifications—according to advertisements we see from time to time—are zeal and enthusiasm rather than fluency and education. His employer warmly seconded his aspirations by allowing him time off to attend and occasionally speak at district rallies, conventions and week-day preaching services at distant chapels.

Josiah was subsequently proposed to the Connexion as a young man whose true vocation was the pulpit, and the saving of immortal souls, and whose

talents were wasted behind a shop counter. He was accepted, and spent about three years as a student in one of the connexional establishments euphemistically known as a "college" for the training of young evangelists.

Towards the close of this probationary period a vacancy occurred for the pastorate of a chapel in a neighbouring town about twenty-five miles distant, and Josiah's fame having penetrated even thus far, he was duly "called" to the ministry. Anyway, that was how it was announced, but I happen to know that he lost no time in visiting the church and canvassing the influential members. Eventually he wrote out a lengthy application, supported by testimonials from the "principal" of his "college" and the deacons of his old chapel, much in the same way as a youth applies for a job in a counting house, and he was ultimately selected from close on fifty applicants. Here he took root, and for many years he was reputed to have "laboured" in the cause, although many of us regarded the term as a misnomer. Singularly enough, he rarely visited his native town, or the chapel, during either his collegiate career or his first pastorate.

Meanwhile changes had occurred with us at home.

Old Simon had been gathered to his fathers, and the winding up of his affairs disclosed the fact that the only way to pay his debts was to dispose of the business. A large multiple firm made a good bid and promptly turned it into an "emporium," installed their own manager, and turning young Simon, who had grown up in the business, adrift. He afterwards found employment in the local co-operative store, through the influence of some of the chapel members who were on the managing committee. He settled down, married, and he and his family were faithful and regular Sunday-scholars and chapel-goers. Ostensibly he carried out his duties satisfactorily both on week-days and Sundays, and had the reputation of being a god-fearing citizen. He was made responsible for sales and money transactions at the stores, but that did not limit his activities, for he was always in the limelight when subscriptions, collections, flag-days, employees' trips, etc., were arranged. And really, who was more suitable and trustworthy to deal with such matters than one who was always in his place at the chapel, class-meeting, and Sunday-school. Hence he was highly trusted—too highly, as events turned out.

The downfall of Simon occasioned much astonishment and searching of hearts amongst the chapel-folk. It seems that some interfering busybodies termed "auditors" in investigating the Co-operative Society's transactions for the half-year had discovered discrepancies, the nature of which was so serious that, after a prolonged committee meeting, Simon was apprehended at two o'clock in the morning and detained pending the hearing of the charge before the local magistrates. Only formal evidence was given, and he was remanded for a week in custody, in order to give the auditors time to complete their investigations of the total defalcations and prefer the charge.

Then, like a bombshell, the Rev. Josiah Stubbings, who had avoided us for years, made an unexpected appearance in our midst, having come post-haste from his flock at —. He was already acquainted with the whole of the details, and lost no time in interviewing the Chairman of the Bench of Magistrates and the members of the management committee of the Co-operative Society. What occurred at these interviews, whether he melted their stony hearts by his eloquence, drew attention to the scandal that would be caused to the church militant, pleaded for leniency on account of Simon's hitherto

unblemished character, pictured the plight of Simon's wife and family, did not transpire, but the result was that when the case came for hearing no evidence was offered, the charge withdrawn, and Simon left the court without a stain on his overall. He shortly afterwards left the district, and his subsequent movements are uncertain.

I puzzled over it, and yet could not account for Josiah's seemingly disinterested action towards one for whom he never had any affection, until one day when I called at the Post Office to transact some business.

Our postmistress is a worthy little woman, and knows everyone's business, and lest you should think that she derives her information from a surreptitious perusal of other people's postcards, let me hasten to inform you that she is the repository of the confidences of a large number of clients. Naturally we conversed about the affair, and on my expressing surprise at Josiah's advocacy of the case of one who had always been a thorn in his side, she replied:—

"Ah well, we might let it pass at that. But surely you knew the real reason for Josiah's concern in the matter and why he came over so soon as he heard of Simon's trouble. Did you not? Well, it's an old story, and maybe you were too young to be informed at the time, and mind you, I don't wish to throw stones at anyone, particularly one who has succeeded like Josiah has. But it seems that old Simon called Josiah into his office a few days before he was due to leave for college, in order to go through his ledgers and account books which had been in Josiah's charge. Old Simon noticed one or two accounts still apparently unpaid which he had every reason to believe had been settled. In fact one of his customers had actually produced a receipt signed by Josiah himself, and yet the account had not been marked off in the ledger as paid. Simon had also just paid a small account for repairs, firmly believing that he had given Josiah money to settle this account a few weeks before. Old Simon was unsatisfied, and Josiah, on being confronted with these transactions, sorrowfully admitted that he had not paid the repairs account, although he had had the money, and also that several customers' accounts apparently still owing had been duly settled. Had it not been that Josiah was about to embark on his college career preparatory to entering the ministry old Simon would have put the matter in the hands of the police. Josiah wisely decided to leave for college a few days before he was due, in order to avoid any demonstration, but news travels quickly, and there was quite a good number of chapel folk on the platform to give him a good send-off, the only notable absentees being the two Simons, father and son, for reasons which we could not then guess, but know now. For years, therefore, Josiah has felt too ashamed to show himself here until this last affair. So far from regarding Josiah's solicitude in getting young Simon let off as a disinterested and public-spirited action, you may well regard it in the nature of a *quid pro quo*, and the discharge of the debt he owed to Simon's father."

Which prompts me to moralize thus:—

Firstly, if a man wishes to extend his circle of acquaintances, increase his sphere of influence, his trade, win esteem as an upright character, he should attend a place of worship. For if he fall, it is imputed to a mere lapse in the pursuit of a high ideal, and his chapel-going is very useful in procuring a mitigation of his just punishment. In short, it pays.

Secondly, the white bow affected by the men of the "cloth" is not to be taken as the symbol of a blameless life.

HOWEL FRANCIS.

Obituary.

STEWART DUCKWORTH HEADLAM.

It is not only in his own church that the death of Stewart Duckworth Headlam, Priest and Reformer, will be deeply mourned. London and indeed the nation at large, will mourn the loss of this fearless, great-hearted champion of great causes, whom Bernard Shaw once called "The Knight of the Unrepresented," and of whom Dr. Scott Lidgett, his colleague on the Education Committee of the London County Council, has just truly said that "his work will be an imperishable monument in the history of London Education." There is probably not a child or teacher in London's Council Schools who does not feel that they have lost the best friend they ever had.

As a young curate in Bethnal Green, fifty years ago, he gathered round him a group of eager young folks, who met in the workman's flat in which he lived in Waterlow Buildings. He did his duty as a parish priest and had a high ideal of what that duty was. He not only prepared the youths and maidens for Confirmation, and read the Bible with them. He also read, in these classes, Shakespeare and Tennyson: he taught the lads to swim: he went for country walks with them: and took them to the theatre. They studied together the laws of health and political economy. In those early seventies of last century were the beginnings of great things, which developed later, when the people of Bethnal Green called him to a wider sphere of service on the London School Board and then on the L.C.C., into the Evening Continuation Schools, the London Schools Swimming Club, the London Shakespeare League, of which he was President till his death, and the visits of thousands of happy school-children to the "Old Vic."

In Bethnal Green he fought the slum landlords, who tried to prevent the establishment of the Free Library. He joined the Commonwealth (Radical) Club, and gave it a library of useful books from his own shelves. One of his lectures on "Theatres and Music Halls" brought him into conflict with a narrow-minded Bishop of London, and caused his dismissal from his curacy. The reply was the founding of the Church and Stage Guild.

Contact with a strenuous Secular movement in the East End brought him into touch with many well-known Freethinkers, including Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant. He lectured to East London Secular Societies, and also took part in Sunday evening discussions at the Hall of Science. Deeply devoted to religious principles, he held to them with characteristic tenacity, but all the time with the widest and most respectful tolerance of others. Freethinkers were glad to meet such a clergyman, and his relations with them were always of the most cordial nature. His opponents were among his greatest admirers. His love of liberty was all-embracing: liberty of thought, of publication of political and economic freedom. In all the years of his public life no call to action on behalf of freedom of thought or speech ever found him wanting. He accepted the anti-malthusianism of Henry George, but defended the right of Bradlaugh and Besant to publish the *Fruits of Philosophy*. He taught the Church Catechism to those who were sent to him at Church, but was a life-long advocate of Secular Education in the State schools.

When Bradlaugh was excluded from the House of Commons, he did a great work in arousing public opinion against the grotesque invasion of the rights of a constituency. He was always a sworn enemy of the Blasphemy Laws, and when the late editor of the *Freethinker* was imprisoned for "blasphemy," organised a protest in which many clergymen followed him. The columns of the twelve volumes of his *Church Reformer* are full of outspoken articles on these subjects. Early in 1884, in his first issue, he published an article on the Blasphemy Laws which earned him high praise from Charles Bradlaugh.

On the purely religious side his interests were keen and continuous. It would lead to a misunderstanding of the man's character to lose sight of this. He published works on "The Meaning of the Mass," "Priestcraft and Progress," and would insist that the foundation of his political and social activity was "the sure founda-

tion of the Incarnation." And he would have replied to his puritanical critics that it was not in spite of, but because of his theology that he wrote his *Theory of Theatre Dancing*, and opposed all attempts to make men religious or to keep them sober by Act of Parliament. A man so strong in his own beliefs and of such manifest intellectual sincerity, felt he could afford to give fair play to opposite opinions, and he made it his duty to see that they got it.

For Stewart Headlam Freethinkers have never had anything but feelings of respect and even affection. The kindness, the sincerity, the manliness of the man were all so obvious that only those deficient in such qualities could fail to observe and to appreciate them. It is probable that few men have fought so many fights for unpopular causes and made so few enemies as did Stewart Headlam, and it is only fitting that in a Freethought journal some public testimony should be made of the high esteem in which Freethinkers held him. After a long and strenuous life of devoted service he leaves no enemies behind, and many thousands of Freethinkers can join with their Christian fellow-citizens in laying a tribute of admiration and affection on the tomb of a veteran in the fight for freedom.

Correspondence.

BIRTH CONTROL.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Many years ago I was interested in this subject and possibly one or two facts that I gathered may not be without interest to your readers.

I constructed a curve showing the crude birth-rate, and found that, subsequent to the publication of the Knowlton pamphlet, the curve became a discontinuous one. From this one might assume, although illogically, that the two were connected. Subsequent investigations show that the fall in the birth-rate was due to other causes operating at the same time.

Generally the birth-rate depends on the death-rate of the young. Those species which protect the immature breed very slowly, while those who leave their offspring to chance or fate are the most prolific breeders. Fish will produce in one season, if all grow up, enough descendants to nearly fill the ocean. The young fish for self-protection swim in the shallow waters, but even here they are preyed upon, until finally not one in ten thousand survive the dangers to which they are being continually exposed. Elephants, the largest land animals, breed slowly as they are able to protect their young. We need not at present go into the problem why such is the case, but undoubtedly there is a connection between the death-rate and birth-rate.

The ratio of the sexes is also important. In Geddes and Thomson's *Evolution of Sex* an experiment is described with tadpoles. They were divided into three groups: A, being fed with minced frog's flesh, produced 70 per cent. females; B, fed with minced horse flesh, gave 50 per cent. females; and C, fed with the natural water, gave 30 per cent. females. I am quoting these figures from memory, but I think they are correct, or nearly so. E. Yung found that when tadpoles were reared under natural conditions the proportion of male to female was forty-three to fifty-seven, but with a flesh diet the proportion of females was greatly increased. The aphides in summer heat and when food is plentiful produce only females, but the advent of autumn brings an equality of sex production. Mrs. Treat showed that starved caterpillars turn into males. In one case I planted a vegetable marrow in worn-out soil and the flowers were nearly all males. Last year in a hot-bed there was an abundance of female flowers and a good supply of marrows. Bees, it is well known, can change the sex of the larva in the cells by varying the nature of the food. There are of course many theories on the subject of sex, but I think it will be ultimately found that food supply plays an important part in sex determination. If such is the case then this is nature's automatic safety valve for regulating the increase of any species.

In addition to nature's method mankind has invented several quick acting safety valves such as delay in marriage, nunneries for surplus women, *coitus interruptus* and contraceptives. These have one great advantage from the fact that the result is almost immediate and suited to the necessities of the individuals concerned.

The present shortage of food supply is produced partly by the increased expectation of life, amounting to fifteen years since 1830. The children do not die so rapidly and there is consequently a fall in the birth-rate. We now come to the question of the cause of the low death-rate, and this may be traced to the Public Health Act of 1875, which conferred greatly increased powers on local bodies dealing with sanitation and water supply. Typhoid fever, typhus fever and smallpox are no longer dreaded as they were years ago, and to this Act and its successors which lowered the death-rate, and therefore the birth-rate, we must look for the changes that have taken place. The Knowlton pamphlet had nothing to do with the matter. *Coitus interruptus* has been known for centuries all over the world, and was hoary with age at the Bradlaugh-Besant trial.

Will Mr. Kerr kindly give the percentage of males and females—children—in *Debrett's* peerage? I wanted to buy one to go into the matter but was unable to obtain it. The number of titles that become extinct leads me to suppose that the percentage of females is unduly high in the richer classes. WILLIAM CLARK.

ARTHUR LYNCH'S "ETHICS."

SIR,—The interest with which I have followed the articles on the *Ethics* of Col. A. Lynch has impelled me to obtain his book. After my labourious endeavour to obtain an insight into those "basic principles deep down" (where?) I am not surprised at the criticism of Mr. Hands.

Col. Lynch insists that "the principles of ethics apply only to real men, but not to men of whom traces have disappeared"; but I assert that we cannot discover the true basis of ethics without a study of the doings of the animal and early man. Commencing, I state that the conception of the basis of ethics here expressed is only acceptable to that form of society that is satisfied with its conditions; by itself, it is fatal to the ruling section or class in a society. This may have some influence as far as Col. Lynch and his *Ethics* are concerned. I will epitomise a long disquisition by stating that the apparent angelic (moral) in man is common to the animal world, expressed through the struggle for existence, which gives rise to the social instinct. Man is an animal, albeit of a higher scale of development, and therefore inherits those instincts. With these, and the capability of mental development, a code of morals is assumed in due time, which is the outcome of custom, subject to the particular environment in which the tribe or society is situated.

Therefore it is absurd to say "a system must be general and of permanent value." I hope I have understood Col. Lynch correctly here.

His book adds not one iota to the understanding of the basis of ethics; as if this were not enough, alas! he misleads those seeking Truth by the introduction of religion, "soul," etc., and such choice specimens of man's ignorance.

I have "heard him" as he expressly desired, and found him not only wanting, but false. He reminds me of those "proconsuls of mediocre intelligence and manufactured opinions" (page 109) who, like our friend, "have no difficulty in knowing what is truth in ethical matters."

To criticise the outcome of his "Basis" is absolute waste of energy; that, of course, would be unethical. It goes the same way as the "Basis," back to—wind.

The fundamental basis of the moral law on ethics is derived from egoism expressed by the preservation of the life of the individual. Thus it will be seen that Col. Lynch's basis, "Truth, Energy, and Sympathy," are manifestations of the true basis. A. S. E. PANTON.

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.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W.): 7, Mr. C. Batchelor, "What are the Principles of the Communist Party?"

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (New Morris Hall, 79 Bedford Road, Clapham): 7, Mr. E. C. Saphin, "God."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7, Mr. Harry Snell, "Personal Experiences in South Africa, Rhodesia, etc."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Lit., "Making a Living."

OUTDOOR.

FINSBURY PARK.—11.15, a Lecture.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Hyde Park): Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays. Speakers: Messrs. Baker, Constable, Hart, and Shaller.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S. (No. 2 Room, City Hall, "A" Door, Albion Street): 6.30, Mr. Ben Goldberg, "Some Stupidities of Biblical Translations." (Silver Collection.)

BOLTON SECULAR SOCIETY.—Will all members and friends interested in the future of the Branch make an attempt to attend a special meeting to be held in the Social Club, 16 Wood Street, Bolton, on Sunday, November 30, at 2.15 p.m.?

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. Chapman Cohen, "The Making of Man."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Engineers' Hall, 120 Rusholme Road, All Saints', Manchester): Miss Ethel A. Rout, 3, "Sexual Health"; 6.30, "Birth Control."

A REMINDER that there is a remnant of *THE EVERLASTING GEMS* to be had at 2s. a copy, post paid, from THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 Farringdon Street, E.C.4.

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