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Views and Opinions.

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Christianity and Progress.

The confusion set up by Lord Oxford in using "Christendom" as the equivalent of Christian or Christianity, enables him to dwell upon the supposed good influence of Christianity in broadening and humanizing life. He says, "The real contribution which Christianity has made to the betterment of political and social conditions is to be found in the indirect influence, slow and fitful, but clearly discernible in the course of history, of some of its formulative ideas." That is a very vague statement, and one cannot be quite sure what is meant by it. If it means that the emergence of ideas of betterment gained ground among Christians, and were often advocated by Christians, the statement calls for no particular efforts at disproof. In a society where the overwhelming majority make profession of belief in Christianity it would be strange indeed if good men and good ideas did not find place among them. But the same would be equally true if we took a society where any other religion was dominant. What we would like to know is what are the particular ideas of social and political betterment which the world owes to Christianity? We do not know how Lord Oxford would get over the very awkward fact that political and social betterment lie outside the aims of the New Testament and also of the earlier generations of Christians. Neither the New Testament nor the early Christians saw in human society something to be improved, but rather something to be tolerated, or avoided. The avowed aim in both cases was to keep oneself unspotted from the world, to live apart from it as something intrinsically evil, and to make the best that could be made of it, pending its speedy end with the second coming of Jesus Christ. And it was not until these notions were weakened by the pressure of circumstances that social and political improvement appeared to some Christians as desirable ends in themselves.

Slavery and Christianity.

There are one or two scientific instances mentioned by Lord Oxford which he would have us take as examples, direct or indirect, of the good influence of Christianity. There is the case of slavery. It is admitted that progressive legislation in favour of the

better treatment of the slave existed in the Roman Empire, and also that the number of slaves decreased. And to that we may add the current ethical teaching that slavery was a mere political institution, but was contrary to the "law of nature." Lord Oxford also points out that even after slavery had died out, or had nearly died out, in Europe, it was revived in an incredibly brutal form under Christian auspices. Now here would seem to be a very good test of the value of the alleged beneficent influence of Christianity. From whatever causes, it is admitted, that slavery had practically disappeared in Europe. Its reintroduction was entirely a Christian affair. It was reintroduced by Christian nations without anyone having the slightest notion that it was religiously wrong. The famous Sir John Hawkins received the direct support of the English Government in the traffic, and, as though to emphasize the point that there was nothing religiously objectionable about it, the Government lent him a ship with the significant name of *Jesus*. In 1698 every British subject was authorized to raid any African village and carry off its inhabitants. The Christian nations of the world entered into fierce competition with each other for the control of the traffic. One of the principal uses of the victories won by Marlborough was to secure to English ships the monopoly of carrying slaves to the Spanish colonies, and it was estimated that in a single century no less than three million slaves were carried into the European colonies and settlements by British vessels. In this respect England was not worse than the other Christian countries; they were all fighting for the control of the slave trade. The important point is that no one saw anything religiously wrong about it, although here and there moral objections were raised against it. The modern slave trade, more brutal, more bloodthirsty, with less to excuse it than any other form of slavery the world has ever seen, was introduced by Christians, fathered by Christians, and no Christian objection was raised to it. Of what value was Christian influence?

Children of God.

Lord Oxford says the fact that it took so long to extirpate slavery shows "how slowly the Christian leaven may work." But it is not a question of the slow working of the Christian leaven, but the damning fact that after slavery had died out—from causes with which Christianity had nothing whatever to do—it was actually reintroduced and flourished under Christian auspices, and its final abolition was strongly opposed by convinced Christians. Slavery, says Lord Oxford, "involves the negation of one of the cardinal doctrines of St. Paul—that Christ died for the whole human race, every member of which, whether Jew or Gentile, bond or free, became potentially a Son of God." If we may speak quite plainly, and without being considered impertinent, that is simply rhetorical nonsense. The belief that all men are children of God no more carries with it a condemnation of slavery than would the statement that all men are

members of a division of the animal kingdom. There is no condemnation whatever of slavery, as an institution, in the New Testament. The very phrase quoted recognizes its existence. Christians did not, then or later, question that all men might be equal before God, but that has never carried with it of necessity social or political quality. The two first rules on Hawkins's slaver, the *Jesus*, was that the men were to "Serve God daily," and to "Love one another." In the worst days of American slavery it was never questioned that every man, black or white, was a son of God. And so little was it thought that the spirit of Christianity was opposed to slavery that the slave party in the United States never ceased to appeal to both the Old and New Testament in support of the traffic. And the example to the rest of Europe in the liberation of slaves was set, not by Christian Spain, Christian Italy, or Christian England, but by revolutionary, anti-Christian France.

* * *

Christian and Pagan Slavery.

Even at that we have not got a full view of the slavery that was instituted by Christians. Ancient slavery was theoretically an advance. Slaves were for the most part captives of war, and when prisoners were carried into captivity instead of being killed, it was, so far, an improvement. Christian slavery could have no such excuse. And while the slave owner of antiquity enjoyed immense power over the persons of his slaves, the slave was not the hopeless, degraded being he became under the rule of those who accepted him as the son of God. The Roman slave might be a mechanic, a teacher, a philosopher, a poet. In the middle of the nineteenth century Christian Americans made it a penal offence to teach a coloured man to read or write. Professor Cairnes, in one of the wisest books ever written on the subject of slavery, contrasting ancient with Christian slavery, said:—

In antiquity precautions were taken to prevent the slave from breaking his chains; at the present day (mid-nineteenth century) measures are adopted to deprive him of even the desire of freedom. The ancients kept the bodies of their slaves in bondage, but they placed no restraint upon the mind and no check upon education; and they acted consistently with their principle, since a natural termination of slavery existed, and one day or other the slave might be set free and become the equal of his master.....The education of slaves amongst the ancients prepared the way for emancipation. The prohibition of the education of slaves amongst the moderns has naturally suggested the policy of holding them in perpetual bondage.

Professor Dill states the bald fact when he says that "the slave class of antiquity really corresponded to our free labouring class." And for downright cruelty the Christian slave traffic outdid anything the world has ever seen. When we find that fifty per cent. of the negroes brought from Africa died from their treatment before reaching their destinations, that scores at a time would be dumped into the sea, while still alive, that slaves were packed in ships in spaces no wider than would be allowed them in coffins, that the Church held its slaves to the last, that propagandist bodies such as the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel derived part of its revenues from slaves, the cant of assuming that Christianity helped to destroy slavery because it said that we were all children of God, is almost staggering. Renan well summed up the attitude and influence of Christianity in this connection in the following passage:—

Christianity never said that slavery is an abuse.....The idea never came to the Christian doctors to protest against the established act of slavery. The rights of men were not in any way a Christian

affair. St. Paul completely recognized the legitimacy of a master's position. No word occurs in all the ancient Christian literature to preach revolt to the slave, nor to advise the master to manumission, nor even to agitate the problem of public law which has been produced among us concerning slavery..... Never is the master Christian who has Christian slaves counselled to free them; it is not forbidden even to use corporal chastisement towards them. If the movement which dates from the Antonines had continued in the second half of the third century, and in the fourth century, the suppression of slavery would have come about as a legal measure, and by redemption money. The ruin of the liberal policy, and the misfortunes of the times caused all the ground which had been gained to be lost.

The religious cant of our politicians is one of the most amazing things of these days. And of this the trick of attributing the abolition of slavery to a religion which in its sacred books says never a word against it, which permitted, with its complete and official sanction, the revival of it, in the most frightful form known to history, which in America bred slaves for market as one breeds cattle, which denied the slaves all civil and political rights, and which finally fought against the abolition of slavery in the name of its traditions and inspired teaching, to say that it led to the removal of slavery because it taught that we were all children of God, is enough to make one despair of human sanity, if not of human honesty.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

(To be Concluded.)

Prayer.

IN the Correspondence Column of the Rev. Professor David Smith, D.D., in the *British Weekly* for March 4, the subject discussed is "The Efficacy of Intercession." An enquirer, "T. G. B.," asks, "How may we feel assured that prayer is an objective power?" and the Professor's article is an attempted answer thereto. This is one of the oldest questions in the world, and the attempted solutions of it are innumerable; and the fact that the question is being still asked is adequate evidence that no solution hitherto offered has given anything like entire satisfaction. Indeed, to "T. G. B.'s" question an affirmative answer, based on clearly ascertained facts, is utterly impossible. And yet Christians, of a certain type, are perpetually trotting out what they regard as positive evidences of answers to prayer, most of which are absurdly whimsical and wholly insusceptible of convincing verification. For example, the Rev. F. C. Spurr, in a book entitled *Knowing God for Certain* (p. 27), declares thus: "For my part there is indelibly written in my own life, not one or two, but a hundred answers to prayer of the most surprising kind. Explain the facts as we may, the facts are there." Mr. Spurr does not inform us what those facts were; but we are profoundly convinced that so-called answers to prayer are not facts at all, but *interpretations* of facts. All we contend is, not that the facts do not occur, but that the religious interpretation attached to them is false. Many of our readers doubtless remember that some years ago a booklet was issued called, *Answers to Prayer*. Some of the answers therein recorded are laughably silly, as, for example, the one related by or about the Reverend Dr. Horton. This well-known divine was once a member of a picnic party when a lady's slipper got lost. After all efforts to find it had failed, Dr. Horton fell on his knees and asked God to direct the searchers, and in answer to that request the slipper was immediately found. We are surprised that

even the most credulous Christians could unblushingly publish such an ineffably ridiculous story.

Professor Smith distinguishes between the objective and the subjective efficacy of prayer, saying:—

Of the latter there is no question; for, says Sir Walter, "the person who lays open his doubts and distresses in prayer, with feeling and sincerity, must necessarily, in the act of doing so, purify his mind from the dross of worldly passions and interests, and bring it into that state when the resolutions adopted are likely to be selected rather from a sense of duty than from any inferior motive.

Of course, there is much truth in that extract, but it is a truth absolutely unaffected by either Theism or Atheism. If a man sits in judgment upon himself, fully realizing what he is and what he ought and may become, the result achieved will be the purification, uplifting, and ennoblement of his whole nature. Prayer to one's self, if the phrase is permissible, when sincerely offered is bound to prove more or less efficacious, whether there is a God or not. But let us listen to the Professor, who, of course, thinks all prayer is addressed to the Deity:—

Is this all? Suffice it meanwhile to observe that the objective efficacy of prayer is surely a necessary corollary of this its subjective efficacy; for as much as by altering our attitude toward God and his purposes it alters his attitude toward us and the operation of his purposes regarding us. Consider our relation to the natural order. Its laws are fixed, and they pursue their course regardless of entreaties, crushing us when we oppose them. Yet when we align ourselves with them they prove helpful and beneficent. The wind which drives an unskilful mariner on the rocks, despite his cries, is the ally of one who knows how to lay his course and trim his sails. And since Nature's laws are God's ordinances, nothing else than, in Martineau's phrase, "his personal habits," this is the principle of prayer. It is the alignment of our wills with his, our removal of the obstacle which would hinder the operation of his gracious purposes. Hence the objective efficacy of prayer is a corollary of its subjective efficacy.

We cordially congratulate Dr. Smith for the non-theological, and possibly, anti-theological, character of that long extract. After all, it is we who align ourselves with Nature's laws, and by so doing attain to peace and happiness. Prayer is thus a wish or desire which transforms itself into action. But why retain the old word after its meaning has become altogether new? Furthermore, this new conception of prayer does away with the need of God. Certainly, it is difficult to discover what God's mission can be, or what there is for him to do. If he is the creator of Nature and its laws, if the evolutionary process was initiated and guided in all its stages by him, it cannot be legitimately claimed that he possesses any moral character at all. In the light of evolution he is clearly seen to be an absolutely inconceivable being. And yet Professor Smith, who is surely not ignorant of the abominable cruelty and disgusting savagery which still characterize life in the jungles and wildernesses of the earth, has the audacity to speak of God in terms of justice, tenderness, mercy, and love.

At this point he takes up the subject of intercessory prayer, and observes: Personal prayer by altering our attitude toward God alters his dealings with us; but what alteration in their attitude toward him can be effected by our prayers for others remote from the sphere of our personal influence? Yet experience attests the fact. "A friend of mine," writes Erskine, of Linlathen, "told me that he had been at different times sensible of spiritual blessings bestowed on him through the prayers of particular friends at a distance. He was conscious of a special blessing, and he had a most distinct

impression that that blessing came to him through the prayers of a particular person; and on asking the person afterwards, he learned that he had been praying for that very blessing for him." Such an experience—and who has not known the like?—is indeed mysterious, but it is neither incredible nor irrational.

Here, again, God is unnecessarily introduced. Intercessory prayer is based upon the natural truth that mankind do exert a vast amount of influence upon one another. Telepathy is a natural phenomenon, which strikes us as mysterious simply because we have not as yet subjected it to a process of strictly scientific investigation. But if the doctrine of intercessory prayer, as taught by Professor Smith, were true, it would bring the blush of shameful neglect to the faces of all believing Christians. If they had but done their duty in the faithful and diligent use of intercessory prayer there would have been no Pagan nations in the world to-day. In answer to earnest and continuous intercessory prayer God would have converted them all to Christianity long ago. What saith the Scripture? It represents God as saying to his beloved Son: "Ask of me, and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possessions" (Ps. ii. 8); "In his days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace till the moon be no more. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth" (Ps. lxxii. 7, 8). But the doctrine of intercessory prayer, like that of personal prayer, is fundamentally false. Our position, however, is not that God turns a deaf ear to all the passionate prayers addressed to him by faithful and loyal people, but that no God exists either to hear or answer them, and we maintain that it is infinitely more honourable to deny the existence of a Supreme Being than to believe in that of the Christian Heavenly Father and Saviour of the world.

Thus we are irresistibly driven once more to the only rational conclusion, namely, that Atheism is immeasurably and in every respect preferable to Theism, and that the world will remain sadly out of joint until it has been universally accepted as such. The cry, "There is no God," is, though of a revolutionary character, an essentially sane and wholesome cry, which ultimately humanity will heartily adopt and treat as its very own. But Atheism, of course, will cease to be the moment Theism dies. Humanity will then be all in all. It will then vigorously undertake the mission which hitherto it has looked upon as God's and vainly waited for him to fulfil. The world's redemption is man's responsibility, and it will continue unaccomplished until man bravely recognizes it as his own and does his very utmost to carry it into effect.

J. T. LLOYD.

SPENCER AND GEORGE ELIOT.

I wrote of her [George Eliot]: "Miss Evans is the most admirable woman mentally I have ever met. The greatness of her intellect, conjoined with her womanly qualities and manner, keep me by her side most of the evening. Striking by its power when in repose, her face was transfigured by a smile. Her philosophical powers were remarkable. I have known but few men with whom I would discuss a question in philosophy with more satisfaction. The impression constantly produced was that of latent power—the ideas which came from her being manifestly the products of a large intelligence working easily.—Herbert Spencer, "Autobiography."

Royalty in Eclipse.

By the grace of God, defender of the Faith.—*Inscription on Coinage.*

Tradition means giving votes to the most obscure of all classes, our ancestors. It is the democracy of the dead.—*G. K. Chesterton.*

MANY years ago a popular engraving depicted Queen Victoria handing a family Bible to a coffee-coloured and very scantily clad African chieftain, and remarking: "This is the source of England's greatness." This sentimental and highly imaginative work of art should have been used as a frontispiece to *The Letters of Queen Victoria, 1862-1878, edited by G. E. Buckle.* 2 vols. (Murray). For these portly volumes are most instructive, and even amusing, but Mr. Buckle possesses the discretion of a born editor, and a peculiar veneration for the powers that be, which is the delight of Continental writers, and which makes British biography a thing apart from all biographies of all the world outside England.

These volumes form a portion of the biography of a Christian sovereign. The old Duchess of Kent, the Queen's mother, was ever solicitous that Victoria should grow up into a model Christian monarch, and the most churlish critic cannot deny honestly that she succeeded admirably in so training her. As so often happens in mundane affairs, the Queen had the defect of her qualities. In addition to being very pious, she was Puritanical, and also tyrannical. Instead of being the embodiment of sweet Christian charity, the Queen was narrow, strict, old-fashioned, and opinionated. Writing half a century after Mary Wollstonecraft's famous vindication of the rights of woman, she said: "The Queen is most anxious to enlist everyone who can speak or write to join in checking the mad, wicked folly of 'woman's rights,' with its attendant horrors, on which her poor, feeble sex is bent, forgetting every sense of womanly feeling and propriety."

On another occasion the Queen bursts out: "Lady — ought to get a good whipping." It is curious to remember that, by the inscrutable decree of Providence, the Queen's life was prolonged sufficiently to witness the sad spectacle of her eldest son, the then Prince of Wales, as a witness in a society divorce case—a dreadful tribulation spared to Albert the Magnificent. The Queen was greatly upset. Forgetting for the moment the vaunted power of prayer, she even turned in her extremity to the secular press for consolation, and wrote to Mr. Delane, editor of the *Times*, asking him if he would "frequently write articles pointing out the immense danger and evil of the wretched frivolity and levity of the views and lives of the higher classes."

What Delane said on receiving this precious letter has never been divulged, even by the office-boy. He did the best he could in most difficult circumstances, but he did not hurry himself. Five years later he did write one solitary article upon this very subject, but, apparently, the first fine rapture of indignation had passed, and its publication was too late to achieve the salvation of the British aristocracy. To-day the Higher Classes are further than ever from living in the chaste atmosphere and domestic sobriety of the Royal sanctuary at Balmoral Castle in the spacious days of great Victoria.

Young people sometimes express their extreme amazement at the tears shed in such old melodramas as "East Lynne" and "Uncle Tom's Cabin," where the players almost splash their way about the stage. This wallowing in sorrow was fashionable years ago, and it had the Royal patronage. Queen Victoria's

husband died of typhoid fever, and in a letter to Lord Russell she wrote:—

The things of this world are of no interest to the Queen.....Where all was peaceful sunshine and perfect happiness.....there is now utter desolation, darkness, and loneliness, and she feels daily more and more worn and wretched. The eternal future is her only comfort.

It is a caustic commentary to recall that Queen Victoria survived her husband forty years, and that period included the junketings of two Jubilees. During that lengthy period she mourned in a manner that would have surprised an undertaker. For four decades a picture of Albert, taken after death, and framed with immortelles, hung over her bed. His room was kept as he left it last, and servants were actually employed in laying out his clothes as if he were still alive. To the outside public her grief was expressed in marble and metal in Kensington Gardens in a design somewhat resembling a dinner-cruet. It was a fitting apotheosis of a period without parallel in English history, or any other.

The Queen was quite cross with her eldest son because he was so unlike her lamented husband. The future King Edward was always running about, perhaps to escape from the watchful eyes of dear mamma. She objected very strongly to his attending race-meetings, particularly Punchestown Races. He explained: "I do not go there at all for my amusement but as a duty." As late as 1870, when the Prince was nearing his thirtieth year of age, she wrote deprecating his going to Ascot, "to which William the Fourth never went, nor did we," she added. It was really indiscreet on her part to drag in poor William, who is known to posterity because his stone effigy guards the city end of London Bridge. "Silly Billy," as he was called, had a left-handed affair with the handsome Mrs. Jordan, the actress, and the caricaturists of the period used to delight in depicting William walking with the lady trundling a perambulator with the Royal Arms of England on the side. However, Edward was no fool, and his spirited reply is worth quoting: "I fear, dear mamma, that no year goes round without your giving me a jobation on the subject of racing."

And he pointed out that, after all, it was "the national sport of this country." As a fact, mother and son had very few ideas in common. She was very vexed with Edward because his attitude towards her beloved Germany was so very different from her own. And it must be conceded that his knowledge of the world was far superior to hers. Victoria might refer to Germany as "that country from which everyone nearest and dearest to the Queen has come, and to which she is bound by every possible tie," but Edward saw only too clearly the menace of militarism.

Indeed, there was no doctrinaire nonsense about Edward. Like his famous predecessor, Charles the Second, he recognized that most men and women were no better than they ought to be, but he thought none the worse of them on that account. In politics Edward was a Liberal, and on the occasions on which he used his vote as a peer of the realm he always voted in favour of Liberal measures. His sister, the Princess Royal of England, who afterwards became Empress of Germany, was even more advanced in her ideas. She befriended Strauss when his book, *The Life of Jesus*, startled Europe, and imperilled his position. It was a noble gesture, recalling the munificence of Catharine of Russia in buying Denis Diderot's library when he was well-nigh penniless, and installing him in it as librarian with a salary. But the fact remains that the institution of Royalty is an anachronism. It is but a survival tolerated for

political purposes, and it places human beings in a false relationship. Surrounded by hundreds of servants, and besieged by time-serving and ambitious people, Queen Victoria had a lonely life. A shy woman, she hated publicity, and dreaded the pageantry of the opening of Parliament as if it were her own execution. She loved nothing better than to be left alone, yet she was compelled to pass her life in a whirl of ceremony. Writing to her uncle, after her widowhood, she broke out: "I feel no energy, no interest, nothing left, no one to talk to. I sometimes wish I could throw everything up and retire into private life."

And the sycophantic and lick-spittling press write of these people as if they were supermen, and superior to human weakness. At the 1887 Jubilee celebrations of Victoria a schoolboy was leaning from a window to get a glimpse of the monarch. Presently he called out: "Why, she's only a woman!" He was disappointed at not seeing a flying steam-roller with outspread wings.

Remembering the awful drivel of the English press concerning Royalty, it is instructive, and even amusing, to reflect that Queen Victoria was very ordinary and very commonplace as a woman. This is revealed in these letters, and also in every page of her book, *My Diary in the Highlands*, which not even the trained literary assistance of Sir Arthur Helps could rescue from downright mediocrity. What is even more astonishing is that Privy Councillors, statesmen, generals, admirals, and otherwise rational beings, should have worshipped such a stupid woman and conducted themselves in a humiliating fashion before her. Gladstone, it is true, held his head higher than the others, and the Queen complained that "he talks to me as if I were a public meeting." The wily Beaconsfield laid the flattery on with a trowel, but he was gratifying an ambition, and needed powerful support.

Perhaps we had better not be too hypercritical concerning the old Queen, and reserve those marks of affection for the Victorians. They were self-complacent folk, and deemed themselves the heirs of all the ages, and the paragons of progress. And now their age is becoming a byword, and a synonym for a narrow, half-educated, and conventional view of life, and justly regarded, not as an opening era of Liberty, but as the last phase of a discredited Feudalism.

MIMNEMUS.

Can Materialism be Monistic?

CAN Materialism account for both physical and mental phenomena? In other words, is the prime element of the material universe of such a nature as to account for the emergence of living substance as well as for its mental appanage, in the animal kingdom, called mind? Advisedly, I avoid as much as possible the term matter, because its more or less fixed connotation or meaning consists of mechanical or physical properties from which sensation and thought could never be derived. The term is, therefore, misleading, despite re-definitions and warnings. The only way that Materialism may be shown to be an all sufficient monistic principle is by indicating that well-known facts of experience and science are consistent or congruent with the unifying assumption or hypothesis, that ultimate substance is intrinsically both physical and psychic. And my object in this article is to examine the mental mechanism of the animal body and see whether the facts of its structure and function indisputably point—what inference do they warrant without the aid of conjecture or speculation.

The problem is not susceptible of direct proof or of a crucial experiment.

I must begin with the truism that the animal body is literally a physical machine, taking in energy-yielding material at the mouth and using it for a definite purpose as any other machine does.

In one important respect, however, it differs from all artificial machines; that is, in the fact that its objective or purposive "target" is not external to the machine, but lies within itself; indeed, its own self is the proximate end of its activities. The energy it takes in and reduces to an available form is to operate its own mechanism. Within this auto-cycle there are in fact two objectives or ends—a proximate and an ultimate—viz., the preservation of its own life and the perpetuation of the species. These two, however, are not parallel lines, independent of each other, but are convergent upon one ultimate end or object—viz., to make a particular organised compound of living substance, a perpetuity in the form of an immortal chain, the individual organisms being the links thereof. To realize these ends the organism is made up of three sub-systems—the muscular, the alimentary, and the cerebral—which are kept functioning by two mental goads or *stimuli*—viz. the impulses or cravings to *eat* and to *procreate*. The first system is to effect mechanical movement; the second, to bring about chemical change with a view to releasing the chemical energy of the foodstuff eaten; while the third is to co-ordinate the activities of the other two systems as well as to act as guide to the muscular and as sentinel to the alimentary.

Now, these three systems rise simultaneously from the same mass of protoplasmic cells. At the morula and blastula stages of the embryo the cells are identical. It is only when it reaches the gastrula stage that differentiation first makes its appearance in the form of two distinct germinal layers—called hypoblast and epiblast respectively. These two layers either directly or indirectly build up the entire animal body. The skin and its modification, together with the nervous system, are wholly derived from the outer or epiblast layer. Thus in their *origin*, there is no difference of any imaginable kind between the three systems. In other words, the differentiation into a nerve or a ganglion differs in no way whatever from that into muscular fibre or secretive gland. Is the cerebral or nervous system then less related to material substance and physical energy than the other two? Certainly not in parentage or birth. Nails, hair, and epidermis spring from the very same germinal layer as the substance of the brain.

Let us now turn to the other end, to the finished article—the complete and functioning organ—and see if it shows any sign of divorce from matter and energy. It is undoubtedly the most complex and elaborated of the three. It is essentially the organ of mind. Its emergence was purposive like all the activities of living substance. Its object was to enable an auto-mobile creature to exist amid the blind hostilities of an environment seething with purposeless energy. It was Nature's device to protect the organism from destruction or extinction, and enable it to realize its two ends—viz. to keep alive and to perpetuate its kind. The contingencies of death increased with the complexity and capacities of the organism. When, therefore, it became an auto-mobile the risks of disaster were indefinitely multiplied, and mind is Nature's means to defeat these blind forces which tend to destroy the organism or terminate the species.

It achieves this end in two ways: by acting as a *goad* and as a *guide*. As feeling it serves as a goad, stimulating the muscular system to action; as intellect, it serves as a guide to the movements induced.

A gland would go on secreting till it burst; the energy blood-pond would empty itself dry, or the body burn to death, if mind, in the form of pain or hunger, did not raise the alarm. In the latter capacity, *i.e.* as guide to movement, the cerebral system is very elaborate, for Nature has gone to the pains of evolving a sense-organ for each of the four principal kinds of energy—the eye, for radiant; the ear, for molecular; touch, for molar; and taste and smell, for chemical; in each of which material energy is intimately geared with the mental. Each organ consists of three parts: the organ proper at the outer end, the corresponding brain centre at the inner, and the connecting chain of nervous matter uniting them for transmitting the energy tapped by the organ to the centre there to be translated to the particular sensation.

If, then, the energy that reaches the optic centre, for instance, does not stand in a causal relation, in the truly physical sense, to the sensation awakened, it may be pertinently asked what, in the name of logic and reason, is it there for? Why did Nature go to such infinite pains through æons of gory times to elaborate such an exquisite material contrivance, marvellous beyond expression for sensitive efficiency for tapping solar energy and simultaneously evolve a spot in the brain more highly specialised still to receive it, if the energy tapped and transmitted was not to act as a physical excitant to awaken the sense of vision in the cerebral plasm. I repeat, if that was not the sole end and purpose of the entire contrivance, what is the eye for? Indeed, only a form of insanity can dispute it. If the sense of perception, then, was the sole objective for which the entire system was evolved, it is obviously a *product* and not a "by-product"; and the same is true of the other senses. But can incompatibles be geared together? If not, there is at bottom a kinship between the two orders—the physical and the psychic—however impossible it be for us to envisage it. To sum up then: there is the same identical reason for regarding the senses to be the direct products or effects of physical stimulation as there is for regarding "movement" to be the object of the muscular, or "chemical change" to be that of the alimentary system.

May I hypothetically ask, is not the awakening of the mental related to the significant fact that the organogens are, in living matter, in a state of flux; that is, that the inorganic bonds are more or less loosened. Who can tell the limits of this loosening? Is it impossible that the very atoms, as in the thermionic valve, are disintegrated in the plasm of the brain to the extent that the outfit of material properties is temporarily cast aside? If so, there is no great mystery attached to the idea that the physical tremors of the incoming impulse should stir up its non-material phase and awaken sensation, provided ultimate substance is psychic as well as physical. It should not be overlooked that in one important respect the cerebral system differs from the others. It has *two* material roots—a chemical, in the brain plasm, and a physical in the sense-organ, and mind is awakened by the interaction of these two forms of material energy—the physical stimulant acting upon the chemical flux.

Thus in material origin, in dependence upon physical energy, and in purposive end the three systems are identical. No one is paramount, *i.e.* independent of the others; the three are dovetailed into each other by reciprocal services. Mind is no more a "by-product" than "motion" is to the muscular, or gastric fluids to the alimentary system. The three have one and the same material and mundane objective—*viz.* to ward off death and continue the species.

There is another fact that, to my mind, clinches the argument. On the assumption that existence is dualistic at base, *i.e.* has two roots, Idealism and Materialism, may, in some form or other, be both true, but as a monistic conception or postulate undertaking to explain the whole—the inner or immediate realm of consciousness as well as the mediately inferred external world, that is impossible; one must necessarily be false. Is there a touchstone to decide? Yes. The truth must be with that which can show, not with the aid of metaphysical thimble-rigging, but by appeal to facts of universal experience, that what its rival assumes as the bedrock of its edifice, has no independent existence. Now, nothing is more palpably evident than that mind, animal or human—indeed, the only mind we have any knowledge of—is *not* an entity but a fleeting intermittent phenomenon, vanishing in sound sleep and reappearing on awakening; contingent upon a normally functioning brain, which in turn is absolutely dependent upon a body capable of providing it with a continuous stream of chemical energy and which is specially geared by means of sense-organs into physical nature to tap its energy to act as *stimuli* to awaken sensations—the elements of mind—within the cerebral plasm. These are no metaphysical hat-tricks or Maskelyne performances, but facts, verified, daily and hourly, in human experience.

KERIDON.

Acid Drops.

A little child was run over and killed by a motor-car belonging to the Bishop of Truro. The driver of the car was acquitted of all blame, and one can sympathise with all concerned in such a distressing event. The child was only four years of age and it ran out of its home, to go to Sunday-school, singing as it ran, "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild." We wonder what kind of a moral orthodox Christians will draw from the accident? Those who believe that God watches over all, and who credit his interest in answer to prayers, may well ask what kind of watch he was keeping when he permitted that child, in the act of singing praise to Jesus, to be crushed under the wheels of a car? If that does not make them review their beliefs, they are hopeless. It is enough to shake the faith of even the Bishop himself.

The Dutch Reformed Church has solemnly affirmed its unshaken belief in the literal truth of the Garden of Eden story. A prominent Amsterdam clergyman had expressed doubts as to whether the serpent actually spoke to Eve. A complaint was lodged by a member of his church, and the Convocation was called upon to settle the question. It declared that the story in Genesis must be accepted as literally accurate. That is quite genuine Christianity, and it is well to know where the mass of Christians stand and to remember the fact. And we have a very strong suspicion that many of those preachers who at present profess other views would soon be back in the old position if circumstances made it advisable.

Here is another example of the kind of mentality that still flourishes in the Christian world. There is at present in London, staying at the Savoy Hotel, a lady evangelist from America, who has been sent direct here by command of Jesus to preach to the Londoners. This lady is preaching at the Surrey Tabernacle, and there are the usual accounts of crowded meetings, with scores of converts. She reports that a number of railwaymen were converted because she had two pictures of trains, one going to heaven and being received by all the pantomimic angels, etc., with which old-fashioned Christians were quite familiar, the other emptying its passengers into Hell. She says that heaven is just like Washington, with a great gold throne in the centre and avenues of glittering gold houses. It all sounds very absurd, but,

after all, it is not more absurd than some of the accounts of heaven, given in the Bible, or the scenes described by the Rev. Vale Owen and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. The daily papers report that scores of converts were made, and we can readily believe it. There is a type of Christian at large that almost beggars anything that could be seen inside of an idiot asylum. And yet we call ourselves a civilized people, and send missionaries abroad to convert other savages, while we have the Surrey Tabernacle filled with them in London.

Mr. Hamilton Fyfe is back-sliding again. In an article, "One in Ten," he labours to prove what Ibsen pronounced in his plays—that it is the minority that counts. He has to resort to the theologians for his authority, and concludes in italics with "The Devil is doing his job a sight better than you and I are doing ours." The Labour movement will certainly not exceed the speed limit if it is unable to rise above this vocabulary of the tin tabernacle.

A rap on the knuckles is given to Mr. Bramwell Booth by a reviewer of his book, *Echoes and Memories*. We gather that Mr. Booth's sense of humour gyrates in the same circle as that of the Rev. Billy Sunday, and the reviewer, with an instinct that does him credit, writes as follows:—

But his sense of humour becomes inoperative when critics or unbelievers trouble. He is betrayed into curious expressions of pity for "poor Huxley and one or two other infidels." His good-natured chapter on Herbert Spencer, whom he has "never taken quite seriously," is amusing in a sense not intended by the author.

The impertinence of an intellectual nonentity like Bramwell Booth passing an opinion on Herbert Spencer is delicious.

Girls are being taught a lot of things not worth two-pence, says Sir Bruce Bruce-Porter. We suggest that cutting out the Scripture lesson would improve matters considerably.

We are living in a rather heroic age, declares Dr. A. S. Russell. We are. Look at the heroic efforts our clergy are making in order to gain clients.

A Methodist reviewer of *The Life and Letters of (Father) George Tyrell*, says:—

As the king of any country keeps his ear close to the ground for rumours, and reckons with them if he would keep the saddle of power, and wisely yet without parade makes his concessions to popular clamour, so Rome tacks and triums when need be. Yet with this to add, obdurate and firm when the issue grows clear and she is driven into the open.

This appears to be a case of the pot calling the kettle black.

Addressing a girls' college, the Marquis of Londonderry said recently that there had been great changes in opportunities denied to previous generations of women. The emancipation of women had been a long process: they had got the vote; they had prevailed in the end. But this generation had had to break through a great deal of ignorance, prejudice, superstition, and convention. What the Marquis said is correct. But what he ought also to have pointed out is this. Women's chief opponent has been St. Paul; and the things they have had to break through are the direct result of many centuries of Biblical teaching. The Marquis might well have drawn attention to the fact that with the loosening of religion's hold on men, the prejudice and convention which stood in the way of women's emancipation has largely disappeared. He could have only pointed out, too, that the women's most ardent supporters have been Freethought pioneers. Another fact that would have been worth stressing was, that the priestly profession is to-day the last stronghold of masculine exclusiveness. If the Marquis had told his audience of girls all this,

he would have done them a good service. And it is facts such as these which the Women's Freedom League, and kindred associations, seem not to be aware of. Or if they know of them, they appear to think it politic not to mention them, but prefer rather to fan the flames of anti-man hatred in order to secure adherents. Sex-war, however, only rouses up masculine opposition. And suppression of facts does but prevent the true cause of the antagonism to women's emancipation from being recognized. The main cause of this opposition is, the Christian religion with its low teaching of the subjection of women. Here is a piece of evidence as to the truth of that assertion. Representatives of the United Free Church of Scotland met recently at Glasgow to discuss a proposal to admit women to the ministry. The proposal was rejected. One speaker, Dr. Knight, of Uddington, said he was quite willing that women should be allowed to teach, but not to preach or dictate to man. "That prerogative of man had come down to us from the third chapter of Genesis." Dr. Knight's attitude is that of the churches throughout the Christian era. Freethinkers would do well to bring to the notice of their Christian suffragist friends this Christian utterance and all that it implies—the subjection of women.

The charge of Atheism, brought against the editor of a paper in Brockton, Mass., a charge based upon an old witch law of the seventeenth century, was dismissed, but he was found guilty of sedition. This old law was the one under which Abner Kneeland was charged and imprisoned in the middle of the nineteenth century. Kneeland was a Freethinker and a strong anti-slave advocate, and shortly after his release, he placed his hall at the disposal of William Lloyd Garrison, when every Christian in Boston refused him a hearing. Garrison was, of course, preaching against slavery, and the good Christians of Boston could not permit wholesale denunciation of so Christian an institution.

In the last letter written by Mrs. Trebitsch Lincoln to her son, John Lincoln, previous to his execution, occurs this passage: "I shall expect you to meet me at heaven's gate when my time comes to pass over. God has chosen you to pass first, that is all. I leave you to His care." This is, of course, but the pitiful attempt of a stricken mother using accustomed religious phrases to console her son at his early death. But one cannot help wondering whether Christian readers of this letter noted the implication of those statements. They imply that God, having decided John Lincoln should die before his mother, deliberately planned that he should murder another man, and so be hanged. If the whole drama was thus predestined as the mother's statements suggest, then God must be held solely responsible for all mental agony subsequently endured, not only by the murderer, but also by his relatives and the friends of the murdered man. A God that could do a thing like that is a pretty curious deity for any mother to wish to worship.

Probably we shall be told that the mother is wrong. God is not responsible for the whole affair. John Lincoln being endowed with free will deliberately chose to commit the sin of murder, and suffered accordingly. If that be so, we fail to see what possible benefit to the relatives and dependents of the murdered man was the execution of Lincoln. It did not lessen their suffering one iota, and it merely created more suffering—that experienced by the executed man's family. In God's scheme of justice, apparently, it is the innocent who do all the suffering, and the sinner—so long as he dies repentant—goes straight to Heaven. Truly, God's ways are not our ways, and the works of the Lord surpasseth all understanding.

"Woodbine Willie" is still presenting his five-a-penny fags to all and sundry. In the *Forum* he declares:—

Men will say the parson does not know what he is talking about. Well, nor do the politicians half their

time. Sermons may be pretty rotten, but they beat political speeches into a cocked hat. Moreover, even a parson may have brains, and at any rate he has no Party axe to grind, and no vested interest to serve, if he is a decent parson.....The parson must think and pray that he may be able to discern the signs of his time and understand what the will of God is for man, and he must blaze it out as he sees it.

No vested interest to serve! We like that. Why, every parson knows quite well he must strive to keep the church from declining in power and income, if his salary is to be forthcoming. Whilst that is so, every parson will do his utmost to prevent his church's interests from being threatened in any way. What is at the back of all this clerical opposition to healthy Sunday recreation? Nothing but a desire to safeguard vested interests. But the desire is camouflaged as an anxiety for the people's moral welfare. It was just the same in Biblical days. It is so now. Priests, like leopards, don't change their spots.

The Rev. "Willie" says the parson must think and pray that he may discern the signs of his time, and understand what the will of God is for man. That, again, is another ancient priestly claim. The curious fact is that no priest, ancient or modern, has ever yet discovered the will of God for man to be anything antagonistic to the vested interests of church or priest. And he never will. "Woodbine Willie" is of the true line of mystery-mongers. The only difference betwixt them and him is that he has discovered the solemn phrasing of his priestly forebears to be no longer impressive with his modern public. So he adopts the argot of the race-course or football field, or whatever is suitable to the occasion, in order to tickle the ears of the groundlings. That is the result of his reading the "signs of his time." There are other signs; one is, a growing indifference to religion. But we doubt whether "Willie's" clownish antics will make any difference to that.

A novel method has been devised by the Pontefract (Yorks) Municipal Corporation to prevent the closing down of "black-listed" school buildings. To bring up to standard the buildings and playgrounds of the non-provided schools in the borough area, from £3,000 to £4,000 is needed. To raise this sum the Council has decided to make a "voluntary" rate of fourpence in the pound for two years. By way of encouragement to the ratepayers to meet this "voluntary" rate, the Council point out that the alternative—that is, to replace the schools if they are closed—is a compulsory rate of two shillings in the pound for an indefinite period. We like the idea of all this very much. The churches and chapels, because they desired to retain denominational religious teaching in the schools pledged themselves to keep their schools in fit condition, and have received State grants to enable them to do so. Having neglected to comply with the conditions laid down by the Education authority, they now wish the ratepayers to make good the deficiency. We ought not to complain, we suppose; it is only the Christian way of doing things.

We are waiting for the lectures that Bishop Gore is now delivering in St. Paul's to be published in book form, when we hope to notice them at length. Bishop Gore is giving up much that ought never to have been believed, and one would think the more of what he gives up, if it were not that he is retaining beliefs that are, intellectually, on all fours with them. Christians must proclaim, he says, "as constantly, as emphatically and as publicly as possible the abandonment by the Church of an untenable position—the position that the early chapters of Genesis record literal history." Adam and Eve are not historical, but are symbols of man and woman. The ascension of Jesus is a mere figure of speech, etc. Well, if one is allowed to turn anything into religious symbols, "Jack the Giant Killer" will do as well as anything else. There is endless opportunities for intellectual dishonesty here, and the Christian clergy may be trusted to exploit them to the full.

But the fact that Bishop Gore is attracting attention because he does not believe in the literal accuracy of these old-world fables is evidence, not merely that they were till yesterday believed in by the whole Christian Church, but also that they are still believed in by the overwhelming majority of Christians. And, as we have often pointed out, what are we to make of a state of affairs in which a man may gain the reputation of a daring and fearless thinker for disowning belief in stories that are not a bit better, intellectually, than similar legends which may be told by numerous admittedly savage tribes? We are astonished to find that these men do not believe in these stories, when our surprise ought to be that they do. And what are we to think of the mental calibre of men who have to reach old age before they either discover, or have the courage to disown such legends, and who meanwhile connive at them being taught to children all over the country as true?

The League of Nations, says Prof. Gilbert Murray, has never had to use force to prevent a war, but it has stopped six. From what the Professor says, it is clear that the ideal of Thomas Paine put into practice has achieved more during its brief existence than have the Christian churches during their whole history.

The hope of the future lies in the influence of the women, declares Sir Arthur Newsholme. If that be so, we are afraid the future looks none too bright if women remain as they are now—very much under the influence of the priests and parsons. That they are thus dominated would appear to be indicated by the articles and books produced by our living women writers who, presumably, are the leaders of feminine thought and opinion. An analysis of some few of these productions suggests that these writers take most of their notions from sermons and parish magazines. And sources of information such as these are not exactly notable for furnishing really advanced or progressive ideas. In the realm of literature it is those writers who have cast off the dominance of Christian thought and modes of thinking who have made the finest and most original contribution to progress. At present, such writers are mostly men; women writers of the intellectual calibre of George Eliot are very rare. And it is not until women also throw off this same dominance that they will contribute to progress some truly progressive and original ideas. When that occurs, the hope of the future will indeed be bright.

The impudence of the average parson is wonderful, and when a number of them act together it is unbounded. Over and over again we have pointed out that their professed concern about Sunday entertainments leading to the working man losing his day of rest is so much humbug. Now we see that Manchester clergymen are asking the City Council to delay the Sunday music in the parks till 8 o'clock as an earlier start will interfere with Church attendance. Now there cannot be less labour at 8 than at 7, and if Sunday music is wrong at 7, it is wrong at 8. The motive here is naked professionalism. The parsons do not want their business interfered with. And they are asking the City Council to shut up something that will interfere with their trade. And these are the people who were recently arguing that people had not lost their faith in Christianity. Why it cannot stand up against a band!

Of course, the Council may submit to this insolent request. The clergy have such a number of underhand ways of bringing pressure to bear that the Council may be afraid to refuse. And yet we say we are not a priest-ridden people! It is false. We are over-ridden by as contemptible a priesthood as exists anywhere in the world. It is a priesthood that lacks the courage to be openly intolerant, but pursues its aims by all kinds of cowardly and detestable methods.

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.

"FREETHINKER" ENDOWMENT TRUST.—J. F. Aust, 10s. 6d.; W. R. Snell (S.A.), 10s.; C. F. Small (Fiji), 10s.

L. BROWN.—As you will see, we deal this week with Lord Oxford's remarks on Slavery and Christianity. We have only dealt with it very briefly, but Mr. Cohen's booklet bearing that title contains a fullish record of the facts, fully documented. The second edition of this work is almost exhausted, and when the remaining few copies are gone we should like to re-issue this with the companion work on *Woman and Christianity* in a form cheap enough for it to be spread broadcast. We are vain enough to think it would do much good.

B. LECHMERE.—Thanks for what you have done. The letter is probably only an excuse for exercising a boycott.

LEEDS BRANCH N.S.S.—We are almost tired of telling Branches that it is no use sending us notices of meetings for the current week that do not reach us till Wednesday morning. We complete our preparations for the press on Tuesday.

W. WALKER.—The additional sentence, "two aspects of human experience," bears out all we have said on the question. If anyone knows of "mind" or "matter" as more than that we should much like to meet him. It is a compliment to the readers of the *Freethinker* that the articles on this subject should have attracted so much attention.

A. B. MOSS.—Glad to know you are better. We have been pressed from several quarters to take a little holiday, and intend taking a week off at Easter—provided nothing interferes. But we are feeling all right again. Thanks for enquiry.

HAIRSPITTER.—Your contribution to the *Freethinker* Endowment Trust was acknowledged in the issue for Jan. 17.

H. ELMAN.—There is no need for pessimism. There were always plenty of fools in the world, even at its best. We should not say that more of them are associated with Christianity than was ever the case before. There is only a shortage of men of ability, and that naturally gives the fools their chance to come to the front. And they make the most of their opportunity.

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.

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

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

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 lectures to-day (March 14) in the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester, at 6.30. He has been asked to deal with the question of a Future Life,

with special reference to Spiritualism, and will do so. If people would only get into the habit of facing this life with courage and intelligence, there would be less opportunity for the antics of those who depend upon the cowardice and stupidity of the multitude.

On Sunday next Mr. Cohen will lecture again in the Century Theatre, Archer Street, Westbourne Grove. The success of the last meeting fully warranted a return visit, and we hope that West London Freethinkers will do what they can to advertise the meeting. On the last occasion many friends did excellent service in distributing printed slips announcing the lecture. We hope that they and others will be equally active on this occasion. There is a good public for Freethought lectures if it can only be got at.

Ashton-under-Lyne is a new place for Freethought lectures, but a Branch of the N.S.S. was formed there recently, and a very energetic band of young men have been carrying on the propaganda, and evidently with good results. Mr. Cohen lectured in the Co-operative Hall, at Ashton, on Sunday last, and the audiences, for a new meeting-place, were quite good. The lectures were listened to with attention and evident interest, and many questions were asked at the conclusion of each address. Mr. Newton, the energetic Secretary of the Branch, took the chair in the afternoon, and Mr. Monks, President of the Manchester Branch, in the evening.

A lady reader has for some time been supplying the *Freethinker* and *Literary Guide* free to the Chiswick Public Library. She has now received a letter of thanks from the Committee, thanking her for what she has done, but declining further issues on the professed grounds that it will for the future accept only official and local publications, and will purchase any others it requires. Well, the Freethinkers of Chiswick have as much right to ask for Freethinking papers being purchased as Christians have to ask for the *Church Times*, and we hope they will do so.

Miss Ettie Rout will be lecturing for the Manchester Branch to-day (March 14) in the Engineers' Hall, Rusholme Road, at 3. Her subject will be "The Physiological Basis of Puritanism." In the evening, at 6.30, Mr. F. A. Hornibrook will lecture on "Health Value of Native Dances." The lecture will be illustrated with examples of native dances, and should prove of more than usual interest to everybody. Mr. Hornibrook is a specialist and an authority on his subject.

The Golden Age.

MAN is the unconquerable idealist. Idealism is the mainspring which urges the reformer on to obtain better conditions of life for himself and his fellows. It is this power of dreaming of an ideal state of perfect happiness—quite lacking among the lower animals—which makes man dissatisfied with his present lot, and look longingly to a Golden Age in the past, and forward to a Golden Age, yet to be in the future. It is a case of cake yesterday, cake to-morrow, but never cake to-day. As *Punch* remarked of the old people's complaint, that the times are not so good as they were in the days when they were young, "They never were."

Most nations have their legends of some time in their past history, which they describe as the Golden Age. The Hebrews placed it in the Garden of Eden. The ancient Greeks looked back to a primitive Golden Age under the reign of Saturn, or Cronos, an age of peace, happiness, and prosperity. I myself have met with this idea, held more or less firmly, among skilled craftsmen, during my working life

in workshops and club-rooms up and down the country, generally by Socialists, who believed that our Golden Age lay in the Middle Ages. That in those ages England was "Merrie England," every man had his "three acres and a cow," or its equivalent. The poor man's rights were guarded by a benevolent Church, who stood between him and the haughty Baron, who also provided for the poor and indigent out of her generous bounty, when he was unable to support himself.

Cobbett's *History of the Protestant Reformation* is mainly responsible for the survival of this legend among our modern democracy—for no competent modern historian outside the Catholic Church would attempt to defend it. Cobbett's book was founded upon the Catholic historian, Lingard's *History of England*. As Cobbett's biographer observes: "Cobbett was carried away by Lingard's book..... His indictment was, of course, absurdly one-sided. He swallowed Lingard whole, and pressed his conclusions far beyond Lingard's own."¹ Cobbett was not a Catholic; he belonged to the Established Church, but he used the supposed happiness and prosperity of the Middle Ages as a foil to the miseries endured by the workers of his own time. Catholic historians and literary men, like Mr. Hilaire Belloc and Mr. G. K. Chesterton, still sedulously maintain and propagate this mythical view of history.

It cannot be said that Protestants of to-day—although they maintain an active propaganda against Romanism—have done anything to counteract this Catholic view of the Middle Ages. It is true the researches of Mosheim, Hallam, Robertson, and Milman threw a lurid light upon this alleged Golden Age, but the latest of these, Milman, has been dead nearly sixty years. And, unfortunately for Protestantism, this revelation of the sordid truth about the Middle Ages was found to be a two-edged weapon, as these works came very handy to the "infidel" to show what historical Christianity was like when it was in full power. The Anglo-Catholic, or High Church party in the Church of England—which has been computed at fifty per cent. of the whole—of course follow Newman in praise of the Middle Ages.

Nor is it everyone who is qualified for research work upon the literature of these ages. It requires a long preparation, the knowledge of several languages and their archaic forms. Access to, and the patience and ability to decipher ancient and crabbed writing in age-worn manuscripts. In fact, it is the special study of a lifetime, and very few there are capable of testing the Roman Catholic historians by going to the actual sources from which they profess to be compiled. Among the very elect, capable of this work, Dr. G. G. Coulton—who is a Doctor of Literature and a Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge—stands easily first, as his long series of "Medieval Studies" proves. His latest work, *The Medieval Village*, just published by the Cambridge University Press, at 25s., will take its place as the standard work upon the subject by a master hand. A critic, reviewing the work, truly observes:—

Dr. Coulton is one of the most learned as well as one of the most readable of contemporary English historians, and, indeed, in the range of his knowledge of European social and ecclesiastical history in the Middle Ages he is without a rival. His main interest has always been in the history of a Universal Church, and thus his outlook is essentially European. He can assemble and compare sources from Germany, France, Flanders, Italy, and England with almost equal familiarity..... This thesis is a two-fold one—first, that the condition of the peasantry in a medieval village was in the main

miserable; and, secondly, that the Church, as landlord, was like every other landlord in its attitude to the poor..... As to the attitude of the Church towards manumission, Dr. Coulton's conclusion is that no medieval philosopher except Wycliffe condemned serfdom in principle, that more serfs were freed by laymen than by Churchmen, and that the serf was obliged to buy his freedom whether his lord were abbot or layman. Indeed, the conservatism of the monks meant that serfdom lingered longer on monastic than on lay estates..... The real credit for the successful movement towards manumission was due to the efforts of the peasants themselves, with the help of favourable economic changes.²

The critic concludes by describing it "as a remarkable book, which no one but Dr. Coulton could have written. No living English historian has anything like his knowledge in his own particular sphere or can give a more delightful presentment." Another critic writes that Dr. Coulton—

has made such a collection of materials as very few scholars could have made, ransacking for his purpose the historical literatures of half-a-dozen countries. Some readers will find his book all the more readable because it is in essence controversial. Mr. Coulton is justifiably annoyed by "the legend of a lost Arcadia, based upon the writings of foreign writers who often tamper with documentary evidence"; and serious students will be grateful to him for his weighty and pointed appendix on *Interested Misstatements*, in which he gives chapter and verse for his charges of ignorance and bad faith against particular writers. Mr. Chesterton and Mr. Belloc will not be pleased to hear that Cobbett is the ultimate source of their ideas about the medieval village, and it would perhaps be more accurate to say that they and Cobbett have been misled by the same authorities. But Mr. Coulton employs heavier artillery against the other writers, whom he specifies. He has turned up their references with rather surprising results—results which are almost as unfavourable to Janssen and to Pastor as they are to Montalembert, the oldest, the most eloquent, and the most widely read of the romantic apologists for the medieval Church.³

The book, indeed, is a veritable mine of out-of-the-way knowledge. Mr. Chesterton himself, when crossing swords with Dr. Coulton in debate, pays tribute to his adversary in the following words: "It is a very great honour for a journalist to find his views criticized by so distinguished a scholar as Mr. Coulton."⁴

W. MANN.

(To be Concluded.)

In Search of the Almighty.

A GENTLEMAN, who is "neither a cleric nor a journalist," and who has yet managed to create "a tremendous stir throughout the religious world" would certainly seem well worth listening to. And we have the *Daily Express*, in its prefatory remarks to a recent article by the "Unknown Man," informing us that it is so. In the article on "My Religion" contributed by "The Unknown Man," perhaps the most striking feature was that while the writer did not seem to have even heard of the infallible Church and had hardly noticed the unimpeachable word of God, he knew practically all there was to be known about the said God—through "a power of spiritual insight" latent within him, which he fortunately discovered after he had vainly striven

² *The Times Literary Supplement*, January 21, 1926.

³ *The Observer*, December 20, 1925.

⁴ G. K. Chesterton, *The Superstitions of the Sceptic*, p. 26.

¹ G. D. H. Cole, *Life of Cobbett*, p. 288.

to solve the riddle of the universe by mere reason. In a parenthetic dismissal of the problem of the origin of evil, for example, he was able to proclaim authoritatively that "God saw no other way for free-willed human beings to find and fulfil themselves than the way of hardship, struggle, and difficulty," thus magnanimously absolving the Deity from all blame for the manifest imperfections of the world created and eternally sustains, according to Christian theology. Indeed, as far as God is concerned, the "Unknown Man" seems to be a sort of prophet Habakkuk—*capable de tout*. And his latest article in the *Daily Express* (February 26) bears the title, "How God is found," which is quite explicit enough!

Throughout the whole article, which is jammed in between "Beachcomber's" humorous interludes and a letter from a gentleman who does not know what to do with his disused safety-razor blades, sundry basic propositions are tacitly assumed to be true, doubtless established by "spiritual insight." The most important of these are, the existence of the Christian God, the existence and infallibility of his "son," Jesus Christ, and the possibility of communion with this God. In searching for this somewhat bashful First Cause—who, we are told, "will not be peeped at by curious humanity"—we are bidden to use "our hearts" rather than "our brains." Or in slightly less figurative language, we are told to rely on our emotions rather than our reason; the mental apparatus we share with the lower animals, rather than that which most distinguishes us from them. We are informed that if we try to reach God by reason alone, "we are not likely to find him"—which is perfectly true. But are we then justified in accepting what certain vague emotional cravings for knowledge may suggest to our troubled imaginations as the great truth of existence. I suppose every religion, at the beginning, arises from sheer emotional turmoil in the minds of its founders. Is every religion, then, true? If Mohammedanism in its distinctive creed is true, Christianity must be false. But both are founded in "the hearts" of their adherents. Hence we cannot escape the conclusion that in one case, at least, emotional groping for the inner secret of the cosmos has led several hundred millions of men into the profoundest abysses of error.

The plain truth is that our emotions are no more bound to hit the truth than our digestions. That portion of truth which is available to our understanding can be reached by reason and reason alone, and when we have come to those bounds of knowledge beyond which no man can step, is it not better to adopt a manly and sincere attitude and say, "We don't know," rather than indulge in infantile pretences of knowledge concerning things of which we know no more than the tiniest beetle? What shall it profit a man to lose his intellectual honesty and gain a rhapsodic mess of verbiage? If Agnosticism is born of despair, the new Christianity seems born of dictionaries—a nebulous, invertebrate, amorphous creed, with the apparent object of exhibiting our impotence to fathom things in as many mellifluous phrases as possible; a child's way of dismissing the great mystery of Life as compared with a man's straightforward confession of ignorance.

ÉPIPHATA.

Medicine is a science which hath been, as we have said, more professed than laboured, and yet more laboured than advanced; the labour having been, in my judgment, rather in circle than in progression—Bacon.

Theology Yields to a Greater Power.

My old friend, Frederic Harrison, the Positivist, died in his ninety-second year in the opening days of 1923. To many citizens he would be mainly known as, at one time, an Alderman of the London County Council; to others, as a bright and learned guide to the "choice of books"; to others, as an anti-Imperialist of the type to which, in varying degrees, also belonged such men as Hyndman, Bradlaugh, and Courtney. To a circle which cannot be called large, he was significant as an Englishman who, in 1855, conversed in Paris with the illustrious philosopher, Auguste Comte, and who, till the close of his long career, gave English literary form to Comte's idea of social evolution (that is, history) and of the Religion of Humanity. Frederic Harrison's son, Austin, has lately brought out a memoir of his father, and its publication has revived at least a passing interest in Positivism. Hence it may be timely if I offer a few reflections.

Not very many Positivists have ever existed. "Three persons and no God," ran a jibe at Richard Congreve's London group. When I first visited Congreve's church, about 1894, the meeting did not surpass a score. Most of the Positivists—French, English, Irish (Ingram, writer of *Who Fears to Speak of '98?* became a Positivist), Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, Brazilian, Mexican, Belgian, Scandinavian, etc., have been middle-class socially. It may be mentioned, however, that Comte's writings, especially in 1842, flamingly defended Labour against a selfish Capitalism; various Parisian working-men were greatly attached to the black-coated, simple-living, and Republican philosopher, and his funeral was followed by his friend, Proudhon, author of the phrase: "What is property?—robbery." Students of the records of heresy (as, for instance, J. M. Robertson's *Short History of Freethought*) know that in England Freethought has acted in an upper social line and a lower. In the upper line one notes such personalities as Hobbes, Locke, Shaftesbury, Bolingbroke, Hume, Gibbon, Bentham, Mill, Matthew Arnold, and so on. We may place the English Positivists in this upper line, if we also bear in mind the tendencies which were not at all upper-class; as, for example, Harrison's defence of the Trades Unions, Congreve's protests against Mr. Foote's prosecution for blasphemy, and Betsy's friendship with Karl Marx, and his chairmanship at the first meeting of the Working-men's International (1864).¹

The choice of the word "Positivism," useful as it was to Comte, in 1822, in the sense of "scientific," has not proved happy. If I asked a friend whether Mr. Cohen's last lecture at Glasgow was good, and he replied: "I'm positive it was," I should not be justified in classing the friend as a Positivist! Even when we say of a bit of evidence that it is "proof positive," we do not cover Comte's meaning. In a French dictionary I find the term "positive" defined thus: "Certain, constant, assured, attached to the material side and reality of things." This seems to link up with "Materialism," and some Continental "materialists," especially in Italy, call themselves "Positivists" while, in many respects, having small affinity with Comte. When (1830-1842) Comte was seeking to bring the term into general acceptance, he was systematically illustrating its sphere by delivering lectures on Mathematics, Astronomy, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, and Sociology (the last now well-known word being his coinage in 1839), so

¹ G. J. Holyoake once had an amicable chat with Comte.

that, in broad significance, "Positive" and "Scientific" seem about square with each other. But notice the seven meanings which Comte offered for the word: 1, real; 2, useful (utilitarian); 3, certain; 4, precise; 5, organic (that is, connected, coherent, co-related); 6, relative ("Everything is relative," he said, before Einstein was born!)—and the six points are, as I said, square with "scientific." And he added, 7, sympathetic. That seventh word makes a difference. Now, among a hundred "materialists" you will discover as many sympathetic persons as in any other class of thinkers. But you would not necessarily imply "sympathetic" in saying "materialist," or in saying "scientific." That is where Comte introduced a novelty, and he did so with the splendid intention of affirming that science was of no value unless it made its researches in a temper of human sympathy. But it cannot be said that he succeeded in giving popular currency to the word "Positive," or "Positivist," in this seven-fold implication. As I am familiar with many Positivist people and books, I can affirm that such is always the meaning they would convey. But, except as a label in the history of philosophy, the term has now no validity for the great world of men and women. I may add here that when, for two years, I edited the *Positivist Review* (founded 1893, died December, 1925), it assumed, as chief title, the excellent word, "Humanity."

So far as I know, the phrase "Religion of Humanity" was first used by Thomas Paine. In one of his American "Crisis" pamphlets, Paine declared that British treatment of the Red men did not accord with the "Religion of Humanity"; that is, the religion of mercy and benevolence. He was thinking ethically, not historically. Thirty years after Paine's death, Comte was beginning (1839) to employ the term "social evolution," and this thought of man's evolution—intellectual, moral, political—became the keynote of all his philosophy and of his brave endeavour to influence Europe and the world. Humanity, in its general development—struggle with nature's forces, family-building, city-building, law-building, knowledge-building—was to be the central conception in the passionate service of the hero, or the household service of the simple. He saw in this willing service (which now, in 1926, is evolving into the acknowledged motor of civilization), not a new energy, but a transformation of the energy formerly devoted to the Gods—an energy which, in the days of the Gods, had constructed the vast social orders of China, India, Persia, Babylon, Egypt, Greece, Rome, and medieval Christendom. That is why he retained the word "Religion." He observed a continuity, in spite of countless varieties of worship, creed, and law.

But the Gods stood in the way of the new power which waited to lift civilization to grander levels. In 1851, Comte looked round Europe, and saw ancient modes of faith in decline, and society dislocated, and he said: "Society is deeply endangered at the very centre by the utter exhaustion of the kingdom of God, for which no substitute is possible but the ascendancy of Humanity." In the same year, at the close of a Sunday lecture in a Parisian hall, he stated the new outlook:—

In the name of the past and of the future, the servants of humanity, both intellectual and practical, now confidently claim the control of world affairs, and to organize the true Providence, moral, mental, material; and to shut out finally from the social leadership all the God's-slaves—Catholic, Protestant, Deist—they being both behind the times and disturbers.

In 1855, two years before his death, looking back-

wards over his strenuous efforts to make civilization understand itself and its future better, he wrote:—

From the age of thirteen, I have been, by a natural process, entirely freed from all supernatural beliefsI remain convinced that it was indispensable for my object, since I could not really give systematic form to the worship of humanity till I had completely got rid of God.

He added, as he had never failed to add, expressions which appreciated the moral and social temper of that Catholic Church which had, for a thousand years, so tremendously swayed the life and manners of Western Europe.

"Completely got rid!" He never wrote a Free-thought article or pamphlet, and never delivered a Free-thought lecture. How, then, could he give effect to his purpose?

The answer is: he devoted his life to portraying, with the indispensable aid of history, the figure of humanity; that is, the collective genius, courage, industry, love, admiration, hope, sense of truth, sense of beauty, sense of goodness, to which the vast mass of men and women in varying measures contribute. He believed that a clear vision of this humanity was, in the last resort, the most powerful, and indeed the sole, dissolvent of theology. I think as he thought. But this does not imply disdain for the journals which, in plain language, challenge the reigning creed. How can that be in my case? It is more than forty years since I began writing articles in the Free-thought press, and more than thirty since I first wrote in Mr. Foote's *Freethinker*; and lo! in 1926, I am still here! I will try to render Comte's method clear.

F. J. GOULD.

(To be Concluded.)

Correspondence.

MATERIALISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—If it is not unduly prolonging controversy in your columns, I should like to clear up what I take to be a slight misunderstanding of terms on the part of Mr. Walker. I gather, and I hope with justification, that your correspondent is at one with me in viewing ether as a conception. When he invokes Einstein's testimony that "There is no way of detecting the ether's existence," he seems to be advocating the non-perceptual character of ether. So far we are together. But he goes on to argue in something like this fashion: "'Medicus' says we get our conceptions of ether out of experience, but Einstein testifies to the non-perceptual character of ether. So it is up to 'Medicus' to explain to us how he experienced it."

I think Mr. Walker's slip has been to conclude rather too hurriedly that a conception of X "arising out of experience" conveys that someone has experienced X. This is of course not so. Such would be a *perception*, or remembered perception of X.

All I meant by a "conception arising out of experience" was a conception framed to explain, or help one to understand, some facts of experience. Mr. Walker will easily see that if the facts of experience were not present in the first place, there would be nothing to give rise to a conception purporting to explain them. So one may speak of such a conception as arising out of experience.

I think he will now agree that the alleged contradiction does not really exist. Speaking of conceptions he argues that "'Medicus' says they do not stand for external reality, and do not even connote percepts, so he has.....contradicted himself." What I was driving at was of course this—that though perceptions may lead us into framing conceptions to explain them, we should remember that those conceptions are not themselves perceptions. That is all.

MEDICUS.

SIR,—Mr. Walter Birks, in your issue of February 28, prefers the term "Rationalism" to Materialism because it is something "apart from mind and the problems of life" and embraces all nature, whereas Materialism does not account for many things nor explain by what mediums light and heat transmit. A "rationalism" apart from mind is as absurd as a digestion apart from stomach. Roman Catholics may call themselves "Rationalists." Where the scientist starts from axioms, they start from premises and reason to justify a self-consistent system. Materialism is not concerned to "account" for things, nor does its truth or falsity depend on the quantity of its explanations. It accepts the universe as fact and makes it intelligible to us by tracing its change from one material form to another. As there are infinite numbers of changes obviously it could not provide us with samples of every possible change. Mr. Birks informs us that "all phenomena has a scientific or natural basis"; again, that "there are other forces in nature, 'physical nature' than material forces." That he is out to oust Spiritualism from the world. Well, if there are other than material or physical forces they must be immaterial or mental; that is, of the nature of spirit. But the assumption of Materialism is that as science is possible, there are none but natural forces, because these alone are determinable, whereas anything in the nature of mind is not completely predictable in its working. "Materialism" is a superior term to "Rationalism," because it implies the existence of the universe in a scientific sense as existing independently of human activity. But Rationalism connotes something human; that is, reason. Knowingly or unknowingly, Mr. Birks is voicing the cant and misunderstanding of the religious world when he says that Materialism attempts to account for the existence of natural phenomena. It does nothing of the kind, as he will discover for himself if he carefully re-reads the articles.

M. B.

"FREETHOUGHT CHARIVARIA."

SIR,—"A Reader" takes exception to the "Charivaria" item: "As Christ had the mind of an uneducated, superstitious peasant, we presume it is love of him that is responsible for his followers exhibiting a similar type of mind." He declares that Christ was not uneducated and not a superstitious peasant.

I, however, think the "Charivaria" statement was justified. For instance, if an English peasant in these times held the beliefs of Christ, beliefs in witches, evil spirits, ghosts, in demons as the cause of madness and fits, and all the rest of the superstitions of Bible days, such a man by educated people would be called both ignorant and superstitious. Therefore, Christ also can be so regarded. Again, if the "highly educated men and women" who find the "Charivaria" statement offensive were to meet to-day Christ in the flesh and hear him declare that the whole of the Old Testament was divinely inspired, and if he were to voice his belief in demons and spirits, etc., these highly educated persons would turn on their heel in disgust, and would declare his education had been sadly neglected.

Your correspondent says there can be no doubt that Christ was familiar with the philosophy of Buddha and the Alexandrian school of thought. My experience is that when a man says "there can be no doubt" he usually follows that phrase with an unwarranted assumption. Your correspondent seems to be a man of that kind. There is no explicit statement in the New Testament that Christ had studied such writers. If "A Reader" had said there is no evidence that Christ was acquainted with Buddha's philosophy, but some modern students of the New Testament fancy they see a certain similarity in some of Christ's alleged assertions to those of Buddha, he would have been nearer the truth.

"A Reader" declares that it was the simplicity and reasonableness of Christ's doctrines that transformed his followers. That reasonableness and simplicity, however, cannot have been so "exquisite" a thing as your correspondent would have us believe. Else how comes it that, out of the millions of people who take the Bible as their guide, there is endless disagreement as to the exact meaning of the teaching therein? "A Reader"

wishes us to believe that all believers in the Bible who happen to differ from him in their interpretation of that book are not Christians. He dubs them "so-called Christians," and says they have perverted the doctrines and practised the opposite to what these doctrines teach. If these people have, then your correspondent must admit that if these people are sincere and did what they have done in good faith, then the simplicity and reasonableness of those doctrines cannot be so very apparent.

"A Reader" alleges that Freethinkers accuse Christians of being insincere. They don't. Freethinkers see a large number of people who declare they believe in Christ's teaching, or rather in Bible teaching, and who say they are Christians, that they love Christ, and that they are practising his doctrines and are trying to be Christ-like. Freethinkers believe these people are sincere in what they profess, and note that these persons do things that seem barbarous, bad, and superstitious. Hence, if Christians do things like that while professing to be Christ-like, then Freethinkers are justified in asserting that it is love of Christ that makes his followers exhibit the characteristics of a mind that is uneducated, superstitious, barbarous, and bad. This assertion may not please the Christian reader of the *Freethinker*, but then if it did it would not be Freethought criticism.

ANOTHER READER.

RELIGION AND THE B.B.C.

SIR,—Doubtless you are aware of the continued encroachments made upon the broadcast programmes by the religionists, and it appears to be time that a definite stand should be taken by all freer thinking people. I have attempted to do my little bit in this direction by addressing the following letter to the *Radio Times*, although I expect that there is about as much chance of its being published as there is of the famous celluloid cat catching the asbestos rat:—

DEAR SIR,—Whilst delighted with all other items of the broadcast programme and deriving much comfort therefrom, I wish to most strongly protest against the surfeit of religion to which we are, at times, subjected.

In deference to the views of the Theists most people submit to the hour on Sunday evenings, but when further encroachments are made, through Daventry, on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday, the matter becomes serious to those who, maimed in the service of the country, realize the hollow hypocrisy of all religion.

I, personally, am as great a lover of the grand organ as anyone and appreciate recitals on that instrument as such, and, for that reason, suggest that the various instruments in secular buildings could be utilized, as is done in the cases of the organs at Boscombe Arcade and Michelgrove House, Bournemouth.

It may be contended that the published programmes prove that my "grouse" is unfounded, as the Sunday and Monday items are the only ones shown, but those who have listened know that from London and Daventry on Wednesday a service was broadcast, whilst on Thursday the Daventry programme ceased at noon for the purpose of transfer to St. Stephen's, Walbrook.

At the same time, if every reader of the *Freethinker* would do his or her bit in this direction, I am confident that much good would accrue. A sufficiently loud voice against any particular item will, or should, result in that item being withdrawn, and we, as licencees under a public body like the British Broadcasting Company, have as much right to have our opinions considered as have the clergy of all denominations and their satellites.

L. M. WERRY EASTERBROOK.

POLICY v. COURAGE.

SIR,—Upon reading in your journal that the Dean of Manchester is "of opinion that no useful purpose will be served by a public discussion of the questions at issue between Christians and Freethinkers," I am reminded of a suggestion made to me recently by a Master of Arts on affirming my conviction that Christianity was largely founded on untruth and on superstitious beliefs. I was advised that there was more in it than I was capable of realizing and understanding; and I have been wondering ever since where my abilities lay or whether I had any.

Now, Sir, as the Dean has the reputation of being

a very intelligent man, and, as I believe there are many men in every degree of life possessed of varying degrees of intelligence, and as the Dean's mission in life is to save souls, I can only express great surprise that he declines any attempt to save the souls of large numbers of people who, whilst they have rejected what they believe to be the Christian Superstition, are prepared to listen to, and ponder over, any Christian doctrine that the Dean or other clergy are prepared to bring forward.

Perhaps it is useless, and a trespass on your space, to labour the question, but the clergy must not complain if they are suspected of having "lost faith" in their own doctrines, and that their frantic appeals are made only on the one hand to the incapable and unenlightened, and on the other to those who believe that there still exists a large proportion of the population who must be kept in that station of life in which it has pleased Providence to place them. There does not, however, appear to be any doubt that heaven has lost its attraction and Hades its terrors, and the sooner the presumed educated people recognize these facts, and adopt saner methods of social regulation, the better it will be for their own safety and that of their own possessions, and of the whole community in general.

SINE CERE.

North London Branch N.S.S.

Owing to two important debates taking place elsewhere last Sunday evening, Mr. Cutner's interesting lecture on "Back to Jesus" was all too sparsely attended. Next Sunday, our good and reliable Chairman, Mr. C. E. Ratcliffe, will fill the breach occasioned by the unavoidable absence from London of Mr. P. Marsden, whose name appears on the syllabus. We hope there will be a good rally to support him.—K. B. K.

Obituary.

We regret to report the passing, in her seventy-sixth year, of Mrs. Wells, a member of the Glasgow Society. Since she came from London some years ago to live with her daughter, Mrs MacMurray, at 12 Drive Road, Govan, she and her late husband were converted to Freethought by her brother, an omnibus driver in London, who had found salvation in talks with one who was a frequent passenger on the front seat, Mr. Charles Bradlaugh. Many recollections she recalled of the lecturing careers of "C. B." and his successors, Mr. Foote and Mr. Cohen. The end came suddenly on Tuesday, February 23—she was out on the previous Sunday—but the last two years were clouded with ill-health. Even then she was working for freedom. Not physically able for a strenuous fight, she kept an ideal in front of herself and tried to realize it. Religious differences denied us an opportunity to attend her funeral, but her memory remains.—E. H.

SUPERIOR domestic help wanted for the work of small non-basement, labour-saving house, Richmond Hill; three in family.—Write Box P 2, c/o *Freethinker* Office, 61 Farringdon Street, E.C.4.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.—INDOOR.

ETHICS BASED ON THE LAWS OF NATURE (Emerson Club, 14 Great George Street, Westminster): 3.30, Lecture in English by the Hon. Mrs. Grant Duff on "Sir John Lubbock (Lord Avebury): His Work and Personality." All invited.

NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (101 Tottenham Court Road): 7.30, Mr. A. B. Le Maire Germann, "What I Believe."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W.): 7.30, Mr. C. E. Ratcliffe, "Revolution and Religion."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7, Mr. Harry Snell, "Fifty Years of Religious and Social Progress."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11, Professor H. Kantorowicz, "The Prospect of the German Republic after Locarno."

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Bromley Public Hall, Bow Road, E.): 7, Mr. R. H. Rosetti, "Monkeyville, Evolution, and the Bible." Questions and discussion invited.

COUNTRY.—INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Brassworkers' Hall, 70 Lionel Street): 7, Mr. G. Bedborough, "Penal Law Reform—Up-to-date Humane View of Treatment of Offenders." Questions and discussion invited.

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S. (No. 2 Room, City Hall, "A" Door, Albion Street): 6.30, "New Lands for Old." Questions and discussion. (Silver Collection.)

LEEDS BRANCH N.S.S. (Trades' Hall, Upper Fountain Street): 7.15, Mr. Green, "Motives in Literature." Questions and discussion invited.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. Chapman Cohen, "When I am Dead."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Engineers' Hall, 120 Rusholme Road): 3, Miss Ettie A. Rout, "The Physiological Basis of Puritanism"; Mr. F. A. Hornibrook, "Health Value of Native Dances," with demonstrations.

SALE AND EXCHANGE.

This column is limited to advertisements from private individuals only. Letters may, if it is so desired, be addressed to the Box Number, c/o "Freethinker" Office. Advertising rates 6d. for first line, every additional line 4d.

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