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Views and Opinions.

Patriotism.

"They are disputing about words," is an expression often heard, and it is used as though the disputants were wasting their time. But words should express thoughts, and thoughts in turn should stand for the representatives of things, so that one might be led to enquire what else should disputes be about but words? Words are not dead entities, but living things. They have their ancestors, they carry with them marks of their heredity, and they have their living relatives, which resemble human relatives in being both desirable and undesirable, admirable and disreputable. Words are born, grow, and die. Every good dictionary stands godfather for the birth of some, and solemnly records the passing away of others. A dictionary is at once an infant clinic and a mortuary. It displays to visitors births and deaths; and just as in the one we can study the play of inherited characteristics, so in the other we can discern their atrophication and disappearance. So it follows that so long as words represent thoughts, we must dispute over them in order to get at the things for which words are supposed to stand. More, it is in virtue of language that man enters into a conscious relationship with his fellows, and with the generations that have gone before him. Without that we should like each animal generation, have to commence life afresh, aided only by the slow accumulation of purely biological acquisitions. Of all the tools that man has invented, there is none greater and none more powerful than words.

True and False. * * *

For some weeks several readers of this journal have been engaged in a quarrel over the use of the expression "Patriotism," and after reading what each side has to say, it seems fairly apparent that if each one had carefully stated to the other what he considered the essential quality of "Patriotism" to be, the dispute might soon have terminated. On the one hand, it is clear that a feeling of disgust is created by Patriotism so often being what Johnson said it might be, the refuge of a scoundrel. We have seen it used, particularly during the war, as a cover for ruthless exploitation, and we have seen it used at all times for schemes of personal national aggrandisement. Or, again, the form of patriotism

which expresses itself in the phrase, "My country right or wrong," cannot be to any reasonable mind any more morally justifiable than its equivalent, "I am going to champion my neighbour in all he does whether he is right or wrong." Yet the one would be called stupid or criminal, the other is treated as something of which one should be proud. Or it is seen how easily the passions of people may be excited by appeals to "Patriotism," and that in each country the appeals for it are made far more strenuously for purposes of war than for those of peace. On the other hand, there is the undeniable fact that for pure love of country people are ready to give all they have, even life itself. And if on the one hand the war was used to purely selfish ends, and deliberately utilized by the unscrupulous, on the other hand numbers of others were ready to make the supreme sacrifice for what they believed to be justice and the interests of civilization. To close one's eyes to either side is to lose sight of the basal facts of the situation.

* * *

The Roots of Patriotism.

What now is the basis fact about the universal phenomenon of patriotism? It is obviously something deeper than can be explained by mere education, or even as the expression of egoism, individual or national. In one of the wisest of his books, *The Study of Sociology*, Herbert Spencer refers to Patriotism as reflex egoism, and that is a description with which some of those responsible for the letters that have been appearing in these columns will cordially agree. And yet, while admitting that a great deal of what passes for patriotism comes rightly under that head, it does not seem to cover all the facts. And although the type of patriot to whom this description would most properly apply would be the last to recognize the virtue of patriotism when manifested by a member of another country as against his own, yet this may properly be treated as a distortion, or an undeveloped form of patriotism, rather than an indictment of patriotism itself. The fundamental fact about patriotism is loyalty to the group, and that is plainly not merely a condition of the survival of the group, as such, but it is the condition of the development of a great many other qualities. No society, whether it be the larger group that meets us in the case of tribe or nation, or the smaller group that meets us in the association of men and women within a society, for artistic, social, literary, or political purposes, can exist in its absence. Groups of human beings must in some degree place the welfare of the whole as superior to the interests of the individual, if they are to live together pleasantly and profitably. And to lose sight of that is to lose sight of the most important fact in the situation.

* * *

Social Evolution.

Society is a growth. That is a statement that has almost become a commonplace, but like many sayings that have become commonplaces, its impli-

cations are not always recognized. For growth is here only another name for expansion, and expansion applies not merely to the spreading of the human species over the face of the earth, but also to an expansion of those feelings and ideas on which the very existence of human society depends. There is no fundamental change that can be indicated in the feelings that animate human beings during at least the historic period of the race. A crowd of Athenians, or Romans, discussing the affairs of life manifested the same passions and the same intellectual qualities that a crowd would manifest to-day. And going back to man in an earlier tribal stage much the same kind of thing might be said. And yet there has gone on a change—in some respects a very drastic change—in the incidence of human passions and convictions. To take our specific instance, patriotism, or the root feeling of loyalty to the herd, is as strong now as ever. But it is not found possible to give adequate or beneficial expression to it in the old way. Loyalty to the herd meant at one time very little more than it literally signifies. It meant loyalty to the mere group in one immediate locality, and involved no more consideration of other groups than the most enlightened humanitarianism to-day would involve considerations of what the people in Mars thought of Mr. Churchill's Budget. But Society grows, and the intercommunications between groups grows also. Our feelings are spread over an ever-widening area, and doing what is best to one's immediate fellows involves consideration for those who are not so close at hand. When a group of tribes coalesce to become a nation each item in the whole takes on wider liberties and wider responsibilities. The feelings hitherto confined only to the few function in relation to the many. There is no fundamental change, there is only an expansion of the feelings that have always existed, an expansion expressed in terms of the whole in order to bring a benefit to each unit.

The Larger Self. * * *

Now this process, which can be seen everywhere at work, has a direct bearing upon the question of Patriotism. Soon after the war commenced I pointed out in these columns that the essential feature of it was that in the real sense of the word it was a civil war. That is, it was war between two human groups that were members of one Society. The political and geographical distinctions and divisions were comparatively unimportant, and of no greater fundamental importance than they would be if Scotsmen and Englishmen were to join in armed conflict. The growth of Society, economic, intellectual, moral, could no longer be properly expressed within the terms of a narrow nationalism. It had to find reasonable expression in terms of the wider grouping and the wider relationships that progress had brought. And it, therefore, was not a question of Patriotism *versus* anti-patriotism, so much as whether we were to continue to express our sense of loyalty to the herd in terms of a primitive tribalism or nationalism, or in terms of the wider human relationships that were actually in existence. Thanks to the growth of human relationships, due to the intellectual and other developments that have been at work, the love of country that expresses itself in a mere detestation of outsiders, the unreasoning desire to advance one's own country without regard to the rights or demands of other countries, is fated to defeat its own object. Enlightened love of country is as likely to place one in opposition to the passions of the moment as it is to set one in opposition to a crowd waving a flag and voicing sentiments that belong of right to a bygone stage of social life.

An Evolutionary Paradox.

There are, of course, a number of forces that contribute to feed the flame of patriotism—the association of early scenes, personal attractions, etc., but I have been concerned with the main root of the sentiment. And if what I have said be correct it is clear that the point at issue is not really patriotism *versus* anti-patriotism, so much as the expression of love of country in an enlightened or an unenlightened form. And it is just one of the paradoxes of existence that it is the loud-mouthed popular foreigner-hating patriot who is often the country's deadliest foe and the man who is hounded down as unpatriotic, who is really risking his life in the attempt to do his country real service. And this paradox is quite in line with the familiar one that it is our die-hard Conservative who is the real cause of revolutions, and the revolutionist who just as often is fighting the cause of an enlightened conservatism. None of us, whether we be called revolutionist or not can hope to escape the social urge which speaks in all. The man who is so often foolishly charged with a love of destruction, because he would pull down existing institutions in his haste to erect new ones, would not be nearly so destructive if he were not obsessed with an overpowering desire for building anew. And it is in the name of a larger, saner, and more enlightened love of country that so much of the out-of-date form of patriotism is challenged. It is just a question of whether we will express those feelings of loyalty and duty to our fellows in terms of a narrow semi-barbaric tribalism, or whether we are intelligent enough to see that real love of country should find expression in the recognition of the truth that helpful service to those who immediately surround us can never ignore the claims, and the rights of all societies with which we are brought into contact.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

God is Love.

SUCH is the definition of the Supreme Being supplied in 1 John iv. 16, and the other Sunday the Bishop of Lichfield ventured to preach a sermon on it at Harrow School. Whatever else may be said about Dr. Kempthorne, it is a certainty that he does not lack courage, for only an exceedingly brave man can affirm the existence of God and call him love. His lordship began by saying that "When a strange bishop comes to preach to a great school it is wise for him to speak of the things that matter most, and that nothing matters more than the truth given in my text"; that is the assertion that God is love. Before proceeding very far, however, the Bishop frankly admits that "the love of God is not a self-evident fact"; but it does not occur to him to enquire whether it be a fact at all or not. To us that is the question that matters most. Dr. Kempthorne makes a further strange admission, namely, that it is "difficult to reconcile the fact of evil, especially of moral evil, which is human selfishness, with the love of God." Then in an almost incredibly naïve manner he says: "Well, you will not expect me to be so foolish as to attempt to solve that problem. One can only say that it is impossible to believe in any God who is not a God of love; it is either that—or blank despair." On this point the Bishop is sadly and entirely mistaken. Our choice is by no means between the belief in a God of love and blank despair, but rather, between belief in God and a firm confidence in the recuperative and progressive powers lying latent in human nature itself, and this is a choice to which the Bishop does not even allude.

Then he very foolishly falls back upon the following reckless statement: "And after all, Christianity is not greatly concerned with trying to explain evil, its business is to fight and conquer evil, and the world would hardly possess men who are men if they had not found their manhood in conflict against evil, within and without." As a matter of fact, Christianity has had very little if anything to do with the conquest of evil in the world, the conflict against it having been carried on in all parts of the earth by men and women who naturally loved and worked for goodness, virtue, and peace; and it is to them we are indebted for whatever progress the human race has made.

We are, of course, fully aware that the Bishop of Lichfield holds a professional brief for Christianity and the Church which compels him to make the best and most of any argument in their favour. He finds that an extremely arduous task on the present occasion. He assures us, for example, that God's love is neither "a sloppy sentimentalism" nor "a passion on the level of our earthly passions." What he means is that God's love is infinitely superior to the very best human love. About the love of God he knows absolutely nothing, but guesses much. He says:—

There is only one way of learning what God's love is. It is to get a vision of the character of Jesus Christ. "He that hath seen me," said our Lord, "hath seen the Father." In him alone we get the right idea of love.....A record of that love is written for us in the Gospels and (I hope some of us may add) in the pages of our own experience. And the first feature which we see in it is an amazing strength and courage. He had a purpose clearly before his eyes—the purpose of saving the world. From that purpose his love never swerved. The Devil might try to bribe him with the kingdoms of this world; men might mock him and spit in his face; they might scourge him and nail him to the Cross. But bribery, ridicule, cruelty could not turn him from his resolve: "Having loved his own that were in the world he loved them unto the end," and he who could have called legions of angels to his aid, endured the Cross, and despised the shame till he could cry, "It is finished." Remember that in this love, so supremely strong, we see the love of God.

To us the Gospel Jesus never lived, but assuming his historicity we fail to see that he shone either as a teacher of love, or as an actual lover of his fellow-beings. In point of fact he did not live up to his own teaching. His commandment is "Love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you"; but in practice he loved his friends and hated his enemies. Mat. xxiii. 13-39 cannot be surpassed as a passage in which nothing but consuming malediction drops from his tongue; and such awful words were spoken simply because the Scribes and the Pharisees declined to accept the Messianic claims of the speaker. Not even the imprecatory Psalms or the damnatory clauses in the Athanasian Creed are one whit worse than the maledictory epithets Jesus is said to have hurled at the heads of his enemies. And yet the Bishop of Lichfield regards Jesus as the ideal illustrator of the love of God for mankind; but we are quite unable to see eye to eye with him on this point. Taking the Gospels as they stand they do not present their hero as an ideal lover. On one occasion he quite unnecessarily rebuked his mother, and on another very rudely declined to recognize her and her other children. But Dr. Kempthorne omits any reference to such facts, and observes:—

The love of Jesus was a love that understood the true values—the things that really matter. Acquisition, self-interest, dominance over others—these are the values of the selfish world. Love, joy, peace

—these are the values of the kingdom of Christ. He was out not to get but to give; not to dominate, but to serve. "I am among you," he said, "as one that serveth." He through whom the worlds were made was ready to wash the feet of Judas: and he carried that service through to the utmost lengths of self-sacrifice, even to the Cross. There on Calvary he taught us that self-sacrificing love is part of the very nature and character of God himself.

Theologians put much more into the Gospels than they naturally contain, and make Jesus responsible for sayings he never uttered, but which they imagine must have fallen from his lips. At best the Gospel Jesus is largely, if not wholly, a legendary character, but the divines make him more legendary still when they represent him as teaching on Calvary "that self-sacrificing love is part of the very nature and character of God himself." That such a view of his death ere long became a fixed doctrine of the Church is true enough, but it is false to represent Jesus as teaching it either before, at, or after his death. Let us now conclude the passage we were quoting:—

Dark as the mystery of evil is, it is something for us to know that God does not stand aloof from it. He enters into the very heart of it. He bears the worst of the suffering. He conquers the evil, not by force, but by love. It is his purpose that love, sheer love, shall drive out the selfishness which poisons the world.

The teaching of the whole paragraph just quoted is founded not upon knowledge, but upon sheer fancy. From beginning to end there is not a single scrap of truth in it. We have now the most convincing evidence that the whole of the teaching attributed to Jesus in the Gospels was of much older origin than the beginning of the Christian era and that he himself possessed few if any historical qualities. We go further still and maintain that the belief in the existence of a God of love is rooted in the soil of superstition. In fact his very existence lacks even the ghost of any convincing proof. There is not a single trace of his activity for good or evil in any age or country. It is easy enough for a Bishop to allow himself to become the slave of emotionalism and cry out as follows:—

Christ is not dead; he lives. He is not far away, but in our midst: his purpose of love for the world still holds, and he is working that purpose out. No one can doubt our need of him in the world to-day. Probably you are tired of the critical urgency of our times. But indeed we have got to hear about it until we are awake to it. Mr Sheppard has recently said: "As I see things, Western civilization will go up in the smoke of another world war long before Christianity, travelling at its present pace, takes possession." The danger is real, and the necessity of the situation is that we Christians must quicken the pace by understanding more clearly what God's love means, by accepting Christ's values of things, by learning that the Church is not a company of people who are out to promote their own selfish spiritual interests, but the family or fellowship of those whom our Lord trusts as his fellow workers in his purpose of love, and above all by placing ourselves unreservedly in his hands that we may become fit to respond to his call.

Such preaching is fundamentally false and has never resulted in any genuine benefit to the world. Its appeal is to a source whence no blessing has ever issued. Christ is dead indeed; he no longer lives, if ever he did live. He is so far away as to be incapable either to respond to or even to hear the multitudinous appeals made to him. The love of God is a dream-love that has never or ever can come true. Bishop Kempthorne does not know what it is. Our

present duty is to fling all such dreams into the scrap heap, and apply ourselves, without supernatural aid, to the solution of the puzzling problems which now threaten the peace and prosperity of the world.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Manner of George Moore.

I would rather have written *Salamambo* than have built the Brooklyn bridge. It was more difficult, and it will last longer.—*Edgar Saltus.*

MR. GEORGE MOORE is one of the men to be reckoned with in contemporary literature. He has written many masterpieces, and, whatever subject he attempts, always writes with dazzling literary brilliancy. The wide reading public does not yet fully realize the great debt it owes to Mr. George Moore, who has helped more than any other writer to remove the just reproach from contemporary English fiction that it is narrow, provincial, conventional, and that it chiefly consists of smooth tales, generally of romantic love. Mr. Moore was not the first modern writer to notice how restricted the art of novel writing had become. Thackeray, many years ago, saw it as plainly as Mr. Moore, but he had not the later writer's fine courage, and the preface to *Pendennis*, explaining the cause of his defeat, remains one of the most pathetic of literary apologies. Mr. Moore never lacked courage, and he never wanted genius. Since *A Mummer's Wife* first frightened the squeamish public of the circulating libraries, Mr. Moore has given us a shelf-full of masterpieces. And *A Mummer's Wife* has the honour of being the finest realistic novel in the language, a feat of which any writer might be proud. His *Esther Waters* is another artistic triumph, since the book dealt with a phase of life so far removed from Mr. Moore's own. *Esther Waters* did more than add to its author's laurels. It cleverly turned the tables on his noisy Puritanical detractors, and by the sheer force of genius compelled their unwilling admiration. For Mr. Moore enjoys the extremely rare privilege of being one of the few English authors who have been boycotted. It was for his sake that the blameless British tradesman, the lamented Mr. Mudie, assumed the functions of the Bishop of Rome, and started an *Index Expurgatorius*, which caused widespread perturbation in many sheltered homes and suburban drawing rooms. But Mr. Moore has had the sweetest of revenges, for with his enviable record of a dozen masterpieces he has reached the enviable position where he can dispense with praise or blame.

As a study of middle-class and Bohemian life, *A Mummer's Wife* is almost without a rival. The central idea of the book, an elopement of a married woman with a lodger, is not unique. Many of the barley-sugary novels freely selected by the circulating libraries, have exploited this theme. But Mr. Moore's genius transforms a commonplace story into a work of real art. The erring heroine of *A Mummer's Wife* is middle-class, the consort of an asthmatic shopkeeper, and the author shows, with incomparable art, the fatal decline; how the divorced woman marries her lover, becomes a dipsomaniac, and, step by step, loses propriety and decency, until she dies the death of a drunkard, impenitent and unloved. With rare insight, Mr. Moore shows the woman's longing for her middle-class surroundings, the lower she sinks in the social scale. Had she been depicted as a lady of position, had the breaking of the bonds of convention been clothed in sentimental and decorative phrases, and Mr. Moore had chosen to wallow in the pathetic, then, probably, no

outcry would have arisen. But because Mr. Moore chose the honest way of describing life as he saw it with truthful eyes, the result upset some of the chaste library readers, who never blushed at the salacious details of notorious police-court cases reported in the newspapers.

The Confessions of a Young Man shows another facet of Mr. Moore's genius. Few of the readers of his novels were prepared for this unique and brilliant work, another book without parallel in our tongue. Audacious in its criticism, it is wonderful how much truth underlies its smart epigrams, and finely moulded sentences. Its intimate knowledge of the art of France, literary and pictorial, of a few years since, marks it off from other books of criticism; while its freshness of treatment, which time cannot wither, manifest a personal force in our literature which, to be quite candid, has mocked every imitator.

All Moore's books are thought-compelling. As a critic, he has ever stood in the front rank. All that easy zest, that curling his tongue round the subject, that freedom of expression, were possible only to a man who simplified his life by dividing it well, and not by cultivating one side at the expense of another.

Mr. Moore's novels and stories are provocative. In his work, *The Brook Kerith*, he produced a most successful and daring reconquest of antiquity that has been attempted of recent years. In it he reconstructed a legend from the New Testament, just as Gustave Flaubert presented a story of ancient Carthage in his *Salamambo*. In *A Mere Accident*, Mr. Moore deals with a story of sheer horror with the same mastery that Shelley displays in handling the tragedy of *The Cenci*. In *The Untilled Field*, Mr. Moore ruthlessly shows the evils attendant upon the triumph of Priestcraft in a country such as Ireland, where intellect is trodden under the hoofs of Superstition, and culture is as stagnant as pond-water. In this volume Mr. Moore held the mirror up to Priestcraft, and, incidentally, revealed his own Free-thought.

Mr. George Moore is endowed with courage and genius, two things which are not so often found together. He not only challenged the idols of the circulating libraries, but beat them with pure artistry. A many-sided man of genius, he has always relished the panorama of life, so many phases of which must have been very remote from his own career as a man of letters. He has shown us that an English writer can compete successfully with the culture of the admired Continental writers. An artist to the fingertips, Mr. Moore calls for recognition from ordinary readers as much as Gabriele D'Annunzio, Maxim Gorky, and others, for whom so many British altars have flamed in worship. A philosopher, a poet, a critic, a novelist, and that rare thing in our populous world of laborious penmen, a fine writer in every sense of the word, Mr. Moore ought to be more popular. Historians of English literature will, we fancy, be compelled to consider his work even more seriously than contemporary critics have done.

MIMNERMUS.

There is no counting on the justice of men who are capable of fashioning and worshipping an unjust divinity, nor on their humanity, so long as they incorporate inhuman motives in their most sacred dogmas, nor on their reasonableness while they rigorously decline to accept reason as a test of truth.—*John Morley.*

Act so that man's trust in man may be increased, not lessened by your example. Seek to live that dignity may be added to our common race.—*Eden Phillpotts,* "The Treasures of Typhon."

The Gospel History a Fabrication.

II.

THE NARRATIVES IN THE SYNOPTICS.

THE first three Gospels, as everyone knows, give an account of the sayings and doings of Jesus Christ, from the time of his baptism in the Jordan to that of his crucifixion and resurrection, so that in these Gospels (which are called Synoptics) we have three versions of the same sayings and doings. It may also have been noticed that, in a great number of cases, these Gospel events are recorded by all three Synoptists in nearly the same words. Another remarkable fact in connection with those incidents or discourses, is that, in the majority of cases, they are related by each Synoptist in the same order of sequence. Thus, we find that Matthew and Mark relate seventy-five of these events or circumstances in exactly the same order; next, we find that Mark and Luke relate seventy-two in the same order. Lastly, we find that Matthew, Mark, and Luke record sixty events or circumstances in exactly the same order. Some of these, it is true, would naturally be placed in the order given by all writers; as, for instance, the arrest of Jesus before his trial, the trial before the crucifixion, and the resurrection to follow: but that three independent writers should record such a number of unconnected, undated, and unlocated incidents in exactly the same order is one that calls for some rational explanation.

To make this matter clear, I subjoin a list of the various circumstances recorded in the same order by all three evangelists. These are the following:—

Ministry of John the Baptist—Baptism of Jesus—Temptation of Jesus—Jesus goes to Galilee after imprisonment of John—Jesus commences teaching—Healing a leper—Healing man sick of palsy—Call of Matthew—Levi's feast—Discourse on fasting—Patching of garments and bottles—Disciples plucking ears of corn—Healing man with withered hand—Parable of Sower—Herod believes Jesus to be the Baptist—Feeding five thousand—Jesus asks what men say of him—Jesus foretells his death—Taking up cross to follow Jesus—The Transfiguration—Disciples unable to cure demoniac—Jesus again foretells his death—Disciples contend who should be greatest—Jesus blesses little children—the Rich young man—The camel and needle's eye—Reward for following Jesus—Jesus again foretells his death—Healing blind man near Jericho—Two disciples sent for colt—Public entry into Jerusalem—Cleansing of temple—Authority of Jesus questioned—Tribute to Cæsar—Woman with seven husbands—How Jesus was son of David—Warnings against scribes and Pharisees—Jesus foretells destruction of Jerusalem—Priests take counsel against Jesus—Judas turns traitor—Disciples sent to find a room—Passover and Last Supper—Jesus foretells Peter's denial—Agony in Gethsemane—Jesus betrayed and made prisoner—Jesus before High Priest—Peter's denial of Jesus—Jesus before Pilate—Jews demand release of Barabbas—Simon bears cross—Jesus crucified—Casting lots for garments—Jesus mocked and reviled—Darkness all over land—Veil of temple rent—Testimony of Centurion—Women beholding afar off—Joseph of Arimathea—Mary Magdalene at the sepulchre.

To the foregoing may be added fifteen additional circumstances, omitted by Luke, which Matthew and Mark record in the same order; also twelve other circumstances, omitted by Matthew, which Mark and Luke give in the same order—bringing the total up to eighty-seven. Now, it is simply impossible that three independent writers—two of whom, Mark and Luke, had never seen nor accompanied Jesus—could record such a number of trifling, and mostly unconnected, incidents in exactly the same order. And, if to this order of sequence, we add the fact, already stated, that a large portion of these narratives are

related in nearly the same words, we arrive at the only conclusion possible—that behind the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, there lies an earlier and more primitive Gospel from which these evangelists took the discourses, events, and other circumstances that are now common to two or to the three. This common matter comprises nearly the whole of the Gospel of Mark; but Matthew and Luke give many additional narratives which they took from other primitive writings of their time, the most important of which are: the Birth stories (Matt. i. and ii.; Luke i. and ii.), the Temptation (Matt. iv. 1—11; Luke iv. 1—13), and the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v., vi., vii.; Luke vi. 20—49). This supplementary matter I leave for the present, being concerned now only with the narratives common to the three as represented by the Gospel of Mark.

According to the orthodox view, the three Synoptical Gospels are independent accounts of the sayings and doings of Jesus. Matthew, it is said, was an apostle, and therefore a witness of what he relates; Mark is stated to have been a companion of Peter, and to have committed to writing all the narratives preached by Peter; Luke, it is declared, was a colleague of Paul, and accompanied that apostle in many of his journeys, and composed his Gospel from the substance of Paul's preaching. All this is apologetic nonsense, which is disproved by merely reading the following short sample of the teaching of Jesus:—

MARK X. 14—15.

Suffer the little children to come unto me; forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein.

LUKE XVIII. 16—17.

Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein.

Now, assuming that Jesus uttered these words, as represented in the Gospels, neither Mark nor Luke was there to hear them; nor was Paul. Peter, supposing he was historical, might have heard them spoken *once*; but no reporter was present, and it is admitted that nothing which Jesus is recorded to have said in the Gospels was ever written down at the time. Neither, again, were any primitive Gospels in existence in Paul's day. Yet, more than half a century later, Mark and Luke reproduce the passage verbatim—the only difference being the word "and," which Luke or some copyist has added. How did these two evangelists, who never saw or heard Jesus, become acquainted with the words they record? To this question there can be but one answer—that which I have stated.

Rational criticism is, however, now beginning to gain more recognition. During the last two decades a closer examination of the Gospels has proved to many Biblical critics that the three Synoptists drew their accounts from a pre-existing *written* Gospel—which is called the Common Tradition or the Common Source. Upon this subject the Rev. J. J. Scott, Canon of Manchester, says:—

Scholars are now of opinion that the likeness between the Synoptic Gospels is due to the fact that St. Matthew and St. Luke wrote with St. Mark's Gospel before them, and embodied in their Gospels such portions of St. Mark's Gospel as they deemed suitable for their purpose. St. Matthew embodies in his Gospel nearly the whole of the subject matter of St. Mark, and St. Luke includes about four-fifths of St. Mark's.

Other critics, including Dr. Carpenter, take the same view. But even Canon Scott afterwards admits that "there are indications that St. Mark made use of a written record" in chapters xi. to xvi. It cannot,

however, be shown that any portion of Mark's Gospel is original. The truth is that all three Synoptists took their accounts from the same Common Source, and living, as they all did, in post-apostolic times, they could not do otherwise. Not one of the three was an apostle or the companion of an apostle. Matthew, Mark, and Luke were merely editors who, in copying their narratives from an older Gospel, made additions or verbal alterations wherever they thought they could improve the narratives. This is why the Gospels they produced were said to be "according to" the first, second, or third editor—it being understood by the Christians of the time when they appeared that they were simply more accurate copies of the primitive Gospel then in use. (See Luke i. 1-4).

I will now take a short example of verbal agreement from all three Synoptics in order to illustrate the method employed by these editors. The words in italics indicate their additions or alterations.

Matt. viii. 2-4.—And behold, there came to him a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And he stretched forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou made clean. And straightway his leprosy was cleansed.

Mark i. 40-42.—And there cometh to him a leper, *beseeching him*, and kneeling down to him, and saying *unto him*, If thou wilt thou canst make me clean. And *being moved with compassion*, he stretched forth his hand and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou made clean. And straightway the leprosy departed from him, *and he was made clean*.

Luke v. 12-13.—And *it came to pass, while he was in one of the cities*, behold a man full of leprosy: *and when he saw Jesus*, he fell on his face, *and besought him*, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And he stretched forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou made clean. And straightway the leprosy departed from him.

Here it appears evident that Matthew's account is the nearest to that in the primitive Gospel, to which, apparently, he has in this case made no addition. The "kneeling down" of Mark and the "fell on his face" of Luke are the equivalents of the "worshipped him" of Matthew.

Now, in these three examples, there is nothing to indicate that Matthew or Luke wrote with Mark's Gospel open before him; but rather the contrary. Had such been the case, we might expect one or the other to copy Mark's phrase—"being moved with compassion"—which was evidently not in the original Gospel. I have not space in this paper for further examples of the verbal agreements; but any readers who wish to make a comparison themselves may commence with those that follow. The Revised Version should be used, if available, as it is nearer to the Greek than the Authorised Version.

Matt. ix.	9-13 ...	Mark ii.	14-17 ...	Luke v.	27-32
" ix.	14-17 ...	" ii.	18-22 ...	" v.	33-39
" x.	2-4 ...	" iii.	16-19 ...	" vi.	14-16
" xii.	1-8 ...	" ii.	23-28 ...	" vi.	1-5
" xii.	46-50 ...	" iii.	31-35 ...	" viii.	19-21

From the foregoing facts we obtain the following results: (1) That for the historicity of the threefold events recorded in the Synoptics *we have no evidence whatever*. This is obvious: the writer of the Common Tradition is unknown; so also is the source whence his narratives were derived. As to the latter, the probability is that the writer simply committed to writing a number of hearsay stories in circulation in his time—the originators being unknown. (2) That the orthodox assumptions respecting the writers of the canonical Gospels being apostolic, and their Gospels written under the influence of "the spirit

of God," are now exploded for ever. We are therefore at liberty to examine the so-called Gospel "history" by precisely the same methods as any other historical history. ABRACADABRA.

Ex-Service Men and the Civil Service.

Government and the Ex-Service Man, by T. H. Elstob. Commonweal Publishing Co., Chancery Lane. 6d.

THE name of Mr. T. H. Elstob will be familiar to readers of the *Freethinker* as that of an occasional, but always welcome, contributor to these columns. It was therefore with some interest that we took up a pamphlet which Mr. Elstob has written on a subject that is of importance to all who value the efficiency of our civil service. As the facts are set forth there does not seem room to question them, and as they stand they form a very serious indictment of a policy which, thanks to the pressure brought to bear upon politicians and the heads of departments by a strongly organized body of men who are determined to push their claims without regard to other considerations, means not merely an injustice to a number of men, but a lowering of the tone of the public service, and at a time when we should be particularly careful to see that this is not done.

We must refer interested readers to Mr. Elstob's pamphlet for the figures and the full particulars on which he bases his case, but the sum of it is that under cover of the public desire to do what could be done to help the ex-Service man, a process of substitution in the civil service has been going on by which many have been removed and others appointed with the minimum of concern as to the fitness for the position they occupy. Reinstatement of those who were taken for the war should have followed as a matter of course, and equally proper was it to strive to make up, so far as it was possible with a regard to the public good, for the four important years that the war took from the life of many young men. But the Association of ex-Service Civil Servants appear to have gone beyond this. The Association appears to be very well organized, and as its strength must obviously depend upon its apparent numbers, ex-Service has been stretched to cover all who have worn khaki, whether they have seen actual foreign service, or merely wore khaki for a few months or were pitchforked into a "cushy" job during the duration of the war. This body Mr. Elstob shows to have few scruples, it is an adept at lobbying, it threatens reprisals against any candidate for Parliament that gives it offence, and appears to have some powerful influence behind it. The Association has no politics, but brings pressure to bear upon members of all political parties, and if Mr. Elstob's statements are correct, all politicians of every party give way to it. One consequence of the activity of the Association has been the wholesale discharge of fully-qualified non-Service men, irrespective of the fact that they were all kept out of the army at the express request of their chiefs, and the substitution of less qualified men. Mr. Elstob says:—

It is one of the standing complaints of the Civil Service Permanent Staff that when the khaki-clad Home Defence men were assessed for remuneration after the war, these assessments were made on their army rank and without any reference to their pre-war status or professional qualifications for the grade they were placed in. Some possessed no professional qualifications or experience as architects, civil engineers, or surveyors before joining His Majesty's forces, and are now holding positions which require for the proper performance of the duties involved adequately trained professional men holding such qualifications. To those so situated the ex-Service agitation is a fairy godfather, as practically every non-Service (so-called) man, whatever the excellence of his qualifications and his consequent value to the State and the taxpayer, has had to vacate the Service in his favour.

Mr. Elstob discloses a very sad state of affairs, and one would like to see some official reply to it. It must

be considered a serious thing to find a body of men, boasting that they can decide the fate of elections, capable of bringing candidates to heel, and claiming as the price of their silence or assistance support of the demand that they shall be given precedence in the public services without due regard to their fitness for such appointments. If Mr. Elstob's case be warranted by the facts, it means that the State loses by the absence of superior men, and suffers from the presence of inferior ones. Generally speaking the country has been proud of the quality of its civil servants, and taking them all in all they have marked a level of efficiency that has justified that pride. That the country owes a debt to the genuine ex-Service man no one will deny. But there should be some way of cancelling that debt other than pursuing a policy which lowers the tone of public life, and threatens the efficiency of important departments of State.

Acid Drops.

Those who have followed the course of theological events will be familiar with the name of the Rev. H. E. Fosdick, who, in New York, stands as the champion of what is known as a liberal theology. But, as we have so often pointed out, it is one of the peculiarities of the situation that it is the mental honesty of those who champion the most ignorant presentation of Christianity of which we are most certain. There must always be a wonder as to whether a man is speaking with his tongue in his cheek when he is awake to the superstitions which lie at the core of Christianity, and is yet giving us a version of Christianity which makes the Jesus of the New Testament and his followers appear as though they were educated idealists of to-day who had somehow got born a couple of thousand years before their time. If that view were honestly held it would imply a lack of knowledge of the nature of historical processes quite as great as that which characterizes the most bigoted opponents of Dr. Fosdick.

What, for example, is one to make of the statement that when Christianity began it was just a group of men keeping fellowship and learning how to live? Such a statement is simply grotesque in its untruthfulness. If there is one thing clear about the New Testament it is that Jesus and his followers were saturated with the grossest of superstitions, they all believed in legions of angels and devils, in the daily or hourly occurrence of miracles, and their object was not to plan a good social or ethical life, but to secure salvation in the next world through belief in a miraculously born individual. In early Christian literature there is no stress on a good life as such. It is the gospel of saving one's soul through a renunciation of the world. It is simply grotesque to imagine that the Christian Church with its mass of superstitions was manufactured out of a few humanistic idealists striving to create a good social community. Moreover, if one is looking for that kind of thing one can find sounder ethical teaching in a couple of volumes of Greek or Latin philosophy than can be found in the whole range of early Christian literature for the first few centuries of its existence.

But there is one thing in which the advanced Christian and the primitive one is quite in agreement, and that is in falsely presenting the opinions of famous men when it pays them to make Christians of them. Dr. Fosdick points out that Abraham Lincoln did not go to Church, but he says that was not because he was not a Christian. What he wishes his hearers to assume is that he and Lincoln were on the same level, so far as religion is concerned. So he cites the following from Lincoln to prove Lincoln's Christianity:—

I have never united myself to any Church because I have found difficulty in giving my assent, without mental reservation, to the long complicated statements of Christianity which characterize their articles of belief and confessions of faith. When the Church will inscribe over its altars, as sole qualification for member-

ship the Saviour's condensed statement of the substance of both the law and the gospel, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself, that Church will I join with all my heart and with all my soul.

Now it is extremely probable that Lincoln was some sort of a deist, and any deist could talk about loving God. But a belief in God certainly does not make a man a Christian. And Dr. Fosdyke might have told his audience that the man whom he is claiming as a Christian said upon the public platform that he would die rather than declare himself to be a Christian, that his closest friends declared him to be an infidel, and that his law partner said he went further in his talk about the Bible than any man he had ever heard. Thomas Paine might have said what Lincoln said, but the preachers have not yet claimed him as a Christian. It may come one day. Meanwhile we may note that whatever good things there are in the world of advanced Christianity intellectual straightforwardness is not one of them.

The American case in which a teacher at Dayton, Tennessee, is being prosecuted for teaching his pupils evolution, in defiance of the State law which forbids an instructor to teach "any theory that denies the story of Divine creation as taught in the Bible, and to teach instead that man has descended from a lower order of animals," continues to attract widespread attention. And the trial is being staged with all the publicity of an American exhibitor bringing a film to England with the assistance of the British Army. There is a big array of counsel engaged, and the trial is to be held in an open space where thousands of the public can be present, with all the accompaniments of a huge fair, or the cheaper and commoner side of Wembley. And the joke of the whole proceedings is that the prime mover in the whole business appears to be an old farmer, quite illiterate, who has lived all his life on his farm, and whose knowledge of science is about as profound as that of a cow concerning astronomy. He is quite a good Christian, but it is of such material that good Christians are made.

The *Weekly Dispatch* quoting with approval from an American paper says that the general adoption of such a law would prevent

the teaching of all that is known concerning the early history of Egypt and Chaldea, because these highly developed civilizations existed before the date assigned by the Bible as the creation of the world. It would also rule out geology, botany, and modern astronomy.

Quite so; but if the Christian Church had had its way that is the position in which the whole of the civilized world would be at present. This poor ignorant farmer represents the Christian Church when it was at the heyday of its power. We are seeing, we have only sense enough to see it, a specimen of genuine Christianity. Nor does it make Christianity look any better that in its current liberalized form, it should be made palatable to some by a series of mental tricks and evasions that cast an unenviable reflection upon those who make use of them.

The *Dispatch* says:—

It is doubtful if the real point at issue is whether the Darwinian theory of man's development is correct or incorrect. It is far more likely that the legislative body of Tennessee is seeking to establish its right to prohibit the freedom of thought.

That may well be the case, but if so, it only proves that what we have so often said is true, namely, that the essential battle has to be decided on the Freethought issue, and that everything else is a mere skirmish, an affair of outposts that decides nothing. Perhaps that is why unbelief in religion is the one offence that stands the least chance of forgiveness. All the political privileges gained avails but little so long as those in authority are able to place fetters on freedom of criticism. And when the history of this country comes to be written properly it will be found that the greatest

reformers of all were those Freethinkers who for years stood waging a gigantic and heroic fight for liberty of thought and speech. Govern that and all else follows. Deny that and nothing gained is permanent.

The clerical dignity who thinly veils himself under the pen name of "Artifex" in the *Manchester Guardian*, says it is extraordinarily difficult to define religion. We do not agree. If we pursue the method adopted in other directions there is no difficulty whatever. The only way I know in which to get to the meaning of a thing is to bring together all the instances under review, eliminate all in which they disagree, and retain whatever they have in common. And if we do this in the case of religions, high and low, ancient and modern, good and bad, we find the one thing, and the only thing in which all religions agree is the belief in supernatural beings. The objection, of course, to this being done in the case of religion is that it would expose its real nature, and would condemn it in the mind of all educated civilized humans. That is why so many fanciful definitions of religion are sought and adopted. They instance the chronic dishonesty about religion in a modern environment.

"Artifex" adopts as his definition of religion, "Man's attitude towards the whole of reality," which is just so much verbal moonshine. One has only to picture the religion of the African or the primitive Redskin as to his attitude towards Reality, to see the absurdity of it. The man who thinks of primitive mankind as busying itself with philosophical questions about Reality, is writing either in ignorance or with his tongue in his cheek. But the crowning absurdity of this definition of "Artifex" is that, as he says, it will bring in the Atheist, the Agnostic, the Pessimist. Now imagine a definition of religion that will include a reasoned rejection of God, the soul, and immortality? Absurdity could hardly go farther than that. And what on earth is the good of a definition which leaves nothing outside? The very essence of a definition is that it shall exclude, it must mark off a territory to which certain things do not belong. "Artifex's" definition is neither sensible nor useful. It implies nothing but that modern religionists are afraid of being found out.

Miss Cicely Hamilton, interviewed by a representative of the *Teachers' World*, says that in her opinion original sin is a reality. It is dangerous to believe that human nature is good. We sincerely trust that not many teachers will be guided by Miss Hamilton's opinion. If they are, we are very sorry for the children who are committed to their care. Children, far more than adults, are inclined to live up to our opinion of them, and if one starts off with the conviction that all children are criminals, they are likely to set a good number on the path that leads to prison. Miss Hamilton should leave that kind of teaching to the clergy. Ingersoll once said that the doctrine of original sin was the only Christian doctrine that the clergy had tried to prove true—in person.

The vicar of Giggleswick, Yorks, has partly gone on strike over payment for his services as organist. His slogan is, "No cheque, no organ." It would be one of the few joys of the twentieth century if all of his reverend brethren went on strike—just to see what would happen. Incidentally, this insubordination goes to prove that all is not well in the Lord's vineyard.

The question of divorce, which will exist as long as there are two sexes, is a difficult one. When, however, theological fiction is added to the problem, it is something like blowing out the candle in the dark in order to see better. Words of wisdom on the subject come from the Rev. Hugh Chapman, chaplain of the Savoy Chapel, who wrote a letter to a meeting of the Divorce Law Reform Union. What solace it can give to a man who complains of his wife's dexterity with the frying-pan we do not know, and cannot tell, but if the reverend

gentleman leaves out his own professional interest the following extract approaches common sense:—

How a God of Love can allow His children to live in hatred and slavery sooner than grant them liberty and a second chance passes my comprehension. Were I a statesman I should boldly go for "incompatibility," which is the basic cause of these private hells.

The only useful part that the parson can play, as far as we can see, would be that of handing back the marriage fee to the divorced parties, but in this business, the fraternity would be about as eager as they are to relinquish tithes.

It is a gorgeous treat to note the approach of the Primitive Methodist Conference to the question of the publicity given to certain aspects of society life which are not nice to say the least of them. The conference rigorously condemns the press, etc. No papers are named. And, if the papers were wise, instead of only being cunning, they would retort rigorously on all religious denominations, the Primitive Methodists included, for allowing the morals of society to get in such a state of rags. England is a Christian country, as the playing of the National Anthem before public performances will testify, and we decline to allow the Primitive Methodists to shirk their responsibilities in this fashion.

After the melodrama of "The Girl's Cross Roads," we now have the Bishop of Birmingham standing at them. He is "gravely apprehensive," which is a change from the old chestnut of being "deeply touched." Well, my Lord! if that is the correct title, your business is in a bad way; your junketting days are over. You might do worse, bearing in mind your limitations, your congregations, and your canonicals. You might do worse, we repeat, than scrap your books on theology, and commence with Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason* and the *Rights of Man*—that will bring you up to being only one hundred years behind the times. The Cross Roads is another term for empty churches; take up Paine, do it now, and earn a Freethinker's blessing. His blessing is as valuable as that of any other person; he is quite human and wears braces for the same reason as the Kaiser and yourself.

The controversy about the Christian's taboo day—Sunday—is going on merrily all over the country, and that is to the good. The more it is discussed the more ridiculous the claims of the Christians are bound to appear to intelligent people. We note that Canon Sinker—the name is reminiscent of some jolly old pirate of our boyhood's days—keeps his attention firmly fixed on the purely business side. For instance, he says that it is not enough to be at home on Sunday and to refrain from games and the like. You must go to Church or you are not a good Christian. In fact you may even play games, provided you go to Church. Which being interpreted means, "I don't care what the devil you do on Sunday so long as you don't neglect patronizing my place of business." Only it would never do for a parson to talk without a moral snivel to his sermon.

A service was held in York Minster in memory of the people killed in the charabanc disaster at Grassington. The choir sang, "I heard a voice from Heaven," but it would have been rather more to the point if a hand from heaven had averted the accident. The Archbishop of York preached a sermon, and said that only infinite wisdom could answer the question of why such things occurred, we could not understand it, but we turned to God for succour. Yes, but the succour does not come, and we should like the Archbishop to tell us what on earth is the good of turning to God or anyone else for help if the help does not come? If God really did something we should have that cited by the clergy as proof of the value of their teaching. As he does nothing we are invited to go on trusting him—because he does nothing. For downright stupidity commend us to the pulpit. And the surprising thing is that if one Christian were to advise another to work along the same lines in his business he would be treated as an incurable fool.

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.

A. W. COLEMAN.—Thanks for cuttings. Some good should result from the correspondence, if pressure is not brought upon the editor to stop it.

A LETTER for C. E. Smith lies at this office. Will he oblige by sending his present address?

A. B. MOSS.—Glad to know you are better. We note your surprise at the article concerning yourself. We do not know whether "Mimmermus" intends continuing with sketches of others, but we feel sure they would be appreciated by most of our readers.

C. D. RADFORD.—Pleased to learn the *Freethinker* interests so many. We have quite a number of readers in India, both British and native. We do place a girdle round the earth, if only a slender one.

IGNORAMUS.—It is very hard to do what you ask in a word or two, but we will try. By "Atheist" we mean one who is without belief in God. Agnostic, in religion, means anything or nothing, generally only a disguise for Atheism. But it has no relevancy at all in religion. In philosophy it may be taken as ignorance concerning the nature of "substance." Secularist is one who derives all values from considerations drawn from this life alone. Rationalist means one who believes in reason, and so may apply to anyone from an Atheist to a Roman Catholic. A Materialist is one who applies the principles of Determinism to the whole of nature, and excludes all consideration of the supernatural. You are really asking for a volume, but this is the best we can do in a few lines.

C. C. D.—Glad to know you found our notes on Spiritualism so helpful. We note the contents of your letter.

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

Mr. H. O'Kane writes us from Port Glasgow that he has been interesting himself in the matter of getting new readers for his journal, and has managed to secure six recruits. He says that "there are potential readers of the *Freethinker* in every city, town, and every village in Great Britain and Ireland, it but needs the paper to be brought to their notice and increased circulation is assured." We quite believe this to be the case, and it is a fact we are continually impressing on our readers. We have no other means of getting new readers, which must be our excuse for being so persistent. We are also glad to report the receipt of several more letters from readers who have adopted the suggestion made

by Mr. James Taylor in the matter of fining oneself to the extent of one extra copy per week until a new reader has been secured. We thank them all.

Meanwhile we may point out to those who care to distribute specimen copies that we will send on small parcels to anyone who will send his, or her, name and address.

"The best reasoned, and the most convincing" is the way the *Sydney Bulletin* describes Miss Ettie Rout's *Sexual Health and Birth Control*, and it well deserves the compliment. But when the *Bulletin* comes to discuss the matter it mixes up two quite distinct aspects of the subject, one of which is not of necessity connected with the other. Birth control may be advisable from economic or physiological reasons of a quite personal character. And so far as that is concerned there is no valid reason that we can see against it. But birth control is also discussable on purely eugenic grounds, and the two points of view should always be kept distinct. On the latter ground we are inclined to agree with the *Bulletin* that our knowledge is far from that state of perfection which would enable us to say just what types should be perpetuated, and which should be scientifically suppressed. The illustration of animal breeding is in this instance rather misleading. Animals are bred for particular qualities, and so long as a special quality is secured, nothing else matters very much. But in the case of humans, the liability to great variation is a first-class desideratum, and we do not know whether in suppressing one quality which is undesirable, we may not be suppressing another for which we should be willing to pay the price of even the undesirable one. Birth control from that point of view may be questionable, as the *Bulletin* suggests, but it is well not to mix up the two points of view.

A little cold water is poured on the theological question by a reviewer of *Thomas Cartwright and Elizabethan Puritanism*, by the Rev. A. F. Scott Pearson. Writing of the day of tracts, the reviewer states that it was so hard for a controversialist to make out his own meaning that he could not make out the meaning of anyone else. This criticism of sixteenth century theology is not out of date; as a matter of fact Bernard Shaw could put the case for Christianity better than an official exponent. Thomas Cartwright appeared to be a genial old soul; his attitude towards blasphemy bubbled over with the milk of human kindness, and showed the wonderful uplifting power of religion during his day. Of backsliders, and for the offence of moving others to do the same, he writes: "I deny that upon repentance, thereought to follow any pardon of death, which the Judicial law doth require." This was in the good old days to which Mr. G. K. Chesterton wants "to get back." The book is priced at 25s., but with this sample from bulk from the Chamber of Horrors of Theology, six dozen for this figure would appear to be rather dear.

One result of Mr. Hamilton Fyfe's disastrous excursion in the bog of theology has been to make him careful. In parenthesis he states that the views which he expresses in his Saturday article are purely personal. As the responsibility is now fixed we suggest that the journalist—as a mental exercise—takes up the study of the affinity between the press and the pulpit.

The thoughts that come often unsought, and, as it were, drop into the mind, are commonly the most valuable of any we have, and therefore should be secured because they seldom return again.—*John Locke*.

The essential character of true liberty is, that under its shelter many different types of life and character, and opinion and belief can develop unmolested and unobstructed.—*W. E. H. Lecky*.

The Moral Doctrines of St. Paul.

THE remarkable ingenuity present in the theological system of Paul is altogether wanting in his moral system. There he is refined and original; here he is primitive and platitudinous. He has a blind reverence for authority; a savage disesteem of women; and a total ignorance of ethical motives. He gives now and then some trite maxims of conduct, such as the wisdom of most peoples beyond infancy has invariably furnished; but, when principles are in question, he either becomes puerile, or else falls into errors likely to prejudice the interests of humanity. Self-seeking is the only motive he is able to conceive. Sensuality is to be avoided, not because of its social inconvenience, but because if the individual "lives after the flesh" he is certain to "die" without hope of resurrection. Christians and athletes, according to Paul, both are "temperate in all things," and the sole difference between them is the nature of the crown for which they strive, the athletes aiming at a conceivable, and the Christians at an inconceivable decoration.¹ Paul would have been nonplussed by the first man who had replied that he felt no desire for an endless life, and that he preferred the actual joys of a known earth to the potential pleasures of an unknown heaven. Suppose Paul had attempted to persuade the man that the delights of heaven were greater than the delights of earth, and that therefore it was worth while to sacrifice the latter to obtain the former. Then, the man might have answered that, whilst earthly delights were adapted to his constitution, heavenly ones did not suit it; and that the creatures grubbing the farmyard were just as happy as the eagle soaring in the sun. If upon this rejoinder, Paul had called him a person of low tastes, he might possibly have vexed him, but he would not have brought him round to his own views. Elsewhere Paul disguises his egoistic principles beneath the specious robe of gratitude, saying:—

I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service (Rom. xii. 1).

But this motive presupposes acceptance of his theological system, which is thus made the basis of ethics; and besides, although ingratitude for disinterested favours is a base fault, yet, after all, gratitude is referable to the love of self, and therefore lacks the impersonal character which is the distinguishing mark of an ethical principle. It is his inability to perceive these obvious truths, that proves the inferiority of Paul's moral insight, thus placing him in a category infinitely below that of Epictetus, Spinoza, and Emerson. The precepts of Paul are such as might be expected from his principles. Here are the most important of his injunctions:—

Unconditional obedience is to be given to rulers, because they are ordained by God.² Wives must obey their husbands in all things, because the husband is the head of the wife.³ For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man: for neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.⁴ If they would learn anything let them ask their own husbands at home.⁵ Let the wife see that she fear her husband.⁶ Husbands are to love their wives as they love their own bodies; and to cherish them accordingly. The reason is because we are the Church which is Christ's body, and which he loved so much that he gave himself

to save and sanctify it.⁷ The father of a virgin does well to give her in marriage, but better still to keep her out of it.⁸ Celibates and widows, if incapable of continency should change their state, "for it is better to marry than to burn."⁹ Husbands and wives should not separate; but and if the wife leaves her husband she must not remarry. In cases where either of the pair is an unbeliever, the other ought not to withdraw from the marriage, because the believing partner sanctifies the unbelieving one, and also their children; nevertheless, if the unbeliever, whether man or woman, thinks fit to depart, the other ought not to hinder it.¹⁰ Parents are not to anger their children, lest they discourage them; and children are to obey their parents in the Lord "in all things" because this is his good pleasure.¹¹ Masters are to treat their slaves with justice and equity, and to forbear threatening them, knowing that there is a common master in heaven who has no respect of persons. Slaves are to obey their masters "in all things" perfectly "with fear and trembling," knowing that everyone, bond or free, shall receive of the Lord according to his deeds.¹² Here are some shrewd and wise directions confused with much that is crude and superficial. Accepting current institutions and conventional arrangements as valid, Paul sought to regulate them with humane precepts, thus playing the part of a benevolent opportunist. But he did not perceive or failed to acknowledge the principles involved. Ignoring the true end of government, he omits to define the limits of authority, and the rights of subjects. Regarding marriage solely as a concession to carnal needs, he neglected its moral aspects. Viewing woman as the creature of man, he put her in a state of unjust inferiority to her husband. He forgot that parents are often unqualified to be the deities of their children. Finally, he missed the prominent truth that slavery cannot be justified under any circumstances. This oversight is especially remarkable because he held men to be the children of God; and therefore he ought to have felt the singular impropriety of brethren enslaving brethren. Ages before the time of Paul, Zeno, the founder of the Stoic sect, enunciated the great principle that "all men are by nature equal, and that virtue alone establishes a difference between them."¹³

Plato, Aristotle, Seneca, Plutarch, and Epictetus all insist upon the duty of treating slaves kindly. Epicurus was particularly distinguished by his behaviour in this respect. Under Nero and Domitian measures were taken to protect slaves from cruelty; and under Hadrian and the Antonines, these reforms were far advanced. Hence with all his boasted assistance from divine revelation, Paul did not surpass the sages of antiquity on that important matter, and indeed he remained behind some of them in regard to it. As a casuist, Paul is lax. Take an example. If a church elder, when present at a banquet, where some of the guests were abstainers from alcoholic beverages, should refuse wine to give these the impression of his belonging to their party, and then a few hours later should accept wine at a feast where no such abstainers were present, he would be justly accused of acting a lie. Paul, however, taught his followers to take a course of that kind. The Pagans used to offer food to idols and then to eat thereof at home. Many Christians regarded the partaking of such food as an act of idolatry. Paul says that he did not share this view; and that in his opinion Christians are free to eat the things in question;

¹ 1 Cor. ix. 25.

² Rom. xiii. 1-7.

³ Eph. v. 22-24; Col. iii. 18.

⁴ 1 Cor. xi. 8-9.

⁵ Ib. xiv. 35.

⁶ Eph. v. 33.

⁷ Ib. v. 25-33.

⁸ 1 Cor. vii. 38.

⁹ Ib. vii. 8-9.

¹⁰ Ib. vii. 10-15.

¹¹ Eph. vi. 1-4; Col. iii. 20-21.

¹² Eph. vi. 5-9; Col. iii. 22-4-1.

¹³ Diog. Laert. Zeno.

but he adds that if a person who admits this liberty, happens to be in company with one who denies it, then the former ought to indulge the prejudice of the latter by foregoing the exercise of his right upon this occasion.¹⁴ A man of Paul's intelligence and experience, however, would know quite well that the course which he thus indicated would not serve its purpose unless the regular abstainer believed that the casual abstainer were as constant as he himself was. Otherwise, he would look upon him either as an hypocrite or as a coward, and whichever of these views he took, he would despise him. This licentious teaching might appear to render it probable that the author of Acts spoke the truth when he said that Paul circumcised Timothy and performed Nazarite ceremonies, his object in both cases being to make the Jews believe that he upheld the authority of the law. But the immense importance which Paul attached to his doctrine of justification by faith, makes it impossible to think that he would compromise this tenet by doing things which flatly contradict it. Let us be charitable to Paul and suppose that he suffered from the faults of his virtues. The thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians is one of the most eloquent pieces of literature, and it bears every mark of sincerity. Therein Paul teaches that love is the highest principle of human nature, and he interprets this principle to mean that we should overlook the frailties of our fellow-men, and act towards them with the utmost indulgence, forgiving them when they injure us, and trying to please them, and to serve their interests whenever we can, even at our own disadvantage. The truth of this doctrine is certainly open to question; but when we consider the malevolence of human nature we cannot but admire the affability of the moralist whose goodness of heart led him into such benevolent exaggerations. One man, the Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, who in all probability had never read a line of Paul, and who disapproved the doctrines of Christianity, put the theory of indiscriminating charity into the fullest practice both in public and in private life, but the result was of a nature to discourage imitators. The old Roman principle of giving to everyone his due, of maintaining rights, and of punishing aggressors, seems the best course for all parties.

C. CLAYTON DOVE.

Books and Life.

A COMEDY on the stage, besides showing us the littleness of ourselves is also an illustrated story. The insatiable thirst of our childhood follows us when we have grown up and we go to the theatre instead, as of old, turning to our parents and asking them to "tell us a story." When we were listening to the story as told by Sir Arthur Pinero in "Trelawny of the Wells," there came unconsciously to our mind that other story-teller, Mr. Bernard Shaw, whose methods are different. Sir Arthur, in his comedy, gently prods respectability of 1860 and, as far as a modern audience is concerned, effectively flogs a dead horse. Whether the audience laughed at a woman's concern over a man showing his ankles to a company of actors or whether the laugh was at the *idea* of it being considered funny, we do not know. These are jokes to be wrapped in antimacassars and put away with the glass case of stuffed birds. As in "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray," the author in this indulges in an anaemic joke—Aunt Trafalgar's advice to Rose Trelawny not to *declaim* her prayers is, we presume, the joke reverential. It finds its place in the circle of evolution at the time when Bradlaugh was saying what Lord Dawson is now taking up. The distance of the

common people from the deity at that time was the distance between the parson and the hind, and jokes such as those above, it will be noted, possess this distinction. Possibly the observance of these proprieties goes with the knighthood; these are esoteric matters on which we have no first-hand knowledge, but, the chances of Shaw ever becoming Sir Bernard are very remote, if propriety of that kind is to be maintained.

Stone masons and workers in marble use what is called a fiddle-drill, and this tool is familiar to most of us. When the point of it on the stone has made a start, the remaining part follows the point easily. The diluted rationalism of Sir Arthur Pinero in most of his comedies follows the point—and the point, in our opinion, is that penetrating material called Freethought. And the point is always conspicuous in Shaw whether it is in the scouring preface to "Androcles and the Lion," or the play itself; Shaw has never written disparagingly of Freethought, and he has not apologetically coughed before slicing up the orthodox hypocrisy that is associated with professional expounders of Christianity; he has never been mesmerized by the fusty and prudish idea of ankles—it is just possible that he would pass his knighthood on to his milkman. One who can give us the inexpressible comic idea of the disposal of thrones in Cæsar and Cleopatra is as sure of his valuation of these honours as Doré was in his sketch of a similar subject. And it was these ideas that were making little songs of delight as the ponderous spirit of Sir Arthur Pinero waded through four acts of a comedy that is no credit to actors and actresses—practically giving them the status of vagabonds. Lecky tells us in his chapter on *The Industrial History of Rationalism* that the rule of the Church depriving actors of the sacrament of marriage deliberately consigned them to concubinage. With its unerring faculty for always being on the wrong side of the fence, the persecution of the stage by the Church may be diagnosed as professional jealousy; was it not Sarah Bernhardt who told the late Joseph Parker, of the City Temple, that two in the same profession should have no quarrels? And when the stage takes the place of the Church, as it does not need a prophet to foretell, this chapter of its history will not be forgotten. Shaw, the most free of Freethinkers, equally at home with a play like "St. Joan," or the "Showing up of Blanco Posnet," could make a heroine of a Christian saint, as he could also make a hero of the late George William Foote, and this, we think, is more than a sneeze of the reason and outside the artistic periphery of Sir Arthur Pinero, who jokes with difficulty.

In his short but interesting article, Mr. H. B. Dodds has, in this paper, written to the point in respect of the attitude of that eminent naturalist, the late W. H. Hudson. Wilde wrote many years ago: "As long as war is regarded as wicked, it will always have its fascination. When it is looked upon as vulgar, it will cease to be popular," and although many of us did not have to experience hunger, and fear, and look on death in its most brutal form, to appreciate the truth of this, there is a type of mind in a physical body that must be made to feel before it will think. We would not care to be the author of the extracts given by Mr. Dodds, yet we had our suspicions about the *attitude* of Hudson, on reading the following in *The Bookmark*, a catalogue of Messrs. Dent & Co. In a letter to Mr. Richard Garnett he wrote:—

Of course these middle chapters would interest you more in the book, but the real interest of the book is the feeling for nature and wild life—and that appeals only to those who have it in them, in whom it is a passion and more to them than interest in human character and affairs. If the book (*Far Away and Long Ago*) is worth anything it is that in it and nothing else—at all events, it is certainly not in the human portraits.

We are tempted to use italics, but refrain, but there it is. This passion is pathetic, and betrays a one-eyed view of the world. The clothes we wear, the food we

¹⁴ 1 Cor. x. 27-29; Ib. viii. 10-11; Rom. xiv. 4.

eat, the houses we live in, are all produced by human activity. We can see unity in diversity, and if we should be tempted to regard wild life and nature before our own species, the baker, the milkman, and the postman would be justified in making us an outcast. Animal life can make nothing—except a mess, and it is our opinion that Richard Jefferies is still unchallenged in this particular field of writing. The relation between the human race and animals and nature is studiously maintained throughout his works, and we agree with this contributor that the publishers have decided to make a great man of Hudson. After trying to read *The Crystal Age*, if any kindly disposed person wishes to send us a set of the author's books, we should be glad, if, instead, they would lend us a copy of *Phra the Phoenician*, by Edwin Lister Arnold, or give us the name of the publishers.

William Heinemann, Ltd., have issued a cheap edition of a book entitled *Word of the Earth*, by Anthony Richardson. The price is three shillings and sixpence. It has appeared serially in the *New Age*—one of the few papers that will not pander to ignorance and prejudice, nor be content with things as they are. There may be a few readers of the *Freethinker* who remember the editorship of the *New Age* by Mr. A. R. Orage; this book is a novel such as he would have written. The main idea of it is a long conversation carried on at an inn, "The Lady Gwendoline." The characters participating are, a poet, a scientist, a shepherd, and an idiot, with a reconciliation at the end of all their differences—they have met frequently, disputed, argued, and in the process, Mr. Richardson has thrown up, what to us, is the view of a real Freethinker or a man of the world. As we cannot quote the whole book we will quote nothing, but our readers will not regret acquiring it with its keynote of "The word of the earth in the ears of the world, was it God? was it man?" from *The Hymn of Man*.

Some may incline to the opinion that a perfect man is a nuisance, but the number who have thought about the matter must be infinitesimally small. An obsession may over develop us and neglect of some part make us deficient, and, taking a retrospective view of one's own development, it is a nice study in the survey of outside influences on inside tendencies. A volume of Byron fascinated us at the age of thirteen, and it was our only companion for a long time. A friend of ours at a later date gave us a copy of the *Freethinker*, and the late editor through this roused our enthusiasm for Shakespeare and Swinburne, and Ingersoll. Our emotional side, like a spoiled child, was crying out for its particular lollipop. Later on, with the acquisition of more books, this child got a spanking and had to receive medicine in the form of Aristotle, Spinoza, Locke, and Bacon, and the unemotional works of the present editor. On our bookshelf, Thomas à Kempis rubs shoulders with *Crimes of Christianity*; Rabelais is on the same level as *The Golden Bough*; and *The Pilgrim's Progress* beds down with Hargrave Jennings's fanciful record of Rosicrucianism. Shaw's plays lean against Hooker, and the judicious reader will see by the intrusion of this personal note our reason for thinking that we are entitled to cry Eureka! over *Word of the Earth*. There is much for and against in the market place, writes our obsessed Nietzsche; yea, friend, give us the faculty for taking all truths from all angles, and the ability to use it being as wise as the serpent and mild as the dove, or in other words find the centre of gravity between intellect and emotion or the head and the heart.

WILLIAM REPTON.

I hear through the ages the marching footsteps of the great army of progress. I salute the nameless, indomitable rank and file, and I greet with reverence the named and mighty leaders who planned and dared, and made the world brighter by their genius and grander by their heroism.—George W. Foote.

Correspondence.

DARWINISM IN THE STATES.
TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The man who put the anti-evolution law on the Tennessee statute books comes from Macon, County Tenn. He is about one hundred miles from Dayton, where Professor Scopes has been indicted for teaching evolution. He states he is too poor to make the journey to Dayton, Tenn. Macon, County Tenn., is the most backward county in Tennessee. It has vast oil, vast mineral resources, but the mining and oil companies will have nothing to do with it, on account of the people there, and so these men pass anti-evolution laws to keep them in poverty, while they ought to get drilling to prove up oil indications, or miners to prove their untouched wealth. These men live in poverty, in degradation and in dread of a Bryan-like God. They know little of the outside world, or care little, yet they are strong enough to pass laws that ruin the outside world. What a farce this civilization is? What a funny thing, that a man instead of getting others to develop around him, sits and passes laws contrary to science, contrary to reason, and contrary to the very Bible he pretends to interpret, for his God says, "Old things are passed away and everything has become new." Yet he believes Bryan rather than his god, and finds out that Bryan does nothing for him, but the geologists, biologists, and other scientists are ready to lift him out of his poverty, if he will take hold of his vast resources and develop them as an honest man should.

B. YORKSTONE HOGG.

Fort Pierce, U.S.A.

NEITZSCHE AND CHRISTIANITY.

SIR,—In your "Acid Drops" of June 28, you ask, "What has happened to Dr. Oscar Levy?" I think I may be able to shed a little light upon the subject.

Dr. Levy, as a disciple of Nietzsche must have been floating round looking for some kind of super-man. At any rate he was graciously permitted an audience with Mussolini, and he sent an article to the *New Age* for October 23, 1924, in which he tells us with bated breath of his wonderful experience. Accepting that very "slave mentality" which Nietzsche ridicules, he grovels on his belly, fawns, and licks the hand of the superman, Mussolini, in the course of his gracious remarks, admits that it was the study of Nietzsche which converted him from Socialism, and opened his eyes to the cant of Statesmen such as "The Consent of the Governed," and about the inner value of such things as "Parliament" and "Universal Suffrage." He says he was deeply impressed by Nietzsche's wonderful precept, "Live Dangerously," and thought he had lived up to it. Here follows a description of the Great Man's smile. "Coming out of his serious, hard-featured face, it was a very extraordinary smile. Thus the sun comes out behind heavy clouds, and by this contrast doubly cheers the observer."

"I wish, your Excellency," says Dr. Levy, "people could hear and know what you say. Unfortunately there is no witness to our conversation....."

Hail Facismo! Hail Mussolini! Hurrah for the Bludgeon and the Castor Oil, symbols of the new *Spiritual* movement based on Nietzschean philosophy! That is what it all amounts to.

Now it would appear that what has happened to Dr. Levy is this. He feels an urge to worship. He feels that Mussolini expresses Nietzschean thought in action. He worships Mussolini. Now Mussolini upholds the Pope, the Roman Catholic Church, and Christianity. He is, therefore, in the awkward position of having to show that the Great Man is doing the right thing; that Nietzsche was really a Christian whatever we all may have thought—Mussolini has interpreted him right—we have interpreted him wrong.

How the desire to worship makes for dishonesty of thought Freethinkers all know. The Cult of the Super-man appears to have obsessed Dr. Levy. Let us hope that the awakening is not too painful, and that he will have enough mental honesty left to recognize the feet of clay in his idol when the obsession begins to wear off.

ROGER ANDERTON.

CHRIST AND MIRACLES.

SIR,—Mr. Knapp-Fisher is determined to uphold a position which the genuine Freethinker has outgrown. The Platonic and Kantian schools of thought supply to completer knowledge only historic interest. Yet we may learn from Plato of the fundamental importance of understanding the significance of terms and the mechanistic causality of Kant, in development continually rebuts the latter speculations of the same philosopher. We are invited to come to grips with the practical issues of Christ's teaching. But the superstitious Christianity and ecclesiastical regalia are practical issues, and in disentangling these from their founder let us note that the adherents to them also claim "a basis beyond the observed facts which is not antagonistic to those facts." I do not suggest a process of thought to be indicative of insanity, though this is often problematical. I do suggest that fallacy and hypothesis may include a term or terms which need further analysis.

One might affirm a degree of success in the attaining of disentanglement from the schools in order to view the man Jesus. In understanding ideas there is a certain advantage in commencing at the lowest races and proceeding upward. This in conjunction with other observed facts enables generalization of a higher order. The advantage is accuracy and the hundred rudimentary organs of man are restated in his ideas.

How could it be otherwise?

Bernard Shaw does say: "The open mind never acts." He also continues "when we can reason and investigate no more we must close our minds.....and act....." There is an inference of necessity to act, and if we may postulate the opposite, the closed mind inhibiting reason and investigation, the quality of action of the two types leaves no room for discussion.

What type of mind is likely to accept doctrines which can only be taught by forbidding questions and enquiry into their truth?

In *Androcles and the Lion*, the "good beginning" commended to the Freethinker, Mr. Shaw also says, "And there I must leave the matter to such choice as your nature allows you."

That at any rate is more refreshing than Mr. Knapp-Fisher's dogmatism that Christ's life and activities "constitute a proof that man can advance on the lines laid down and on no other." What vile acts have been committed under cover of this assertion and what a confidence now brushes aside with impunity the generations of the Christian era only to cast a vote on the side of Jesus. Thus is Freethought justified, eventually to merge into normal thought. In the meantime its misrepresentation is only increased by self-styled Freethinkers with Sectarian principles. J. G. BURDON.

"IS MAN A MACHINE?"

SIR,—A correspondent informs me that a symposium was recently held at an adult school to discuss the above question. In course of the debate, one of the speakers said that "both man and machine generate energy"; to which another promptly replied, "No, man generates energy, but a machine does not."

Now, to contradict a person in public who simply states an established fact—indeed, a scientific truism—and pronounces, with the emphatic assurance of an oracle, its opposite as the truth (though it be an unmitigated falsity), is not a case of the usual conceit born of mere ignorance; it is a bastard offspring of ignorance and insolence.

The very fact that the amount of power generated or developed by an engine or machine is estimated in terms of "horse-power" should be sufficient proof of their identity to anyone even devoid of any specific knowledge of physical science, unless he be hind-bound by prejudice or inflated by infinite conceit, or, indeed, by both! if we can imagine two incompatibles meeting in the same person. The terms "generate" and "develop" merely signify that a certain amount of potential energy is rendered available for mechanical work by the mechanism. The core of their meaning is "availability for use"; and in this respect there is not one iota of difference between the living and the lifeless variety. The food the animal eats is a store of latent

or unavailable energy; and so is the coal, the oil, or the petrol—indeed, at bottom, they are one and the same. What the body or steam-engine, or motor does, is to liberate it from its static form and make it kinetic. There is no difference whatsoever in the two cycles save that the chauffeur who has to provide a continuous supply of fuel is, in the animal body, incorporated with the machine.

Notwithstanding these obvious facts, I should not be at all surprised to be told that the arrant falsity won the votes of the gathering—such is the hypnotic effect of oracular impudence. KERIDON.

"PATRIOTISM AND POETRY."

SIR,—Although as a rule I think it well to ignore anonymous letters, that of "John's Grandpa" calls for brief comment, because the writer seems to have misunderstood my remarks. He writes, "Eliana Twynam seems to imagine that Patriotism has no real basis, that it is a sham just because it is, and has been, abused." No, sir, it is only too evident a reality, and I regard its existence as an evil—a terrible disease—that has destroyed countless thousands because its very victims fight for it.

When the world war was started by the misrulers of the nations of Europe, the youth of Germany and England alike were encouraged from the pulpits, platforms, and by the Patriotic Press to go forth to fight—to slay or be slain—for their Kaiser and Fatherland and their King and Country respectively, and the peoples of each nation crowded the churches devoutly praying their particular national and most Christian god to grant them victory by confounding and crushing their "enemies." Who were their enemies? The workers of other lands with whom the workers of this land had no quarrel, or the Diplomats and Imperialist war-mongers who coaxed some conscripted and almost all the rest to fight in their misrulers' interests? The Nationalist is proud of having been born in his own particular country, even though he may own not enough of the soil to be buried in, nor worldly wealth enough to purchase a grave in it! The Internationalist claims the whole wide world for his country, and, loving the whole, certainly can have no hatred for any part. Of course, patriots do "not hate the rest of the world," they only want to add it all to the Empire! The late Dr. Russel Wallace summed up the situation as long ago as 1904, when he wrote:—

It is a notorious and undeniable fact that we—that is our governments—are, with few exceptions, hated and feared by almost all other Governments, especially those of the Great Powers. Is there no cause for this? Surely we know there is ample cause. We have either annexed or conquered a larger portion of the world than any other Power. We have long claimed the sovereignty of the sea. We hold islands and forts and small territories offensively near the territories of other Powers. We still continue grabbing all we can. We claim to be more moral than other nations, and to conquer and govern and tax and plunder weaker peoples for their good! While robbing them we actually claim to be benefactors! And then we wonder, or profess to wonder, why other Governments hate us! Is it surprising that they seek every means to annoy us, that they struggle to get navies to compete with us, and look forward to a time when some two or three of them may combine together and thoroughly humble and cripple us?

When a little girl I felt exceedingly proud that my people claimed direct descent from Wina, the Saxon Bishop-King of Wessex, and that our family had dwelt (unbrokenly) in the county of his capitol through the chain of centuries. Now I have grown to be prouder still of my claim to be a free citizen of the world and to share that freedom with the grand old poets and philosophers—intellectual giants of antiquity who embraced Freethought, and anticipated Thomas Paine in their firm grasp of fundamental principles. Meleager, one of the world's sweetest singers (and compiler of the "Anthology") whose monument is in his works, wrote of himself:—

A Syrian? Yes. What if I be!
You need not wondering stand.
Children of Chaos all are we,
The World our Fatherland.

One can understand "devout" Jews, Christians, Mahommedans, Hindus, and Britons of the "Rule Britannia, Land-of-hope-and-glory" type, thinking themselves god-favoured "chosen peoples," but Freethinkers, surely, should not follow the crowd in whom "the ape and tiger" are as yet far from dead. Surely we, of whatever country, colour, class, or political creed, should be Cosmopolitans.

ELIANA TWYNAM.

SIR,—I do not gather from the letter of "A. G. B.," in the issue of June 28, whether he admits or denies patriotism to be a fact of human nature. He says, for instance, that such an assertion is a wild statement unsupported by any evidence; and yet he says that patriotism suffered a well-deserved slump at the end of the war. How anything which does not exist can suffer a great slump I will leave it to him to explain. And then again he seems to recognize its truth when he says that "patriotism is a fact of human nature," the same as "lying and theft." That patriotism is a fact of human nature I thought would admit of no doubt, the evidences are so universally apparent. But he seems to have no doubt that "lying and theft" are common qualities.

Might I remind "A. G. B." that there have been whole communities, even continents, where the vices of lying and theft were practically unknown. The native peoples of South America laughed at their Spanish conquerors for using lock, bolts, and bars to protect their property; the very idea of putting anything under lock and key had never even occurred to these people. The same was true of the numerous tribes of North America, as well as of the Esquimaux. It may well be that among the many millions of the earth's inhabitants there are some individuals whose souls do not rise to the height of patriotism, but that all men are steeped in the moral degradation of lying and theft seems to me a most appalling view of human nature. This would kill both the patriotism and the poetry of life at one blow.

JOSEPH BRYCE.

[As the contributions to the discussion do not appear to be advancing, we must now consider this correspondence closed.—ED.]

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON JUNE 25.

The President, Mr. C. Cohen, in the chair. Also present, Messrs. Clifton, Quinton, Rosetti, and Samuels, Mrs. Quinton, Miss Kough, and the Secretary.

Apologies for unavoidable absence were received from Messrs. Gorniot, Moss, and Neate.

Minutes of the last Executive meeting were taken as read. The monthly financial statement was submitted and adopted, and the pass book produced.

New members were received for North London, South London, and the Parent Society.

The new Sub-Committees were then elected.

Benevolent Fund Committee.—Mrs. Quinton and Miss Kough, Messrs. Rosetti and Samuels.

Propagandist Committee.—Messrs. Moss, Quinton, Samuels, and Rosetti.

Various items of correspondence were dealt with, and matters remitted from the Conference were read over and adjourned until the next meeting.

On the motion of Mr. Rosetti, a vote of thanks was carried unanimously to Miss Kough for her voluntary services at the recent Conference and to the Society generally.

The meeting then adjourned.

E. M. VANCE,
General Secretary.

Free speech is to a great people what winds are to oceans and malarial regions, which waft away the elements of disease and bring new elements of health.—*Henry Ward Beecher.*

Mr. G. Whitehead's Mission.

Mr. Whitehead reports a "bumper" week at Swansea. Half the town turned out to the Sands to hear the Infidel Lecturer. The local press appealed to the "clerical intellectuals" to come out and fight the Philistine dominating the Sands, but in one instance (the *Western Mail*) fair play was demanded for the Freethinkers. Special prayers were offered up at various opposition meetings for the conversion of the infidel. Mr. Whitehead does not seem "one penny the worse," and hopes that the second week will be even better than the first. From Swansea he goes to Stockport.—E.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11, S. K. Ratcliffe, "The Newest War Against Knowledge."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 6.15, Mr. J. Marshall, a Lecture.

FINSBURY PARK BRANCH N.S.S. (Finsbury Park): 11.15, a Lecture.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Hyde Park): Every evening at 8; every Sunday at 3. Speakers: Mrs. Tring, Messrs. Brayton, Ryan, Burns, Keeling, Vickers, and Baker.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Regent's Park, near the Fountain): 6, Mr. R. H. Rosetti, a Lecture.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 3.30, Mr. F. P. Corrigan, a Lecture; 6.30, Mr. F. C. Saphin, a Lecture.

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

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S. (Town Moor, near North Road entrance): 7, a Lecture.

STOCKPORT BRANCH N.S.S.—Mr. G. Whitehead's Mission.—July 4 to July 10, every evening on Armoury or Mersey Square, at 7.30; July 5 at 6.30.

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