

THE BIOGRAPHY OF A GOD.

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*Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums,
Letters to the Editor, etc.*

Views and Opinions.

The Biography of a God.

THE issue of the *Freethinker* in which these notes appear bears the date of December 25—Christmas Day. And on that date all the Churches in Christendom will be proclaiming it the date of the birthday of their God. So far, good. Many Gods—all of them nature gods, vegetation gods, solar gods were born on that day, and it is only fit and proper that the god who figures at the head of the Christian mythology should follow the fashion. As an Atheist I have not the least objection to December 25 being noted in our calendars as the birthday of a God. Neither do I question that Jesus Christ was a God, nor that being a God he was born of a virgin, expelled demons from human beings, and finally got himself raised from the dead and ascended to heaven. That is the way in which gods have behaved for long enough. I assert without the slightest qualification or circumlocution that Jesus Christ was a God. If I believed otherwise I could not write myself Atheist. And I add, merely by way of explanation, that as a matter of demonstrated fact, all the gods the world has ever known are pure myth. What I object to, is Christians asserting that Jesus Christ was god and man. I will have none of that kind of qualification. I say that he was God and nothing more than God. That is precisely why I do not believe in him.

* * *

A Nose of Wax.

Thousands of biographies of this particular god have been written, and there is no reason, if the Christian Church endures, why other thousands should not be written. So long as one is a parson the job is delightfully simple. The subject of the biography always does and means exactly what the parson himself would have done and meant. If he believes in a literal hell and heaven, so does Jesus. If he believes in miracles, so does Jesus. If he is a Conservative in politics, so is Jesus. If he follows the Labour Party, then Jesus believes in the policy of that body.

If the biographer believes in none of these things, then neither did Jesus. There is nothing you cannot make Jesus mean; there is nothing he has not been made to mean. He is, if one takes these biographies as a whole, the most delightfully incompetent teacher the world has ever seen or has ever dreamed of. The same lack of clarity would get an ordinary school-teacher the "sack" in a month. Even as a politician he might lose caste as a mere verbal windbag. But no one appears to bother about it in the case of Jesus Christ. I hasten to say that it is the Christian biographers, not I, who between them manage to reduce Jesus Christ to this ridiculous figure, and make him a mouther of a mass of incompetent absurdities. As a believer in the absolute godhood of Jesus Christ, I believe that what this God stands for is fairly plain, and that the aim was fairly plain also. I find it plain because I take him in his proper relation to other Gods, and also in relation to the times in which he lived, and the environment in which he moved. And that makes a devil of a difference. His avowed followers believe in him as a man, or as a half man, or as a quarter man, and that makes the whole thing ridiculous.

* * *

The Apocryphal Gospels.

The Rev. R. J. Campbell, who, some years ago, ran a brief career as a reforming Nonconformist parson, and an alleged philosophic thinker—until he found a peaceful home in the Church of England, has just added one more to the many lives of Jesus Christ. As a biography of a non-existent character, it is just about as good or as bad as any other life of Christ. It is plentifully sprinkled with, perhaps he did this; or that; we may assume; we are left to conclude; etc., etc.; and so he presents us with a character who would do all that Mr. Campbell would do in the same circumstances, and who believed nearly all that Mr. Campbell believes. And readers are warned off certain avenues of information that might really help them to understand this particular god, and to rescue him from beneath the loads of misrepresentation under which his followers have covered him. Thus, he says, dealing with the source of information we have, that the apocryphal gospels "are of little use." On the contrary, they are of the greatest use. The Apocryphal gospels are so called solely because it suited the policy of the Christian Church to deny their divine inspiration when they were settling the Canon. But, apart from their not suiting the Church, they are not substantially different from the ones retained. The story of Jesus working with Joseph in the workshop, and when a plank was not long enough, stretching it to the required length, is not more ridiculous than stretching a handful of food to enough to feed five thousand and then having more food left than the banquet started with. The tale of Jesus

making clay birds, and their flying away when he clapped his hands, is not more absurd than his conflicts with demons, and raising men from the dead. The Apocryphal gospels are extremely valuable to anyone who wants to know about this particular God. They help us to realize the kind of environment to which he belongs, and that is all-important in biography, whether of gods or men.

* * *

The Aim of Jesus.

Mr. Campbell is evidently a little troubled about the miracles. If he would only accept Jesus as God and nothing but God—a 100 per cent. God—he would have no difficulty whatever, for all gods work miracles. That is the badge of their trade, just as it is characteristic of giants to have three heads, of ghosts to have diaphanous drapery and transparent bodies, and of fairies to float on moonbeams. His troubles arise from the fact that he wants to have him as a man as well as a God. Thus, of the Virgin Birth, he says that “the reasonable view to take of this mysterious subject is to admit that Christ might have been born without a human father” (reasonable view!!!) that “one would like to believe that a corner of the veil, which hangs between heaven and earth was raised” when Jesus was born, and the bystanders saw the “heavenly watchers in the stable.” The outstanding feature of the ministry of Jesus was his miracles, he says. They contributed to his vogue—he somehow gathers that all Jerusalem was attracted to him and were watching him—and “would do the same to-day.” There is no doubt about that. If anyone to-day did what Jesus is reported to have done in Jerusalem, the papers would be full of him. His belief in demons “seems to the modern educated mind to partake of superstition. But Jesus himself took it seriously.” The nature miracles, though, “may be figurative.” That is a rather artful way of stalling off scientific criticism of things which any fairly educated person knows to be sheer impossibilities. And as he is now a good and obedient servant of the English Church, Mr. Campbell will have nothing to do with those who want to make Jesus Christ a mere teacher of ethics. He says:—

The assumption is a misleading one that his primary desire was that of leading men to establish right relations with one another: his primary desire was that they should enter into right relations with God. If readers of his words could but see that his governing intention was not ethical at all, but something far deeper, they would be in possession of the key, not only to all he said, but to all that he did.

This knocks the bottom out of much that is said about the ethical Jesus, and if we could only assume that Mr. Campbell saw all that was in it, it would voice a real truth. For whether the New Testament Jesus be a real or a mythical figure, nothing could be farther from the truth than to parade him as a mere teacher of ethics, primarily interested in making men socially good. The whole aim of the character is religion; the end of all that is said and done, the salvation of man's soul in the next world. About this world and its betterment the makers of Christianity cared not a jot. They were concerned with the religious issue, and the religious issue alone.

* * *

The Value of a Testimonial.

Jesus Christ, says Mr. Campbell, “is by general consent the greatest being who has ever lived in this world, if we have regard to the profound and lasting effects he has produced.” That is the kind of thing

one must expect, but it contains as much nonsense as one could well pack into a single sentence. But it is said so often that Christians have come to take it as an axiom, and many who are not Christians seem afraid to contradict it. What is the general consent worth? It means the general consent of Christians. That goes without saying; but as it is the Christian verdict that is challenged, it is not worth much as evidence. Mohammedans would make the same claim, and with as much justification, on the behalf of Mohammed, and Buddhists on behalf of Buddha. Clearly, neither Buddhists, Mohammedans, nor Jews would admit the claim. Those who do not believe in Christianity would not admit it. Mr. Campbell is merely saying by the general consent of all who agree with this statement, this statement meets with their agreement. And what of the “profound effects”? It is one of the standing complaints of all Christian preachers that their followers simply will not follow the teachings of “the Master.” His profound influence has not made his professed followers more truthful, more peaceful, more tolerant, or kinder than are those who are not his followers. The testimonial to the excellence of the influence of Jesus comes from Christians. They write their own testimonials, and they read them publicly as conclusive evidence.

* * *

The Fathers of Jesus.

One final point. In common with the rest of the clerical world, even with those who admit the large body of myth that exists in the New Testament, there is a constant reference to what Jesus said, and the scenes amid which he moved, as though we were dealing with a newspaper report of the visit of one of our well known public men to one of the large cities. And yet nearly all of this is quite imaginary. What Jesus said was just what those who created the character wished him to say, and when some of the pseudo-biographies issued contradicted what the stronger body of Christians believed, or taught in their selected biographies, the offending ones were suppressed. Of this vast mass of quite fictional literature concerning the New Testament God, the apocryphal gospels, of which Mr. Campbell speaks so slightly, are examples. Yet no genuine life of Jesus can be written without reference to such collections as the apocryphal gospels, and also without reference to the mass of primitive customs which can be still seen active amid savage communities. Mr. Campbell is writing the biography of a God as though he were writing the biography of a man. And that simply will not do. For the latter belongs to history, and deals with credible and verifiable facts. The former belongs to mythology, and the true explanation can be found only in a study of primitive customs and beliefs. But it is curious that in the list of books which the student is advised to study, there is not one that deals with the mythological side of the question. And that makes the whole biography absurd. The only man who can write an instructive biography of a genuine God is the one who has ceased to believe in him.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

READING AND STUDY.

When a man, as I have said, hath got this faculty of observing and judging of the reasoning and coherence of what he reads, and how it proves what it pretends to teach; he is then, and not till then, in the right way of improving his understanding and enlarging his knowledge by reading.—*John Locke.*

Cock Lane and Common Sense.

"Many people have not yet caught up with Voltaire, much less with the twentieth century; and for them it would be a considerable advance if they were to become Voltaireans."—*Bernard Shaw.*

FROM time immemorial men and women have been fascinated with stories of the alleged supernatural, and among these tales ghosts and haunted houses occupy a prominent position. At this season of the year folks like to gather round the fire by night and vie with each other in telling flesh-creeping and leg-pulling tales. Few of these yarns bear much investigation, but the very fact that the subject is off the beaten track, and also that some people are very credulous, helps to keep alive a mild interest in the subject.

Quite a number of people swallow such stories with too facile a belief. Old Sam Johnson was not a blockhead, but he lent a ready ear to the story of the Cock Lane "ghost." And present-day newspaper editors pander to this feeling of curiosity, in order to increase the circulation of their periodicals. Not long since there was a discussion in a widely-circulated paper as to which was the strangest and weirdest legend of the alleged supernatural current in this country. Ghost stories were retailed from all parts of Great Britain and Ireland. Even London, the Metropolis of the Empire, which seems a most unpropitious place for such happenings, had its haunted houses catalogued. The list even included a very stupid story of a "ghost" in the old Tower of London, that was said to frighten the sentries, and was alleged to be like a teddy-bear in appearance. This was an unusually silly story, and the evidence would hardly satisfy a jury of kindergarten scholars.

The journalists wasted time, paper, and ink, and even then failed to agree concerning which particular ghost story was the strangest. Yet, had the journalists been reasonably honest, and admitted the soft impeachment, the strangest of all ghost stories is that associated with the Christian religion, and with the festival of Christmas. Its accuracy is vouched for by no less than fifty thousand straight-faced clergymen, who were not present at the time, but whose solemnity would wrinkle the face of a funeral horse with smiles. Not only do these men-of-God protest the truth of this particular ghost story, but tens of thousands of persons who profess and call themselves Christians support their pastors and masters in their truly extraordinary allegation. It is, therefore, highly fitting at this season of the year to recount some of the chief points of such a remarkable legend.

In the year nought B.C., or A.D. nought, a child with a "ghost" for its father is alleged to have been born in a stable at Bethlehem, in Judea. The infant was considered to be of such extreme importance that a wholesale massacre of children was said to have been carried out in the hope of getting rid of the prodigy. So thorough and sensational was this murder on the grand scale that profane historians did not consider it worth referring to, even in a footnote. The subsequent life of this ghost child was one long string of marvellous happenings, quite as extraordinary as the bizarre stories in the *Arabian Nights*, the favourite hunting ground of the Christmas pantomime producer.

The ghost's son is said to have restored blind people to sight, and even restored dead persons to life. He is alleged to have fed thousands with a few loaves and fishes, the fragments of the feast being in excess of the original amount used. Which, as old Euclid says, is absurd. The ghost's son was not a Prohibitionist, and he is alleged to have turned water

into wine. At his death as a common criminal a three days' darkness is said to have overspread the entire earth, although no contemporary astronomer noticed the awful and depressing occurrence. Even death could not quash his exuberant personality, for after his funeral he is said to have appeared again in ghostly form, and he finally ascended into the sky like an aeroplane, and has never been seen since. He may be "looping the loop," or nose-diving somewhere in space to-day.

There has never been so astonishing a career. Compared with such a life, Napoleon had a humdrum existence, and that of Julius Cæsar is almost as placid as that of an ordinary bank-manager or pork-butcher. Yet this highly-coloured career of the ghost's son scarce made a ripple on the surface of contemporary society. Outside of what are known as the four "Gospels," written no one knows where, no one knows by whom, there is no corroboration of this most popular of all ghost stories. The story of this Syrian ghost is written in the Greek language by priests. And many people will echo the words of Iago, and add, "'tis Greek to me." So far as sober historians are concerned, "the rest is silence."

This Oriental ghost story is associated with the festival of Yuletide, which is a most curious jumble of Paganism and Christianity, and contains as many indigestible and diverse ingredients as a Christmas pudding. The ghost story is obviously "all bogey," but it is associated with a heavily endowed system of superstition. Fifty thousand Christian priests in this country alone get a comfortable living by pretending that this sacred sham is other than it is. The whole sorry business is pretence and make-believe, but there is plenty of money in it, from the £15,000 yearly of the Archbishop of Canterbury to the £5 weekly of the pastor of the nearest tin tabernacle.

This particular ghost story is a savage survival from the bad, old days. The Christian superstition is also a savage survival, and the clerical caste is pre-eminently a savage survival in a society heading towards civilization. It is the perpetuation of ignorance and superstition associated with the Christian religion that makes it so impossible to-day. In its present form Christianity hinders the wheels of progress, and has become absolutely unbearable to all who take serious things seriously.

MIMNERMUS.

Masterpieces of Freethought.

(Concluded from page 806.)

II.—LETTERS ON JESUS CHRIST.

By John Clarke.

II.

"WHEN we compare," says John Clarke in his third letter, "the history of Jesus 'according to Matthew,' with that 'according to Luke,' we have strong reasons for suspecting that Matthew and Luke were inspired by different Holy Ghosts." I myself suspect that there must have been quite a large number of Christians who secretly agreed with Clarke in his day, and we know there are quite a large number now who are by no means impressed with any one or the whole lot of the volumes the religious press pours out in such profusion, to prove Luke and Matthew agree in every detail when properly explained. Apart altogether from the utterly absurd legends and myths which form the "life" of Jesus, the fact that the four biographers disagree in almost every particular should prove the falsity of Christian

claims, and Clarke had little difficulty in showing up the stupid contradictions. In addition, his fertile mind would roam over the whole Bible, pointing out all sorts of things only possible to one who had stored up and pondered over a prodigious amount of "sacred" lore. For example, in speaking of Moses, he observes:—

Moreover the style and manner in which those books (the Pentateuch) are written, is an additional proof (if any further proof is necessary) that they were not written by Moses; for it is everywhere expressed that the *Lord said unto Moses* and *Moses said unto the Lord* or *Moses said unto the people* and *the people said unto Moses* and *Moses began to declare*, all evidently prove that some other person was writing the history of Moses; but in all that Moses is himself supposed to have said, we find not a syllable of Adam, Eve, Ghost, Devil or Hell, much less the immortality of a *soul*!

Everywhere do we find, in Clarke, shrewd remarks of this kind—some, of course, Freethought common-places now, but in his day how few people brought up in the atmosphere of Wesley, John Pye Smith, or Adam Clarke, would have been allowed even to guess at such unbelief of God's Holy Word?

Clarke also points out that in most cases it was the Israelites who were murderous scoundrels, while "the conduct of the Amalekites, towards their captives is a proof of their humanity. The noble and magnanimous spirit of Pharaoh and the two Abimelechs ought not to be overlooked."

Clarke having been a Methodist, knew something about Baptism. He says, "where do the priests obtain authority for baptizing young children? They say that it is agreeable for the institution of Christ: but I cannot find that Christ instituted *water* baptism at all. Jesus himself baptized not; neither did he ever force it upon anyone as being necessary to salvation." No more delicious controversy can be imagined than one between a Roman Catholic and a Baptist on the question of Infant Baptism. Why we, outside the pale, are denied the privilege of hearing such a discussion, I don't know. Is it because the result would be conducive to Christian love and brotherhood? "At the age of twelve," says Clarke, "Jesus was found disputing with the doctors in the temple . . . a proof that the Jewish doctors were more liberal in tolerating FREE DISCUSSION than the Christian doctors, who will not suffer any man to speak beside themselves in their temples; wherein they crow like a cock upon its own dunghill." A hundred years later, can Christians point to any Church which does not deserve this criticism?

In this year of grace 1927, you will not find many Christians genuinely proud of the Devil. So long as he figures prominently in the biographies of Jesus, he can't really be got rid of, but he can be discreetly kept in the background. Besides, the Devil is not actually a Devil, he is our evil passions personified, and after all why worry about the Devil when you should devote yourself to Jesus? No, Christians don't like discussing the terrible tempter, and object to you poking fun at his horns or his tail. They have, of course, outgrown him, but few realize their saner attitude is due to such men as John Clarke. His letters on the Devil are full of sly humour, and what could Adam Clarke or Dr. John Pye Smith say in reply? Simply nothing. The "infidel" was unanswerable. The worst of the whole question is that—if three out of his four biographies are true in substance and fact—Jesus himself believed in the Devil and subsidiary devils. This is very humiliating to any Christian who has given them up and very difficult to explain away. I suggest readers should attend any local revival meetings and rever-

ently ask questions about His Sable Majesty and Jesus's belief in Him. We ought to infuse some humour in these dismal and depressing proceedings, and questions about the Devil will make the pastors speak up.

I am almost sure that neither Professor Huxley nor Mr. Gladstone, when they had their famous controversy about the Gadarene swine, had never read Clarke, otherwise it is safe to say that neither could have seriously discussed the idiotic incident. Even Gladstone would have had to raise a smile somehow. Anyway, Clarke's conclusion is that as Jesus never recompensed the unfortunate owner of the pigs, "he must have acted in a most barbarous, wanton, and malicious manner"—with which criticism we can agree. But it is when he comes to the question of the real historicity of Jesus that Clarke shows his insight. He recognized the utter uselessness of asking the unbeliever to account for the devotion of the twelve apostles and the vigorous championship of Paul before proving that the twelve lived or that the Epistles came from Paul—if that gentleman's existence can be taken for granted. Clarke says that the usual arguments for Christ's existence "might have some weight in the scale if it were first proved that the poor fishermen ever existed and did those things which are recorded of them . . . The testimonies of Tacitus, Pliny, Ignatius, Suetonius, can be no more convincing to us that such a person as Jesus ever existed, than those who might now make allusion in their writings to the adventures of Robinson Crusoe will be to those who may live 1,000 years hence . . . What they wrote must have been from hearsay or tradition (printing being unknown), upon which, as Jesus himself acknowledged, no dependence can be placed (Matt. xv. 2-3). As for Clemens, Origen, Jerome, Eusebius and others, whose writings are brought forward as certain proofs of the validity of the gospels and epistles, they all living in the third or fourth century after those things, which they say had occurred, could not vouch for the truth of them more than we can now for the existence of witches, said to have existed 200 years ago." I have no space to quote further the splendid way in which Clarke develops his argument. It is almost as masterly as Gibbon's famous sixteenth chapter and, of course, far more openly destructive. He surveys all the principal arguments known so well to modern students—naturally, not the additional ones which the work of John M. Robertson, Sir James Fraser and others have so laboriously collected—and concludes the Gospel history is on a par with Robinson Crusoe. And to show the utter nonsense of the miracles, he selects the famous one of the loaves and fishes and annihilates it—"like the rest," he says, "it destroys its own credibility."

Clarke quotes as an example of Christian ferocity, the torture and execution of a Catholic secular clergyman in the reign of Charles II. But I cannot transcribe any portion of it, so horrible are the details. That such things could be done 250 years or so ago seems incredible. I often wonder whether we realize in these days what we owe to the great scientists and Freethinkers who cut the claws of the Christian Church and made it ashamed of its dreadful history.

So far I have surveyed but half of John Clarke's famous book, and space compels me to close. Every letter contains wit, wisdom, keen analysis, masterly argument.

He pits his native shrewdness against the learned disquisitions of Christian doctors and unhorses them, as Ingersoll later unhorsed Gladstone in a famous encounter. He attacks the immorality of the soul, the doctrine of eternal rewards and punishments, and

every Christian institution, with knowledge, insight and power. He examines the origin of the documents in the New Testament, as far as the textual and historical criticism of his day permitted him, but his conclusions are quite as advanced as our own.

"If I could believe," he says in his concluding letter, "that this Jesus ever liveth and has witnessed all the horrid tortures, the agonies the sufferings and the miseries of so many millions of human beings, by that infernal religious engine called the Inquisition, and by the ambition of kings and the avarice of priests, in his name, I should think him to be the most cruel, vindictive, bloody-minded monster that could be conceived by the mind of man . . . Candidly, I ask you, wherein do the Christians excel in moral virtue the Pagan Romans?" I do not suppose Christians will ever reply to brave old John Clarke, writing his single masterpiece in a prison cell and now long forgotten. But we, who inherit his tradition must not forget him and his courageous work. He contributed a great share to the Cause.

H. CUTNER.

On being "Saved" and having a "Religious Experience."

The Christian Church claims two alternative methods of "Conversion." :—

- (i.) The gradual dawning of a new experience which ousts the "old man," and at the same time develops a "new man."
- (ii.) A sudden meteoric change, instantaneous in form which simulates the stories in the gospels of the casting out of demons and very often leaves the convert in a very limp condition.

Being brought up in what was a strictly religious home, I had no personal experience like No. 2. But I have seen many instances of No. 2 type of conversion, both in mass in the so-called revivals, and also in individual cases, and one is at a loss as to how to provide even a crude explanation of them. I have been in meetings where men of loose character and dissolute habits have suddenly got up from their seats, and, waving their hands, have made a bee-line for a form at the front of the chapel, and there, amidst groans, tears, and exhortations, have seemingly passed out of "darkness" into "light."

This wonderful miracle having happened, they then stood up before the congregation and in broken words renounced the devil and all his evil works, and then proceeded to exhort others to follow in their footsteps.

What has happened?

Either a brain-storm caused by outside forces working upon sensory nerves, or psychic forces at work in the hands of strong-willed persons working upon the weaker.

Even the Churches themselves are and have been for some time very apathetic to these revivals by professional soul-catchers, who count results by scalps, and who advertise their powers in religious papers, adding "so many souls saved at H."

For weeks before this visit they demand that prayer meetings shall be held nightly, and they arrive expecting to find all things in readiness for them to discharge their electricity into ready-primed atmospheres.

Can you wonder that people, emotional and often times irrational under normal conditions, can become doubly so under such manufactured sensation given times?

I have been in "Class Meetings" (meetings held by the Churches for the purpose of mutually relating

Christian experience) subsequent to these revivals, when the newly saved have related their experience, and I safely say that were not such meetings "privileged" (and no doubt such experiences are taken by those present with many grains of salt) on the evidence of those present, coupled with the self-confession, many of them would be landed in the Divorce, Police, County and Bankruptcy Courts successively or alternately. We used to sit on forms ranged round the room—in the centre stood the class leader. After the opening hymn (generally of the most emotional type, and calculated to promote excitement) one brother would engage in prayer, and if the Almighty has had time to listen to some of the drivel which was offered up, then the world must be an easier task to run than the Churches will give credit for. Those prayers were accompanied by "Amen's" and groans of encouragement and sympathy, form hammering and various ejaculations according to the differing whims of those present—those making the most noise being accounted the most earnest. After another hymn, the leader beginning at one point completed the circle, each present saying what they wished, and the leader replying with encouragement and exhortation to live the good life, and making much play in the "keeping power" of the blood of Jesus.

To the Churches' credit it may be said that never once outside those walls were mentioned those "experiences"—whether because we did not place too much credence upon those vapourings, or whether it was for fear of mutual recrimination, I cannot say.

F.

Propaganda that Pays.

A RECENT experience of mine may be worth recounting, inasmuch that it will, I hope, serve two purposes, firstly that of exposing an innovation in Christian propaganda methods; and secondly, of preventing brother Freethinkers from making the same mistake as I made.

One Saturday evening recently, I was wandering about London on the quest of some kind of amusement, and found, as I had feared, that no seats that I could afford were obtainable at any variety show or cinema. However, I persevered in the search, and found myself outside the Polytechnic Cinema in Regent Street, and was agreeably surprised to discover that seats were bookable for the 8.30 performance for a couple of shillings.

The film advertised was titled "Africa To-day," and photographs in the usual show-cases outside gave interesting glimpses of the subject in question. So far as one could tell from outside, the film had all the earmarks of a good "interest" film, perhaps a trifle "educational," but none the less it seemed well worth a visit.

The theatre was crowded by half-past eight, and before long the lights were lowered. The performance began with the unexpected appearance of a gentleman, who informed us that he would accompany the showing of the film by a sort of running commentary.

It was soon apparent to the audience that without assistance from the "commentary" the film would have been almost unintelligible, for it seemed to consist mainly of disconnected "snaps" taken on a sort of grand tour in South Africa, *financed and directed*, if you please, by a *Committee of Churches*, some of them "Free," and others of the "Anglican" variety.

The film rapidly went from bad to worse, and we were treated to the painful exhibition of a horde of

converted natives undergoing total baptism with appropriate mummery, church services, choir practises and weddings galore, whilst the orchestra rendered hymn tunes, and the "lecturer" gave off illuminating remarks to the effect that "Religion was the true basis of Education," and all kinds of highly controversial assertions.

As a final treat we were shown a map of Africa, upon which a large and fancy Cross gradually appeared.

It says much for my respect for law and order, that I sat the whole thing out in silence (except perhaps a few irrepressible groans). What annoyed me more than anything else, was that I had unwittingly contributed towards missionary effort in Africa, and furthermore, had paid two shillings of my hard-earned money to witness this puerile propaganda.

For a really fine example of unprincipled "nerve," I think this affair would break all records.

I need hardly suggest to all Freethinkers who read this, to avoid this film like the Black Death, unless, of course, some hardy spirits among them will see it for themselves, and then demand the return of their money on the grounds that it had been taken "on false pretences."

A. J. COOPER.

Sweet are the Uses of Advertisement.

I READ the other day of a business concern spending over £10,000 a year in advertising its wares, and it occurred to me that a splendid and fruitful source of ideas in this connexion is at present practically unexplored.

Some of our large advertising firms do use the great figures of history as the basis of their appeals for custom, but what an inexhaustible supply of promising material we have in the Christian Bible, ready to be exploited by the pious vendors of articles in everyday use among the Faithful.

And how much simpler will be the task of the advertising expert when he is working along these lines. For instance, when he is pushing the sale of a new baby food, and asserts that it is compounded from a secret recipe used by Sarah, when she presented Abraham with a son at a time of life which prevented her from suckling him, there will be no need for him to offer any proofs of his assertion to people who are prepared to swallow such yarns as Jonah and the whale, the Virgin Birth, and so on.

What a splendid opportunity, too, for some enterprising Christian vinegar manufacturer:—

"Use our Vitamin Vinegar, as supplied to our dear Lord. (See St. Matthew 27, v. 34.)"

ought to fetch all true believers, and if some nasty Sceptic attempts to question the veracity of the statement, the Christian Press, which prints the advertisement, will take care to suppress any communications casting doubts upon it.

Or again:—

"Use our Holy Honey, as eaten by the prophet in the wilderness. (See St. Mark 1, v. 6.)"

"Our famous Honey is obtained from the bees directly descended from the wild bees whose honey fed St. John."

Then the idea could be used to found a new industry. The people who can be induced by skilful advertising to "Eat more Seaweed," could also be persuaded to eat other unlikely things, which would bring handsome profits to those who exploit them.

Here is a suggestion which may commend itself to some Christian business man:—

"Take Bulrush Bark with your breakfast."

"Scientists have proved that the bark of the bulrush contains all the elements necessary to keep the human body in a state of perfect health, and a spoonful sprinkled over your bacon at breakfast time will save you many a doctor's bill.

The bulrushes from which our famous bark is pre-

pared are gathered in Egypt at the spot where, many centuries ago, Pharaoh's daughter found the infant Moses, and the bark, before being ground into powder form is sprinkled with Holy Water from the river Jordan, thus increasing the life and health-giving properties for which it is so famous."

The above examples will, I am sure, be sufficient to indicate to any enterprising Christian that *there is money in the idea* if carried out properly (an all-sufficient reason with many Christians), and I ask no recompense for making the suggestions, except to make the further suggestion that 5 per cent. of the first year's profits of the enterprise should be given to the *Freethinker* Endowment Fund.

But I'm afraid that would not appeal to a Christian.

FRED HOBDAV.

The Dies Iræ of the Gods.

HEINRICH HEINE, in my opinion, the greatest stylist of all the great writers of the highly-gifted Jewish nation, describes how he felt a mysterious piety, and shuddering compassion for the old Jehovah preparing for death. He traces his career from his cradle in Egypt, where he was reared among the divine crocodiles, and sacred onions, Ibises, and cats. Forsaking the obelisks and sphinxes of the Nile, to become a little god-king in Palestine. Civilized by contact with higher civilizations, he renounces his all-too-human passions, or, at least, no longer thunders at every trifle; he migrates to Rome and establishes an opposition to Jupiter, ultimately supplants him, and from the Capitol rules the city and the world, *urbem et orbem*. Growing still more spiritualized he becomes a friend, a benefactor, a philanthropist. But all this availed him nothing. "Hear ye not the bells resounding? Kneel down. They are bringing the sacraments to a dying god."¹

Yes, the old Jehovah, who walked and talked in the garden of Eden, and delighted in burnt sacrifices, has, for all thinking people, long been dead; the newer, parvenu gods of philosophy and metaphysics, invented to occupy the vacant throne, are following him to the Valhalla, or wherever it is that the dead gods go.

The representatives of religion are loud in their lamentations over the growing secularization of life and neglect of public worship. Even the best friends and supporters of religion, outside the Churches, are filled with dismay as they watch the decay of religion and the growth of scepticism. Take the following avowal by Prof. Whitehead, the professor of philosophy, who is so much quoted in the Press, and by religious journals, as a supporter of religion. He observes:—

There have been reactions and revivals. But on the whole, during many generations, there has been a gradual decay of religious influence in European civilization. Each revival touches a lower peak than its predecessor, and each period of slackness a lower depth. The average curve marks a steady fall in religious tone. In some countries the interest in religion is higher than in others. But in those countries where the interest is relatively high, it still falls as the generations pass. Religion is tending to degenerate into a decent formula wherewith to embellish a comfortable life. A great historical movement on this scale results from the convergence of many causes. I wish to suggest two of them which lie within the scope of this chapter for consideration.

In the first place, for over two centuries, religion has been on the defensive, and on a weak defensive. The period has been one of unprecedented intellectual progress. In this way a series of novel situations have been produced for thought. Each such

¹ Heine: *Religion and Philosophy in Germany*. Page 103.

occasion has found the religious thinkers unprepared. Something which has been proclaimed to be vital, has finally, after struggle, distress, and anathema, been modified and otherwise interpreted. The next generation of religious apologists then congratulates the religious world on the deeper insight which has been gained. The result of the continued repetition of this undignified retreat, during many generations, has at last almost entirely destroyed the intellectual authority of religious thinkers. (A. N. Whitehead: *Science and the Modern World*. 1926. Pages 262-263.)

Not only have the clergy lost whatever intellectual authority they may have once possessed, but their retreat has been conducted under a cloud of evasion, trickery, equivocation and shuffling; such as has never been seen in any cause before, and has irretrievably damaged their moral authority for veracity and integrity. Who would attend a Church or Chapel to hear the truth about religion and science? Or any other subject.

Professor Wildon Carr—another professor of philosophy who supports religion—in his latest book, just published, testifies to the difficulties modern science throws in the way of retaining any religious ideas at all. He observes:—

The scientific interpretation of natural phenomena has made the interest in God more remote, God's existence more problematical, and even the idea of God unnecessary. Mathematics and physics are making it increasingly difficult to assign a place for God in our co-ordinations and constructions of the universe, and the necessity of positing a first cause or of conceiving a designer, a necessity which seemed *prima facie* obvious to a pre-scientific generation, does not exist for us. (Wildon Carr: *Changing Backgrounds in Religion and Science*. 1927. Page 74.)

So that it has come to this at last. Instead of finding the idea of God useful as the First Cause, or as a convenient fall-back when no other explanation is available, the modern scientists find it more and more difficult to find a place for God in the universe at all. Like Laplace, they have no need of the hypothesis. In fact, God has become an encumbrance.

Here is the testimony of another well-known opponent of secularism, Mr. Frank Ballard, who has probably given more lectures, and written more pamphlets and books against Scepticism and Freethought than any other man in the kingdom. He observes: "Whence it comes to pass that in this so-called Christian country—to say nothing here about the Continent—seven at least out of every ten adults, are entirely out of touch with all the churches, and are manifestly un-Christian, with an increasing proportion decidedly anti-Christian. Why is this? Unquestionably because of the lack of Christian conviction. Why then is that lacking? Because modern knowledge, whatever name it bears, has shown that the former grounds for such conviction are not true. That plain fact has to be faced."²

We will conclude with testimony of the Rev. Scott Lidgett, one of the most influential personalities in British Nonconformity. He was elected President in 1906 of the National Free Church Council, and in 1908, President of the Wesleyan Conference. He testifies: "The war and its consequences have shaken, if not shattered, the popular conception of the sovereignty of God. The widely held expectation of what He might be expected to do in a crisis has not been fulfilled, has indeed been falsified. People looked for what is called Divine intervention to prevent, or at all events to mitigate, an unparalleled calamity, and such intervention from with-

out, has not taken place."³ This expectation of divine aid in man's extremity, Dr. Lidgett stigmatizes as: "A crude imagination of the revelation of God to the world-order," and adds: "a loftier and larger conception of His purpose and methods must take the place of what has given way."

For our part, we fail to see any lofty purpose in the divine neutrality which allowed the nations to fight it out to the bitter end, and we do not believe that Dr. Lidgett will succeed in converting the man-in-the-street to his view of the case. One thing emerges from the testimony of our opponents, and that is that God's days are numbered. He is not required by science, and he has been found wanting and useless in the affairs of the world. Let him go.

W. MANN.

Acid Drops.

The New Prayer Book has been passed by the House of Lords and rejected by the House of Commons. On general grounds we do not see that it matters to Freethinkers very much whether it is passed or not. The spectacle of a Parliament composed of all sorts of religious opinions, with numbers of those whose opinions are either against all religion or definitely opposed to Christianity deciding what is true Christian doctrine, is quite amusing, even though some of the speeches with their religious philosophy, coming from those whom we know to have very little religious conviction at all, indicates that humbug which is so largely associated with public professions of religion nowadays. If the House of Commons mustered many men of genuine conviction, men whose public statements on religion were not given with one eye on the ballot box, the occasion might have served as an opportunity for a decided protest against the time of Parliament being taken up with religious discussions. People who call themselves reformers should at least have reached the point of believing that it is not the business of the Secular State to interfere in matters of religion. And whether anyone chooses to believe that some pastry and cheap wine becomes the body and blood of Jesus is a form of delusion with which the State has no concern.

As it is, we venture to say that there are not a score of those who worked themselves into a state of "tense emotion" over the matter, to cite the daily press, who understood the real meaning of the "Sacrament." It is not a matter of theory, but of demonstrable fact, that the belief in the Sacrament, whether interpreted by "Jix," or by the most extreme Catholic, is no more than a survival of primitive religious cannibalism. Of course, we do not now kill and eat the god, neither do we kill and bury a human being beneath the foundation stone of a building. In the latter case we bury a set of coins, in the former, very devout Christians eat the god in effigy, or by way of symbolism. But it is the same thing at bottom. The Anglo-Catholic is demanding the right, by Act of Parliament, to eat his God. Sir William Joynson Hicks as passionately declares, "You shall not eat my God, neither shall you drink his blood in the Established Church." And these people think themselves civilized.

Sir H. Slessor, Solicitor-General under the Labour Government, was quite content to be guided by the Bishops as to what he ought to believe. He looked upon Bishops as "divinely appointed guardians of the Church of England." That would seem to settle it. Sir Henry Slessor does not believe that God has appointed the Bishops to do what they are doing. Stupidity could hardly go farther than this, but it is all of a piece with the whole discussion. To him, however, the Attorney-General, Sir Douglas Hogg, said that we must be satisfied that the people of England require a

² F. Ballard: *Christian Findings after Fifty Years* (1927). Page 162.

³ Scott Lidgett: *God, Christ and the Church* (1927). Page 32.

change before it is made. Now that is quite a pretty kind of religious doctrine that would have made the hair of those who created the prayer book stand on end. If the people of England decide the bread and wine becomes flesh and blood, then, says Sir Douglas Hogg, they do become that, and the subject is ended—until you can get a vote in the other direction. Finding out what is true religion is just on the same level as deciding whether a particular new road shall be made, or whether there shall be a higher tax on whisky. One feels almost inclined to say that these are the kind of things that make religion ridiculous, only religion is ridiculous in a modern setting. Sir Douglas Hogg, Sir Henry Slessor and the other "impassioned" speakers would have been quite in the proper setting among the primitives who made the Christian Church. In a modern environment they are simply ridiculous.

The plain way out of all this tomfoolery, so far as Parliament is concerned would be to disestablish religion altogether. Mark, disestablish religion—not merely disestablish the Church. The first is and has always been our aim; but we would not cross the road merely to accomplish the other. To disestablish the Church in the sense in which most non-conformists advocate the policy, only means to establish them all on an equal footing, so that all the Churches will have their share of State patronage and will share in the plunder of the public. The kind of disestablishment we are after would preclude the State taking any part at all in religion. It would give to every religious sect the same protection and the same privilege which it gives to any body of men and women joined for any lawful purpose. But it would leave men to decide for themselves, and by themselves whether they wished to remain in the mental company of primitive savages, or enter that of really civilized men and women.

On "The Blight of Bribery," the Rev. A. J. Edmonds expends himself to the extent of two columns in a pious weekly. He says nothing about Christians bribing—by way of the collection bag—the parson to secure them a safe conduct to Heaven and through Hades.

Bishop Temple, of the First Apostolic Church, U.S.A., had recently a first-class chance of exhibiting a miracle. Two bottles of whisky were found in his bedroom, in defiance of the American law that the only whisky permitted by the officials shall be smuggled whisky. He said the bottles contained sacramental wine, but the searchers were unconvinced. Now he might have repeated the wine and water trick of the New Testament, with the slight variation of whisky instead of water. But, presumably, the secret of that has been lost.

Not satisfied with giving the public the yards of religion served out to it every Sunday over the wireless, the *Church Times* hopes that the B.B.C. will give us a daily service. For our part, as the B.B.C. is now a government affair, we are wondering when the Government will realize that it is not its business to dose the public with religion. We might reasonably demand that it should give a weekly discourse on some phase of Atheism. But we prefer our opinions to stand apart from all government interference.

That early Victorian versifier, Francis Ridley Havergal, used to divide her fellow-creatures into three classes, says a memoir writer. These were: (1) gentlefolk, including herself; (2) servants, gardeners and tradespeople; and (3) the heathen in distant lands. The good lady was very devout, and her verses were much esteemed by the pious of her times. It was no doubt her type of Christian who found blessed consolation in that sweet hymn—nowadays out of fashion in churches—which related how the rich man in his castle, the poor man at his gate, God made them high and lowly, and ordered their estate.

To stem the flow of visitors to the Temple Church, London, the Benchers of the Inner Temple and Middle

Temple have ordained that admission shall be by ticket only. One might fancy at first blush that here was indeed a "living church" (see *Daily Express*). But it appears, the popular interest is not in religion but in the singing. The Church has a very fine choir—that's all. And this suggests that if this love of music is widespread, the churches everywhere could soon be emptied, were the amusement halls in every large town to give first-class musical concerts on Sundays.

The "King of Kings" has duly appeared, although the bishops were not present who were expected to attend, there was a large number of parsons there—by invitation. And what we said a fortnight ago about the effect of present-day people seeing biblical scenes on the stage was well born out. One critic thought the raising of Lazarus from the dead was not quite effective enough. We wonder what they expected? To an audience of superstitious peasants the scene would have had all the stamp of actuality. To an audience of modern Londoners, it is just a man getting up from the ground. The one is ready to believe anything marvellous; the other looks for a *natural* meaning in all that occurs. That is why religious scenes on the stage met with the approval of the priests in early times and their disapproval in modern days.

The figure of Christ, it is said, was quite reverently conceived. That means that the actor had to move through his scenes like a slow motion picture. If he had behaved as a man might well behave at some time or other, shown passion, or pleasure, laughed or shouted, or shown any touch of *human* feeling it would have been called irreverent. So the actor had to play up to the Church impression with a Jesus that had as much genuine human nature about it as one of the figures from Madame Tussaud's. The *Daily Chronicle* says that the face of Jesus ought never to have been brought close to the people, so obviously was the actor attempting to express the divine." That strikes us as unconsciously funny. How does a man portray the divine? What does the divine look like, anyhow? If it looks like a man, how does one tell it is not a man? If it is not like a man, what on earth—or in heaven—is it like? That is the kind of clotted bosh one has to put up with whenever we are dealing with religion. Which prompts to a further question. Why do writers get it into their heads that so long as they are religious they have an unassailable right to be as stupid, or as banalistic, as it is possible for them to be?

The film critic of the *Evening Standard*, in his review of the "King of Kings," referred with approval to the incident in the film where Jesus indulges in some hy-play with a little girl who has broken her doll. But the effect of this touching portrayal of "suffer little children to come unto me" was rather spoilt by the report in the same paper of the fire in Quebec City, when the wing of the Hospice of St. Charles was consumed and four hundred children trapped by the flames. Fifty children and nuns have been burned to death, or buried in the ruins. We are waiting for the religious moral to be drawn.

Mussolini says it is his object to make Italy a moral and pious nation. We have understood that Mussolini used to be anything but a pious individual, but if that is so, the growth of his megalomania—which we think will one day form a subject for some pathologist as an accompaniment of a well known disease—has turned him again to some form of religion. But we might remind him that Italy was very pious long before he was born, and the days of its greatest piety were the days of its greatest rascality. Of course, we do not doubt but that Mussolini will find, as others have found before him, that if the people are to be held in subjection, and criticism of their rulers treated as a crime, nothing will serve his ends so well as religion. That is not a new discovery. There is no dope like the religious dope. People take it so easily.

The "Freethinker" Endowment Trust.

We go to press early this week with the *Freethinker*, and I have time for but a few words. But these few words are of the best. We have done what we set out to do, and in the course of just over two years £8,000 has been subscribed to one of the best of objects. The £1,615 promised conditionally has not yet been actually received, but that is merely a matter of time. Their promise is worth twenty shillings in the pound every time. Meanwhile, will they please take this as formal notice that the amounts promised are now due, and must be in the bank before the end of the year, when we shall receive the £1,000 promised by Mr. Peabody.

It will be seen that we are just over £40 to the good. That is very satisfactory, but if the Trust had £20,000 in hand it could use its income to good purpose. When the £1,615 promised is banked I will, early in the New Year, have something to say on behalf of the Trustees on the general question of the Trust.

Meanwhile I want to thank most heartily everyone who has co-operated in doing this great work. Christians who talk about devotion to a cause might well reflect that this was done on behalf of one that promises men absolutely nothing in the shape of worldly benefit, or reward in some future state. It should give them food for reflection, if they are capable of the effort.

When I mentioned the project to some old Freethinking friends, they said it was impossible. They were sure I was riding for a fall. Well, we have succeeded. We have accomplished the impossible, and I know they will forgive my doing a little cock-crowing over the success. My brother Trustees are equally delighted; and I am even more pleased on their behalf than I am on my own.

So for the moment we rest. For the first time in the history of Freethought, we have managed to make it possible that the paper which represents its interests shall be reasonably secure against a back-breaking loss. We shall, I am sure, and in consequence, spend a happier Christmas, and look forward with more pleasurable anticipations to the New Year.

Once more, thanks.

	£	s.	d.
PREVIOUSLY ACKNOWLEDGED	6,299	7	9
Anonymous	100	0	0
Ajax	5	0	0
J. Aitken	0	5	0
E. L. G. Gillett	1	1	0
E. Oliver	5	0	0
R. H. (Nelson)	1	0	0
H. Purdy	0	2	6
F. Redwood	0	5	0
W. C. Edwards	0	5	0
Robert Brown	10	0	0
W. Milroy	1	0	0
H. Beech	0	10	0
South London Branch N.S.S.	1	1	0
G. P. O'Leary	0	1	0
P. V. M.	0	10	0
F. Taylor	0	2	6
L. M.	0	5	0
G. Allcorn	0	5	0
J. Wearing	0	1	0
H. J. Lees	2	0	0
Total	£6,428	1	9
Promised (now due)	£1,615	0	0
GRAND TOTAL	£8,043	1	9

CHAPMAN COHEN.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

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

J. WEARING.—Many thanks. You have been the most persistent contributor to the Endowment Trust, and we thoroughly appreciate your interest in the cause.

T. MUNDE.—Meredith's *Prophet of Nazareth* has been out of print for many years. Copies can be met with second hand. It is a really good piece of work.

W. DIXON.—Glad to have your appreciation of the paper.

A. MILLAR.—Shall appear. Thanks.

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

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

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

When the services of the National Secular Society in connexion with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Mr. F. Mann, giving as long notice as possible.

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

As announced previously, we go to press several days earlier this week owing to the Christmas holiday, and to avoid the almost inevitable delay in getting parcels to their journey's end. This will account for the paucity of paragraphs, and the absence of Branch News, etc.

Mr. Cohen's recently issued second series of *Essays in Freethinking* forms the text of a two column article in the *New Age*. The editor pays the author the compliment of saying that he is "a master of the weapons of written and spoken propaganda . . . that of persuading people to take an interest in the subject itself; the problem of getting people to investigate a 'mystery.' To everyone who realizes the obstinacy of a mass-hypnosis, and wishes to overcome it, we put forward Mr. Cohen as the teacher of teachers on how to do so." Our contemporary's main interest lies with "Credit Reform," and he goes through the essays showing that the lines of reasoning adopted, and applied to a criticism of religious beliefs will apply equally well to other subjects on which clear thinking is necessary.

The critic closes his review—after remarking that "Sound teachers are not excommunicated nowadays; they are simply excluded from bibliographies," by saying that what the religion of the future will be is unknown, "but its cathedrals will assuredly enshrine statues to those insatiable seekers after natural knowledge whom the church once martyred . . . In that day Mr. Chapman Cohen and the Archbishop of Canterbury will forgather, and if they discuss theology at all, and the Archbishop insists that all the bursting joy of life and freedom to live it that is to be seen everywhere, is evidence of God, we can hear his companion slyly reply, 'Well, at least I can say that I like your evidence, so we can shake hands on that.'" Probably; only by that time we doubt there will be an Archbishop of Canterbury to bear his share in the conversation.

There are no lectures with the English Branches on Christmas day, but Scotland is an exception. Mr. F. Mann will be spending Christmas in Glasgow, and on Friday, December 23, he will take part in a discussion at the Christian Institute, Bothwell Street, on "Is Spiritualism a Menace to Civilization?" and on Sunday (December 25), he will lecture in No. 2 Room, City Hall, at 11.30, on "Freethought and Democracy," and at 6.30, on "Theology and the Weather."

The Festive Season.

Overheard outside Westminster Abbey.

AMERICAN TOURIST (to Policeman): "Say boss, who's the big noise in this yer Tabernacle?"

(From "Pharamond" of *The Referee*.)

USUALLY at this season of the year Christians are making preparations for the celebration of the birthday of their Saviour God—Jesus Christ. As though their God, whom they declare has existed throughout all eternity, and who is an infinite, omnipotent and all wise Being, solemnly decided nearly two thousand years ago to allow a part of himself called his son to be born miraculously of a young Jewish maiden in Bethlehem—and the poor girl to have no human father to hold responsible for the child's existence. And this incredible story is the foundation of the Christian Faith to-day. But in the midst of the preparations for their annual festivities the Christians are wrangling and disputing over the revision of the Prayer Book. One section wants the old book as it stands, and another the revised version, and the matter has now been referred to the House of Lords—composed largely of Bishops—for their decision. And so they are now fighting hammer and tongs, if we may use such an expression to describe the bitter controversial methods of the Lords spiritual, before coming to the final decision.

Meanwhile Canon Donaldson, a Democratic Churchman, has denounced his Christian brethren in Westminster Abbey for wasting their time over this question, while hundreds of thousands of their fellow creatures were starving. "Immediate and drastic remedies were required," said Canon Donaldson. "Instead of that, Parliament has been busy cutting down unemployment benefit and tightening up the operation of the poor law relief. Under such circumstances our institutions were incurring the contempt of the people."

Well spoken, Canon Donaldson, say I—and I believe most Freethinkers will heartily endorse his remarks.

During Christmas week thousands of unemployed miners will be seeking relief for their half-starved wives and children.

But Christian missionaries will be saying: "There will be plenty of soup kitchens open in the mining districts." The miners will probably say, "We don't want your soup—and we don't want your Christmas pudden—we want work—and if not that—adequate relief until we can get it."

And so we can say on behalf of the starving children:—

"Oh, my Lord Bishop, its an awful doom,
To be crying for bread in a mother's womb."

But when will Christians leave off wrangling over theological dogmas, and pay attention to the hard and pressing facts of life?

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

P.S.: The House of Commons, that has the final decision in the matter, has just rejected the *Revised Version* by a majority of 42; so all the work of the Revising Committee goes for nothing. What a gross waste of time and public money.—A.B.M.

Thoughts Upon an Execution.

It is all very well to gird at religion, but where—oh, where the devil—should we be without it? We should have no guide to conduct, no standard of morality, no one's life or property would be safe, immorality would be as common as impecuniosity; theft would be as ordinary as thrift; murder would be as general as mumps.

The above philosophical considerations were inspired—inspired is the word, Sir!—by a perusal of that famous Secular newspaper (with Protestant leanings though!), the *Sunday Express*, edited by that light of orthodoxy, that superlord of eloquence, that pillar of popular journalism, the Almost-Reverend James Douglas, who astonishes the world every Sunday with the desiccated sob-stuff, the thunderous morality, the overwhelmingly-cheap piety that delights the warm hearts and soft heads of the Great British Public.

Sex-novels, divorce, the state of the stage, the shortcomings of politicians, the solution of sorrow, the consolations of religion, the moral of Armistice Day, the results of pessimism, bobbing, shingling, mixed marriages, bimetalism; nothing on earth, in heaven, or in hell is unknown to him; on grounds of taste, we do not mention purgatory, for that mysterious region is not popular with Protestants, but we have no doubt that he knows all about that too. As the poet so nearly wrote:—

"And still the wonder grows
One Fleet Street head can carry all he knows."

It is a truism, familiar possibly even to popular journalists, that even Homer nods; and sometimes—but only sometimes—even popular journalists themselves may be caught napping. For our part, my dear Editor, we wish that they would nap more frequently, for then we might be spared some of the mountains of mush that depress our spirits; some of the moonshiny messes that bewilder our brains; some of the torrents of toshfulness that make us long to shake the shoulders of those who, secretly knowing better, flood our front-parlours and back-kitchens every Lord's Day with the outpourings of their stuffed heads, the overflowings of their abundant emotionalism, at God knows how many guineas a column.

These journalist chaps, oracles of the Press Club, purveyors of culture (complete with anecdotes) to Fleet Street bars, *must* be great writers, for most of them earn more in a week than Shelley (for instance) made in his whole life; and according to suburban standards, money is the supreme test of excellence. (What is he worth? What will it *fetch*? These be your gods, O England!) Nevertheless, in face of all the financial evidence, we have our doubts; we are incurably sceptical, even in regard to the universal omnipotence of the Great British God Mammon.

This slight and sugary exordium was occasioned by, and is preliminary to, the reprinting of a cutting from the *Sunday Express*. We give it in full, headings and all:—

100 GUESTS AT AN EXECUTION.

TICKET INVITATIONS TO DEATH CHAMBER.

MURDERERS' SPEECH.

More than a hundred people had tickets to witness the execution by the electric chair of four murderers at Trenton, New Jersey, last night. There was not enough room for them all in the death chamber at the same time, so they went in relays.

The murderers, who had killed and robbed the cashier of an ice-cream company, were all executed within half an hour. Each one made a speech pro-

claiming his innocence after being strapped in the chair, and each one kissed a crucifix held to his lips by the prison chaplain just before the current was turned on.

Their last meal, eaten only a few hours before their death, and which, as is customary under prison rules here, they were allowed to choose themselves, irrespective of expense, consisted of six courses. All four men were Roman Catholics, and, as it was Friday, obeyed the injunction of their faith against eating meat.

It is comforting to know that these four gentleman, who had apparently murdered their victim for money, "kissed a crucifix" before they were "turned-off," to use the expressive old phrase; and it is perhaps even more comforting to know that they were restrained by their religion from eating meat on Friday. It would perhaps have been more comforting still (especially to the victim) had their religion restrained them from murder. But that perhaps is too much to ask; religion cannot do everything, and we must be as thankful as we can for small mercies, though we fear that this is small comfort to the unfortunate cashier, the mercy extended to whom seems to have been severely limited. But then, if there were no Catholics, what would become of all the crucifix-makers, and some of the fishmongers?

Probably not one in ten thousand of the readers of the *Sunday Express* saw the irony lurking in every line of these three brutal paragraphs, in every word of these three atrocious headlines. How should they? They have been brought up on a system of false ethical values, and have no means of appraising either life or death at its true value.

Christianity has been "in the air" for something like two thousand years, and it might have been a good thing if it had stayed there, instead of polluting the earth with its slime.

What are we to think of the millions of people in Europe and the States who lick their lips over such stuff, and see nothing wrong or funny in the extensively-advertised religiosity of sordid murderers? Such things are so common in our civilization that they are taken as a matter of course. How superior we are to the old Pagans!

What of a system under which tickets are issued to enable acquaintances to see their friends "done in"? At the old Gladiatorial shows, some of the victims at least had a sporting chance; but Christians take no chances in such matters. These four men were "certs." for death, and had there been a charge made for the tickets, members of the audience could no doubt have demanded their money back in the case of a reprieve. We wonder what "Christian" charities would have refused a share of the profits, "after all expenses were paid"?

What of the ethical code that enjoins men to believe that "God," or Jesus, or Mary, or the Holy Ghost, or the Saints, wink at murder, but cannot bear the idea of a man eating meat on Friday? What of this Jesus who is apparently willing to excuse the shedding of blood if only the slayer will kiss the crucifix before he dies? What of the "more than a hundred people" who went to see the execution-show? We'll wager that there were no Freethinkers among them.

It cannot be denied that in this year of grace Nineteen-twenty-seven, the blessed religion of Christianity has succeeded in obliterating all blood-lust and savagery from the purified minds of its gentle devotees. A trace of cruelty remains perhaps in a few million cases, but then the True Faith has not yet been in existence for two thousand years; and, as an Anglican friend remarked, in replying to an article of mine, "Christianity has never really had a chance." Let us hope piously that it will get its

"chance" in the next three or four thousand years; otherwise we may be tempted to try something else, and the world will fall into anarchy and confusion, and produce such monsters as Confucius and Socrates; and where shall we be then?

Meantime, we note with dismay that in certain parts of Europe the holy religion of Christianity is actually being discarded. There are really men whose patience is worn out after a trifling delay of nineteen centuries. What a pity that these blasphemers do not share the pure and exalted faith common to the humble and underpaid scribes of the *Sunday Express*!

There is a postscript; it is certainly almost incredible, but we give it for what it is worth.

We showed this cutting to a friend of ours, a professional wit, a man who is a graduate, with first-class honours, of London University. He saw nothing wrong with it; but we must add that he is a convert to Roman Catholicism. So perhaps the curious lack of moral judgment that, in our view, he showed may not be so odd as it would be in a Freethinker.

Still; in our nasty, querulous, sceptical way, we can't help thinking that there's something wrong somewhere.

VICTOR B. NEUBURG.

The Evolution of a Freethinker.

WITH the exception of one or two little superstitious that seem to be embedded in my mental strata, I think I may properly be called a "Freethinker." The belief in the fateful figure 13, the breaking of a mirror, the appearance of a spider, or the overturning of the salt-cellar, is difficult to extirpate. Heredity, and a long process of religious environment leave their mark inevitably.

Mr. Repton advises a "sense of humour" as the best antidote to religious bigotry, and one must agree that a pinch of that condiment is an excellent preservative. And Mr. V. Hands also gives good advice, when he exclaims incredulously, "Surely you don't believe that damned nonsense." But not all of us have the courage of St. Vincent.

In the words of the New Testament, "I began to be about thirty years of age" before I commenced my Pilgrim's Progress from benighted sophistry to the Delectable Mountains of a freer air. I had been reared in a strict Presbyterian family, on the unpalatable doctrines set forth in the Westminster Confession. Theories of justification, sanctification, conversion, election, damnation and so forth, monopolized a good deal of my spare time, and I did my best to believe in a dramatic Day of Judgment, and the red-hot cinders of a literal Hell.

You can see at once it was no laughing matter. The sense of humour was difficult to cultivate.

When a child, my parents, though rigid Presbyterians, never forced their views specially upon me. It was a kind of atmosphere, and I took it for granted. Family worship, and a careful regard for the "Sabbath" were strongly enforced. We took few liberties with the A-mighty.

Methodists and other branches of the Church militant we looked upon with disfavour. Catholics were idolators. Very few members of any of these alien sects would win heaven, unless, indeed they changed before the summons of Death.

As the tree fell, so must it lie.

Ranters and Methodists made far too free with their deity. They shouted at him when there was no necessity. He was always willing to hear, and had numbered their hairs, so why be so clamant?

In fact there was a dignity, not to say a kind of "dourness," in the United Presbyterian (when he

became United) with the covenanting blood in his veins.

I never could quite honestly say I was "saved." I thought it my duty to attain to that proud position, when I heard the various evangelists. But, somehow, I was never "convinced." I tried different methods to no purpose. I attempted to "work out my own salvation," as the phrase goes, and I tried to do nothing at all, with the same result.

Then I sampled other preachers. Strange to say, many of these were touched with heresy, among whom I remember Marcus Dodds. I liked to hear famous preachers. Parker Talmadge, W. J. Dawson. The latter edited the *Young Man*, a periodical, containing varying shades of opinions at that time.

Then I heard Mr. Bradlaugh. Of course, at that time I was opposed to the great iconoclast. Still there could be no harm in hearing his views. If God were for us, who could be against us?

Mr. Bradlaugh startled me by referring to an Egyptian civilization of 7,000 years ago. How could this be so if the Bible were true?

Then I fraternized with the Unitarians. I liked them as a class for their literature was good, and their arguments seemed to be sound at the time. They took a merciful view of Voltaire, and gave due credit to Thomas Paine, which was more than the Presbyterians were willing to do. More and more I adopted the Unitarian attitude.

This led to a breach with the Presbyterians. It was over the meaning attached to the Sacrament—the same question that still worries Bishop Barnes. I couldn't quite understand how the virtue—if any—was passed over to the recipient, and my pastor was willing to let me go on and trust to time. But I rebelled, and when we met a few weeks later he failed to recognize me. He was a real Covenanter.

Then I read that much advertised book, *The Ascent of Man*, by the "elegant evangelist." I was carried away with it, and thought that at last Science and Religion were reconciled. They had long been at loggerheads, but Drummond was the man to wed them.

Renan's *Vie de Jesus* also fascinated me for a time. Renan certainly shattered many old beliefs, and his beautiful style charmed me. Huxley's *Essays on Controversial Questions* kept me awake all one night till I had read it. Ruskin and Carlyle both helped to rear Doubting Castle.

More and more I revelled in theological debate. "Discussion Challenged" flaming on the Free-thought posters fostered my zeal. If God was a God of truth, what was there left to fear? We could fight with wild beasts at Ephesus.

Celestine Edwards at that time was out to demolish Freethought. It might safely be said he converted more people to Freethought.

Touzeau Parris, Arthur Moss, Chas. Watts, G. W. Foote, C. Cohen. I heard them all. Debates in plenty. Watts and Marchant, Bradlaugh and Marsden Gibson. This would be somewhere in the nineties. Soon the Unitarian position became untenable. It seemed like eating your cake while trying to preserve it. It was illogical to retain "heaven" while denying its opposite. It became a question of either All God or No God.

Then the good old *Freethinker* came to the rescue. Under its past and present able editorship, one has been guided safely through stormy seas to a fairly secure haven. It has taken many years to do it, but slow conversion is, perhaps, more natural. Mr. Lloyd would back me there I fancy, for he too for years, wrestled with a Calvinistic hobgoblin. We now deserve plain-sailing, and a free unhampered course.

ALAN TYNDAL.

Travel Sketches.

THERE was good wine and good food and good beds, for a moderate price, to be had in La Belle France. The individual cobbles in the narrow street had almost an aspect of familiarity, and we made our usual café the centre for our explorations. With us, we took the good weather, and the old-fashioned waggons were busy until dusk, coming and going to the cornfields. Gleaners also, with bent backs, were twitching out of the stubble the heads of oats missed by the rakes and machines.

When we set out to the races at Boulogne, an old lady, with a face that Rembrandt would have enjoyed painting, made the sign of the cross in the little tram-car, and regaled herself with pinches of snuff on the journey. She descended at the first village safe and sound and we reached the course; the smell of bruised grass was pleasant, and the pari-mutuel system was in full swing, assisted by what appears to have become an international habit—the queue. A fat curé was waddling about, and mothers had brought their children. There was an air of enjoyment and a delight in the excitement of winning fivepence; this is not to be wondered at, as the arrival of the Brighton Boat at Boulogne was included in the bill as an item of the programme for a Fête Galante.

A visit to Cape Gris-Nez, and initiation into the wonders of the lighthouse was something to remember; the place was scrupulously clean; there was something fascinating about the crystal glasses arranged on a revolving shaft, and the attendant very obligingly gave us a demonstration interspersed with the deafening sound of the sirens.

At Boulogne the "Salomé" was lying in port; she was being filled up with black and white—the hussy—with coal and ice. She would dance at a later time in the North Atlantic, and she will shiver near Iceland and Greenland. Amid all the chatter, a Joseph Conrad figure is lying on the top of the cabin with his face downwards—sleeping or resting. After the coaling is finished, gleaners of another kind come to pick up the coal lying on the ground.

When we return to the café three English visitors had arrived; they recount their experiences at Noyelle. There they had been locked in their bedrooms, and the village had to be searched for a ladder, and they eventually went down to their rolls and coffee via the window. They order things better in France. Our friends told us also of their visit to the race-course in Paris, where an invalid Lancashire woman was being crushed by the crowd. As an imploring effort to desist, she shouted out "Mercy! Mercy!" "Shut up," said her husband, "you are thanking them for doing it."

There was then a journey to Dunkerque and St. Malo. At Dunkerque the Cathedral was in ruins; it had been left exactly as it was at the conclusion of the war. An old vociferous woman, who guarded the place, told us that owing to the poverty of the Republic, the building could not be repaired this year—perhaps next. In the Market Square there was the statue of Jean Bart the Corsair, who, many years ago, drove all the English out of Dunkerque; this clearance, however, was made up during the war, when nearly everyone on the same principle that hell is for the other fellow, considered it a duty to get someone into France passage paid. History is always having the last laugh.

René, who came from Cambrai, had a pretty accent, and had a habit of saying "surely," as well-intoned as any Welsh girl. She was induced to translate into French, "Yes we have no bananas," and there was half a hope that we should obtain an international version of this bright thought. But we stopped collecting when it came to asking a Roumanian. There was a goodly international gathering; there was a Chinaman who used to call in the café; he was selling coloured paper toys and he spoke commercial French. Philomène spoke English, as she said, "comme une vache Espagnol." Then there was the Frenchman who spoke English with an American accent. There was also the Englishman who spoke French like a chaff-cutter. Eyes opened wide when the air was smitten with "frank" and "blank" or "blonk."

Opposite the café door was an alley, picturesque, and

wanting the sun to give it beauty. An old woman came one day and she industriously painted away for three hours; the result was splendid, but the colours were in her imagination. If only the real could have been painted in the same manner as the copy, Venice in all her glory could not have been better. Alas! artists and poets are instinctive liars.

The ladies would, of course, go shopping. Some wonderful bargain, unique in design, and as useful as a machine for counting drops of water when it rains, was bought—and left behind in the shop on the window of which were the words, "Se Habla Español." After we had tramped round the city, Madame ran to the English purchaser, excited and happy—she had found the forgetful Englishwoman and restored unto Cæsar the things that were Cæsar's. This was, we thought, a nice example of international courtesy, and in our mind's eye, we waved the tricolour, but as we could not recall the Spanish flag—it remained like some bobbed heads—unwaved.

On our return, we tried to count the trees that line the road from Dunkerque to Calais, but it was a failure; and here again History must have grinned like a Cheshire cat. These trees were planted by Napoleon to hide the movements of French soldiers; this must have been a pleasant thought to drivers and driven along the long road during the last family brawl.

As all good things must come to an end, so our holidays crumpled up. Sadly we parted with our Host, Madame, Philomène, Marguerite and Jean; we were jolted over the cobbled streets in an automobile, the driver of which was a model in courtesy and help. The sea was angry, many passengers were ill on the crossing, and the divine providence that calls on one unawares must have said to Monsieur Picard, it must be Benedictine. A glass each before we said good-bye, and in some mystical manner, the action of pouring oil on troubled waters had a wonderful effect. It was grateful and comforting, and the Kent coast was reached without any mishap. At least, the stomach said with truth of one thing, "They order things better in France."

WILLIAM REPTON.

Simplicities.

It is always interesting, often amusing, sometimes irritating, to hear the average man's opinion of the extraordinary man. The average man referred to has, let us say, lived as long, read and thought and suffered as much, or as little, as I, only arriving at, or retaining, a totally different culture; a really dogmatic man, who sees the regiment "a' oot o' step but oor Jock," but who talks round in large circles of misty horizons, always returning to the settled solid logic of John Macpherson. In other words, the mind of the great man is measured by that of J. M., not vice versa—the metier of the carpenter, not the arcana of Einstein! I doubt it, said the carpenter, but I, alas, I cannot doubt. But lest I do Brutus wrong, let him speak for himself. At his request I had lent him my now well-thumbed *Leopardi*, which he was great enough to peruse diligently and return promptly—rare virtues these!

"But," says he, "I had not long received your book, when I betook myself to it with the hope of finding some sustenance . . . yet after hearing your praise of Leopardi, I must say I was disappointed. No doubt there are some fine things, and some originality, notable in such pieces as 'The Story of the Human Race,' 'The Dialogue of the Mummies,' etc., but on going through the collection, one is struck with the fact that there is only one text—man's inevitable unhappiness and the preference of death to life. Now such a conclusion is almost a common-place with me, and I turn to a book in the hope of finding some strength and courage with which to carry on. I am inclined to think, however, this small volume gives only a little of Leopardi's philosophy, and that not the best. He had no doubt a keen and powerful mind, and one looked for much more than is contained in this partial and selected translation of James Thomson. No doubt, in cases of severe and chronic illness, and other misfortune, it is difficult to rise above oneself, and quite natural that intimate correspondences should harp on these; and when such letters and remarks are collected and published to-

gether, they are apt to give the impression of a man of only one idea—and if in general essays and books a writer cannot get away from such a 'dominant thought,' one cannot put his writings on a high level. Still, I am grateful to Leopardi for having lived and written so sincerely and fearlessly in spite of the orthodoxy prevalent in his day . . ."

And so once more, with kindly tolerance, as he and I expected, is my poor Leopardi damned with faint praise! This simple and ingenuous, unconsciously superior letter of my good friend is going to intrigue and amuse and redeem the tedium of a day! I light my pipe and smile again, sit in the sun on the outer step, look at the little meadow, the mere and rushes, the woods and fields and farms, the grey cloudlet and blue sky over all; enjoy within once more the sunshine of the spirit, a too intermittent ray! I think of his, of mine, of the master mind, and the minds of most all the people I have ever known, and of the outstanding quality of the great majority—Simplicity: we see this quality holding sway through all the centuries, here more marked than there, confounding all—not always to their hurt as units, often to their happiness; need I name them? the Simplicities of the mob and of the mob orator, even of him who now writes, of kings, statesmen, generals, soldiers; of all the interests of social, civil life, christenings and marriages, funerals, always the simple, often sordid, sublimated, while the destined globe goes whirling round and Simplicity's God sits on his whirling throne!

When I suggest to our critic that even were the state of man perfect, there would still remain "the divine plan of the ages," even their necessity, Atheist nature red in tooth and claw; the continuous chain of destruction; the poor beetle that we tread upon, that feels a pang as great as when a giant dies: nay, while the divine music and the plaudits of London's happy multitude comes over the Wireless, even then millions of cattle, sheep, and birds are being slaughtered for the grosser delectation of man; while S.O.S. reminds us there is always someone "dangerously ill"; while the newspapers tell their tragic tale—such things as we are habituated to hear and heed but little; the large mantle of Simplicity is over us all—all but the Leopardies. I conclude there is no way out, when my friend has his inspiration: Yes, he says, it may be only my partial and personal opinion, but I would suggest God is the only way out; pain and death may not be the evils we think them; in any case, is it not comforting and uplifting to raise our hearts and minds to a Supreme Being, one infinitely above us in all the attributes, maker and sustainer of all that is; why not do the best you can and leave the rest in perfect trust to Him? But, I rejoin, this God of yours is but a magnified man; and were he ten thousand times more transcendent and sublime, he would still be remote and cold from human calamity as the furthest fixed star. To myself I said: this is the simplicity of simplicities, yea, *sancta simplicitas*! And yet, and yet, like Spurgeon and Strindbergh, shall we not "doubt the very doubt" and believe at last in both God and Hell—for comfort and for sustenance? Or if, in the nobility and humanity of our nature, we reject both, how far are we justified, even in the *Freethinker*, in expressing all we feel and see and know, and with how much intensity?

Who shall minister to a mind diseased? Who shall prescribe food for the dyspeptic millionaire? The answer is nature only; nature, if given time and opportunity, has great recuperative powers, and has a way of setting up again—as of pulling down—independent, as it seems, of the quality of food, philosophy, religion, or riches, even as I to-day have smiled over the faint appreciation of a beloved seer. Should Leopardi have written as he did? Should doctors tell, even doctors of philosophy? Is there a limit to truth-telling? Can we follow the logic of facts too far; or must we reserve a corner of the mantle of simplicity and illusion, while wholly discarding the mantle, so large and wide, of religion and hypocrisy? Perhaps some reader or writer will offer his counsel. My final smile is reserved for the critic's naive admission that the pessimistic conclusions of Leopardi are "commonplace" to him; for it is in just this common application their great strength lies. Neither

is our critic too willing to admit the quiet dignity, clearness and beauty of Leopardi's style, even in translation. But this, too, we fear, is a commonplace of criticism. As with other felicities of the greatest and best minds, only one in a million may sense this perfection of just expression. Only the tutored mind is fully responsive to this mastery, nor daring to emulate, but pleased to worship from afar and ever ready to defend.

ANDREW MILLAR.

Correspondence.

BISHOP BARNES AND THE CHURCH.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In your article on Bishop Barnes' defence in the issue of December 18th, you accuse the Bishop of dishonesty, in his attempt to reinterpret the Bible in accord with modern science. Your argument on this point is based on the assumption that there is a rigid historical system which is called Christianity. I should very much like to know what that system is. Harnack describes Christianity as simply "the teaching of Jesus"; but since in the historical development of the almost innumerable churches of Christendom, reinterpretation of the teaching of Jesus has been practically continuous, I am unable to accept the assertion that there is a body of belief and a specific organization which is Christianity.

It is hardly necessary for me to point out that within what is termed Christianity are found quite incompatible varieties of cult, organization and creed, mutually antagonistic sects denying to each other the name Christian. Compare the elaborate ritualistic religion represented by the Greek Church with the simple, bare individualism of the Quakers; or the sacrificial love-feasts of the old Armenian and Jacobite churches, at which intending priests were compulsorily married, with the enforced celibacy of the priests of the Roman Communion. In the teaching of individual saints and preachers within the term Christianity a like variety is observable. From the days of the Gnostics and the Nestorians to the days of the Christian Scientists and the Modernists, a reinterpretation of the teaching of Jesus has been one of the main characteristics of Christianity. To-day, this necessity for reinterpretation has produced the rumpus over the new prayer book in the Anglican church.

One may say that these endless reinterpretations arise from the contradictory and ambiguous matter of the original teachings. One cannot, however, deny the orthodoxy of Bishop Barnes when there is no definable orthodoxy of Christianity; nor can one accuse him of dishonesty in seizing the idea that Christianity is a evolutionary theory. All things are possible to a monster which can change itself into any number of shapes: one may say that a religion which can adapt itself to changing circumstances and differing conditions is the most dangerous thing in the world; on the other hand, a religion which calls for perpetual reinterpretation is at least one step nearer freedom of thought than an orthodoxy which defies innovations.

HUBERT C. KNAPP-FISHER.

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