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Views and Opinions.

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Glorifying the Commonplace.

I said last week that one of the striking features of the articles of the ten literary characters who were selected by the *Daily Express* to inform the world as to their opinions on religion was their extraordinary commonplace character. Not one of them had managed to give birth to a single original or arresting thought, not one had said anything that the man in the street, given their capacity for verbal expression, could not have said equally well. To test the matter—I have always been fond of experiments in psychology—I, so to speak, "tried it on the pup." I selected a number of my acquaintances who were neither avowed Freethinkers nor orthodox Christians. The subject of the *Express* articles was casually introduced, and they were then led to give their ideas of religion. In every case I found I was dealing with an Arnold Bennett, a Rebecca West, a Hugh Walpole, or one other of the gallant ten. There was precisely the same vagueness about what really was religion, the same comprehensive ignorance of the anthropological side of religion, the same readiness to take their own vague ethical feelings or hazy social ideals and transform them into a "true religion," and, above all, the same unmeaning jargon about the character and influence of Jesus. Any one of them might have taken the place of the *Express* writers, and with a little less intelligence might have filled the place of any one of the bishops who had sent in their contribution to the discussion. I advise my readers to try the same kind of experiment, and I am quite sure they will meet with the same result.

* * *

Intuition.

Place aux Dames. Miss Rebecca West has the customary stock of vague religious beliefs, some of which she calls certainties. She is good enough to admit that "these certainties of mine cannot be proved by any logical process," but she cheerfully remarks that "it is not necessary they should be." She is sure enough of them, logical proof could only convince other people, and she does not want to convince others—by logical reasoning. She prefers to fall back upon that blessed word "intuition." She has an intuition which tells her that certain acts will perish

"with this universe," while there are others that must continue in another life; she has another intuition that this life is not all, she "intuitively perceives" something sacred in the effort to extend the sphere of personal liberty, and whenever she wants to clinch a statement she has only to call in this mysterious "intuition" to settle the matter. This leaves one wondering what on earth Miss West imagines "Intuition" stands for? It may be considered impolite to say that I have a quite strong intuition that Miss West is talking just nonsense, but accuracy compels me to say so. Just a little study of elementary psychology might show Miss West that so long as we use the term with any regard for accuracy, an intuition is a judgment that is not independent of experience, but is based upon it. When a stockbroker "intuitively" perceives that rubbers will rise or mines will fall, he is not acting independently of experience, it is a rapidly formed judgment based upon his experience of the signs that govern the turn of the market. In Miss West's mouth intuition appears to stand for a proposition which her reason shows her to be nonsensical, but which she would like to find true. In other words, it is another word for nonsense.

* * *

Tinkle, Tinkle.

But, for Miss West's sake, it is a pity that her "intuition" did not warn her against venturing on such statements of assumed fact as the following:—

The ordinary pre-Christian man was not accustomed to the idea of moral power unsupported by force. It would have been impossible to convince him that a man was divine simply because his behaviour was supremely beautiful.

And this:—

The spirit of tolerance represents the merciful hand of Christ thrust through the ages, saving the next Christ from crucifixion.

Quite a nice sentence for a daily newspaper in this country, but, dear! dear! what nonsense! If Miss West will only spend a few hours in the company of any of the Greek or Roman moralists, she will soon discover how mistaken she is in assuming that morality was indistinguishable from force before Christianity appeared. The "law of nature" as applied to morals was established with both, and morality as a natural growth of the social state was a common enough conception. And it certainly never did strike the ethical teachers of Rome and Greece that because a man led a good life he must be a god incarnate. They would have called him a good man and left it at that. Christianity said goodness must be supernatural because it taught man was essentially and naturally vile. It is a pity that Miss West, with her avowed disregard of churches and church doctrines, should, in talking in this manner about Christianity and morals, really make herself the mouthpiece of the most ill-informed and the most unscrupulous of pulpiteers. It was actually the Christian religion which suppressed, so far as it could, the conception of morality as a natural growth, and insisted on its

being entirely dependent upon the rewards and punishments promised by the Christian religion. And I may remind Miss West that even her ideal Jesus could find no better basis for morals than this hope of being rewarded or fear of being punished by God. And if that is not resting the idea of morality on a basis of force we should be obliged to Miss West explaining what it is. After that exhibition one is not surprised at learning that tolerance is the hand of Christ thrust through the ages—particularly, as the most intolerant of peoples during the past two thousand years have been the followers of Jesus. If Miss West really requires a tolerant teacher, with an influence for toleration that lasted for over twenty centuries, she should turn to the Buddha. But probably her "intuition" does not extend beyond the Christian borders.

* * *

Absurd Solemnity.

Mr. Arnold Bennett opened the series of articles, and his has been the most discussed, because it happened to be the only one that contained a very plain and unmistakable rejection of specific Christian doctrines as so many childish superstitions unworthy of serious consideration as matters of historic fact. Naturally the Bishops did not like this. What they prefer is someone who, while rejecting Christianity, will manage to do so in a way that gives believers an impression of the importance of them. Personally, I agree with Mr. Bennett that there is not a single one of the Christian doctrines that are worthy of five minutes' serious consideration by a really cultured and liberated intelligence. But then I never had the misfortune to be a Christian, and that makes a difference—a tremendous difference. For example, I observe that a great many are surprised when they discover that people do not believe the Christian legends. My surprise, as a youth, was always to discover that people really did believe them. Men and women come out and say with an air of boldness, I do not believe in the Virgin Birth, or in the rising from the dead, or things of that kind. And thousands exclaim at their boldness, or marvel at the spectacle. But why should this be so? We do not marvel at adult men and women not believing in the actuality of Santa Claus, or the historicity of Jack and the Beanstalk. Really the most serious indictment of the quality of our culture is that people should consider it necessary to tell the world they do not believe in tales that every civilized mind should have got rid of long ago. I do not like the habit of treating a disavowal of belief in Christian doctrines as though it in itself is important. It is an indication that the liberated one is not quite so free from the influence of this particular superstition.

* * *

Disguised Nonsense.

And, indeed, Mr. Bennett, on his own confession, is only partly liberated after all. He has got rid of the most aggressively grotesque of Christian beliefs, but he is still hanging on to others which, while not quite so obviously ridiculous, have no greater claim to intellectual dignity. We shall have to return to this topic later in dealing with the other writers, but take this as a first-rate example of—one can hardly call it confused thinking, for it is not thinking at all, it is a mere repetition of heard phrases repeated without very much reflection:—

Is there a God? Call this phenomenon a First Cause, a Supreme Being, a Creator, what you like; God is a good name for it. I believe there is a God, if only for the reason that I can imagine no other explanation of a marvellous scientifically ordered and law controlled universe. The argument from design presents itself to me as a pretty good argument.

Of course, Mr. Bennett is not alone in repeating this kind of jargon, but the mere fact of other well-known men saying it ought not to blind us to the fact that it is mere jargon. Of course, too, the name does not matter; it is the thing, the conception, that matters. The root conception of "God" is that of some personal intelligence making and controlling the universe. And as Mr. Bennett says, it does not matter what you call it, God or Creator, Mumbo-Jumbo, or anything else. Nor does it make any difference whether the person believing in it is a simple savage with obviously no other basis for his belief than his equally obvious ignorance of things, or a modern professor, or parson, or journalist, expressing the same belief in more graceful, but not more intelligible language. It is the same thing, although if one were to put it before Mr. Bennett in its original form he would at once see its absurdity. He does not see it, apparently, because it is hidden by such phrases as "Creator," which rests upon a sheer confusion between creating and making; "first cause," when an examination shows that there conceivably can be no such thing; "scientifically ordered" universe, as though the universe had been made by contract; and a "law controlled" world, a perfectly nonsensical expression from the point of view of science. All this is sheer confusion, and serves to illustrate the lack of ordered thinking characteristic of the whole of the articles. More than that, perhaps, it illustrates the fact that even those who stand before the public as so many teachers are ready to pronounce opinions about religion without anything like the care they would exercise if they were giving an opinion on politics, or art, or literature. As I said last week, most people appear to feel that when talking about religion any kind of nonsense will do. And, as a matter of fact, any nonsense, so long as it runs on customary lines, will do. And that is the most striking feature of the articles, the essays of the bishops, and the letters from the general public—carefully selected by the editor of the *Express*. There is nothing but a dead level of stereotyped religious meandering. Well might Heine say that the most stupid of Englishmen would manage to say something sensible on politics, but the most intelligent ones could be trusted to say something stupid on religion. One would have enjoyed his comments on these ten leading men of letters.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

(To be Continued.)

The Council of Trent.

THE General Councils of the Christian Church, without a single exception, have been characterized by the most disgraceful and dishonourable features conceivable. This opinion is held not by Secularists only, but also by not a few ecclesiastics. Dean Milman expresses his conviction that "nowhere is Christianity less attractive, and if we look to the ordinary tone and character of the proceedings, less authoritative, than in the Councils of the Church." In more condemnatory language still he proceeds thus:—

It is in general a fierce collision of two rival factions, neither of which will yield, each of which is solemnly pledged against conviction. Intrigue, injustice, violence, decisions on authority alone, and that the authority of a turbulent majority, decisions by wild acclamation rather than after sober enquiry, detract from the reverence and impugn the judgments, at least of the later Councils. The close is almost invariably a terrible anathema, in which it is impossible not to discern the tones of human hatred, or arrogant triumph, of rejoicing at the damnation imprecated against the humiliated

adversary.....A General Council is a field of battle, in which a long train of animosities and hostilities is to come to an issue. Men, therefore, meet with all the excitement, the estrangement, the jealousy, the antipathy engendered by a fierce and obstinate controversy (*Latin Christianity*, vol. i., pp. 202, 203).

All who have carefully read a fairly full description of any General Council are aware how eminently fair and just Milman's denunciation is. Even the first, held at Nicaea in the year 325, often had its meetings disturbed and interrupted by great storms of angry retorts, reckless accusations and recriminations, some of the right reverend Prelates resorting to fisticuff; and we have Dean Milman's authority for stating that "the degeneracy is rapid from the Council of Nicaea to that of Ephesus (431), where each party came determined to use every means of haste, manoeuvre, court influence, bribery, to crush his adversary." The Council of Ephesus was the most discreditable and unscrupulous assembly ever convoked; and this was almost entirely due to the overmastering influence of that wild, unprincipled fanatic, Cyril of Alexandria, the man who instigated the heartless murder of Hypatia, the famous Neoplatonist philosopher.

We now come to the great Council of Trent which held its meetings between 1545 and 1563, and the object of which was to discuss seriously and devise remedies for the dreadful evils which prevailed disastrously both within and without the Church. The chief evils without were the rapid spread of the New Learning and the progress of Protestantism, and within, the moral degeneration of both the clergy and the laity. These evils threatened the very existence of the Church. The Emperor Charles V. had been warning the Pope against these dangers for some time, and strongly advocating the convocation of a new Council, to which his Holiness was more or less averse, because the proceedings at some past Councils had tended to weaken and restrict the authority of the Vatican. Clement VII. turned a deaf ear to the Emperor's demand, but Paul III. resolved to accede to it, and consequently, after several plans had been completely upset, a Council was summoned to meet at Trent on March 15, 1545. As a matter of fact, nothing was done till the following year when several decrees were promulgated. One of these declared, under anathema, that Scripture and tradition possess equal authority and are to be treated with equal reverence. Another enacted that the doctrine of original sin must be faithfully upheld, and anathema was pronounced against all who denied that "the entire Adam as to body and soul" underwent a change for the worse when he disobeyed his Creator. There was a wide diversity of opinion on almost every subject, and the debates were often extremely heated, decisions being arrived at by majority votes.

At first, there was a dim hope of effecting a reconciliation between the Church and the Protestants; but the latter flatly refused to submit to the Council. And they multiplied with such rapidity, and secured so many new advantages, especially in Germany, that the Pope and Charles V. entered into a treaty to make war against the German Protestants merely because they would not accept the findings of the Council. This involves a sad reflection upon the character of the Pope, who claimed to be the representative of the Prince of Peace on earth. Here was Christ's viceregent making a compact with an earthly potentate to put to the sword all who declined to bow the knee to him as their religious head. But even in the Council itself no peace was experienced. In the seventh session, held on March 3, 1547, serious dis-

agreements arose. As Dr. Littledale puts it in his article on Trent in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*:—

A more important part of the business of this session was the open declaration of a measure which the Pope and the legates had been privately planning for some time, the transference of the Council from Trent to some city more directly under papal control; for while Trent sufficed for headquarters as against Protestants, yet it was found that a virtual coalition between the Spanish, French, and German bishops to resist the Italians interfered with the intentions of the papal court, and could be most effectively broken up by a change of place. Occasion was accordingly taken from an outbreak of disease, alleged to be infectious, at Trent, to issue a bull transferring the Council to Bologna, which was read in the seventh session, while the promulgation of a decree in accordance with it formed the whole business of the eighth session (March 11, 1547). When it had been passed, the legates produced a brief which they had obtained more than two years before, empowering them to transfer the Council as they pleased. But while they themselves quitted Trent the next day, and were followed by the majority of the bishops, those of the Emperor's party continued in session at Trent, and refused to leave it without the permission of their sovereign, though they abstained from all conciliar action, in order to avoid the charge of schism.

Now the Pope and Charles fell to loggerheads, the latter being so incensed at the former's action that he sent a message approving and confirming his supporter's conduct, and informed Paul that unless the entire body returned to Trent he would proceed to Rome and himself hold the Council there. So severe was the quarrel between the two men that the Council had to be formally prorogued indefinitely. Paul III. died in November, 1549, and in 1550 Julius III. occupied the papal throne. The Council reassembled on May 1, 1551, but practically nothing was done beyond reasserting the dogma of Transubstantiation. The Council was again prorogued, and for ten years it never met at all. When it reassembled on January 18, 1562, many decrees bearing chiefly on dogma and discipline were passed, and it continued sitting until December, 1563. Dr. Littledale says:—

Two hundred and fifty-five signatures were attached to the decrees, and also those of the ambassadors still remaining at Trent. The bull of confirmation was issued at Rome on January 26, 1564, and followed by another fixing May 1, 1564, as the date from which the decrees should be held binding. The bull of confirmation forbade all persons whatsoever, whether ecclesiastics or laymen, to gloss or interpret the decrees upon any pretext whatever, without papal authority for the purpose.

Now nothing can be more fully attested than the fact that the Church in all its œcumenical Councils played with perfect success the part of a consummate hypocrite. Between its profession and its practice there has never existed the slightest conformity. Its profession has always been that it never does anything except under the guidance of God's Spirit. A wag among the French envoys at the Council of Trent said that the Holy Spirit was brought there in a carpet bag from Rome, which was one way of saying that he was conspicuous only by his absence. The Gospel Jesus is reported to have said: "The Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things." In another allusion to the Comforter Jesus said: "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide into all the truth." If Jesus had been right the Church would never have needed to convene General Councils to discover and establish what it calls supernatural truths. But it is self-evident that Jesus was wrong, with the result that the Church,

despite its claim to be a supernatural institution, has been compelled throughout its history to engage in bitterest controversy, and to suppress by force what it regarded as heresy, and act the tyrant in defence of its truths. The history of its œcumenical Councils is adequate evidence of its non-supernatural character and its utter inability to transform the world into an ideal place to live in.

J. T. LLOYD.

Ever a Fighter.

An idea that is not dangerous is unworthy of being called an idea at all.—Oscar Wilde.

Wisdom,
Whether in early season or in late
It usually comes high-priced.

—Landor.

"Nor one man in a thousand has either strength of mind or goodness of heart to be an Atheist. I repeat it. Not one man in ten thousand has goodness of heart or strength of mind to be an Atheist." This was said by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, himself a man with a big heart and a big head. Coleridge was not arguing without knowledge, for among his intimate friends were Thomas Holcroft and his wife, both of whom were Atheists. Indeed, Holcroft endeavoured to convert Coleridge from Deism, and, as both disputants were voluble, it must have been a battle of giants. Coleridge was one of the greatest talkers of his generation, and he reduced Mrs. Holcroft to tearful expostulation. Holcroft was made of sterner stuff, more befitting a man of many talents.

Curiously, Thomas Holcroft is chiefly remembered as the author of the familiar play, "The Road to Ruin," a work which naturally appeals more to students of the drama than lovers of literature. Yet Holcroft has many claims to recognition. He wrote a most excellent *Autobiography*; and he narrowly escaped being hanged for treason. His friendships ranged from William Godwin to Coleridge, and he must have been a man of parts to have been admitted to such a select circle of genius. Moreover, he was an Atheist when Atheists were almost as scarce as auk's eggs.

Holcroft's life was a romance as entertaining as any novel, and, during his career, he passed from abject penury to comfortable affluence, and declined again to poverty. He possessed many traits which make for success, but his splendid iconoclasm led to his undoing. Beginning at the bed-rock of society, he made a name and position by sheer ability. His love of Liberty caused his ostracism, and actually led to his downfall. But Freethinkers have always had to endure that sort of thing.

His father was a cobbler, and young Holcroft's early years were spent in Orange Court, Leicester Fields, not so attractive a place as the name implies. The boot business did not prosper, and the father was compelled to peddle his wares on the open road. In such unpromising circumstances did Holcroft begin a life of struggle which never ceased till the day of his death, although, for a short time, he had a place in the sun.

For some time young Holcroft was a stable-boy at Newmarket. In spite of his untoward surroundings, he began to teach himself. Having no writing materials, he often got an old nail and cast up sums on the palings of the stable yard. The other boys prophesied that he would end in a mad-house, and some of their seniors agreed. To learn music he joined a church choir. He found out that he was losing his income by betting, and, although he loved horses, he left the stables and returned to his father as a cobbler-apprentice. Then a love of the theatre

seized him, and he joined a "spouter's club" in order to learn elocution. Whilst still a young man he went to Dublin with Macklin, the famous actor.

This was the turning point in his career. From this time his life was divided between acting, play-writing, and literary hack work. With indomitable spirit, he learned French and other languages, and became one of the most voluminous translators of his time. He also found time to write a novel, *Alwyn*, but his biggest successes were his plays, and when his comedy, "Duplicity," took the town by storm, he abandoned acting altogether, and devoted himself to literature and politics. His political activity was devoted to Republicanism, and he was a firm believer in the principles which animated the leaders in the French Revolution. William Godwin got many of his ideas from Holcroft. The young poet, Percy Shelley, was one of Godwin's most ardent disciples, and it is interesting to note how the torch of Liberty was carried from one hand to another in this troublous period of history. Holcroft was, indeed, a man to be reckoned with, and his indictment for high treason with Horne Tooke, Thomas Hardy, and others, was, in reality, an unwilling tribute to his influence. Although Holcroft was never brought to trial, it was a narrow escape. It affected his fortunes seriously, for it alienated the sympathies of the more timid of his patrons, always the more numerous of the community.

From this time his position declined, until he was compelled to part with his beloved books and pictures. He went abroad, and when he died he was as penniless as his own "Gaffar-Gray," the last verse of which is so often quoted:—

My keg is but low, I confess,
Gaffar-Gray;
What then? While it lasts, man, we'll live,
The poor man alone
When he hears the poor moan,
Of his morsel a morsel will give,
Well-a-day!

William Godwin considered Holcroft as "a man of iron." Like so many of the early pioneers, he was no weakling. He had his own way to make in a saucy world which he always thought better than it was. To spurn delights and live laborious days for the sake of ambition and its golden rewards is comparatively easy. Holcroft belonged to the small but select class of men who have sunk their personality in a great cause, and without thinking of fortune and fame. Struggling for years against real poverty, against obscurity, against the indifference of a whole nation to Freethought and Republicanism, he persevered to the end. Standing outside all churches and all creeds, he built up a workable philosophy of life by common-sense alone.

Holcroft had need to be "a man of iron." Remember that he lived over a century ago, and, like all the early pioneers, he was so much alone. So early was he in the field that he could do little more than anticipate Carlyle's bitter "Exodus from Houndsditch," or his caustic apostrophe to the figure of Christ, "Ih, man, ye've had your day!" But what he did was sufficient for his generation. He fought at fearful odds, and, as Carlyle well says, "Granted the ship comes into harbour with shrouds and tackle damaged, the pilot is blameworthy, but to know how blameworthy, tell us first whether his voyage has been round the globe, or only to Ramsgate and the Isle of Dogs."

MIMNERMUS.

Religion does not help me. The faith that others give to what is unseen, I give to what one can touch, and look at.—Oscar Wilde, "De Profundis."

The Gnostic Origins of Christianity.

IV.

(Continued from page 636.)

ANOTHER of these Gnostic Gospels that have come to light is the *Acts of John*, or, rather, a long fragment of it. The cross also plays a prominent part in it, and, like the cross in the Gospel of Peter, it is a mystic cross, a cross of light, not a wooden cross. John describes how:—

Our Lord stood in the midst of the cave and filled it with light.....He showed me a cross of light set up, and about the cross a great multitude, and therein one form and one likeness; and on the cross another multitude, not having one form, and I saw the Lord Himself above the cross, not having any shape, but only a voice, and a voice not such as was familiar to us, but a sweet and kind voice and one truly of God, saying unto me: "Johu, it is needful that one should hear these things from Me, for I have need of one who will hear. This cross of light is sometimes called the Word by Me for your sakes, sometimes Mind, sometimes Jesus, sometimes Christ, sometimes Door, sometimes Way, sometimes Bread, sometimes Seed, sometimes Resurrection, sometimes Son, sometimes Father, sometimes Spirit, sometimes Life, sometimes Truth, sometimes Faith, sometimes Grace.

It is clear from this, as Mr. Mead, who cites it, observes: "the 'mystery of the cross,' the mystic crucifixion, was understood by the Gnostics in a fashion far different from the literal historic narrative, is abundantly proved by these same Johannine Acts."

This, of course, is one of numerous Docetic Gospels that denied that the Lord had a body of flesh and blood. To say that the early Docetist "denied" the corporeal existence of Christ is misleading, it is the orthodox party who make the charge. The Docetist were the earliest Christians; they did not deny that Christ existed in the flesh; they were not aware that anyone thought he did.

The Lord further instructs John in the Mystery: See thou therefore in Me the slaying of the word (Logos), the piercing of the word, the blood of a word, the wounding of a word, the hanging of a word, the passion of a word, the nailing [fixing or joining] of a word, the death of a word. And by a word I mean man. First, then, understand the word, then shalt thou understand the Lord, and thirdly the man, and what is his passion.

As Mr. Mead remarks: "It is evident that we have here the tradition of the inner schools as to the mystery of initiation called the cross." In the sixth chapter of Galatians, the 17th verse, Paul says: "From henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." The Revised Version of the New Testament gives the true and literal translation as: "I bear *branded* on my body the marks of Jesus." Now there is nothing in the four Gospels about being branded with the marks of Jesus, but in many of the Mystery-religions the initiates were branded. In the mysteries of Mithra, says Mr. Rose, "the mystic was baptised and marked upon the forehead with a hot iron as a sign of his devotion to Mithra."

That the sign of the cross was used as a sacred symbol in the Pagan mysteries, we know for a fact. Mr. Mead, in his book, *Did Jesus Live 100 B.C.?* cites a very important passage in this connection, from the

Pandion of Epiphanius, a copy of which, much older than any hitherto known, was discovered in St. Mark's Library at Venice. This passage has been suppressed in all the later copies of this work. It runs as follows:—

At Alexandria, in the Koreion, as it is called—an immense temple—that is to say, the precinct of the Virgin; after they have kept all-night vigil with songs and music, chanting to their idol, when the vigil is over, at cockcrow, they descend with lights into an underground crypt, and carry up a wooden image lying naked on a litter, with the seal of the cross made in gold on its forehead, and on either hand two other similar seals, and on both knees two others, all five seals being similarly made of gold. And they carry round the image itself, circumambulating seven times the innermost temple, to the accompaniment of pipes, tabors, and hymns; and with merry-making they carry it down again underground. And if they are asked the meaning of this mystery, they answer and say: "To-day, at this hour, the maiden [Kore]—that is, the Virgin—gave birth to the æon."

As Mr. Mead, commenting upon this, points out: "Here we have a definite statement that one of the most widespread mystic festivals of the ancients was connected with a rite of 'resurrection,' and that in Egypt the one who was 'raised from the dead,' and returned from the underworld or Hades, was sealed with five mystic crosses on forehead, hands and knees (?feet)."

It is difficult for those who have been brought up in the Christian faith, to think of the cross apart from the crucifixion, which it symbolises. Yet the cross was sacred and an object of veneration thousands of years before our era. So was the belief in Saviour-gods who suffered and died, and rose again, and conferred the gift of immortality upon their followers. In Christianity the two beliefs are combined; this was the work of the Gnostics, who had no idea of any historical Christ of flesh and blood, and, in fact, denied the existence of any such person. Paul, a Greek-speaking Jew of the Diaspora, added the mystical doctrine that we were redeemed from the consequences of Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden by the sacrifice of the suffering Saviour-god on the cross.

For the rest, the details of the life of Jesus are, for the most part, built up out of passages in the Old Testament, especially those concerned with what scholars describe as "the suffering servant." Again and again, in the New Testament, we are told that Jesus did a certain thing that it might fulfil some statement made by the Old Testament prophets. The earliest apologists of Christianity, like Justin Martyr, constantly appeal to the Old Testament to prove the truth of the New. It was, in truth, the only proof they knew.

The fact is that in the four Gospels we have the last phase of a long evolution that began thousands of years before the Christian era. Christian scholars themselves are beginning to realize the fact. The late Canon Cheyne, the editor of the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, one of the greatest scholars of his time, in his book, *The Mines of Isaiah*, spoke openly of "the Christ Myth." Mr. Gilbert Sadler, in his very useful little book, *Behind the New Testament*, shows that Canon Cheyne had completely given up all belief in any historical Jesus. He says:—

The late Professor T. K. Cheyne wrote in 1914: "If the crucifixion is unhistorical—and there is, I fear, considerable probability that it is"—see *The Reconciliation of Races and Religions*, page 185. In 1910, Dr. Cheyne had written in *The Christian Commonwealth of Jesus*, "If such a personage existed," and "a sketch of the career of the Son of Man or Christ may have been current in certain Jewish circles even before the Christian era."

¹ G. R. S. Mead, *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten* (1906), p. 434.

² *Ibid.*, p. 438.

³ C. P. G. Rose, *Antecedents of Christianity* (1925), p. 154.

In two letters to the present writer, [Mr. Sadler] Dr. Cheyne expressed himself thus: "The myth of the suffering and rising God lies behind Isaiah 53. It is no doubt difficult to see one's way in the Pauline references to the crucifixion. But if the basis is elsewhere mythological, one may reasonably conjecture that it is so in the crucifixion. St. Paul, like others of his age, may draw no sharp line between history and myth. Myth had become fact" (for him): (May 16, 1913).

Starting from the Virgin narrative it became clear to me that the story of the nativity and that of the Resurrection and Ascension must be of mythic origin, and the myth which bound these stories together must have been the common tradition of the God, friendly to man, who was born (as it seemed) in human form, died and rose again, for man" (April 8, 1914).—G. T. Sadler, *Behind the New Testament*. Footnote to p. 76.

We submit that a Canon of the Church must have had good reasons for holding the opinions here expressed. We regret that he did not publish a book upon the subject; it would have startled the Christian world as much as Colenso did with his book on the Old Testament.

W. MANN.

Logic and Science.

INFERENCE.

To infer is to deduce the existence of an unseen or unknown fact from that of a seen or known one. For instance, you go out in the early morning after a nightfall of snow and you see human footprints on the path and you infer that someone has already passed that way. Seeing smoke issuing from a chimney you infer the existence of fire in one of the grates of the house. Coming across a man lying dead in an unfrequented spot, you infer either a murder or a suicide. If the barometer rises you predict fair weather; sciences, like geology, were mainly built up by similar reasoning: finding a mountain, like the Rigi, to consist of conglomerate, you conclude that that lofty site was at one time under sea or lake, forming a vast estuary to some swift and great rivers.

Likewise, our knowledge of the constitution of the sun, stars, comets, and nebulae is entirely inferential from data observed in the spectroscope.

Indeed, all our knowledge of the external world is inferential; that is to say, it is mediate and not immediate. Immediate knowledge consists entirely of the contents of consciousness. The pain of a pin-prick is immediate or direct cognition, but the pin, or, indeed, the finger it pricks are inferences of the mind. It is upon this palpable fact that the solipsistic idealist bases his phantasmagorical universe.

But the inference that Mr. H. Russell had in mind is, I feel sure, not that basic stratum of all knowledge, but derivatives from it, that is, inferences based, directly or indirectly, upon human experience like those detailed above.

Inferences based on experience are *real*, grounded upon the permanency and uniformity of Nature, which is immutable through everlasting changing.

This statement is a fact, and not a Shavian paradox. Nature has two invariables, the elements of matter and the totality of energy. In other words, the sum-total of the one and any constituent of the other are eternal constants. These two facts in combination necessitate that every change (which is only a redistribution of energy), is uniform—a fact that links all phenomena into continuous chains of events stretching from one eternity to another. This causal

linkage is the basis of all real inference. And it makes no difference whether you proceed backwards along the chain and infer the cause from the effect, or *vice versa*, the inference is equally valid.

This is the kind of inference that is stereotyped in every animal instinct and plant habit as well as in the perennial incentives which urge us to fulfil the tasks and duties which make up the routine of our daily lives.

There is, however, another kind of sequence to which the term inference is applied. This order is met in the application of axioms to the solution of mathematical problems and in the use of the syllogism. The inference in these is merely modal, formal, or verbal, and not real as defined above.

It is to this variety that Mr. H. Russell most probably alludes in his note. For upwards of two thousand years this so-called inference has been considered to be of paramount importance—indeed, the metaphysical scales in which truth is weighed. This opinion has received the endorsement of all the great minds—the Abelards, the Thomists, and Scotists, ancient and modern. A normal person should feel overawed in the presence of a galaxy so dazzling with metaphysical light. But the opinion of persons to whom the Christian Trinity—the *nadir point of metaphysical bathos*—is a reality and a solemn object of study, may be ignored on all kindred subjects. So I make no apology for my bizarre scepticism. Let me therefore assert with all due emphasis that the "inference" made in a syllogism is devoid of reality; it is a mere *predication on stilts*; a clumsy way of making an assertion.

And lest anyone should think that my statement is a mere *ipse dixit*, let us briefly dissect it:

Any ordinary object, *i.e.* subject of thought, consists of a group of properties, attributes, qualities, forces, or whatever one may call the cluster of characteristics which make up the sum-total of the connotation of a term used to denote the class to which it belongs. Now, these characteristics range from the wholly universal; that is, from those which are under no conceivable circumstance, ever absent from it, to the wholly contingent or accidental. For example, *inertia* is absolutely inseparable from matter, and is also invariable in magnitude; it is therefore a universal attribute. So is gravity as well as the atomic and molecular forces though they vary in intensity with change of conditions. Solidity may be affirmed of solids and fluidity, of liquids. But a stone may be hard or soft; big or small; round or angular; red, green, or black, etc.

Likewise in the case of living things we meet with certain structures, organs, functions, tissues which are as essential to or inalienable from living organism as is their inertia or weight, while their variable characteristics are as numerous as the sand that girdles the ocean. As you ascend from the material to the mental the number of universal attributes get less and less. Not many mental characteristics can you affirm of every individual of a tribe, clan, or nation, leave alone the race.

I can say from personal experience that nothing can be more false than to predicate "meanness" of all Scotsmen.

Now, attributes that may be affirmed of all without exception are seldom formally predicated of them; they are usually assumed. To affirm that horses have four legs; hens, feathers; stones, solidity; apples, weight; dogs, mortality, etc., would sound grotesquely comical. But to affirm them of an individual would be positively silly, for it conveys no information—the very thing which a sentence is supposed to do. To say that Sambo, the monkey, has a nose,

eyes, and ears, or that Sally, the cow, has a tail, would savour of an asylum for mental defectives. Constant properties, being the "ground-floor" of knowledge, are always taken for granted and never affirmed of one individual. But, lo and behold, this is the very thing which a syllogism does do. Its conclusion predicates, *i.e.* it affirms or denies, a universal attribute of a particular subject. Its utter silliness is more or less masked by the "antics of the stilts"—the premises. The assertion that "John Smith is mortal" is quite typical of a syllogistic conclusion. The major premise affirms (or denies) a universal attribute of a class; the minor simply reminds one that a particular object is a unit of that class and then the conclusion re-affirms the universal attribute of the individual. This is a mere predication in disguise. Where or what is the *inference* or new fact? The barest and crudest consistency would demand that what is true of *all* would be true of *each*. To call this piece of palpable *truism an inference* is characteristic of all metaphysical pretensions—hollow, meaningless nothings.

I quite agree with Mr. Barnard that when the denotation of a term is not instantly obvious or is of a complex nature, some way of indicating it is useful or even necessary. But I contend that this could be more sanely done by discarding the "stilts" and using in their stead a participial phrase, thus: John Smith, being a human being, is necessarily mortal.

When, however, we affirm of an individual an attribute which is *not* common to every member of the class, we commit the fallacy of "begging the question." It is probably the commonest form of false reasoning. It is so easy to make, without any warranty, a general statement which is often tacitly admitted, again without warranty. Then the falsity is hooked and landed without more ado. Whether the predicable is true of all, or of some only, or again, of none at all, the impotent syllogism can give us no help. To ascertain that all essential point, we must consult human experience or appeal to science.

Mr. Barnard is quite right in stating that it is claimed that science has frequently employed deduction as an ally; and scientists admit the claim. But I have to confess that I can find no evidence to support that contention or assumption rather. What science invariably did was to vary the conditions (antecedents) and see if the change in the effect (consequent) was *consistent* with the hypothesis. Self-consistency—a principle virtually unnoticed in text-books on logic—was the one reliable criterion or test in the discovery of facts or in the establishment of principles. I had hoped to have sufficient space left to substantiate this view from the historical steps taken to prove that the air was material and not a spiritual thing as it was to the founders of Christianity; and also from the history of the discoveries of the elements of matter and the establishment of the so-called laws of chemical reaction. I may, however, have an opportunity to do so another time.

KERIDON.

Mr. G. Whitehead's Mission.

The weather smiled upon the final week of our mission in the provinces, and fine accounts have been received from both Mr. Whitehead and the Birmingham Branch of six very successful meetings held in the Bull Ring and at Smethwick. Mr. Whitehead is now in London, and will be pleased to hear from any Branches requiring his services during the indoor season. Letters should be addressed to Mr. Whitehead direct, care of this office, and will be forwarded to him immediately.

Acid Drops.

Writing about Caradoc Evan's play, "Taffy," a fortnight ago, we pointed out the plain fact that religion often served as a cover for the exercise of some of man's worst passions, and served in such a way that the exercise of these passions took on quite a moral and religious character. We see the same point is raised in the *Daily News*, above all others, in the course of a review of Mr. Masefield's new work, *The Trial of Jesus*. The writer says that Mr. Masefield "fails to realize the sectarian or ecclesiastical fanatic, far from being a good man misled by logic, is more often a good man in a condition akin to delirium tremens. Under the influence of sectarianism, many men who are good and kindly men among their friends, regard their enemies with the vindictive passion of drink-demented demons." There is far more in that than either the editor or the reviewer probably saw. If they had seen it they would hardly have written or published it. For it really amounts to an indictment of religion, and that would never be permitted in the *Daily News*.

Intolerance is a passion of which most people, when it is manifested in connection with Secular affairs, are ashamed. In Secular life the possibility of being in error is always before one, and the pressure of existence makes concessions inevitable and advisable. But in religion there is no such check. To be intolerant here is an expression of loyalty to God, with the consequence that the native passion of intolerance may be expressed under cover of concern for morals, for religion, or for both. The man is made to feel that he is a better man in the very act of becoming a worse one. It is not merely intolerance that is cloaked in this way, sheer malevolence may be also gratified in the same manner. It has been pointed out more than once that nothing but the most profound belief in the wickedness of heresy could have reconciled people to the spectacle of men and women being burned alive. Quite true, but there is a Sadic quality in many humans which delights in the contemplation of suffering, and here again we had it gratified under cloak of a purification of society by the removal of the heretic. And so one might trace the influence of religion in one direction after another, and when one tries to calculate the immense degradation of human nature consequent on this gratification of the lower passions under guise of devotion to religion, it is but a scanty offset to point to some unquestionable tender and beautiful characters that may have allied themselves with religion.

In South Wales the Nonconformists are holding prayer meetings asking the Lord that work may be found for the miners. We do not know how he is expected to bring this about. Hell has gone out of fashion, and even though it had not there does not seem any known way in which the fuel could be transported. Anyway there is a trifle of originality in the prayer. God had been asked to send rain, or to stop it raining, or to do a variety of other things, but this is the first time we have ever heard of him being asked to stir up the trade in coal.

Mr. Arnold Bennett has replied to the critics of his article which he wrote for the *Daily Express*. He treats them far more tenderly than they deserve to be treated, but he puts one series of questions to them which they would find it difficult to answer, if they attempted to reply. To those Bishops who have been rejecting so many things as not being essential to Christianity, he says:—

If what was held true forty years ago was divinely inspired, it should be true to-day—all of it. How comes it that so many things that were regarded as essential forty years ago can to-day be regarded as "inessential" and "unimportant"? And is there any reason why the process of lopping the tree should stop at the point it has now reached? The process has been continuous. Is it ended? Is it improbable that the Bishop of London and the Bishop of Ely forty years hence will

be limiting Christian dogma to the assertion that Christ was divine in the sense that we are all divine, but to a greater degree?

Far from that being improbable it is pretty certain that it will be so. As Mr. Bennett says, the process has been continuous. First of all something is propounded as coming directly from God, and as being absolutely true. Then when the clergy are found out in this particular teaching they revise just enough to get the least thoughtful to accept it, and the new teaching takes the place of the old one. There is no finality, and all along it is the heretic who is driving back the church step by step and forcing to admit as true a something which it has denounced as false, and to dismiss as false things they have sworn to be the truth and nothing but the truth. And in the long run it means that the clergy will preach a lie so long as they can, and will admit just as much of the truth as they can no longer profitably deny.

Meanwhile there is one feature of the letters published by the *Express* that deserves pointing out. When Freethinkers attack the orthodox doctrines of Christianity they are told by those who cannot defend them that these beliefs are no longer held by Christians. But here is General Booth who still holds on to the doctrines of hell and the blood of Jesus in all their primitive barbarity, and the other letters show that if orthodox Christian doctrines are rejected by a few Christians the majority still accept them. The business men, for example, who have been lecturing at the Y.M.C.A. meetings in the City of London appear to hold all the beliefs for which a man such as Charles Haddon Spurgeon was celebrated. They still believe the Bible is literally true from cover to cover. They are where Christians were a hundred years ago. Apparently they have been so busy building up their businesses that their intellects have stood quite still in other directions.

The truth is that most of us are apt to overestimate the progress made among Christians. Because a parson here and there is astute enough to throw over the more revolting of Christian doctrines we get into the habit of talking as though these doctrines were no longer believed in. And that is not the case. The majority of sincere Christians, including the majority of the clergy, still talk the religious jargon of a hundred years ago. They are practically untouched by the criticism that has been passed on religion. And of the so-called enlightened clergy, it may safely be said that a large proportion of them would return to the old forms if only it became profitable to do so. No greater mistake could be made by Freethinkers than that of assuming orthodox Christianity to have lost its hold on the Christian world.

The *Church Times* deplores the hold that anti-Christian opinion has on the Labour Party. We can assure the *Church Times* that there is no cause for immediate alarm. So long as there are enough Christians in this country to count as an important factor in voting the Labour leaders are never likely to cease to babble about Jesus Christ, and his power to save the world. Of course, when Freethought has made it possible for them to be quite intellectually honest there will be another tune played. And what is true of the Labour leaders is more or less true of the other political parties. Freethought activity has made it possible for them all to be a little more fearless in matters of religion than they would have been without it, and it must go on doing its work to the end of the chapter.

The following sounds very much like a quotation from one of our weekly series of "Views and Opinions," but it is actually taken from the *Christian World* :—

What is needed most of all is freedom for the journalist to speak as conscience and judgment move him. No good paper was ever edited by those who had the spirit of a tame rabbit.

We have said the same thing scores of times, but we have never yet found a paper that "fills the bill." Journalists are not expected to have opinions of their

own, but to hold the opinions of their paper. And, thanks to their Christian training, the main reason why a number of people take in certain papers is because they believe in what it says, and it knows that the tame rabbit who sits in the editorial chair will see to it that they read nothing with which they are likely to violently disagree. A people who have been bred on Christianity cannot be expected to support a paper in which the writers have opinions of their own, and write careless whether of the fact of whether their readers agree with them or not. We suggest to the *Christian World* that if it is genuinely anxious to have an independent press, it should encourage their Christian readers to see to it that they know the other side of every question, including that of religion. But we wonder what would happen if the editor of the *Christian World* took his courage in his hands and advised his Christian readers to go in for a course of Freethought reading, including an occasional glimpse at such a terrible paper as the *Freethinker*?

Obliquely, newspapers give homage to the hoary old lie contained in "original sin." A murder gets greater prominence in the press than the saving of life in coal-mines, rescues at sea, or any other deeds that proclaim man's loyalty to his own species. Society will have to pay for this perversion. A straw showing the way the wind blows was seen when crowds gathered in front of a house in Paddington as the result of a rumour. The police found nothing amiss after making a search—for evidently the trouble was in the silly heads of the people who cannot live a day without their daily dope.

In a report of the "Wembley Tattoo," we notice that the appeal to conventional Christianity is not lacking. There is "Onward Christian Soldiers," and "Abide with Me"; it is a pity that there were not also a few of the hymns sung by the soldiers during the last war. The Tommy's sarcasm left nothing to the imagination, and was the voice of revolt against the hideous hypocrisy of those who thought he went over the top with a prayer on his lips.

Mr. J. A. Hobson, in *Foreign Affairs*, reviews Mr. Arthur Ponsonby's book, *Now is the Time*. At the conclusion of his notice, Mr. Hobson says one thing, and says it finely: "The fighting spirit of a people must not be repressed, but diverted into the secular conflict with poverty, disease, ignorance, and the other physical enemies of human progress." In the army to where this spirit has been diverted, the terms and conditions of service are well known and understood by Freethinkers; it is the only army in which a full-grown man or woman can take a place as a volunteer prepared for iron rations and hard work—and the chaplain's sermon is but the sound of the croaking of frogs. It is the affirmation to the fact that the world is our house, that you cannot kill an idea by blowing a man's head off. It is an affirmation to the fact that mechanical and chemical warfare is the supreme height of folly, and folly is folly whatever the trappings and pomp and glory may indicate to the contrary.

During the Great War there was no question that it had the blessing and active support of the Black Army. In that historic mess, for it cannot be called by any other name, we are informed by the *Official History of the Veterinary Service* that the total casualties for horses on the Western Front was 120,886. On the Christian basis that man is a fallen angel, he might at least maintain his level and not take with him this number of dumb animals. And in a happier dispensation, the comparatively few who believe that man is a risen animal, will do their best to see that diabolical scientists, greedy kings and emperors, wirepullers and fire-eating statesmen will do their own fighting for the right of way between two blades of grass. Animals are our younger brothers; biblically, it is a matter of doubt whether God cares for oxen. It does not matter either way, but man can at least grow up, and include in his growth and sympathies 120,886 horses.

"Freethinker" Endowment Trust.

TRAVELLING all day on Saturday to Glasgow, and all day on Monday back to London, with lectures on Sunday by way of filling up the time, has left me but scant time on Tuesday (press day) with which to deal with the many letters received in connection with the above scheme. With most of these I shall have to deal next week. I need only say for the moment that the scheme has been well received and has gained nothing but good wishes.

A very old supporter of the Movement, Mr. G. Lunn—I omit the flattering words regarding myself—thinks the plan a good one, and the start a very hopeful one. Mr. S. Clowes has well grasped the spirit of the scheme in the following:—

I cannot tell you how delighted I am to see that a Trust Fund has been started to help the dear old *Freethinker*. I have often wondered why this has not been done years ago. Surely it would have saved you an enormous amount of energy. And to think what other advantages we have lost through unnecessary absorption of energy, which might have been usefully utilised on your part. Anyway I am glad you have made a start. Herewith is my subscription. It won't be the last, I can assure you. I shall support this even more heartily than the Sustentation Fund.....This will be open, I take it, for anyone to subscribe until it is completed. In this case it will give me the greatest pleasure to keep on doing my bit whenever I can. That is the difference between a Trust and a Fund.

If all work in that spirit we should not be long in getting the Trust completed. Mr. A. W. Davis regrets that he is not in a position to capitalize his contribution, but will keep on in the old way so long as it is necessary. Mr. J. N. Prowns encloses cheque for £10, and says it is merely a token of his desire to help, and but a small measure of his interest and admiration of the work done. Mr. J. W. Arnott sends a subscription with an appreciation of the appeal as a "human document."

Mr. A. F. Bullock writes:—

As one of your poorer readers of many years, I was very glad to see the scheme of endowment, and hereby enclose my mite of £1 towards that £8,000 as a token of my great appreciation and gratitude to you and all those in the past and present that have laboured and sacrificed so much on behalf of the good old paper and the Cause.

Mr. T. Warwick, whose record as a Freethinker stretches back to the early days of Bradlaugh, sends his contribution with warm wishes for the success of the effort.

Mr. D. Macconnell says: "My wishes for the Fund's success go a thousand times beyond my power to help it forward."

All we can say is that if each friend of the *Freethinker* helps in the same spirit, all will be well.

Mr. J. B. Palphreyman hopes:—

the fund will meet with a ready and substantial response, because you deserve the support of the whole of the Secular movement for the very efficient way you and your colleagues have upheld the freedom of both thought and speech in the columns of the *Freethinker*.

Mr. and Mrs. H. R. Side writes:—

The Trustees and initial subscribers are to be heartily congratulated on the beginning that has been made. Freethinkers all over the country now have an opportunity of showing their recognition of the great work you have done, and are doing, for the Cause by seeing to it that in future there will be no such thing as an annual deficit on the balance-sheet of the fearless *Freethinker*.

I gave a full account of the Trust last week, and there is no need now to repeat it at length. The *Freethinker* Endowment Trust is a legally executed instrument, administered by five Trustees, the duties of whom are laid down in the Trust Deed. The purpose of the Trust is to secure a sum of money which, by investment, will produce about £400 annually, to be devoted to clearing off the annual loss incurred in maintaining the *Freethinker*. The capital will remain intact, and the investments will be governed by the law controlling the investment of Trust Funds. If at some future time the *Freethinker* should be able to pay its way, and, in the opinion of the Trustees, there does not appear any reasonable probability of the income of the Trust being again required, the Trust may be wound up and the funds handed over to the National Secular Society. No personal benefit can be derived from the Trust by anyone, either now or at any future time.

If successful, and so far as it is successful, the Trust will abolish the usual Sustentation Fund. No one will regret that—myself least of all. It will get rid of a not too pleasant feature of the paper, to say nothing of the constant anxiety involved.

As I said last week the main idea governing the promoters of the scheme is that the regular subscribers to the annual fund should, so to speak, capitalize their donations, and give once for all. But it would be wrong to imagine that the scheme is intended only for those who are in the fortunate position of being able to fall in with the suggestion. It is hoped that all will join in the effort, from those whose subscription cannot rise above a single Treasury Note, to those who are in a position to write a cheque for a large amount. It is the will to help that counts in this effort, and divided between *Freethinker* readers in proportion to their interest and ability to help, the total, while the largest ever aimed at in the history of our movement, is, I am convinced, not above the capacity of the Party. It should not be impossible to find one hundred Freethinkers who are ready to subscribe £50 each, or two hundred at £25 each, and so bring the Fund to a triumphant end, and give a solid financial guarantee for the future. And, in addition to these, there is the very much larger body that can help with smaller amounts. I am quite convinced that the raising of the required sum is well within the capacity of the Party. This is intended to be a final effort, and it rests with those who believe in the value of the *Freethinker* to our great Cause to see that it is such.

I am reprinting this week the whole of the subscriptions to date, which includes those announced last week. I think it is a list of which we may all feel proud, and although we have a long way to reach the goal, I look to our getting there with every confidence.

FIRST LIST OF ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

	£	s.	d.
H. Jessop	500	0	0
C. Bush	500	0	0
"A Friend"	500	0	0
"In Memory of Sir Hiram Maxim"	250	0	0
W. B. Columbine	250	0	0
J. Cahn	250	0	0
W. J. W. Rasterbrook	100	0	0
J. Fallows	100	0	0
T. Robertson	100	0	0
J. Sumner	50	0	0
J. Davie	50	0	0
J. F. Shoults	50	0	0
"Sin Cere"	31	10	0
J. W. Arnott	25	0	0
F. Lee	20	0	0

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E. D. Side	10	10	0
Mrs. I. King	10	0	0
G. Lunn	10	0	0
J. N. Prowns	10	0	0
Mr. and Mrs. H. R. Side	5	0	0
J. Pendlebury	5	0	0
A. W. B. Shaw	5	0	0
"Tenarg"	3	0	0
J. B. Palphreyman	2	0	0
A. W. Davis	2	2	0
F. Kietgens	2	2	0
D. Macconnell	1	1	0
R. Daniell	1	0	0
E. H. Hassell	1	0	0
D. C. Drummond	1	0	0
S. Clowes	1	0	0
T. Warwick	1	0	0
A. F. Bullock	1	0	0
J. Somerville	0	10	0
A. R. Clark	0	2	0
Total...	£2,848	17	0

Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to the "Freethinker Endowment Trust," and crossed Midland Bank, Limited (Clerkenwell Branch). All letters should be addressed to the Editor, *Freethinker*, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

To Correspondents.

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

A. CLARK.—No responsible Atheist has ever defined Atheism as being other than without belief in a God. And so far as genuine Freethinkers prefer the term Agnostic, they mean exactly the same thing. The denial of a God is absurd, since the word by itself means nothing at all. The denial of *the God*, that is, some defined object of worship set up by religious sects, from the Mumbo-Jumbo of the savage to the figurehead of more recent religions, is a thing that religionists of all kinds are constantly doing.

I. DONOVAN.—Mr. Cohen wrote to the address on your letter, but some days after it was returned.

E. TWYNAM.—We have already said that we do not care to spend our time on discussing the character of a dead man, and for that reason we propose to let the matter drop, particularly as your last letter adds nothing to the controversy, and does not challenge the truth of anything that has been said. To say that some Freethinkers have behaved badly cannot be regarded as a disproof. Moreover, we may point out that you invited the retort by what we cannot help considering an extravagant eulogy. The original article by "Mimnermus" was quite generous enough to have been passed without comment, and would have been, but for your unfortunate letter. Will other correspondents who have written us on the subject, criticizing Miss Twynam's letter, please take this as a reason for the non-appearance of their communications.

MR. J. W. PARKER writes that the lines commencing "My country is the world, I count no son of man my foe," appear in Moore's *Universal Kinship*, and was attributed by him to Robert Whitaker, published some years back in a San Francisco newspaper.

E. SMEDLEY.—We are aware that Huxley spoke of consciousness as a "third thing" which existed, and it is probably the use of the word "thing" in this connection which is responsible for the conclusion. It suggests that consciousness is an independent existence in itself, and that is a begging of the whole question at issue. Huxley appears to have been guilty of the common mistake of taking the statement of his own case from his opponents. And that nearly always is a fatal policy. We quite agree with

all you say as to the rubbishy talk of an ideal Jesus. As a matter of fact there are any number of them. Everyone who wants to pull the leg of the credulous invents an ideal Jesus. All that the New Testament supplies is the name. As you say, if we take away the supernatural element from the New Testament Jesus, there is nothing left.

A. B. PHIPSON.—Next week.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Cohen opened the winter session of the Glasgow Branch on Sunday last, and there were two fine meetings. In the afternoon the hall was full, and in the evening crowded, with some standing. The lectures were followed with close attention, and Mr. Hale, the President of the Branch, made a very earnest appeal for continued and extended support. One very pleasing feature of the meeting was the large proportion of young men present, and the intelligent interest displayed. There was a good sale of literature, every copy of the *Freethinker* and of Mr. Cohen's new booklet, *God and Evolution*, being sold out.

This new pamphlet, by the way, is going well, and we suggest that an extra copy purchased for lending to religious friends of the more thoughtful type—the ordinary believer would hardly understand it—would do much good while the subject is fresh.

We have several times of late been asked to arrange for some lectures in Liverpool. Mr. Cohen has now arranged for two meetings, one on October 25, and the other on November 22. The lectures will be delivered in the Pictou Hall, and we should be glad to get the names and addresses of all those who are willing to help in conducting the meetings or in making them known. The names and addresses may be sent to this office, or to Mr. W. McKelvie, 29 Claremont Road, Seaforth, Liverpool. There will be handbills to distribute, and help required in other directions. And the hall should be packed if all do their best.

Mr. C. Clayton Dove writes, suggesting that it would prove interesting to readers of the *Freethinker* if friends who live abroad would send some brief accounts of the state of Freethought in the parts where they reside. He mentions particularly the various South American States. We quite agree with this, and should be very pleased indeed to hear from any friends who care to write us.

The Leeds Branch has booked the Trades' Hall, Upper Fountain Street, for a course of Sunday evening meet-

ings. To-day (October 11) the lecturer will be Mr. J. Nichol, and we hope that Leeds Freethinkers will do their best to make the venture a success. If possible Mr. Cohen will visit Leeds some time this side of Christmas.

Miss Ettie Rout opened the autumn session of the North London Branch with a lecture on "Ancient Maori Freethinkers." The lecture was listened to with great attention and interest, and a good discussion developed afterwards. To-day (October 11) the lecturer will be Mr. Graham, of the Commonwealth Land Party. The address will be followed by discussion.

Mr. George Whitehead has now concluded his summer campaign on behalf of the N.S.S., and is back in London. His meetings during the whole season have been very successful. Large audiences have been addressed all over the country, a considerable quantity of literature distributed, and many new members gained. Mr. Whitehead is available for lectures during the autumn and winter, but Branches and others will please apply direct to him. Letters addressed c/o this office will be duly forwarded.

In announcing the course of lectures which Mr. Saphin is delivering in West London we omitted to give the address of the hall, although it was given in the "Guide" column. The place of meeting is Stanley Hall, Hallam Street, Great Portland Street.

A Tenebrious Affair.

Bangor (Bana-chor, "wide precinct") was the name of three important ecclesiastical sites. The original Irish monastery in County Down, the sister convent on the banks of the Dee in Flintshire, and the later episcopal see on the coast of Caernarvon, all bore the same name.....Bangor on the Dee was founded by Iltud, a fellow disciple with St. David at St. Germain of Auxerre. It contained within its "wide precincts" a whole army of monks.—Rev. J. H. Blunt, M.A., F.S.A., *Dictionary of Doctrinal and Historical Theology* (1872), art., "Monasticism."

Bangor-Ys-Coed is situated on the banks of the Dee, in a detached portion of Flintshire, which adjoins the English counties of Chester and Salop.....It is famed as having been the site of the most ancient monastery in the kingdom, founded before the year 180. According to Speed, the monastery, or college, of Bangor, contained, in the year 596, not fewer than 2,400 monks. Of these ecclesiastics 1,200 were slain by Ethelfrid, King of Northumbria, who afterwards devastated the monastery.—*Black's Picturesque Guide through North and South Wales* (1848, p. 80.

Howbeit there reigned in 593 a king in Northumberland, named Ethelfrith, a very mighty man.....In 607 Ethelfrith went down into the Welsh country and fought a great battle near Chester; and the Welsh fled before his face. In that battle were slain many monks who had come to pray that the Welsh might win the day. Ethelfrith said that although they had not fought, they had done as much to defeat him by their prayers as the fighting men with their swords and spears, and he gave orders to slay them.—York Powell, Historical Lecturer Trin. Coll., Oxford, *Early England* (1879, p. 31.

Acting on Carlyle's principle that "you cannot pass too quickly over hot coals," the two authorities last quoted do not delay to examine the remoter causes of the tragedy which they report. An older writer was less discreet. This is Dr. Peter Heylin (1600-1662), a cleric of Royalist and High Church principles, who belonged to an ancient Welsh family. In his celebrated *Cosmographie*, he says:—

Banchor, by Beda, called Bancornburg, a famous monastery of the Britains, containing above 2,000 monks, attending their devotions at the time appointed, at other times labouring for their livelihood; most cruelly and unmercifully slaughtered by the Saxons at the in-

stigation of *Austln*, the first Archbishop of Canterbury, offended that they would not yield to his authority.¹

The opinion of Dr. Heylin was shared by many learned divines at or near this period, such as Dr. Matthew Parker (1504-1575), Archbishop of Canterbury; Dr. John Jewel (1522-1571), Bishop of Salisbury; Dr. Thomas Godwin (1567-1648), Bishop of Landaff; and Dr. William Cave (1637-1713), Canon of Windsor.² On the other hand, John Fox (1517-1587), the famous martyrologist, declared the matter to be too uncertain for him to pass a judgment upon it. Dr. Thomas Fuller (1608-1661), influenced, as he says, by the example of Fox, took the same course, "preferring," as he facetiously observes, "to clear a twilight innocence [rather] than to darken it into midnight."³

Subsequently, Jeremy Collier (1650-1726), the notorious nonjuror, attempted, in his *Ecclesiastical History of Great Britain*, to invalidate some of the inferences supporting the charge against Augustine; and Henry Warton (whose dates I know not), made the same effort in his *Angli Sacra*, with greater plausibility. Later on, Dr. Thomas Tanner (1674-1735), Bishop of St. Asaph, who had been inclined to acquiesce in Cave's decision, was converted to the opposite view by Warton's arguments.⁴

Mr. Broughton, who wrote a lengthy and very judicious account of Augustine, in the *Biographic Britannica*, and Dr. Kippis, editor of the work, who contributed a long note at the end of the article, do little more than report what their predecessors had said on the present point.

After all, the various persons above cited were only judges, and not testifiers, though their estimate of the testimony before them is of much interest. Hence, the reader will now want to know what fire occasioned all that smoke. Here is the evidence:—

1. The Venerable Bede (672-735) declares that Augustine sought to get his master, the Pope, acknowledged by the ancient Britons, who had taken Christianity with them into Wales and the bordering countries where they had finally settled in their retreat from successive invaders; and that because these people would not obey him in this matter, he said:—

If ye will not accept of peace with your brethren, ye shall receive war with your enemies; and if ye will not preach the way of life to the English, ye shall suffer from their hands by way of revenge.

This prediction, adds Bede, was fulfilled by Ethelfrid, King of Northumberland, who, marching into Wales against the Britons, slew nearly twelve hundred monks of Bangor.⁵

2. Geoffrey of Monmouth, who "about the year 1125" translated into Latin from the *Amorica*, a chronicle brought to this country by Gualtier, Archdeacon of Oxford,⁶ says therein:—

Ethelbert, King of Kent, when he saw the Britons disclaiming to yield subjection to Augustine, and that they scorned to be subject to himself, stirred up the

¹ My copy of this deeply interesting work is a folio of over a thousand pages. The title page of the volume is missing; but the work is divided into four books, the second, third, and fourth of which have full title pages, dated, in the first two cases, 1665, and the last case 1662.

² For Parker and Jewel, see Thomas Fuller's *Church History of Britain*, 1837, vol. i., p. 95. For Godwin and Cave, see *Biographia Britannica*, 1778, art. "Augustine." The respective works of the four authors are *Antiq. Brit.; Apol.; Praesut. Ang. and Hist. Literaria*.

³ Fuller, *Ibid.*

⁴ Collier, etc., *Biog. Brit.*, art. "Aug.," hereinafter cited as *B.B.*

⁵ Cited in *B.B.*

⁶ Berrington's *Literary History of the Middle Ages*, 1846, p. 263.

Northumberlanders, and other Saxon princes; that gathering a great army against the city of Bangor, they should go forth to destroy the Abbot Dinot, and the other clergy, who had formerly slighted them.⁷

3. Thomas Gray, who, three hundred years before the time of Bishop Godwin, as this authority tells us, wrote annals in the French language, says:—

Augustine, being in this manner rejected by the Bishops, and other learned men among the Britons, complained so heavily there of to Ethelbert, King of Kent, that that Prince immediately levied a considerable army, and, falling upon them, destroyed great multitudes of them, taking no more pity on them than a wolf does of a flock of sheep.⁸

4. Nicholas Trivet, a Dominican, whom Fuller places three hundred years before his own day,⁹ and who wrote a chronicle in Norman French,¹⁰ says:—

Ethelbert, King of Kent, being highly offended, incited Ethelfrid, King of Northumberland, and other petty Saxon Kings, because they had contemned Augustine in council, etc.

He also adds that vengeance quickly overtook Ethelfrid, for the Duke of Cornwall, with the dukes of North and South Wales, arrested his onward march, wounding him severely, slaying ten thousand and sixty of his troops, and forcing him to give an undertaking to leave all Wales to the Britons, and to keep within his territory north of the Trent.¹¹

5. Bishop Godwin, "upon the authority of a very ancient anonymous manuscript, which he does not cite," states that Augustine, having instigated Ethelbert to borrow forces from Ethelfrid, wherewith to attack the Britons of Wales, accompanied this army, which gained a complete victory at Chester.¹²

How, then, does the case stand?

According to Bede, Augustine told the Britons that if they did not take the course which he indicated, they would be slain by the Saxons. This, however, is obviously not only a prediction, but also a menace. Their ecclesiastical disobedience was to be the cause of their being destroyed; and therefore the vindictive jealousy, or the predatory desires which should induce their national enemies to destroy them, would be nothing more than the mere occasion of their destruction. But, as Bishop Godwin sharply observes, the prophet was in a position to effect the fulfilment of his own prophecy. This fact was evidently noticed at a much earlier period. For a parenthesis in Bede's work states that Augustine's prophecy was fulfilled after Augustine's death. But this parenthesis has a very clumsy air; and it is wanting in King Alfred's translation, so that it may have been either put into the original after his time or else rejected by him as spurious. Moreover, it is very remarkable that, when transcribing the inscription on the tomb of Augustine, Bede cites the day and the month, but not the year of the saint's death. Commenting on this most singular omission, Fuller says:—

Strangely is that watch contrived, and is generally useless, which shows the number of the hour, but not the hour of the day. As this epitaph points at the day, of smaller consequence, leaving out the year, of greater concernment, this hath put men's fancies on various conjectures.

⁷ Fuller citing *M.S. in pub. lib. Cantab.*, p. 167.

⁸ *B.B.* Fuller succinctly from Jewel's *Apol.* Thomas Watson, *History of English Poetry* (sec. ii.) has *Scalae Chronicum*, an ancient French history or chronicle of England, never printed, which Leland says was translated out of French rhyme into French prose.....It was probably written or reduced by Thomas Grey into prose.....Others affirm it to have been the work of John Gray, an eminent churchman, about the year 1212."

⁹ Fuller.

¹⁰ *B.B.*

¹¹ Fuller, citing Spelman's *Councils*.

¹² *B.B.*

One of these, he adds, is the surmise that Bede suppressed the year of Augustine's death, knowing that this year was earlier and not later than the year of the slaughter, he being otherwise "most critical and punctual in the notation of time." Of course, if the parenthesis above referred to is an interpolation, the interpolator endeavoured to improve upon the device that Bede had used in suppressing the date of Augustine's decease.

The points of greatest importance in this enquiry are the two dates, that of the massacre, and that of Augustine's death. Fuller says that at his day the massacre was generally referred to 603; but he gives 605 as an alternative date, and adds that the *Annals of Ulster*, "whose authority is not to be contemned," gives 1613. He remarks correctly that the first of these dates was before, and the second, after the death of Augustine. Mr. York Powell assigns the massacre to 607; and he may safely be trusted to have given the date generally accepted by modern scholars, as his work is one of a series issued by Messrs. Longmans & Co., under the supervision of Dr. Mandell Creighton for the use of learners. The same year, 607, is also given in the nineteenth edition of Haydn's *Dictionary of Dates*, a standard work of reference.

This disposes of Jeremy Collier, whose only plausible argument in defence of Augustine is the date given to the massacre in the *Ulster* record. As to the time of Augustine's death, Henry Warton says, on the authority of "an ancient book cited by William Thorn," that both Augustine and Pope Gregory the Great died in one year, and he adds that 604 is the date universally admitted for the death of Gregory.¹³ This contention obviously satisfied Dr. Tanner, and, apparently, also Mr. Broughton. But it has lost credit, for in Blunt's *Dictionary of Doctrinal and Historical Theology*, an erudite lucubration strongly imbued with Catholic principles, there is a chronological table of great length and value, wherein are the following notices:—

Gregory I., s. by Sabinianus, 604.

Sabinianus, s. by Boniface III., 606.

Boniface III., s. by Boniface IV., 607.

Augustine, Archbishop of Canterbury, died, s. by Laurence, 607.

According to the sepulchral inscription which Bede has preserved, Augustine departed this life on May 26, and this date is the one assigned for his commemoration in the calendar of the Anglican Church. As the massacre took place in the year of his death it might easily, as far as time was concerned, have been due to his instigation, whether he lived, or did not live, to see it. If he were present upon the occasion, and then accompanied Ethelfrid towards the south, he may have caught a fatal chill, when the three dukes, after routing that monarch, pursued him right up to the Humber;¹⁴ or perhaps on their day of vengeance his saintship was taken wounded from the field and brought back to Canterbury, where in any case his mortal remains found a rest which, however, at certain remote periods, was much disturbed by pious hands.¹⁵

C. CLAYTON DOVE.

There is a third condition too, which must be fulfilled before the great teachers of the world will cease to scoff at its religion. Creeds must become intellectually honest. At present there is not a single credible established religion in the world.—G. B. Shaw, *Preface to "Major Barbara."*

¹³ *B.B.*

¹⁴ Trivet cited from Spelman in *B.B.*

¹⁵ *B.B.*

Correspondence.

JESUS AS A FREETHINKER.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The mentality of some so-called "free" thinkers seems to be a cross between that of the Particular Baptists and the Heresy-hunters. Their freethought is merely another form of Little Bethelism. These new Little Bethelites are even more credulous in believing everything bad about Jesus than the old Little Bethelites were in believing everything good about him. Mr. H. Cutner recently quoted my statement (without my proofs) that "Jesus was a Freethinker," and one ardent "Freethinker" sent me a copy of the article marked "You fool." Street urchins scribble the same kind of comment on brick walls, but don't consider themselves "freethinkers" by virtue of this act. Similarly there are village yokels who acquire a reputation for intellect and courage on the strength of cheeking the parson or throwing a cabbage-stalk at the curate. So in the literary world. I know people who prefer the *Daily Mirror* to the *Freethinker*. Mr. Cutner thinks there is more "humanity" in Jack London's words than in the words of Jesus. I like Jack London, but I cannot agree with Mr. Cutner. Other people consider Nat Gould a greater writer than William Shakespeare, and perhaps Mr. Cutner would not agree with them. As to my being a "reverent Rationalist," I see no inherent beauty or wisdom in irrationality and irreverence. To me the Bible is simply a collection of books, some of which contain the finest examples of style and thought the world has ever seen; and some of them have great anthropological and ethnographical value, as evidence of the origin and migration of different races with identical legends. Some so-called Christians believe that the Bible is the word of God: some so-called Freethinkers believe it is a "fake." These two beliefs seem to me equally silly, and the believers equally credulous. Both sets of believers stand in need of mental courage. They are both frightened to accept the Bible for what it really is.

Now as to Jesus being a "freethinker." The proofs I cited were his scathing condemnation of the Church—of the priests, scribes, hypocrites, and Pharisees; his toleration and sympathy with sexual unconventionality; and his attack on the suppression of knowledge: "Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered." Mr. Cutner is a hero-worshipper, but he prefers Ingersoll as a hero to Jesus. Personally I think Jesus, stripped of the priestly tinsel and lies, is a greater personality than Colonel Ingersoll, and the equal—if not superior—of the heroes worshipped by Colonel Ingersoll: Socrates, Newton, Kepler, Bruno, and others. No doubt this is largely a matter of opinion—or taste; but to deny the right or reason of any difference in choice is to deny freedom of thought itself.

Further, not even from the philosophy of Freethought must the element of growth be excluded. Freethought maxims and methods which may have been useful thirty or forty years ago may be useless and even mischievous nowadays. The trouble with many Freethinkers seems to me that they are out of date. They don't realize that since the time of Ingersoll and Bradlaugh a new generation has grown up—a generation to which I belong, and which (rightly or wrongly) I feel to be fundamentally more advanced than the well-meaning but misguided Freethinkers who find such a relish in Bible-banging, which to me seems utterly childish and boring. Still it takes all sorts to make a world, and I for one would not deprive them of their simple pleasures. I don't even expect to shake their simple faith in the efficacy of Bible-banging; but, please, please, Mr. Cutner, don't ask me to share it!

ETIE A. ROUT.

BLACK AND WHITE.

SIR,—Our South African papers frequently have amusing information about this remote and little-known country culled from home papers, but I have seldom seen anything so curious as the paragraph quoted

with approval by Mr. Ernest Anderson, in your issue of the 2nd inst., *re* the shocking slavery on the Rand.

The indictment in detail is that (1) the mine natives are "herded together"—like policemen or soldiers, or schoolboys, or any other class for whom free quarters have to be found; (2) that they cannot have their wives with them, any more than the other helots aforementioned; (3) that this shocking state of things last for a year—one-seventh as long as the bondage of an old time enlisted soldier.

But this horrible state of affairs is not the worst. These innocent children of nature are no more allowed to come and live in the white man's city of Johannesburg or its white suburbs, unless they have business there which make their presence desirable, than a white man would be allowed to go and take up his residence in a native stad, unless the chief thought his presence was for the good of the community!

For this reason anyone in Johannesburg engaging a coloured gentleman to work for him is compelled to pay a fee for a "pass" for the said child of nature, and the latter has to discard his blanket and barely assume the trousers of the oppressing race with a pocket wherein to hold the badge of servitude.

The native population of Johannesburg not provided with passes, or provided, as is usual, with stolen or forged passes, are one and all criminals or outcasts from their tribes, engaged in sly grog selling or thieving. The native houseboy himself is not infrequently a member of one of the gangs, Amalaita (Amalekites), Ninevites or other confraternities, securing safety from the police by having an authorised domicile and a white baas to testify to his immaculate innocence if ever he is suspected of being accessory to any crime in the neighbourhood. Lately large gangs of natives have been parading the streets on Sundays with pick-handles and knocking passers-by about or having battles between themselves. They ought certainly to be encouraged to settle among us in thousands! The boys come to the mines because they get better paid, better housed, better fed than with any other employers, and are able to go home and buy wives and oxen to work for them for the rest of their lives. It is certainly a shame that they should have to toil like a woman or a white man for so long a period.

J. LATHAM.

Johannesburg, South Africa.

LOURDES V. HOLYWELL.

SIR,—Lourdes must have a great quantity in its composition of the Lord's special mixture for the cure of rheumatism than the waters of Holywell.

Only this week a friend (who is a great sufferer from rheumatism) told me a true story of a Chorley Catholic, another great sufferer from this complaint, whom it took five minutes with the help of two sticks to "drag his limbs across the kitchen floor." This Chorley Catholic told a companion that he had made up his mind to go with other sufferers on the pilgrimage to the healing waters of Holywell, and that he expected to come back cured. "Well," said his companion, in broad Lancashire, "if theau coms back curat, I'll turn a Papist."

His great suffering on the journey to this Pool of Lilloum was nothing to what he experienced when he landed on the brink of this wonderful mixture of H₂O and grease left by the thousands who had been washed in the same basin. Two strong men of God and Mary laid hands upon him, ducked him well under, and, in so doing, pushed his legs with force to straighten them whilst submerged. The scream he let out during this inhuman treatment would have "lifted" the proverbial "roof." He returned home in pain and in a worse condition than before he made the pilgrimage. His companion called to see him and asked him if he had got cured. He replied, "Never no more. Never no more." From the enclosed cutting it will be seen that the Preston pilgrim could do a seven-mile sprint, whilst our Chorley friend with the aid of his two old friends, those reliable sticks, was taking the usual five minutes to get across his kitchen floor. Will some of your readers who have analysed both waters, tell me what Lourdes contains to make all this difference?

AN ENGINEER.

OUR INSTRUCTORS IN RIGHTEOUSNESS.

SIR,—Whether it be the courtly Cardinal, walking in the gardens of the Vatican, dreaming of the conquest of the world by the Church and yearning for a return of those conditions under which the Inquisition and St. Bartholomew were possible; or whether it be the sleek Anglican prelate in glossy rochet and snow-white lawn, coquetting with Modernism from the carved pulpit of an ancient lofty Cathedral; or the sour-visaged exponent of the hideous theology of Knox and Calvin, in Geneva gown and starched bands, revelling in the terrifying mysteries of election and predestination; or the self-appointed young evangelist, a complex combination of arrogance, earnestness and ignorance, bawling at street corner, with raucous voice, the glad tidings of eternal torment to those who refuse to accept as true, his imbecile utterances.

Each and all, however lofty their pretensions or sincere their motives, are to the man in touch with the discoveries of science, merely the twentieth-century representatives of the medicine man of the primitive savage.

A. W. B. SHAW.

Obituary.

On Friday, October 2, the remains of Mr. J. A. Morris were interred in East London Cemetery. Mr. Morris had been a member of West Ham Branch N.S.S. for about thirty years, and was at one time its secretary. Loyalty and honesty were the hall-marks of his service. A number of members of West Ham Branch were present at the graveside, and a Secular service was read by the Branch President, Mr. R. H. Rosetti.—MRS. H. ROSETTI.

We laid to rest on Saturday, October 3, the remains of Joseph Wilson, of 3 Station View, Hetton-le-Hole, in the beautiful cemetery, Hetton Lane. In accordance with the expressed wish of the deceased gentleman, the service of Austin Holyoake was read by Mr. J. Fothergill. A few years ago he extracted a promise from us that this service should be rendered to him. The late Mr. Wilson was a pioneer in the true sense of the word, although he "ploughed a lonely furrow" in his own quiet way. He showed to us something of the sturdiness of his character by the fact that he has assigned a goodly number of his books to be used in the furtherance of Freethought. This is the first occasion that the Secular form of burial has been resorted to in this place. The goodly number of people at the graveside gave a perfectly respectful hearing, and were evidently deeply interested.—J. F.

On Thursday, October 1, we laid to rest the remains of Margaret Boll, of 1 Council Houses, New Herrington, in the quiet little churchyard of St. Aidan's. By this sad event Freethought in North-East Durham has sustained a real loss. It is around Mr. Harry Boll that the Freethought of the immediate district lives and moves, and has its being; and now that his kindly and ever helpful helpmeet has gone from his side, the void will be felt by all of us. The funeral was very well attended by a large number of relatives and friends. The service of Austin Holyoake was read by Mr. J. Fothergill, Hon. Sec. of the South Shields Branch of the N.S.S. It was listened to in respectful quietude. It is some consolation to think of our departed friend as sleeping well in the "Haven under the Hill."—J. F.

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LONDON.

INDOOR.

ETHICS BASED ON THE LAWS OF NATURE (Emerson Club, 14 Great George Street, Westminster): 3.30, Lecture in French by Mademoiselle Delblende on "Le Sourire at le Rire." All invited.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W.): 7.30, Mr. J. W. Graham Peace, "What is Coming?"

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7, Mr. William Platt, "The Freedom Movement in our Schools."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11, John A. Hobson, M.A., "Sir E. Benn's 'The Confessions of a Capitalist.'"

STANLEY HALL (Hallam Street, Great Portland Street, W.1): 8, Mr. E. C. Saphin, "God and the Devil." With Lantern Illustrations.

OUTDOOR.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 3, Mr. H. Constable, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S. (No. 2 Room, City Hall, "A" Door, Alibon Street): 6.30, Mr. Wm. MacEwan, "Previous Minds of the Young." Questions and Discussion. Silver Collection.

LEEDS BRANCH N.S.S. (Trades' Hall, Upper Fountain Street): 7, Mr. J. Nichol, "Does Man Survive Death?"

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Dramatic Performance by the Secular Dramatic Circle. Shakespeare's "Two Gentlemen of Verona." (Silver Collection.)

OUTDOOR.

BOLTON BRANCH N.S.S. (Town Hall Steps): Friday, October 9, at 7.30, Messrs. Addison, Partington, and Sisson.

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