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Views and Opinions.

A Scientist in the Pulpit.

"Sir Oliver Lodge in the Pulpit" was the large heading to a newspaper notice of the fact that the famous scientist had been preaching in Purley Congregational Church. And if the notice was read properly the fact that Sir Oliver was in the pulpit deserved special emphasis. He was in the pulpit, not in the scientific lecture hall, nor in the scientific laboratory, but in the pulpit. And Sir Oliver Lodge in the pulpit is just a man in a pulpit, only that and nothing more. It is not Sir Oliver Lodge the scientist that is in the pulpit, but Sir Oliver Lodge, a mere man in a pulpit, and the paper did well to emphasize, even though unconsciously, this important distinction. For being in the pulpit he said the kind of thing that is usually said there, said it a little more forcibly than does the average preacher, but said it none the less. He would have considered it out of place to have said in the pulpit what he would have said out of it. He would not have dreamed of telling them about the atoms, or the ether, or any of the other things that have made him eminent; he would have said these are not the things that people go into the pulpit to talk about. The pulpit has a lingo of its own, it has an atmosphere of its own, and an audience of its own. And when a man goes into the pulpit he unconsciously drops into the habits of the pulpit. So Sir Oliver Lodge was in the pulpit. But it was not Sir Oliver Lodge the scientist who was in the pulpit. It was someone who had the same name, who looked like the great scientist, but except that the name was the same and the appearance was the same, it was not the scientist. It was just a preacher, talking about the things preachers usually talk about, and knowing about them no more than preachers usually know.

* * *

Taming the Scientist.

But, of course, it was not the man in the pulpit that this particular church, or any other church, wanted. About him they probably cared but little. When a scientist is asked to preach in a pulpit—care is taken that he shall not be one of those scientists who might blurt out some unpleasant truths about religion—they who issue the invitation

know that the ordinary man or woman will not discriminate between the scientist and the preacher. His presence will enable the professional preacher to tell the world, or that portion of it that is impressed by such "flapdoodle," that all the talk of science and religion being in conflict is sheer nonsense. The value to a church of having Sir Oliver Lodge in a pulpit is just this and no more. For his work as a scientist these preachers care nothing. For the ability of science to give us an understanding of the universe they care as much. What the religionist loves to dwell upon is not the conquests of science but its failures. He is happiest when he is able to say that science cannot explain this or that. It is not science but nescience that he loves. If he can only say to his audience, "Here science is bound to stop, it can tell us no more," his voice rings with the triumph of one who has achieved his end. For he knows that where knowledge ends religion begins. Where men know nothing any and every kind of speculation is permissible, and contradiction is impossible. Ignorance is a field on which the fool and the philosopher are on an equality—and the fool knows it. And if the believer is able to get a scientist in the pulpit he can exhibit him with the pride that an animal tamer takes in showing some ferocious creature who has been induced to eat out of his hand.

* * *

Uriah Heep.

The subject of Sir Oliver's address was the Destiny of Man, and the title takes us at once clear out of the world of science and into that of theology. In the sense in which Sir Oliver uses the term "destiny" science knows nothing whatever about it. Science can tell us that, given the persistence of certain conditions, there will be such and such changes taking place, and it can tell us that because science is in its very essence deterministic. But in the sense in which Sir Oliver speaks of the destiny of man, of an evolution that was planned by some "higher power," science knows nothing whatever. Of the process of evolution he says—I am quoting from the summary in the *Christian World*—"All that was foreseen, all that was known to the Higher Power. He remembers that we are but dust. He remembers our lowly origin. He is not hard upon us; he knows what we have to contend with." Now not by the very widest latitude can that be called science. With all due respect to Sir Oliver Lodge, I beg to say that it is not even sense. This "Higher Power" foresaw all that was to come, he is not hard upon us because he remembers what we have come from. That is very good and gracious, but one's gratitude is diminished when one remembers that it was this same "Higher Power" that is assumed to have called forth the whole process. He is responsible for it, when he might have done so much better by adopting some other plan. And when he refrains from blaming us because we do not do better, that only impresses one as an elaborate act of humbug, for it is the work of this "Higher Power" that is the subject of judgment. And looking at it this Power

says it will not blame it for not being better than he made it. That is indeed gracious! Of course, it is an advance on that form of Christian theology which pictured this "Higher Power" as deliberately making some for damnation and some for eternal glory, for no other reason than that it was his will to do so. But it is not intellectually more respectable. The other view was frankly brutal. Sir Oliver Lodge's "Higher Power," if he acts as we are told he acts, outdoes everything in sheer hypocrisy. He is the Uriah Heep of infinity.

* * *

Infinite Stupidity.

Sir Oliver is amazed at the goodness of "the Creator," who had to wait possibly a million million of years for an earth to develop that would provide scope for a free race to grow. "The Creator had to wait patiently all that vast lapse of time, and to be rewarded at last with the kind of civilization we have developed." That is very affecting. The picture of the Creator calling a world into existence, and having to wait for millions of years for man to appear, and then wait another incalculably lengthy period for Sir Oliver Lodge to unfold his intention and eulogise his patience in Purley Congregational Church! I am more staggered at this picture than is, possibly, Sir Oliver Lodge. But it does not make me fall on my knees and worship the "Creator." It only leaves me wondering what on earth he did it for, or if he had to do it why he did not do it better? Imagine a Creator who wanted a globe fit for human beings to dwell on creating something that had to wait for a million million years before it was able to tolerate a human being. Assuming the soundness of the fantastic assumption that man would have been worse if he had been created perfect than he is, becoming perfect as the result of millions of generations of sufferings, surely there was no need to wait millions of years for the earth itself to develop. The picture of God waiting patiently all these millions of years for something to happen is really quite comical, when he could so easily have got over that stage at once and no one have been a penny the worse. Sir Oliver is amazed at the patience of God. If I may be permitted to say so, I am only astonished at the colossal stupidity of the deity Sir Oliver pictures for us.

* * *

The Man in the Pulpit.

Quite seriously, is this kind of talk any better when it comes from a well-known scientist than it is when it comes from an ignorant professional preacher? When will the world learn the lesson that when a man is talking about something of which he knows nothing, no matter how great he may be in other directions, he is of no consequence at all in this one. Nonsense does not become sense when it is voiced by a scientist, any more than it does when it is uttered by the most ignorant among us. And Sir Oliver is telling us only what thousands and thousands of preachers are telling us year after year. I hope I shall not be taken to mean that Sir Oliver Lodge is acting in any way with conscious unfairness, or that he has the remotest desire to deceive people, if I say that he is acting as might the son of a millionaire who used his father's name to get credit, knowing full well that the liabilities incurred would never be discharged. Sir Oliver is listened to on theology because he has gained a well-deserved reputation as a man of science. It is not what he says about religion that established his claim to be listened to, but what he has done in a different department altogether. And tried by all the canons that have given him this deserved reputation, what he does say on religion is completely discredited. Nonsense

remains nonsense no matter who utters it. That is a lesson the world sadly needs to learn, and were it learned it would stop men being misled by a name, and stop also the exploitation of men of science by the preachers of a religion of which nothing scientific can be said in its favour. Would Sir Oliver Lodge be listened to with respect when he delivers himself of these strings of almost meaningless sentences were he not a famous scientist? Would he be invited to preach in a Church merely on account of what he says about religion were he an ordinary individual? Everyone must know the answers to such questions. A reputation well earned in one direction is used to command attention in an entirely different one. Men who are quite careless about research use the aberrations of a scientist to further their own unscientific views. Unfortunately these aberrations are not by any means new. We have had Sir Isaac Newton on Prophecies and we have had Michael Faraday among the Sandemanians. Newton the propounder of universal gravitation lives, Newton the writer on prophecies is remembered with a smile of pity. Faraday the great experimentalist is assured of immortality in the annals of science. The worshipper with an ignorant Christian sect is shrouded in a kindly oblivion. And as we ignore Newton the believer in prophecies and Faraday of the crude religious beliefs, so we may safely assume will the future deal with "Sir Oliver Lodge in the Pulpit."

CHAPMAN COHEN.

"On Doing Without Opiates."

SUCH is the title of the leading article in the *British Weekly* of March 5, contributed by the Rev. Professor George Jackson, D.D.. Dr. Jackson is an exceedingly popular Wesleyan minister, who spent many years in Canada and Scotland, but is now settled down in England as trainer of candidates for the Wesleyan ministry. At one time suspected of heresy, he seems at present to enjoy the full confidence of his denomination. The article just mentioned begins with a quotation from one of George Elliot's letters, which is as follows:—

I have faith in the working out of higher possibilities than the Catholic or any other Church has presented; and those who have strength to wait and endure are bound to accept no formula which their whole souls—their intellect as well as their emotions—do not embrace with entire reverence. The "highest calling and election" is to do without opium and live through all our pain with conscious, clear-eyed endurance.

Dr. Jackson reminds us that the late R. H. Hutton, the brilliant and deeply influential journalist, pronounced that passage "one of the finest touches in the whole volume" of George Elliot's letters. Mr. Hutton went farther still and declared that the celebrated novelist had not the strength so to live and endure, and that consequently, "minute doses of opium in the shape of soothing but thoroughly unreal assuagements of the pain of her own incapacity to help her friends when in trouble, she certainly did take." We all know how those who suffer intense physical pain are often irresistibly tempted to seek relief in drugs; and without a doubt relief is invariably realized. De Quincey, in his wonderful *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*, devotes one chapter to "The Pleasures of Opium," which were at once numerous and exquisitely enchanting. Opium was to him a sweet revealer of the glories of human life. He exclaimed: "That my pain had vanished was now a trifle in my eyes; this negative effect was swallowed up in the immensity of those positive effects which had opened before me, in the abyss of divine

enjoyment thus suddenly revealed. Here was a panacea for all human woes; here was the secret of happiness, about which philosophers had disputed for so many years, at once discovered; happiness might now be bought for a penny, and carried in the waistcoat pocket; portable ecstasies might be corked up in a pint bottle; and peace of mind could be sent down by the mail."

But the pleasures of opium did not last long, for this is how the chapter depicting them closes:—

But now farewell, a long farewell, to happiness, winter or summer! farewell to smiles and laughter! farewell to peace of mind, to tranquil dreams, and to blessed consolations of sleep! For more than three years and a half I am summoned away from these. Here opens upon me an Iliad of woes; for I now enter upon *The Pains of Opium*.

Upon this new chapter it is needless to dwell, for its contents are horrible in the extreme, and utterly inexplicable to all who have not experienced them.

Of course, George Elliot's letter does not contemplate those who, like Coleridge and De Quincey, take material opium to remove or lessen physical discomforts but rather those who accept what is called the truth, not because they are convinced of its truth, but because of the comfort the belief in it ministers to them. As is well known, George Elliot was not a Christian, nor had she any sympathy with Christian doctrines. Dr. Jackson says:—

Her words are rather a plea for intellectual honesty and sincerity, a protest against the vulgar notion that what counts in truth is its power to comfort rather than to convince. And little as we may sympathize with George Elliot's own attitude to Christianity, her plea is one which every Christian mind should be quick to endorse. We have no right to play tricks with ourselves, to try to make ourselves mentally comfortable at the expense of truth, to pretend to believe what in our inmost souls we know that we do not believe for the sake of some fancied good that our pretence may bring with it. That way lies only moral darkness and death. Only by loyalty to the partial truth that we see, can we ever hope to find the larger truth which as yet is hidden from us.

There is much sound sense in that fine passage, and if all Christians were to pay serious heed to its recommendations their numbers would be immediately very considerably diminished. The fact is the overwhelming majority of Christians become such not because they are profoundly convinced of the truth of Christianity, but because they have been emotionally driven to flee from the wrath to come and to lay hold upon the hope of heaven. During a religious revival in a place known to us a pious mother passionately urged her unconverted son to attend the meetings and get saved. He was not at all eager to follow his mother's advice; but eventually, just to please her, he attended one of the meetings which were all uncomfortably crowded and vastly sentimental. When the young fellow entered the atmosphere was full of excitement. The singing, the praying, the ejaculations of people already powerfully moved, all had their effect upon the boy, with the result that in response to the revivalist's impassioned appeals, he publicly avowed his acceptance of Christ as his Saviour, and returned home in a saved condition and thereby gladdened his mother's heart. Of Christianity he knew practically nothing, and he never had any desire to learn. As already stated, such is the case with the great bulk of Christians everywhere whose faith lacks intelligence, and in every sense means nothing of value.

Dr. Jackson is a bold man, and gives expression to risky notions. Take the following:—

There is—and we ought not to shrink from saying it—an "unbelief" which, rightly understood, is

rather a sign of sympathy with Christ than of alienation from him, and which is more acceptable in God's sight than the languid, unthinking acquiescence which we too often dignify by the name of "faith."

It has not been our privilege to meet such unbelieving disciples of Christ, and we were not aware of their existence. Does the Professor really believe what he says? Is he sincerely convinced that even Huxley, "for all his denials, was nearer the kingdom of heaven than he knew"? In proof of that he quotes portions of a letter to Kingsley who had tried to comfort him in his bereavement with the Christian hope of immortality, but the great man of science put the offered comfort from him, and wrote a reply to the man of God, in which he strongly declared his utter inability to believe in immortality. He said:—

I know right well that ninety-nine out of a hundred of my fellows would call me Athiest, Infidel, and all the other usual hard names. I cannot help it. One thing people shall not call me with justice, and that is—a liar. I have searched over the grounds of my belief, and if wife and child and name and fame were all to be lost to me, one after the other, as the penalty, still I will not lie.

Professor Jackson evidently clings to the old Christian fable that all virtues owe their existence to the Gospel Jesus, whereas, in reality, not one virtue has sprung from that source. Honesty, truthfulness, sincerity, righteousness, and love are purely human qualities which were practised more or less in prehistoric times as well as in all historic periods. Confucius, Buddha, and Mohammed taught them in clear terms, but Confucians, Buddhists, and Mohammedans are not on that account to be called Christians. Huxley's letter to Kingsley was beautifully true; but it is false to say that "the moral qualities which shine through it if they be not faith—and Hort used to say that all goodness is what one may call imperfect Christianity—are at least faith in the making." Huxley died an unbeliever in Christ, just as truly as Marcus Aurelius did; but it is an insult to his memory and a sign of Christian self-righteousness to say: "We may mourn that his eyes were holden that he could not see." It is useless and nonsensical to say "but it is not for us to judge," when judgment of the severest kind has already been pronounced.

Of all religious people Christians make the most extensive use of opium. Indeed, Christianity itself is a dope and can do nothing but harm to its addicts.

J. T. LLOYD.

A Hymn About Him.

THERE is a good time a-coming very soon—
Ask the Lord!

There's a good time a-coming very soon.
(You can chant this rhyme to any mouldy tune)—
O! Believe, believe, believe in the Lord!

We are all a-going to Heaven very soon—
Tell 'em, Lord!

Oh! we are all a-going to Heaven very soon;
There we'll all be Angels, and every day we'll croon:
O! Believe, believe, believe in the Lord!

Never mind your worries, your little earthly woes;
Praise the Lord!

Gather up your "blessings," and stand them up in rows;
Dress 'em in their Sunday best, and take them to His shows

To Believe, believe, believe in the Lord!
Make your kiddies fear Him, never understand
'Bout the Lord!

Help the mighty myst'ry of His Hidden Hand;
Help to sweep out Reason from your native land,
And Believe, believe, believe in the Lord!

C. B. WARWICK.

The Junketings of Joe Smith.

There is nothing divine on earth beside humanity.—
Walter Savage Landor.

We think our civilization near its meridian, but we
are yet only at the cock-crowing and the morning star.—
Emerson.

THE name of Smith is regarded as a common one, but it belongs to the largest family in the world. More columns in the London Post Office Directory are devoted to that name than any other, and, even across the Atlantic Ocean, in the United States, this proud predominance is maintained against the polygot surnames of all Europe. Mark Twain, perhaps the most popular of American writers, once dedicated one of his books to plain John Smith, "in the hope that every person of that name will buy a copy, in which case the author will die rich and famous."

A family such as this has left its record in most callings in life. Turn where you will the name of Smith confronts you, whether it be in the Army, the Navy, the Church, the Law, or any of the many professions. A Smith once founded a religion, and the common name of its founder did not prevent the religion being a most uncommon one.

To a Freethinker it is a perennial source of delight that the lengthy list of founders of religion should include the name of plain Joe Smith. And, mind you, the religion of Mr. Smith is not an unsuccessful one, whether judged by theological or purely business tests. Indeed, the Smith religion has one great superiority over all its rivals. It started less than a hundred years ago, and can be tested in all particulars.

The story of Mormonism, for that is the popular name of the religion founded by Mr. Joseph Smith, is a most excellent study in religious origins. Its salient features are the same, or almost the same, as those of so many other religions. Stripped of all embellishment, the bare facts are quite interesting. Joe Smith, an American preacher, alleged that he had received a revelation from "heaven," written on gold plates. This message was transcribed for the world as *The Book of Mormon*, and Smith's disciples were called "Latter-Day Saints" by the elect, and "Mormons" by ordinary folks. Owing to their fanaticism, the new religionists got into trouble with the authorities, and Smith was shot dead by United States soldiers during a riot. This martyrdom of the founder only served to fan the zeal of his followers. In order to secure freedom for themselves, they migrated in a body to Utah, and established Salt Lake City, where under the leadership of Brigham Young, they flourished exceedingly, and made the desert blossom like the rose.

This trek across the deserts of Utah of many hundreds of men, women, and children, was an Homeric adventure. There were no railways in those days, and the journey was undertaken in covered wagons. The leaders of the trek were very able men who knew their work, and to-day the State of Utah, with its 84,000 square miles, is mainly peopled by Mormons, and Salt Lake City is a town of over a quarter of a million inhabitants, and its principal church is said to be the largest place of worship in the world. Looked at from any point of view, the Church of the Latter Day Saints can be regarded as a successful body, and the constant activity of its missionaries is a proof of its continued vitality.

Curiously, it was Brigham Young, the second leader, and not the founder, who first imposed polygamy upon the Latter-Day Saints. An astute and far-seeing man, Young must have realised that polygamy was almost a necessity, if the infant Church was to triumph over its many enemies. That he was

right has been proved by the irresistible logic of events. The Mormons survived, not because they were right, but simply because they became far too numerous to be exterminated. They have always been hated by the Orthodox Churches of America, and the Benighted States has never been a comfortable place for pioneers or reformers, whatever their opinions.

There is a large literature associated with Mormonism, but most of it is futile. Defenders of the Latter-Day Saints are usually poor writers, and opponents often approach the subject with minds untrammelled with any real knowledge. Perhaps the best book dealing with the matter in a satisfactory manner is Sir Richard Burton's *City of the Saints*, a volume worth reprinting. But, then, Burton was a ripe scholar as well as a traveller, not an everyday combination.

Compared with many so-called sacred writings, *The Book of Mormon* is a sorry production, and, truth to tell, contains more nonsense than sense. It is more closely related to the prophetic writings of Joanna Southcott, and to the hysterical outbursts of Mary Glover Eddy, the Christian Scientist, than to the more ambitious fetish books of the great religions. Yet, though of small value, it is, in its way, a Bible, and, doubtless, good Mormons, like good Christians, if they do not read their sacred volume, find it useful for supporting flower pots, and even short-legged tables in their homes.

To the Freethinker, who is a student of religions, Mormonism must be, if not a thing of beauty, at least a joy for ever. It is such an exposure of the mysteries of so many theological systems, which impose upon people by sheer antiquity and apparent respectability.

No one in this country pretends that Mormonism is even moral, let alone respectable, yet its success is undeniable. Everybody here realizes that Joe Smith was half-mad, and never had any revelation, but he imposed upon his innocent countrymen. He even died for his opinions, and all Englishmen will point out that those opinions were ridiculous and not worth living for. Yet hundreds of thousands of pious Mormons still go on paying tithes to a Church, which is built on a sham and a delusion. Is it not an object lesson in religious origins? Is it not almost sufficient to drive the entire Bench of Bishops to drink? For, if the man-in-the-street once thinks of the Christian superstition in terms of Mormonism, the poor Bishops will, like Othello, find their occupation gone indeed.

To the man in the pew of any religion the service usually appears solemn and impressive. But appearances are deceptive, and it is foolish to look at any question with only one eye, as is said to be the habit of birds. The unfeathered biped, man, should know better. A more philosophic view of the matter would lead to another conclusion. So far from religion being a serious affair, it is simply a comedy played in the interest of the priests. An elaborate and expensive jest it may be, but none the less a joke. That is why a man should always keep his hands in his pockets when kneeling before a priest. For, whether the priests are Christians, Mormons, Mohammedans, Buddhists, or what you will, they may pretend to save your soul, but most certainly they will be after your money.

MIMNERMUS.

The future presses. Humanity has not a minute to lose. Society requires prompt succour. Let us seek out the best. Go, all of you, in this search. Civilization must march forward. But above all, before all, let us be lavish with light. All sanity purification begins by opening the windows wide. Let us open wide all intellects. Every one to work. The urgency is supreme.—
Victor Hugo.

Ethics.

A DISCOURSE FOR NURSES AND CHILDREN—Continued.

VII.

BEFORE I come to deal with the sex question, nurse, I want to make a short digression. It has been said that there is nothing new under the sun, but this is not strictly correct, as Lord Crewe has just recently formulated a new moral maxim. At least, I am not aware that it is to be found in any work on ethics, and Lord Crewe himself evidently thought that the statement of it was original. He put it into this form: you are just as likely to be misled by distrust in human nature as you are by confidence. And if this is true; if it can be justified by what we know of human nature, it seems to me to be of some importance. Of course, the ultimate appeal as to the truth of any statements regarding human conduct must always be to human nature itself.

That we are sometimes misled by confidence will be admitted by everyone; and the results are often disastrous. What may prove to be the most glaring historic example of the confidence trick is that of the case of Lord Haldane. Sent to Berlin before the War to feel the pulse of the German War Party and discover which way the political wind was blowing, he was at once marked out as a suitable victim upon whom to play the confidence trick. He returned home to assure us that everything was all serene, and that in quitting Germany, he felt as if he had left his "spiritual home." And immediately after, out of this spiritual home, about nine million armed men goose-stepped across its border, to devastate a large part of Europe, and make a shambles of its peaceful villages and industrious towns. And the same confidence trick on a smaller scale is being played on trustful human nature every day in life. I need not labour this point, as the newspapers daily furnish sufficient evidence of it. But, says Lord Crewe, you are just as likely to be misled by distrust in human nature, as you are by over-confidence. So that between the dangers of confidence, and those of lack of confidence, or distrust, it would seem that a person wishing to pursue a strictly moral course was always between the devil and the deep sea. And yet one statement is just as true as the other. Confucius was once asked by a pupil to give him the whole law of virtue in one word, and he immediately replied, Reciprocity. And so, if I were asked to express in a single word the real reason of the late war, I would be inclined to say, Distrust—distrust between the nations concerned. Because all secret diplomacy and secret international compacts denote a distrust of others. And it is just as true of nations as it is of individuals, that distrust begets distrust, and leads to antagonism. Man has arisen out of a barbarous state into a social one of stability, security, and confidence, by virtue of recognizing the moral law of reciprocity, that out of faith and trust arise the practice of the same virtues in others. And a stable international relationship will only be arrived at in the same way. But the question arises: If we are likely to fall between the two stools of confidence and distrust, what view of human nature are we to take as a guide? Let us glance for a moment at one or two of the views generally held.

John Morley, in *On Compromise*, makes the following statements:—

Moral principles, when they are true are at bottom only registered generalizations from experience. They record certain uniformities of antecedence and consequence in the region of human conduct. Want of faith in the persistency of these uniformities is only a little less fatuous in the moral order than a

corresponding want of faith would instantly disclose itself to be in the purely physical order.

Buddhism expresses the same view of the uniformity thus:—

The dewdrop is formed, and the heart is tranquillized, and the practice of virtue rewarded by causes that are alike in their operation.

And Professor Drummond makes a somewhat bungling attempt to work out the same idea in his *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*.

But what all these statements overlook are certain variable factors often operating in human conduct that do not affect the uniformity observable in the relations of cause and effect in the physical world. If everyone responded to the trust placed in them, and the antecedence and consequence were as invariable in the moral world as they are in the physical, then (O, happy day) there would be no such things as bad debts in business. The very fact that we have in our midst such things as murderers, adulterers, thieves, and rogues, to whom moral principles fail to appeal, shows that this alleged uniformity has its limitations.

Let us look at another view of human nature, which is expressed by a well-known writer in a public journal thus:—

All human actions are dictated by selfishness; even those usually regarded as disinterested being based on selfish motives.

Whether Utilitarianism likes itself to be stated in this bald form, I do not know; but it is a concise statement of the view many people profess to hold as to the basis of morals. Now to say that *all* human actions are dictated by self interest is simply to say that Morality does not exist; for what is morality but the recognition of a higher law than self-interest. Such a statement ignores all those social instincts from which our actions spring. It views human nature as being in a barbarous or semi-barbarous condition, and refuses to recognise the social influences which moderate our selfish desires. Of course, the majority of our actions are neither selfish nor unselfish, and do not come within the moral category. What then is a selfish act? We are looking at human nature from the standpoint of Desire; and there is no such thing as an evil desire. A desire from excessive indulgence may become abnormal and lead to evil results; but the gratification of normal desires is compatible with the highest virtue. Morality does not, as Religion has often done, regard virtue as consisting in the suppression of natural instincts; but it does demand that the pursuit of our desires shall be regulated so as not to interfere with the interests of others. But to say that all disinterested actions are based on purely selfish motives is to use contradictory terms, and shows a misunderstanding of the whole subject. To get over the difficulty by saying that the motives which prompt self-sacrificing or heroic acts are stronger than those of self-interest and are still selfish at bottom is to attach a meaning to the word selfish that it does not bear. For whatever agreement the two motives may have from a subjective point of view, the outward actions possess a totally different value in the eyes of society. And the very persons who profess to believe that morality is rooted in selfishness are usually the first to condemn a glaringly selfish act, and to praise a noble and courageous one.

We have, then, what we may call a mechanical view of human nature on the one hand; and on the other a theory which reduces all moral action to a basis of selfishness. But a study of human nature warrants neither the one nor the other. While it is generally true that our actions beget like actions; that

kindness begets kindness; trust begets trust; and persecution begets persecution; it must be borne in mind that the working of this law is conditional. For instance, Cotter Morrison in dealing with the rural conditions of Scotland in the seventeenth century, says, "they were in that state of semi-barbarism when no moral principle is able to take hold." Ideal conduct under such conditions would therefore not be possible, and the operation of the law of reciprocity would prove abortive. The law in question assumes a certain degree of moral cultivation in the persons among whom ideal conduct is practised. An infusion of tea is made by pouring water on the dry leaves; but the water must be in a certain condition—it must be boiling. And so moral actions will only be effective where the respondent is in a state of moral receptivity. It is just here where the so-called enlightened treatment of hardened criminals may err. By all means treat a criminal humanely, but do not let us make the mistake of treating him as a normal moral being. On the other hand, in a social state which is based upon mutual confidence and goodwill, if we exhibit a distrust of any member's intention to comply with its moral requirements, to use a common expression, we are sure to rub his back the wrong way, and excite feelings of antipathy that will take a lot of allaying. In the *Freethinker* for March 1 Mr. H. B. Dodds cites a letter of Mr. Foote's to Malcolm Quin, in which the veteran fighter says: "The prison door is open. If I am thrust inside I will answer punishment for blasphemy with—more blasphemy." And if you openly show your distrust of a person who does not merit it, the chances are that he will soon give you good cause for your suspicion. You are not only just as likely, but you are more likely, to be misled by distrust than you are by confidence. The safe way is to do as you would be done by, but at the same time to keep your weather-eye open for abuses. JOSEPH BRYCE.

Ruskin and the Church.

A GREAT scientist, well advanced in the autumn of his days and surveying his activities during a lifetime of study, once said that he knew practically nothing. The accumulated wisdom of years was but as a scratching of the surface of the infinite mine of knowledge. Therefore, as a student endeavouring to gather some pearls of wisdom from great minds and a little understanding of the amazing complexity of existence, I must humbly submit that I know less. How comforting to be a Christian or a cabbage! Or to possess the cocksureness of "star" journalists or the clergy. Which brings me to the fellow I want to get at. I should say, rather, the fellow I want to get away from—the parson. For the fallacious creeds which he seeks to perpetuate seem to taint with the irrational much of the closely-reasoned work of some of our greatest thinkers.

Most of us are drawn to examine the theories of our great social reformers, among whom John Ruskin was perhaps the greatest analytic mind in Europe. It might be said that he "humanised" Political Economy. Had his activities been confined only to criticism of the current Political Economy and to the exposure of the falsity of the meaning attached to terms such as "wealth" and "value" when used in connection with the science of Commercial Wealth, he would have done lasting service to the cause of humanity.

It is not, however, with Ruskin's indictment of current Political Economy that I wish to deal, but rather with the effect his reliance upon religious

authority, as a vital function in good government, had upon his teaching.

For those who like their reasoning cold it must come somewhat as a shock, after studying his revolutionary analysis of economic forces, to read such sentimental twaddle as the following passage from *Fors Clavigera*:—

Therefore, you who are eating luxurious dinners, call in the tramp from the highway and share them with him—so gradually you will understand how your brother came to be a tramp; and practically make your dinners plain till the poor man's dinner is rich—or you are no Christians; and you who are dressing in fine dress, put on blouses and aprons, till you have got your poor dressed with grace and decency—or you are no Christians.....

As J. A. Hobson points out in his *John Ruskin: Social Reformer*—a work which is a veritable goldmine to a student of Ruskin—such advice may be heroic but is quite ineffectual as a means of social reform. It is justice that is needed, not charity. Palliatives are worse than useless; the economic roots of poverty must be cut away.

The same authority also shows how Ruskin's advocacy of a theocracy

found eager acceptance among the "churchmen" who look to the revival of the popular power of the priesthood, and are even willing to modify their stress upon "another life" in favour of a better life on earth, partly because the defences of "supernaturalism" have been weakened by the inroads of rationalism and partly because the growing sense of continuity between this world and another has genuinely raised the value of this life even for convinced believers in another.

Now I rather take exception to the latter part of the above quotation. The "churchmen's" eager acceptance of Ruskin's idea of a theocracy can be readily understood. The Catholic Socialists would no doubt be only too delighted to see the "divinely appointed bishops and a hierarchy of orders"—from Rome perhaps—administering spiritual authority and "penetrating all the details of social life"! But among whom is felt "the growing sense of continuity between this world and another"? And that the alleged fact has "raised the value of this life for even convinced believers in another"? Such a statement could be accepted by only believers themselves.

No! had the paragraph but read:—

The power of the priesthood and the defences of supernaturalism have been so weakened by the inroads of Rationalism that the priesthood have been *compelled*—always with inveterate hypocrisy and effrontery laying claim to any particular reform as having been originated and brought into effect by themselves—to modify their stress upon "another life" in favour of a betterment of the only life we know. This has genuinely raised the value of life for us all, whatever may be our creed,—

then I would heartily agree with it.

W. THOMPSON.

"There is a remarkable absence of religious influence in Lu-chu. Places of worship are few, and the only function discharged by Buddhist priests seems to be to officiate at funerals. The people are distinguished by gentleness, courtesy and docility, as well as by marked avoidance of crime. With the exception of petty thefts, their Japanese administrators find nothing to punish, and for nearly 300 years no such thing as a lethal weapon has been known in Lu-chu."—From the article on the Lu-chu Archipelago in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

Acid Drops.

It is really time that the Lord Chancellor sent round a letter of instruction to magistrates and magistrates' clerks instructing them as to the provisions of the Oaths Amendment Act of 1888. At Weston-super-Mare the other day a man was summoned for frequenting a public place for the purpose of betting. He declined to take the oath and the clerk asked a totally improper question in the form of "What is your religion?" The man replied that he hadn't any, but believed in keeping his wife and children. The man's solicitor, Sir Duncan Grey, then asked him to take the oath, which he did. Now the plain duty of the Bench was to let the man know, if he did not already know, exactly what his rights were under the Act and to see that the provisions of the Act were carried out. And when the clerk did not do this, it was monstrous that the man's solicitor should advise him to forego a plain legal right. It was his place to see that the man affirmed as he desired to do, and not to aid in setting an Act of Parliament on one side. Eventually the case was decided against the man, but there is to be an appeal. By the time that comes on we hope that the man will be better informed as to what his legal rights are.

Preaching at the Old Meeting Church, Birmingham, recently, on the occasion of a collection in aid of the Lord Mayor of Birmingham's Unemployment Fund, the Rev. J. M. Lloyd Thomas said, "We are feeding ourselves and others on lies—lies, when in relation to the unemployment question, we plead the general poverty of this country in the face of the glaring windows and the splendid architecture of our luxurious shops and hotels and dancing-halls and clubs, and our expensive resorts of pleasure." We agree with what the reverend gentleman says, but we should like to point out that the very profession by which he lives has done more to cultivate a contempt for the truth than any other single organization that has ever existed in this world. Also, of course, Christianity has hindered real social progress and the development of an effective sense of social responsibility by its insistence upon the unimportance of this life. After nearly two thousand years of a religion which has always taught that man's real interest should not be centred in this world, but in a future one, it is scarcely astonishing that we should be faced with the condition of things that the parson denounced.

I would be almost comic to-day to hear a sermon about hell, said the Bishop of Lincoln recently. He might in justice have added, thanks to the work of Freethinkers.

But the Bishop made one other remark which we must confess is unintelligible to us. They heard, he said, much about the consolations of religion, but little about hell, which was not an article of faith but a fact of experience. Possibly the Bishop is like Humpty Dumpty in "Alice in Wonderland," and makes words mean what he wishes them to. There is, so far as we can see, no other explanation of his statement, since even the most enthusiastic of Christians have never claimed to have visited hell. And how it is possible to know of this place by experience, when no one has been there and returned with a report of what he has seen, baffles our understanding.

"Y. Y.," in the *New Statesman*, says:—

Obviously, the publishers of the Bible could make a great deal of money by accepting advertisements of pills and imitation pearls and motor-cars. But we realize at once that this would be indecent, and I doubt if anybody has ever proposed it. Yet it is not a whit more indecent than the setting-up of advertisements of pills and tonics and tinned milk in the fields.

We can sympathize with the disgust that "Y. Y." feels when he sees a fine landscape marred by somebody's advertisements for pills or tonics or milk, but at the same time we suggest that in comparing this vandalism with the publishing of advertisements in editions of the Bible,

he is simply manifesting the curious bias which almost everyone born and reared in a society permeated with Christian notions is troubled with. Even regarding the Bible as a holy book there is, so far as we can see, no argument against advertisements being inserted. At least their effect is certainly not comparable with the evil of those huge hoardings that often spoil a beautiful piece of nature. And no one born outside the Christian world would dream of talking as if the two things were comparable.

Labour principles were based on a great sermon, and he was a convinced Socialist because he believed that Capitalism was antagonistic to Christianity. Thus Mr. R. J. Davies, M.P., at a meeting which he addressed a few days ago at West Ryton, County Durham. As Mr. Davies has thus dragged religion into politics it would be interesting to hear him justify this statement. Big business men the world over seem to find no difficulty in reconciling Capitalism and Christianity, for they are often among the most pious supporters of religion. And their opinion on the matter is just as valuable as Mr. Davies' is. The truth of the matter probably is that when Mr. Davies speaks of Christianity he has not got in mind the teaching of the New Testament—which condemns Capitalism, for the simple reason that it condemns every rational human attempt to create wealth and comfort here on earth as vain and foolish, since the earth-life is infinitesimally brief compared with the eternity that is to follow, either of heavenly bliss or torment in hell. Probably he has in mind certain vague ethical doctrines which have been the commonplaces of all ethical systems, and to which almost universal assent is given to-day. These doctrines may clash with Capitalism in certain of its modern aspects, for the reason that Capitalism is founded upon self-aggrandisement. Possibly they would clash with every social system that imperfect men and women living in a world of hard, awkward realities, could devise. But most certainly the teachings ascribed to Christ in the New Testament give no support to Capitalism, or Socialism, or Feudalism, or society based on chattel slavery, or any form of civilized life. They practically ignore social problems, being in essence a selfish individualism, that has no concern with normal human needs. Unfortunately when politicians go out of their way to announce that they are Christians, or that their political opinions are derived from the New Testament, one is inclined to wonder whether, after all, they are not just pandering to the Christian voter. In the long run, we think, it will benefit no political party to mix itself up with theology. The "great lying church" has never yet lost in such alliances, and we doubt whether it ever will. It is far likelier to use the politician than the politician is to use it.

Yet another attempted theft from a church! Some person, or persons, have forced their way into the parish church of St. Mary's, at Leyton, apparently with the idea of securing the ancient silver plate which is in a safe in the vestry. They got away with nothing of value on this occasion; but really we can't understand what is happening to the deity to permit these things to occur so frequently. It is simply encouraging scepticism.

Those members of the Labour Party who are coquetting with the churches must find the Dean of Durham a dreadful cross to bear. His latest onslaught, we see, was when debating before the University of Durham Debating society, when he said he was full of regrets at the sheepish way in which so many members of the working class seemed to follow their leaders. Of course he was referring to trade union leaders. Doubtless the sheepish way in which many members of the working class follow their "spiritual" leaders fills the bishop with satisfaction. At any rate he can scarcely complain of any sheepish tendencies that sections of his fellow-countrymen may display since for generations they have been taught by the Church, which the dean represents, that faith is the greatest of virtues, and a desire for knowledge and a show of manly self-reliance is something reprehensible.

Two candidates for municipal honours in Central Wandsworth, relieved themselves of their views on Sunday Games as follows:—

The Council, on July 22, 1922, permitted the playing of games on Sunday in certain parks and open spaces, without any demand from the public. In our view this was a retrograde step, and it would appear that no voice from Wandsworth Members was heard in opposition. We would ask for support in our endeavour to preserve our parks and open spaces as places for rest and quietness on Sundays.

Church and chapel bells are discordantly clanged on Sundays without any demand from the public. Salvation Army bands are allowed to blare and thrum in the streets without any demand from the public, and we trust that the young people who enjoy themselves rationally in the open spaces of Wandsworth will tell Mr. A. J. Payne, Free Church Minister, Earlsfield, and Mr. Phillips Welch, member of the Children's Care Committee, what they think of them at the polling booth on March 5.

The *Birmingham Town Crier* tells a rather good story: "It was a long and tedious sermon, and at last little Joan could stand it no longer. 'If we give him the money now, mother,' she said in a loud whisper, 'won't he let us go out?'" Certainly Joan put her finger on the really fundamental fact about religion today; namely, that it provides a means of livelihood for a not inconsiderable number of persons.

A Roman Catholic Relief Bill has been introduced into the House of Commons which aims at wiping away the many laws still existing which are aimed at Roman Catholics. By existing laws the Roman ritual is forbidden to be "kept in this realm," property given to a convent may be set aside as being devoted to superstitious uses, a Catholic priest may be fined £50 every time he exercises the rites of his church save in the usual places of worship, any member of a religious order coming into this country may be banished for life. There are others, and most of them are dead letters. All the same it is quite a pretty picture of the attitude of one body of Christians towards another body. For our part we should like to see all restrictions on freedom of religion wiped completely away, including those laws which are aimed at protecting religion itself. But in this we should not get much assistance from Roman Catholics. When it comes to it the majority of Christians feel that their deity is all the safer for the protecting hand of a policeman.

In a recent case in Derbyshire, in which some parents were summoned for not sending their children to school, it was stated that the headmistress had beaten the children. The school was a Roman Catholic one, and the headmistress, in reply, said that the "priest in charge" had instructed her "to cane, and cane, and cane," and had said that if she did not do so he would go into the school and cane the children himself. We are not surprised. Christianity is a religion of fear, and it is quite natural that a Christian priest should lean towards the cane as an instrument of education.

Jack Dempsey, the boxer, is writing his life. We understand that some capital is being made by churches in America over the opening statement of Dempsey, "I began as a Sunday schoolboy." Perhaps that explains why he beat Carpenter and others. He had God on his side. Still, it seems hardly fair to the others. And now we can expect to see young America being urged to attend Sunday-school, because if it does so the boys may all grow up to be champion boxers.

We have all heard of the man who failing to get the end of a tangled piece of rope decided that it had been cut off. That man has turned up again in the person of Canon Sewell, of Bristol. Appealing against the extension of the hours of public-houses from 10 to 10.30 Canon Sewell remarked it was the last hour that led to excessive drinking. For that reason he did not want the half hour put on. So evidently, in the Canon's

opinion, he has abolished that last hour. Another gem of the Canon's was that while the Bible did not forbid drinking it gave a sanction to wine, and it was not wine the working people of Bristol drink, but beer and spirits. That is quite Christian, but we would venture to suggest to the Canon that the main point is the drinking of intoxicating liquors. Whether it is wine or beer matters very little. And wine-drinkers can usually spend that last hour at home. But if the wife insists on the husband going to bed early there would be—according to Canon Sewell, no last hour there either.

By the time this issue of the *Freethinker* is in the hands of its readers the L.C.C. elections will be over. The World's Evangelical Alliance has been busy calling on the people to vote against the continuance of Sunday games because they threaten the workers with the "Continental Sunday." That bugbear is still able to frighten some, apparently, in spite of the universal testimony of the police that the growth of Sunday amusements has led to a marked improvement in the conduct of young men and women who without these had nothing to do but lounge about the streets. But these Sabbatarians never learn. And their desire is not for the betterment of the people but for their Christianization—two things that are not at all synonymous.

In 1894 G. W. Foote penned a preface to David Hume's *Essay on Suicide*. Our late leader wrote that the law against suicide is both cruel and absurd. We notice that a verdict out of the ordinary was passed at the inquest, at Camberwell, on a man and woman who had resolved to die together. The verdict was that neither was of unsound mind, and the coroner, whose name is not given, struck a new note in a province that is not usually associated with common-sense.

During the ceremony of "blessing the ashes," the Rev. J. R. Saukey, at St. Andrew-by-the-Wardrobe, was interrupted by the ever busy Mr. Kensit. He accused him of going through a shameful form of superstition rejected by the Church of England at the Reformation. The difference in the two forms to the ordinary man appears to be that between sixpence and six penn'orth of coppers.

Many interesting speculations may be made after reading Sir D'Arcy Power's Hunterian oration at the Royal College of Surgeons. Man is afflicted with all kinds of disease, a catalogue of which makes a miserable commentary on benevolent design. John Hunter, a great surgeon, born in 1728, performed an inoculation on himself which caused him to suffer ill-health until the time of his death. This was a direct challenge to the orthodox idea of a God that was omnipotent and all wise. As Schopenhauer has pointed out the giving of alms is a similar challenge and an open admission that God cannot look after his children.

Re-shuffling and re-stating the position of the impregnable rock of holy scripture appears to be the order of the day. The Rev. J. H. Beibitz has a book entitled *What I Believe, and why I Believe It*. A reviewer, with a little tune on a tin whistle, comments on it as follows:

A clear and simple statement of what the Christian Faith really is, and of the reasons for believing it to be true; especially designed to counteract the haziness and ignorance about Christianity which are at the root of much of the unbelief of the present day.

One notes the sweet simplicity about the statement that ignorance about Christianity is at the root of unbelief. What has the great black army been doing for centuries? We cannot believe that they have been taking their money under false pretences.

By "One who has served both" we are told of Churchmen and Nonconformists that though their organization and methods differ they are much nearer to each other than they know. This is a long-winded way of saying that "Presbyter is but old priest writ large."

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.

H. BLACK.—Thanks for cutting, but the report in the *Evening Chronicle* is inaccurate. The juror had some peculiar religious views and declined either to swear or affirm in the proper manner. The judge was therefore warranted in discharging him.

C. MORGAN.—We cannot think of any effect the removal of Christianity would have more important than the elimination of a deal of humbug from our lives.

E. C. CORNETT.—We are sorry to decline, but it would take a far better mathematician than we can claim to be to write an article that would make the subject quite clear to the general reader. *Sexual Health* is being sent.

L. W. WILLIS.—Your letter was a very good reminder to the B.B.C. that there are other people in the country besides Christians. The statement that because this is a "Christian Country" Christians are justified in using other people's money to thrust their religion upon everyone unasked, and where it is not wanted, is a piece of characteristic Christian impudence.

ANDREW CLARKE.—Thanks for review. The *Time's* reviewer's remark that Professor Leuba shows no interest in religion is stupid. The interest is shown in the book. What he means is that Professor Leuba does not believe in the truth of religion. That is correct, but it is not what the reviewer says.

J. HUTCHINSON.—You are mistaken in thinking that we wish the *Daily Herald* as an ordinary newspaper to take part in our fight against Christian supernaturalism. We do not expect this, nor have we a right to expect it. What we have commented on is the habit of such papers to play to the religious gallery. For the rest, we are never averse to noticing a new paper whatever its views may happen to be. And we do like to see all sorts of opinions having an organ of expression, whatever these opinions may be.

A. RUSSELL.—Next week. Crowded out of this issue.

F. W. HAUGHTON.—Priests in politics prove particularly perilous. Papists and Protestants practically paralyse progress.

C. A. MILLS.—Apply to Mr. Youngman, 19 Lowerhead Row, Leeds. Pleased to know that you appreciate the *Freethinker*.

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

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

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Freedom's battles once begun,
Bequeathed by bleeding sire to son,
Though baffled oft, are ever won.

—Byron.

Sugar Plums.

There will be some who will receive their copy of this week's paper in time for a reminder that no tickets for the N.S.S. Social on March 16 will be sold after the 14th—Saturday. We are promised an exceptionally good entertainment in addition to dancing and other forms of frivolity. The price of the tickets, which include refreshments, is 2s. They may be had from either the N.S.S. or the *Freethinker* office.

On Sunday next Mr. Cohen will lecture twice in the Town Hall, Pendleton. This is on the car route from Manchester and many other places, and we hope to see a good gathering of friends as well as of the "enemy."

We always like to give credit where it is due, and the following from the *Church Times* of March 6 deserves placing on record:—

The *Record*, which lives in constant terror of something dreadful that is sure to happen to-morrow, warns its readers that a determined effort is being made "to rob Sunday of its quiet restfulness." For a large proportion of the population the Sunday restfulness which the *Record* so values consists in lying in bed and reading the beastly details of divorce cases until the public-houses open. We pray for the day when the English people as a whole will regularly hear Mass on Sunday mornings as their forefathers heard it, and that, when they have fulfilled this solemn duty, they will spend Sunday afternoons playing healthy games as their forefathers spent their Sunday afternoons with the bow and arrow on the village greens. But even while they still fail to realize their religious obligations, we see no reason why the hardworking and the over-worked should be barred from healthy exercise while they are given free liberty for demoralizing reading. Frankly, we find the Puritan attitude on the Sunday question absolutely incomprehensible. Dull services, public-houses, and Sunday newspapers make a poor ideal! And Sabbatarianism is a blatant class agitation. Mr. Gooch and his friends cannot fix barbed wire round golf courses on Saturday nights, or prevent the hiring of river punts on Sundays, or secure the closing of the roads to motors on that day. They can, however, prevent games in the parks, and prevent Jack and Jill from the set of lawn tennis which their master and mistress are free to play. The Leeds City Council has voted against the playing of games in the parks on Sunday, the opposition being led by Sir Charles Wilson, who has publicly declared, "I don't see any greater objection to playing golf on Sundays than to walking along the streets!"

What, of course, the *Church Times* does not realize is that its sweet religion is always used as an instrument for keeping the people "in order." Too much ease and enlightenment is not good for them for many reasons, but particularly because it would enable them to see what an intellectual fraud Christianity is. Might we suggest that where the *Church Times* can let go so much common sense the leaders of the Labour Party might take their courage in both hands and also stand out for an enlightened day of rest, and so tell the chapels to go to the devil. Many of them we know wish them there, but dare not say so.

We have many times printed letters from readers of the *Freethinker* or listeners at our lectures, giving their opinions of what we are doing, and we feel sure that many will be interested in the following from a Christian attendant at our recent lectures at Weston-super-Mare. We print the letter just as it was received, written in big block letters:—

TO THE BIGGEST LIAR IN CREATION,—

Last Sunday was so I am told the unhappiest day of your life. According to your confession you were sat on at every point and made to feel what you are the meanest worm alive. You do not deserve to be alive. Worms like you are only fit for the dust heap. You know that you are rotten to the core and have never been known to speak the truth. Your mouth wants

washing with Sapolio. Men or rather lumps of dirt such as you ought never to have been born. Everyone in Weston loathes the sight of such a rotten-minded beast as you and feel hurt that the streets of our home birth-place should be contaminated with the feet of a dirty peace of rubbish of your class.

Think it over You

ROTTEN SCAVENGER.

We ought to explain that the last line is not the signature of the writer. It is intended as a description of us.

Nearly a column of the *Weston Gazette* was devoted to a report of Mr. Cohen's recent lectures at Weston-super-Mare. The paper notes that the persistent propagandaganda has led to increased attendances at successive lectures, and also that there were good audiences both in the afternoon and evening. We are pleased to have this testimony from the press, and hope that friends in other places, where the conditions could not possibly be more unfavourable to Freethought propaganda, will note the effect of persistency.

We hear that the North London Branch had a particularly interesting discussion on Sunday last on whether we should be guided by considerations of expediency rather than principle. The debaters were Messrs. Rex Roberts and Eagar, but at the end many of the audience took part in the debate. To-day Mr. Kerr will discuss the relations between emigration and the population question. Particulars will be found in our lecture guide column.

Glasgow is on the point of electing members of the "Education Authority," and the question of secular education appears to be playing a larger part in these elections than is usual in Scotland. Probably the religious parties are realizing that this is one of their most important strongholds, and if they lose the chance of capturing the child, it is useless them expecting to triumph over the mature intellect. The situation gives interest to a lecture by Mr. Maclean, which will be delivered before the Glasgow Branch of the N.S.S. to-day (March 15) at 6.30, on "The Case for Secular Education," in the City Hall, No. 2 Room, Entrance in Albion Street. We hope there will be a goodly attendance.

Mr. Corrigan was to have lectured in Birmingham on Sunday last, but ill-health prevented his doing so. At short notice his place was taken by Mr. Ratcliffe. We are glad to learn that Mr. Ratcliffe's lecture was greatly appreciated by a good sized audience, and that the Branch hopes to see more of Mr. Ratcliffe in the future.

"Rejuvenation."

Who reads William Godwin nowadays? It would not be unfair to say that to most people of this generation, he is merely a name, the father-in-law of Shelley (and not a very attractive one at that) and the author of *Political Justice*. Yet Godwin was no inconsiderable man in his day. He was, indeed, a brilliant writer and though his most famous work received its death blow at the hands of Malthus, it can still be read with profit and interest.

But Godwin was more than a political writer and the father-in-law of Shelley. He wrote some half-dozen novels, two of which are infinitely superior to the rubbish which has introduced to us sheiks, strong silent, cave-men lovers, and flappers, who, after a strenuous marriage of five or more years are as young, as boyish and as virginal as ever. Godwin's *Caleb Williams* is, in its way, a masterpiece of powerful writing and so is *St. Leon*, which I have just finished reading.

St. Leon deals with that miracle of alchemy, the Elixir of Life—that wondrous concoction to the search of which so many philosophers, students, and chemists in the Middle Ages devoted their lives, and the Philosopher's Stone, with which baser metals could be transmuted into gold. Could there be two more marvellous discoveries—perpetual youth and untold riches? One would have thought that with these *St. Leon* could procure not only his heart's desires in whatever shape and form but every joy and happiness humanity craves for, but with wonderful ingenuity Godwin shows they brought nothing but awful misery to his hero.

After all do we really want to live for ever? Would we never tire of the world and all it stands for? To live for ever, with the purse of Fortunatus, is a pleasant phantasy, but how would it work out in reality? Perhaps if we alone were the lucky one in the whole world, it would have some advantages, but fancy a world of people—"millions now living who will never die," as some cracked-brained Christian has it—perpetually living and bringing other immortals into being—how quickly would our old earth fill up?

Of course, the idea of immortality has been with us from the dawn of history. Most religions promise it—in the world to come. It has been the principal plank of Christianity—no matter how rough a time you have in *this* world, you will live for ever in the arms—or is it the blood—of Jesus, if only you accept him as your Saviour in Heaven. As for Spiritualists, they have gone much further and are not content with merely telling you that you will live for ever. If a baby of two days dies, it will grow up to be twenty-five and then stop, while if a centenarian dies back he or she reverts also to that same age of youth and promise. Spiritualism is the modern Elixir of Life. You still get your philosophers and students and chemists believing in it, but alas, before you can reach their promised land you must die; no, not die, but "pass over." And there, heavenly delight, you will be able to smoke your dearest cigar, indulge in your favourite drink, bet with your trusted book-maker or even squabble with your most hated policeman—dear, dear old Summerland.

But I am wandering away from my subject, which is not the kind of immortality *St. Leon* or Christians or Spiritualists believe in. For many years, scientists have been experimenting with what we may call, roughly, glands—they are of various kinds—and the practical result of their researches have been collected by Dr. Norman Haire in his book, *Rejuvenation*. It is a clear, concise account of the work of Steinach, Voronoff, Lichtenstern, Thorek, and others, and also of his own cases, and while it will correct many errors and false statements that have appeared in the press from time to time, it gives both the layman and the medical man all that is known of some of the most extraordinary operations that have ever been performed on men and animals.

Dr. Haire, with youth and boundless enthusiasm, threw himself into the Birth Control movement and made a deep study of all the available methods. His results are found in the address he gave to his brother doctors at the Birth Control Conference in 1922, and he has also published the first distinctly medical handbook on the subject. Ever since, he has followed Steinach's remarkable experiments and the effects of vasoligature and vasectomy. The latter is a particularly interesting operation, as it is the best means known for birth control by the man. Its chief fault is that it is irrevocable, if fully done.

In a short article such as this, it is impossible to do full justice to the investigations made first by Steinach and then by the other men whose names I have given above. The account given by Dr. Haire

of the marvellous experiments on animals alone makes intensely interesting reading. Rats, thoroughly senile, were able to become parents. A female rat "had a litter of five at the age of twenty-nine months. After more than twelve months of sterility she had become fertile again." When one of the experimenters, Sand, saw an old and useless watch-dog for the first time, "he thought it hopeless to try the experiment. His attitude, his dull glance, his bleary eyes, his terrible emaciation, his coat miserably thin in spite of every care, his slinking, faltering gait and miserable appearance, produced an impression of hopelessness." Yet after the operation, in but a few months, he became lively and cheerful, could run for fifteen kilometres, had a great appetite, shiny hair, strength and tonus of muscles good, and carriage almost normal. The effect of the operation lasted a whole year, but the dog died of an acute enteritis. So much for animals, but what about man?

So far, let me say at once "rejuvenation" does not promise immeasurably longer life but in a good many of the cases the results have been both surprising and most encouraging. It is a fact that certain "gland" experiments have made old men seem younger, stronger, and healthier, and made some sexually impotent, once again virile. The most successful in the latter class seem to have been in Europe and those of the former in America. On the whole, both the vasectomy and the gland transplanting operations have produced wonderful results but, as Dr. Haire insists, the best results in gland transplantation must always be from human to human, and the further one gets from the human, such as monkeys, apes, or lower animals, the poorer are the results. Thus "monkey" glands may prove good as a makeshift, but will never equal human glands for results. For men, in particular, a fuller sexual life has nearly always been the objective in submitting to the experiment, but this has not always followed. As for retarding old age, Dr. Haire says: "Voronoff's operations on human beings are too recent for him to offer any definite opinion on the duration of their effects. Some have lasted more than three years; in one, aged sixty-five, who was prodigal of his new-found strength, the effect wore off after two years and seven months, and he underwent a second operation with renewed success."

Voronoff "has no doubt that in animals, at any rate, testicular grafts can actually *prolong* life. He thinks that human life may be prolonged if the patient lives prudently and does not give himself up to all sorts of excess."

Dr. Haire does not let his enthusiasm exceed his caution, but he believes that the operation "in successful cases may lower high blood pressure; increase muscular energy; stimulate appetite for food; relieve insomnia and indigestion; cause improved nutrition of skin and renewed growth of hair; improve power of concentration, memory, temper, capacity for mental work; and possibly increase sexual desire, potency and pleasure. Not all these changes appear in every case, nor does this list cover all the changes that may appear."

But one must go to Dr. Haire's book for full details of the cases which give both positive and negative results, and deals also with some of the criticisms levelled at the whole procedure.

Lastly, there is an excellent bibliography for which students must be very grateful. It is true that most of the books mentioned are written in French and German, but in medical and scientific investigation a knowledge of one or both these languages is essential.

Messrs. Allen & Unwin publish the volume, and the price is 7s. 6d.

H. CUTNER.

The Schools of a Revolution.

(Concluded from page 141.)

XIV.

THE administration of the great public libraries, which, we must not forget, had their origin in the French Revolution, was not likely to be overlooked by the Commune. One of the Commune's first acts was to appoint a Delegate of Communal Libraries, a position which was given to a well-known author and revolutionary journalist, Benjamin Gastineau (1823-).

The *Bibliothèque Nationale* was first taken over and the sum of 80,000 francs a month was granted for its upkeep. Taschereau, the official curator, having deserted his post, the Commune appointed Jules Vincent as his successor, enjoining him to take the "necessary proper measures to safeguard the integrity and preservation of the collections." The staff deserted wholesale, and this delayed the opening of the library, although by April 24 the departments of printed books, manuscripts, prints, and geographical section, were opened.¹ On April 27, Vincent was succeeded by Elie Reclus, the ethnologist and author of *Primitive Folk*, the brother of the celebrated geographer, Elisee Reclus, also a communist. His chief assistant at the library was the bibliographer, Joannis Guignard. Reclus immediately set to work upon a "radical reorganization" of the establishment of an *annexe* in the Place Louvois specially for "day readers." This department was placed in the charge of Jules Troubat, the friend and executor of Saint Beuve.

On May 13, Gastineau, the Delegate of Communal Libraries, issued a notice suppressing the lending of books, a system by which, under the Empire, said Gastineau, "the privileged few had carved out their private libraries from the public collections." Several other important libraries were organized or cared for by the Commune, including the *Mazarine* and *Sainte Genevieve*.

XV.

It has been said that the heretics of one age often become the saints of another. The educationists of the Paris Commune of 1871 were branded by their contemporaries as either "dreamers" or "ruffians," and that their methods were "Utopian," or that they revealed "the superficial hand of ignorance."² The Commune only lasted two months, and it was suppressed with ruthless severity. Yet its ideals have survived the fire and sword of the "bloody week." To-day, most of the educational plans of these "dreamers" and "ruffians" have been adopted by France, America, Germany, and Britain.

The Commune demanded that education should be *free*, *compulsory*, and *secular*, and made it so. Yet the Third Republic that crushed the Commune, did not erect its *free* educational scheme until 1881: it did not decree *compulsory* education until 1882; and *secular* education was not completely established until 1904. In England, *free* education was looked upon as "Socialistic" or "Communist" for many years, and it was not until 1891 that it could claim to be called free. Although *compulsory* education came with the laws of 1876 and 1880, *secular* education is still as far off as ever.

Civil and moral instruction, which the Commune put in the place of religious teaching, has yet to be developed by educationists. In France, this system was adopted so far as it concerns religious sanctions. In Britain, in spite of the pioneer work of F. J.

¹ J.O.

² These are the actual epithets and phrases used.

Gould and the *Moral Instruction League*, little progress has been made, yet in America, the *National Education Association* said in 1907 that it was the duty of teachers to enter at once upon this question.

The *liberty of the pupil* so eloquently demanded by the educationists of the Commune, is now considered by a great educationist like Dr. Montessori, to be "the fundamental attitude of scientific pedagogy."

Vocational instruction, which the Commune was one of the first governments to establish, was many years taking root in France. Yet to-day, the Third Republic claims to take the world's lead in this question, and its schools for industrial training have the most complete and thorough curriculum yet put into practice.

As for the *free feeding of the children* during school hours, which were inaugurated by some of the *arrondissements* of Communard Paris, and was, in fact, one of the so-called "horrors" of the Commune (*vide* its detractors), this scheme is now quite an established thing in many countries, even in these "tight little islands."

One of the first ideas which Jules Valles brought to the Commission of Education under the Commune was the *abolition of corporal punishment for children*. It was either Dr. Goupil or Dr. Naquet (Vaillant, who gave the present writer this information was not quite sure) who, during the Commune, recommended that the *arrondissement medical officers of health should attend the schools daily*. Whether this was so that the children should have a free medical service, or whether it was for the purpose that the modern clinic has a place in the school, we have not been able to ascertain.

Dr. Naquet certainly held strong views on the question of adolescence as a factor to be given due consideration in education. *Sex age* ought perhaps to have its place in scientific pedagogy, side by side with *chronological* and *mental* age.

Turning to the arts we see that the Commune created a revolution in art instruction which had the greatest influence on the next generation. How real this was may be seen in the treatment meted out to the post-Commune "realists" and "impressionists," who were called "Communards" *merely because their art was free and independent of the schools*. Many of the real Communard artists like the famous Dalou, Hereau, and Chesneau, carried their "free ideas" to other lands where they had fled for safety. Dalou, whilst he was a professor at South Kensington schools, was the founder of the "freedom school" in British art. Chesneau's *Education of the Artist*, reveals his free and unfettered mind, and it is a work which has helped to mould the liberal *æsthetic criteria* in this country.

In music, the Commune attempted but little. Yet the views of its delegate to the Conservatoire show the tendencies of the movement. Romain Rolland said a year or two ago in his *Musicians of To-day* that "The Republic continues to regard music as something outside of the people." He has little hope for the "people" whilst such a state of affairs exists. Yet, it was the Delegate to the Conservatoire of Music under the Commune who said the same thing, and, what is more, sought to remedy it by his ideas of *la musique sociale*. This poor enthusiast was shot by the Government troops for his "opinions." Romain Rolland says the same thing fifty years later and is applauded. Salvador Daniel's reform of class teaching by making ten to twenty teachers take the same class in turn, so as not to confine individuality, has found its echo in many works in modern pedagogy.

The Communard educational idea of making *gymnastics* part of the curriculum of every school was, so far as the present writer is aware, quite new to

France, although the doctrine had been preached for a half-century.

Finally, we may call attention to the wide scope of authority which the Communard Commission of Education assumed. It controlled not only all educational establishments from the University down to the Primary schools, but also the museums, art galleries, libraries, and such-like institutions. In the last days of its *regime*, the Commission actually assumed control of the State-subsidized theatres. There is much to be said for the control and responsibility assumed. If the State had the right to determine what should be shown or demonstrated in its art galleries and museums, surely there was greater justification for control of the theatres. What was the use of one department teaching one set of ideas whilst another was allowed to propagate another set of ideas?

Such, in brief, were the educational ideals of the social revolutionaries of the Paris Commune. For being a half-century before their age, they paid the penalty that all soldiers of progress must pay. To-day, we realize that they were right in their protests, and we who benefit by their sacrifice should openly acknowledge the debt, and pay the honour due to them.²

HENRY GEORGE FARMER.

Correspondence.

CLERICAL SCHOOLS IN RURAL AREAS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I'm afraid neither Mrs. Adams nor Mr. Drage quite understood my letter. Where, for example, did I say I found so satisfactory a "hymn, prayer, and a little Bible story," or that I would fail to take advantage of the efforts made by any party towards educational liberty? I am absolutely in favour of Secular education and I cannot put that any plainer. What I said was that it is absurd to claim that the hopeless illiteracy found among (in particular) so many Socialists and Labour men was due to religious education or dilapidated schools. Those who say it was must explain why the religious education of so many of our greatest Free-thinkers did not affect them the same way. And my questions were not irrelevant. I had a perfect right to ask would Mrs. Adams' comrades help to build better schools and homes, and both Mrs. Adams and Mr. Drage have a perfect right not to answer. They know better. Moreover, my questions regarding Birth Control and University education for all were quite to the point. "Under Socialism" we may get a complete education up to the age of twenty-five and wonderful mansions for everybody and plenty of good food and a month's holiday every year and lots of other tremendous advantages.

But we haven't got Socialism yet, and what I should like to have thoroughly explained is how does Mrs. Adams propose to give University education for us all? Who is to pay for it? The "Capitalists"? Am I to understand that Mrs. Jones, the charwoman, who has thoughtfully given the country eight or ten budding-citizens, expects Mr. Smythe, the bank clerk, who finds it a struggle to bring up one child, to pay for the aforesaid citizens' University education and upkeep till the age of twenty-five? If "University education for all" does not mean this, what does it mean? I say it is simply preposterous—in fact, criminal—for the Labour Party not to insist on the absolute necessity for Birth

² My chief "authorities" in these articles on "The Schools of a Revolution" are the *Journal Officiel de la Commune*, the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, and the periodical press of the Commune. The late Dr. Edouard Vaillant, who was Delegate for Education under the Commune, honoured me with his friendship, and to him I am indebted for many particulars, which would not have been available otherwise. Information was also supplied me by many people officially connected with the Commune, including the famous composer and pianist, Raoul Pugno, who was the Communard "Director of Music" at the Opera.

Control among its members. But I am not surprised at both Mrs. Adams' and Mr. Drage's silence on this point. They prefer the "class-war" of the Wheatleys, the Kirkwoods, and the Cooks to rational and peaceful reforms. How the members of the Labour Party love each other!

Mr. Drage accuses me of "political bias." This really means that when Socialists foully attack "Capitalists" they have every right. It is really "constructive criticism." But when any of us dares to criticise, even in a mild way, the great Labour Party, it is purely "political bias." It is all very humorous, but I shall continue to ask "irrelevant" questions and criticise the absurd half-baked theories, dreams, and delusions which obsess Socialists until I get clear and irrefutable replies. And so far these have not been forthcoming.

H. CUTNER.

MR. BRYAN AND THE NEANDERTHAL TYPE.

SIR,—Mr. F. J. Gould, in his article, "Children seldom cry for Theology," quotes Luther Burbank's description of his friend Bryan as follows:—

Mr. Bryan is an honoured personal friend of mine, yet this need not prevent the observation that the skull with which nature endowed him visibly approaches the Neanderthal type.

Luther Burbank may be a genius in producing new varieties of fruits but his knowledge of primitive men is sadly out of date. Professor Marcellin Boule, one of the greatest living authorities, in his *Fossil Men*, recently translated into English, says:—

Homo neanderthalensis, whose origins are from every aspect extremely ancient, became extinct without leaving any posterity. It is fossil in a double sense, because it dates from a geological period prior to the present day, and because we are aware of no descendants, from the Upper Pleistocene onwards.

It is impossible, among the modern ethnological groups, to point to any single one which could be considered a descendant of the Neanderthal people. No modern human type can be considered as a direct descendant, even with modifications, of the Neanderthal type.

Mr. F. J. Gould also seems to hold Luther Burbank's view that some people in England at the present day show traces of the Neanderthal type, for he writes:—

We have some people in England who express their sad belief in Evolution.

Can we look at their skulls, and dare to whisper the word Neanderthal.....

I hardly think one would convince an opponent of Evolution, or retain one's friends by likening them to the Neanderthal people.

HENRY SPENCE, B.Sc.

A MATERIALIST CONCEPTION OF MIND.

SIR,—Although "Keridon's" letter is more in the nature of a negation than a refutation I am hopeful of finding some common ground on which to base a useful discussion. We are all familiar with the religionist who, rejecting the idea of an eternal universe, still finds nothing incongruous in the idea of an eternal Deity; similarly "Keridon," rejecting the idea that mental phenomena can by any possibility be the outcome of the action and interaction of physical energy, has no difficulty in imagining an ultimate substance which is both physical and psychic—although it is not quite clear in what sense the term "psychic" is here used.

To me "Keridon's" ultimate substance is as much an appeal to human ignorance as the religionists' God; we will start, therefore, with the much more relevant reality: physical energy. "Physical energy," says "Keridon" truly, "is in a state of oscillation between momentum and strain." In my article under the above heading I expressed the same thing as external energy (radiant) and internal energy (gravitant)—two aspects or poles of the same physical energy. My fundamental tenet is that the human organism is what it is as a result of the action and interaction of this dual aspect (the biologist's "environment and heredity"); and that the terms objectivity and subjectivity are but modes of expressing external and internal energy. If I can get

"Keridon" to agree on these fundamentals then our mutual benefit is assured.

If the foregoing be true—and, quite frankly, I do not see how it can be refuted—then all manifestations are the expression of physical energy, and mental phenomena is no exception to the rule, being, in fact, the expression of the expenditure of internal energy. "Keridon's" denial of the relevancy of the tuning-fork analogy thus falls to the ground. The universe is one vast ocean of vibrations; and I assert that when we witness the response of one tuning-fork to a like one in its field that has been set vibrating we are witnessing incipient knowledge.

"Keridon" agrees that Light, Heat, and Sound are physical vibrations, but, he adds, that the ensuing sensations by which we are aware of them are not only not identical, but—despite the fact that only like can know like—belong to a realm in which physical laws do not apply. In the case of heat he uses the word hot to describe the sensation, and what is this but a *word* to describe the identity of the internal vibration with the external vibration causing it? Will "Keridon" tell us what "hotness" is apart from a vibration of heat? He also attempts to draw a distinction between a "mental and a physical idea" but what he means by this distinction is more than I can say. It is his occasional lapse from monism into a dubious dualism that is so confusing. I will leave the explanation of self-consciousness (Nature's crowning miracle), by which an organism becomes both object and subject at one and the same time, to future treatment.

VINCENT J. HANDS.

PAPINI'S CHRIST.

SIR,—Mr. Knapp-Fisher disputes my assertion that Jesus prophesied the end of the world during the generation in which he lived. He says that either the Gospel writers, or later copyists, have confused the fall of Jerusalem—which did take place during that generation—with the end of the world, which was to come later; and cites the words, "But the end it not yet," which occurs in the very same chapter as the prediction that the end would come before the present generation had passed away.

It seems, then, that the "muddle-headedness" that Mr. Knapp-Fisher attributes to me, should rightly be assigned to the Gospel writers of copyists! However, I am not going to retort the charge "muddle-headedness" on him, as that would only provoke some further flowers of Christian amenity; and a considerable acquaintance with Christian controversialists from Tertullian to Luther, and from Luther to Christian Evidence Society, lecturers, convinces me that in a contest of vituperation and invective I should certainly come off second best.

I am quite aware that Papini and modern theologians try to get rid of this very awkward prediction, that was falsified in the event, but it cannot be done without throwing discredit on all the writers of the New Testament, for the prediction occurs twice in Matthew, in the first place (xvi., 28), where we read, "There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom," and again (xxiv., 34).

Mark (ix., 1) and Luke (ix., 27) repeat the prediction word for word. So also John (v., 28). Paul also shared this delusion, for he says (Heb. x., 37), "For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." And again (1 Thess., iv., 15), "We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord." Peter, too, taught the same doctrine and declared (1 Peter, iv., 7), "The end of all things is at hand." So did James, (v., 8-9), "The coming of the Lord draweth near....behold, the judge standeth before the door." There is no doubt that the phrase, "But the end is not yet," was quietly slipped in, many years after the first generation had passed away without witnessing the end of the world.

Mr. Knapp-Fisher also declares that I am in error in saying that the rise of Christianity destroyed the peace and prosperity of the Roman Empire. What I said was, that the rise of Christianity coincided with the decay of the Empire, that while the Empire was

fighting for its very existence against the hordes of barbarian invaders, the Christians not only refused to help defend the Empire, but threw their weight on the other side, rejoiced in the downfall of the Empire and helped to send it down into the abyss.

As to the assertion that the Roman Empire "was never a peaceful empire, and its treatment of the Christians is sufficient to indicate its brutality." It should be borne in mind that the Roman Empire was surrounded by hosts of barbarians, always ready to break through the hedge of Roman spears that kept them at bay. But even so, Professor Tucker, the historian, points out, omitting the year 69 A.D., an exceptional year, counting a hundred years before and more than a hundred years after, "It would be impossible to find in the history of the world any period at which peace, and probably contentment, was so widely and continuously spread."—Tucker (*Life in the Roman World of Nero and St. Paul.*, p. 11.)

As to the treatment the Christians received, it is now recognised by all competent modern historians that the accounts of the persecutions of the early Christians have been grossly exaggerated. The Roman tolerated all religions, but the Christians were not content with this; they violently attacked the established religion of Rome, invading the Temples and smashing the images of the Gods. They brought their punishment, such as it was, upon themselves by their own intolerance. They were regarded by the Romans as enemies of the human race, and they were not far wrong, as history testifies.

In conclusion, my critic says that when I quote the saying of Christ: "My kingdom is not of this world," I should have set beside it the prayer of Jesus, "Thy kingdom come.....on earth, as it is in Heaven." I have no objection to doing so, if it is understood that the Kingdom that Jesus had in view has nothing to do with the state of society which Socialists and modern reformers look forward to establishing, and that the so-called "Lord's Prayer" was well known to the Jews and much older than the time of Christ.

W. MANN.

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SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Lit., "Converts to Rational Religion."

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