

The

# FREETHINKER

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## Views and Opinions.

### Do We Believe?

If a census of religious belief were taken in this country it could only be considered authoritative if everybody felt quite at liberty to make their opinions public, and did so. The absence of this condition vitiates considerably the value of the attempts made by the *Daily News* and the *Nation* to ascertain the beliefs of its readers. As things are, the majority of those who have ceased to believe in Christianity do not let their neighbours into the secret, and the amorphous nature of current Christianity helps them to veil their unbelief under a number of vague phrases that really mean nothing at all, and are not intended to mean anything. This is very regrettable, but the fact remains. The Christian Church for many centuries made it highly dangerous for a man to say that he did not believe, and, partly as a consequence of its past power, partly because of its present ability to injure men in business and in social intercourse, this disinclination to be quite honest where religion is concerned still obtains. The average man or woman has no objection to intellectual honesty so long as its manifestation does not involve penalties, but if it does then they pursue the opposite path of safety and social respectability. We inherit mental cowardice along with our religion; one may say because of our religion, and there can be little doubt that if all men felt quite at liberty to express their opinions we should find the majority of the educated people of this country definitely repudiating the Christian creed. This is no mere speculation as to what might be the case; it is what everyone who observes knows to be the case. Even a man in the position of Sir James Frazer, whose researches knock the bottom out of every form of religion, and reduces every God the world has known to pure myth, declines to draw the logical conclusion of his own work and apply established results definitely to the Christian religion. Both the *Daily News* and the *Nation* gave its readers a guarantee of secrecy if they would answer the questions asked. We really cannot have a Christian heredity without paying a price for it.

### Growth of Unbelief.

The *Daily News*' replies numbered over fifteen thousand, while the *Nation* had a smaller number, on

account of its much smaller circulation. It may be noted in passing that the *Nation*, appealing to a better educated public, gave a much larger number of replies showing rejection of the belief in God, personal immortality, and Christianity. But we will keep mainly to the *Daily News* as covering the large number. and so being, perhaps, better representative. Of the answers sent in it may be noted that the conglomeration of verbalistic nonsense beloved by Mr. George Bernard Shaw: "Do you believe in an impersonal, purposive, and creative power of which living beings are the vehicle, corresponding to the Life Force, the *elan vital*, the Evolutionary Appetite, etc.," was rejected by forty-five per cent. It would be interesting to know what exactly those who replied in the affirmative had in their mind when they said they believed in it. Belief in a mentally unrealizable proposition, or in a number of mutually destructive ones, is a psychological miracle quite as startling as the physical miracle of virgin birth. As a cover for those who do not wish the world to know that they are Atheists the formula serves, but why one should accept this and reject transubstantiation is more than one can understand. Twenty-one per cent. replied that they believed the basis of reality to be matter, philosophically obscure as that question was. All one may gather from that is that twenty-one per cent. preferred to label themselves Materialists, which hardly agrees with the often made religious statement that Materialism is as dead as the Dodo.

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### The Decline of God.

One-fourth of those who wrote rejected the belief in a personal God—which is the only kind of a God worth bothering about. That is something worth noting, and we are not surprised that an American paper, in commenting on this, said that Atheism is spreading in England. Of course it is, and in every other country in the civilized world. But it would never do to admit as much. The *Christian World*, thinks Mr. Wood, is right in saying that all it proves is that the modern mind is moving away from definite belief or disbelief, and adopting an attitude of enquiry and hope. That seems to us another way of saying that people are getting more and more uncertain about the truth of religion, and that the *Christian World* prefers fog to sunlight. And there is an indication of the lack of sincerity in the modern religious mind to find the same paper saying that although a man may refrain from saying he believes in a personal God, "he may be testifying by selfless and sacrificial action....that he believes in the God of Jesus Christ, the loving Father, who will never desert his children in their hours of darkness and trial." If that means anything at all it means that a man may not live decently and properly unless he believes in the God of Jesus Christ, although to say as much quite plainly would be to give up a satisfying but empty formula in favour of clear-cut statements that really said something definite. And that would never do nowadays where religion is con-



cerned. Anyhow, we have travelled a long way when a Christian paper is ready to hail as a sound Christian any good man or woman. It does not make them good Christians, and it is anything but complimentary to call them such. But it helps the unbeliever to realize how very much the power of religion has been cut down during the past two or three generations. Perhaps it may encourage some of them to speak out a little more plainly than they have hitherto done.

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#### Our Cavemen.

Continuing with the figures, we see that only nine per cent. professed belief in that form of religious cannibalism known as transubstantiation. Against this we must remember that if the Roman Catholics had replied, who are god-eaters to a man and woman, it would have been found that belief in this survival of disgusting primitive religious practice was held by a much larger number of people. There were sixty-four per cent. who believed the Bible to be inspired in a sense that other books are not inspired, and sixty-eight per cent. believed that Jesus Christ was divine in a sense that other men are not divine. It is not quite clear what was meant by these professions. If it means that the Bible contains things that could not have been discovered by human intelligence alone, the belief is obvious nonsense. There is hardly an important point in which the Bible has not been shown to be wrong. Its science, its philosophy, its ethics have been so completely riddled by modern thought that large numbers of Christians are anxious to throw it overboard altogether. And on the whole the modern world has experienced no greater disaster than the fact of the Christian Church having saddled civilization with the crushing burden of "God's Word." The statement that Jesus Christ was not a man but a God, brings us back to the region of pure mythology. But here we should be inclined to agree with them. We believe the Jesus of the New Testament really was a God, and not a man, and we also believe that all gods are myths, born of the fear and ignorance of savage humanity. And we take that to be the best established truth of modern research. But with thirty-eight per cent. of the people believing in the historical accuracy of the first chapter of Genesis, it looks as though we are not so far from Dayton after all. The backward States have not got it all their own way. We have our own good Christians, and we should make much of them. If we could only preserve some of them in museums of anthropology they would undoubtedly be of some interest to the civilized man of the future.

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#### Signs of the Times.

Turning for a moment to the *Nation's* figures it may be noted that while the number of replies were smaller, they were dead against fundamental religious beliefs. Thus 537 professed belief in a personal God, and 780 repudiated it; 474 believed in the divinity of Jesus, while 819 threw it overboard. There were 597 who believed in immortality, and 646 disbelieved. On the other hand, to the question, "Do you believe in any form of Christianity?" 666 answered in the affirmative, and 585 in the negative. But Christianity means so much and so little; it is so often used as an equivalent for a belief in social service, that one may safely say that if by Christianity was meant any form represented by any one of the official churches, the majority would be on the other side. And placing these two sets of figures together it is plain that the journal with by far the better educated and more thoughtful class of readers offers a majority for Freethought, while the paper

with the less educated and less thoughtful class, and which lays itself out to attract Christians, offers but a small majority in favour of the Christian religion. The *Church Times* consoles itself with the reflection that the intellectual Liberalism represented by the *Nation* makes little appeal to Churchmen, and among its readers there would be an "exceptionally high percentage of so-called Agnostics and Freethinkers." We are not inclined to disagree with this conclusion, and we should say that would be true of any journal which appealed to the more thoughtful class of readers. The fact of the enormous increase in the number of Freethinkers is indisputable, and the problem that presents itself to those who are actively interested in Freethought work is how to get this growing number to take a more energetic part in the struggle against superstition. It ought to be done, for unless the liberation of the mind from superstition goes along with the recognition that seeing the truth involves a certain social responsibility, the advance is robbed of a deal of its value. One other remark of the *Church Times* calls for notice here. It says, "It is a further consolation to us that youthful Freethinkers often end as good Catholics." We should dearly like to meet some of these Freethinkers who end as good Catholics, and we earnestly invite the *Church Times* to assist us in the matter. We do know that thousands who begin as good Christians end as Freethinkers, but we have yet to receive proof of the opposite process. As it is the *Church Times* rather damns its case by saying the voting "only proves that Freethought is rampant in literary and reforming circles." Freethinkers may congratulate themselves on the fact, but we do not quite see what consolation a Christian is going to get from it.

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#### Life and Religion.

The *Daily News* is pleased to conclude that the figures "justify the belief that the creed of the ordinary middle class Englishman is still what we might describe as common sense." Well, much depends upon one's estimate of what is common sense, and, in any case, we do not know that we have good warranty for forming a high opinion of the culture of the "ordinary middle-class Englishman." There is an enormous mass of superstition about in all classes of society, and education often gives it only another form without effecting any material alteration. Fortune tellers, charm dispensers, and the like do a roaring trade, and that with the "upper" as well as the "lower" classes of society. There is one Sunday paper, boasting a circulation of several millions, and which is certainly about the last word in the art of catering for empty minds. Fifty-two weeks in the year it has the same presentation of police-court and other sensational happenings, in which there is a variation of names and places only, but which its readers devour as though the news had never before appeared. Then we have the daily picture papers, which are marvels of mental vacuity, reading and illustrations well matching each other. And the more "respectable" dailies in their race for circulation are forced to enter into competition with them. No one can even pretend that the bulk of these pictures can possibly arouse anything of an intellectual nature. There is the picture of the Prince on the beach at Biarritz, which, except for the standardized grin—I do not suppose for a moment that he does go through life like a walking edition of one of the figures of "Alice in Wonderland"—might pass for any young man on any beach in the world. Lord Blank inspecting exhibits at a flower show, depicting an elderly gentleman bending down to look at something that might be an orchid or a cabbage.



The people who clamour for these things must have minds empty of serious thoughts to an almost unbelievable extent. And when we remember that this goes on day after day, and year after year, and that these papers form the major part of the mental food of large masses of the population, we do not know that we ought to be surprised that the majority of the population still profess belief in Christianity. The marvel would be were it otherwise. And perhaps a greater marvel still is that, in spite of this state of affairs, in spite of the comparatively few who have the courage to face social boycott and definitely proclaim themselves as anti-Christian, such results as those furnished by the *Daily News* and *Nation* figures can be. It is proof, as we have so often said, that the real enemy of Christianity is life. It is the course of civilization that fights against the Gods, for the Gods represent all that existed before civilization came into being.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

(To be Concluded.)

### What is Christianity?

SURELY it is rather late in the day to ask such a question. Christianity has been in the world for nineteen hundred years, and Great Britain has been a so-called Christian country for upwards of a millennium, and yet even to-day scarcely any two people are agreed as to what this religion really is. In the *British Weekly* of September 2 the Rev. Arthur Hallack, M.A., contributed an article entitled, "The Theology of Sand Services." About thirty-five years ago the present writer knew Arthur Hallack intimately as a young man in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, and well remembers his leaving for England to study for the Congregational ministry. Ever since we have watched his career with interest, and our impression is, though on this point we have no direct knowledge, that he is a Liberal theologian. At any rate, in the article just mentioned he pertinently asks, "Why should sand services be chiefly in the hands of speakers to whom ordinary congregations would not be willing to listen twice? Why should our children be regaled with ideas which we ourselves discarded fifty years ago?" We have never attended sand services for children, but we are not unacquainted with sand mission services for adults, which are usually conducted by men and women whose main qualifications for the work are dense ignorance and childish credulity. Referring to children brought up in Christian homes, Mr. Hallack observes:—

When they hear the Old Testament stories told at the seaside as if their morality was Christian and their events as historical as the life of Jesus they feel a clash, for they were not so taught at home. Must the only people willing to teach children upon the seashore be those whose Biblical views are obsolete? Are enthusiasm, sacrifice, and love for children never found with enlightenment?

Perhaps Mr. Hallack forgets that "obsolete" and "enlightenment" are purely relative terms; but that is another story, with which we are not at present concerned.

As one would have naturally expected, the reverend gentleman's article has aroused a veritable storm of opposition, and the *British Weekly* of September 9 and 16 gives a selection of innumerable letters received almost exclusively from passionate defenders of the theology of sand services for children. Referring to these communications, the writer of "Things in General," says in the issue for September 16:—

The letters on the whole have been controlled and temperate, as readers will acknowledge from the

chief examples which were given last week. In some cases, however, an earnest antagonist has been so violent as to put himself for the time being out of the ranks of Christians altogether. "Satan cannot cast out Satan" is the very highest Scripture. Mr. Hallack may have been indiscreet in alleging that sometimes those who speak at such services are people who would not be listened to twice were they to speak from a pulpit. That may have been a hard saying. But a charge made in such general terms does not hurt anyone in particular. When a correspondent replies and says that, to judge from Mr. Hallack's own contribution, he is a man whom many people would not care to listen to even *once*—well, he is simply giving way to bad temper, and is at that moment in the gall of bitterness.

It is not difficult to discern, however, which side enjoys the sympathy and support of the *British Weekly*, and we are also bound to admit that the theology of the sand services is far more scriptural than that which Mr. Hallack seems to endorse. It is the only theology that ever captivated the masses and that made religious revivals possible. This theology is based upon the assumption that we are all miserable sinners, doomed by nature to spend eternity in the flames of hell, but that by believing in Christ, who in the plenitude of his love shed his blood on Calvary, we shall inherit eternal life, with endless bliss in heaven. Such was Paul's Gospel, which was so effectually preached in this country in modern times by such giants of natural orators as George Whitefield, Howell Harris, and John Wesley. To them, with their profoundly emotional temperament, such a Gospel appealed as true, but to more intellectual and scholarly men, like Mr. Hallack, it contains elements which shock and disgust their moral nature, with the result that they can accept and deliver only a largely modified version of it, such a version, in many instances, as would be wholly unrecognizable to Augustine, Luther, and Calvin. Mr. Hallack says, for example, that "Christian parents know that their children belong to a redeemed race and were born in Christ. At the first possible moment they were dedicated to him, and from their earliest days their faces were set towards the Sun of Righteousness, and by his grace they have never turned their backs upon him. To be 'converted' to turn round, would be to turn away from him who is their life and joy." One critic asks, "What about the multitude of parents whose hearts are breaking because of wayward children who have lapsed altogether from our churches? Mr. Hallack would like speakers at these services who would present Christ as 'Friend, Counsellor, Hero, Comrade, and King.' Would he never have him presented as Saviour? Do we not all need to be saved from sin whoever our parents are? And did not Jesus come to do that by his death on the Cross?" We do not know how Mr. Hallack will answer those questions, nor do we care; but what is perfectly manifest is that the New Testament is on the side of his critics, for here we read: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned."

What, then, is Christianity? There was a time when only one answer was possible, but to-day at least a dozen different and conflicting replies are confidently tendered, each claiming to be the absolutely true one. During the pre-eminently ignorant and superstitious eras, known as the Ages of Faith, when the word of the priest was law everywhere and in everything, several types of Christianity were desperately struggling for supremacy. At the Nicene Council, in the year 325, Athanasius carried the day, and the Arian bishops were banished; but a few years later, through the influence of his sister, whom



he had criminally wronged, the emperor recalled the exiles, and entirely reversed the ecclesiastical situation. There have always been different theological schools in the Church; but the seat of authority has invariably been occupied by the strongest because the most numerous party, while weaker and less numerous parties, have been as invariably held under, if not suppressed, by a policy of merciless persecution. Such has always been the history of the Church and the fate of Christianity. The Christian religion from the beginning has been constantly passing through processes of reconstruction and adaptation; and the end is not yet. In the Anglican Church Bishop Gore professes to be guiding it through a process of that kind at the present time. Whether the Anglo-Catholic party will ever become the most numerous and strongest in that communion remains to be seen, but believing it with all his heart, Bishop Gore has already done his share as wholehearted persecutor of his fellow-members, the Modernists. Well do we remember with what burning vehemence he used to castigate, both on the platform and in the press, the late Dean Rashdall for his envenomed heresies. According to Dr. Gore Christianity is one thing, but according to the Thirty-Nine Articles we learn that it is something fundamentally different, whilst if we listen to the Modernists it turns out to be a type essentially at variance with each of the other two.

In view, then, of all the heated disputation, controversy, and party persecution of the past and present, the only rational conclusion to which we can honestly come is that Christianity in whatever form it has ever assumed is a gigantic and altogether dehumanizing superstition, and that, being such, it has never rendered the world any beneficial service whatsoever, but has always been a source of corruption and despotism in society, and a disruptive force in the world at large. Even from the columns of the *British Weekly*, during the last few weeks, it has been abundantly disclosed that Christian workers are not one whit better than those whom they pretend to be anxious to save, and that the so-called state of salvation generally takes the form of loathsome self-righteousness. In other words, Christianity is a poison which, when swallowed, saps absolutely both self-respect and self-reliance, and ends in the destruction of noble manhood.

J. T. LLOYD.

### The Ruin.

It was but yester eve, and merrily  
 The festive island whiled the hours away;  
 They sang unto the grave their roundelay;  
 And danced the dance of death in measures free:  
 But when the city sleepeth peacefully,  
 Save for the revellers whose night is day;  
 But Nature also hath her hour of play—  
 And woe unto the city by the sea!  
 A ruined church—and most was ruin drear —  
 Where not a stone upon a stone was laid,  
 I saw; and mid the wreck a statue staid  
 Of Christ, with outstretched arm; "Take comfort  
 here,"  
 He seemed to say: "For Love can never cease  
 Where Life hath aught to hold"; "Peace, perfect  
 peace!"

W. J. LAMB.

Half our mistakes in life arise from our feeling where we ought to think, and from our thinking where we ought to feel.—Prof. Churton Collins.

### Piety and the Press-Gang.

I don't believe in principle,  
 But O I do in interest.

—The Biglow Papers.

A drop of ink,  
 Falling on a thought, like dew,  
 Makes millions think.

—Byron.

The press is the guardian angel of Democracy.—  
 W. T. Stead.

EDITORS of newspapers and periodicals usually avoid religion in their columns. Shrewd judges of public opinion, they realize only too well that theological discussion is sure to annoy some readers, and that way lies disaster. Occasionally, however, they take the bull by the horns and startle their public with considerable profit to themselves.

Curiously, one of the finest "scoops" was organized by the sedate editor of a severe monthly review. Thirty years ago the late Mr. James Knowles, editor of the *Nineteenth Century*, wishing to attract attention to his review, persuaded Mr. Gladstone, then at the zenith of his career, to write an article on the Bible account of creation. Then he approached Professor Huxley to make an effective reply, and soon all the serious reading public was buying his periodical. So great was the sensation that he could actually boast of the "glory of a fifth edition." Nothing loth, the canny Mr. Knowles "roped in" two Bishops to reply to doubting Thomas Huxley, whose debating power was so high that he sent the circulation of the *Nineteenth Century* soaring to unheard of figures for so serious a publication.

Huxley was an ideal champion for Freethought. Although a scientist of European renown, he did not use a language that darkened knowledge. On the contrary, Huxley was the master of a literary style which many professional men of letters would have given their ears to emulate.

Nor is this all, for across the Atlantic Colonel Robert Ingersoll was engaging in literary debate with Cardinal Manning, Gladstone, and lesser lights. This time the "stunt" was organized by the editor of the *North American Review*, who understood the sweet uses of publicity quite as well as Mr. Knowles. Serious Americans are more fond of debates than Englishmen, and these encounters were real enough. Ingersoll was a Paladin, and he strode into the literary arena like a knight in shining armour. Moreover, he had a lightning wit, which made even his opponents chuckle. For instance, in his debate with Gladstone that nimble statesman reproached him for his advanced views. It was like, he said, "riding a runaway horse." You could not be sure of the end. Ingersoll's retort was crushing. "Riding a runaway horse," he said, "was far better than sitting on the back of a dead animal, holding the reins in a reverential calm."

Both these editors did a good thing for themselves, but they did a better for the freedom of thought. The debates were real, and each participant, a man of reputation, defended his own side to the best of his ability. Even to-day, after a lapse of long years, the debates make lively reading. Nor did it end there, for controversy raged in other directions. One delightful instance will suffice. John Morley, in the *Fortnightly Review*, was spelling "God" with a little "g," and Hutton, of the *Spectator*, was retaliating by spelling Morley's name with a little "m."

Just lately there has been a revival of religious "stunts" on the parts of editors of newspapers, but the difference of method is worth more than passing attention. In the first place, the debates are not real,



but merely editorial sham-fights. In the second place, some of the contributors write, obviously, with anything but sincerity. Is it any wonder that the reading public take but a languid interest in the whole proceedings?

In one case a bunch of popular novelists were asked by an editor to discuss "religion," which, by the way, is a very large order remembering there are a hundred religions, mutually contradictory. What could these unhappy men and women do to earn their cheques? Fiction was their forte, not theology, and the resulting columns of verbosity must have annoyed really religious folk as much as it delighted honest sceptics. Some of the contributors were sentimental, most of them innocent, all very vague. One alert male novelist escaped from a difficult dilemma by writing two columns about himself—a cheap advertisement, and readable, too.

The second instance is quite as bad. A discussion was staged on the question of human immortality. In this case the editor led off with a couple of tame parsons, who simply "talked shop" down two columns of print. These were followed by a succession of notorieties, who, apparently, were as happy as a number of school children reciting poetry in public for the first time. All were delightfully hazy as to whether they believed in the resurrection of the body, or the immortality of the soul, or both. When bankrupt of ideas, one and all fell to quoting hackneyed texts from the Bible. The whole thing was a distressing example of how not to do it.

Unless such debates are undertaken in all seriousness, the results must be futile. These modern editors imagine they are smart; but they are simply silly. Their idea is to start a discussion on such a subject as "The Virgin Birth" with a contribution from a timid clergyman, afraid of his own shadow, and to continue it by getting hold of spectacular contributors, such as musical comedy stars, pugilists, the president of the Cats-Meat-Men's Union, and, perhaps, an ex-convict. All this is feeding the wind and folly. Outside of their calling, these notorieties are far too often as ignorant of such theological matters as Gold Coast niggers. The sole effect is not only to bring Truth into contempt in order to increase the circulation of a newspaper, but to prostitute the press itself to the basest of all uses by pandering to the grossest prejudices of the groundlings. Under such insidious conditions the press becomes of no educational value whatever, but is a menace to the community. Once editors were jealous of the honour of their high calling, now far too many of them are the humble obedient servants of the advertising manager. "The pity of it!"

MIMNERMUS.

MR. G. WHITEHEAD'S MISSION.

The rain interfered with meetings in the early part of the week, but later I addressed four meetings at Bolton and two at Blackburn. The meetings, especially at Bolton, were very well attended and there was the usual excitement caused by our friends the enemy, who, failing to keep us off the pitch, abused me in the customary Christian fashion. Luckily, so far, the hostility in Bolton has not gone beyond threats and vituperation. In Blackburn the opposition was less fervent, for here the Christians are almost civilized, and my prophesied future was accordingly less hot than at Bolton. I have to thank again Messrs. Sisson and Partington for their splendid enthusiasm and ungrudging assistance. I shall be speaking at Chapel Street, Nelson, from Thursday, September 23, to Sunday, September 26, and in the Bull Ring, Birmingham, for a week commencing Monday, September 27.

G. WHITEHEAD.

Acid Drops.

Our readers will probably remember the story of the notorious American evangelist, Mrs. Aimee McPherson, who visited London a short time ago and drew many thousands of Christians to the Albert Hall. Mrs. McPherson is reported to have made a fortune out of her evangelistic efforts—these professional evangelists have usually a keen eye and hand for money, and when she returned to America from England, she suddenly disappeared from her church in Los Angeles. A month after she was "discovered" in Arizona, and said she had been kidnapped by a man and a woman and carried off to Mexico. We said at the time that the whole story was probably only one of the usual evangelistic lies, and that its aim was to advertise this servant of the Lord.

Now we see that the District Attorney has issued writs against Mrs. McPherson and her mother and others for having conspired to support a story of kidnapping. Some of those in the plot have "blabbed," and the District Attorney should have an easy job in securing a conviction. But America being America, and Christians being Christians, and there being plenty of money about, for the defence, we are not quite so sure.

For the plain truth is that indiscriminate lying is so usual in the evangelistic campaigns, it is so customary to invent "experiences," to fabricate stories about unbelievers, to tell lying yarns about the number of broken down people who have come to the evangelist to be saved, and for the evangelist to tell lurid and untruthful accounts of the depravity of his own life before he "met Jesus," that we expect Christians at most will hold that Mrs. McPherson may have gone a little too far, but will not think any the worse of her on that account. It is suggestive that the District Attorney has felt it necessary to issue a public statement as to his reasons for arresting Mrs. McPherson, and we venture to prophesy that his greatest task will be to convince Christian public opinion that a lie or an imposture carried on in the interests of Christianity really deserves severe condemnation. And as to imprisonment, well, if all those who tell lies in the interests of Christianity are imprisoned, a great many pulpits all over the world will have to get new occupants.

Here is one other example of the persistency of Christian lying, of which we are reminded by a couple of articles in the *Daily News* for September 18. This is the fear of death, which is greater with the Christian religion than with any other of which we know. For its own end the Christian Church has encouraged men to fear death, and has manufactured death-bed stories by the thousand with a complete disregard for truth. And this has been so continuous, the lying has been done by all from Archbishop to street-corner preacher with such persistency, that in spite of the actual experience of every one that in the overwhelming majority of cases men and women evince no fear of death in their last moments, but gradually sink into unconsciousness, each believer has managed to accept the lie as sober truth. In one of the *Daily News* articles, Sir William Arbuthnot Lane says:—

I have seen many hundreds of people go to their long rest, and in many of the instances they have just wanted to sleep—for death is but a sleep and a forgetting. They have little or no pain. I don't think there is any great fear of death. At least that is my opinion from the many cases I have seen. Death is the way of nature, and I think that people in old age, or those suffering in prolonged illness, desire it.

Mr. Phillip Inman, Superintendent of Charing Cross Hospital, also said:—

I have seen hundreds of people die, but seldom have I seen anything like a dread of death. Most people just before death are either unconscious or in a comatose condition.



Now this is the universal experience of all, and yet we would ask the Christian to reflect on the ability of the average parson to distort truth and the power of persistent lying shown in the fact that so many have closed their minds to their own experiences and have accepted the pulpit yarn of man's fear of death and the need for belief in Jesus to give them the strength to face death. Instinctively the Churches have felt that the only way to keep a man a Christian is to rob him of his mental courage. Nor have we much hope that statements made by medical men and others, however eminent, will readily kill this particular religious lie. It has had too great a start for that. And it may be noted that tales of death-beds are being issued by various evangelical agencies as plentifully as ever. Christian preachers will only tell the truth when it no longer pays them to do otherwise. But by that time they will have ceased to be Christians.

Your truly religious man has always sufficient religion to make him hate his fellow-men of another creed or sect. One has only to read Christian history a little to soon become aware of that. But it is not only the Christian who reveals the truth of the statement. The Mohammedans and Hindus exhibit the same unlovely characteristic. At Allahabad, recently, there was a lovely scrap that would have delighted the heart of dear old Yahwah. Mohammedans attacked a Hindu procession passing a mosque. Four British officials, we read, dispersed the mob by means of police batons and revolver butts. After that, we should fancy, the benighted heathen ought to be in just the right mood to listen to the missionaries when they come around teaching that all Christians believe in "turning the other cheek." The missionaries, of course, could quite easily explain that the officials were not really Christians.

In regard to the truthfulness of missionary claims to have large numbers of adherents in foreign lands, the following statement, in a pious journal, is rather revealing: "Some of the Sunday-schools in Pyengyang, Korea, found recently that out of about two thousand children on their books only about fifteen per cent. were attending any Sunday-school." As a result of this discovery a "children's revival" was planned and "a programme attractive to children was presented." We are not told what was the result of these tactics. But one may be sure that, if there was to be had something for nothing, the little Koreans turned up in full force. The missionaries would thus be able to show in their reports a sufficiently large attendance of scholars to convince any suspicious English contributor that the good work overseas was going along all right.

The fly is the greatest insect pest to humanity, declares Mr. B. L. Phillips. Well, does that matter very much so long as it aids the Christian apologist with his argument from "Design"?

The "world teacher" whom Mrs. Annie Besant is hawking around New York is stated to have told the reporters that America was too much engrossed in material progress, and India was too inclined to neglect material progress for spiritual contemplation. The ideal, he said, was an attitude between the two. Mrs. Besant's pet, we should say, ought to have little trouble in getting a goodly number of Americans to adopt this ideal. The average pious American is a first-class expert in the art of combining pietism with a sound instinct for money-getting.

"Simon Peter was a man who could never keep still and never keep his mouth shut, and sometimes I think I'm one of his descendants," said Dr. Campbell Morgan in a recent sermon. Well, as Simon Peter appeared never to have done anything but talk, nor to have said anything particularly sensible when he opened his mouth, we are inclined to fancy Dr. Campbell's "think" may be not far off the truth.

If we are to abolish war, says the German Chancellor, we must fill the minds and souls of children with the emotions and images of peace. The best preliminary to doing this, we suggest, is to cut out from the school curriculum the lessons now devoted to war-saturated Holy Scripture. For all the European races nurtured on Holy Writ have been notorious for their war-mongering activities.

A Christian journalist has been spending an interesting week in Manchester. He has been tremendously impressed by what he has seen of religious activity in the crowded industrial areas of Ancoats and Hulme. The Wesleyans and the Congregationalists, he declares, have been especially active in adapting churches to meet changed conditions. Two old chapels in slum districts, he found, were carrying on with a wonderful heroism, but which in their present condition can never hope to draw a congregation except one of children! It is very pathetic, he says, to see only two or three adults turn up for worship. It is, indeed! The "wonderful heroism" appears to be love's labour lost. By the look of things, that spiritual revival we have heard so much about seems a long time getting a move on. Manchester, at any rate, appears not to worry much about it. But one never knows, does one? Our deans and bishops and newspaper prophets have declared for it. And they, being in the Almighty's confidence, ought to know far better than does the benighted sceptic, what is in store for us.

In a sermon broadcast from Leeds, the Rev. G. W. Seager declared that non-Christian religions had left their people wallowing in a quagmire of tyranny, slavery, and degradation. But the one part of the world where men obtained freedom, where hospitals abounded, and where the child was cared for from cradle to grave, was that part of the world where the teaching of Jesus Christ had been accepted. This, he thought, could be taken as evidence that Christianity was the true religion. Mr. Seager's statements do not prove Christianity to be the true religion. They merely exhibit the measure of his Christian impudence. His rather stale old trick of claiming every piece of social progress to be due to Christian teaching no doubt seemed convincing enough to pious listeners. But what the more alert listener would ask himself is: How is it that the things mentioned were either not at all in existence, or least in evidence, during the ages when the Christian religion was universally believed in and enthusiastically professed, and when the Church was supreme?

Mr. Seager has a useful memory. He conveniently forgets the social state of England so late as a hundred years ago. Then, three-fourths of the children of tender years worked twelve hours a day in factories owned by good Christians, the insane were left to wander about the streets, and the aged poor to die of starvation. There were no schools for the masses, no hospitals, no limitation of the hours of labour, and a large proportion of the people were miserably fed, clothed, and housed. There was no drainage or sanitation, and no medical supervision; hence, filth and diseases took an enormous toll of lives. Labour was voteless, Parliament was run by the wealthy, and justice was largely in the hands of very class-conscious squires. Slavery was an established institution, yet the Christian consciences of the Bishops and other slave-owners could find no fault with it. The workers on the land were little better than the land-owners' chattels. Yet throughout this period, as in periods before it, Christ's teaching was to be heard in every church in the land; the leaders of the nation and the majority of citizens were convinced Christians. Such was the state of England after eighteen hundred years of Christ's teaching. Since then there has been a marked decline in religious belief. And the odd part about it is that coincident with this decline we can note a striking improvement in social progress. And the greater the decline in faith, the more rapid is the improvement in humanitarian reform. All these



are awkward facts for a Christian minister to explain away. They reveal the impudence of Mr. Seager's stupid claim. There is one thing we think the reverend gentleman ought particularly to thank the Lord for—the noble and well-Christianised press. This being what it is, he can be sure that, no matter how childish may be the claim he makes for his religion, no challenge to it will sully the chaste pages of any public journal in the whole of Britain. The "teaching of Jesus Christ" is still too strongly operative.

We had some comments in a recent issue of this paper on the sermon preached by the Rev. Reynolds, and reported in the *East African Standard*. Mr. Reynolds held that when the New Testament talked of the brotherhood of man it meant the brotherhood of believers, which was quite a proper conclusion to anyone who really understood what it was the primitive Christians believed. The curious thing is to find the alleged humourists of the *Daily Herald* sneering at Mr. Reynolds's use of what he calls Dr. Moffat's "gloss" of the New Testament in claiming that the existing authorities have been ordained by God, and that people must therefore obey the Government. If "Gadfly" will cease to read the New Testament so as to make it square with the invertebrate Christianity of the *Daily Herald*, he will find that Dr. Moffat is giving here quite a honest reading of the New Testament. The fault of Dr. Reynolds was in looking to the New Testament for instruction. "Gadfly's" fault is that of misrepresenting the New Testament in order to please the slushy sentimentalism of his Christian Socialist readers.

In the list of American exports to France must be included the Rev. Clayton E. Williams, who will become assistant pastor of the American Church, rue de Berri, Paris. The reverend gentleman has sailed the Atlantic on the liner "Majestic" to take up his call. This would make the fishermen of Galilee open their eyes wide to note how their small business had grown into a large one.

A very pretty story comes from Austria, according to the Vienna correspondent of the *Observer*. The Austrian constitution provides that children are not obliged to attend religious instruction if their parents do not wish it. Through pressure by an edict from the Minister this is to be used for the penalization of the children to the extent that if they do not pass an examination in religious instruction they will not be permitted to enter the higher class, even if they have acquired all the necessary knowledge of other subjects. Pressure by clericals, it is stated, has been brought to bear on the Minister to break the law, and he is to be proceeded against.

In a film in which Mary Pickford appears, one of the scenes originally presented the figure of Jesus carrying a child to heaven. Our film censor at once pointed out that a materialization of Jesus could not be permitted, and the figure of an angel was substituted. But why should a Christian object to a figure of Jesus appearing on the screen? After all, if he lived he must have looked like something, and there are thousands of pictures of him as someone or other thought he might have looked. We fancy the whole point is that if the figure is made too common it may destroy that feeling of "reverence" which acts on the pious as a narcotic. It might make believers think, and that is too dangerous where religion is concerned. After all, when people really believed, the figure of God the father, and God the son frequently appeared on the stage during the performance of the Miracle plays. But times are different.

The Roman Church is shrieking out about persecution in Mexico, mainly because the Mexican Government is determined to secularize the State, prevent the priest interfering in politics, and insisting on putting an

end to the reign of Spanish priests by demanding that the priests shall be natives of the country. But in Italy there is a very different tale. Here, Mussolini, working hand-in-hand with the Church, claiming that the Roman Church is the only one recognized by the State, the others being merely tolerated, is putting an end to all social and educational centres that are existing under Protestant auspices. All but the Roman Church have been ordered to close their schools, on the ground that "teaching, both spiritual and physical, is a delicate one and should be entrusted to the State and the Church." Church and State is thus working in happy combination, and the education of the rising generation of Italians is to be entrusted to the greatest organized enemy of sane and sound education on the face of the globe.

In Spain the Church has practically its own way in this matter, and one need only turn to it for an object-lesson. There the country has just been asked to vote, and the remarkable result has been that the whole of the population voted in favour of the dictator. Not so remarkable when one bears in mind that, according to the *Daily Express* correspondent, only those in favour of the dictator were allowed to approach the polling booths. "The priests were the most assiduous voters of them all, for, not content with voting themselves, they stood outside the polling booths and led passers-by to the table and showed them where to sign on the dotted lines." And it must be borne in mind that forty-five per cent. of the Spanish population are quite illiterate.

There are State schools and Church schools in Spain, and there is war on them from the Church. In Spain there are over 100,000 priests and monks, one half of whom are teachers. There are about 30,000 State teachers. The Church constantly demands the suppression of the State schools, and it remains to be seen whether this is brought about by the Dictator or not. In Spain the Church openly disclaims anything in the shape of toleration. It is the Church and nothing but the Church. If it has its way, the tragedy of Ferrer will be repeated once more. Spain is the most Christian country in the world. It is also the most ignorant in Europe and the most intolerant. Cause and effect.

A friend sends us an article from the *Daily Mail* of August 26, which escaped our notice, but is too good not to notice now. It is from "Our Own Correspondent," and says bluntly that "it must be apparent to the missionary bodies in Europe and America that the hopes of Christianizing China are but a shattered dream." The article goes on to say:—

They are faced with a strong anti-Christian movement which it is impossible for them to stem. This movement has taken a serious turn during the past two years.

The millions of pounds that have been forwarded from Britain and other countries, either for missionary, medical, or educational work in this country, it is impossible to estimate. The pennies collected from the Sunday-school children and from the poorer classes would now appear to have been of but very little service.

In Shanghai a few days ago there was an anti-Christian drive. At this meeting it was resolved that the use of the Bible and all religious instruction should be abolished. It was also demanded that the students should be allowed to take part in the school management, and be allowed to audit the books at their will; these and other similar resolutions were passed, the resolutions being headed the "Anti-Christian Movement."

We have often pointed out the misleading nature of missionary statistics, for missionaries generally are more careless about the truth than are even the parsons at home:—

How many real converts have been secured it is difficult to say. It is impossible to take any notice of the figures published by the missionary boards at home. There are so many "Rice Christians," students who make protestation of conversion for the sake of the education they receive and the opportunity given them to learn English and other languages.



It was always plain to observers that the Chinese did not want Christianity and would not have it. They have been compelled to grant concessions to the various missionary bodies, but it is significant that in nearly every case of trouble the native feeling has manifested itself against the missionary. Educated Chinese have always regarded the missionary as an impertinent intruder, and more than one of our own officials have said that the less they interfered in Chinese affairs the better.

In view of what we have so often said as to the value of newspaper journalism, the following confession by Mr. Jerome K. Jerome in his *My Life and Times* is worth noting. He is speaking of the war period: "The newspapers had roped in most of us literary gents to write their special articles upon the war. Those hysterical first weeks must have made the angels weep, and all the little devils hold their sides with laughter." The truth of the situation was, as we then pointed out, that huge sums of money were spent on buying up anyone who could write, and men, some of them known to us personally, and who have posed, and still pose, as ardent advocates of public purity, were paid to turn out so many articles per month on ordered and standardized lines. There was never any other war in which England was engaged in which there was so great a unanimity of opinion expressed, because there was never so organized a buying up of those whose pens were for sale. And we all reaped the consequence of this when the war came to an end by the impossibility of a reasonable peace being made.

Other journalists have been as frank as Mr. Jerome—since the war—for as the temper of the more thoughtful section of the public changed, so the tone of their articles changed also. And this has a very important bearing upon the articles written in defence of religion by a number of well-known journalists. We do not hesitate to say that this is as much bought advocacy as were their war articles. Given the market they would write as fiercely against Christianity, and if we cared to purchase, and could so, we could have many of these journalists who are writing columns in Sunday papers in defence of Christianity writing articles in defence of Freethought in the *Freethinker*. If anyone doubts the character of the religious articles in the press, when written by ordinary journalists, they need only study their standardized character. They are just the usual arguments served up with the "spice" of the journalist accustomed to write for a half-educated people.

Here is a current example of the way in which journalists play up to religious ignorance. Mr. Max Pemberton, writing in the *Daily Mail* apropos of the attempt to assassinate Mussolini, who said that God had protected him, "To me it seems to come to this, that we may justly believe that he who is rendering great service to God and his country will be shielded by destiny until that work is done." The complete rubbish of that defies comment. We do not imagine for a moment that Mr. Pemberton believes that God looks after a man so long as he is doing anything useful, and then rewards him for his past labours by standing aside while someone shoots or stabs him. Mr. Pemberton is a journalist writing for a Christian public. This kind of writing makes us wonder whether the capacity to read is really a blessing so far as all the people are concerned. Naturally these journalists believe it is, for if all could not read, and immense circulations could not exist, they might be asked to put some real thought into their writing, and what would the average journalist do then, poor thing?

Writing about the "Theology of Sand Services" held at South-east coast resorts, the Rev. H. Hallack appears to entertain no very high opinion of the preachers undertaking this kind of "service for God." He suggests that most of them are unenlightened bigots belonging to a past theological period. A critic of Mr. Hallack finds the comment "painful reading," and hastens to

point out that the leaders of these services are ordained ministers, and their helpers students or prospective students of theological colleges. We don't quite see how such information disposes of the reverend gentleman's charge. Our experience is that a theological training usually finds a man a bigot or leaves him one. It is only because modern taste has become educated to the point of being liberal enough to resent bigotry, that the present-day preacher finds it politic to try to hide the worst of his bigotry. But rouse up his pious prejudices, then the old Adam—or is it the old Jesus?—soon shows itself. Once a man believes that the Lord God is guiding his conduct, that he possesses the one true light, and that all who differ from him are wilfully "sinful," he cannot help becoming a bigot, and blind to the fact that he is one. This is the inevitable end of all who follow too closely in the footsteps of the bigot Jesus—he who always reserved a choice selection of curses for those who dared to differ.

The circumstances of our time, writes a Methodist, are not too helpful to us people of the churches. Our work is not so easy as it seems to have been in our fathers' days. We cannot appeal to the old sanctions, and the old fears have gone. Men cannot be reached in any numbers in the time-worn ways. Everywhere in our land the forces of organized religion are failing to advance, and even more serious, in view of the future, is the fact that most the members of the churches seem content to have it so. There is a need for a rekindling of their courage and their zeal. Judging by what this doleful Christian says, we imagine he is in just the right mood to appreciate the spiritual "uplift" of the "Lamentations of Jeremiah." That is the useful point about Holy Writ, one can always find in it the right kind of comfort for any sort of dire affliction or adversity.

A nameless writer in the *Baptist Times* feels it to be his duty to protest against what he calls the "new materialism." The good man says:—

The two-fold reaction against the Victorian conception of life may be said, on the whole, to be sound and healthy. As our fathers knew and practised them, both Puritanism and Individualism were unsound and unhealthy. In the nineteenth century our fathers went to one extreme, and in the twentieth century their children are going to another.

Puritanism of last century was unhealthy! This is a welcome admission from a Baptist. It justifies Freethought criticism and propaganda which has done more than anything else to bring about the reaction now seen "to be sound and healthy." The Baptist writer, however, is very uneasy about this reaction. His unhealthy Victorian conscience is troubled in regard to what he styles "the much vexed question of amusements." If amusements are permissible, he says, in this life, then they must all come under the domination of the Lord Jesus Christ. We like his "if"; it reveals a mind still loitering about in the dingy corridors of a narrow and bigoted Puritanism. He still has his doubts whether pleasures are "sinful." He has most likely searched his New Testament to find if the good Jesus ever took part in any of the innocent pastimes of the day. We are afraid his search was in vain. Hence, he will have a hard job to place any kind of pleasure under the domination of the Lord Jesus. We advise him to use his common-sense judgment in regard to pleasures. This will be more likely to give him sound guidance than will an ancient book of myth and fairy tales.

A correspondent in the *Times*, who, as time goes, has had his teeth drawn, in a religious column of words makes the following statement: "The exponent of Christian doctrine who demands that men must decide whether they will accept or reject what may be called the authoritative teaching of the Church is considered to render no real service either to truth or to the religious life of his fellows." We are much obliged and trust that the advice will be passed on to speakers for the Christian Evidence Society.



### To Correspondents.

H. G. WOOD.—There is, in our opinion, very good ground for rejecting the passage in Tacitus, although, even if genuine, it does not make the existence of the New Testament Christ the more credible. Your argument as to the reasonableness of a revelation reduces it to a personal impression, and that can never be good evidence to a third party. As to the Modernist position, that appears to us to be no more than an attempt to accommodate old beliefs to new conditions, without paying due regard to the essential nature of the beliefs themselves.

E. ANDERSON.—Thanks for note. Will bear suggestions in mind, and may go over the whole question for the beginning of the 1927 volume.

H. WILSON writes complaining that the *Freethinker* has disturbed his peace of mind. Up to six months ago he believed in the religion he had been taught and did not trouble his head about anything. Then some friend sent him a copy of this paper, since when he has read it regularly, and finds himself thinking about religion and other things that never troubled him before. The *Freethinker*, he complains, has made him do more mental work in six months than the churches did in thirty-three years. Mr. Wilson has our sympathy. But we would advise him that if he wishes other Christians to read the *Freethinker* let him not tell them that it makes them think. That will be quite enough to put them on their guard against it.

J. RAE.—Your letter has been forwarded. Messrs. Menzies are agents for the *Freethinker*, and there should be no difficulty in getting what you want. Or it can be sent by post for 15s. per year.

H. M. WILLIAMS.—We do not know in what way we can help, as you will appreciate the situation. But if you can suggest a way in which we can be of assistance we will be pleased to do so.

A. JACKSON.—We have made a note of your name and address as one willing to help arrange lectures for Liverpool. All that is needed there is the determination to work. There are plenty of Freethinkers in the city. Perhaps some of these will send their names along, and then a preliminary meeting could be arranged.

H. IRVING.—Paper received. We have acted in the other matter as you desire. Shall we send on at once? The rest can wait.

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

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### Sugar Plums.

To-day (September 26) is "Bradlaugh Sunday," and the South London Branch is holding a demonstration at 3.0 o'clock in Brockwell Park. Mr. Cohen has promised to attend and speak. May the fine weather continue. The North London Branch has also arranged a meeting at Regent's Park to the same end, and Mr. McLaren is to be the principal speaker. We should like all Branches of the N.S.S. to do something in the same way to keep Bradlaugh's name before the people. We are the only

people who are likely to do this, and if we do not, we do not know others who will.

A copy of Mr. H. G. Wells' *Outline of History* has been publicly burned by the minister of a Baptist Church in Kentucky because of its hostility to the book of Genesis. This is rather hard on Mr. Wells, since he went so much out of his way to placate Christians, and in Part XII. came near to destroying his character as a trustworthy guide in matters of history. Moreover, Mr. Wells solemnly offered to put Gibbon right and to set the Christian story in a better light. Perhaps when Mr. Wells has had a little more of Mr. Belloc and other Christians he may discover that the policy of the *Freethinker* is the better one—tell the truth, and never bother whether Christians are pleased or otherwise. A real reformer must be above their praise and learn to laugh at their condemnation. Otherwise he is not fit for the task.

In another case we see that Mr. Aldous Huxley's *Antic Hay* has been burnt at Alexandria, as it was thought it might have a harmful effect on Alexandrian morals. The paragraph should read Christian morals, as we do not suppose the book would be read by many of the Mohammedan inhabitants. But what a nose these Christians have for immorality—real or fancied—and what shaky morals Christians have since the reading of a book is so certain to upset their balance. Perhaps one day some Christians will appreciate the truth of what we have been saying for so many years, namely, that one of our cardinal objections to Christianity is its low moral tone and the type of character it develops and attracts.

Dr. George Brandes has written a work under the challenging title, *Jesus a Myth*, in which the whole Christian theory is dismissed, and, we are glad to say, deals "faithfully with the over-rated Paul." But Dr. Brandes must be careful, for one parson, the Rev. Isaac Hartill, writes to the *Daily News*, that although "as a literary critic he stands deservedly high," and "his extensive knowledge, the lucidity and charm of his style, and the thoroughness of his treatment entitle him to the international reputation which he has achieved," yet "it should be borne in mind that Dr. Brandes is a Jew, a Radical, and has long been suspected of Atheism." That settles it. Someone less muddle-headed or more straightforward than is the average parson, might ask why did Dr. Brandes become an Atheist? But we thought it was the fact that Christian preachers follow one who was certainly—if he lived—a Jew, who was charged with blasphemy, and is now proclaimed by many of his followers to have been a Radical. What does Mr. Hartill make of that?

If we only wait long enough, we shall find that the story of Freethought will tell itself. But the waiting period will be more than one ordinary life-time. Reviewing three books on Descartes, the *Times Literary Supplement* records an incident in the gathering of forces against free enquiry as follows:—

The encounter was decisive for Descartes; it was a significant moment in the history of modern thought. De Bérulle was a great organizer; not only had he founded the Congregation of the Oratory, but just at this time was recruiting a new society, the Company of the Holy Sacrament, which was to be a vast army of devout Catholic laymen, mobilized for the struggle against Protestantism and Freethought. For this organization he needed, above all, a corps of controversialists—men apt for the destruction of heresies and the demonstration of the true faith.

The sorry mess that faith has wrought in history is not exactly a concern for the distribution of medals; the surprising fact is that mankind persists in spite of organized bodies trying to imprison it in the strait jacket fashioned by the hands of popes, cardinals, monks, and all the lesser lights who chant in unison, "We are all equal." Facial control must of necessity be a Catholic virtue.



## The Making of the Gospels.

### II.

(Continued from page 590.)

We have now to see what historical facts relating to Jesus or the early Christian Church may reasonably be deduced from the Pauline Epistles. From an examination of the most authentic of these documents we learn that in the days of the writer (whom I will call Paul) there were two separate and hostile parties engaged in preaching the Christian religion. The first and original propagators of this superstition were a small company of Jews, whose headquarters were at Jerusalem, the leaders or elders of the sect being "James, the Lord's brother," John, and Cephas, all three being "reputed to be pillars." The other party consisted chiefly of Gentiles, the followers and converts of Paul, which teacher was held by the Judaists to be an innovator and an apostate.

The Judaistic or Apostolic party taught that circumcision, the abstaining from meat offered to idols, and other matters connected with the Mosaic law, were essential to salvation. The Apostle of the Gentiles (Paul), who had set himself up as a teacher in opposition to the Judaists, taught that simple belief in Jesus Christ was all-sufficient. This self-constituted teacher had never seen or heard the Jesus whom he preached; when, therefore, his authority as a preacher was questioned by the Apostolic party—as was frequently the case—he justified his teaching by a special "revelation" from heaven—a plea which could not in that age be disproved.

As to the reputed founder of the Christian religion, it would appear that there really *was* an historical Jesus—an ignorant Jewish fanatic known to James, John and Cephas—whom a later generation credited with the possession of miraculous powers of healing and the utterance of a large number of wise sayings. Unfortunately, we have no writings that can with certainty be ascribed to members of the Apostolic party who professed to have known and held intercourse with this much-lauded personage, except possibly the Apocalypse or Book of Revelation. The last-named book was undoubtedly the work of a Jewish Christian belonging to the Judaizing party; but there is nothing to show that the writer had been personally acquainted with Jesus—and he has very little to say respecting that individual. The same remarks apply to the Epistle of James, which, however, is of a later date, and has nothing to say of Jesus at all.

From all the evidence we possess it seems tolerably certain that the original Christians were a branch of the Essenes who practised the Nazarite vow and were known as Nazarenes. Jesus was merely one of the prominent members of the sect; his brother James was another; so also were John and Cephas. The names of the twelve "apostles," given in the Gospels, are probably mythical. In any case, nothing was known of them. There may, of course, have been twelve elders in the sect to which Jesus belonged, James, John and Cephas being the most notable. In the Gospel lists there is no "James the son of Zebedee" and "James the son of Alphæus"; but not the James who was known to Paul as president of the church at Jerusalem. Yet, strange to say, a reference to the historical James, the natural brother of Jesus, is found in the first two Synoptical Gospels. In the earliest of these compilations we read:—

Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, and Joseph, and Judas, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? (Mark vi. 3).

The four brothers of Jesus here named are given as distinct from the twelve who are called apostles. These "brethren" are again referred to in Mark iii. 31 and Acts i. 14. The author of the Fourth Gospel also mentions them as distinct from the apostles (vii. 5), and says that they had no faith in Jesus. Against this statement we have the fact that it was Christ's brother James who became leader of the sect after the Crucifixion, and also that after the death of this James the "church of Jerusalem" was governed by other relatives of Jesus.

With regard to Cephas, it should be noted that the name of this great "pillar" of the Nazarene church, is not found in the three Synoptical Gospels. We have in those books, it is true, accounts of Jesus changing the name Simon into Peter; but it is only in the Fourth Gospel that the name is said to be changed into Cephas—"which is by interpretation Peter" (i. 42). We thus have a disciple named Simon Cephas Peter—which is pure nonsense. The apostle whom Paul "withstood to the face" was known only as Cephas, and from the following paragraphs it seems more than probable that Cephas was not the same individual as Peter: Gal. i. 7-8; ii. 6-12. Paul would not be likely to speak of an apostle, in one and the same letter, first as Cephas, then as Peter, and then again as Cephas.

With regard to the doctrine of the primitive Jewish Christians, we learn, further, that they regarded the martyred Jesus not as a divine Being, but as the founder of their particular sect, and as one who had possessed the gift of prophecy. He was now, they believed, a son of God and a saint in heaven, and such would be the reward of every member of the sect who "overcame" the world or suffered martyrdom.

Irenæus tells us that the Nazarenes of his day "assert that Jesus was begotten by Joseph," and that they "do not choose to understand that the Holy Ghost came upon Mary, and the power of the Most High did overshadow her" (Heresies iii. 21, 1; v. 1, 3). There can be no doubt, then, that the story of the Virgin Birth did not originate with the Apostolic party.

We will now see what Gospel legends appear to have been known to Paul, or to have been in circulation in his time. It goes, of course, without saying, that any knowledge which the Apostle of the Gentiles exhibits respecting Jesus must have been derived from reports current in his day. Well, the knowledge displayed in the Pauline Epistles is very small indeed, and amounts only to the following bald statements:—

1. That Jesus Christ was "the son of God," was "born of a woman," and was of "the seed of David."
2. That Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper "the same night in which he was betrayed."
3. That the Jews had "killed the Lord Jesus," who suffered death by crucifixion.
4. That Jesus "died for our sins," was buried and rose the third day "according to the scriptures."
5. That Jesus was seen alive by many after his resurrection.
6. That Jesus was at that time "seated at the right hand of God."

Here we have the sum and substance of what was commonly reported of Jesus in Paul's time—long before any of the Gospels came to be written. These statements are not, of course, historic facts. Paul could not know that Jesus was "the son of God," that he was then "seated at the right hand of God," that he was of "the seed of David," or that he "died for our sins." Moreover, to say that Jesus was "born of a woman" is only to say that he was a human being; the statement implies no knowledge



of the Virgin Birth story. There remain, then, but the alleged facts that Jesus had instituted the Lord's Supper, that he had been put to death, that he rose from the dead and was seen by many after his resurrection. The question now arises: Did Paul know even these few circumstances? The answer is—he did not. The account of the "Lord's Supper" (1 Cor. xi. 23-26) is evidently an interpolation, added at some later period from Luke's Gospel. The resurrection of Jesus was based upon the fact (or fiction) of a general resurrection of all men.

But if there is no resurrection of the dead, neither hath Christ been raised....For if the dead are not raised, neither hath Christ been raised" (1 Cor. xv. 13-16).

Paul was a Pharisee, and believed in a resurrection. The list of post mortem appearances of Jesus to his disciples was mere hearsay.

For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received, how that Christ died for our sins .....and that he appeared to Cephas; then to the twelve; then he appeared to above five hundred brethren at once.....then he appeared to James; then to all the apostles; and last of all.....he appeared to me also" (1 Cor. xv. 3-8).

The "appearance" to Paul was in a "vision": all the other alleged appearances were equally visionary. Paul "received" the account from someone; but who his informant was will never now be known. The appearances mentioned by Paul were, no doubt, the first that came into circulation, and they flatly contradict the later Gospel stories. Thus, judging by the silence of Paul, that Christian teacher knew nothing of the events and sayings now recorded in the Gospels, and, what is more remarkable, the author of the Book of Revelation was in the same blissful state of ignorance. The authentic "history" of Jesus was then unwritten.

I may, of course, be told that the silence of these two writers is no proof that they were unacquainted with the sayings and doings of Jesus recorded in the Gospels. This is certainly true: both writers may have had a full knowledge of all these matters, and both may have studiously avoided mentioning them. But this, I think, is very improbable indeed. Now, had Paul been acquainted with the sayings ascribed to Jesus in the Gospels, he could not well have written long letters of counsel, instruction and doctrine to the churches in Rome, Corinth, Philippi and Galatia without quoting or referring to some of them. Instead, for instance, of telling the church at Rome to "mark them which are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling *contrary to the teaching which ye learned,*" he would doubtless have said, "contrary to the teaching of the Lord Jesus." In his four great epistles the Apostle of the Gentiles gives no less than seventy quotations from the Old Testament, and in most cases, cites them in support of his teaching. Had he been acquainted with the sayings now attributed to Christ, he would, beyond all doubt, have quoted *them*, and not the Hebrew Scriptures, as his authority for the doctrines he taught. They would have been cited either for the purpose mentioned, or to remind his converts that they were not acting or living in accordance with the precepts of their Lord, or for a score of other reasons. He could not possibly have completely ignored them—as he undoubtedly does.

The same argument applies with even greater force to the author of the Book of Revelation, who was a member of the Judaistic party that professed to have been personal followers of Jesus. One fact is beyond all doubt: neither the Apostle of the Gentiles nor the writer of the Apocalypse appears to have been acquainted with any authoritative commands or pre-

cepts of Jesus to which he could appeal in support of his teaching. Each was his own authority for the particular form of doctrine he preached.

ABRACADABRA.

(To be Continued.)

## The Story of Evolution.

### FIRST CIVILIZATION.

ALL civilized nations have evolved from primitive savage tribes, or from colonies of nations who originally were savage. The advancement from barbarism to civilization was slow and gradual, because every step in that process is the result of necessity, after the experience of an error, or the strong feeling of a want.

Scientists are agreed that agriculture, the cultivation of the earth, was the primary act which produced civilization. That means that until numbers gathered and settled down permanently in one spot, and obtained food principally from tilling the ground, there could be no organized social relations. Previous to that state of life known as village communes, there were hordes, or tribes, of mankind roaming over grassy plains with flocks of sheep and herds of cattle, and existing in what is called a nomad condition, and even after husbandry had been well established in some places, there were still large tracts of country in which only a nomad, or pastoral, life was followed.

The question of where husbandry was first established is not yet decided. It is thought that a *sine qua non* (as superior writers put it) would be a settlement by a river which periodically overflows its banks and so provides easily worked soil in which to sow grain, but early agriculture is found in other places, and it appears clear that it commenced by digging up edible roots and by collecting plants and seeds. Dr. J. Deniker tells us in *The Races of Man*:

The Australians, the Papuans, and the Indians of California, even yet make use of long pointed staves, hardened in the fire, to unearth natural roots; certain Negroes and Bushmen join to the staff a stone whorl, which makes the work easier.

And he concludes that

True agriculture could only have originated where the ox, the horse, the buffalo, and other animals used in ploughing were first domesticated—that is to say, in Eurasia (between Europe and Asia) and perhaps in Mesopotamia, where the art of irrigation was known at a period when in other countries there was not even any agriculture at all. As far back as the Chaldian monuments can take us we find agriculture existing in this part of Asia.

On the other hand, there are many who declare that it was on the Nile in Upper Egypt where the first land was cultivated. While some scholars hold that in Atlantis, a large island near the middle of the Atlantic, was first developed a civilized race from a barbaric one.

The legend of Atlantis comes to us from a priest of Sais, a town at the mouth of the Nile, who related it about 2530 years ago to Solon, an archon, or sovereign law-giver, of Athens. Solon travelled through the countries surrounding Greece, visited Egypt, and attempted a "large description" of Atlantis, but, according to Plutarch, age and affairs of State prevented him from completing it. The manuscript came to Plato, whose narrative of Solon's conversation with the priest states that a "mighty power" came forth out of the Atlantic Ocean:—

Now, in the island of Atlantis there was a great and wonderful Empire, which had rule over the island and several others, as well as over parts of



the continent (of Europe); and besides these they subjected the parts of Libya within the columns of Heracles (Straits of Gibraltar) as far as Egypt, and in Europe as far as Tyrrhenia (West Italy).....But afterwards there occurred violent earthquakes and floods, and in a single day and night all your warlike men in a body sank into the earth, and the island of Atlantis in like manner disappeared, and was sunk beneath the sea.

This legend is found in many nations. According to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, medieval writers learnt the tradition from Arabian geographers; the Irish have a similar tale; the Hebrews tell it in the account of the Deluge; and the Mayas of Central America possess it. Some writers believe that the Gods and Goddesses of the ancient Greeks, the Phœnicians, the Hindoos, and the Scandinavians, were simply the heroes of Atlantis; and the acts attributed to them in mythology are a confused recollection of real historical events. It is said that probably a few of the inhabitants of Atlantis escaped in boats and landed in Europe, and Egypt, and America, and brought with them the news of the catastrophe, which has survived to our time.

There are no geological or archæological records of this story by which it can be corroborated, but if it has some basis of fact, like most folk-lore, and if such a continent as Atlantis existed where the islands of Azores now represent the tops of mountains, and which was engulfed, it is also possible that civilization originated there.

According to Thompson, who has made a close study of the relics of ancient peoples in Mesopotamia, the earliest settlers of that country were colonists from the Pamirs of the Hindu Kush:—

They made thin pottery, artistically painted—though it is doubtful if they were acquainted with the potter's wheel. They were an agricultural people: they tilled the ground with stone hoes, reaped their crops with clay sickles, and ground their corn on stone querns. The art of weaving was known to them, and their weapons consisted of bows and arrows, slings, and stone axes.

In other words, they were semi-civilized when coming to Mesopotamia, and already were experienced in agriculture.

"Of the earliest inhabitants nothing is known," says Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, "but we may assume that they lived in much the same way as men of the Stone Age lived.....That a Stone Age existed in Babylonia is proved by the objects which have been found in various parts of the country." Therefore we cannot see that agriculture started in that place, but rather that it was introduced there from some other country.

From all indications and many authorities it appears conclusive that the place where a settled condition first appeared was in the region of the Caucasus mountains, at least 20,000 years ago. Here a white race of people evolved.

"In the southern steppes of Russia," writes Dr. Allan Menzies, in *The History of Religions*,

in the great plains north of the Black Sea, the Caspian, and the Sea of Aral, there dwelt, we are told, in times far before the dawn of history, hordes rather than tribes of men, who though they had originally spoken the same language, were coming to differ from each other in speech and culture.

And Dr. Taylor tells us:—

The undivided Aryans were a pastoral people, who wandered with their herds.....Dogs, cattle, and sheep had been domesticated, but not the pig, the horse, the goat, or the ass and domestic poultry was unknown. The fibres of certain plants were plaited into mats, but wool was not woven, and the skins of beasts were scraped with stone knives, and sewed

together into garments with sinews, by the aid of needles of bone, wood or stone.

This white race sent out parties in all directions. Those spreading into Europe founded the Caucasian branch, of which the Aryans, the Circassian, the Georgian, and the Ossets are sections. Those moving into Asia may have mixed with the previous inhabitants and became the Chinese, the Mongol, and later, the Laplander. And at a very much later date, a branch spread into Armenia and then found their way down the River Euphrates into Kaldi (Chaldea) and built the city of Kish. Still later, parties found their way to northern India, and followed the River Indus to its mouth, discovered the use of metals, and suppressed the older and less advanced inhabitants. Some 8000 or more years ago some of these people moved into the Persian Gulf, and on the Bahrein Islands evolved into the Semite races which spread over Arabia when it was less dry than at present.

E. ANDERSON.

(To be Continued.)

## Some Real and Alleged Atheists.

IN days when Christianity was triumphant no charge was attended with more opprobrium than that of Atheism. To be even suspected of the "crime" was to be condemned and suppressed with horror and indignation. Atheism was thought the *ne plus ultra* of Satanic wickedness, and its supposed apostles were execrated as monsters doomed to eternal torments. The world branded and banished and the Church burnt them. Of the heretics who were burnt as Atheists it is not easy to say how many were really deserving the name.

The Manicheans, Bogomiles, and other heretics, who were relentlessly pursued to death during the Middle Ages, were commonly charged with Atheism. The disciples of Amaury de Chartres, who were burnt for Atheism at Paris in 1209, were probably only early philosophic reformers. Sagarel, who was burnt alive in 1300, held the heresy of the Everlasting Gospel, and probably, in holding that the Father and Son would give place to the Holy Ghost, meant that the reign of spiritual love would supersede dogmatism. Francis of Poitou, a Franciscan, who was also burnt for this heresy, was rather a mystic than an Atheist. Marguerite Porrete, burnt at Paris in 1300, was an Antinomian mystic. Lollard Walter, or Gauthier, burnt at Cologne in 1322, was apparently an Epicurean Deist. He asserted that God did not know of the evil done on earth, and denied all the distinctive dogmas of the Church. Many of his followers were also burnt. Herman de Ryswick, burnt at Hague in 1512, was a Deist and disbeliever in hell. The Anabaptists were commonly charged with Atheism, even while they were most religiously striving to emulate the primitive simplicity and community of the first Christians. Louis Berquin, the friend of Erasmus, who was burnt in 1530, was only a monk-hater. Quintin of Picardy, the chief of the Libertines, who was burnt at Tournay in the same year, probably gave colour to the charge of Atheism by declaring the falsity of the Gospel. Gruet was burnt in 1549 more probably for his enmity to Calvin than for any distinct opinions. Etienne Dolet, who was burnt at Paris in 1546, was probably a sceptic of the type of his friend Rabelais. As a friend of heretics he was suspected, as a printer he was hated, as a satirist he was feared, and he was burnt for having wrongly translated Plato, whom he had made to say: "After death *tu ne seras plus rein du tout*—you will be



nothing at all." The last three words were declared a damnable addition to the text, and cost him his life. Geoffrey Vallée, who was put to death in 1574, was not an Atheist, but an Epicurean Deist. He wished men to believe in God without fearing him. Had the dialogues for which he was condemned appeared in our own time, they would have been considered but mildly heretical.

Giordano Bruno, burnt at Rome, February 17, 1600, has been placed in all catalogues of Atheists down to modern times, and there are still many who hold with the Church and Lord Beaconsfield that Pantheism is only Atheism in domino. Lucilio Vanini, burnt at Toulouse, February 19, 1619, wrote in favour of the existence of God; but then Atheism has had no more powerful auxiliary than certain demonstrations of the existence of God. Father Mersenne, who shared in the *rabies* common to Atheographers, declared that Vanini set out with twelve apostles to convert the world to Atheism, and that in 1623 there were fifty thousand Atheist followers of Vanini in Paris alone.

Manzoli, a marquis of Florence, was burnt for Atheism in 1637. But the real cause was probably his having spoken and written against the Pope. Renault de Poitou and Jacques Dupain, of Sens, also burnt at Paris, 1646, may have only blasphemed the Trinity, the Virgin, or the saints. Kuhlmann, burnt at Moscow in 1689, was, according to the Christian accounts, rather a fanatic than an Atheist.

One of the last cases of capital punishment for Atheism is also one of the most dubious. In 1688 a Polish knight named Casimir Liszinski was cited for Atheism by the Bishops of Wilna and Posnovia. He was excommunicated and condemned to be burnt alive. According to his defence, his only crime was having made a compilation of arguments for Atheism in order to refute them, and having written in the margin of a theological work that the arguments were inconclusive. Unfortunately for Liszinski, he had not commenced the second part of his work. By grace of the king, he was decapitated before being burnt (at Grodno, March 30, 1689). His ashes were placed into a cannon and scattered to the winds.

When so many suffered the extremest penalty of the law for alleged Atheism, it cannot be wondered if many real Atheists carefully concealed their opinions. It is not entirely without reason that the charge has been made at least against five popes—viz. Sylvester (999-1003), Boniface VIII. (1294-1308), John XXII. (1410-1416), Alexander VI. (1492-1503), and Leo X. (1513-1522). Sylvester probably incurred the charge for his patronage of learning. Against Boniface and Leo XX. there is some evidence, while John and Alexander were denounced for their crimes.

Atheism is by no means the abnormal state of mind that some theologians would have us believe, and there can be little doubt that thinking men in all ages have often been troubled with doubts as to the religious opinions of those around them. Practical Atheism, or living without God in the world, has indeed been the unacknowledged creed of most of those who, concerning themselves with the things of the world, have helped forward its progress. The name, however, can only philosophically be applied to those who deny a personal intelligent first cause, and it is best restricted to those only who willingly accept it.

With many zealous Christians the charge of Atheism has been used in a most indiscriminate manner. Of course, there is a certain sense in which every man is an Atheist to every other, since no two men's gods are exactly alike. To the Swedenborgian, who believes not only that Jesus Christ was God, but that he was Jehovah, the one only God, every Jew every rejecter of Christ, must be strictly an Atheist.

Unitarians may be said to be Atheists to the Trinitarian God; nor have the orthodox hesitated to press the charge even against fervent believers in Theism. Berkeley and Bentley both called Anthony Collins an Atheist, and even at the present day we occasionally find Paine and Voltaire termed Atheists in the religious press.

Christians should, however, bear in mind that the charge of Atheism was one of the commonest that was brought against the early Christians by the Pagans. The Emperor Julian charged the "Galileans" with borrowing their Atheism from the absurd religion of the Jews. Father Arnobius complains to the Gentiles: "You call us impious, irreligious, and Atheists." The same charge of Atheism against the Christians is put into the mouth of Cæcilius in Minucius Felix; and in Eusebius's *Evangelical Preparation* a Pagan is introduced, speaking as follows:—

Ought not those men to be considered altogether irreligious and Atheistical who desert the customs of their forefathers, by which every nation and every city hath been preserved? What good can reasonably be expected from those who oppose our saviour and reject our benefactors, and thus make themselves enemies of our gods? And can they deserve pardon who adopt whatever is impious and Atheistical among men, having turned away from the worship of beings honoured everywhere, from time immemorial, both by Greeks and barbarians, with all sorts of sacrifices, rites, and mysteries, by all kings, legislators, and philosophers?

Clement of Alexandria even claims many of the so-called Atheists of Paganism as being rather Christians in advance of their times. Yet there is little reason to doubt that Diagoras, Theodorus, Bion, Nicagoras, and Hippo, and even Pliny the Elder, rejected all idea of God. Euhemerus was called an Atheist for assigning a human origin to the gods. The opinions of Leucippus and Democritus were Materialists rather than strictly Atheistic. There are deniers of a personal God who yet believe in a future life, like Hudson Tuttle, G. Barlow, A. P. Sinnet, and G. St. Clair. Epicurus and his followers relegated the gods to a remote sphere without influence on the conduct of men. Yet the Atheistic poem of Lucretius opens with an invocation to Venus. The real gods of Horace were Mæcænus and Augustus. The Atheistic character of Buddhism has often been contested, yet Max Müller says: "The fact cannot be disputed away that the religion of Buddha was from the beginning purely Atheistic." The Southern Buddhists have most closely kept the teachings of Gautama, and they neither worship any god nor seek for a personal continued existence. Gautama, however, does not seem from his discourses to have challenged the existence of the Vedic gods, but simply to have contended that they must be subject to the universal law of *Karma*.

Confucius spoke of Heaven (*Tien*), but did not use the name of the personal God (*Shang-te*). When asked about serving the spirits of the dead, he answered: "While you are not able to serve men, how can you serve their spirits?" Ke-Loo added: "I venture to ask about death." He was answered: "While you do not know life, how can you know about death?"

Julius Caesar was almost certainly an Atheist. He questioned a future life even before the Senate. Augustus and Tiberius were sceptics. Pyrrho was so complete a sceptic that he would have doubted the truth of Atheism had he known he would be classed as an Atheist.

J. M. WHEELER.

(To be Concluded.)



## Correspondence.

### RELIGION AND CRIME.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I see that you have commented on the preliminary result of the *Daily News* enquiry into the belief of its readers; but, when admitting the apparent numerical superiority of believers, it might be enlightening to add that the *Daily News* is largely read by Nonconformists. On the other hand, the *Nation and Athenæum* is chiefly read by intellectuals, hence the result of its questionnaire showed an excess of unbelievers. Averaging up the figures of both results should be a fair way of arriving at the correct proportions.

I have lately ascertained that clergymen in various parts of the country have been trying to persuade credulous people that crime would be far more universal than it is, but for the restraining influence of Christian teaching. This is a very old argument, and it certainly is a plausible one. The most conclusive and crushing reply is to publish from time to time the officially-stated creeds of all the criminals who have been forced to accept prison accommodation.

I do not mean to imply that religion makes criminality or furthers it in any way. My contention is that the weak and unmoral mind, peculiar to the average criminal, is always the most ready to uncritically absorb religion or any kind of superstition. I have made this explanation to partly satisfy people who had thought it inconceivable that atrocious and dastardly acts could be committed by intensely religious men. The ordinary mind cannot readily understand that although all criminals may be sincerely religious, the majority of religious people may, nevertheless, be comparatively good citizens! To me it seems amazing that, even in the present age, there are many people so muddled-minded as to use the word "Christian" as a synonym for "good." I have forced several into a corner by insisting that, according to their views, Patrick Mahon must have been a "good" man—he was undoubtedly a Christian.

F. G. ELIOT.

### STRAWS.

SIR,—If one might pick from your journal many of its truthful statements, and comment thereon, there would be more correspondence than your columns could contain.

Your "Views and Opinions" in your issue of the 19th inst., exposing the false reasoning of Dr. Gore's "Can We Then Believe?" shows the kind of teaching that the clergy still indulge in. Looking back through the last hundred years at the history of the control by the clergy of the education of the people, some appalling facts are revealed; so appalling that one may question their truth.

If confirmation were necessary we need only read the doctrines of living clergymen to find it. That these men still persist in their false doctrines can only be attributed to their vested interest. The clergy do not lead and enlighten the people on facts of which the clergy are not so ignorant; therefore it follows that they will prevaricate and mislead so long as they can command an ignorant or otherwise interested following. The Church does not lead, but follows the people; and when their doctrines become obviously absurd a Bishop steps forward only to make the ridiculous look more absurd, in the vain attempt to hoodwink modern intelligence.

All this is commonplace matter to your readers, but perhaps its endorsement is not out of place from one of your

REGULAR READERS.

It is better, by yielding to truth, to conquer opinion; than, by yielding to opinion, to be defeated by truth.—*Epictetus*.

When we hope for some very great thing, we find in the beauty of the object the courage necessary to surmount the obstacles.—*Guyau*.

## 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, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Lit., "Unemployment and Europe's Folly."

#### OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 6, Mr. F. P. Corrigan, "Charles Bradlaugh."

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, Botting, and Saphin.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Regent's Park, near the Fountain): 6, Mr. A. D. McLaren, "Charles Bradlaugh—His Life and Work."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 3, Bradlaugh Demonstration. Speakers: Mr. Chapman Cohen, Mrs. H. Bradlaugh-Bonner, Messrs. Arthur B. Moss, F. P. Corrigan, E. Saphin, and G. Shambrook.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (outside the Technical Institute, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7, Mr. A. C. High, a Lecture.

### COUNTRY.

#### INDOOR.

GLASGOW (Bakunin House, 13 Burnbank Gardens, Glasgow): Thursday, September 30, at 8, Mr. Guy A. Aldred, "The Roman Atheists."

#### OUTDOOR.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Branch of the N.S.S.).—Ramble to Blairiskaith Moor. Meet at Bishopbriggs Tram Terminus at 12 noon.

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