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Views and Opinions.

Faith and Fact.

Many years ago the late Professor Tyndall gave Christians a splendid chance of proving the power of prayer. He said he would provide a ward in a hospital, at his own cost, to be run on strictly scientific lines. Meantime Christians should also have a ward of their own in which scientific medicine and surgery should be taboo, the patients being prayed over by skilled and admittedly professional operators. Then a return would be made of the cases and the world would be able to judge the results. Of course, Christians did not accept the offer. On the contrary, they solemnly explained that this would be asking God to work a miracle to order, and they implied that no self-respecting God could be expected to take orders from his creatures. They prefer peripatetic Munchausens of the Hickson type who tells the English people of the wonderful cures he effected in Australia, and the Australians of the marvellous recoveries from serious diseases he effected in England. It is a pity the offer was not accepted because not only would it have given Christians a chance of vindicating their faith in the Lord, it would also have given the Lord a fine chance of demonstrating his power. At present his followers hardly act fairly by him. They mix up prayer and physic in such a way that no one can be quite certain which it is that cures. It is time that believers in the Lord gave him a fair chance to do what he can. We believe in justice—even to Gods.

* * *

Prayer.

The other day there was one case in which the Lord was solemnly and publicly invited to demonstrate his power in a specific direction. Cricket is said to be our national game, although it suffers from the misfortune of having been played originally by gentlemen in top hats, and it has never quite got out of the top-hat atmosphere. Consequently there still exists in the cricket world the distinction of players and gentlemen—which led someone to remark, with not great accuracy, that the players are not gentlemen and the gentlemen are not players. At any rate when it was suggested that the Test Team might profitably be captained by a player, Lord Hawke solemnly invoked the aid of God Almighty to prevent such a catastrophe. I have no doubt but that Lord

Hawke felt like the old French duchess who when warned by her Confessor that she stood in some danger of damnation, remarked that God would probably think twice before he damned a person of her quality. So in this case it was perhaps thought that when God Almighty was publicly requested by Lord Hawke to do something, he would hardly like to refuse. But either God did not hear Lord Hawke, or he forgot about it, or he would not bother about it. At any rate it is now reported that the Team will be captained by a professional player. The Lord has paid no more attention to Lord Hawke than he would have done to a coalheaver. And we do the Lord the justice of observing that he usually does pay exactly the same attention to the prayers of a coalheaver as he does to a member of our glorious aristocracy. Nay, his impartiality is such that if the Editor of the *Freethinker* were to pray for fine weather on a particular date, that prayer would receive exactly the same kind of answer as would one by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

* * *

God and St. Paul's.

In this world of ours the Lord appears to have been doing nothing for so long that most people seem to have become quite accustomed to his inactivity. He has given up ruling the weather; some of his professional representatives publicly proclaim that he is not responsible for either the presence or the removal of disease; he has given up the habit of striking unbelievers blind or dead; he does not even attend to the preservation of those buildings that are specially devoted to his service. For example, for some time there have been published alarmist reports about St. Paul's. Very large sums of money have been collected, and spent on repairing the Cathedral, and recently the authorities sent out a message of extra urgency to the effect that the dome was in danger of collapse. Again money flowed in, but the reports had one undesired effect. There is a story told of a Chicago preacher who was lecturing his congregation at the time of the last earthquake there. At the first tremor he warned his hearers to sit still, if death came they could not meet it better than in the House of God, but, he added, as a second violent rumble occurred, "outside is good enough for me," and made a bee-line for the door. A number of worshippers at St. Paul's were of the same opinion as the Chicago preacher. They apparently did not trust the House of Lord any more than they did a "pub," and stayed away. More than that, the City surveyor visited the building, in the same way that he might have visited the *Freethinker* office, and reported St. Paul's unsound. If St. Paul's had been a night club or an Atheistic meeting he could not have paid less regard to the providence of God. Faith might move mountains, but it could not be expected to uphold a cathedral.

* * *

What of Providence?

The complete lack of trust in the Lord, as well as the Lord's own indifference to the welfare of the

building, are both striking. According to the experts one cause of the trouble is that when the piers were filled, the jerry-building contractor put in rubbish instead of the proper material. Nothing, so far as we know, happened to the contractor. He was paid for his work and doubtless died in the odour of sanctity. And this happened in the days when God Almighty still interfered in affairs, for among my collection of religious tracts there are some of the late seventeenth century which tell how certain people were afflicted with sore diseases for their unbelief, desecration of the Sabbath, etc. But the Lord did nothing to the contractor. And when the Dean and Chapter find the building in danger they do not hold prayer meetings for its safety. They call in architects, some of whom may be Atheists, for all they know, and ask them what they think about it. When money is wanted they again show no faith whatever in the power of prayer to secure it. They issue public appeals broadcast, and do not even promise the givers a reward in the next world for their giving. The whole thing is reprehensible in the highest degree. It is a consecrated building, but it decays as rapidly as though it were unconsecrated. It is God's house, but he takes no more care of it, and shows no more interest in it than an absentee landlord does in the condition of the houses from which he draws his rents. His followers have so little faith in his providence that they are afraid to trust in his protecting arm even while they are praying to him and telling him how all-powerful he is. There is evidently a good moral here if one can only discover it.

* * *

"Practical Atheism."

The moral of it is not, after all, hard to find. So long as Christians are content to talk, and so long as other people allow themselves to be impressed and take this talk at its face value, there will linger with us this belief in an overruling providence, an Almighty God, the efficacy of prayer, and the rest of the string of attenuated primitive superstitions. But when it comes to the test of actual fact, and when there is something solid to be either lost or gained, then we find most Christians will throw their theories to the wind, and deal with the matters before them on the same lines as other people. Theoretically it should be no more difficult for God Almighty to hold up the dome of St. Paul's than it is for him to cure a headache. But no one expects him to do the former, and not so many nowadays rely upon his doing the latter. Whether it be the leadership of a cricket team or the upholding of a cathedral it is all the same. They are both matters where actual knowledge may be applied, the pros and cons debated, and a decision arrived at in accord with ascertainable facts. And in that atmosphere religion cannot live. It can only flourish in the half lights of insecure knowledge and doubtful information. God does most where man knows least, man's religious belief is most fervent where his ignorance is most profound. Some preachers have complained that many Christians nowadays are "practically Atheists." If that means acting as though God does not exist, or, at least, as though he does not interfere, one may ask, "In what other way should they behave?" The accumulated and ever growing experience of the race will make itself felt sooner or later, and one of the plainest lessons here is that God does nothing. "Practical Atheism" means no more than common sense applied to the affairs of life. And if Christians find it pays to become "practical Atheists" when dealing with a cricket match and a cathedral, we suggest they would find it equally sensible and profitable to apply it to life as a whole. CHAPMAN COHEN.

Dean Inge on Copec.

It is a well known and generally acknowledged fact that Dr. Inge is one of the greatest personalities and possesses an exceptionally keen and agile intellect. His mind is marvellously versatile, which renders him one of the subtlest and most triumphant debaters. Theologically, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to place him. When he discusses Christianity from the standpoint of scholarship he is a Modernist of the sternest type; but when he preaches a sermon from such a text as, "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned," you would naturally infer that he is a pre-eminently orthodox divine. As a canon of Manchester recently described him he seems to be two entirely different men in one. A few weeks ago he made a characteristic attack on Copec in two articles to the press. He is a born journalist, and as a matter of fact he is even now a much more prosperous journalist than preacher.

His attack on Copec has caused a stupendous sensation in the religious world. It is a deplorably bitter and sneering assault. The Rev. Canon Raven, D.D., who is a great admirer of the Dean, admits, in the *Guardian* of January 30, that "it is a pity that one who can speak so beautifully of the inner life of the saint can display so peevish a temper and such a delight in most unsaintly sneering; that, while asserting that Christianity takes all the sting and bitterness out of economic struggles, he refuses to recognize that it must also take the bitterness out of contributions to the daily press. Under the lash of his malicious phrases his victims are sorely tempted to retaliate in the same spirit; but, if they do what becomes of "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost?" On this point we are in full agreement with Canon Raven. We have never been able to understand how so great a man, in many respects, can indulge in so much contemptuous and scornful language while dealing with opponents. A few years ago he despised the working man and spoke of him in terms of disdain.

Now the question arises, what is Copec which Dean Inge so heartily hates? Canon Raven says:—

In his attacks upon "Copec," in more than one article, the Dean has been unusually unfair to himself. He purports to be an independent and original thinker: his reputation as a scholar leads his readers to assume that he does not write without some first-hand knowledge of his subject. On this account his work is valued by many who disagree with his conclusions. It has long been suspected that, in fact, he often writes without any real knowledge at all; that he simply adopts the conclusions of others, clothes them in brilliant garb and issues them to the world as his own. This is at least exactly what he has done in the present case. His article is nothing more than a condensed and envenomed version of the Bishop of Durham's Primary Charge; even the epigrams are borrowed. There is not a word to suggest that he has used any other source in order to acquaint himself with the intentions and work of "Copec," or has ever corrected a casual reading of the Bishop's criticism by reference to the facts. Only two bishops on the bench have showed any hostility to "Copec"; the Dean selects the more uncompromising of them as his authority, and distorts his account of the movement both by suppression and exaggeration. His article is in consequence so wide of the mark as hardly to require a reply.

If most of these words are true we cannot learn from the Dean what Copec really means. Canon Raven informs us that "it was simply and solely from our sense of the supreme importance of personal discipleship that the Copec movement started." The

Bishop of Durham says that "we must reform society through men," a statement with which Copec is in full agreement. The Canon puts it thus:—

Indeed, if I may speak personally, it was only my evangelistic work among individuals that convinced me that mere individualism was not enough. We are members one of another, and none of us lives or dies unto himself....."Copec" is simply an attempt an honest and unequivocal attempt, on the part of a great number of ordinary Christians of all shades of political and religious opinion, to discover together how they can live out their common faith consistently. They hoped "to show how the truth about God casts light on the world's problems, and points the way of duty," and this the Bishop of Durham, from whose charge the words are quoted, asserts to be "the sublime task to which we are called." Knowing their own ignorance and agreeing with the Bishop and his decanal interpreter that such problems can only be solved by experts and exact study, they invited the best qualified thinkers and workers in each field to form Commissions to investigate and report upon the several aspects of corporate life. The commissions were carefully chosen so as to represent a wide variety of outlook. Dr. Inge singles out the report of that which dealt with industry for condemnation, on the ground of its "sloppy Socialism."

That long passage written by a member of the Copec movement supplies us with a fair idea of what "Copec" really signifies. Dean Inge was asked at an early stage of the movement to join it; but he refused to do so, evidently on the ground that it savoured too much of Socialism. Clearly, from the very start, he disapproved of the movement. Canon Raven's reply to the Dean is couched in most friendly terms, but lacks convincing qualities. We are even more opposed to Copec after reading it than we were before.

Another reply to Dean Inge's articles has just been made by a man of a fundamentally different type of mind from that of Canon Raven, a short report of which appeared in the *Christian World* of February 5, under the heading of "Dr. Horton Roused; Biting Criticism of Dean Inge." This eminent Free Churchman is said to have "addressed some exceedingly plain remarks to Dean Inge, in connection with his recent attack on Copec," which he did in the course of his Monthly Lecture on the first Sunday in February. Even Dr. Horton recognizes the intellectual greatness of the Dean. He says, "I know it is a daring thing to enter into an argument with a man who has such a pen; unfortunately he is the most noted and prominent representative of the Church in England to-day. A thousand earnest preachers may speak for Copec, but the voice of Dean Inge will be heard above them all; they never will be heard and he is heard everywhere." It follows from this that the gravest importance attaches to whatever position he may take up. Therefore from Dr. Horton's point of view, "no one can exaggerate the calamity of such a powerful mind and such a brilliant wit being used to deride this great, earnest, honest effort of the great bulk of the Church of Christ in England to bring the truth of Christ to bear upon the conditions of our time." The Hampstead divine is humble enough to declare that he "would not dare to enter into controversy with so great a writer and thinker," and all he does venture to do is to remind the Dean of certain sayings of Jesus found in the Gospels, but without even mentioning the fact that there is absolutely no evidence that any of the words attributed to him in these documents ever actually fell from his lips.

It is beyond all dispute that Christianity began as a form of Socialism, or even Communism. In the apostolic Church everything was had in common. It was an experiment that totally failed. Copec so

arranges so-called truths of Christ as to make Socialism a distinctly Christian product. We think that Dean Inge is perfectly justified in attacking Copec, and we go further still, and declare that, to be consistent, he ought to attack Christianity itself, which, in fact, he has often done, in a way peculiar to himself.

J. T. LLOYD.

Bishops at Play.

The entire training and life of England's ecclesiastics seem to render the majority of them incapable of taking in facts patent to everyone else.—*The Duke of Argyle.*

ACCORDING to most Holy Writ, a Christian should be an austere and serious man, disdaining the world and all its pomps. He should avoid the idle word in his conversation, thus being barred from telling the story of the churchwarden and the barmaid. He must shun the use of swear-words. What he does when he steps on the soap in his bath must ever be a matter for speculation, like the tangle of the Trinity. Above all things, however, he must eschew money in all its forms, war-loan, bank-notes, gold (when there is any) and silver. For that way lies the Bottomless Pit and all its unmentionable horrors.

If the common or garden Christian must be more stoical than the Stoic, more ascetic than a Hindoo fakir, more obstinate for truth than a mule, what must be said for the Bishops? They are in the direct line of Apostolic Succession; they inherit, as it were, the fishing-nets and the zeal for martyrdom of the original disciples. Nothing less than a hair-shirt and a tin halo should suffice for such holy men of God. Yet, so far from this being the case, the Bishops out-Herod Herod in the matter of dress. Not content with wearing the shiny stove-pipe hat of respectability, they actually have stringed ornaments on their head-gear, like women. Laymen wear trousers, the right reverend Fathers-in-God must need add fancy garters. Other men live in houses, the ecclesiastics reside in palaces with so many servants. So far from disdaining wealth, the bishops roll in it. Forty bishops, for example, share £182,000 annually between them, ranging from the modest £15,000 a year of the Archbishop of Canterbury to the £2,000 of the Bishop of Westminster. Nor is this all, for there are pluralists among these ecclesiastics, and, as Shakespeare puts it, a man in his time plays many parts. Each part, in this sacred game, be it noted, being well remunerated. So we have the sorry spectacle of the poor layman treading the thorny way to heaven whilst the prelates dance the primrose path to a place so often mentioned in sermons.

There must be some uneasiness in ecclesiastical circles regarding public opinion on the question of the bishops' "purple, palaces, patronage, profit, and power," for some of them protest very shrilly that, strange as it may seem, they are poor men. The Bishop of London, whose salary is £10,000 yearly, with a palace and a town-house, actually declared that, not only was he not rich, but that the longer he drew his ecclesiastical stipend the poorer he became. After fifteen years' enjoyment of £10,000 yearly he was £2,000 out of pocket. How he arrived at these fanciful figures is a bigger maze than that at Hampton Court, but it is quite clear that, had he enjoyed the salary of his brother of Canterbury, he must have finished his career on the Thames Embankment, "down and out" in every sense of the term. Lest anyone should be so worldly-minded as to scoff at this holy man's accountancy, there is another bishop who corroborates the sad story of "Londoniensis," Bishop Welldon, an ex-schoolmaster who ought to know arithmetic, and

whose salary is a paltry £3,000 a year, makes our hearts bleed at the story of his own privations. Speaking last week he said that the previous year he spent in taxation, £1,267 19s. 11d., and his charities and subscriptions to worthy objects amounted to £548 9s., making a total of £1,852 8s. 11d. In addition, this penurious bishop said that his coal bill last year was £121 16s. 1d., and it was a mild winter for poor people.

The explanation is worthy of the bishop's creed. Fifty tons of coal in one year is startling in the case of a humble follower of the Carpenter of Nazareth, for it argues anything but the simple life and the hermit's hut. As for the taxes, it is highly probable that these include enthronement fees, which are initial expenses and most unlikely to be charged again. The bishop admits that he has his modest "savings" to fall back upon in his dire distress, and that he derives an income from his writings, thus being able to keep the wolf from his palace door. But is it not playing it low down on the poor innocent man in the pew for these purse-proud prelates to pretend, saucily, that their four-figure salaries are as a millstone around their necks? The Bishop of London, despite all his protestations, is not poor. His income of £10,000 yearly is sufficient to keep fifty working-class families in comparative comfort. To pretend that affluence is poverty is as nauseous as the pretence that there is any resemblance between a purse-proud prelate and the poor Carpenter of Nazareth. Both attitudes are sufficient to make a bronze statue blush with shame.

The blunt truth is that the Church to which these two precious bishops belong is the wealthiest Church in Christendom. At the top are two score of prelates with seats in the House of Lords, where they never do any good service for democracy; at the bottom are a multitude of holders of benefices far better off than the ordinary man. The Anglican Church has property in the City of London alone worth over £2,000,000, beside property in other parts of the country, including coal royalties and ground-rents, valued at millions of money. The episcopal costume costs over £200, and even a theatrical star could scarce wear any dress at greater cost. Episcopal poverty is all a sham and a make-believe. It is, indeed, a far cry from the fishing-nets of the original disciples to Lambeth Palace, with its guard-room, Fulham Palace, with its pleasure-grounds, Farnham Castle, with its deer-park, and Wells with its moated garden. Instead of snuffling that they water the bread of poverty with their tears, the Bishop of London and Bishop Welldon should have imitated the quiet and cautious reserve of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, two canny North-country clerics who pocket larger salaries, and, like Brer Rabbit, "lay low and say nothing."

These men-of-God are guilty of camouflage, and they are not at all clever with it. The endowments of the Anglican Church, as administered by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, are more solid than the golden streets of the New Jerusalem, and they were not invested in Farrow's Bank. Lord Addington's return of 1891 showed that the annual value of these ancient endowments was £5,469,171, exclusive of modern private benefactions, which then amounted to £284,000 a year. There is much food for meditation in these eloquent figures, for the money might be far more profitably spent than in perpetuating the mummeries of the Middle Ages.

MIMNERMUS.

Papini's Christ.

II.

(Concluded from page 70.)

OUR Prebendary complains that even during the critical months of 1918 the "British Christian Pacifists" pleaded for a "spirit of free forgiveness." "And," he adds, "their fervent prayer was that we should drop our weapons and rush into the arms of our astonished enemies, protesting that we and they were 'a society knit together by love.'"

This, according to Papini, is the only way of dealing with those who behave as "brutes," and presumably with the devil himself when he chooses a sphere of operations outside our own hearts. He dwells strongly on the valuable effect of the astonishment which would follow a nation's or an individual turning the other cheek. "To turn the other cheek means," he says, "that the second blow will not be inflicted."

Perhaps not. The assailant would merely take what he wanted. And probably, though not repeating the blow, he would continue to take what he wanted till there was nothing more to take. He would, in fact, carry out the purpose for which he struck the blow.....Blows are not struck by nations, or always even by individuals merely as exhibitions of bad temper, but because they want to get something. So far, therefore, from being "paralysed with astonishment and filled with an almost timorous respect for this new power with which he was as yet unacquainted," the smiter's surprise, after his first happy experience of non-resistance, would pass away, and he would proceed to carry out his further desires without the inconveniences which wrongdoers sometimes encounter.¹

Quite true, good Prebendary, but not new, you might have heard the same arguments expounded any time during the last forty years from Secular platforms. All the while these non-resistance teachings of Christ were taught, as counsels of perfection, which no sane man would think of putting into practice, all well and good; but now, when influential people in the political world, advocate putting them into practice in real practical earnest, then the teachings of Christ on this subject can go to Jericho, and the arguments of the despised Secularists—for expounding which he has been so heartily cursed—are found to come very handy to the militant ecclesiastic. "Subversive Christianity does not attack only the institutions of civilization—bombarding them with the Sermon on the Mount," continues the irate Prebendary, "we have but to notice how it uses the Beatitudes to see that it is as hostile to a worthy conception of human character as it is to any ordering of society with an intelligent view to human welfare."

Christians are divided into two parties regarding the teachings of Christ. Those who believe that Christ meant what he said in the Sermon on the Mount, and intended his followers to practise that teaching in their daily life. In this camp are the early Christians, and the multitude of saints, hermits, monks, and nuns. In literature it is represented by the *Lives of the Saints*, *The Imitation of Christ*, by Thomas à Kempis, and Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*.

The other Christians, the vast majority, have the common sense to see that if the teachings of Christ were literally carried out there would be an end to civilization. Therefore they declare that Christ never intended these teachings for universal application, but only for the twelve Apostles; and then they, very illogically, pick out the maxims which suit them, or those they think they can practise in daily life, without too much inconvenience, call it Christianity, and

No man is good enough to govern another without that other's consent.—*Abraham Lincoln*

¹ *Destructive Christianity*. By Prebendary A. W. Gough. *The National Review*. December, 1924.

reject the rest! The only great man who has attempted to carry out the literal teachings of Christ, in our time, was Tolstoy, and then only after he had run the gamut of all the passions, and also produced a large family. The attempt ended disastrously and he is regarded by Christians themselves as a crank. He ran away from his wife and family—like Christian did in the *Pilgrim's Progress*—and when he lay dying, his wife was denied admission to his bedside by the fanatics with whom he had surrounded himself.

There is a party in this country calling themselves "Christian Socialists." It is a contradiction in terms. Socialism is incompatible with the literal practice of the teachings of Christ. The Socialist declares that he is working for a better life here, on this earth. Better education, better housing, better art, better health, better culture for the mass of the people, and better government all round. But where, in the New Testament do we find any regard paid to these things? What instructions did Christ give for any intelligent ordering of society with a view to human welfare upon earth? None at all. "My kingdom," he declared, "is not of this world," and directed men's attention to the Kingdom of Heaven, close at hand. Describing the events of the last day and the coming of the Son of Man "in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory," he declares "Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled" (Matt. xxiv.).

What, in the face of this declaration, was the good of trying to found a kingdom upon earth, if the earth was shortly coming to an end, and its inhabitants to stand before the judgment seat of God? As Prof. Francis Newman truly observes: "To teach the certain speedy destruction of earthly things, as the *New Testament* does, is to cut the sinews of all earthly progress; to declare war against Intellect and Imagination, against Industrial and Social Advancement" (*Phases of Faith*, p. 136). Those acquainted with early Christian history know that the first Christians lived in hourly expectation of the second coming of Christ and the end of the world, and this belief was the mainspring of all their actions.

Gibbons in his magnificent history of the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, rolls up the curtain of his great drama upon one of the fairest scenes ever depicted by the historian. By a gradually ascending crescendo, the pagan Roman Empire, just before the advent of Christianity, had reached the summit of its power and glory. Under wise and benovolent rulers like Julius Cæsar, Hadrian, and Marcus Aurelius, who spent their lives in service to the State, and not for their own aggrandisement, the world had reached an era of profound peace and prosperity, such as it had never attained before, and which it has never realized since, or seems likely to in our time, if ever. The succeeding chapters show that the rise of Christianity coincided with the decay and fall of the greatest experiment in government the world has ever seen.

Wherever the Roman Legions went, there sprang up fair cities connected by magnificent roads and bridges, the ruins of which still excite our wonder and admiration. The Romans carried civilization to the ends of the earth. They did not carry on wars of extermination for the mere lust of conquest and plunder as the former world rulers, Babylon, Egypt, Assyria, and Persia often did. Gibbon says: "The reigns of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius offers the fair prospect of universal peace. The Roman name was revered among the most remote nations of the earth. The fiercest barbarians frequently submitted their differences to the arbitration of the Emperor."² This

was the famous *Pax Romana*, the Roman peace, which was maintained with an insignificant force of less than 450,000, who served in the double capacity of soldiers and police.

Later, when the Empire was in difficulties, fighting for its very existence, the manhood that should have been defending the Empire had, many of them, turned hermits, living in caves in the desert, like wild beasts. The Christians who remained behind declined either to fight in the army, or serve in civic life. Why should they fight for a world that was shortly passing away? Nay, they rejoiced with savage exultation over the downfall of the once glorious empire and helped to send it down into the abyss.

Professor Clifford declared that Christianity had destroyed two civilizations and had only just failed in destroying a third. The late Lord Salisbury, himself a professing Christian, quoted Clifford, with entire agreement, declaring:—

What had been would be. The result was contained in the inherent nature of things, not to be affected by man's conscious action. We had been warned that Christianity could know no neutrality and history had verified the warning. It was incapable of co-existing permanently with a civilization which it did not inspire and any such as it came in contact with withered.³

Christianity was not a Gospel of Glad Tidings. It did not usher in a period of peace and goodwill. It appeared during a period of peace and prosperity, but it was not a Christian peace; it was a pagan peace, and the world was never again to know such a period under Christian rule.

Prebendary Gough describes Papini's teaching as "subversive Christianity," and entitles his own article, "Destructive Christianity." Real Christianity as it is taught in the Gospels, is both subversive and destructive. No State could possibly survive that attempted to carry out the literal teachings of Christ. None of them attempt it, and when men like Papini bring these ignored teachings forward and advocate putting them into practice, they are simply cursed and described as Anarchists or Bolsheviks. Why do they not put the blame on the proper person, the Christ who is said to have taught these unworkable and ruinous maxims. Christianity is a decadent religion, it started by gathering in all the weary and sick, the botched and the bungled, Nietzsche speaks of that strange morbid world of the Gospels, like a Russian novel, full of epileptics and visionaries, where the scum and dross of society, diseases of the nerves and childish imbecility, seem to have appointed a rendezvous. He declared that one needed gloves on to handle the New Testament.

We believe Papini is right in his view of Christ, and we agree with Prebendary Gough in denouncing it as a danger to civilization, but we do not believe in the Prebendary's version of Christ's teachings.

W. MANN.

"Why has the moral supremacy of the church passed to the scientist? You know that it has! It is because the scientist is humble. He seeks truth without prejudice. He changes his views on the acquisition of knowledge while the Christian Church defends old things.—*Rev. Stuart L. Tyson* (formerly Honorary Dean of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, U.S.A.).

We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are endowed with certain inalienable rights; that among them are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.—*Thos. Jefferson*.

² *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Vol. I., chapter I.

³ *Life of Robert Marquis of Salisbury*. By his daughter. Vol. I., p. 103.

Ethics.

III.

A DISCOURSE FOR NURSES AND CHILDREN—Continued.

YOU may remember, nurse, my quoting a remark that "man always acts from desire." And I shall now try and give you a summary view of human nature from the standpoint of Desire. Ethics has no meaning apart from human nature; and according to the view we take of what constitutes the essential elements of man's being, so will our interpretation be of ethical codes and moral duties. We speak, for instance, of the Puritanical view of life, but this particular view, with all its objectionable restrictions, is only the outcome of a narrow and one-sided view of life's demands. And so, too, the doctrine of Egoism, or Individualism, with its justification of the practice of selfishness, is based upon a view of human nature that is equally as erroneous as the Puritanical one. So you see, unless our ethical doctrines are related to a right understanding of human nature itself, their signboards are apt to be misleading.

Nuttall's Dictionary gives some twenty-seven different meanings to the word "life"; but the definition of a friend of mine probably fills the bill, so to speak. It is this: Life is our desires in activity. Life and desire are synonymous terms. From the cradle to the grave desire is the impelling motive to human action; and a classification of these desires will be seen to embrace the whole of life and its various activities. They can be summarised into the following groups: (1) the Vital desires, (2) the Recreative, (3) the Approbative, (4) the Inquisitive, (5) the Sympathetic, and (6) the Venerative. We will take these in their order, and deal, firstly, with the Vital desires, by which we mean our wants of food, clothing, and habitation; also the sexual desires, and all that are termed needs.

Have you ever watched the chickens in the yard, nurse, when one of them secures a piece of meat? Off it flies to the most secluded corner, with all the other chickens after it trying to grab the precious morsel out of its mouth. If one of them is successful, away they go again chasing the captor round and round until it is either stolen afresh by another thief, or gobbled in a lump. Now, bearing these chicken ethics in mind, I want to read to you something from the memoirs of a noted criminal who has just died in America. He says:—

Hunger destroys the feelings of humanity, and makes man a savage. Take the mildest couple that ever lived, and reduce them by famine to a state of extremity, and you will see the fond husband tearing from his beloved partner the food upon which her existence depends.

If this should be regarded as an over-statement of the case, it undoubtedly shows a knowledge of ethics that one fails to find in the philosophies. Cannibalism itself is not the result of any ferocious cruelty inherent in the heart of the savage, but is to be referred to the insistent demands of nature, and the difficulties experienced in satisfying his gastronomical desires. The morals of the savage who makes a meal of his enemy, or an unwanted missionary, is no more reprehensible than that of a so-called civilized human being who seeks to "corner" the food of his fellow-countrymen, and prevent them from satisfying the most fundamental need of their nature. You will thus see, I think, how intimately connected the question of ethics is with this desire for food; and not with its gratification only, but with every operation that enters into the production and distribution of life's supplies. There can be little doubt, from the evidence we had of panic food hoarding at the begin-

ning of the Great War, that if anything very serious were to happen to our food supply, all the fine ethics of our boasted civilization would topple over into the dust, and we would soon descend to the level of chicken morality. What! I have a queer way of looking at things! Not at all, nurse! It is the other fellows who have a queer way of looking at things. You cannot understand ethics apart from the basic facts of life. You have seen the picture, nurse, of a little chubby baby trying to grasp a cake of soap, with the advertiser's remark: "He won't be happy till he gets it." That picture represents a whole philosophy of life—desire, and its gratification. Happiness is the gratification of our normal desires. But to return to this question of food. Man, of course, does not live by bread alone, but there is one thing very certain, and that is that he cannot live without it. And arising out of this, is the fact that his morals, the line of conduct he pursues, will depend to a large extent upon his ability and opportunity to satisfy this desire. Probably it was the apprehension of this truth that led to the formulation of the economic theory known as the materialist conception of history. Did you ever think, nurse, of the tremendous amount of human activity which this desire brings into play. I read a few weeks ago that there were twenty-two ships afloat on their way to this country from Australia, bringing with them cargoes of butter amounting to five hundred thousand boxes. Try and imagine the amount of labour the production of this twelve hundred thousand tons of butter would require, besides all that will be entailed by its distribution when it lands! And butter is only a very small item of our daily diet. This little digestive organ with which nature has endowed organic life is the pivot around which human nature revolves; it keeps the whole world on the move. Its insistent demands is the cause of strikes, and revolutions and social unrest. It makes of the sea a shambles; of the forest a veritable slaughter-house; of the savage a cannibal; and of human life in its industrial relationships a hell upon earth.

I might illustrate the bearing of this vital desire upon ethics in many ways. For instance, the good lady who said that the road to a man's heart was through his stomach, no doubt intended it as a sarcastic remark, but nevertheless she hit upon an ethical truth. Did not someone else say that when poverty comes in at the door love flies out at the window? One of the poets—Keats—who did not let his ideal fancies blind his eyes to facts, put the matter thus:—

Love in a hut, with water, and a crust,
Is—Love, forgive us!—cinders, ashes, dust.

You see, nurse, even the domestic affections cannot be sustained without a judicious attention to the requirements of the "inner man." Domesticity and love may jog along very well with an abundant food supply, but as soon as the wolf of starvation appears at the door, love, which the poets assure us is strong as death, quietly hops out of the window. Hunger, as the old criminal rightly said, destroys the feelings of humanity. Many a peacefully-minded man, because his wife refused to go for the supper beer, has seized the empty quart pot, and flung it violently at her head, with disastrous results. Where it is a question between domestic concord and beer, it is quite safe, nurse, to lay the odds on the beer.

Again, what is the meaning of "free breakfasts for school children"? Is it not a recognition of the fact that it is useless trying to teach a child anything while its stomach is empty? If a man steals a loaf of bread, and pleads hunger, or a starving wife and children, as the reason of the theft, you may be sure the magistrates will deal leniently with him, because they know that they are up against one of the basic

facts of life. Someone has said that necessity knows no law, and this is especially true of hunger. Do not think, nurse, that I am seeking to disparage any of the beautiful results of human thought and ideals which are enshrined in the teachings of the various ethical systems; I am only trying to show how the realization of these is conditioned by the circumstances of life. One of the late Archbishops of York once said that society would fall to pieces if it attempted to put into practice the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount—meaning, presumably, that these were impracticable. But the fact of their being impracticable under present social conditions, does not militate against these beautiful ideals. It is quite possible to conceive a different state of society from the present, where these ethics would be quite applicable. But we will come to these again, after we have completed our survey of human nature. JOSEPH BRYCE.

Acid Drops.

Dr. Norman Maclean writes scornfully in the *Scotsman* of those timid persons who when he was young would write to Mr. Gladstone asking him if their faith was sound, and who promptly received a testimonial to the deity, on a postcard. He says he cannot imagine Christians writing to politicians nowadays for testimonials of this kind. And yet we fancy we have read of religious conferences inviting Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Ramsay Macdonald and others to their meetings with the obvious purpose of using them as so many advertisements for their faith, and afterwards hawking their testimonials around with all the energy of a patent medicine vendor. And was there not a recent congress called together for the very purpose of seeing how best to advertise religion? Dr. Maclean says that people throng the Churches because they cannot help it. All we need say on that is that there seems to be an enormous amount of trouble to get people not to give up something which they are said to be violently eager to retain.

The ban on Sunday entertainments in Middlesex is to be maintained. At a meeting of the County Council recently, Mr. W. W. Kelland (Hornsey) moved that each district in the county should be allowed to decide the question of opening or closing for itself. He said that the rich could enjoy golf, cricket, lawn tennis, and other games, but the poor who choose the pictures as their recreation were debarred enjoyment. The resolution was defeated. We suggest that if some of our clerics, who, in the intervals between criticising the flippancy of modern youth and denouncing the general immorality and selfishness of everyone who is not a professional theologian, deplore the talk of "class war," were really earnest in their endeavours to minimise class antagonisms, they would not prevent the opening of the cinemas on Sunday. After all, the sight of those a little higher up the social scale than oneself enjoying their chosen form of amusement, whilst one's own more plebeian form is forbidden, is hardly calculated to persuade the average man or woman that the utmost amity exists between the various classes of society. It helps breed that very bitterness and lack of sympathy that priests and parsons are always ready to preach against in the abstract.

A book with the Latin title of *Quo Tendimus*, by the Lord Bishop of Durham, appears to be aptly named in a dead language, for it is about a dying institution. We are told that:—

The Church Assembly in theory represents the great mass of the people. But it is observed that the present House of Laity in the Assembly was actually chosen by no more than 200,000 persons of both sexes above the age of eighteen years, while the number of Parliamentary electors is 18,000,000, of whom 14,000,000 voted. The

number of those on parochial church rolls is about 3,500,000, in a nation of more than 35,000,000.

When the leaders of Christianity speak for the nation we shall know what to describe them as, and Gipsy Smith's efforts on his intensive campaign as a travelling salesman will make very little difference to the decline and fall of a superstition that was not even wrapped in the grace and beauty of Greek mythology.

For the purpose of "acquainting the public with the Catholic point of view upon current affairs," the Paulist Fathers intend to instal a broadcasting station at the headquarters of the organization, the Church of St. Paul the Apostle, New York. It is planned, says the *Times*, to broadcast lectures and instructions by well-known priests and laymen, and also concerts by the Paulist choristers, and probably Cardinal Hayes will henceforth broadcast his messages to the New York archdiocese. The Church contemplates erecting similar stations in several cities. The Roman Catholic Church has never been slow to avail itself of every opportunity for self-advertisement; but, in this case, we think, it may have cause to regret its action. In a dimly-lighted and rather gloomy-looking building, surrounded by everything that through the senses suggests the mysterious and awful, a religious service may impress the average person. But when the same prehistoric nonsense comes over the wireless to listeners lolling in easy chairs in front of a fire at home, where mundane sensible things surround them, it is, we fancy, apt to strike them as ridiculous. That, at least, has been the experience of a number of persons to whom we have spoken, who have listened-in to the Sunday evening services broadcasted in this country. Whenever the Church advertises it must beware lest it rob religion of its atmosphere of mystery. Bring it down to the level of understandable things, and it is seen as the weird survival that it is.

The question of the Sunday opening of Wembley next year is still under consideration, we see, although an announcement on the subject will shortly be made. Here is a vast imperial undertaking, subsidized by the rate-payers' money, and intended, among other things, to educate the British public. And for the most part the British public would find Sunday the most convenient day for visiting the Exhibition. But still a handful of religious bigots, with an anxious eye on their fast-emptying churches, can prevent the authorities taking the sensible step of opening Wembley on Sunday. Those who are inclined to dismiss religion by saying that in this country it is a spent force, and the churches decaying institutions, might do well to ponder this fact.

Industrial Palestine is the title of a book, and a review of it makes interesting reading. We are told that it is barely half a generation ago that any book, other than works of a devotional or purely religious character, was liable to confiscation. Now, ugly factories have appeared in the land, and the country that caused so much trouble in the past appears to be having it returned with interest.

The scheme for Methodist Union has resulted in large majorities being returned in favour of union at the quarterly meetings of the three churches concerned. The voting was as follows:—

	For	Against.
Wesleyan Methodists	652	96
Primitive Methodists	575	92
United Methodists	275	65

This voting is generally regarded in Methodist circles as a sure indication of union. The future historian will probably be able to show fairly clearly that the peculiar form of Christianity known as Methodism was the product of certain economic and social changes in this country, which took place round about the period of the Industrial Revolution. And religion, like all other things, being compelled to be in accord with its environment if it is to survive, this peculiar form of Christianity is

now on the wane as the social conditions which gave it strength are passing. Hence the need for amalgamation to maintain its position. It is, indeed, rather interesting to watch the slow decay of the slightly rationalistic forms of Christianity (the Protestant Churches), *pari passu* with the growing strength of the Catholic Church. Possibly the greater willingness that that Church displays to provide its adherents with various forms of social amusement, as opposed to the puritanical distaste for jollity exhibited by the Nonconformist bodies, explains in part its greater popularity.

Hotel proprietors in Rome are greatly alarmed at the failure of the hoped-for concourse of visitors for the Holy Year Celebrations. In an interview with the Fascist Popolo D'Italia, Commendatore Girani, Chairman of the Rome Hotel Proprietors' Union, states that the number of Catholic pilgrims visiting Rome has been so far very meagre, and far inferior to their anticipations. It is suggested that one reason for this is the unsafety of Italy for visitors owing to Fascist violence. All that we can say is that if this is the cause, it exhibits a most deplorable lack of faith on the part of Christians. If even a sparrow cannot fall to the ground but the Lord wills it, surely he is capable of protecting his devout ones from Fascist assaults. But this, as gloomy theologians often tell us, is an age of lack of faith—because, maybe, it is largely an age of common sense.

With a deep sigh of relief we saw February 6 pass and the old world still going on its way. February 6 had been announced in the press, on the authority of the Seventh Day Adventists, as the end of the world. Now we see that the European Division of the General Conference of Seventh Day Adventists has unanimously passed the following resolution:—

Whereas in various localities there have appeared in the public press and upon bill boards statements to the effect that Seventh Day Adventists have named February 6, 1925, as the date upon which the Lord Jesus Christ will return to this earth and the world will come to an end:

Be it therefore resolved that we hereby announce to all concerned that the foregoing statements are untrue; that the people responsible for them are not members of the Seventh Day Adventist Denomination, and that we positively disagree with them.

All the same this disagreement among those in the know is rather unsettling. One would like to know the date of these occurrences as far ahead as possible.

At Blidworth the vicar has recently performed the seven hundred-year-old ceremony of rocking a baby in its cradle in front of the altar. The adults, we understand, are usually able to enjoy a nap during divine service without any artificial aids.

Hamlet must have come at close quarters with theologians. Words, words, words, was his famous outburst, and we can apply the same description to the information in *Prayer in Christian Theology*, by A. L. Lilley. We are told that "it is God in man that prays," and we should be guilty of the same complaint if we attempted to criticise this gem. What is theology? The answer is, an arrangement and re-arrangement of printer's type about the unknown.

In a well written and well reasoned article entitled "The Varioussness of Man" in the *Times Literary Supplement*, the writer has packed more in his columns than usually appears, and he mentions "the Rights of Man" in a manner that assumes the authorship of the work to be understood. The time for this cool assumption is not yet, and when the name of Thomas Paine has gained currency, we trust it will be followed by a reading and understanding of his work. He at least brought clarity to bear on many foggy subjects, and by bringing the "Rights of Man" forward he assisted in putting the claims of theologians in their right place, and was

chased out of England for his trouble. Those were "hanging days" when theology was firmly planted in the saddle.

When the Dean of Chester writes a book about *The Nature of a Cathedral* it is not difficult to remember that, to a cobbler, there is nothing like leather. The reviewer, however, has some things to say about it, which are nearly commonplaces and perfectly well known to those who have no illusion about the mercenary side of ecclesiasticism. His remarks deserve mention in full:—

Not a few people complain of unpleasant associations with our Cathedrals—coldness, emptiness, sometimes fussy and condescending vergers, and sometimes the impression, "It's your money we want," or the memory of the barrier at the choir-aisles, the sixpenny fee, and the little company of confused sightseers on their round.

That appears to be a thumb-nail sketch of the situation before the many counter attractions came along, and, as the reviewer in question states that "people are made to feel at home in Chester Cathedral," we conclude that the rationalizing of the general attitude towards buildings of this kind has been brought about by competition and—disinterest.

There is to be a united campaign by the churches against gambling. One wonders what connection there is between the fundamental and antiquated ideas of Christianity and a "shilling on," for we are sure that the bravoos of the Church will never attack the Stock Exchange—even if the loaf is costing half-a-crown.

To what shifts are the lights of the Church reduced! The vicar of Box, a Wilts village is organizing a revue company among the parishioners. We presume he must hold them together with some other interest now that the motive of fear has gone.

A Glasgow correspondent writes protesting against the arrangements which permitted an eclipse of the moon to occur on a Sunday, and during church time, too. He thinks that the Churches already have enough to contend against with cinemas and Sunday lectures without eclipses, and suggests that the attention of the Magistrate's Committee, a body which controls Sunday gatherings should prohibit such things in future. There was no public demand for an eclipse, so that the eclipse appears to have been a deliberate flouting of the Christian conscience.

Against their will the daily papers have to publish elementary Freethought. Mr. C. E. Vulliamy, F.R.G.S., makes the following statement in connection with the discovery of the prehistoric skull:—

This newly-found skull apparently enables us to assert the existence in the Miocene period of a creature who takes a definite position in the line of human descent—a forerunner of man himself—living at least a million years ago.

This should have the effect of splitting theology into two camps. One will proclaim Canon Barnes as a brave fellow, and the other will be busy in soling and heeling the chronology of the Bible.

As a sample of casuistry and at the same time an interesting light on the one-eyed outlook of people who call themselves Christians we cull from a daily paper:—

The hard truth is that there is no such thing as a Right to live, to work, to be fed, and so on. As Christians we have the duty to succour the fallen, but that is very different from acknowledging that the fallen or anybody else have Rights.

The writer of this gem might try to drown himself and see what would happen if he were rescued. If this is not to his liking he might read the *Rights of Man*, by Thomas Paine, and in the meantime study Common Law. There are such things as social and moral rights, although these do not appear to impress Christians overmuch.

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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. O. HANLON (Auckland).—Glad to hear from you. Pioneers must be prepared for the ups and downs of propaganda work such as you describe. After all, there are centuries of ingrained and established superstition to overcome, and that will not be done in a day.

J. A. BATES (Shanghai).—Thanks for cuttings. They are interesting and useful. We should have liked to have purchased the Meredith Letters to G. W. Foote, but the price was beyond us. The purchaser had to suit himself as to the best method of advertising them. Glad to know you are well and safe.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—M. Goldberg, 5s.

E. HALE.—Would have done quite well if published before the event, but it naturally loses its point when published afterwards. But it has not been wasted, as you will see.

N. M.—The discovery of the South African skull does, of course, support the evolutionary account of man's origin, but that is not the question which makes it of interest. The animal origin of man is not a matter for debate save amongst ignorant people. The importance of the skull lies rather in the light it may throw upon the area in which the animal began to first assume a definite human form.

A. B. MADDOCK.—Received. Thanks. We envy you your trip to Ceylon during the winter, too. We have dreamed of such things, but that appears to be as near, or as far, as we shall get.

A. B. MOSS.—Papers have been sent. We are very sanguine of the future of militant Freethought. More and more men of real independence of mind and strength of character are seeing its value in the world's progress.

MR. J. WILTON, of 105 Rectory Road, Burnley, Lancs, writes that he would be pleased to meet with other Freethinkers in the district who would be willing to co-operate with him in starting some form of Freethought propaganda. There is plenty of room in the district for work in that direction, and we should like to see a good Branch of the N.S.S. formed there.

P. G. TACCHI.—Next week, unavoidably crowded out of this issue.

T. FEGAN.—We are glad to learn that you have found so much "light and consolation" in the columns of the *Freethinker*.

R. PARKER.—Thanks for the typescript. We are only permitted to publish parts, however, but we fancy that a part will prove interesting. We are obliged for the trouble you have taken in the matter.

S. HOLMES.—Yes, we observe that the *Daily Herald* thinks the demand for religious equality in the schools to be old-fashioned and a waste of time. We should have thought that the kind of intelligence turned out from our schools would have been of some interest even to those Labour leaders who are so terribly afraid of offending the churches and chapels. And, apart from this, we observe without great regret that there are still some who are

interested in such things as justice for all irrespective of their religious or political opinions.

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

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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.

There was a crowded meeting on Sunday last to listen to Mr. Cohen's lecture, and, so far as one could judge, the address was highly appreciated by those present. There were also a number of questions, which prolonged the meeting for about two hours, and as Mr. Cohen was suffering from a bad cold, suspiciously like an influenza attack, the ordeal was a stiff one. But everything went off all right, and there was a good deal of literature sold at the bookstall, and also, we believe, some new members were made.

Once again we have been having complaints from newsagents that the *Freethinker* is reported as non-returnable if unsold. We can therefore only say, for the thousandth time, that this paper is sent out on sale or return, and we earnestly beg the assistance of Freethinkers all over the country in breaking down this form of boycott. They must insist on the paper being delivered. There is never the slightest delay in despatching the paper at this end, and there are always copies on sale at the office. The old plan of boycott was not nearly so dangerous as this one. When newsagents flatly refused to get the paper their refusal put people on their mettle. But the lying reply, "Out of print," or the evasive, "The paper has not been sent," sometimes has the effect of some giving up the paper altogether. Christians know the value of the *Freethinker* to the movement, hence their slimy methods of working. Freethinkers should be equally on the alert to circumvent them.

A discussion is being arranged at Manchester between Councillor F. E. Monks and Mr. J. E. McCann, on the subject of Spiritualism. The date has not yet been decided, but it is a subject that ought to prove of interest to the public. Mr. Monks is the President of the Manchester Branch, and will represent the Freethought view.

The pagans knew not our theological quarrels; they have never shed a drop of blood for the interpretation of a dogma, and we have flooded the earth with it. Let us cast off superstition, and be more humane. When you speak against fanaticism, anger not the fanatics; they are delirious invalids, who would assault their physicians. Let us instil, drop by drop, into their souls that divine balm of tolerance which they would reject with horror if offered to them in full.—*Voltaire*.

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What the Zuni Said.

A TRAVELLER in Mexico, named Lumholtz, formed good opinions concerning at least some of the Indian tribes. The Tarahumare people, for instance, sold their home-made earthenware to visitors or traders. But, says Lumholtz, they never parted with any article that was defective. If a jar had a flaw in it, while otherwise attractive, the would-be buyer had much difficulty in persuading the owner to sell it. We might, with advantage, welcome a Tarahumare mission to the shopkeepers of Europe.

Another group of Mexican Indians are known as Zunis. They were not Christians; and this fact gave great concern to a kind American lady who lived on the United States side of the Mexican border. Her views were deeply Evangelical.

I was myself brought up in the Evangelical school of the Church of England. The school had a few merits; I knew some very excellent men who professed its dismal principles of Human Sin and Atonement by Blood; and I will give them credit for missionary zeal, however misdirected. The Freethought movement itself is a mission, in the psychological sense; and, though I believe the civilization of the future will need no mission of any sort (for a humane and scientific education will be universal), yet the world of to-day cannot do without the propaganda spirit.

Well, Mrs. Hemenway determined to save the Zuni souls if she could. She invited a number of Zuni Indians to her comfortable mansion. Seated in a beautiful room, and clad in headdresses of bright feathers and gay mantles, they presented a perfect picture of heathen material ready to be transfigured into first-rank Baptists or Episcopalians, with, of course, correct and valid ideas on politics, economics, art and science. For, if you ask any well-informed believer in the Old and New Testaments, he will assure you that, on such important topics, the Mosaic and Pauline theologies are competent guides.

Mrs. Hemenway had placed a Bible on a table, in front of a candelabra of many lights; the candles acting as a symbol of the illumination which the Scriptures would impart to the Zuni intelligence. A minister of a particularly eminent quality had been brought specially to this assembly, and he never had a more attentive audience. He knew his hearers had not had opportunities of high-school, or even primary education, and were ignorant of history. So he gave them a rapid outline of the evolution of the British race, of which the American Pilgrim Fathers and other colonists of the northern New World were the offspring. In early ages, he said, the Britons and the English were an extremely crude and barbaric population; but Christianity arrived, and its happy effects could be witnessed in the modern United States.

To these statements, the Indians respectfully listened, occasionally grunting, in the native mode, their appreciation of the minister's kind intentions and evangelic eloquence. Whether, on the Mexican border-land discussion is usually allowed after lectures I know not, but Lumholtz says that, at the end of the pastor's discourse, a Zuni rose and spoke somewhat along this line:—

Father, you have told us of the ancestors of the American Republic. They were ignorant, and you say they were savage. Well, it all depends upon how you look at it. I say your ancestors were *men*, worthy of the name. You in the United States have railways, and banks, and many other notable things. But you are the children of those savages. We all have to learn as we go along. Men and Gods come out of darkness, and become something greater than they were at birth. The grain of corn lies in the

dark earth, and comes out into the sun, and grows up. So with us men; we walk in the dark towards the daylight. We reach the top of a hill, and look over and see a new and better country. But we had to climb.

Lumholtz tells us no more. It seems to me that, without any assistance from the candelabra, or the Bible, or even the pious pastor, the Zuni had hit upon the central fact of human evolution, namely, that it is a natural and continuous climb, and that, at each stage, man struggles according to his wit and faculty, and makes the next stage easier for his children. By that method, and not by the help of Jewish, Christian, Moslem, Hindu, or any other revelations, our present social order, with its possibilities of further improvement, has been won.

I have no objections to any "revelation." If I had authentic news of a revelation which would emerge from the Infinities, and enable mankind to fill the earth with, say, Beauty in the space of twenty-four hours, and if the decision were left to me, as representative of humanity at large, I should joyfully accept the magnificent gift. I should prefer the express speed to our present rate of going. But, on surveying the course of history, I am obliged to conclude that our ancestors, all along the hard road, have had to construct civilization *as if* Gods had not exerted omnipotent interventions.

I will not say that, had I been privileged to sit in the light of that candelabra, I would, in Indian style, have grunted at the points in the Zuni's speech; but I would have liked to shake hands with the speaker.

F. J. GOULD.

The Schools of a Revolution.

(Continued from page 76.)

VII.

THE great scheme in the reform of the schools which was to follow the secular charter was *l'education integrale*, with its basic principles of "physical, intellectual, and moral training." This had always been specially favoured by advocates of social revolution. It was the basis (although not in so many words) of Robert Owen's teachings. Cabot said of Icarian education that it divided into *physical, intellectual, moral, and individual*. Its practice is written on every line of Fourier's scheme. Lepellier, one of Babeuf's associates, proposed that public instruction should be *literary, intellectual, physical, moral, and individual*. Saint Simon urged three branches—*physical* (material activity), *moral* (inculcation of sympathy), and *intellectual* (ratiocinative development).

The primary feature of *l'education integrale* was its observational and scientific system. This was to begin very early with the children, to be carried out under Froebel's methods. It may be recalled that even before Froebel instituted his *kindergarten* at Keilhan, Robert Owen, the English Socialist, had received children into his schools at the age of three, where for two or three years they "were not annoyed with books," but taught from nature and common objects, and had their curiosity excited so as to ask questions. Singing, dancing, and outdoor exercises accompanied this instruction. The French Socialist groups also strongly advocated the *kindergarten*, and with Fourier's "Harmonians" it was quite an elaborate system. But to return to the Commune of 1871.

Under the Commune, although nothing was done specifically for the *kindergarten*, an attempt was made in the 8th *arrondissement* to organize infant schools on a special and uniform model. Infant schools,

which had existed since Guizot's reform of 1833, were not connected in any way with the courses of the primary schools, and the regulations did not permit children under the age of seven to be admitted to the latter. That the systematic and practical education of children was left until so late an age was to be condemned, and the Commune attempted to reform this by organizing infant schools in two forms, *Three to Five years*, and *Five to Seven years*, the courses being definitely attached to each other so as to run into and connect with the primary schools.¹

Marie Verdure, a delegate of the *Societe de l'Education Nouvelle*, suggested several excellent reforms for infants' schools during the Commune, and there is a contribution from her on the question in the *Journal Officiel*, entitled *Les Creches*, written in conjunction with Felix and Elie Ducoudray on behalf of the *Societe des amis de l'enseignement*.²

We have seen that the inauguration of *l'education integrale* in the schools was within the scheme of the *Societe de l'Education Nouvelle* at the beginning of the Commune. On April 23, the Commission of Education announced that *integrale* and *professionnelle* instruction was its programme,³ and later it pointed out how important it was that "the Communal revolution should assert its essentially Socialistic character by the reform of education, assuring to all the true basis of social equality, *l'education integrale*, to which all had a right; facilitating for them the apprenticeship and the exercise of a profession to which their tastes and talents are directed."⁴ Although this *integrale* education was partly put into operation in the 8th and 17th *arrondissements* upon their own initiative, the Commission itself issued no definite programme on the question, and as late as May 18 it said that a "complete plan" of *integrale* education had yet to be arranged.⁵

Whilst waiting for this, the Commission proceeded with its scheme for *professionnelle* education, and on May 7 the public were informed that the first *Ecole professionnelle* would be opened in the Rue Lhomond (5th *arrondissement*) in premises recently occupied by the Jesuits. Here, children from the age of twelve years and upwards were "to complete the instruction which they had received in the primary school, and to have an apprenticeship to a profession" which they desired to enter.⁶ It was not merely trades that were to be taught in these schools since the Commission appealed for professors of modern languages, the sciences, drawing, and history, to take service in these departments.⁷ The *Journal Officiel* advertised this school to open on May 22, but the doors were scarcely open when the news came that the Government troops had entered Paris.⁸ On May 13, a professional school of industrial art for girls was also advertised for immediate opening.⁹ The Commission was evidently determined upon a general establishment of these schools, and on May 18 it invited the *arrondissements* to furnish "details of premises and establishments most convenient for the immediate institution of professional schools where pupils whilst undergoing apprenticeship to a profession may complete their literary and scientific training."¹⁰

It was worthy of the Commune, which claimed to acknowledge the equality of the sexes, that attention should be given to the education of girls, so long neglected. Although primary schools for boys had

existed since 1833, girls were not placed on a similar footing until 1867. We have already seen that where the Commune had established a professional school for boys, it had done the same for girls. In the *Journal Officiel* for May 22, the appointment was announced of a sub-commission for "the care and organization of education in schools for girls." It comprised the *citoyennes*—Andre Leo, Jaclard, Perier, Reclus, and Sapia. Andre Leo (1829-) was a popular novelist, who contributed also to the Socialist press. Anna Jaclard was the wife of the mayoral adjunct of the 18th *arrondissement*, a professor and author. Madame Reclus was the wife of Elie Reclus, the author of *Primitive Folk*, and the Commune Director of the *Bibliotheque Nationale*.

It is worth noting that the "charter of the children," as British revolutionary educationists have called the free feeding and clothing of school children, was first advocated and practised by the Paris Commune of 1871. The measure did not, however, emanate from the Commission of Education. It seemed too revolutionary even for this body. The Commune which sent food to the widows and orphans of the Government soldiery who were fighting against them, claiming the right to care for *all widows and orphans*, did not advocate the feeding of its own school children. The free maintenance of school children was put into practice independently by the 20th *arrondissement*, for who knew better than the workmen of Belleville what the provision of *free food and clothing* meant to the cold, hungry, and wet-footed children of the workers, and without which a *free education* was useless.

VIII.

Revolutionary movements in France appear to have been, in the main run, favourable to institutions for higher education. This seems strange at first sight, when we consider that these revolutions were made for the most part by "the people," to whom the "higher schools" invariably presented a closed door. On the other hand, the intellectuals of revolution have always insisted on the progress and improvement of the higher schools, and their appropriation by the "people." Thus it was only natural that the Paris Commune, which claimed so many "intellectuals" in its ranks, should look to and care for the higher branches of education in its effort to establish the "Social Republic." That success did not crown its efforts was not due to any lack of zeal on the part of the Commune. At most of the higher schools, from the University downwards, the Commune had almost insuperable difficulties to surmount. At some places the responsible officials and professors deserted their posts, whilst at others, the mere surveillance of the Commune was strongly resisted. The opposition, too, was not confined to officials and professors, but even included a certain class of students, who hitherto had been in the vanguard of all revolutions. As early as March 19 the *bourgeois* students of the University and Polytechnique pronounced against the Central Committee. This "grave symptom," as Lissagaray terms it, revealed the distinct social phase of the revolution of the Commune, against the mere political phases of its forerunners. It showed that the sons of the "upper ten" and the bourgeoisie were sufficiently "class conscious" to grasp that the trend of this revolution was towards an increasing power of social-democratic control. This threatened their privileges to the higher schools, which reserved for them the "pick" of the positions in official and professional life. That a refractory attitude was assumed by the students of the *Ecole polytechnique*, within whose walls (as Cotter Morrison once said) it was considered less odious to be a Prussian than

¹ J.O., May 8.

² The Communard Press contained several articles on popular education, notably one in the *Affranchi*, entitled: "L'Education de l'enfance pauvre," and another in Danduran's *Revolution*.

³ J.O., April 23.

⁴ J.O., May 18.

⁵ J.O., May 7, 17, 22.

⁶ J.O., May 22.

⁷ J.O., May 18.

⁸ J.O., May 7.

⁹ J.O., May 13.

¹⁰ J.O., May 18.

a Republican, was not at all strange. This school was a veritable nursery for the sons of the privileged classes, from which they were pushed into the high grades in the Army and Government administration. The legal and medical professions and their schools were likewise appropriated.

From 17 April, when the Commune instructed the directors of all schools supported by the State, both for higher as well as primary education, to furnish the Commission of Education with details of their establishments, it was evident that the Commune was going to control these "happy hunting grounds" of the privileged classes. Apart from the question of reforms at these institutions which the Commune specially had in view, it also desired to maintain the regular courses by bringing back the city to its normal conditions which had been denied it since the *bourgeois* republicans had assumed control in September, 1870. What the Commune accomplished with the higher schools we shall now consider.

An English vicar, who visited Paris during the Commune, and expected to find the city in a state of anarchy, as the world at large was led to believe, was surprised to find everything quite normal, and the schools "all doubly active." Indeed, one has but to read the *Journal Officiel* and the periodical press of the movement to realize that in spite of the state of the siege, the general administration and business was carried on much as usual. We see for instance in the higher schools that the courses continued at the *Sorbonne* and *College de France*, that the *Turgot* and *Colbert* Colleges were open,¹ that the *Academie des Sciences* held its usual sittings, that the *ateliers* of the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts* were working, etc. It is not, however, of these normal aspects of the Commune *régime* in matters of education that concerns us, but more the abnormal trend of affairs, the schemes and reforms that were peculiar to it. We will enquire into the Commune legislation for the *Ecole de Medicine*, the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts*, the *Conservatoire de Musique*, the *Museum d'histoire naturelle*, and the *Bibliothèque Nationale*.

HENRY GEORGE FARMER.

(To be Continued.)

Idealism.

MANY a reader of this Journal has asked me questions about Idealism. Several have expressed a wish that I should write an article upon the subject. This request is probably due to the fact that Mr. Robert Arch, when reviewing my monograph, *Life, Mind, and Knowledge*, in the *Literary Guide*, described me as a metaphysician in spite of myself. In the way Mr. Arch uses the term he was right, since I am a kind of semi-idealist; for I do consider it an obvious and indisputable fact that we can know nothing of the external world, *i.e.*, of the physical universe, except in terms of the symbolic images or hieroglyphs of which mind consists. But this is not the orthodox idealism to which the *pure* metaphysician would subscribe. It is a truncated or headless variety; an object of derision to the high-browed whole-hogger and is, or has been, called, "Cosmothetic Idealism." It is the *inference* drawn from the above basic fact that forms the essence of the orthodox tenet, *viz.*, that "external objects are not there till they are thought"; that "all reality is of the nature of the psychical"; that is to say, that the external world has no existence independent of mind. Now, that is the inference; it is like an inverted pyramid with its apex resting upon the fact already referred to

¹ Eugene Andre, a member of the Commune's sub-commission of Education controlled the *Turgot* and *Colbert*.

and its base sweeping the heavens in all its infinitude. But that inference, however illogical it be, forms the spectacular part of the creed of the orthodox idealist. Here, as always, *Orthodoxy* is at the furthest point you can reach on the road of unreason. At best it is only a mirage of the desert—a cruelly delusive reflection of some mundane reality.

As stated above, I believe in the basic fact, but to say that I do not believe in the sweeping inference based on it is a mild way of putting it. Owing to a double dose of original sin, my scepticism is possibly of a deeper dye than the average. I am almost unable to believe in anything in absence of evidence even when I wish. But to believe, *against* evidence, well, is a case of sailing round the moon on a broomstick. It is not the intrinsic absurdity or impossibility of an alleged event that excites ridicule, contempt, or disgust, but the circumstances under which it is conceived, believed, and propagandized: to wit, the presence or the absence of indisputable facts of knowledge to serve as standards of its possible or probable verity. That is to say, whether the reported event belongs to primitive times when the black pall of ignorance and superstition enwrapped the world; or whether the alleged occurrence belong to the new dispensation—the age of science and reason—when the report can be critically examined and checked. That is why modern spiritualism awakens in us both derision and pity for its numerous victims.

I confess much sympathy with the ancient Gnostics, the immediate progenitors of Christianity, such as Basilides, Bardesanes, Hippolytus, or Valentinus, who dreamed their day-dreams about the fall of the Godhead into the "world of matter"; the fall of Sophia (wisdom) into the Bythos; and of the successive Emanations and of Primal Man—all in the effort to solve the problem, Pothos to Kakos (whence evil)—dreams that more or less moulded the final form of the Christian creed. These I read and re-read with a deal of sympathetic delight as witnessing anew the mental gymkhana in which the Christian Fathers and their contemporaries so freely indulged. It gives one an idea of the psychic matrix in which Christianity was conceived and hatched.

But we are in a different realm when we come to the notorious schoolmen. Their word-splitting policy and practice excites in one only derision; but it is a mild form in comparison with that awakened by their modern progeny, the Idealist; and still more by Platon-redivivus as he hops, struts, and dances in the recent literature of resurrected "Realism." It is just as if crinolines had returned into vogue!

Why the difference?

At the time of the Ancient Gnostics fully-awakened self-consciousness was not many thousand years old. But it was sufficiently clairvoyant to discover the fact that the phenomena of Nature were causally concatenated, *i.e.*, they formed endless chains whose links, as time sped along, changed their names successively from effect to cause. And under the impulse of this discovery, they were eagerly seeking the causal origins of the phenomena around them, both social and material; and that at a time when knowledge of the "world of matter" was virtually nil. So to satisfy their craving to understand and account for things, they allowed their imagination to run riot and dream their day-dreams.

The schoolmen, on the other hand, assuming that the riddle of existence was to be explained by dissecting words, hallowed that vile practice of word-splitting which has been so fertile and so constant a source of hatreds, schisms, and internecine wars from the time that Christianity first drew breath.

The lucubrations of their heirs, the Idealists, as well as those of the neo-realists, proceed upon the same

assumption, that the mystery of Universe and of Being is to be solved by *words*, if only they are more or less divested of meaning. But what makes their attitude and conduct reprehensible, is the fact that whereas the ancient Gnostic dreamed his day-dreams when the "world of matter" lay under the pall of pitch-darkness—the night of ignorance—the modern metaphysician spins his threads and weaves his gossamers in the cloudless light of scientific knowledge. On what grounds then can he claim our esteem and homage?

Let us then leave the metaphysician to ride his word-'planes and loop his loops high up in the verbal ether, or hurl his predecessors headlong to the earth and in turn to await the same doom himself. The dis-service of the ancient Gnostic to humanity, though grave, was innocent compared with that of his lineal descendant. To love the darkness rather than the light is a folly and a "sin," but to shut up his fellows away from it, as in a dungeon, is a crime.

Now let us proceed to examine the Inference that the external world has no existence apart from mind, not in the glow-worm light of the metaphysician, but in that shed by the facts of experience and science.

If I express a phenomenon which has no independent existence or intrinsic reality by the word "phantom," we have then two phantoms to deal with: (1) The material universe—*i.e.*, that part of Nature which betrays no evidence of life. (2) The world of living substance and organic forms.

We shall first consider phantom No. 1. The only mind we know of, is the one ensconced in living substance, or more definitely in a specialised kind of it—the animal brain. In man the mind has become self-conscious, or more technically, *apperceptive*. The animal perceives, but man apperceives; he is aware that he perceives; he is conscious of himself as a percipient Being. In virtue of this higher awakening he has a capacity of introspecting, of viewing, the field of consciousness, and of apprehending "relation" as distinct from the related objects, and of abstracting it in thought as an idea, and lastly of embodying it in a physical shell—a word or name. Now, phantom No. 2 provides this mind with loopholes—the senses—for viewing and inspecting phantom No. 1. What has it, then, discovered as to the nature of the latter? Let me summarize it in briefest of terms: (1) that the substratum, or matter, is indestructible; (2) that the properties of this basic substance are permanent; (3) that it is, moreover, the focus of four different orders of energy which is constant in quantity, uniform in action and is for ever in ceaseless circulation from ether to matter or *vice versa*; (4) that this matter and energy existed millions and millions of years before an animal mind, let alone a human one, could possibly exist on this planet. Do these facts point to a universe that has no intrinsic existence and is only a mirage reflected from mind or mind-stuff!

That ultimate substance is both physical and psychic is to me an imperative postulate to account for the emergence of mind. To get mind out of matter and motion is to me an absurdity; but to get the physical universe—infinite, eternal, and immutable—from a gratuitously postulated mind-stuff, is the quintessence of one.

Let us next consider phantom No. 2—*viz.*, living matter as organized in the animal body, the brain of which is the *nest of mind* where it dwells for a season—indeed only for a "breeding season." What truths or facts has the human mind, since its acquisition of a scientific consciousness, taught us in respect to this other piece of mirage? (1) Firstly, that it consists wholly of the elements found in phantom No. 1—indeed, is made up of its most noted constituents—*viz.*, carbon, oxygen, hydrogen, and nitrogen—and is thus

essentially a fragment of the first, possessing all its mutable and immutable attributes. (2) That Nature, *i.e.*, phantom No. 1, has evolved muscular and alimentary systems, solely for enabling phantom No. 2, *i.e.*, the body, to exist as a living substance by appropriating chemical energy from No. 1, thus making living substance, in which mind is nested, obviously dependent upon it and not conversely as Idealism would make us believe.

Besides, that is only one half of the task that Nature undertook to do and accomplished. It moreover, elaborated a system of sense-organs, complex beyond description or even comprehension, with power to absorb and appropriate physical energy from phantom No. 1 and developed the senses, as psychic counterparts, to give the organs a meaning, by acting as guides when exercising its muscular and alimentary systems. And as they are, one and all, valets in the service of the living organism, mind is thus obviously dependent upon both phantoms—on No. 1 as source of energy and upon No. 2 for absorbing and transmitting it; and not *vice versa*.

Can you then conceive a craziness more preposterous and unmitigated in its fatuity than that a thing called "mind" should undertake to elaborate through aeons of tragedy a dual system to enable it to exist and act by appropriating two orders of energies (chemical and physical) from Nature—the phantom—which according to the high-browed Idealist owes its very existence to the thing that it brings into being! The cat feeding upon its own tail is both tame and sane in comparison.

The reader, however, must bear in mind that a metaphysician does not trouble himself about such insignificant things as scientific facts and generalizations—empirical trifles beneath its august notice. He is solely concerned with terms and phrases which have become more or less, by repeated abstractions, non-significant. He resorts to The Absolute and the Categories for the solution of the riddle of Being and of Becoming. When he juxtaposes words in the form of sentences that convey no more meaning than a column of words in a spelling-book he claims homage for egregious profundity, and often gets it! from the uncultured or thoughtless—that is, from the herd whose members he despises and dubs as Philistines! The Gods are always worshipped by those whom they are about to torture and slay.

KERIDON.

Correspondence.

CLERICAL SCHOOLS IN RURAL AREAS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—While I agree with Mrs. Adams in her vigorous advocacy for Secular education, I fail to see quite why the deplorable lack of even an elementary education shown by so many workers can be put down either to the clerical control of our country schools or the "scandalous condition of denominational school buildings." When I was in the army I used to write dozens of letters for men to their wives or parents—they were quite unable to string together even a few simple sentences in English, and their handwriting was shocking. Now these men had exactly the same kind of education in exactly similar schools under the same kind of religious influence as other men who were quite able to write and speak perfect English. Moreover, in the three schools I went to, for example, which were supposed to be quite religious, all the religion we used to get was a hymn, a prayer, and a little story from the Bible, the whole taking at the most fifteen minutes a day, and it is simply absurd to attribute the failure of so many boys in their exams. to this kind of "clerical" influence. Let us at least be fair. Again, why all this fulsome praise of the Labour Party for educational reforms?

There is a general advance in knowledge, in science, and in psychology and boys and girls everywhere are

getting some benefit from this, and I challenge Mrs. Adams to show that the Labour Party is doing more for general education than any other party. Children all over the country are having unheard-of opportunities in the way of scholarships for better schools; in fact, there is no comparison between the chance they have now and what we had twenty-five years ago. And all this under a Capitalist system!

The Labour Party, just like other parties, is out for power, and they are out for Socialism. Some of us, who still remember Bradlaugh, Ingersoll, and Foote, are quite ready to oppose Socialism with its intolerable gang of officials, as they were. Let Mrs. Adams make no mistake about that.

Her great hero seems to be Mr. Wheatley with his "class war." This is the gentleman who denounces the slums of Glasgow with its foul, overcrowded houses, but who, when pressed by thousands of labour women all over the country to give them the same facilities for preventing overcrowding as their "capitalistic" sisters, angrily refuses. Perhaps Mrs. Adams will tell us whether this refusal was due to the exceeding love Mr. Wheatley had for his unfortunate brothers and sisters in Glasgow and elsewhere or whether it was due to *his being a Roman Catholic*?

My own limited experience has been (with one or two honourable exceptions, like Mr. Snell) that most members of the Labour Party are only against "religion" because it is believed in by the "capitalists"—and they will spend hours in trying to convince you that Jesus, the greatest trade unionist or Socialist or Communist that ever lived, would have wept tears of blood in contemplating the terrible sufferings of the British working man, and that only if we obey Christ's precepts and turn this country into a vast Trade Unionist or Socialistic or Communistic organization entirely in the hands of the workers, can we arrive at the Kingdom of God. What nonsense!

Just three questions more: Would the Labour Party help the Government now to build better and more houses and schools?

Is the Labour Party wholeheartedly in favour of birth control?

Does Mrs. Adams believe in University education for all?

H. CUTNER.

THE CAR OF JUGGERNAUT.

SIR,—Someone has said that when once a lie is started on its course it takes truth a long time to overtake it. In my first contribution to the *Freethinker*, some twenty years ago, dealing with the baneful influence of the priest in all ages of the world's history, my effusion, I am sorry to say, was marred by a regrettable reference. It occurred in the following lines:—

At altar, temple, grave or shrine, with endless ceremonial show,
He panders with his mysteries to human lust—and direful woe.
To Moloch's fires the children casts, exulting in their dying yell;
He drives the Car of Juggernaut, and gloats upon the Christian hell.

Some time later, I learned from Dr. Moncure Conway's book that the popular belief in regard to the cruel nature of the Juggernaut festival was not founded upon fact. The author made careful enquiries in the neighbourhood, and both European residents and native Hindus were quite surprised to learn that this festival had such an evil reputation in Europe. Readers may remember that in a recent article, I quoted Arthur Lynch's reference to its "bloody, sacrificial rites"—rites which are utterly alien to the spirit and purpose of the festival. And now our veteran friend, A. B. Moss, in last week's *Freethinker*, again repeats the falsehood. In his article on *The Ten Commandments*, which is at present being screened, he speaks of the Israelites being crushed under the Egyptian cars, as under the wheels of a great Juggernaut. No one has ever been crushed under the wheels of the Juggernaut Car, except it may have been by accident; and there are no bloody, sacrificial rites connected with the ceremony. Since I first learned the true nature of the festival, I have seen the same falsehood in print hundreds of times, and have rarely lost an

opportunity to point out the error. But to see it repeated again and again in Freethought literature makes one almost despair of the truth ever overtaking the lie.

JOSEPH BRYCE.

North London Branch N.S.S.

An exceedingly able debate took place on Sunday at the St. Pancras Reform Club between Mr. C. E. Pell and Mr. C. E. Ratcliffe, followed by an animated discussion in which many of the audience took part. Mr. Royle made an excellent and judicious chairman. We hope for an overflow meeting to-day, when Miss Ettie Rout will again speak for us on "Birth Control in the Stone Age," a title provocative of much thought and conjecture. Those who have once heard Miss Rout will want to hear her again, and it is to be hoped that they will bring a friend with them. We can promise them an interesting and stimulating evening.—K.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (160 Great Portland Street, W.): 8, Debate—"Determinism or Free Will?" Affirmative, Mr. C. H. Keeling; Negative, Rev. Father Vincent McNab. The Discussion Circle meets every Thursday at 8 at "The Castle," Shouldham Street, Edgware Road, W.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W.): 7, Miss Ettie Rout, "Birth Control in the Stone Age."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (New Morris Hall, 79 Bedford Road, Clapham Road): 7, Debate—"Materialism." Affirmative, Mr. Ralph Brown; Negative, Mr. Walter B. Wingate.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7, Mr. Joseph McCabe, "Can We Change Human Nature?"

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Lit., "Christian Natures and Others."

OUTDOOR.

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

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S. (No. 2 Room, City Hall, "A" Door, Albion Street, Glasgow): 6.30, Mr. Thomas Bell, "Education." Questions and Discussion. (Silver Collection.)

HULL BRANCH N.S.S. (Metropole, Albany Room, West Street): 6.30, Mr. B. Friend, "Evolution."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Operetta, "Zurika, the Gipsy Maid," performed by the Secular Sunday-school children. (Silver Collection.)

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