

# The FREETHINKER

FOUNDED · 1881

EDITED BY CHAPMAN · COHEN    ■    EDITOR · 1881-1915 · G · W · FOOTE

*Registered at the General Post Office as a Newspaper*

VOL. XLVI.—No. 37

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 1926

PRICE THREEPENCE

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## Views and Opinions.

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### **A Defender of the Faith.**

Last week we referred to two books we had recently been reading—one, the *Harp of God*, published by the International Bible Association, and filled with the crudest and most ignorant form of Christian superstition, the other, *Can We then Believe?* by Bishop Gore. We put the two books together deliberately, and for a special purpose. Generally Dr. Gore would be placed in the category of religious thinkers, and Mr. Rutherford in that of religious fanatics of the more ignorant type. And so far as mere scholarship is concerned, the classification would be justified. But in the religious sense, in the Christian sense, they are both in the same camp; Bishop Gore is not a whit more reasonable than is Mr. Rutherford; he is simply more nebulous, expresses himself in less definite terms, and is less loyal to the religion in which he professes to believe. For example, both of these writers profess belief in the Christian deity, and both claim to base that belief on the Bible. On this latter point Dr. Gore says very plainly that he could not believe in the God he does believe in without a revelation, which is only another way of saying that he has no hope of giving a reasonable justification for his belief. But given a God who must make himself known by revelation, and Mr. Rutherford and Bishop Gore differs only as to the way in which they believe in the Bible. The first takes the Bible in much the same sense that Christians have always taken it; the other takes the Bible also, but says that we must interpret it in the light of modern thought, but only so long as we do not allow our devotion to modern thought to lead us to reject the Bible altogether. The difference here, therefore, is not a difference of fundamental belief; it is rather a difference of intellectual straightforwardness. The beliefs that Bishop Gore professes to retain are not a bit more rational, or more capable of justification than those which he rejects in the name of scholarship and modern thought. A revelation concerning the existence of the soul, or of God, is not a bit more sensible or necessary than a revelation concerning the multiplication table. A thing that is unreasonable in the absence of a revelation does not become

reasonable with it; it is merely the introduction of an impossibility to justify an absurdity.

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### **A Question of Values.**

It is, we know, not usual to deal with these highly placed religious gentlemen from the standpoint of intellectual honesty. The customary method is to assume their complete sincerity and desire to get at the truth, with a determination to speak the truth and nothing but the truth. And in the ordinary affairs of life one must admit that a bishop deserves the same degree of trust that we give the ordinary man. But when we touch religion we are moving in a different atmosphere, and dealing with men who have been trained in using one set of weights and measures for secular, and another set for religious affairs. They are not dishonest in the sense that a man is dishonest who puts his hand in my pocket and steals my purse. But they are not honest in the sense that they will give to words their established value, and use them with the same meanings that their hearers attach to them. Let us take as an illustration of this established mental crookedness Dr. Gore's treatment of the Bible. He says:—

The Bible was not given to teach us science, and it simply accepts the science of its time; it knows nothing of physical evolution.....Neither the prophets nor Jesus Christ himself show any signs whatever of authority to anticipate future discoveries which mankind by its faculties of observation has slowly shown itself capable of making. Therefore the old astronomy is taken for granted in the Bible.....Let us take it for granted that when we say our Lord "descended into Hades," we mean no more than that He, in his human spirit, like all other human spirits, went into the unseen world.....And that when we say "He ascended into heaven" we refer to a vision actually seen by the apostles which was intended to express his exaltation into the divine glory.

There are many more sentences of this kind that might be quoted and they well illustrate what has been said above. We put on one side with a brief comment the statement that the book which professes to tell us the manner in which the earth came into existence, the way in which man and woman were formed, was not intended to teach science. If these are not matters of science, what are? And with the same brevity we may pass over the absurd statement that when the New Testament writers talk of Jesus ascending into heaven or descending into hell, they meant only the travail or exaltation of spirit such as may overcome any man. In connection with anything else but Christianity the dishonesty and poor shuffling of such deliverances would be readily seen. What we are content to ask is the simple question, "What did the early generations of believers, what did the church itself understand by these teachings and by the science of the Bible?" There can be no denial that they did accept the Bible as telling them the literal truth about the creation of the world and of man, they did believe

that the Bible taught science, and that Jesus ascended bodily into a definitely localisable place called heaven. Observe, it is not at all a question of what certain expressions may be made to mean, but what they were understood to mean. If what they were always understood to mean is wrong, and if what they were understood to mean constituted Christianity, their disproof is a disproof of Christianity. We do not know anything more startling in our lives than the manner in which truth is juggled with, and the moral currency debased by these men who claim to be the moral leaders of the nation, unless it is that the mass of the people appear to take the mental shiftiness of these fathers in God as belonging to quite a normal state of affairs. Perhaps it is because the world has quietly left off expecting honesty in the pulpit that we do not get it.

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#### A Parson on Parsons.

Dr. Gore writes repeatedly of the views he rejects having been held by medieval Christian leaders, as though they were late in the history of Christianity. But they were held by the Christians from the first. Can anyone believe that a people who could accept the fantastic story of a second coming of Jesus to judge the world would be capable of being enlightened about the origins of religion, or would have boggled at Biblical teachings which we now know to be absurd. Mediævelists only, so to speak, codified the teachings and beliefs of earlier generations, and often enough tried to make them more reasonable than they were. The beliefs of the primitive Christians were, as a matter of fact, so shockingly crude that a mere statement of them would more often than not excite some doubt as to whether rational human beings could ever have professed them. But if anyone wishes to get a glimpse of the primitive Christian mind, and he will spend a few hours in a public library running through the twenty-four volumes of the Anti-Nicene library, he will find there a collection of absurd superstitions nowhere equalled in the world's literature. The Rev. Professor Kirksopp Lake has replied to this attempt to saddle the Mediævelists with the responsibility for the discredited science of the Church in the following in his *The Religion of Yesterday and To-Morrow* :—

It is a mistake often made by educated persons who happen to have but little knowledge of historical theology, to suppose that Fundamentalism is a new and strange form of thought. It is nothing of the kind; it is the partial and uneducated survival of a theology that was once universally held by all Christians. How many were there, for instance, in Christian Churches who doubted the infallible inspiration of all Scripture? A few, perhaps, but very few. No, the Fundamentalist may be wrong; I think that he is. But it is we who have departed from the tradition, not he, and I am sorry for the fate of anyone who tries to argue with a Fundamentalist on the basis of authority. The Bible and the *corpus theologicum* of the Church is on the Fundamentalist side.

And Dr. Gore's method is unconsciously held up to derision in the following passage :—

Instead of interpreting it (the Bible) to show what the writer meant it is used as a vehicle to convey what the preacher wishes. Instead of being explained in the light of knowledge of the times when it was written, it is made to refer to the problems of to-day. The preachers have lost their father's belief in the infallibility of Scripture, but they endeavour to transfer something of the traditional authority of the Bible to teaching which they appear to have taken from it, but have really inserted into it by homiletical conjuring. Thus, for

instance, they have read into it science, not always with complete accuracy, and explained that in some mysterious way when the Bible said Creation it meant Evolution, when it said Fall it meant Ascent, and when it said Salvation it meant Progress.

This was written before Dr. Gore's book appeared, but it could not have described the method employed more accurately had it been written as a review of the book. And the contempt implied is richly deserved.

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#### Pious Jugglers.

With some of Dr. Gore's specific points we will deal next week. What we would now like to emphasize is the consideration of the question, How far is one justified in treating men in Dr Gore's position as being perfectly honest in their dealing with religion? It is difficult to believe that these men are consciously dishonest in the sense in which a man is dishonest who deliberately slanders a neighbour, or robs him of his property. And the only escape from this is to assume that there has grown up in connection with the Christian pulpit a form of mental crookedness which is tolerated in no other walk of life. In business or in politics selling or gaining confidence under false pretences is considered a grave offence; it may be even a criminal offence. In religion one is permitted to twist texts and utterances, to disown established meanings and impose new ones, to play fast and loose with historic facts, and yet be thought none the worse for so doing. This state of things can only be understood on the assumption of the existence of a lower ethic in connection with Christianity than obtains elsewhere. It is not, we must again insist, a question of whether the present interpretation put forward by apologists is what Jesus meant, or what the Bible meant. The central fact is that Christianity has always meant to those who believed in it a certain number of doctrines. If these are not true then Christianity is not true. The Bible was accepted as revelation from God and to contain nothing but the truth. If that is not so, then the belief in the Bible was unwarranted. It is not at all a question of what you can make established formulae mean, but what they have always been understood to mean. When we read that Jesus ascended into heaven in the full view of his followers, the record is the statement of an event that was believed to be as actual as the ascent of an aeroplane. To say that the ascent of Jesus might mean only his mental uplifting, is to say that the other belief was false. And if a system of religion has been built upon beliefs of this kind, then that system is also false. The issue is perfectly plain, and it would seem that the only way to get the clergy to carry out these elementary rules of intellectual honesty is to insist that there shall be at least the same degree of veracity in religious matters as is current in politics or commerce. Neither has an extravagantly high standard, but it would seem to be much higher than that which obtains in religion.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

(To be Concluded.)

Great Britain is losing her industrial position, and will perhaps lose her empire, through stupidity, and through the fact that the authorities do not value or promote intelligence. All this is connected with the fanatical belief in the paramount importance of games. Of course, it goes deeper: the belief that a young man's athletic record is a test of his worth is a symptom of our general failure to grasp the need of knowledge and thought in mastering the complex modern world.—*Bertrand Russell, "On Education."*

## Christianity and Evolution.

CANON J. M. WILSON, D.D., has been for many years a zealous believer in and eloquent advocate of what is known as Liberal Theology. Whether he is an accredited member of the Modernist school in the Anglican Church or not, he holds extremely advanced views on religion. Recently he published an essay in the *Guardian* entitled "Christianity in the Light of the Idea of Evolution," in which he expressed his entire acceptance of that scientific theory. In the issues of the *Guardian* for August 20 and 27 appeared articles by him called "An Essay and Some Criticisms," in which he replies to objections against the position he has adopted. He is glad to be able to say, however, that, on the whole, the essay "has been generally well received—if I may judge by reviews and private correspondence—as to the subject, and tone, and temper: I may say remarkably well received, both by churchmen and the public generally." That is exceedingly surprising, except on the supposition that those who still adhere to traditional theology, did not think it worth while to take any notice of so heterodox a pronouncement. As a matter of fact Christianity and evolution offer entirely different and absolutely irreconcilable interpretations of the universe in general and of mankind in particular. Mr. Chesterton and Mr. Belloc are fully justified, as orthodox Christians, in wholly rejecting and denouncing the modern scientific views of Nature and of Man. If religion is true, science is, of necessity, false; but if science is true, there is no conceivable escape from the conclusions that religion is sheer superstition, doomed to extinction.

Canon Wilson's Christianity is a woefully effeminate affair, which neither Paul nor Calvin could recognize at all, if able to behold it. In reply to one of his critics he says:—

I do not think you have yet grasped the immense change that has already taken place in the attitude that the Church must take towards revelation since the verbal inspiration of the Bible has been abandoned. That illusion haunts us still. Few have fully realized how this abandonment affects our way of regarding the Creeds. Are they to be regarded as still verbally binding on us? How can they be so?

Surely to repudiate the belief in the Bible as the inspired Word of God is virtually to discard everything of a supernatural character. It is alleged that the Creeds are founded upon or have grown out of the Bible; but if the Scripture is no longer believed to be a God-breathed book, the Creeds naturally lose their binding authority. It is perfectly futile to claim that "God speaks to us as he spoke to our forefathers," because there is no convincing evidence that he has ever spoken at all, or that there is a God capable of speech. At this point the Canon becomes strangely cryptical:—

There is a parallel to this contrast in the old medieval dispute which you will recall. Must we first believe in order that we may understand? Or first understand in order that we may believe? The answer is Yes to both questions. And there is no contradiction between the answers when the object of belief is rightly stated. We must believe from our own consciousness that there exists a Spiritual Power outside ourselves, a God, before we can begin to understand *him*; and we must understand the statements men have made about God before we can believe *them*.

No one can believe in God from his or her own consciousness. Spencer tells of some deaf mutes in America who arrived at maturity without being able to enjoy any communication with their fellow-beings.

When a missionary was found for them who taught them the deaf and dumb language, he discovered that they had no idea of a Supreme Being; and it is well known that a child does not believe in God from its own consciousness, but from the instruction imparted to it by its parents and teachers. Years ago Canon Peter Green complained in a sermon preached in Manchester that there was so little religion taught in schools and colleges that our young people were in grave danger of developing into Atheists, implying that in the absence of religious education religion would soon die out; and he was right. Furthermore, the most fervent believers in God do not understand him in the least. In Job xxxvi. 26 we read: "Behold, God is great, and we know him not." He is merely an object of belief, not at all of knowledge. Therefore, Canon Wilson is radically mistaken when he declares that the belief in God "is implanted or inborn in us by God's creation of us." Fancy an orthodox evolutionist speaking of "God's creation of us," and of his implanting within us the belief in and knowledge of himself. The scientific evolutionist knows nothing of "God's creation of us," or of his implanting anything within us. And here comes the absurdest of all passages:—

The evolutionist Christian, we may say, accepts the whole substance of the Nicene Creed; but it presents itself to him logically in the reverse order. Our Faith is based on induction as well as deduction. He believes in the Holy Spirit of God, from his own personal conscience and consciousness, and from the witness of others for God, shown in good and holy lives. This is sure ground. He believes in the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church as the proper ideal embodiment of that Holy Spirit in mankind. He believes in Jesus Christ as the unique historical Representative and Revealer on our earth of that Holy Spirit of God, and therefore as our Example, our Saviour, our Lord, our link to God, our At-one-ment; and through Him he believes in the Eternal Father, whom Jesus Christ has partially revealed.

Well, the evolutionist Christian is the craziest and most impossible being under the sun. It appears that, at heart, Canon Wilson is not an evolutionist, but a thoroughly orthodox divine. No genuine evolutionist could have written the foregoing paragraph. There is not the slightest trace of evolution in it from beginning to end.

One of Canon Wilson's critics, speaking of evolution, says: "I do not feel that it really faces the fact of the prevalence and persistence of sin, and the feeling of remorse after sin; and while I feel that it is quite right to emphasize man's progressive discovery of truth, yet that you need to emphasize side by side with it God's progressive revelation of it. Otherwise it seems to me to emphasize the worship of humanity rather than the worship of God." In our judgment that objection is, from the theologically orthodox point of view, perfectly legitimate and well founded. The Canon's reply to it is as follows:—

Does evolutionist Christianity explain the fact of the prevalence and persistence of sin, and the feeling of remorse after sin? I think the only answer is that it does, and that very completely; though I should prefer to use the words "self-reproach"—or even "shame and rage at oneself"—to "remorse." I think that the evolutionist alone can fully sympathise with and explain St. Paul's words: "I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members. O wretched man that I am." St. Paul was fighting unseen and imagined foes—"the principalities, the powers, the world-rulers of this darkness, the spiritual hosts of wickedness in

the heavenly places." We know what we are fighting against—our inherited animal passions and nature.

The scientific evolutionist is totally ignorant of sin and also of "shame and rage at oneself" on account of sin. Sin is a purely theological term, and has meaning only to believers in God. To the scientist, as scientist, the idea of God is utterly foreign. To him physical and chemical forces, operating of grim necessity, are the only things that really count. What else is there to bother ourselves about? All we need is harmony with our environment, for the acquisition of which no supernatural aid is either required or obtainable.

J. T. LLOYD.

## The "Wisdom" of the East.

For East is East, and West is West,  
And never the twain shall meet.

—Kipling.

How shall I hate anything, unless I am myself filled  
with hatred.—Goethe.

"OUT of the East, light," was a saying of the ancient world which was supposed to have philosophical as well as astronomical significance. Even to-day Theosophists, and other vendors of superstition, profess to find the Orient, of all places in the world, as the repository of wisdom and the ancient home of so-called "spiritual" teaching. The contention is that the East is more in accord with the infinite than the West, and that Europeans, and Britishers in particular, are not in touch with the finer spiritual motives and higher feelings which actuate Hindus, and Moslems, specially the former.

This contention, we firmly believe, is erroneous. Maybe, the "Zendavista," and other sacred books of the East, contain some golden thoughts amidst a mass of ideas better forgotten; but we also notice that the representatives of two great religious communities, Hinduism and Mohammedanism, are ever ready to fly at each other's throats at the slightest provocation. Indeed, it is only the presence of the Secular, and armed, police force that prevents these high-minded religionists from daily committing murder on a wholesale scale. So it would appear that the leaders ignore the golden thoughts in their sacred writings, and that the same beautiful ideas have never penetrated very far down among the rank and file of their followers. In other words, the lip-service and hypocrisy is as profound in these far-off spiritual homes of religion as that credited to the commercially-minded Britishers in their island home.

The blunt truth is that both Hindus and Moslems are as fanatical as any dusky cannibal that dined off a white missionary. The music of a Hindu religious procession falls on the ear of Moslems in their mosques as an unspeakable insult to their religion, which can only be wiped out in blood; while the killing of a cow by Moslems transforms the spiritually-minded Hindu into a homicidal maniac. And it is instructive to remember that four centuries ago Britishers discarded such hyper-sensitiveness in matters of religion, and decided that religion without murder was a step towards that toleration which is a distinguishing mark of real as opposed to a spurious civilization.

The same thing applies to the leading countries of Europe. Western Europe is learning the lesson of religious toleration, and men of opposing creeds are living together in lands once swamped with the blood resulting from sanguinary persecutions and religious wars of attempted extermination. Western Europe was then, four hundred years ago, in a similar position to the India of to-day. Protestants wrecked

churches and cathedrals, and Catholics retorted with the sword, the thumbscrew, and the rack. Europe was, indeed, a cockpit of rival religionists, and the St. Bartholomew massacre, the Spanish fury in the Netherlands, and the fires of Smithfield, to mention but a few instances, only serve to show what an Age of Faith really meant in actual practice.

So far from Britishers being behind the Hindus and Moslems in matters of ethics, the exact reverse is the case. These Oriental religionists have not even attempted to learn the lesson of religious toleration, which we have learnt at the cost of so much suffering. The Indians have had their religious and internecine wars for many centuries, but the lesson is unlearned, and they are as ready as ever to murder those who differ from them in matters of faith, and on the slightest provocation. Neither Hindus nor Moslems have the faintest idea of being fair to their rivals, and neither the one nor the other has the remotest thought of recognizing the equal rights of the other. Nor is this the outcome of ignorance on the part of the populace, for prejudice is carefully fostered by the leaders on both sides. The Hindus are past masters at camouflage; at starting movements which appear to be the outcome of religious zeal, but which are carefully calculated to excite the fury of the Moslems. The Hindu Association is narrow, sectional and anti-alien as was the Fenian movement in Ireland, and the rival Moslem League is conducted on the same fraternal spirit towards the Hindus.

There is no pill to cure the disease of fanaticism. Such cure must come by the gradual broadening of ideas, and this must take much time, especially amongst an Indian population on the bedrock of ignorance and superstition. The prospect is none too promising. There are too many leaders, hankering for temporal power, in both camps, prophesying and encouraging not peace but strife. But, it is high time there was an end of the cant that Europeans, especially Britishers, have anything to learn from Hindus and Moslems concerning religion. These Orientals are as far behind us in matters of this kind as they are in matters relating to sanitation. We, as a nation, are discarding the barbarities associated with religion, whilst these Orientals are still living in an age of belief and of murder. Hatred and intolerance are not unknown in England, but we rightly draw the line at murder and wholesale massacre. What is needed to-day is less, and not more, religion. And the secularization of this country is not likely to be promoted in any form or shape by turning to one of the motherlands of superstition for guidance. Fine words of advice in ancient records are words only so long as they are more honoured in the breach than the observance. And, judged by deeds, this country of ours has no need to seek its wisdom from the East, where chicanery is a virtue, and murder one of the fine arts. MIMNERMUS.

The question of analysis is not only of supreme importance in relation to a particular proposition for discussion, but it is also of the greatest importance in all the practical affairs of life. No mental quality is so necessary as the analytical habit of mind. Practically all the men whom history calls great have possessed in a large degree the habit of analysing everything. Lincoln was in the habit of applying this analytical process not only to great affairs of State, but to anything and everything which came beneath his notice. He analysed the actions of his fellow men, the workings of a machine, the nature of moral principles, and the significance of political movements. He was continually penetrating to the point of things, visible and invisible, and laying it bare.—Prof. Victor A. Ketcham, "Argumentation of Debate."

## Holidays and Change.

AFTER THE STYLE OF A MODERN ESSAYIST.

Thei holden nat here holydaies as holy churchetecheth.<sup>1</sup>

THERE is a very prevalent fallacy among all conditions of men that they work too hard. They consider that should they work the allotted number of hours every working day throughout the year without a break, mental or physical, collapse would inevitably ensue. Butcher, baker, and candlestick-maker—even including the parson who draws the dole from his parishioners and kicks over the traces on the Continent, and the equally parasitic young hooligan who draws the dole from the Labour Exchange and goes home and kicks his mother—all are specious reasoners in defence of their fetich. Hence the reason for that diverting phenomenon, the annual holiday. The universal panacea for boredom in comfort at home is to seek boredom in discomfort abroad. It is generally agreed that to create an atmosphere of change one needs a change of atmosphere.

A platitudinous adage, very much fancied by sweaters generally, is that "a change of work is as good as a rest." Following a similar line of argument, one might say with equal reason that a total change of occupation is as good as a holiday. It is necessary, though, to make sure that it be a radical change. One can imagine the embarrassment—not to say annoyance—of a lawyer and a barber who, on exchanging professions, find that each is still splitting hairs and talking for hours to unwilling listeners about nothing in particular.

One of man's characteristic inconsistencies is that he has an eternal craving for change, yet always shows reluctance in seeking it. He is a creature of habit and convention, and it is easier for the average man to break a nigger's head than to break away from convention. Hence his rigid adherence to the belief that a fortnight or so away from them is necessary to his recognition of the beauties of home and work. He has yet to learn that it takes more than change of environment to create holy days. Many who would howl with hilarity at Hoxton find nothing but the megrims at Margate and the blues at Blackpool.

Failing to gain mental emancipation by change of environment, some, sincere only in their insincerity, consistent only in their inconsistency, even carry their absurd craving for change to the extent of frequently changing their wives or husbands, as the case may be. Infirm of purpose, incapable of steadfastness, they obtain a divorce only to discover the obvious fact that a thing or person is more desirable when unobtainable. It is a common trait among mental inefficient to covet others' possessions, both spiritual and material, and to despise their own. In that land of the Fundamentalists, America, these sexual diversions have become almost commonplace, and soon it will be more conventional to marry in order to divorce than re-marry, and so on, *ad infinitum*, than it will be to lead what is considered a normal married life.

Now the root of such grotesque activities seems to be that man is continuously endeavouring to get away from himself. Unfortunately for the successful accomplishment of these psychological gymnastics, a whole directory of other selves is waiting to step into the shoes of each deposed ego. Some solve the problem by becoming artists in life; that is, they go raving mad. The more rational and preferable solution is to master the art of living.

Thus we are faced with the paradox of man eternally changing his mind but never altering the com-

position of it. The greatest phenomenon of all, however, is the man who changes his religion. As he is usually imbued with the drug in early childhood, one would hardly conceive that, on mastering the craving for it on his arrival at maturity, he would willingly succumb to another form of narcotic. Perhaps, providing the initial dose be strong enough, he never completely recovers from its effect. Once having become addicted to the Christian drug, it takes a stronger personality than is possessed by the average victim of the priest to entirely eradicate all superstition from the system. It is almost impossible for him to dispel the results of—

The daily drug which turned  
My sickening memory.<sup>2</sup>

having been taught by the priest to

Drug thy memories lest thou learnt it.<sup>3</sup>

Such types crave for still stronger medicines and find no difficulty in exchanging the small beer of Protestantism for the cocaine of Catholicism. Eventually, Spiritualism may claim them. They run the gamut of all superstitions from touching wood in their childhood to touching "ectoplasm" in their dotage. In fact, it is a touching spectacle altogether, for, in more senses than one, they are "touched" considerably in their turn—usually in the head and the pocket.

Nobody is truly content until he is dead. To possess a spirit of unrest, to strive after an ideal, shows a healthy discontent; to crave morbidly after trivial change denotes an unhealthy and childish mind. The child who is so petulant that it threatens to go into the garden and eat worms should be persuaded to go there and study them. Many a man has been of immense benefit to humanity through undertaking a similar task.

The altruist is as superior to the egotist as truth is to a lie. Everybody who adds something to the sum of human knowledge, kills a potential lie. The egotist, by the inertia of his self-conceit, perpetuates it. Remember always, there is no greater egotist than the priest, and while one of them retains a foothold in the citadel of superstition, there is always man's work to do.

W. THOMPSON.

## Lazarus Has Changed.

OFTEN I wish I could have personally known the admirable story-teller who passes under the name of Saint Luke. He was the first novelist of his age. I could almost fancy he was an educated Greek slave, employed as secretary to a Roman landowner or official, sometimes living in Rome, and sometimes in his master's villa on the shore of the Ionian Sea at Miletus in Anatolia. His so-called "Gospel" (which he calls a *Diegesis*) shows acquaintance with the manners of cultivated society, and also shows keen sympathy with women, slaves, and poor people generally. From (as I suppose) travelling merchants, seamen, and wandering preachers he had picked up rumours of the Nazareth martyr whose death had taken place a century or so ago. And he had been given, or had bought, manuscripts of legends which we now call "Matthew" and "Mark." He altered these, and added to them with the imaginative skill of a Dante, a Shakespeare, or a Defoe. A story which he alone tells begins thus:—

There was a certain rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day; and there was a certain beggar named Lazarus,

<sup>1</sup> *Piers Plowman*, p. 143.

<sup>2</sup> Byron, *Childe Harold IV.*, p. 76.

<sup>3</sup> Tennyson, *Locksley Hall*, p. 77.

who was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table; moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores.

It is remarkable that when the rich man and the poor man died, and Lazarus lay happy on a couch in heaven, and the rich man writhed in the furnace of hell, nothing is said as to any virtuous quality possessed by the once-beggar. He was lifted to the divine banquet-table as compensation for the dog's life of poverty and disease which he had suffered down below in Rome, or Miletus, or Jericho, or elsewhere. And if anybody will take the trouble to run through Luke's *Diegesis*, or history, and pick out the references to the humble folk who had little money or property, he will conclude that Luke had an intense fellow feeling for these proletarian classes. In one or two cases (Lydia the cloth-seller and Zacchæus the excise-officer), he presents pictures of persons who probably had well-lined purses, yet were considered "vulgarians" by the upper-social ranks. But it is to the hungry people and the lowly artisans that he gives his warmest heart-beats. Perchance he had read the Latin pages of Seneca (d. 65), and approved the passage:—

How happy the Primitive Ages when the bounties of nature lay in common and were used promiscuously! They enjoyed all nature in common, which thus gave them secure possession of the public wealth. Why should I not think them the richest of all people, among whom there was not to be found one poor man?.....Not yet had the stronger begun to lay hands upon the weaker. Not yet had the miser, by hiding away what lay before him, shut off his neighbour from even the necessities of life. Each cared as much for his neighbour as for himself.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, we cannot credit Luke with the capacity for planning an organized Communism or Socialism. Social intelligence could not grasp such conceptions in the second century. And Ramsay MacDonald and other modern Labour leaders utter a peculiar mis-statement when they speak of the Utopia of "all things in common" among the early Christians as if Luke's anecdotes were a God-made programme prepared for the convenience of the Twentieth Century Labour Party. Neither Seneca nor Luke had, or could have, a vision of a national authority assuming control of economic and financial resources, for purposes of national production and distribution. The best destiny Luke could conceive for the poor man was that God would finally balance the affair by moving beggars and slaves to heaven. And, for my part, I think that idea marked a step forward. In a mythical, yet strikingly dramatic manner, it blazed out a pathway of hope for Lazarus. By "Lazarus" I mean the ill-fed masses of the Roman Empire and beyond. Lazarus went on vomiting, groaning, and cursing for about sixteen centuries till the days of John Bellers, Thomas Paine, Thomas Spence, Francis Place, and Robert Owen.

Then something happened in the story of the Wandering Beggar and Wage-slave. Lazarus has changed.

I am perfectly certain that the Latin Seneca and the Greek secretary Luke (if he was a secretary!) would perform a joyful Bacchic reel if they could witness the world-wide Labour movement of 1926. The case for Luke is securely based on his own "Parable of the Spendthrift." When the wretched youth was welcomed home, the household slaves made a triumphal clatter with music and dancing (Luke xv. 25). But Luke (I cannot speak for Seneca)

would recognize a remarkable change. About the year 126, the only hope for Lazarus was in an after-death translation to heaven. In the year 1926, the obvious intention of Lazarus (I apologize to the members of the 1924 Labour Cabinet for using the rather vulgar name) is to construct a new world of his own, and to bake his own bread and organize his own comforts. And I shrewdly suspect that, sooner or later (alas! for the later!) the Rich Man will see which way the political wind blows, and will, more or less grudgingly, support the new programme. I should be glad if that happened. I do not approve of dropping the Rich Man—that is, the Profiteer—into hell-fire. I would, if I could arrange things, make him a member of the National Fire Brigade, or Guild of Extinguishers.<sup>2</sup>

This assumption of self-reliance by Lazarus makes all the difference in the world; and, indeed, all the difference in heaven too. I am familiar with the Old Testament and the New Testament; and I affirm that no gleam of the doctrine of self-reliant democracy occurs anywhere from the book of Genesis to the book of the Apocalypse. That is why I object to the more or less straight—or more or less twisting—declarations of Ramsay MacDonald and others to the effect that Labour's emancipation derives its economic agenda from the Bible. As a human literature, I highly value the Bible—poet Job and secretary Luke (if he was a secretary!) above all. But the whole thing was simply and finely natural, without one drop of heaven. As a politician, I resent being asked to draw up my manifesto to the electors in terms supplied by the ancient Luke or Paul, just as I should resent being tied up to the civics of the Greek Aristotle, or to the Hindu Laws of Manu. It is as plain as plain can be that the working-classes of the chief civilized nations do not rest their hopes on prayer. For more than a hundred years the sense of self-confidence has been growing. The earlier political leaders spoke like rebels. Their sons spoke as if suggesting a modest alliance with higher powers. The workers of to-day mean, by their independent exertion, to realize release from poverty. Of course, they differ in policies and the choice of instruments. The Lazarus of the year 126 never dreamed of a policy, and never stretched out his hand towards an instrument. He lay at the gate; moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores. The divisions of opinion in 1926 as to the advisable methods of emancipation are themselves a sign of approaching success. Captains, not slaves, make plans of campaign, and even bear with courage the failure of this or that plan; and then they evolve better plans.

Lazarus has changed. He begged; he speaks as an equal. He lay rotten; he marches as a citizen. He cadged heaven; he claims the earth. He caught at crumbs; he devises harvests. He sighed the elegy of the night; he chants the song of the morning. He was God's serf; he is Man. F. J. GOULD.

New customs,  
Though they be never so ridiculous,  
Nay, let 'em be unmanly, yet are follow'd.

—Shakespeare.

If wisdom were offered me with this restriction, that I should keep it close and not communicate it, I would refuse the gift.—Seneca.

<sup>2</sup> The Rich Man of Luke's parable had five brethren; and I hazard the guess that the Rich Man and his five brethren represented the six divisions of the Roman citizenship, excluding the Proletariat (Lazarus).

<sup>1</sup> See M. Beer's *Social Struggles in Antiquity* (Parsons, 3s. 6d.).

## Acid Drops.

You can't kill a religious lie, for the simple reason that you can't kill the religious liar. There are few religious people who think very much worse of a man who lies in the interests of religion, and so there is nothing to lower the religious liar in either his own estimation or in that of other people. And so far as Freethinkers are concerned, it is impossible to lower him in theirs. Hence the religious liar approaches as near immortality as it is possible for anyone to get.

That is by way of preface to informing our readers that the Atheist who took out his watch and called on God to strike him dead within three or five minutes has reappeared in the columns of the *New York Sun*. One Hyacinthe Ringrose tells how Mrs. Besant, during the course of a public debate in London many years ago, gave the Almighty five minutes to show his power by striking her dead, and at the end of the five minutes said, "Time is up, Mr. Chairman, where is Mr. God?" And Charles Bradlaugh, who was in the chair, said, "Perhaps he is taking a nap." We don't know who Mr. Hyacinthe Ringrose is, and we do not call him a liar. We are only reminded of one of Phil May's stories: Said one coster to another, "I say, Bill, did you tell Jim I was a liar?" "No," said Bill, "I thought he knew it." It should be quite unnecessary to tell the acquaintances of Mr. Ringrose anything about that gentleman's reputation for veracity.

In the same issue of the *Sun* Mrs. Besant informs a reporter that the ridiculous young man whom she is taking round on exhibition as an incarnation of the Messiah, often leaves the body and visits celestial lands. When questioned how this is done, she explained that it is "something like a dream." Very like a dream, we should say. And this from Mrs. Besant. When religion seizes on the mind no absurdity seems too great for it. And it is worth noting that Mrs. Besant secures from our enlightened press the publicity that was carefully denied her during the more sensible period of her life.

In every town there should be a building dedicated to the recreation of the people, declares Miss Lena Ashwell. We think the suggestion a good one. But it seems as well to point out that, so long as the rabid Sabbatarians have any power in the land, such buildings would not be available for the fifty-two days in the year when the workers are most free to enjoy recreation. There are plenty of buildings and parks for amusement and recreation now, but the trouble is to get them open to the people when the week's work is done.

Methodist parsons are now busily engaged in saying good-bye to their flocks preparatory to moving to pastures new. In these days of lamentations about the shocking salaries they get for the Lord's service, it is interesting to read the reports of minister's farewell parties, and to notice the little "extras" that help the good men along their chosen path of poverty. One parson gets a £50 cheque, and a wallet of notes goes to his wife. Another receives notes value £22, and the wife an oak table. As we run an eye down the other reports, we read of gold-mounted umbrellas, silver teakettles, sumptuous easy chairs, gold-mounted fountain-pens, silver plate, sectional bookcases, sets of knives, wallets of notes, and bicycles. All these things are, of course, horribly materialistic, but no doubt they are necessary as some kind of compensation for having to wear a dog-collar, and to mouth pious platitudes from one weary Sunday to another.

The Protestant Truth Society, we learn, has issued a booklet entitled *Protestant Arrows* (price 1½d.). "Every point of the contest with sacerdotalism," says the notice, "is met by an arrow for the Word of God."

A wonderful old quiver, is that Word of God. It will no doubt supply the opponents of Protestantism with arrows also. It is quite in keeping with so obsolete a thing as religion that its defenders should think in terms of bows and arrows.

Those who are inclined to pride themselves on the advanced state of our civilization would do well to read an article on "Suicide," by the Rev. Desmond Morse-Boycott, in the *Evening Standard* of August 31. Mr. Morse-Boycott suggests a theory of suicide, not by any means new, indeed it takes one right back to the heart of savagery. He admits that there is no need to go further than overstrained nerves to explain some cases, but there are others which, he holds, can only be explained on the New Testament theory of demonic possession. This is getting back to Jesus with a vengeance. Evil spirits take possession of the body and drive the man or woman, or child, to suicide. The belief is stated in all its naked absurdity and primitive barbarism. And it is published in one of our leading London evening papers. Such things ought to remind all who are inclined to think of the fight against superstition as being almost over, of the immense mass of crude superstition by which we are surrounded, and of the writers and speakers and priests of all denominations who are ready to exploit it to the full.

In the last analysis, says Dr. G. Campbell Morgan, the spirit of the age is expressed by the words he saw hanging on a 'bus, "Safety first." He doesn't object to it on a 'bus or motor-car. It is a good thing, obey it. "But when you make that the philosophy of life—finding the path of least resistance—you are a pagan blasphemer," he declares. The reverend gentleman should be the last to rail at a "Safety first" philosophy. The sheep in the religious fold believe that by pious observances they will escape some kind of punishment in the Hereafter. They may not accept all the clerics tell them; but as a matter of insurance, as it were, they think it best to praise the Lord and be on the safe side. Well, if that isn't a "Safety first" philosophy we should like Mr. Morgan to tell us what it is. When the faithful and the brethren dump this philosophy and acquire something better we can predict a very "thin" time for the devil-dodgers.

Several facts demonstrate that there has grown up lately a new sense of the value of the Old Testament, writes the Rev. C. W. Andrews. The Old Testament, it has been argued, represents a long superseded type of religion, contains tales that are unedifying, and records tempers that are un-Christian. It is therefore all to the good, it is a fact of great significance, that this new sense of values has found so much expression of late years. If the reverend gentleman had said that the Old Testament represents an antiquated type of thought, contains tales which are beastly, and records ideas that disgust the more enlightened ethical taste of to-day, he would have been more accurate. We agree it is all to the good that Christians, after nearly two thousand years, should discover these things. But we don't expect the godly to express any gratitude to the Freethinker for opening their eyes, or rather, shall we say, for opening one eye half-way. At this present rate of Christian progress, several centuries will elapse before the pious will be able to use that one eye properly. Then there perhaps will be some hope of getting the other in working order on the New Testament, and another new sense of values will come into being.

The *Manchester Guardian* reprints what it calls a "remarkable sermon," preached by one of the chaplains in Kenya Colony—Mr. D. B. Reynolds. Mr. Reynolds is very clear in his mind about what the New Testament teaches concerning the relation of the white and coloured races, and the only remarkable thing about the sermon, so far as we can see, is that Mr. Reynolds is rather nearer to the real spirit of Christianity than is many of our popularity-hunting parsons at home. Mr. Reynolds

is quite clear on the point that the New Testament nowhere asserts the equality of mankind. The white race is clearly the superior race, and the "New Testament asserted nothing more than the brotherhood of Christians," which does not "imply equality in all the varied relations of life." The punishment to be served out to the black must be more severe than that served out to the white, while there is the support of St. Paul for the statement that the powers that be are ordained by God, and that resistance to them is wrong. Mr. Reynolds is scornful of the belief that the New Testament repudiates slavery. In point of fact, he says, "it does not even specifically condemn the slavery which existed throughout the Roman Empire; though it urges slave owners to treat their slaves with kindness. It took the Christian Church just 1800 years to realize that the institution of slavery was morally indefensible."

We repeat that the only remarkable feature about this sermon is that it is a Christian sermon—that is, it gives a plain reading of the New Testament free from the gloss placed on it by apologetic parsons in this country. The *Guardian* says it is astonished at the sermon because it plays into the hands of those who desire to exploit the black people. But that is not the fault of the parson; it is the fault of the New Testament. The sanction given to slavery is of the clearest kind. So is the command to obey masters whether they be good ones or bad ones, as is also the teaching that the powers that be are ordained of God. Mr. Reynolds is simply preaching unadulterated historic Christianity. He is not concerned with what Christianity may be made to mean, but with what it does mean. And it is idle to reject this because it may be made an instrument of exploitation. The reply to that is that it always has been used as an instrument of exploitation, and is being so used still. For the more fashionable teaching here at home is being used as much as an instrument of exploitation as it is in Kenya Colony. That the teaching runs differently is a consequence of the conditions being different.

A leading article in the *Christian World* raises the question of the belief in the second advent. It points out that there is no lack of people who believe it, and says it is time that leading ministers should put their congregations right on the matter. But the article also admits that the belief in the second coming of Jesus was held by the early Christians as a body, and although "modern knowledge of physical science may compel us to reject the second coming as transcending the limits of human mental credibility, that does not in any sense justify us in concluding that Jesus himself did not firmly accept the view and its possibility." And the writer goes on to point out that it was the influence of Greece that undermined the belief in the minds of the more cultured of Christian believers. In other words, it was the more civilized Greek spirit that instructed the less civilized Christian body of believers.

This article has no little bearing upon what has been said of the mass of crude superstition in our midst. For if there is a belief startling in its crude ignorance it is the belief in a second coming of Jesus. One cannot argue with such as believe in it. The ordinary rules of logic do not apply. They move in a mental atmosphere that defies what the educated mind regards as proof. One can only use them as examples of what the early Christian Church was like, and the type of mind that gave it vitality.

And if that is done, one needs no further proof of the absurdity of regarding the Christian Church as either a benefactor to civilization or as being concerned in any degree with making this world a better one. What concern could a body of men have with the far-sighted legislation required to better adjust the relation of human beings, or with the slow acquisition of knowledge that has built up our mastery of the world, if they believed that at any moment, and certainly not to be long delayed in any case, "Our Lord" would return

to usher them into eternal life? The mere existence of this general belief in a second coming of Jesus is alone enough to demonstrate the dishonesty or stupidity of those who hold up Jesus as a social reformer, or as a betterment of the world as being one of the aims of fundamental Christianity. Men who argue thus must be either dishonest or stupid. There is really no middle term. And if there are any who think this judgment too hasty or too stupid, we need only ask them to look at the facts.

A correspondent sends us a copy of the *Cape Argus*, which contains an account of the last moments of a man named De Beere, executed for poisoning his wife while on a railway journey. As it common in these cases, De Beere came to a quite godly end. And, as is also quite common, he had a quite godly training. In a confession to a Salvation Army officer he said his father was a good Christian man, he had a good Christian home, there were family prayers daily, and they were always exhorted to live for Christ. When he went to work he used to read his Bible regularly. He never read the *Freethinker*, never attended Freethought meetings, and never throughout his life had any disbelief in the moralising influence of the Christian religion. Quite an admirable young man, from the Church point of view.

Still, he poisoned his wife, and it is here that the beneficial influence of the Christian training comes. Without the comforts of Christianity, he might have ended his days in despair. With the Christian faith he was able to assure the Salvation Army officer that his last thoughts were with his children. He had secured God's forgiveness, and knew that God would care for them. Two parsons gave him the sacrament, and when he was led out to execution he was quite composed, and walked to the scaffold with the assurance that he was "going to meet God and his wife." And as he left the condemned cell his last words were, "Father into thy hands....."

This is where the excellence of the Christian religion comes in. In the absence of that faith a man might have been careless, or downcast. It is the Christian religion alone that can take hold of a murderer, and fill him with the conviction that his crime has brought him into a special relation with God Almighty, and in a position to ask and receive favours. It is Christianity alone that can get hold of a convicted murderer, and so fill him with the importance of his own position, and of his saved condition that he can afford to take up an attitude of pity and forgiveness towards those he has wronged. An excellent religion—for criminals.

An ex-Wesleyan preacher writes to the *Daily News* that so soon as he began to doubt the accuracy of Christian doctrines he ceased to preach. But that is a very dangerous procedure. If all the parsons who doubted the truth of Christian doctrines ceased to preach, some of the best posts in the Churches would be vacant. The regular course is that adopted by Bishop Gore, and Bishop Barnes, and Dean Inge, and the like. This is, that when you can no longer hold that a Christian doctrine is true, make it mean something different from what it has always meant and what Christians have never understood it to mean. By this method you are able to hang on to place and emoluments, and pose as a daring religious thinker.

The Commercial Travellers' Association is an organization which supplies hotels with Bibles, and distributes tracts among the men "on the road" that are an insult to anyone outside an idiot asylum—and even some of these might very well resent such piffle as is passed off on them. But the secretary now writes to the press that although two thousand letters were sent out asking hotel proprietors if they wanted more Bibles, only two hundred consented to take them. So it looks as though even commercials do not want to read the Bible to each other before retiring to rest, as we were led to believe they once did.



**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.—F. MacLachlan, Lt. W. O'SHAUGHNESSY.—Thanks for getting new subscribers. We are sending the paper to the fresh address, and hope it will be the means of plucking more brands from the burning. The *Freethinker* has not a tenth of the circulation it should have.

M. BLENKINSOP (S.A.).—Your letter should have given the clerical gentleman something to think about. We quite agree with you as to the inadvisability of leaving people alone in the matter of religion. Truth is a social product, and to hug it to oneself is as mean as the miser's love of hoarding money. It is a social responsibility to speak the truth as one sees it, and we are proud to know that the *Freethinker* has been of help to you in what you have done. You may be sure that your work has not been without some influence on others.

"TAB CAN."—A paragraph was already in type when your note came to hand. Thanks.

H. BLACK.—We are obliged. If all would do as much to promote the circulation of the paper we should cease to worry, although it might increase the worries of the enemy.

J. W. WEARING.—We are taking the matter up with the officials concerned and will see what comes of it.

F. G. CLARKE.—Hone's edition of the Apocryphal New Testament is not what can properly be called a "rare" book, although, of course, out of print. It can frequently be met with on secondhand bookstalls at about 2s. 6d. per copy. There are numerous copies in circulation.

R. M. WILLIAMS.—Mr. Cohen is ready to come to Liverpool to lecture at any time. It entirely depends upon the activities of local Freethinkers. If a few of them will get together and undertake the local arrangements, he could visit Liverpool this side of Christmas. The trouble in Liverpool appears to be that each seems to be waiting for the other to move.

MORAG WALTERS.—Ingersoll's address was reprinted some years ago in a pamphlet, with other addresses, but you would now have to consult an edition of the works—*The Dresden Edition*, 12 volumes.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Sugar Plums.**

With regard to our reply to a correspondent concerning the alleged conversion of W. Stewart Ross (Saladin), Mrs. Stewart Ross writes us:—

It was with the greatest indignation that I read under

the "To Correspondents" column that someone has been telling a lie about my husband, the late W. Stewart Ross being converted. It is utterly false. His antagonistic, iconoclastic attitude towards Christianity was as pronounced as ever at the time of his death, and to the last he continued to write his caustic "At Random" for his beloved *Agnostic Journal*.

We deeply regret that Mrs. Ross should have, in the present state of her health, been subjected to this kind of annoyance, but that is not a consideration likely to have much weight with the ordinary Christian. Nor have we any expectation that this repudiation from "Saladin's" widow will suffice to kill the lie. It will continue to be told, and we are quite certain that Christians will not lose caste with their fellow believers because they have been lying for the glory of God.

Lying and cowardice very often run together, and the persistence of this particular death-bed lie lets in a flood of life on the type of character formed by Christianity and which is attracted by Christianity. It is simply impossible for a certain type of Christian believer to understand how a man can face death with the same serenity that he has faced life. Himself a coward, and with convictions that rest on no sound intellectual basis, he is so afraid of what may await him after death that he imagines all others must be in the same condition. Hence his belief that it is likely the dying unbeliever will call on Jesus to save him, and will die with no other thought uppermost but the salvation of his soul. That and the notorious readiness of Christian advocates to lie without stint where the interests of Christianity are concerned, seems adequate to explain the persistence of this death-bed legend. It will die only when Christianity dies.

A South African Judge writes to express his very high appreciation of the *Freethinker*, and says that, in his opinion, there is very great scope, in the Transvaal and elsewhere in South Africa, for the circulation of the *Freethinker* and other Freethought literature. He asks what can be done to rouse Freethinkers to the importance of this work? Well, we hardly know what can be done except to keep reminding them of their duty and their opportunities in this direction. We are always ready to send parcels of specimen copies for circulation, both abroad and at home. And we are quite sure that a determined effort by *Freethinker* readers, if steadily continued for a single year, would greatly increase both our circulation and our influence. There is only one *Freethinker* in this country; we might also say in the world. It has always occupied a place by itself in the world of Freethought literature, and it continues to do so.

While we are on this point we again take the opportunity of earnestly asking subscribers all over the country to insist on getting their copies of the paper as ordered and when ordered. The boycott is very severe, the *Freethinker* is hated by the bigots because of its uncompromising character, and we have lost many subscribers because newsagents have placed difficulties in the way of their getting it. And we are powerless in this matter without the co-operation of our friends. If they insist on getting what they order and when they order it, those who play this game will soon see the futility of it. But everyone must lend a hand.

We see from an advertisement sent us by a reader that a new film called "Evolution" is being shown in various cinemas in the country. As it appears to present the earth and man in various stages of development, it should prove educational; that is, if it is properly done. We suggest that one showing the development of the parson from the primitive medicine man would prove equally informative.

## The Exodus from Egypt.

### II.

(Continued from page 550.)

MR. JACK'S book, *The Date of the Exodus*, will not please the Fundamentalists. The believers in the historical truth and integrity of the Pentateuch, in spite of his attempt to find in Egyptian history a date for the Exodus. The Fundamentalist regards the Bible as the word of God and the bed-rock of truth, and wherever secular history comes in conflict with it—as it does in the first five books, wherever it can be tested—then the secular history, says the Fundamentalist, must give way to the authority of the Bible.

Mr. Jack, however, adopts precisely the opposite method to this. If the Scriptures do not agree with the inscriptions, then the Scriptures are discarded, or they are discovered to mean something very different from what they say.

On the other hand, the book will not satisfy those with an adequate knowledge of the discussions that have taken place regarding this subject. There is too much of "we may assume" certain things we have no right to assume. And too many suppositions as to what might have happened. These assumptions and suppositions being taken for granted later on.

The class of readers this book will please, and for whom it is probably written, is that large class, who, having been trained to belief in the Bible during the Victorian era, but later, under the pressure of science and archaeology, have had to abandon their belief, but yet entertain a sentimental regard for the book, and are always pleased when anyone comes forward with some scheme for reconciling it, if only in one or two points, with the facts of history.

Mr. Jack admits at the outset that "the period of Egyptian history at which the Exodus of Israelites took place can only be determined inferentially..... the Book of Exodus does not mention the name of any of the Pharaohs at the time, the first Pharaoh named in the Bible being 'Shishak, King of Egypt' (1 Kings, xi. 40; xiv. 25), who reigned several hundred years later" (p. 1). He proceeds:—

It is well known, too, among scholars that we do not possess a contemporary account of Exodus and the subsequent events; for if these had been still fresh in the minds of the Israelites or their immediate descendants when the book was written, we should have had more particulars in the narrative—not only the personal names of the Pharaohs, but the place where they held their court, the names of some of the officers and taskmasters, and other definite and specific items of information. Contemporary writers of history are generally more exact and detailed. The narrative of the Exodus contains material written down several centuries later, presumably in the schools of the prophets, and this represents an age already distant. It was probably compiled in its present connected form only about the fifth century B.C., nearly nine hundred years after the Israelites are supposed to have sojourned in Egypt. (J. W. Jack, *The Date of the Exodus*, pp. 1-2.)

Moreover, as the same writer points out: the story of the Exodus is part of a great composite work, the Hexateuch—the first six books of the Bible—which contains all that has been preserved of the early history of the Israelites; the documents of which "have been repeatedly copied, interpolated with new matter, and expanded with traditions." And, further, "None of the documents appear in its original form as a connected whole. They have all been annotated and condensed by later editors, and

fused by them into a general narrative; and this editorial work has been a repeated process by successive scribes, belonging to different periods in Israel's history and even to 'different schools of thought,' if one might so express it" (pp. 2-3). As he observes, this all makes it very difficult to arrive at facts required for fixing the date of the Exodus. We should say there are no facts at all, merely a bundle of legends and traditions.

On the other hand, when we seek for evidence of the oppression and the exodus in the history of Egypt Mr. Jack frankly admits that, "Neither the papyri already discovered nor the monuments and tombs of Egypt give us the slightest record of the Exodus, or even of the oppression, which must have extended over a considerable period." The reference to Israel, on the Marenptah stele, he dismisses as "only creating further difficulties in some minds." Also the supposed discovery of the name of Moses in an obscure inscription in the mines of Sinai, which, he says, most writers are agreed does not represent Moses, and if it did, "it might represent one of a hundred different individuals, and doubtless has no connection with the leader of the Israelites" (p. 4). To conclude with the Egyptian evidence:—

Names of places called "Jacob-el" and "Joseph-el" occur in the list of conquests made by Thutmose III. in Palestine (c. 1470 B.C.), but apart from this and from the mention of "Israel," we may regard it as certain that there is no Egyptian reference anywhere to any of the persons or events connected with Israel's early history. Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses are all clearly connected with Egypt in the biblical narrative, but with the exceptions mentioned no Egyptian records make reference to any of these persons. No inscriptions or documents of any kind have yet been discovered which place the Exodus within the contents of Egyptian history by bearing witness to its occurrence. (Jack, *The Date of the Exodus*, p. 5.)

And, he adds, "no portion of this history has been more fully examined and explored within the last few years than that into which the oppression and the exodus must have fallen." But, in spite of all this, Mr. Jack believes that the Israelites were once in bondage, in Egypt, and in their exodus to Palestine. He claims that the Israelites entered Egypt about 1875 B.C., during the reign of the Hyksos. That Ahmose I., who expelled the Hyksos, was the "new king who knew not Joseph." That Thutmose III. [Thotmes III.] 1501-1447 B.C. was the Pharaoh of the Oppression; and Amenhotep, his successor, 1447 B.C. was the Pharaoh of the Exodus.

Having shown the worthlessness of the Bible tradition, of course Mr. Jack is at liberty to reject all the marvellous and miraculous features of the story. He does not even mention the ten plagues. He relieves himself of much embarrassment by saying, quite off-handedly: "We are not concerned here with the route taken at the Exodus" (p. 13), because he does not have to explain away the fact that Mount Sinai, to which, according to the Bible, Moses led the Israelites, was in the hands of the Egyptians, who held it for its copper and turquoise mines. It had been held by them for two thousand years, and was held by them for hundreds of years after the time of Amenhotep, in whose reign Mr. Jack places the Exodus; yet the Bible narrative says nothing about meeting the Egyptian garrison that was maintained there!

Of the multitude who are said to have made the journey, he says frankly: "It is incredible that this vast number of people, amounting in reality to about 2,000,000, could have made the march to Kadesh under the circumstances depicted. As Doughty observes, the convoy would be about two hundred

leagues long. Nor could they have maintained themselves for a generation in the desert between Goschen and Canaan" (p. 14). Then, again, the land of Goschen, where, according to the Bible, the Israelites dwelt during their sojourn in Egypt, is quite unknown to the Egyptian inscriptions and writings; it is as mythical as Utopia.

So eager is Mr. Jack to prove Thutmose III. to be the Pharaoh of the oppression, that he actually cites the illustration of the brickmakers as a proof of it. This illustration is probably the most widely known of all Egyptian pictures, through its indiscriminate use by Christian apologists, "Bible Handbooks," and other works. In *The Dwellers on the Nile*, by Dr. Wallace Budge, published by "The Religious Tract Society," it is given inside the book, and also stamped in gold on the cover. This picture was taken from the tomb of the vizier of Thutmose III., near Luxor. Sir Gardner Wilkinson, commenting upon it, says: "The brickmakers, far from having the very Jewish expression found in many of those figures, have not even the beard, so marked in the people of Syria and the prisoners of Sheshonk; and from the names of the captives throughout the tomb where they are found, it is evident they belong to a nation living far to the north of Judea."<sup>1</sup> Canon Rawlinson remarks of this illustration: "The general character of their physiognomy is very different from that of the Jews. They have light hair, and in several instances, blue eyes; they are as slight in frame as the Egyptians themselves, and in few instances do they wear beards." (Rawlinson, *History of Egypt*, vol. 2, p. 244.)

W. MANN.

(To be Concluded.)

## Tacitus and the Neoronic Persecution.

ROME had been more than half destroyed by a frightful conflagration, and it was rumoured that Nero was the incendiary of his own capital. Absurd as the rumour was, it is said that Nero was alarmed, and that he looked about for a victim to offer as a sacrifice to the angry multitude. What followed is related in the famous passage in Tacitus:

With this view he inflicted the most exquisite tortures on those men who, under the vulgar appellation of Christians, were already branded with deserved infamy. They derived their name and origin from Christ, who, in the reign of Tiberius, had suffered death by the sentence of the procurator, Pontius Pilate. For a while this dire superstition was checked, but it again burst forth: and not only spread itself over Judæa, the first seat of this mischievous sect, but was even introduced into Rome, the common asylum which receives and protects whatever is impure, whatever is atrocious. The confessions of those who were seized discovered a great multitude of their accomplices, and they were all convicted, not so much for the crime of setting fire to the city, as for their hatred of human kind. They died in torments and their torments were embittered by insult and derision. Some were nailed on crosses; others sewn up in the skins of wild beasts and exposed to the fury of dogs; others, again, smeared over with combustible materials, were used as torches to illuminate the darkness of the night. The gardens of Nero were destined for the melancholy spectacle, which was accompanied by a horse-race and honoured with the presence of the Emperor, who mingled with the populace in the dress and attitude of a charioteer. The

guilt of the Christians, indeed, deserved the most exemplary punishment, but the public abhorrence was changed into commiseration, for the opinion that those unhappy wretches were sacrificed, not so much to the public welfare as to the cruelty of a jealous tyrant.

This passage occurs in the *Annals* (xv. 44) of Tacitus. Gibbon regards it as genuine; but let us look at the facts.

The *Annals* of Tacitus was first printed at Venice between 1468 and 1470. There is not a trace of the existence of this work prior to the fifteenth century. Mr. W. R. Ross has written a learned book to prove that it was forged by Bracciolini. He shows, by a wide appeal to Christian and Pagan authors that the *History* of Tacitus was well known, but that there is not a single reference to the *Annals* during thirteen hundred years. He says that this long, unbroken silence is inexplicable, except on the ground that the work was not in existence; and he then gives a variety of reasons, personal, historical, and philological, for concluding that the writer was not Tacitus, but Bracciolini.

I do not desire to take a side in this controversy; I do not know that I am entitled to. But in the circumstances, I do question the authenticity of the particular passage which relates the persecution of the Christians by Nero. It contains a reference to Jesus Christ, which would have been invaluable to the apologists of Christianity; but not one of them, from Tertullian downwards, until fourteen hundred years after the death of Christ, ever lighted upon it, or caught a glimpse of it, or even heard of its existence. And knowing what we do of the forgery practised in all ages on behalf of the Christian faith, I say that this particular passage—whatever may be the case with respect to the entire *Annals*—lies under very grave suspicion.

It is not generally known how very recent is the Christian appeal to Tacitus. Mr. Ross says that the *Annals*, though printed in the fifteenth century, was "not generally known till the sixteenth and seventeenth." A singular corroboration of this statement may be found in John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*—as it is commonly (though incorrectly) called. This work was first published in 1563, and I find that Foxe knows nothing whatever of this (since) famous passage in Tacitus. He does relate that Nero slaughtered the Christians, but his authorities are Eusebius, Hegesippus, Sulpicius Severus and Orosius. He refers in a footnote to Suetonius, and the reference to Tacitus is supplied, within brackets, by the modern editor.

This suspicious passage in Tacitus was probably based upon a very similar passage in Sulpicius Severus, a Christian writer who flourished about A.D. 400. I give the latter in full, so that the reader may, if possible, judge for himself:—

In the meantime, while the number of the Christians were greatly increased, there happened a fire at Rome while Nero was at Antium. Nevertheless, the general opinion of all men cast the blame of the fire upon the emperor. And it was supposed that his aim therein was that he might have the glory of raising the city again in greater splendour. Nor could he by any means suppress the common rumour that the fire was owing to his orders. He therefore endeavoured to cast the reproach of it upon the Christians. And exquisite tortures were inflicted upon innocent men; and, moreover, new kinds of death were invented. Some were tied up in the skins of wild beasts, that they might be worried to death by dogs. Many were crucified, others were burnt to death; and they were set up as lights in the night-time. This was the beginning of the persecution of the Christians.

<sup>1</sup> Wilkinson, *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians* (1878), vol. 1, p. 345.

Lardner supposes that Sulpicius Severus had read Tacitus, but it is first necessary to prove that the *Annals*, or the special passage in it, existed to be read. Lardner also supposes that Sulpicius Severus had "other authorities," but who they were is left in obscurity. As a matter of fact, the farther back we go beyond this writer (A.D. 400) the less precise does the information become concerning the Neronian persecution of the Christians. The earliest Christian writers were ignorant of details with which later Christian writers were so familiar. And it is curious that, although the later Martyrologies are so circumstantial, not a single name was preserved by the Church of any Christian who perished in Nero's massacre. Paul is said to have been beheaded at Rome at some time, and Peter is said to have been crucified (upside down) there; but every student knows that these are mere traditions, which abound in supernatural incidents that deprive them of all historical value.

Supposing, however, that the Tacitus message be genuine, still it lends no countenance to the common statement that Nero persecuted the Christians as Christians, or slew them for conspiring against his throne and life. Nero's action, as Lardner remarks, was "not owing to their having different principles in religion from the Romans, but proceeded from a desire he had to throw off from himself the odium of a vile action—namely, setting fire to the city." "The religious tenets of the Galileans or Christians," says Gibbon, "were never made a subject of punishment, or even of enquiry." Mosheim states that "Nero first enacted laws for the extermination of Christians," but later on he admits that "the Christians were condemned rather as incendiaries than on religious grounds"; and his English editor, Murdock, is obliged to point out that Nero did not enact public laws against them. It is impossible to refute the conclusion of Gibbon, that there were "no general laws or decrees of the senate in force against the Christians," when Pliny, in the beginning of the second century, wrote to the Emperor Trajan for instructions with respect to those who were accused at his tribunal of being worshippers of Christ. "Trajan's rescript," says Long, "is the first legislative act of the head of the Roman state with reference to Christianity, which is known to us." Pliny's translator, the elegant and learned Melmoth, remarks that his author's letter to Trajan "is esteemed as almost the only genuine monument of antiquity relating to the times immediately succeeding the Apostles"—which is rather severe on the other "monuments." Melmoth adds that the Christians came under the Roman law against unlicensed assemblies, and that, as they met just before the dawn, the very unusualness of the hour laid them open to the suspicion that they indulged in Bacchanalian practices. But it is not my purpose to write a disquisition on the reasons why the Christians of the second century were persecuted by a government renowned for its religious toleration. My object is to demonstrate the truth that the Christians were not molested by Nero on account of their religion, and in this I think I have fully succeeded. G. W. FOOTE.

## Christianity and Getting Drunk.

We have all heard at one time or another that Christianity alone has the power of "saving people's souls," and that, for this reason alone, we ought to believe in it. This is more or less of a commonplace in Christian apologetics—it is the theory underlying the blatant activities of the Salvation Army, it is the particular obsession of "evangelical" Protestants and, in a modified, but essentially similar, form, it is the basis of Roman Catholicism.

Whilst commenting on the pantheistic beliefs of some of the writers in the "My Religion" symposium, the Bishop of London observed: "This vague Pantheism which seems the religion of so many of the authors has no power to save souls. It was said of an eloquent preacher once 'that there was not enough gospel in his sermons to save a tom-tit.'"

There we have it. Pantheism cannot "save souls." Exit Pantheism. *A fortiori*, to the Devil with those wicked Agnostics who declare that the good Bishop knows no more about ultimate reality than the said tom-tit! I know not who was the "eloquent preacher" whose orations laboured under the extreme disadvantage of not being able to procure the salvation of a tom-tit. Nor am I privileged to know exactly how much of the "Gospel" the Bishop of London regards as adequate to such an extremely important purpose. I should imagine that a tom-tit would find certain portions of the Gospel rather unaccommodating. The Tenth Chapter of "The Acts of the Apostles,"<sup>1</sup> in which Peter sees a vision of a vessel, specially lowered from Heaven by the Almighty, and containing—amongst other things—"fowls of the air," which Peter is bidden to "kill and eat"—this, if I were a tom-tit, would scarcely inspire me to mend my naughty ways and be saved with the precious Blood of the Saviour. But let us leave our ornithological speculations.

"What about the drunkards?" I once heard a Christian Evidence Lecturer triumphantly exclaim. "What about the men who have been redeemed from sin and iniquity by Christ's Holy Spirit?" Well, what about it? Suppose the implication to be actually true. Let us forbear asking the very salient question as to whether Christians are, on the whole, more temperate than Freethinkers. Let us not question that a firm grip of the Christian faith will infallibly prevent a man from consciously imbibing that quantity of ethyl alcohol sufficient to intoxicate him. Let us even refrain from asking whether it would not be a much better way of promoting temperance to remove the ghastly slums which disfigure our Christian civilization—to make the "pub" a place where decent refreshment can be comfortably obtained in decent surroundings, rather than in unbearably hot, overcrowded, smoky places which shatter all self-control—and to ease the vast burden of oppressive misery which hangs over Christian England (which often makes one wonder that drunkenness is not more prevalent than it actually is). Let us admit, just for the sake of argument, that Christianity, once embraced, will oust booze and reform the drunkard, even if it has failed to do so in nineteen centuries. Granted all this, what have we proved? We have proved that Christianity is a very good thing—for drunkards. Similarly, we could prove, even more convincingly, that strait-jackets are splendid things—for lunatics. But for men of intellect, of self-restraint and of self-knowledge, they are (to say the least)

<sup>1</sup> Daily Express, October 3, 1925.

<sup>2</sup> Which the Bishop actually declares to be a reliable historical document!

But it is impossible too often to remind people that, on the one hand, all correct reasoning consists in substituting like things for like things, and inferring that what is true of one will be true of all which are similar to it in the points of resemblance concerned in the matter. All incorrect reasoning, on the other hand, consists in putting one thing for another when there is not the requisite likeness.—Prof. W. Stanley Jevons.

somewhat cumbersome and superfluous. In elaborately demonstrating Christianity to be a good thing for dipsomaniacs (as it quite possibly may be), our apologist is rather defeating, than serving, his own ends. To prove that Christianity is just the thing for people whose one aim is to soak themselves in alcohol, is really to raise an *a priori* presumption against it being a good thing for people who do not want to spend their lives in a condition of intoxication—alcoholic or otherwise. "Dearly beloved brethren, our creed is eminently fitted to serve the needs of the lowest, most ignorant, uneducated, and bestial members of society. Let us therefore rejoice and be exceeding glad." Such a conclusion, stated as honestly as this, is hardly likely to kindle much enthusiasm in the Church militant!

"Saving souls" is a very ambiguous phrase. If it implies that a man, in the interests of his "soul," must believe such and such theological propositions as our episcopal mentors lay down; if, that is to say, it means nothing more than the basic principle on which was founded the Holy Inquisition, then, as an Agnostic, I declare that I see no more need for saving souls than for saving tram-tickets. Both are quite amiable hobbies, but hardly more. Again, if "saving souls" means instilling superstition into morally unhinged persons with a view to repairing their conduct, I concede there is something to be said. But any old beliefs will do for this. And, finally, if "saving souls" means conserving all that is highest and noblest in human faculty, then I fail to see that orthodox Christianity is any good for this purpose. The best minds of every generation, almost without exception, have rejected orthodox beliefs. The essence of ethical religion had been expressed by Greek philosophers, Chinese sages, and other thinkers, before the "Gospel" was even heard of. And though, in my view, the sayings—or some of them—attributed to Jesus express a beautiful and poetic (if occasionally impracticable) code of morals; there was nothing unique or even original about them. They were the common heritage of dozens of sincere moralists of those times. By connecting it in a system of dominant superstition, I doubt not that Christianity may have done something to help morality. But far more than it has uplifted, regenerated, or intellectualized morals has Christianity oppressed, stultified, and perverted a truly ethical outlook.

"Saving souls" is either a baseless superstition, a dubious social expedient or a superfluous and mischievous attempt to sully the fair gem of intellectual and moral uplift with the worthless settings of a religion based on ignorance and mental darkness.

EPHPIATHA.

## Correspondence.

### NO COMPROMISE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The letter of Mr. Hardy in a recent issue reminds me of an experience of my own. About three months ago I was knocked down by a motor-car, and taken unconscious with a fractured skull to the infirmary. It was thought that "my hour had almost come," and within a short time of my admission I was asked, "What Religion?" My reply was "Atheist," and Atheist was clearly written on my chart. I was treated by all with the greatest kindness and consideration, and I have nothing but praise and thanks for doctors, nurses, and all concerned.

L. W. WILLIS.

## It's Your Money They Want.

Where great additions swell's, and virtue none,  
It is a dropsied honour.

To me, as to many other Atheo-Rationalists, religion is the most interesting of all subjects. The journey of Humankind has been a slow and painful one; slow for the race, and painful for the individual. "Whither go they, and whence they come," no one knows, and few care. The strife, tears, and toil, if that struggle have been enough for the great mass of people, without speculating as to what it all meant—if it "meant" anything at all.

In that long, striving, toilsome, wandering—with little time for wondering—Religion has supplied the worst of the terrors; religion has caused the bitterest of the strife; and religion has intensified the burden of the toil. Apart from physical disasters, in that long journey—not always upward, nor onward—religion has brought about the most serious set-backs for the human race, in the (often) inhuman race of life. The histories of Asia, Europe, Africa, South America, North America, and the story of the aborigines of Australia, prove this beyond the shadow of a doubt. The evil influence of religion in the ages past, that are without any record, was probably at least as bad as it has been in recorded time. And to-day, Ireland at our door (back door, if you like), Spain at our front door, Italy with its mixture of holy oil and castor oil, and Great Britain in the last General Election are but a few of the many proofs of the still present prevalent power of the pest of religion. In the past beyond record, in the past within record, and in the present, that unreason called religion has been a curse and a blight upon humankind.

Religion in general, and the Christian forms of religion in particular, are so interesting to the Atheo-Rationalist because in those beliefs, creeds, ceremonies, worships, prayers, hymns, vestments, furniture, decorations, sacraments, books, idols, language, *et cetera*, we have the actual survival of savage times of long ago—and of not so long ago as well. The Christian forms of religion are the most interesting of all, simply because Christianity is the greatest—or, rather, the biggest—hotch-potch of superstition that has ever been used to enslave the minds and exploit the bodies of men, women, and children. The Christian form of religion may be described accurately as a crystallization of the errors and the savagery of the past. It is like a kind of cinema record of all the wrong turnings taken by our ancestors in their wandering from the wilderness of ignorance and fear. Some of these wrong turnings were taken quite recently; but the film goes away back, until the mists of time render the record a blurred and blotted splotch. The Rational eye can see this film on show—wherever there is a Christian meeting or meeting-place.

Unfortunately, religion is more than—and worse than—merely an interesting story of the mistakes of man (AND woman) in the past. Were it only that; we could afford to regard it as an historical show; tiresome, amusing, tawdry, interesting, unintentionally, farcical, as the case might be—but always expensive. It is, literally, a "dear"—a very "dear"—religion! The Archbishop of Canterbury, as the chief Big Fetish man and most prominent Survival of the Savage in Great Britain (with all due apologies to the R.C. section of the sect), may be of interest to the rational philosopher, the anthropologist, or the antiquarian. He may often serve to amuse us; albeit there is much of pity in our smile. But £15,000 a year is far too big a price to pay for such a show;

when thousands of Britishers have nowhere to lay their heads, have less sustenance than hounds or grouse, and have raiment poorer far than an orchid in a buttonhole. A friend of mine declares that, during the war, one comparison alone proved what a daft people we are. In my friend's opinion, Admiral Jellicoe had the greatest responsibility that any man has ever had in the history of the world. On the other hand, there was the Archbishop of Canterbury who—in his official capacity—is worse than useless, far "more useless" than Charlie Chaplin, who does do *some* good. "Yet," says my friend, "we paid Admiral Jellicoe about £3,000 a year to bear that tremendous responsibility, while we paid 'Canterbury' five times as much—for doing worse than nothing. None but daft people would do as daft a thing as that; and Religion keeps 'em daft—if it doesn't make them so!"

Then there are all the other many actors in the cast of this pictorial play of ignorance, savagery, fear, and error, in the past. From "Canterbury's" £15,000, "York's" £10,000, and "London's" £10,000 a year—for playing at humility(!) and poverty—there is a declining scale in the salary list, until we get down to the crowd of curates—once adored by the single ladies of the parish. These last (the curates, not the ladies) are not mere supers in the Church's play upon the people; and, though their share in the spoil may be small (with "prospects"), they all get more than the mythical Jesus Christ of the Canonical Gospels is supposed to have had. All that wealth that goes to those Official Christians comes—directly or indirectly—out of the people; and the ghost never fails to walk—for them, whatever it may not have done in Galilee! What a monstrous waste of wealth, what a burden on the people, in an already sorely distressed and over-burdened country!

Thus honest fools lay out their wealth on curtsies.

ATHOS ZENO.

### Mr. G. Whitehead's Mission.

The Manchester week witnessed the most successful series of meetings I have held in this city. Altogether eight satisfactory meetings were addressed before audiences to whom the message seemed absolutely new. Questions were rained upon the speaker, and platform opposition of various degrees of strength were offered on three occasions. One result is that a discussion has been arranged to take place in Stevenson Square at 3 o'clock to-day (Sunday, September 12). More interest this year was taken by the members, several of whom rendered assistance at every meeting. Their attendance was useful as the muscular help of one of them prevented the platform being rushed by a drunken opponent at Salford, who pulled the speaker off the platform, but was prevented from doing any damage. A certain amount of friskiness was manifest at the Salford meetings and a mild attempt at hustling was indulged in, but the presence of a few members prevented the Hull rowdiness from being repeated. Much literature was sold and a good number of *Freethinkers* were distributed. I shall be lecturing on the Market ground, Ashton-under-Lyne on Thursday, Friday, and Sunday evenings (September 9, 10, and 12), and in Stevenson Square, Manchester, Sunday afternoon, at 3 o'clock; from September 13 to 19, Town Hall Steps, Bolton.

G. WHITEHEAD.

The true strength of every human soul is to be dependent on as many nobler as it can discern, and to be depended upon, by as many inferior as it can reach.—*Ruskin*.

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

### LONDON.

#### INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11, Dr. Bernard Hollander, "The Origin and History of Man's Supernatural Beliefs."

#### OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 6.15, Mr. H. Constable, a Lecture.

NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Hyde Park): Every Tuesday and Thursday at 7.30; Sunday at 11, 3.30, and 6.30; Lecturers—Messrs. Hart, Howell Smith, B.A., Hyatt, Le Maine, and Saphin.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Regent's Park, near the Fountain): 6, Mr. A. D. McLaren, a Lecture.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 3 and 6, Mr. R. H. Rosetti will lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (outside the Technical Institute, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7, Mr. H. B. Samuels, a Lecture.

### COUNTRY.

#### INDOOR.

GLASGOW (Bakunin House, 13 Burnbank Gardens, Glasgow): Thursday, September 16, at 8, Mr. Guy A. Aldred, "Teachings of the Great Infidels." Questions and discussion invited.

#### OUTDOOR.

LEEDS BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Square): 7.30, Mr. L. Davis, "Practical Freethought."

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