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Views and Opinions.

The Vanishing Parson.

The position of the modern medicine man is, from many points of view, far from a happy one. From being everything he threatens to become nothing, or even a little less. From the position in which he ruled men in virtue of his divine commission from God Almighty, a commission that none might question with safety, he is driven to seeking the suffrage of people on the ground that he acts as an almoner for more or less charitable folk, or that he can help them realize ends that have nothing whatever to do with religion. Members of his flock openly criticize his style, or the matter of his sermons, certain of the leaders of the spiritual army are not slow in informing the world that the medicine man of to-day really is less educated than he ought to be, and religious papers point out occasionally that the number of people devoting themselves to the ministry gets smaller year in and year out and decidedly poorer in quality. Foolish people among the clergy there always were, but there were once men of something like first-rate intelligence, and these served to keep the others in the background. But the first-rate intelligences are now rare, if not non-existent, and mediocrity has come into its own. And the attitude of the educated public towards the clergy is one that parsons appear to be the last to realize. In the main it is that of good-humoured tolerance towards an individual who suffers from either congenital weakness or faulty education. They submit to what a parson says because he is what he is. They do not express their real opinions because they do not like to hurt his feelings. If the average parson could only get a straight "heart-to-heart" talk with the educated members of his own congregation he would be very much surprised at what he would find. If the parson does not say all he knows about Christianity because he does not wish to unsettle the minds of those to whom he talks, many of these latter do not say what they believe because they feel that a parson is not the one to whom the truth about Christianity ought to be told.

* * *

Why the Parson?

Writing a little over a month ago with reference to an article entitled "The Vanishing Clergyman," Dean Inge called it an alarming heading. But

why alarming? Suppose the parson were to vanish entirely, is there anything that he does—from a secular point of view—that could not be equally well done by a layman? Suppose we were to grant all that can be said on behalf of what the clergy do in the shape of visiting people in distress, giving advice to the young, etc. Of course, we do not grant all that is said by a very long way, but suppose we did. What then? Could not all these things be done equally well by purely secular agencies. After all, sympathy with the distressed, readiness to give a word of kindly advice where it is needed, or to work in a dozen and one different ways to help raise the level of life, none of these things is so uncommon with ordinary human beings that we need fear its disappearance with that of the parson. They did not commence with him, and they will not end with him. As it is, movements for real betterment have usually originated apart from the clergy. The movement for the rationalizing of the day of rest, the demand for a larger leisure which would permit the working classes to enjoy a better share in the cultural side of life, the demand for education, the assertion that relief where necessary should be treated as a legitimate demand on society by its less fortunate members, with numerous other developments, have nothing to do with the parson in their origin, and little in their development until they were strong enough to promise him profit if he associated with them and loss if he did not. There would be still cakes and ale in the world even if there were no parsons to sit down to the eating and drinking thereof.

* * *

The Holy Bible.

It is argued by many that more would be attracted to the ministry if the pay were better. That is probably true. Make the economic inducement large enough and you will get some men to advocate anything. A minimum annual salary of £1,000 would provide nearly twenty weekly reasons which numbers would find quite convincing. Only if that were done, it would be as well to drop all talk of the parson receiving a "call" from above to this or that church or chapel. The Dean of St. Paul's thinks the situation would be eased if a bolder policy were adopted with regard to some portions of the Old Testament, "large parts of which are a dead weight upon the intellect and conscience of the modern man." That might relieve the situation for the moment, but for the moment only. The pose of the moment would be considerably weakened, if not nullified by the Church's past. A Church that has had the truth about the Bible forced upon it by outside developments, is not likely to gain permanent credit, because when this truth can no longer be denied with safety it makes the smallest concessions possible. And what of the New Testament? So far as the Old is concerned, its historical and scientific and ethical character has been pretty well demolished. But in what better position is the New Testament? How much better is the redeeming blood of Jesus than the

fall in the Garden of Eden? What sort of an improvement are the demoniacs of Jesus upon the Jonah and the Whale legend? Is the outlook of the New Testament more scientifically defensible than is that of the Old? The Virgin Birth is not more credible than the flood, or the resurrection more believable than the plagues of Egypt. Merely admitting some of the truth about the Old Testament cannot for ever delay the application of the same reasoning to the New. Intellectually they are of a piece, and the Freethinking against which the Churches fought, but the truth of which its leaders have now been compelled to admit, in the case of the old Bible, must one day be admitted to be equally true with regard to the New Testament. They are of the same material.

* * *

The Origin of the Parson.

There is only one real reason for the decline of the clergyman in influence and in intellectual status, and that is the advance of knowledge and of civilization. In primitive societies the medicine man has three well-defined functions to perform. He is the rain maker, the disease curer, and the corn producer. These things come by the favour of the gods, and between them and man stands the primitive priest levying his toll in discharge for services he is believed to give. There is nothing theoretical about the relations of the primitive savage to his medicine men. As in other directions he is the most practical and most matter-of-fact being, although at our stage of culture he appears to be living in a world of the most fantastic imaginings. He believes in the Gods because he thinks they do something. He maintains his priests because he is convinced that it is through their mediation that the Gods bestow their favours on mankind. We have all the evidence of this in the official confessions of faith and articles of religion. We have the prayers for rain and for fine weather, even though educated people have long since given up the belief that prayer has anything to do with either. But the priest still remains officially the rain getter. So with the cure of disease. The savage medicine man reigns here unquestioned. The Jesus of the New Testament gives his followers the power to cure disease "in my name." The prayer book assures the sick man that whatsoever a man's disease may be he can be quite certain that "it is God's visitation." The lower order of Christians still profess to believe in the miraculous cure of disease, and the healing missions that are carried on up and down the country are generally more suggestive of a gathering of a tribe of savages than of a civilized people. But here also the better educated stand aloof, and the wisdom of several gatherings of Church of England clergymen of late has decided that the priest should only exert his healing power in conjunction with medical advice. God is supposed to work with the consent and co-operation of Harley Street. Finally, there is the priest in his capacity of corn producer. Here again, we have still, officially, our spring festivals, which have no other meaning apart from the miraculous production of crops. And as a complement we have the harvest thanksgiving, even when the harvest has been a poor one and a god with a sense of humour might be inclined to charge his worshippers with sarcasm.

A Fatal Complaint.

The reasons advanced by apologists to account for the alteration in the status and quality of the clergy are quite superficial. They do not touch the real causes. It is strange to find defenders of a religion which boasts that its first preachers were poor men,

and which has always professed to hold the material things of life in contempt, arguing that the quality of the clergy would improve if larger salaries could be paid. We have a rather better opinion of human nature than that. We have never known a really good cause to suffer because it has not been able to buy advocates with large salaries. The root cause of "the vanishing clergyman" is the decline of belief in that for which he stands. Men never did go to the parson for information on any subject connected with this world, but only because of his supposed knowledge of and influence with another world. That he knows no more about this world than any other person was always obvious. But he was supposed to know all there was to know about it. He was in close touch with that and with God. But now that pretence is wearing thin, so thin that many thousands of parsons give it up altogether. As parsons the whole combined wisdom of the Black Army cannot answer a single question we want answering nor a single problem we wish to solve. The medicine man to-day is as much a survival as are the rudimentary ear muscles or the rudimentary tail. The clergy are being attacked by the one disease to which every religion is liable, and for which no remedy has ever been found. They are being found out.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Christian Egotism.

UNITY has been non-existent in Christendom from the very beginning. The common saying as applied to Christians, "Behold, how they love one another," has generally been uttered ironically, or in derision, for it has never been literally true. Ideally, in Paul's estimation, the followers of Jesus were perfect, whose mission it was to judge the world and even angels; but practically he found them to be the very opposite of perfect. Writing to the Corinthian Church he used these scathing words: "I have been informed, my brothers, by the members of Chloe's household, that party feeling exists among you. I mean this, that every one of you says either 'I follow Paul,' or 'I Apollos,' or 'I Kephas,' or 'I Christ.' You have rent the Christ in pieces" (1 Cor. i. 11, 12). Again: "It is actually reported that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not even among the Gentiles, that one of you hath his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and did not rather mourn, that he that had done this deed might be taken away from among you" (v. 1, 2). According to the Apostle's own testimony, many of the Corinthian converts were drunken, querulous, litigious, fraudulent, and divided into several irreconcilable factions. Now, each party claimed that it and it alone was right, while the others were clearly in the wrong. Egotism ruled everywhere, giving rise to endless bickerings and disputations. What was true of Corinth in primitive times has been true of the Christian Church in all ages and countries, and is true of it to-day.

A fortnight ago the thirty-first Annual Assembly of the National Council of the Evangelical Free Churches was held at Llandrindod Wells. These so-called Evangelical Free Churches are sad victims of self-conceit; in fact, they are so eaten up with self-righteousness that they have persistently declined to be publicly associated with a body of Christians known as Unitarians. And yet, strangely enough, the motto of the meetings at Llandrindod was "Conciliation and Co-operation." The first session was opened, apparently, by Professor J. W. Oman, M.A., D.D., of Westminster Presbyterian College, Cambridge. Unfortunately neither the *Christian*

World nor the *British Weekly* supplied a verbatim report of his address. "Our own correspondent" of the former journal gives a report of it in his own words, which for Dr. Oman's sake we hope is not accurate. In any case, here it is:—

Speaking on "The Positive Meaning of Protestantism," he said there was more in Protestantism than a monk making a bonfire of books and documents. Protestantism, he argued, was in the purpose of God. It meant liberty, but liberty within the Gospel. He was a good friend of Dr. Orchard, although they both strongly disapproved of each other. Dr. Orchard one day illustrated his methods. He put a pinch of powder on a man's tongue, and said, "Now shut your eyes and swallow that." He placed a man on a path, and said, "Be a good boy and walk in that path." Dr. Oman told Dr. Orchard he would not cross the road for a faith like that, for it meant asking a man to believe what he could not see. The Protestant believed a thing because it was true; the Romanist believed because the Church said so. "The Roman Church could put him through it in twenty minutes." The Roman Church made the Pope an infallible person, but said to him, "Now, take care, and don't be infallible too often."

Probably Dr. Oman intended that to be taken as banter, but even as banter it was in bad taste before such an audience. The *British Weekly* showed greater tact in leaving most of it out, and particularly in not mentioning Dr. Orchard's name. Dr. Orchard was once a prominent New Theologian, standing almost on the verge of Freethought; but latterly he, like Dr. R. J. Campbell, has been intrenching himself more and more upon the old historic orthodoxy. We do not share a single one of his theological views, but we contemplate his career with great interest and not without sympathy. For a considerable time he has been in Congregational circles an object of persecution, especially on the part of such men as the Rev. J. Morgan Gibbon, who, on the one hand, do not understand his position, and, on the other, are determined not to give him fair play as an Independent minister. Had he remained in the Presbyterian Church which conferred his Holy Orders upon him, his position would have been radically different, but in an Independent Church he can do whatever he likes as long as he enjoys the approval of his people.

To return to Dr. Oman's speech, what strikes us most about it is its tacit claim to Protestant infallibility. According to the Presbyterian Professor, Catholic doctrines are wholly worthless; he would not cross the road to embrace them, for "they meant asking a man to believe what he could not see." That is exceedingly well put; but we ask Dr. Oman, is not the same thing equally true of the Protestant faith? Why, of necessity, the holding of any faith signifies believing what cannot be seen. That is the innermost significance of Christianity. As the Epistle to the Hebrews accurately puts it: "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." A week ago to-day was Easter, a festival commemorating the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Dr. Oman believes that such an event actually occurred, but can he stand up and honestly say, "I saw it with my own eyes"? There were absolutely no witnesses of the resurrection; and the late Prof. Denney frankly admitted that he, for one, could never have believed in it on the contradictory and utterly unreliable evidence contained in the Four Gospels. It is sheer egotism on the part of Dr. Oman to assert that the Protestant believes only what is true, while the Catholic believes only what the Church declares to be true. Things believed are not necessarily objective realities. As a matter of fact, there is no difference whatever between a

Catholic and a Protestant so far as the so-called evidences for faith are concerned. For example, why does Dr. Oman believe in the resurrection of Christ? To say that he believes in it because it is true is simply to beg the question. He does not and cannot know that it really took place; he believes that it occurred on the testimony of primitive tradition, or, in other words, on the authority of the Apostolic Church. Thus the difference between the basis of the faith of a Protestant and that of the faith of a Catholic is purely nominal. In the long run, all Christian faith rests on the authority of the Church, whether it be the Church of to-day with an infallible Pope at its head, or the Church depicted in the Book of the Acts, with specially inspired Apostles presiding over it.

The egotism displayed by the leaders of the Free Churches is astounding. The Catholic Church looks down upon them with disdain, saying, "You have no valid orders, and your preaching activities and administration of the sacraments are blasphemous mockery and open frauds; you are mushroom, schismatic growths, and your very existence is in defiance of God's will." The Nonconformist ministers are scarcely less bitter and extreme in their denunciation of the Catholics and their superstitious beliefs and practices. Years ago a Calvinistic Methodist minister and a well-known deacon were talking together about the evils and corruptions of popery, and all of a sudden the reverend gentleman stopped, and after a pause said, "Well, now, if I saw the Pope standing on the brow of the hill yonder, and I had a gun, without a moment's hesitation I would shoot him dead," and the deacon replied, "That would be just punishment for the Antichrist's many sins." That was fifty odd years ago, but the Nonconformists of to-day entertain essentially the same feeling of hostility towards the Catholic Church. At an evening demonstration Dr. Berry, Secretary of the Congregational Union, delivered what is described as "a gripping address" on religion as an end in itself. Here again egotism was in full evidence. As reported in the *British Weekly*, Dr. Sidney M. Berry said:—

A man who has no living communion with God is a defective man, as truly as is a man who has no ear for music. Religion is not a mere refuge from the world, or safety by membership of a little clique. If so it is sectarian and unworthy. Our Free Church Council was called into being to give a large and noble conception of religion as Christianity, large enough for all types and all organizations which have Christian liberty to interpret and declare the mind and will and love of God. We must be true to our type and claim the co-operation of God and all men of good will.

Before the world could know and rejoice in such a transcendent conception of religion the Free Church Council had to be brought into existence. To what a wonderfully large extent this Council, with its special conscience, has enriched the religious life of England and Wales, and through them of the whole Christian world. There is nothing like having a good conceit of ourselves!

And how infinitely superior to Catholicism Nonconformist religion is. As reported in the *Christian World* for March 25, Dr. Berry said:—

No narrow exclusive type of Catholicism could express this Evangelical Free Church conception of religion as the life of God in Christ revivifying this individual and corporate spiritual life, irrespective of all differences in the formal expression of their beliefs or the methods of their Church government.

No Christian sect, and there are hundreds of them, is free from this self-glorifying habit. Anglican and

Nonconformist vie with one another in the exercise of the high art of self-laudation. They cannot all be right, and is it not possible that they may all be wrong? Each type seems to say, "I may be wrong, but I know I am right." They are all slowly dying out; and on their corpses shall arise a government of human life in which Reason shall be Prime Minister and all the other faculties members of a sane yet most effective Cabinet aiming at and working for the highest good of the whole race.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Spoken Word.

Yet doth remembrance, like a sovereign prince,
For you a stately gallery maintain
Of gay and tragic pictures. —Wordsworth.

Aye, sharpest, shrewdest steel that ever stabbed
Imposture, through the armour-joints to death.
—Browning.

LORD BIRKENHEAD, himself one of the most distinguished of living orators, has written a series of articles on public speaking, which he rightly insists is one of the fine arts. From Demosthenes to Disraeli, from Cicero to Curzon, he passes them in review. So comprehensive is he in his range that he even pauses to point out the excellence of Mark Antony's oration over the dead Cæsar in Shakespeare's play. Yet, with all his meticulous care, Lord Birkenhead has overlooked a group of orators, who, at least, deserved some mention in a work of this kind, for they profoundly affected large numbers of their countrymen and helped materially to make freedom something more than a mere name in a country pretending to some civilization.

Freethinkers have always had a warm place in their hearts for the orators of their movement, and very rightly so. Freethought has been advanced as much by the spoken word as by the pen of the writer, and an evangel which can point to such masters of the art of public speaking as Robert Ingersoll and Charles Bradlaugh has some reason for pride.

In the period prior to the formation of a national Freethought party the outstanding figure in the adolescent movement was Charles Southwell. As a boy I remember hearing old Freethinkers describe his feats of oratory, which they assured me were extraordinary. Unfortunately, so few traces remain of Southwell's speeches, and one cannot judge today. His gifts in that direction must have been considerable because of the effect he produced on his contemporaries.

It was a generation later before Freethought could claim orators of the first class, and, curiously, a whole galaxy of talent made itself manifest in the hitherto despised movement. Charles Bradlaugh may fittingly be described as the Danton of Freethought. Physically he was a magnificent man with a leonine head, and he was a born orator. Few men had such power over a popular audience. He simply played on it as a great musician plays on an instrument. I heard him many times at the Hall of Science in Old Street, London, having walked all the way from South London for that purpose. His greatest oratorical triumph was, however, not on the Freethought platform, but in the House of Commons when he spoke on the Oaths Bill. There were not half a dozen Freethinkers among the six hundred members, yet Bradlaugh broke the opposition, and made his name ever memorable in his country's annals.

Among Bradlaugh's colleagues was Mrs. Annie Besant, the two being indefatigable on the platform. "The two Busy B's" some admirers called them. She roused enormous enthusiasm by her espousal of Freethought, and it was richly deserved. A cul-

tured lady, with a winning, magnetic personality, she did wonders for the Cause. She was easily first among the women speakers of her generation, and her fifteen years of strenuous work for Secularism was of enormous service. There were few women on the Freethought platform then, and very few among the audiences.

George Foote was a splendid foil to the others. A fine figure, handsome, with a Greek profile, compelling, always a man of dignity, he brought unique gifts to the great Cause. His beautiful voice made prose sound like music, and the Freethought platform never had a more magnificent apostle. When young his hair was fair, and, once, at the conclusion of a truly splendid speech, Cunningham Grahame seized his hand, and, in a burst of enthusiasm, quoted Swinburne's famous line: "Thou hast conquered O pale Galilean." Foote's speeches before Judge North and Coleridge were amongst his finest efforts, and he won a well-deserved compliment from the Lord Chief Justice.

Foote's famous gift of telling repartee came out even in the stress of his trial for blasphemy when the Roman Catholic Judge North sentenced him to a year's imprisonment, Foote calmly said: "Thank you, my lord. The sentence is worthy of your creed."

No one who ever heard Charles Watts could resist his glowing charm. Urbane and delightful, he was welcomed on the platforms in far Canada, the United States, as he was in England. Personality throbbed through the smooth sentences, and reached the audience in waves. In a debate he would rise, a smile of bland benevolence wreathing his face, which looked as innocent as that of a child, and then destroy his opponent in a stream of logic. He rendered inestimable service in his day and generation. His son's talents lay in other directions, but it will be long before Freethinkers forget the services of this one family to the cause of Freedom.

Of Robert Ingersoll what can be said? Democratic America dearly loves rhetoric, and in the Great Republic of the West government is composed of talking of principle in public, and looking after the interest in private. Among a nation of talkers Ingersoll had no equal in the States. He dealt rhetorically with elemental emotions, and he enjoyed the fame of being an apostle of liberty. Expressing the simple feelings of men, he made a universal appeal. "Give me liberty, or give me death!" That was the kind of thing; a sonorous and impassioned phrase flung out to thrill the hearts and flush the cheeks of thousands. Phrase after phrase in Ingersoll's orations have this special quality, and read like poetry, grandiose and sweeping. Listen to a sentence. "Liberty, a word without which all other words are vain." You can almost see the outstretched arm, hear the thrilling, resonant voice. There is music in it; the trumpets sing to battle.

Robert Ingersoll was of the race of the Sun-Treader, whom Browning once worshipped "this side idolatry." He was the mouthpiece of liberty and fraternity, believing, as he did, that freedom was the very breath of brotherhood. He was, first and foremost, the orator of Freethought, and that all-embracing appeal which the mere mechanical rhetorician never succeeds in attaining.

His was a genius in which intellectual liberty appeared as beautiful a thing as a flower, a bird, or a star. At heart a poet, he found the world a place of ethical ideals, and he was no less exalted when he spoke of the golden hopes of a regenerated humanity than when he described the exquisite beauty of a little child's laugh:—

Strike with hand of fire, O weird musician, thy
harp strung with Apollo's golden hair, fill the vast

cathedral aisles with symphonies sweet and dim, deft touches of the organ keys; blow, bugler, blow, till thy silver notes touch and kiss the moonlit waves, and charm the lovers wandering amid the vineclad hills. But know your sweetest strains are discords all, compared with childhood's happy laugh—the laugh that fills the eyes with light and every heart with joy. O rippling river of laughter, thou art the blessed boundary-line between beasts and men; and every wayward wave of thine doth drown some fiend of care. O laughter! rose-lipped daughter of joy, there are dimples enough in thy cheeks to catch and hold and glorify all the tears of grief.

Men old in the Movement sometimes shake their heads and say that oratory is not what it was. That is true. There is much less verbiage, but ideas are more abundant. Whilst we have the convincing clarity of Mr. Cohen, and the classical style of Mr. Lloyd, the Movement can hold its own. If I am accused of undue partiality for these pioneers, my reply is simply that they were so much more than mere orators. They were each and all knight-errants of the Army of Human Liberation. Perhaps to Englishmen, half-savage still on the very pinnacle of their civilization, will some day come the tardy recognition that these despised Freethinkers, so fearless, so tireless, so confident, were the very flower of their race. For it is to such men as these that we owe the preservation of the right of free speech, without which we should be but the basest of slaves, and fit only for the heel of any tyrant.

MIMNERMUS.

The Unity of Life.

AS DEMONSTRATED BY SIR J. C. BOSE.

THE theistic mind is peculiar for two things, its pliability (provided that the pressure is sufficiently great), and its final immobility. In face of facts adverse to its ancient dogmas and preconceived notions, it will first deny, then anathematize, then decry, then deprecate, and then endeavour to explain away the evidence. Finally, when certitude is established by demonstration, it will fall silent, and, after a while, we find that the hard-won truths have, by some unimaginable *volt-face*, become a part of the theistic teaching which had opposed them.

But the theist has by no means abandoned his old position. Not a bit of it! Like the Bourbons, he has learned nothing and forgotten nothing. The old controversy has died down, the world at large has forgotten it, and the new ideas are accepted by the majority of thinking men. The theist then comes along and tells us that these ideas are now old-fashioned and out of date, leaving us to infer that his own original position has somehow been rehabilitated.

An example of this peculiar mentality was afforded me not long ago when I declared that the researches of Sir Jagadis Chandra Bose, F.R.S., provided further, and most striking, evidence of the truth of Haeckel's monistic philosophy.

"Oh, Haeckel! My dear fellow, you are twenty years out of date. We have advanced far beyond that position." Thus the editor of a leading daily newspaper which, by the way, was obscurantist enough to boycott Dr. Bose until it was no longer possible to do so. Having ascertained what the editor's position was, it became evident that the "advance" was in a circle, back to a point *ante* Haeckel.

It was my privilege to meet the distinguished Indian scientist recently in India, and to witness some of his experiments, both at the Bose Institute

in Calcutta and in Darjeeling, where he has a research laboratory and a large garden. He told me of the discouragement, scepticism, and active opposition with which he had to contend in his earlier years. Particularly was this the case when his researches as a physicist carried him into the domain of physiology. It was asserted that the excitatory response of ordinary plants to mechanical stimulus was an impossibility. Undeterred, Dr. Bose proceeded to prove by actual experiment that, physiologically, no dividing line can be drawn between the vegetable and the animal worlds. He found that the plant and the animal are similarly responsive to all the diverse forms of stimulus which impinge upon them. We ascend, in the one case, as in the other, from the simplicities of the isotropic to the complexities of the anisotropic, and find that the responses are the same in both. The plant, like the animal, is a single organic whole, all its different parts being connected and their activities co-ordinated by a nervous system. As in plants, so in animals, stimulation gives rise to two distinct impulses exhibiting themselves by two-fold mechanical and electrical indications of opposite signs.

The dual qualities or tones known as sensation are correspondent with those two different nervous impulses of opposite signs which are occasioned by stimulation. These two sensory responses—positive and negative, pleasure and pain—are found to be subject to the same modifications, under parallel conditions, as the positive and negative mechanical and electrical indications with which they are associated. And finally, perhaps the most significant example of the effect of induced anisotropy lies in the differential impression made by stimulus on the sensory surfaces which remain latent and capable of revival as the memory image. In this demonstration of continuity then, it has been found that there are no dividing lines between physics, physiology, and psychology.

Three conclusions follow. Continuity, and not special differences, is found between plant and animal life. So complete indeed is the similarity between the responses of plant and animal found to be that the discovery of a given responsive characteristic in the one case proves a sure guide to its observation in the other; and the explanation of the phenomena, under the simpler conditions of the plant, is found fully sufficient for elucidation under the more complex circumstances of the animal. The "autonomous" movements of plants which were enveloped in mystery received a satisfactory solution. It was demonstrated that the "autonomous action" is not due to any internal vital force. Thus the theory of vitalism, so necessary for the doctrines of theism and dualism, received a further refutation.

Without the remarkable instruments which the inventive genius of Sir Jagadis Bose has devised, his theories would have remained in the region of pure speculation, and there indeed did the Royal Society at first consider them to belong. That learned and austere body preferred to reserve its judgment until the plants themselves could be made to record their answers to the questions put to them. By means of the instruments this is achieved. So sensitive are they that one of them, the *cresigograph*, will magnify the imperceptible movements of a plant a million, or even ten million, times, revealing to the eye a leaf shivering to electrical stimulus, or a plant actually growing. Another instrument records the rate at which a plant assimilates nourishment. There is a delicate electrical attachment which causes a needle point to impinge upon the surface of a roll of paper. This roll is kept moving at a regular speed. Normally, the dots on the paper are made evenly to a

thousandth part of an inch, at regular intervals to the fraction of a second. Let there be any disturbing influence either in the atmosphere or the composition of the soil, or by some external agency, as a touch, and the record will vary, speeding up or slowing down. The plant responds exactly like a human heart, and will resist interference more than the human muscle. It can be quickened and will eventually show fatigue. It will stop altogether if poisoned.

One of the latest instruments is the electric probe. It is thrust cautiously into the stem of a living tree. At first, as the probe pierces the bark, there is no response. At a certain depth a layer of active tissue is reached in which the cells have a regular beat like the human pulse. The pulsations of the living plant cell cannot be perceived by any microscope, but it is recorded by the galvanometer in Dr. Bose's laboratory. The records of this instrument show that anything which quickens or arrests the heart-beat of an animal quickens or stops the heart-beat of the tree. Also the breathing of the tree, the intake of carbon dioxide and the liberation of oxygen as by a lung, is recorded, and such conditions as interfere with this process are observed.

The experiments of Sir Jagadis Bose show the value of imagination in research. Indeed, this faculty must exist in the experimental scientist who aspires to discovery. Pure imagination, as we know, will create an immaterial world of wonder, but when allied to science it often brings these wonders—or some of them—down to the material and the practical.

There are perhaps those who cannot readily appreciate to what practical ends these experiments lead. In the study of plant assimilation the instruments show what takes place during a few beats of a pendulum. The movement is measured, and in less than a quarter of an hour the action of fertilizers, foods, electrical currents, and various stimulants is determined. Instead of waiting a whole season, perhaps years, to discover whether it is wise or not to mix this or that fertilizer with the soil one can now find out in a few minutes. Yet in India, essentially an agricultural country, less is known of the marvels of the Bose Institute than in England, and more popular interest has been aroused in the United States of America than in England.

But the application of these researches does not end with plant life. Sir Jagadis shows, not only that the nervous impulse in plant and in man is exalted or inhibited under identical conditions, but he carries the parallelism very far. Demonstrating that there is no dividing line to be drawn between the nervous reaction of a plant and an animal, we may reason by analogy from the one to the other. And so it is experimentally shown to be in fact. By interposing an "electric block" Sir Jagadis arrests the nervous impulse in a plant in a manner similar to the corresponding arrest in the animal nerve and thereby produces nervous paralysis in the plant, such paralysis being afterwards cured by appropriate treatment.

We know little about the paralysis of the human body and practically nothing about its cause. The nervous system of the higher animals is so complicated, so intricate, that it is difficult to understand its derangement. The human nerve dies when isolated. It is killed by the shock of removal. But if we study the simplest kind of a nerve—and the simplest is that of a plant—we may hope to understand what occurs when a hand or a foot cannot be made to move. To find out that plants have nerves, to induce paralysis in such nerves and then to cure

them—such experiments may lead to discoveries which may ultimately enable physicians to treat more effectively the various forms of paralysis now regarded as incurable.

Sir Jagadis Bose has demonstrated that there is an essential unity in the physiological effects of drugs on plant and animal tissues, and shown the modifications which are introduced into these effects by the factor of individual constitution. This physiological identity is regarded by leading physicians as of great significance in the scientific advance of medicine, since we have now a means of testing the effect of drugs under conditions far simpler than those presented by the patient, far subtler, too, and more humane than those of experiments on animals.

Nor is it between plant and animal only that these strange analogies exist. Metals are found to behave very much as if they were "alive." Sir Jagadis shows that there are metals which, when stimulated, throb under the effect of the stimulus just as a muscle or a nerve does; that just as we can poison a muscle so a metal can be poisoned. He poisons tin, he poisons a plant, and a strip of muscle, and they all behave alike, showing sharp responses to stimulus before poisoning and stopping dead thereafter. Tin, brass, platinum, behave in the same way as living tissues do.

"How then," he asks,

can we draw the line and say where a physical effect ends and a physiological one begins? Do not these records tell us of some property of matter common and persistent? Do they not show that the responsive processes seen in life have been foreshadowed in what we call "non-life," in the forerunners of living things?

E. J. LAMEL.

Acid Drops.

A Methodist writer, Mr. Percy C. Pegler, doubts if Christians realize clearly that conscience is a "faculty" which requires to be educated; the verdict of any sort of conscience, he declares, is not necessarily bound to be right. He continues:—

It is a disquieting fact, but a fact nevertheless, that in the name of conscience men have done all sorts of absurd and outrageous things.....All the infamies of the Inquisition were perpetrated under the supposed sanctions of conscience, and by men who quite sincerely imagined they were doing their duty to God and His Church.....they prove the point that conscience is not to be thought of as an oracle whose voice is bound to be right and whose judgments are to be regarded as infallible. We need to realize that conscience may be very badly trained and shockingly under-educated. That is why I hesitate to speak of conscience as the voice of God.

Conscience, therefore, needs educating, he contends; and the way to educate it is "to put it to school with the Light of the World." It needs to be tested and regulated by the mind of Christ; Christians ought always to enquire, when giving this or that verdict, how far conscience is in harmony with the mind and will of Christ.

From what Mr. Pegler says, Christians appear to be shifting their ground somewhat. Once upon a time our torturing Catholic murderers and our Protestant butchers were content to put their conscience to school with the Word of God—the Bible as a whole. And though that book contained Christ's teachings, yet these good men apparently saw nothing therein to prevent their behaving like wild beasts to men and women who in opinion differed from them. Will the conscience of modern Christians who are now going "back to Jesus" tolerate freedom of opinion much better than did that of their forerunners? We fancy it will not; at least, only to the extent that Freethought criticism has forced it

to be more tolerant. For where in the New Testament is there freedom of opinion explicitly advocated. Did Jesus ever commend men for differing from him? On the contrary. He was a past master at cursing, and at consigning to eternal damnation, all and sundry who committed the awful crime of holding opinions different from his own. Such people he delighted in accusing of the meanest of motives and the basest of actions.

Mr. Pegler, we fancy, has himself put his conscience to school with Jesus; and to some purpose. For he says later that though there "is a noble infidelity and a very 'honest doubt,'" yet there is also a lot of infidelity which is the result of a bad conscience. He then tells us about the men and women he and his readers are supposed to know who have doubted this and that, have left the Church and made no secret of their unbelief. And when you know all, says the Christ-like Mr. Pegler, you discover that the real trouble of these men and women was not intellectual but moral; "behind their apostasy there lay a course of crooked conduct and a grievous loosening of the hold on moral distinctions." They begin to gamble, or to drink, or to do shady things in business—that is why they become infidels, says he. From these charitable remarks the reader will see that Mr. Pegler and his conscience, in giving this verdict on unbelievers, are well "in harmony with the mind and will of Christ."

An archbishop is not a leisured man, asserts the Archbishop of Canterbury. Possibly so. The important point, however, is not how busy a man is, but how valuable is his labour to the community. His Grace's energies are directed to benefiting the Church rather than the people.

Says a writer in a Methodist journal: "If you taboo sentimentalism from popular hymns, you might at least expect sense." You might *expect* sense, but you wouldn't get it. Besides, it isn't necessary; the noise is the important thing about hymns.

The B.B.C. is still specializing in Sunday inanities from the Broadcast Pulpit. One preacher tells the world that despondency is unfavourable to successful work, that a joyless workman does not work vigorously, and that joy is a source of strength, and light-heartedness makes work easy. Another happy warrior of God informs us that memory cannot strengthen faith in the hearts of men unless they know that God is the God of things that are, as well as of things that once were. Still another, trading on the ignorance of his listeners, confidently informs them that "there is not a single movement for the uplift of life which did not get its original heart-beat from Christianity." Evidently this silly boaster imagines that there was never any "uplift" before Christ was born. He also attempts to explain away the fact that many men outside the Church exhibit nobility of life—it is the "fire of the Church" which is responsible for the warmth of such noble service, he declares. He is conveniently forgetting the fact that many such men never have been Christians and many have never believed in any creed whatever. A fourth cheery disciple of the Man of Sorrows trots out the stale old platitude that cheerfulness not only brings good to ourselves, but has a wonderful influence upon all we meet. From all this our readers will see that the fool of the family is still being turned into a parson.

A meeting of Lay Churchmen was recently held in the Church House, Westminster. Among the speakers was Mr. G. D. Turner, deputy-governor of Wormwood Scrubs prison. He said he was not there to deplore the lack of attendance at Church services in prison, at which the other Christians present laughed hugely. Then Mr. Turner went on to say:—

The voluntary attendance at these services was amazing, and if it went to show anything, it went to show that men would gladly go to Church where there was no more attractive occupation afforded them. He

urged his listeners not to run away with the idea that prisoners were not religious people. They were often more religious than people outside. There was no necessary connection between lack of religion and prison.

We should rather imagine that the other Churchmen would not smile very broadly at the conclusion of Mr. Turner's speech. But the remark that people will go to Church if there is nowhere more attractive to go, goes a long way towards the opposition to the provision of decent and healthy entertainments on Sunday. The only way to make sure of people attending Church is to see that things are so deadly dull that even a Church is attractive by contrast.

In the muzzy atmosphere of theology one is at liberty to say anything so long as it bears the hall-mark of piety. Under the title of "Grandma's Prayer," Eugene Field unloads the following nonsense on a long-suffering world:—

Therefore, accustomed to the end,
To plying useful stitches,
I'll be content if asked to mend
The little angel's breeches.

This is beyond criticism.

Make way for the Poet Laureate. He has something to say, and he says it well:—

The world is so full of foolish fuss, uninspired effort, fatuous enthusiasms, unprincipled competition, and befooled adaptations that a man who is truly his natural self, and at his ease dispenses as much comfort as he feels.

It will not be difficult to fix the place of those actors in the solemn fooling that takes place under the name of religion. Dr. Bridges will get himself disliked if he is not careful.

"Ezra," of the *Methodist Recorder*, says Christians are accustomed to lament the fact that the Bible is seriously neglected nowadays, but he thinks the time has come to ask *why* that is so. Discover the reason, says he, then it might be possible to start a revival of the "much-to-be-desired custom" of Bible-reading. He suggests one reason may be that false notions have grown up around "the sacred volume"; ideas such as inerrancy and infallibility and the like, have tended to make the Bible an unreal book and have caused it to be judged by standards other than those applied to "other great literature." And the neglect of Bible-reading is the aftermath, he believes, of such well-meant but disastrous theories. If "Ezra" means by this that people after having been told the Bible is infallible discover it to be the very reverse, and so neglect the book altogether, we fancy his diagnosis is not far wrong. Naturally when people find out that certain portions of the "sacred volume" are not infallible, they become uncertain whether the other parts are as fallible and errant. Hence the Bible is no longer accepted as an infallible guide, and people put the dear old book among their other curios. The only way, therefore, in which Christian leaders can revive Bible-reading is for them to assert again that the book is infallible. But such a declaration is to-day very unlikely to be accepted; hence, we fear Christians will continue to lament the neglect of their unlovely fetish book.

The positive meaning of Protestantism was presented to the Free Church Council by Prof. J. W. Oman, of the Presbyterian College, Cambridge. The Protestant, he said, believed a thing because it was true; the Romanist believed because the Church said so. Fundamentalism, he continued, was a purely Roman Catholic position, and it was a purely materialistic form of the Romanist position; it absolutely distrusted the power of truth and righteousness to take care of themselves. The Professor, we note, does not say *why* Protestants believe their doctrines are true. We always fancied Protestants do so because the Bible, the Word of God, is declared to be the basis of those doctrines. And as the Romanist Church, we believe, also asserts her doctrines are true because the Bible is what she bases them on, there would

appear to be no difference between the two sects as regards this one particular aspect of the Christian religion. What differences in doctrines there may be are probably accounted for by the fact that each sect interprets the Bible teachings in its own way. In our opinion both sects make an unwarranted assumption when they assert the Bible is true, and that therefore its teachings are not to be denied nor questioned. It is that assumption, and the assumption that each sect has the one true interpretation, which has legitimised in Christian minds the bloody persecutions of sect by sect, and of Freethinkers by Protestants and Catholics.

The Professor wishes us to believe that it is only Fundamentalists (Catholic and Protestant) who distrust the power of Christian truth to take care of itself; but that is not so, all the sects are alike in this respect. Else why do the Protestant Churches retain the Blasphemy Laws, and why does the Roman Church never protest against those laws? And, too, why do Christians of all sects still consider it essential to boycott in a most contemptible fashion Freethought publications and Freethinkers? Perhaps the Professor, if not too busy with Christian truth to trouble about ordinary truth, can supply us with an answer.

The Southend Free Church Council is concerned about the welfare of that popular holiday resort and reports that there is possibly no town in the country which needs the prayers of Christian people more. We wonder what Southend thinks of this gratuitous patronage from a body of professional medicine men that cannot obtain fine weather by prayers. This, in itself, might enlist the sympathies of all tradespeople in Southend, and, for once in a way, if it enjoyed three months of good holiday weather through the efforts of the Council, this body would justify itself in the eyes of the heathen.

Dr. Henri M. Léon, in an address to the Ethnological Society, made the assertion that religion to the average Westerner was merely a secondary consideration, a side-show, something which it was respectable to profess, which he put on and took off with his Sunday attire. It is to be concluded that these remarks are the results of direct observation by Dr. Léon and have not been gathered from carefully compiled statistics by people in the business, on a business footing, and as jealous of their business as any manufacturers of soap or iron girders.

By change in habit and convention, says Canon Alexander, a woman may gain in freedom and lose in refinement. That's a pity! When women change their habit of church-going they will gain still more freedom and lose a heap more refinement. But as the refinement they will lose is only Christian barbarity as acquired from the vulgarest old book in all creation, that loss will not cause decent people to snivel at it overmuch.

Dr. George A. Gordon, a well-known American preacher, has severely criticised the hymn, "Rock of Ages." It is "simply Calvinism in great vein"; it is "utterly pagan," and in particular the line "See Thee on Thy Judgment Throne" is "a terror and a horror," he declares. We don't quite see how the words of an esteemed layman can be Calvinistic and pagan at one and the same time. Still, we suppose this good man thinks, like many another Christian, that to call a thing "pagan" is equivalent to saying it is the last word in degradation. He forgets, or perhaps he does not know, the tremendous debt Christian civilization owes to the pagan civilizations. Be that as it may, we are glad to note that even Christians are revolting at the barbarity of pious sentiments in hymns. But that disgust is a little belated; Freethinkers expressed it many long years ago, and experienced the full measure of Christian dislike when they did so. Dr. Gordon is more fortunate; he is able to take up Christian pay while mouthing ancient Freethought criticism.

The influence of children's books upon the psychology of the child, was the subject of a lecture by Miss A. M. Jackson, a lecturer in psychology. She said that all great literature must ultimately heighten for us the value of life; in this broad sense even nursery tales must be true to life. Fairy-tales and phantasies, she said, had a place in the life of the child; they gave scope to his newly-acquired power of creating images and of manipulating them mentally. A few stories, she asserted, if frankly recognized as belonging to the fairy realm did no harm; but there was probably danger in stories which professed to belong to the realm of reality, but which were really quite as fantastic as the old fairy-tales. We agree that there is danger in teaching children these particular kind of stories; and we believe that the worst of them are to be found in the Bible. To teach children Biblical stories "which professed to belong to the realm of reality," and, what is still worse, to base morality upon them, is a criminal folly against which Freethinkers will never cease protesting.

The lecturer then said that though children rightly objected to a self-conscious morality in tales, yet love and beauty and truth made a profound appeal largely to the child's unconscious mind in which ideals of conduct were slowly but surely built up. Hence she commended the English Bible in which would be found the antidote to much vulgarity and insincerity. We like that! It moves us to exclaim that the astounding innocence—to use no harsher term—of some of our lecturers in psychology is to us a never-ending source of wonder. Why, the Bible is packed full of vulgarity, cruelty, immorality, and barbarity; everyone who has not a religious-doped mind knows that. This alone would condemn the book as unfit for the uncritical mind of a child. But what makes the Biblical stories still more harmful is that the child is given to understand that the cruel and superstitious actions of the Bible worthies were approved and even commanded by the Ruler of the world. And when we realize that these Biblical notions eat into the child's mind and form his ideals of conduct, we need not be very much surprised at the large amount of cruelty, superstition, and vulgarity that is everywhere apparent. Some fine day when our educationalists have cultivated a keener sense of cause and effect, they may realize how evil is the effect of the Scripture lesson and will sweep the Scriptures out of the schools.

The Garden of Eden story tells of the *Fall* of Man, whereas Evolution, which the editor of a contemporary accepts, tells of the *Ascent* of Man, and thus obviously has forced all Christian believers in Evolution to declare the Eden story is not fact but fiction, or allegory. But if the story is not fact, how can it rightly be said to represent a "great moral truth"? It can represent that for Christians only so long as it is accepted as actual fact. If it is declared to be allegory, then we would point out that it cannot be that; for allegory never sets out to deceive people into believing to be true that which is the exact opposite of the truth.

In a pious contemporary, a correspondent asks for a little light on a dark subject. What benefit, he enquires, do Christians receive from all that stuff in the Scriptures about wars and kings? The editor replies that all parts of the Bible are not on the same level of inspiration; the portions mentioned are interesting only to historical students, and the reader seeking spiritual help need not trouble about them. Read the Bible naturally, he advises, on the same principle as you take food for your body. Sometimes you will feel in the mood for one part of the Bible, sometimes for another. That, we think, is rather dangerous advice; for some dull-witted believers may turn to certain "purple passages" and think they are getting the highest of spiritual comfort simply because they are in the mood for such "rare and refreshing fruit."

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.—H. G. Whitehead, £1. We are asked to request C. E. S. to write or call on N., at Grove Lane as soon as possible.

G. A. BELLONI.—Thanks. Shall appear as early as possible.

A. W. COLEMAN.—We are not surprised you are disgusted at the pious drivell Church dignitaries unload on newspaper readers. Either they are afraid to talk sense or are unable to do so. And newspaper editors place no limits on absurdity so long as it is headed "Religion."

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

As announced last week, Mr. Cohen has promised to address one of the monthly meetings of the R.P.A., at 5 Johnson's Court, on the evening of Tuesday, April 13, on the subject of "Freethinkers and the Blasphemy Laws." The lecture commences at 7.30, and will be followed by discussion. The meeting is open to all.

A debate has been arranged between the Rev. W. Mason, of Burslem, Staffs, and Mr. Cohen. The discussion will take place on Monday, April 19, in the Queens' Hall, Burslem. Subject, "That Christianity is necessary for the attainment of Social Justice." Mr. Mason will, of course, take the affirmative. From all we hear of Mr. Mason he is a gentleman with whom the discussion will be of the most friendly character, and it should prove interesting to all concerned.

We hope to be able to announce next week the meeting place of this year's Annual Conference of the National Secular Society. The Branches have a choice this year of either Birmingham or Manchester, and in either case we hope to see there a goodly number of delegates and individual members. The usual arrangement will be made for the comfort of friends visiting the Conference, and those who intend doing so should make their wants known to the General Secretary as early as possible.

We would also remind Branches and individual members that all motions for the Conference Agenda should be sent in without delay. Individual members have the

right to place a motion on the Agenda paper, and we expect some will avail themselves of the opportunity. But no time should be lost in sending them in.

The Annual Meeting of Members of the Manchester Branch will be held in the Large Committee Room (ground floor) of the Engineers' Hall, 120, Rusholme Road, on Sunday, April 11, and a good muster of members is particularly requested. Annual Meetings have hitherto been held on Saturday afternoons, but as the attendance of recent years has left much to be desired, the Committee have decided to hold it this year on a Sunday, and trust the alteration will result in a greatly increased attendance. Will all members please note?

Members and friends in the Birmingham district will please note that the Annual Dinner and Concert in connection with the Birmingham Branch will be held at the Falstaff Restaurant, Bull Street, on Monday, April 19, at 6.15 prompt. The tickets are 5s. each, and the Secretary, Miss S. Dobson, of 6 Daniells Road, Little Bromwich, will be pleased to forward tickets to those who wish to attend the annual function.

A small book of 64 pages has just appeared, entitled *Selections from the Poems of John E. Barlas*, edited by Henry S. Salt, price 5s. net. The publishers are Messrs. Elkin Mathews, Ltd., 4a Cork Street, London, W.1. The Editor's Preface is an expression of keen appreciation of the works of Barlas, specially the *Love Sonnets*. George Meredith wrote of the latter thus: "It is in the sonnets that he takes high rank among the poets of his time. I think the concluding sonnet unmatched for nobility of sentiment, and the workmanship is adequate." Mr. Salt says: "Though the number of modern poets is now considerable—artists skilled in the production of beautiful verse—the born singers, the hearts to whom poetry is as the breath of life, are still but few; and it is to this small class that Barlas essentially belongs."

Nearly all the poems given in this tiny volume are exquisitely beautiful. Take the following verse from the first poem, *The Golden City*:—

There gorgeous Plato's spirit
Hangs brooding like a dove,
And all men born inherit
Love free as gods above;
There each one is to other
A sister or a brother
A father or a mother,
A lover or a love.

John Barlas was born in Burma, in 1860, and died in Scotland, in 1914. His education was completed at New College, Oxford, where he took a degree, and where also, "while still an undergraduate, at the age of twenty-one, he made a romantic marriage with a grand-niece of Lord Nelson." He became an ardent Socialist, to whom freedom was a burning passion, and whose ruling aspiration was to bring about such reforms as would result in the peace and happiness of mankind. To him Love meant everything:—

He who has once loved truly is a knight,
Knows deep down in his heart heroic worth,
And pins upon his crest a lady's glove.
Him shall you not turn back in the grim fight:
Uncover and own, then, ye who prate of birth,
The untitled aristocracy of Love.

Denis Diderot is dead. He died a long time ago, but here is a liberal notice by a reviewer of a volume of *Diderot's Miscellanies*. From the remarks made we gather that Freethought was in the famous philosopher's time just as difficult and unpopular as it is in the present. We are told that in the volume an innocent-looking conversation with a general's wife develops into a defence of Freethought. No doubt Diderot realized the necessity of medicine even if administered in the jaws of the novelist's art.

Some Trivial Incidents.

THE scene, a little village some few miles from the Scottish capital. The actors, a few young men who, according to custom, had congregated in the only street it possessed, after their day's labours were over. The topic of discussion was the great exhibition then being held in Edinburgh and the famous picture, "Leaving the Manse," which had been a source of attraction and interest. This well-known picture, depicting an old and venerable lady on the arm of her young minister son departing from the manse at the time of the great Secession, is one that appeals to the heart of all religious Scotsmen. After its merits and the history of those stirring times had been fully discussed, one of the young men who had been silent during the conversation, said he would venture to give them a more interesting and dramatic picture of "leaving the manse" than was portrayed by the historic masterpiece. And this was the tale he unfolded. He had been a diligent church member, but very early began to be troubled with the demon of doubt. He had read some critical literature which disturbed his mind, and the more he thought about the alleged evidences of Christianity the more unsettled he became. In the end he arranged for an interview with the minister, who, he hoped, would be able to explain things to his satisfaction and reconfirm his faith. So he hied him to the manse. He stated at length all the points that were troubling his perplexed mind, but the minister made no response until he had finished. Then he said: So, that's what you think; now I'll tell you what I think. And rising from his chair, he led the doubter to the door, and taking him by the cuff of the neck, he lifted his foot and, with a firm, vigorous kick on his posterior, sent him spinning through the doorway. "And that," said the young man, "was how I left the manse—and the Church—never to return."

He was the treasurer of a small struggling Presbyterian church, and kept a watchful eye upon the expenditure. But he had his troubles. His chief trouble, however, was the Rev. Judas Holdfast, who also kept an anxious eye upon the money-bag. The Rev. Judas had only been installed a few weeks when the trouble began. At a Church business meeting—the first after his induction—he rose and said there was a little matter he would like to put before them. The Church he had left used to grant him £30 a year for pulpit supplies in the case of absence or holidays, and he thought it was only fair to himself that they should grant him a like sum. The treasurer was up in arms and protested most vigorously against any change in their usual procedure and such an unwarranted increase in their expenditure. But the Rev. Judas won the day, and the thirty pounds was set aside for his future use. Very shortly after this, his wife's father, who was also a minister, came to stay with them on a short holiday. He officiated on the Sunday in place of the Rev. Judas who sat down in the pew below to be edified. At the next church meeting he again rose to call their attention to a little matter. His father-in-law had occupied the pulpit on a certain Sunday, and he regretted to say he had not been given the usual fee. The poor treasurer jumped up in alarm and protested that he had come on a friendly visit, and had only officiated as a matter of courtesy; that the minister was not absent, and such an expenditure was not justifiable. All in vain! The ten pounds was remitted to the father-in-law. But the treasurer was to receive some further shocks. In a short time, the wife's brother, who was also a minister, paid a

friendly visit and, like the father, "occupied the pulpit." There was another contest between the treasurer and the minister, at the end of which the treasurer's bag was lighter by another ten pounds. Again, a third visitor appeared in the shape of a theological student, a younger brother of Mrs. Judas. The congregation, of course, could not be deprived of the privilege of listening to the gospel message afresh from the lips of so gifted a young man. They were treated on the Sunday to a beautiful sermon from the text: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal." He left on the Monday morning—with the remaining ten pounds.

The treasurer also left; and afterwards used to speak of the minister in most unbecoming language. He was wont to say that if Moses was the meekest man on earth, their minister was certainly the meanest man on earth.

He was a very pompous and pious old gentleman, and a member of the sect of the Superior Baptists. Piety and pomposity are not infrequently found linked together in persons of such affluence. He was also the uncle of my friend's wife, who, so rumour had it, figured to a considerable extent in the old man's will. My friend was of an enquiring turn of mind and took no little interest in matters social and intellectual; and one of the books I had lent him to stimulate his interest was Winwood Reade's *Martyrdom of Man*. He was so delighted with the work that he purchased a copy of his own to enrich his bookshelves and peruse afresh in his leisure hours. The august uncle had arranged to spend a week-end with them, and naturally they wished to do all they could to make his visit a pleasant one. All went well until the Sunday afternoon. After dinner they retired to the parlour, and the old gentleman was comfortably settled in an easy-chair, to occupy the time in desultory reading and pious meditation. And then one of those little imps of mischief who seem to appear from nowhere at the most inconvenient times, played a nasty, unkind trick, and threw a bombshell into the midst of the happy trio. On the table were lying a number of books, and unfortunately the one nearest to the old gentleman's hand was *The Martyrdom of Man*. He drew it leisurely towards him with a caressing sort of gesture, as if it were a volume of Spurgeon's Sermons, and settled down to a quiet hour. My friend was too late to prevent the catastrophe that followed, and nervously awaited the result. It was not long in coming. After a period of silence during which you might have heard a pin drop, suddenly there was a terrific explosion. The old gentleman jumped from his chair as if he had been shot, and nearly went through the ceiling. Winwood Reade, just missing the chandelier, went bang through the window and landed on the lawn outside. "So that is the kind of blasphemous rubbish that you leave lying about your house," he yelled, "to pollute the minds of decent people." He was in such a towering rage that my friend was apprehensive of an apopleptic fit. Attempts at pacification were useless. Any book that could blasphemously refer to Abraham—the friend of God—as an "Arab Sheik," and thus associate him in the minds of the vulgar with the "Sheik of Araby" and low music-hall audiences, was an offence against the Christian conscience that could not be condoned! etc. The remainder of the visit was a very trying one indeed; and my friend and his wife have given up all hope of figuring in the old gentleman's will.

JOSEPH BRYCE.

A Scottish Walt Whitman.

INTUITION.

When the poet evokes in his splendid fury, the shining spheres, the murmuring fountains, and the rushing streams; when he calls upon the earth to hearken, and bids the wild sea listen to his song; when he communes with the sweet secluded valleys and the haughty-headed hills, as if those masses of brute matter were endowed with sense and thought, we do not smile, we do not sneer, we do not reason, but we feel. A secret chord is touched within us; a slumbering sympathy is aroused into life. Who has not felt a pang of pity for a flower torn and trampled in the dust; a shell dashed to fragments by the waves? Such emotions and ideas last only for a moment: they do not belong to us; they are the fossil fancies of a by-gone age; they are a heritage of thought from the childhood of our race. For there was a time when they possessed the human mind. There was a time when the phrases of modern poetry were the facts of ordinary life. There was a time when man lived in fellowship with nature, believing that all things which moved or changed had minds and bodies kindred to his own.—*Winwood Reade, "Martyrdom of Man."*

ROGER QUIN, the self-styled, self-devoted Tramp Poet, was born in the town of Dumfries, in a house almost midway between Burns's House and Burns's Mausoleum, in the year 1850, and died, in hospital, in the same town on July 31 of last year, aged 75. His father, the elder Roger Quin, was a minor poet, who published two volumes, *The Heather Lintie*, and *The Plain Truth, or Error Exposed*, dealing much with religious polemic from the point of the "Truth" according to the Roman Catholic Church. The elder Roger came over from Ireland about 1820, and one writer states that when he was married (to a Highland wife) he could neither read nor write. But though he was a cotton weaver, often working sixteen hours a day, he found time to educate himself and emulate the tuneful Lintie of his title. The son, Roger, may be said to have soared, if not to heaven's gate, at least to a considerable altitude—of which readers shall judge. Luckier in learning than his father, he had high schooling till he was sixteen, was apprenticed to the law, and spent his leisure in the bookshop of Mr. Maxwell, where he often had the honour of serving the Scottish sage, Thomas Carlyle. Later, and for a long time, he was a railway clerk, mostly in Glasgow. The father and sisters removing to Galashiels, thither went Roger, drawn by a kindly fate, destined to feed his poetic flame amid the scenery, romance, history, and posy of that delectable Border Land—near by and about were lone St. Mary's Loch, the brown moors and classic streams, the peewit and the curlew's call, the "Shepherd's" statue on the moorland (James Hogg), border keep, ruined abbey, battlefield of victory and defeat; the ashes of the great wizard (Sir Walter Scott) slept in Dryburgh to the gentle requiem of the placid Tweed—surely his spirit hovered over his beloved Melrose and Abbotsford. Twenty years later the poet returned to Glasgow and his clerking, but not for long. On the death of his wife and the break up of his home, he felt the overwhelming "call of the wild"—so many poets have sung the joys of the road and the open sky, but it is the supreme credit of Roger Quin that he not only sang but lived the life of the houseless wanderer—of his own choice too. Many friends and admirers bade him stay, and even offered him a permanent home; but no, he complied a day or so there, here a year or so, but the wanderlust would not be denied—not to the very end, when he said: "the spirit is willing, but my poor legs will not carry me"—so in the infirmary from the effects of exposure, gangrene, and amputations, his wanderings finally ended at 75. He had

lived in caves on the Ayrshire and Galloway coast, played his piccolo for pennies, and was often reduced to subsist on the shellfish he gathered on the shore. If his life was so irregular, his poetry was not, and in places bears the touch of the master hand. Needless to ask: was he a Freethinker? He probably was not, but only "whiles," or, like Burns and Carlyle, found artistic uses for the "ineffable name." Fame came to Quin at 57, with the appearance—in *T.P.'s Weekly*, widely quoted in other journals—of "The Border Land," a long poem, rich in the scenery and lore of that countryside, and its philosophy. Here are the opening lines:—

From the moorland and the meadows
To this city of the shadows,
Where I wander old and lonely comes the call I understand;
In clear, soft tones, enthralling,
It is calling—calling—calling—
'Tis the Spirit of the Open from the dear old Border-land.

Ah! that call, who can gainsay it?
To hear is to obey it;
I must leave the bustling city to the busy city man—
Leave behind its fevered madness,
Its scenes of sordid sadness,
And drink the unpolluted air of Yarrow once again!

And so the poet sets out, and the sun shines over many felicities of scene and diction in the happy lines.

Spending a night on Glasgow's "Embankment," George Square, the poet writes his "Nocturne" at two in the morning:—

The City's clamour now has ebbed away
And silence settles in the dusky Square,
Save for a cough, sepulchral, here and there,
From shivering Forms that wait the coming day;
Hunger and Houselessness without one ray
Of Hope to chase the shadow of Despair
Keep weary vigil in the wintry air,
Each heart to dread Despondency a prey.
Proudly the Civic Palace, over all,
Looms through the night, and with a sculptured frown
Meets the dull gaze of Want's lack-lustre eye:
Till, slowly, like some vast funeral pall,
The chill dense curtain of the mist creeps down,
Shrouding the Splendour—and the Misery.

"SONNET"

(to a skylark singing above Barnhill Poorhouse.)

What blast of Fate, melodious mocker! say,
Has blown thee here; in airy spendor! glee,
Wasting thy wealth of liquid ecstasy
On hearts too cold to kindle at thy lay?
Thou sing'st of Hope above Hope's grave. Away!
Flee this dark Hall of Eblis through whose aisles
Frail phantoms totter, or with senile smiles
Rake the spent ashes of dead Yesterday!
Flung from Life's boiling tumult—bruised and sore,
Sick with the shame of what I have become,
My wistful gaze follows thy flight afar—
As some late reveller, when the rout is o'er,
Pauses in his uncertain step for home,
With bleary eyes blinking at the morning star.

There seems more than a touch here of *The City of Dreadful Night*.

Several war poems show a shifting mood, as when the tearful mother, seeing the troops away to Armageddon, cries, "Noo, Jock, ye'll dae ye're bit!" or when the aged patriot laments:—

Too old! too old! Ah! not for me to feel
The bounding pulse, the eager, indrawn breath;
The reckless rush mid serried ranks of steel,
The fine disdain of Death!

And, then, in mordant apostrophe he breaks out in

"THE CHANT OF DEATH."

Way for King Death! I am monarch of all,
As I haste to my harvest carnival—
The goodliest harvest of all the years;
Watered with blood and women's tears!
From the reeking trench; from the shattered fane—
Smit to dust by the fiery rain—
From the ravished town; from the ocean grave,
Where the children sleep beneath the wave—
Gather my red sheaves—garner my grain;
Mine are the slayers—and mine the slain:

with the final lines:—

*Bind up the sheaves—pile high the load;
'Tis the grist of Death for the Mills of God.*

So slaughter shocks patriotism and the trumpets that sing to battle can sound the retreat from what must be ever more horrible, ever more hopeless, war. Those mills of God may grind yet a while, because, without them, the armies of Mars and Christ may find their occupations gone.

Our minstrel sings the praises of many of the greater poets, Shelley especially, in verses worthy of their theme.

The passion for poetry in Roger Quin, and for liberty, was no doubt the same that drove him into the solitudes to lose his "puny ills" in "the proud silence of the hills." But how, we may ask, how preserved, in such a "dishevelled mind," this "ae spark o' nature's fire?" That's hard to be conceived, but certain it is, it has survived in all scenes and situations: it is Shelley's "divinity in man," or, "last footsteps of Astrea," only not leaving us utterly forsaken, but intercepted, pleaded with here and there, by the true redeemers of the world, the poets, among whom not the least eloquent and devoted was Roger Quin, the Tramp Poet of the Border Land, of Glasgow, and Dumfries.

His volumes are out of print, but it is expected a new collection will be made soon. The poet himself cared little for publicity, but wrote to soothe the rage of the moment; indifferent to the fame, but, as may have been seen, fastidious to a degree in the form and spirit of his productions.

ANDREW MILLAR.

The Devil and the Deluge.

Of all the myths of mankind the one which has produced the greatest amount of controversy is the Deluge. The objections against it have been of a two-fold nature. It has been subjected to criticism from the moral aspect with a great amount of success. The idea, that a God of Love suddenly determined to drown every living thing in the world, is one which is repugnant to our conceptions of justice. The myth has also been attacked from the scientific point of view and the impossibility of such an event having occurred has apparently been completely demonstrated.

This myth, however, is known to all the nations of the world. Races which differ in language and which are drawn from Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, America, and Polynesia have asserted the truth of the Deluge story. The evidence is not dependent, it is entirely independent, and we are bound to conclude that alleged event actually took place. The fact that this myth has been handed down for more than five thousand years by oral methods, is, to some extent evidence of its intensity and its effect on mankind.

The objections to the myth can easily be stated. At a temperature of 90 degs. F.—a tropical temperature at sea-level—the air is fully saturated when it contains five per cent. of water vapour by weight. The colder the air the less water vapour it will hold. We may therefore say that the whole of our atmosphere cannot at any time hold more than one per cent. of its weight of moisture. Such being the case, there cannot be a greater rainfall all over the world than four inches. Further, it will take, under present conditions, three or four weeks to again fully saturate the air, hence the Universal Deluge is a physical impossibility unless something of an abnormal character happened.

Reverting to my theory, previously published, that a mass of matter which we know as the Devil, entered the solar system and disrupted the planet Uranus, one is enabled from this theory to account for the Deluge. The particles of the disrupted planet would probably occupy a space equal to or greater than the sun. This mass crossed the orbit of the earth and moon, and, as previously pointed out, the evidence is clear that the moon underwent a severe aerolithic bombardment. In fact, this bombardment was the crucifixion of Christ, the Moon God, from whose wounded side the blood-red lava flowed, thus giving rise to the Red Moon of Revelation. Readers may however refer to page 646 of the *Freethinker* for October 11, 1925, in which Mr. Mann has quoted some opinions of Canon T. K. Cheyne. Mythology and physical evidences on the earth show also that our planet was struck by this flying mass of particles. The evidence on this point is so enormous that it would require many issues of this paper to give it all. I need only refer, however, to the Bible, the books of the Prophets and Revelation; the Mulciber myth of *Paradise Lost*, lines 738-746, Book 1, and the thousand-million ton aerolite of Arizona which contains diamonds and platinum.

The earth we know moves in its orbit with a velocity of eighteen miles per second, and any body falling on it would have on impact a velocity of between seven and sixty miles per second. If an aerolite were overtaking the earth its force of impact would be less than if approaching it from the opposite direction. Meteorites we know have an average velocity of thirty miles per second, and I will, therefore, take this velocity as the basis of my argument.

A pound weight moving with a velocity of thirty miles per second has in it sufficient energy, expressed as heat, to vapourise 470 pounds of water. If the amount of matter which fell on the earth was equivalent to a pound mass for each square inch of surface, then the rainfall would be 13,100 inches, that is somewhat more than one thousand feet. Of course, a large quantity would fall back into the ocean, but the lands near the seas would undoubtedly suffer severely.

A cross section of the River Dart in Devonshire¹ shows that its valley would be scooped out by a rainfall of nearly 400 inches in one or more successive days. I think the Thames Valley must have had a rainfall of not less than two hundred inches daily, and the mammoth elephants were washed into the North Sea, where their tusks are sometimes dredged up by trawlers between Yarmouth and Dunkirk.

Owing to the presence of meteoric dust, which followed in the wake of the moving mass of aerolites, the heat of the sun was prevented from reaching us, and in northern latitudes, especially on the coast line, the vapour fell as snow, and produced the glacial epoch from which we are now slowly recovering. From the centre of Asia the mammoth elephant was washed to the shores of the Arctic Ocean. How else can we explain the presence of an animal which requires large quantities of vegetable matter in such a barren region. We can hardly say he went fishing and carried his provisions in his trunk.

It is a well-known medical fact that when a person strikes the back of his head, sometimes the bones at the point of impact are not broken, but the waves of pressure come to a focus at the front and break a bone there. A huge aerolite or several such might or might not push down the crust where they struck the earth, but the blow would undoubtedly tend to raise the crust at the other extremity of the diameter. We may therefore suppose that when the continents or land masses surrounding the Fiji Islands and

¹ See *Journal of Geological Society* for August, 1898.

Easter Island were submerged that the bed of the Sahara Ocean and the Himalayan Mountains were respectively raised. As regards the latter there appears to be zoological evidence in favour of this theory, and the same may be said for the Butterfly Glacier of North America. In each instance we can only explain the facts by a sudden change of climate which has remained permanent.

Let us for a moment consider the energy in a sphere of one mile in diameter, having a density four times greater than that of water and moving with a velocity of thirty miles per second. Such a body falling into the ocean would generate enough steam to give nearly one-third of an inch rainfall over all the globe. It would have also sufficient energy to lift up nearly 800 square miles of land fifty miles in depth to a height of one mile. There were titanic forces at work and the effects were on a corresponding scale.

In connection with the foregoing theory of the causes of the Deluge one can quote Greek mythology. Uranus was destroyed and from his blood issued giants, ash-nymphs, furies and Aphrodite. Uranus was the father of Iapetus, who was the father of Prometheus, the fire that came down from Heaven, and Prometheus was the father of Deucalion. We speak of the Flood of Deucalion, if, however, we say the Flood Deucalion and put Iapetus for the mass of moving aerolites, some of which struck the earth and moon, and Prometheus for those which struck the earth only, then the meaning of the myth is quite clear. It is, therefore, evident that the Greeks, alone in the ancient world, had a true conception of the causes of the Deluge. In course of time these masses of matter became personified, and eventually partook of the characters of men and women. Taking such to be the evolution of the myths; that is, from masses of inorganic matter to sentient beings, one is not surprised, that, after the lapse of more than two thousand years, Socrates impiously stated that the fables of the gods were the inventions of lying poets, for which blasphemy he was condemned to death by a righteous and indignant populace.

In the *Times Literary Supplement* of March 18 this year there is a review of *The Bright Islands*, and one of the myths is "Then Waka covered land and sea with a mist, and through that mist, hidden from all who were there, Laie the Beautiful came borne on the wings of the birds Pali-uli." Assuming the mist to be the steam from the ocean, then, after it had rolled away and the Lord of Hosts had passed onwards, mankind saw "a new heaven and a new earth."

A. M. Y., in the *Sunday Observer* of August 10, 1925, states, there is an eastern legend that the waters of the Deluge were boiling hot. This appears to be very strong corroborative evidence of the truth of my working hypothesis regarding the meaning of the myths. The masses of matter, large and small, which struck the ocean would naturally heat the surface water. The upheaval of the ocean beds would cause this heated water to roll over the land.

WILLIAM CLARK.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.

The Easter holiday thinned our audience considerably on Sunday, although two or three of our good and constant supporters turned up. Those who attended enjoyed a very interesting and instructive address on Electricity undertakings, with special reference to St. Pancras, upon which the lecturer, Alderman Combes, was well qualified to speak. A good discussion followed, and we hope that Mr. Combes will address us on the same interesting subject on some future occasion. This evening Mr. P. Marsden, of the Socialist Labour League, will open. Subject: "Is Marxism Out of Date?"—K. B. K.

"Think Differently."

ADDRESSING a Rotary Club recently, Mr. Eustace Miles, the well-known food reformer, took for his theme the phrase "Think Differently." Of Mr. Miles it might be said that he has taken this phrase as the guiding motto of his life. For whatever subject he engages to teach he invariably tackles it from unusual aspects, whether that subject be how to play games, to write essays, or to acquire health. Believing in thinking differently, he usually presents his hearers or readers with ideas that are both fresh and suggestive. The chief defect of Mr. Miles, from the Freethinking view-point, is that he tends somewhat boringly to centre his thought around Jesus, whom he uses to point a moral and to illustrate a statement in and out of season.

The first general commandment of Jesus and John, said Mr. Miles to his Rotarian audience, was "Think Differently." This was usually translated as "Repent," but it really meant, "Change your mind—get newness of thought"; and that was what everybody needs to-day. In a particular sense, this contention of Mr. Miles might be true. If Jesus wished men to accept his teaching, no doubt he desired them to think differently and to get newness of thought. And it is this way of regarding the teaching of Jesus that has probably led some people to declare Jesus was a Freethinker.

But all Jesus appeared to mean by his "Think Differently" was, "change your current conceptions of certain matters and accept *mine*." That is, men were to adopt only *his* particular way of looking at things. Here, however, is where Jesus radically differs from a real Freethinker such as Socrates. Jesus said, believe what I say or be damned. Whereas Socrates exhorted his listeners more in this wise: "Think differently, get newness of thought, but use your reason to do so. Do not accept what I may say, but question and examine everything for yourselves that you may discover what is true and what is false." And what reward does Jesus offer for thinking differently? Everlasting bliss, with everlasting torment as the alternative for not so thinking. But the Freethinker, Socrates, what does he say is the reward for getting newness of thought? The reward of happiness in doing what reason declares is just and best and noble. Jesus says in effect, you are ignorant, but I will tell you what is true. Socrates, on the other hand, says, I and you are both ignorant, but we can discover what is true by using our reason.

In the light of all this, one suspects that Mr. Eustace Miles is more nearly a follower of Socrates than of Jesus.

Mr. Miles declared that the command, "Think Differently" was an exceptionally important one; people were all in grooves and ruts and they must get out of them. We agree. But there is little doubt that people to-day are less in ruts than they ever were before. A considerable portion of them are no longer in the Christian rut. They are thinking differently, but are doing so, not in the Jesus way, but in the Socratic manner. And the churches do not like that one little bit!

There is also a question of enemies, said Mr. Miles. We should love our enemies, but our professions of friendship should be genuine. We should, he added, wish our enemies happiness and wisdom; if we did that and our wishes were realized, *we* should score. For if our enemies succeeded against us and they were kind and wise, they would not want to score.

All that, of course, sounds very nice, but wishing our enemies to be kind and wise has never yet made

them so. Freethinkers wish the Christian bigots were kind and wise, but they never have been so, and never are. And how one can love enemies of this sort is past one's understanding. One cannot "love" persons whom one does not respect, whose tactics are mean and contemptible. We doubt whether Mr. Miles, with all his ingenuity, could show us how it might be done.

Why should we think differently? asked Mr. Miles, and replied, it is an awfully good mental exercise. It means more sympathy. We cannot help people unless we understand them and look at things from their point of view before insisting on our own. Mr. Miles is right enough, and his advice should be especially useful to his Christian listeners if they would but apply it in dealing with Freethought and Freethinkers. For whereas Freethinkers do understand the Christian and his point of view, the Christian, following the advice of his priests, refuses to study the Freethinker's point of view, and tries to suppress Freethought utterance whether by tongue or pen. And he does so, we may remark, because he believes in thinking differently in the Jesus manner.

There were three things, declared Mr. Miles, which accounted for the fact that thinking differently was so rare. The first thing was Ease. It was so very easy to go along in the same groove because everyone was doing so. It seemed silly to get out of the rut and into the open country where there was no path. But we must get out if we were really to live, and not simply exist. The second thing was Education. Education of the old school was a great obstruction, he said, because it had kept to the textbooks. The third was Etiquette (in which Mr. Miles appeared to include custom). People were afraid to do anything different from others, because of etiquette. Etiquette, he added, was necessary, but there was too much of it.

To put different thinking into practice, Mr. Miles suggested the reading of journals and books which one does not usually read and which one knew nothing about. One should welcome criticism; but that was awfully hard, although criticism was one's best friend. We heartily agree with these suggestions. But they apply more to Christians than to Freethinkers. For Freethinkers, by the very fact of being such, have arrived at their opinions through reading both sides of the religious question. And they tend to carry this principle of investigation into other matters about which they desire to know the truth. On the other hand, Christians—the majority of them—do not try to discover what the Freethought critic has to say. They refuse to read Freethought publications. They strongly object to criticism of their religion and suppress both critics and publications whenever they can, by fair means or foul. To evoke the strong arm of the law they regard as an act of righteousness.

We sincerely hope the hearers of Mr. Miles' address will adopt his motto and apply it to their religious notions. What a good thing it would be for Freethinkers if Christians applied it to their present opinion of the Blasphemy Laws!

D. P. STICKELLS.

God has, especially during the scholastic period and later, been clothed with all kinds of attributes. Public enlightenment, however, has compelled the taking back of these garments one by one, and his defenders would be very glad to undress him completely but for this difficulty—it might then be discovered that the clothes had nothing inside them.—*Schopenhauer.*

Correspondence.

A "RICE CHRISTIAN."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—My seven-year-old boy goes to Sunday school. We don't send him; he goes of his own accord. He is a "rice Christian"; he wants to be invited to the treats. I don't want him to become any other kind of Christian, so I sometimes question him about the rubbish they teach him there, and try to neutralize it.

For instance, "Jesus Christ was the only perfectly good person who ever lived." So I told him of the cursing of the fig-tree, the bewitching of a flock of innocent pigs, his abominable rudeness to his mother, and the immoral teaching in the Sermon on the Mount. I think an article by you on this subject would be useful. If I wrote it, I would say that cruelty is the one real sin, and Jesus never mentioned it (nor does the Decalogue, nor Paul in his lists of deadly sins).

But I suppose you are so much tied to the myth that he was a myth, that you can't attack his morals very effectively. That must be left to anti-scientific animists like me.

C. HARPUR.

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 French by M. Leakey on "Esperanto." All invited.

NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (101 Tottenham Court Road): 7.30, Mr. E. C. Saphin, "The Crucifixion and the Resurrection." (Lantern Lecture.)

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W.): 7.30, Mr. P. Marsden, "Is Marxism Out of Date?"

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11, Dr. Bernard Hollander, "Eugenics, Love, and Marriage."

OUTDOOR.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 3.30, Mr. J. Hart, "The Fundamentals of Christianity."

COUNTRY.—INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Brassworkers' Hall, 70 Lionel Street): Dr. C. J. Higginson, M.A., M.D., "Joan of Arc." Questions and discussion invited.

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S. (No. 2 Room, City Hall, "A" Door, Albion Street): 12 noon, Annual General Meeting. All members are requested to attend.

LEEDS BRANCH N.S.S. (Trades' Hall, Upper Fountain Street): 7.15, Mr. A. Hough, "A New View of Evolution." Questions and discussion invited.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Engineers' Hall, 120 Rusholme Road): 3, Annual Meeting. All members are requested to attend.

BARGAINS.—Hand-made quilts; 18s. to 25s.; assorted colours; satisfaction guaranteed.—HAWKINS'S STORES, Cheddon Road, Taunton.

FREETHINKER wants situation near London; life gardener; abstainer; references.—H. H., 5 Hillside Road, Stamford Hill, N.15.

REASON THUS about tailors: If I do lose a Christian one, I do lose a thing that none but priests should keep, and if I neglect to find an Atheist one, I'm with those priests immersed in Theist deep. Every week you have the chance to be wise by writing for any of the following:—Gents' A to D Patterns, suits from 55s.; Gents' E Patterns, suits all at 67s. 6d.; Gents' F to I Patterns, suits from 75s.; Gents' J to N Patterns, suits from 104s. 6d.; or Ladies' Spring Fashion and Pattern Book, costumes from 60s., frocks from 52s. 6d.—MACCONNELL & MABE, New Street, Bakewell, Derbyshire.

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