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

Views and Opinions.

Science and God.

For some time, partly in response to requests from many readers, I have been intending to deal with the plea for religion set up by Professor Eddington in his book *The Nature of the Physical World*, and in his lecture *Science and the Unseen World*. Other things, that had to be either dealt with at once or left alone intervened, and these were taken first. There was, indeed, no need for haste. It is not likely that the discussion will be settled by anything I can say, and it is certainly not settled by what Professor Eddington has said. And now I may as well bracket with Professor Eddington's books two others of recent date—Professor MacDougall's *Materialism and Emergent Evolution*, and Professor Needham's *Materialism and Religion*. Three of the four works find some place for religion—of a rather emasculated kind, the fourth, Professor Needham's, is a kind of "Well, if you will have religion you may, but it is not of much use to anyone," production. And in these days any man of eminence who merely says that he holds some kind of a religion is eagerly hailed by hard-pressed Christians as being on their side.

This last is a point worth stressing. So far as Professor McDougall and Professor Eddington are concerned, their published statements do not make them out to be Christians, and it is hardly likely that if they do not publicly claim to be Christians that they are such in private. Professor Needham, I should say is not even religious. And so far as the immediate issue in this country is concerned, it is the truth of Christianity that is at stake. The truth of religion is a much wider issue. It is an example of the lack of straightforwardness, characteristic of current Christianity, to find eminent men paraded as on the side of the Churches, because they profess belief in some kind of a "spiritual" force. Very many men

have been burned by the Churches for not having a religion of a more definite and substantial form. The truth is that specific Christianity is repudiated by more than half the scientific men in the country.

* * *

Materialism.

Another point worth noting is the folly of the common chatter about Materialism being dead, or as no longer held by men of science. Three of the books referred to above—one might add others—are engaged in the attempt to disprove Materialism as an adequate philosophy of nature; and men of the standing of those named do not waste their time in disproving something that is universally discarded. The talk of Materialism—essential Materialism—being dead is just a piece of newspaper and pulpit jargon. It is a product of the pulpit on the one hand, and of those who find in the popular press an easy field in which to exploit an ill-read and half educated public. Usually the criticism levelled at Materialism is as pertinent as would be a criticism of astronomy based on fifteenth century science. When it is said that Materialism is dead, what is meant is that a particular conception of "matter" is no longer tenable, or that you cannot express all that goes on in the world of experience in terms of atomic or molecular motion, and that shows not merely a misunderstanding of Materialism, but a gross ignorance of the principles of scientific method. Of that kind of criticism Professor Needham says:—

At the present time it is not popular to say that in a sense Materialism is the life-blood of scientific thought, or more accurately, that a view of the world based solely on the achievement of scientific experience could only be materialistic, but this is nevertheless true. People would prefer to suppose that science in some way supported the religious picture of the universe, and that is why the fallacy that the relativity theory has made matter less material is so common. On the contrary, you cannot turn matter into spirit by making it thin It is much better to realize that the scientific view of the universe is incurably analytical, mathematical, and materialistic. Mechanism and Materialism lie at the basis of scientific thought.

Freethinker readers will find here an echo of what I have been saying in these columns for very many years.

* * *

A Common Confusion.

Materialism has suffered quite as much at the hands of its friends as at those of its enemies. Defenders of Materialism have hung on to the old conception of the atom and of matter, and have so given critics good ground for fault-finding. In obedience to the challenge of their critics they have set out to express all biological and psychological phenomena in terms of laws of chemistry and physics

and so essayed an impossible task., and it is certainly not true that atomic Materialism has lost its scientific utility, nor is it the case, as some popular writers are fond of saying, that the atom has been abolished. In science the atom is as useful as it ever was, and it is not likely to be displaced.

A great deal of the misunderstanding here—it lies at the root of much of the anti-materialistic criticism of Professor Eddington—is due to confusing explanation with expression. To explain a thing, and to express a thing is not, in science at all events, identical. We explain the cause of a phenomenon when we have accurately shown the conditions from which it emerges. Thus, we have explained the existence of a sensation when we have set out the nature of nerve tracks and nerve centres, etc. But when we set out to *express* a sensation in terms of mere vibration, we soon find we are altogether at sea. The new fact has to be expressed by a new formula. I shall have more to say on this head when I come to deal with the question of "emergence," but if readers will keep in mind the distinction noted they will escape much of the current confusion. It is good sound materialistic science to say that you must find the explanation of biological facts in chemical and physical conditions. It is also sound materialistic science to say that once the biological fact has made its appearance, some new formula of expression must be found for it. The distinction between explanation and description is one that should always be borne in mind, but it is one that is being constantly ignored.

A Lusty Corpse.

In *Materialism Re-stated*, I have shown that the essence of Materialism is what has come to be known as the Mechanistic theory, or still more recently "Emergence," but which I presented to *Freethinker* readers about thirty years ago. Both assert that any combination of factors gives rise to something that did not previously exist, as when oxygen and hydrogen in combination gives rise to the new quality of "wetness." This position is put by Professor Needham:—

The vitalists, who are of many varieties and, though not numerically strong yet very vocal, affirm that there is something about living beings which will forever resist chemico-physical explanation, although none of them agree as to what it is. The Mechanists, who can legitimately count among their numbers 90 per cent of working biological investigators, affirm that there is no gap between dead and living matter. They do not say that nothing is true or intelligible unless expressed in physico-chemical terms, they do not say that nothing takes place differently in living matter from what takes place in dead matter, they do not say that our present physics and chemistry are fully competent to explain the behaviour of living systems. What they do say is that the processes of living matter are subject to the same laws which govern the processes of dead matter, but that the laws operate in a far more complicated medium; thus living things differ from dead things in degree and not in kind, and are, as it were, extrapolations from the inorganic.

Wherever science rules the mechanistic conception rules, and that, as I have so often said, is only another way of saying that Materialism rules. One consequence is that those who appreciate science can only disown Materialism by re-establishing it under another name. Professor McDougall points out, with justice, that the champions of emergent evolution are mechanistic, that is, materialistic, and that in the act of repudiating Materialism they are championing it under another name. Professor Eddington says, that "Materialism in its literal sense is long since

dead." By literal sense he means the sense in which Materialism was stated in the eighteenth century by some of its advocates. One might as reasonably say that science is dead because so many of its conjectures have had to be abandoned. But immediately after saying this he comments:—

But its place has been taken by other philosophies which represent a virtually equivalent outlook. The tendency to-day is not to reduce everything to manifestations of matter—since matter has now only a minor place in the physical world—but to reduce everything to the operations of natural law. By "Natural law" is here meant laws of the type prevailing in geometry, mechanics, and physics which are found to have this common characteristic—that they are ultimately reducible to mathematical equations.

It all reminds one of the theory that the plays were not written by Shakespeare, but by some one else of the same name. If Materialism is dead, but its place has been taken by something else of the same kind, there does not appear very much to cheer up the Spiritualist. Professor Eddington also seems to be in rather too great a hurry to take for granted the present status of the quantum theory, and other recent theories in mathematical physics, as being final, and this, so far as I can see, for no other reason than to lay this terrible spectre of Materialism. And in the end he is driven to confess he has "not been able to form a satisfactory conception of any kind of law, or causal sequence that shall be other than deterministic," which strikes one as saying, that so far as we are scientific, we must be materialistic. How could it be otherwise? Determinism is not something that one can either have or not have, any more than one can have or not have gravitation. Determinism is an absolute condition of sane and ordered thinking. It is not merely that in science and sound philosophy, it is a case of Materialism or nothing, it is implied in the structure of our mental life.

CHAPMAN COHEN.
(To be continued.)

The Canon's Roar.

"The divine stands wrapt up in his cloud of mysteries, and the amused laity must pay tithes and veneration to be kept in obscurity, grounding their hope of future knowledge on a competent stock of present ignorance."—George Farquhar.

THE clergy of all denominations, from the curled, perfumed darlings of the State Church to the half-time pastors of the tin-tabernacles, are highly perturbed at the emptiness of their places of worship. They profess to give reasons for this state of affairs, and, as they seldom deal with realities, these excuses are often highly amusing. One man-of-God ascribes the decline of church attendance to the prevalence of paganism. Another is equally certain that Sunday golf and motoring is to blame. Yet another is cocksure that cinemas are the rivals. Out of a total running into thousands, not one has had the courage to admit that religion itself no longer makes the appeal that it did to earlier generations.

One of the most amusing of the priestly apologists is the Rev. W. H. Elliott, Canon of St. Paul's Cathedral, London. He is almost heroic in his attitude, and seeks to emulate Nelson when he clapped the telescope to his blind eye. Listen to the Canon's roar:—

"I meet dozens of people nowadays of all sorts and kinds, who are very much depressed by the comparative emptiness of our churches. Church-going, they say, is fast losing the place that it used to have and ought to have among the habits of the people. For myself, I doubt that, though, if my

friends continue to say so day by day I shall end by believing it."

Wonderful, is it not? The Canon has no actual knowledge of the small attendance at places of worship, but he hears of it from people "of all sorts and kinds," presumably, from dukes and dustmen alike. St. Paul's Cathedral, being one of the show-places of the Metropolis, is not affected, so why should he be upset? It looks as if the only thing that would convince the reverend gentleman that there was anything wrong with the State Church would be the collapse of St. Paul's Cathedral on to Ludgate Hill, or the stoppage of his own stipend.

The Canon is simple, but not quite so simple as he appears. He may not be aware that the number of State priests has sunk from 25,000 to 16,000 in the course of a few years, in spite of an increase of population. He could scarcely be unaware of the nineteen derelict City Churches, considering that they are all within a short distance of St. Paul's Cathedral, of which he is an officiating priest. As a matter of fact all the numerous Christian Churches are suffering, and the State Church is not feeling the effect so much as the others, because it relies on ancient endowments and is more indifferent as to the size of the congregations.

The Canon's amazement is as great as that of Alice in Wonderland. This is how he continues:—

"I wonder sometimes if church people are not creating in themselves a sort of inferiority complex. All these sermons and articles and speeches are for ever telling us that congregations are smaller, and that the churches are losing ground. Perhaps that is the reason why we have become so depressed about churchgoing. Anyhow, it is an odd thing that so many people should care that nobody cares about Christian worship. So I chuckle a little as I go on my way."

But, "soft, awhile," as Shakespeare puts it. The canon's chuckle does not dispose of the matter. The few dozen people who complain to the canon do not represent the whole nation, but they do represent the opinion of members of his church. Their distress may be real, that the faith of their fathers is being disregarded by the rising generation. As laymen they have not the same financial reasons for chuckling as the canon himself.

He chuckles best who chuckles last. After suggesting that complaints as to the decay of religion are all so much baby-talk, the Canon eats his own words. He says:—

"To get these good folk back into the churches is, in my judgment, only a question of time and of method."

Mind you, the good people who told the Canon that the churches were emptying were hysterical folk, and were creating an inferiority complex. The Canon pitied them, and sought to soothe them. Yet a little later he is making plans to get back these prodigal sons and daughters. It is enough to put an Egyptian mummy into a rebellious humour. For there is a most irritating air of facing-both-ways in Canon Elliott's apologia, and more than a note of patronage. There is also an echo of the Oxford University manner, which has been jocously described as the attitude of the Christian Trinity addressing a bug. It will probably be grateful to the sentimentalists who still cling to the name of Christian, but I imagine it will irritate rather than satisfy other readers of more virile intelligence.

Like that placid dachshund which Mark Twain saw in the possession of a sportsman who was taking it out to hunt wild elephants, Canon Elliott lacks bitterness. He also lacks other things as his peroration suggests:—

"The masses of our people do believe in God,

though there are perplexities that they would give much to have explained."

This is beautiful and ineffectual nonsense. Unitarians believe in a god, but "the Book of Common Prayer" of the Church of England states in unmistakable language, the awful fate that awaits such monsters of iniquity. Mohammedans believe in a god. Hindoos and South Sea Islanders believe in "plenty much" gods. Since this matter can be pursued, it is terrible to think of the mess that Canon Elliott has made in his endeavour to be childlike and bland. He follows the beaten track of the theologians in talking of mysteries, which is simply an old subterfuge to cover the retreat of a defender of the faith.

Mysteries, forsooth! And Canon Elliott has not illuminated them with his camouflage of controversy. Wishing to keep his religion in mystery or obscurity, he objects to explanations. He cannot tolerate that men should talk of these things too pointedly. Even if the critics are right, the subject is taboo. The older theologians of the Ages of Faith were definite; the modern defenders of the faith are indefinite. With each increase of our knowledge of Nature the sphere of the supernatural is lessened, and the power of Priestcraft lessened with it. That is the real reason why all the Churches are losing ground, and have very slender hope of recovering it. The official form of religion in this country is the Protestant Reformed Church, which is the State Church of England by law established. Parliament made it, and Parliament can unmake it. It is only a matter of time, for one day it will be both disestablished and disendowed.

MIMNERMUS.

Leo Tolstoy.

(Continued from page 48A.)

Up to fifty years of age Tolstoy was a happy man. It is true that he had led a dissolute life as a young man, gambling, getting drunk, consorting with loose women of the town; but that was the normal practice of the aristocratic youths of Russia, and discounted as such. When however, at the age of thirty-four, he married Sophia Behrs, aged nineteen, he gave up this dissipated life, settled down to a quiet family life, and began his great novel *War and Peace*, to be followed by *Anna Karenina*.

After the publication of these works, Tolstoy had everything a man could wish for. His novels brought him fame. They were translated into every cultured language, and he was hailed as the greatest writer of his age. Even before this, while he was an artillery officer in the Russian Army, the Czar had been attracted by some writing of his in a periodical, and had communicated with his superior officers concerning him. His writings also brought him great wealth. His wife loved him, and what is more, instead of being jealous of the time he spent in literary work, as the wives of many literary men are prone to be, was as much interested in his work as he was himself; urging him on when he became idle, as he often did; giving advice, which he often saw was good, and making fair copies of all his writings. No small labour, for she wrote and re-wrote *War and Peace* seven times before Tolstoy was satisfied with it, and it is a very long novel, consisting, in one edition, of two thousand pages. Dent's, who are noted for their cheap publications, have had to issue it in three volumes, each of which is longer than an ordinary novel. It is certain, that but for the help of his wife, Tolstoy's literary output would have been considerably curtailed. When we reflect upon the many authors whose wives have been a hindrance rather than a help, we must agree that Tolstoy was singu-

larly fortunate. "For sixteen years out of his two-and-eighty," says Stefan Zweig, "from the time of his wedding until he has finished the novels *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy is content with himself and his work. For thirteen years, from 1865 to 1878, even the diary, the warder of his conscience, is dumb. Tolstoy, happily immersed in the task of composition, is no longer watching himself, and is satisfied with watching the world."³ If Mephistopheles, or a good fairy, had suddenly appeared and offered to grant him a wish, he would not have known what to wish for. In one of his letters, says Zweig, we read the bold assertion: "My happiness is without alloy." Then something snapped:—

Suddenly, betwixt night and morning, all these things became meaningless, worthless. This diligent man conceived a loathing for his work. He became estranged from his wife, grew indifferent to his children. At night, after tossing sleepless upon his bed, he would wander to and fro like a sick man. In the day time, he sat before his writing-table staring into vacancy, unable to put pen to paper. Once he rushed upstairs and locked his fowling piece away, being fearful lest he should turn the weapon against himself. . . Tolstoy had glimpsed the nothing that lies behind things. Something had given way in his soul, a crack opened, a narrow black fissure; and he had no choice, in his panic fear, but to go on staring through it into this void, this unnamable nothing, this nihil, this nullity, this not-self that stretches alien and cold and dark and in-palpable, as background to a life pulsing with warm blood; he had no choice but to contemplate the nothing which is the eternal framework of our transitory existence. . . In the four-and-fiftieth year of a life that was exercising a worldwide influence, Tolstoy for the first time perceived this great nothing, its recognition being his share in the universal human lot. Thenceforward to the day of his death, he continued to stare unceasingly into the vacancy, the in-palpable void that lies behind existence. Stefan Zweig: *Adepts in Self-Portraiture*. pp. 212-214

It was a stampede of terror from the goal of annihilation: "a crudely animal, a barbaric terror; with a violent revulsion, a hurricane of fear, a panic revolt against death. When he shrinks from the inevitable, it is not as a thinking man, not as one endowed with a virile and heroic spirit." (p. 234.) But he shrinks, like a slave from the branding iron.

The reader will have noticed that this revulsion of feeling came to Tolstoy in his fifty-fourth year. The age when a man reaches his climateric, commonly known as "the change of life," which generally sets in between fifty and sixty years of age; when the energies, both mental and physical begin to run down. Many people, when they reach this phase of life, are seized with an uncontrollable nausea, or disgust of life, so violent that it often leads to suicide. There are more suicides per million of the population, during this period than during any other period of the human life. We often see recorded in the daily papers, cases, of men, City men of good repute, with hosts of friends, and of great wealth, who suddenly, without any apparent reason, suddenly put an end to their lives, to the intense surprise of their friends and relatives. This phase of life is well known to the medical profession, who are often called upon to prescribe for it.

Tolstoy, however, who disliked all science, and especially medical science; seems to have been quite ignorant of these facts, at least we have never seen any allusion to them in any of his writings, and took his feelings at their face value. As Zweig remarks, that which happened to Tolstoy,

his sudden turning from art to religion, which seemed so inexplicable to his contemporaries, was nothing abnormal, the only thing unusual about it is its intensity: "What happened was nothing more than the inevitable adaptation of the bodily organism to the approach of old age, the climateric change which occurs in artists just as in other men: 'Life stood still and grew sinister,' it is thus that he formulates the beginning of the crisis. At fifty he has reached the 'dead point,' the formative capacity of the plasma begins to decline, and the soul tends to grow rigid." A chill feeling of anxiety, a terrible dread of the future disquiets his thoughts.

All his world-wide fame, all his wealth, and title of nobility fail to relieve his agony, they have all turned to dust and ashes, it is in this crisis that he turns to religion. The religion of Jesus Christ.

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

Religious Liberty in the United States.

THE majority of the American people think that the Federal Constitution guarantees absolute religious liberty, an idea which they have probably learned from evangelist preachers; but nothing could be more erroneous. The First Amendment to the Constitution forbids congress to make any law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech or the press; but this Amendment does not apply to the States, which are left to establish as many State religions as they might choose to establish, a different religion for every State, if the voters of each State should see fit to do so.

It was fortunate for civilization that the theocratic government did not acquire a permanent footing in the United States; and its failure to do so was largely due to the zeal displayed by theocrats to the extent of the power they acquired. Prior to the adoption of the Federal Constitution, some of the Colonies or States, had enacted laws respecting an establishment of religion. They also prescribed religious doctrines and precepts, imposed taxes for the support of churches regardless to the religious beliefs of the taxpayers, prescribed penalties for failure to attend public worship; and in some cases, prescribed entertaining heretical opinions. But this condition of things was unsatisfactory. The obnoxious laws were repealed, and there was full religious liberty at the time of the adoption of the Federal Constitution. But the States were distrustful as to what Congress might do, if allowed to legislate on the subject of religion, and demanded the first Amendment as protection against the experiences through which they had passed. The State constitutions are not materially different from the Federal on the subject of religious liberty. In only one of them (that of N.H.) is there to be found any discrimination in favour of any religious sect.

The clergy have always been hostile to the liberty of speech and of the press, recognizing them as their two worst enemies; and they have been more successful in controlling them than in any other country in the world which is supposed to enjoy liberty. Elliott's book in defence of popular freedom, and Calf's book criticizing Cotton Mather, were publicly burned in Cambridge in colonial times; and from that time to the present day, the press, with few exceptions, has never been free from clerical control.

Senator Norris, in a recent speech in the United States Senate, charged that the "power trust" was about to buy up the press of the United States. Where has he been all of his life that he does not know that the churches own it? And how can he expect the power trust to be able to deal with such a combination. He said, among other things: "God knows that we can't have a free country without a free press." But he did not say when and where God told him this. God's residence has not been known since he left Teman, and

³ Stefan Zweig: *Adepts in Self-Portraiture*. p. 273.

He may properly be supposed to be among his "chosen people," seeking the "first of thy ripe fruits," and "of thy liquors." Teman is probably bone dry.

Street corner orators who attack religion are soon silenced. The blasphemy laws are useful for this purpose, but commercial transactions are often more effective if such an orator has much of a following, he is liable to become a pillar post of the church, and an expounder of its doctrines; and the church boycott is always ready for hostile newspapers, which drives them into bankruptcy before very long. Christianity, of course, means trouble wherever it goes, being designed for that purpose.

"And the son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." (Matthew xiii. 38-42.)

Witches and quakers were among the first "things" that the angels found in the New World to be "gathered out of the kingdom." Both Father and Son well knew the witches. The Father had made the law, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," and the son had cast legions of devils out of them ages before either of them knew that there was a New World. And there could be no question as to what should be done with those who were found in Boston and Salem. The Puritan angels hanged twenty-seven of them, and had many more in jail, waiting for trial, when charges of witchcraft, involving the friends and families of the clerical prosecutors in the nefarious work, were made. Then there was "wailing and gnashing of teeth." The prisoners were released without trial, and no more indictments for witchcraft were found; but none of the property of the unfortunate victims, which had been confiscated, was restored to their relatives.

The Quakers stood on a slightly different footing from that of the witches. There was no prescribed law in Jehovah's Code for putting them to death, although they had committed a serious offence. They had come under the ban of St. Paul for preaching doctrines that were contrary to the Established Church, something forbidden to angels from heaven.

"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." (Gal. i. 8.)

But the angels from the earth, in their zeal to clean up the kingdom for their Master, hung several Quakers, including one woman (Mary Dyer), before the difference in the law was noticed. So they changed the mode of punishment from hanging to boring of their tongues, with hot irons; beating them through the public streets, banishing them from the community, confiscating their property, and selling them into slavery. Cotton Mather is said to have been anxious to capture a ship-load of them, including Wm. Penn, for the slave market when they landed in Pennsylvania. His letter on the subject refers to Penn as the "chief scamp."

Roger Williams was a Baptist, and, like the Quakers, was under the ban of Paul for preaching doctrines that were contrary to the Established Church. So they banished him into a wilderness, where he lived with the Indians for a time, eventually reaching Rhode Island, where he established a church of his own; and one of his descendants, the late Senator, Geo. F. Hoar, was a skeptic, who did not "love the Lord Jesus," as Paul had enjoined all to do.

While these things were in progress in Massachusetts, and long before that time, the rest of the world in which Christianity had had undisputed control of education, was turned into a slaughter house in propagating the doctrines said to have been handed down to posterity from a Jewish carpenter, through a dozen fools and knaves, with whom he is said to have been associated in catching fish from a small lake. The creation of such a condition of things shows what education will accomplish. Give one man absolute control of education, and he can bring the world under his feet, and most of its wealth into his pocket; and the worst menace to civilization to-day, and the saddest commentary on the intelligence of the times in which we live, is the fact that most of the educational facilities are under the control of the propagandists of this same Jewish carpenter; and the

most astounding feature of the situation is, that not one of the historians and philosophical writers who lived contemporaneously with him, and in the same vicinity, knew anything about him, the wonderful things that he is said to have done not having attracted their attention, which ought to be sufficient proof to all rational minds that no such things ever took place.

The trial, conviction, and execution of a part of the witches who had been indicted, and the release, without trial of the rest, when the friends and families of the clerical prosecutors became involved, did not create a favourable impression on the public mind. The clergy were looked upon with suspicion, but some went further than that by asking the question: "Is God a fool, or is the Bible a lie?" The same question had troubled John Wesley when he said that to give up belief in witchcraft was to give up belief in the Bible. Where brains are not soaked into sawdust with superstition, the human mind is logical. The witchcraft prosecutions, therefore, were influential, to a certain extent, in throwing off the theocratic yoke in the United States.

From the beginning, Christianity taught the divine right of kings to rule, and declared disobedience to their orders to be a sin for which eternal punishment would be inflicted upon the disobedient, the purpose being clerical rule of the State. The babblings of Christ about his kingdom that he was going to establish within the generation in which he lived, and who was to be "first" in it, were political harangues merely, seeking political power. He seems to have forgotten his relationship to the Holy Ghost at about that time. And his lamentation because he had not been able to get the Jewish people together under his leadership, "as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings," was an expression of political disappointment. The Jews, of course, could not accept him as their leader, since their promised Messiah was to be a descendant of David, and not of the Holy Ghost. Paul also illustrates, quite forcibly, the Christians' desire for political power:—

"Let every soul be subject to the higher powers. For there is no power but God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." (Romans xiii. 1, 2.)

Gipsy Smith voiced the same sentiments when he told a Boston audience recently to "let the Lord have his way with them." Christians, like the Royalists of France, never forget anything, and never learn anything. It is always the same story with them:—

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever." (Heb. xiii. 8.)

In his essays on government, John Locke showed that kings ruled by the consent of the governed, and not by divine right. Thomas Paine advanced the same doctrine in his essay entitled *Common Sense*; and Jefferson set it forth most forcibly in the Declaration of Independence.

In 1785, the Legislature of Virginia passed an Act drawn by Jefferson, denying the right of the civil authority to interfere with religious worship, except to check "overt acts against peace and good order." And two years later, the Federal Constitution was framed, which ignored God altogether.

By Statute of 1862, Congress abolished polygamy in the territories, prescribing penalties for its practice. Under this Statute, a member of the "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints" was convicted of the crime of polygamy. He pleaded in defence the Holy Bible, with its record of polygamy; his belief therein; his church creed, enjoining polygamy upon its male members as a means of escaping "damnation in the life to come"; and a revelation from God to Joseph Smith, founder of his Church. By writ of error, he brought his case before the Supreme Court of the United States for review.

Citing as authority the definition of religious liberty given in the Preamble to the Virginia Statute of 1785, the Court sustained the conviction, rejecting all of the defences pleaded, and holding that the civil authority could interfere with religious worship, notwithstanding the First Amendment to the Federal Constitution, in case of "overt acts against peace and good order." (Reynolds v. United States, 98 U.S. 145.)

This Statute was passed in order to check the evil consequences which flow from plural marriages, illegitimate children being the most odious feature which the Statute was intended to remedy. But what of divorces granted by the holy rota, thus rendering illegitimate citizens who are not residents of the country in which the court exercising such jurisdiction is held? Is there anything "against peace and good order" about that? Father Duffy and "Al." Smith say not; and on similar reasoning, the same learned gentlemen justify the deposition of Queen Elizabeth from the English Throne by one of the Popes; and they would, of course, have justified King John's deed of England to another Pope for the recited consideration of "the remission of our sins," if they had been invited to discuss the subject.

Remission of sin is a very lucrative business; but it is to be regretted that each nation cannot take care of its own sinners.

E. W. PHILBRICK.

Week's Mills, Maine, U.S.A.

Books and Life.

GISSING and Voltaire, a strange couple, had hopes that music might be used to good advantage in improving the human race. The power of music is a good subject for study if the student can disentangle himself from the jargon that is flung at him by the facile critic, as full of high-sounding words and phrases as Mr. Micawber. Music, to the ordinary listener is good, poor, or bad—an analysis of the feelings might reveal some reasons for the individual likes and dislikes. The martial mind prefers the military band; the artistic temperament likes the mixed orchestra of strings, reeds and brass. Again, the sensitive person may be quite satisfied with the harmonies from a harp and a few violins. It is all a question of taste. A private orchestra is beyond the reach of the majority, but, in our opinion the next best thing is a good gramophone and some good records, if, for various reasons, instrumental methods are not available. The gramophone has received the same amount of abuse as the Ford car, but the various improvements of the former have gradually worn down the opposition, and dislike has finally disappeared before the wide and extensive choice of records. The owner of the gramophone can command his or her own programme, and also can minister to any mood. And this, my readers, is by way of introduction to a few notes on records, for you will see that I have carefully covered this divagation by the third word of the title of this series. I have always regarded this series in the nature of the little silver ornaments on cakes—my other colleagues do all the hard work in making the cake palatable.

Some time ago "The Pines of Rome" was sent over the wireless, and it made an impression that was not forgotten. It may be that a particular love of trees had something to do with it, but, nevertheless, an opportunity came along to get this selection, and the pleasure can now be had and repeated, for it is available in the Columbia records played by the Milan Symphony Orchestra. The series is in six parts on three discs; the work is described as musical views or landscapes, and no one will quarrel about the names if genuine pleasure is the result. Part 1 is supposed to be the impression of children at play in the pine groves of the Villa Borghese, and although the songs are Italian they have an affinity with our own children's ditties that may tempt one to think that diversity of tongues was some device to separate the human family—until music came to the rescue. Part 2 takes us to the Pines near the Catacombs; Part 3 is a slight change, but the melody becomes sweeter, and one may marvel at the skill of the composer, at the interwoven airs making him a near neighbour of Wagner. Part 4 is idyllic—and here the similarity to Wagner is more marked—the Idyll of Siegfried is recalled. When Nietzsche turned on Wagner he had even a liking left for this beautiful composition. This particular record may also be had in the Columbia series. Part 5 is descriptive of the Pines of the Appian Way, and Part 6 is a continuation. Respighi recalls in

these two pieces the splendour of Roman conquest, of triumph. Throughout, the tramp of hundreds of feet can be heard, together with the closely-imitated blare of ancient military brass instruments. The whole work is the result of a dive in the waters of history, and the composer, who at one time of his studies was a pupil of Rimsky-Korsakov, has given us of his best in this magnificent work. It will not appeal to everybody—it has to be heard a few times to be liked, but we may be thanked by music lovers for this note.

Another record of quite a different kind is "Memories of Tchaikowsky," Columbia. The "Danse des Merlions" is the Russian at his lightest and brightest; "None but the Weary Heart" is exquisite, and superbly played by the J. H. Squire Celeste Octet. Beethoven once said that "he who understands the meaning of my music shall be free from the miseries that afflict other men." With Tchaikowsky in "None but the Weary Heart," it seems that he touches the intellect through the emotions, and bids the listener to weigh up the things in life that matter. They are not many—good health, a serene conscience, contentment with each hour, and not wishing that the world was different. The 1812 record is noisy but tuneful—a lot for money as it were, but our genius was not content to have small views, to sound them on a triangle. With mastery, he could alike follow Mendelssohn in a dance of fairies. Your *pour-boire* for this, also my readers'.

WILLIAM REPTON.

Acid Drops.

A ray of light in many directions is thrown by a remark of the *Daily Express* writer on the present position of the Cinema industry. He says that the "talkies" are not supplanting the silent film, because "cinema masses" do not understand more than half of what they see and hear. Fifty per cent are "morons"—adults with the intelligence of a child. And all films that aspire to wide commercial success must be fitted to the intelligence of the "moron." The editor of the *Express* must have been off his guard to have passed that comment. It throws so much light on the huge circulations of newspapers, for instance. If we read, "All papers that aspire to wide commercial success must be fitted to the intelligence of the moron," we have an explanation of the type of articles that appear, and to the present quality of the popular press. We have been saying, in substance, for years of the popular press what is now said of the cinema. There is a mass of undeveloped intelligence, and of brains that are incapable of development, and the newspapers are out to exploit them. The motto is "better a thousand pennies from morons than a hundred from intelligent people." And they all have votes.

On the same day, on which we take the opinion cited, July 29, we find on the back of the *Daily Chronicle*, there is a picture of Canon Bullock-Webster, rector of St. Michael Royal, College Hill, blessing a motor-car and its owner. The occasion was the feast of St. Christopher, patron saint of travellers. It is evident that "morons" are not confined to cinema attendants. How else are we to explain the blessing of a motor-car, and the picture of it in a daily paper. Evidently these people expect something to follow from the blessing, and quite certainly only an undeveloped intelligence could expect that much. And both Canon Bullock-Webster and the owner of the car have votes. That type of brain must be a valuable asset when it deals with political and social affairs. And politicians reason much as do the Cinema and newspaper owners. "If we want votes we must keep our eyes on the morons." In almost any constituency they may well be the deciding factor. In religion they are unquestionably so.

Someone has been writing about "barnacled minds." By a coincidence, the article appears at a time when

Nonconformist journals are full of the utterances of men of God assembled in pious conference.

"Passing the mug" is a newly invented game for boys. We have a suspicion that it is not exactly unknown to some adults. We are irresistably reminded of one chapel parson writing to another: "Dear Friend. Brother Blank has removed to your district. Bring yourself to his notice with all speed."

The wife of Dean Inge says: "Bishops and deans are the only men who still keep to the beautiful old seventeenth-century dress." This serves the useful purpose of reminding people that the notions disseminated by deans and bishops are centuries behind the best thought of this present age.

On the authority of the Rev. Geo. A. McNeil, we learn that:—

To the Plymouth Pilgrims, more than any other group. America to-day owes a debt of gratitude for the concepts of those ideas which are the underlying principles of the Government of the United States . . . We realize that they worked, they loved, they suffered, but through it all they were inspired by a high ideal—the ideal of civic as well as religious liberty.

We know the Pilgrim Fathers emigrated in order to secure the liberty denied them in England. But we understand that they esteemed liberty—religious and civic—so highly that they measured it out meagrely, lest the supply run short. This may possibly account for the trouble with the Quakers, and also for the passing of the "Blue Laws," for which many Americans to-day are deeply grateful.

Mr. Edward Price Bell says: "We are going to get rid of warlike feelings, warlike thoughts, and warlike symbols." In this direction the Church will no doubt be very helpful. It will not need to go outside its own domain to make a start. For instance, there are prayers and hymns praising battle or embodying war sentiments—they could be either eliminated or else purged. Priests could stop blessing war-banners and christening warships, and also cease their official connexion with the Army and Navy. They might also stay away from all social functions in which fighting-men are the predominant figures. This will do just as a commencement.

All great discoveries, says Sir William Bragg, have been made by men who did their work for the fun of it. On the other hand, the great discovery of God was made by men who feared the unknown.

Dr. Slosser has written a guinea book as a thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of London. The title does not appear to have overlooked anything—like the tripper's portmanteau—"Christian Unity: Its History and Challenge in All Communion, in all Lands." An extract from it—"Christian re-union can only come as a result of a compelling tidal momentum built up by waves and eddies that have had their beginnings on a thousand shores" can only make the case-hardened Freethinker say, "God help Philosophy!" At the same time, if the moon was made of green cheese it would be interesting to know how long the population of this world could live on it at the rate of 4 ozs. per day for each individual—this is merely suggested as a further thesis.

The Rev. Dr. Ritson wants more money devoted to theological training-colleges, because the Methodist Church will "never get anywhere" unless its ministers are trained to be keen and alert in mind. For the benefit of those who might wonder why mentally keen and alert ministers should suddenly be necessary, Dr. Ritson explains (according to a report) that:—

The appeal of Methodism is to all sorts and conditions of men. But those who can be reached by a shallow, unthinking evangelism are getting fewer every day. That seems an expensive sort of nuisance to the Methodist Church! We gather from Dr. Ritson's statements that the ideas, the language, and the methods employed by Jesus and the Apostles, as recorded in the Holy

Book, make little or no impression in these days. There happens to be—unfortunately for the Church—more education abroad in the land. Scientific knowledge is more easily available; and also, intelligence and the critical faculty have been quickened. All these things make the parson's job a harder one, and he needs to be made more ready for his task. Hence the plea for more money to raise the parson to the general mental level of the age. What is curious is that the things which seem disadvantageous to the Churches are advantageous to Freethought. An impartial philosopher might, we suggest, discover much food for thought in that fact.

The letter from the Archbishops, which was read in all Anglican churches the other Sunday, declared that:—

Among our own people, not least among the young, there are many who are perplexed by difficulties or haunted by the fear that new knowledge is shaking the foundation of their Faith. To them the Church owes a two-fold duty. It must give them in fuller measure, chances of learning what the Christian Faith really is. It must show them that through new light thrown upon the Bible, and new discoveries of science rightly understood, we are reaching a new knowledge of God and of His ways of revealing Himself.

It is very comforting to know that at long last the Church has determined to tell its adherents what the Christian Faith "really is." But, really, it seems rather a pity to depart from the venerable practice of telling them what it really is not. Again, we are rather anxious to know why God should be ignoring his priests and revealing new knowledge of himself and his ways through men of science mainly. This makes a lot of hard work for the priests, hustling the Church's creaking machinery to catch up with Science.

At last a parson has discovered why churches are getting emptier. Canon R. W. Longley, of Norwich, tells the *Daily Mail* that persistent caricaturing of the clergy on the stage has been "one of the most insidious factors in emptying the places of worship." He argues that, as the Supreme Authority is heard and is worshipped in churches, "what respect can there be for Authority, whose exponents are portrayed as something less than manly?" We fancy the Canon is seeing evil where he ought to be discerning good. Persistent exposure of parsonic weaknesses has no doubt induced many parsons to get shut of them, and to acquire better characteristics. Surely the Canon must realize that?

Says the Headmaster of Eton: "The real thing you learn at school is how you are going to get on with one another." If this is so, we are doubtful whether some of the well-known schools are imparting the right method. With some, this takes the form of encouraging intellectual timidity. To "get on" well with your fellows, you keep your opinions to yourself, you avoid all discussion on topics likely to excite controversy, and you never by any chance say or do anything contrary to the orthodox notions of mediocracy. These appear to be some of the unwritten precepts understood in many schools. Perhaps this helps to explain why a large number of public men are so very timid about expressing openly their real opinions. Urbanity or dissimulation or silence may be useful in the art of "getting on" with other people, but they are hindrances to freedom of thought and speech, upon which depends all true progress in regard to intellectual matters and social institutions.

Of the Boy Scout Movement, a weekly journal says that, when started, the Movement had one thing distinguishing it from other organizations for boys—the absence of the words Don't and Must Not. For instance, the Scout Law says, "A Scout's honour is to be trusted," instead of saying, "A Scout must not lie, steal, or cheat." This no doubt came as an agreeable surprise to many scouts accustomed to dreary recitals of the Christian Ten Commandments in Sunday-school. Another welcome surprise must have been to find themselves not regarded as naturally bad—full of "original sin"—as the adult orthodox Christian view had led

them to believe they were. Perhaps we might add that the Scout movement appeals to modern youth because the movement embodies many primitive and non-Christian notions and ideals, with a sprinkling of modern ideas. This may be news to the Chief Scout, who is an observer and a practical psychologist rather than a philosopher. And it is not said in condemnation; some of the ideals are sound and wholesome enough. We are inclined to fancy that many of the sloppy products of chapel Sunday-schools have learnt to be manly and wholesome by contact with the Scout Movement.

In a discussion as to whether the face and hands should be the only human portions to be exposed to view, a newspaper reader favours covering up all—human bodies are “distressingly hideous!” As the Bible tells us that God made man in his own image, that sounds suspiciously like blasphemy! But this aside, people who take the view that the human body is hideous and too nasty for the eye to see, reminds us that Christian notions linger long. Thus have argued generation upon generation of Christian believers mentally twisted by the Holy Bible. In days to come, doctors and philosophers will not be afraid to tell the world how great was the physical and mental degradation caused by such unwholesome Christian notions. The renaissance of pagan intellectual ideas saved civilization in the Age of Faith. By the look of things, the renaissance of pagan ideas in regard to health and the body will save this and future generations from physical deterioration. “A sound mind in a sound body”—that noble pagan conception has been dead for nineteen hundred years of Christian centuries. It is rising again now that the Christian religion is dying.

Mr. George Jean Nathan, the American critic and essayist, in an interview with a *Daily Mail* reporter, throws a little light on the people known in the States as “uplifters.” He said: “Yes, there are far more objectionable classes in the United States than there are in England. There are the ‘uplifters’ for instance. Those are people with an itch for publicity—people to whom nothing is worth while unless it gets them their names in the papers.” Perhaps we may see here that wonderful spirit of humility absorbed from the religious attitude of “the world revolves around me.” It is to be hoped that some measure of safeguarding will be introduced so that we may be spared from the dumping of cranks in this country which would give us more time to deal with those we are already afflicted with.

In the “Saturday Pulpit” of the *Daily News*, the Rt. Rev. Bishop Welldon is asking his readers the following question: “But who and what is Jesus Christ?” This for a Shepherd shows profound ignorance. It is as bad as a cobbler asking what is leather? At the same time, it is a very poor display by a follower—Freethinkers could state his case better.

A “very grateful invalid” forwards to the B.B.C. heartfelt thanks for the Epilogue. Seeing that there are probably three times as many more non-pious invalids than pious, why shouldn't the B.B.C. supply a special closing item for their benefit? But perhaps it is assumed that they are of stronger mental calibre, and do not need special spiritual dope to sustain them against physical depression.

Sir Edward Elgar says the character of English people musically is extremely bad. Is he judging them by their fondness for hymn-tunes of the “Abide with me” kind?

Dr. Lidgett recently warned Wesleyans that too extensive pressing of denominational claims in regard to religion in the schools may “awaken the ghost of Secularism which has been laid.” Leaving aside the possible effect of pressing denominational claims, we should say that the “ghost” has merely been put partly out of sight, owing to the timidity of teachers and to ignorance of parents as to the principle at issue. Nevertheless, such a state of things is not likely to

continue for long. By means of propaganda, parental ignorance can be removed. Also, the need for pedagogic timidity will become less evident; for there is a growing tendency, owing to Freethought activity, to regard mental cowardice with contempt. Nor must it be forgotten that the majority of parents nowadays are indifferent to religion and ignore the Churches, and are therefore not in sympathy with the parson's aim to make the school a client-producing factory in the interests of their profession. Altogether, we feel sure that, in the near future, the “ghost of Secularism” will again be walking and scaring the parsons.

Says Sir I. A. Selby-Bigge:—

Educationists are too prone to assume that parents demand, desire, or are willing to swallow what the educationalist thinks they ought to want because it is good for them.

This point of view might interest the B.B.C., who ordain religion or nothing for listeners during certain hours on Sundays.

Ignorance exists, says Sir Josiah Stamp, “when you don't know that you don't know things.” It may be as well to mention that ignorance exists also when one thinks he knows all that is worth knowing, because the Bible and a parson or priest tells him so.

Mr. J. Bewsher declares that boys are no worse than boys used to be. We feel sure that few parsons will agree with this. For have they not openly deplored the doleful fact that children to-day are growing up almost destitute of religious knowledge? And to say that modern boys are no worse than boys of a former generation who were thoroughly doped with religion, surely implies that the earlier boys acquired no advantage from Christian instruction—which is, of course, absurd!

A reader of the *Daily Mirror* asks: “Must it not be a very disgruntled sort of Puritan who sees ugliness or evil in the human body?” We think a better question would have thus: Must not the minds of men and women who see ugliness and evil in the uncovered human body be ugly and evil? And, since many people acquire this low mentality from Holy Writ, would it not be advisable to encourage more wholesome reading?

Mr. Michael Joseph, in a book edited and entitled *The Autobiography of a Journalist*, should be thanked for showing the uninitiated public how the great newspapers view public opinion. Newspapers have now become something more than a by-word, but the following extract should be allowed to glow on its high level of example:—

“Here's a murder in North London,” said the news editor. “You better miss the midnight edition and run over. Interview the widow, if you can. Get some stuff for a general story—it looks like being a big yarn. But it can't have more than two columns however good it is.”

The gospel of brotherly love comes from the cutting taken from a report of a Wesleyan Conference:—

Mr. Walter Runciman referred to the aggressive action of the Roman Catholic authorities who had demanded that Parliamentary candidates should pledge financial aid for the repair of their schools and the building of new schools.

In money matters Christians are just as human as other people, and the test of their pious gush is their pockets.

Mr. Spencer Hurst, M.A., in a religious weekly, says:—

The question is how are we to explain the lack of curative power among even the devoutest Christians? They can comfort the sick but cannot cure them. There is only one answer. We have not the faith. We do not trust God enough nor ask God enough.

Apparently, the only people God now inspires with curative power are intelligent modern doctors. And they don't trouble much about trusting God, nor having faith, nor praying. And the curative ability God bestows upon doctors appears to be served out quite impartially. An Atheistic physician gets no more or less than a pious fellow practitioner.

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.

R. ATHERTON.—The Leicester Ghost Story appears to be a money-making device. We have no doubt it will succeed. These priests know the mentality of their flocks, and Roman Catholics are more carefully trained than Protestants, and so the more easily duped.

M. COLVIN.—We are not continuing the discussion with Dr. Calner, although the columns of this journal would be open to him if he cared to use them. Will appear next week.

G. F. LAWS (Canada).—Sorry your communication is too late for use. One of the inconveniences of attempting a discussion at a distance is that by the time a reply is reached reader's have lost touch with the original communication.

S. BRADLEY.—It is not our place to apologise for the existence of human freaks. That task belongs to the Theist. And his apologies make one reflect that

... The Creator called God
Has ways most remarkably odd.

J.C.M. (Glasgow).—Your lecture notice reached us on Wednesday—too late to be of use. Why not post on Saturday in future?

A.B.—We don't know who put the *Freethinker* in, but if we may judge the intellectual quality of your correspondence by the letter you write us, we should say that your letter-box on that occasion broke the record for quality.

G. H. TAYLOR.—Sorry, your letter makes too great a demand on the space at our disposal. You will note that some of your points have been briefly put by other correspondents.

T. DIXON.—It all depends upon the activity of local friends. The N.S.S. will arrange lectures anywhere that a likely opening presents itself.

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

We must ask the indulgence of readers and correspondents this week. Mr. Cohen is taking a few days holiday—although he has always to take his work with him, even when he is away from home. But it means editing the paper at a distance, and that involves disadvantages. Next week Mr. Cohen will be back at the office as usual.

The volume of *Literary Essays*, by G. W. Foote, is nearing completion, and we hope to publish about the end of September. There will be Essays on Shakespeare, Emerson, Shelley, Keats, and others, and we venture to say that it will be a volume worth having and prizing. G. W. Foote was far and away the finest writer the Freethought Movement ever had in this country, and his literary criticisms had a breadth, and a sanity, and human touch that made him without a rival. The Essay on Emerson, for instance, is one that none but Foote could have written. It is distinctive, thorough, and critically appreciative. The price of the volume will be 3s. 6d.

Mr. Cohen has received an invitation from the "Fellowship of Youth," to address the organization next Easter at Oxford. The Secretary asks for a criticism of the basis of religion. As Mr. Cohen has accepted the invitation, we think we can say, with confidence, they will get what they ask for.

The success of the course of lectures given by Mr. Cohen in the Secular Hall, Leicester, in November last—since published under the title of *Freethought and Life*, has induced the Leicester Society to venture on another course during the coming winter. Mr. Cohen has promised to visit the hall on the four Sundays in November. The subject has not yet been decided, but will be announced in due course.

In March, 1932, the Leicester Society will celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Secular Hall. There will be great doings on this particular anniversary, and the Committee hopes to accomplish by that time what ought to have been accomplished before now. The Secular Hall is a very fine building in one of the principle thoroughfares in Leicester, and it has for years provided the finest courses of lectures in the town. But there exists to-day a debt of £2,000, and to that end a Jubilee Building Fund, the object of which is to have the building free of debt by the time the anniversary arrives. We see no reason why this reasonable ambition should not be gratified, and it will be if Freethinkers do what each can to that end. Subscriptions towards this Fund should be addressed to Mr. J. Abbot, Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester.

Mr. Gerald Bullett says (in *Radio Times*) that "during the war I carried that prig, Marcus Aurelius, about with me . . . Nowadays, I know better than that." This fashion of dubbing Aurelius a "prig" has caught on with some writers. The epithet might be justified, if Marcus had written the *Meditations* with the object of improving other people. But what is obvious is that the *Meditations* are the private self-debates of a sensitively conscientious and noble mind, anxious to beat out a workable code of conduct for its own guidance. This being the case, the epithet "prig" is merely cheap slander. It may, of course, have been there priggishness that led Mr. Bullett to carry Marcus Aurelius round. I looked well; and having got over that dose of the disease Mr. Bullett contracts another form of the same complaint. But we expect Marcus will survive.

We acquire the virtues by doing the acts. We become builders by building.—*Aristotle*.

Some Recent Philological Research.

FAR too little attention has been paid to the sterling work done by the British-Israel World Federation in a multitude of directions. It is not only the pioneer of the wonderful new science of Pyramidal Trigonometry, but is also the foremost exponent of philological methods.

An examination of its literature discloses the truly astonishing results of dogged perseverance combined with imaginative insight and intuition. It has, by philological methods, conclusively proved, "without any possible shadow of doubt whatever," that the British race is, in very deed, the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel. In Hebrew, "Brit" means "Covenant"; "Ish" means "Man." Hence, the Brit-Ish are the Covenant-Men, legatees to the covenant made between Jehovah and Abraham and Others. Again, Joseph's constellational crest was a Bull; the Hebrew for "Bull" is "Engl." Hence England is very evidently "the land of Joseph's children." We may note in passing that further incontestable proof can be found in the fact that the Englishman is everywhere referred to as John *Bull*.

Even more astonishing are the proofs that Dan is the "pathfinder of Israel," for this "serpent's trail" can easily be traced across the map of Europe. It is now a *proved historical fact* that this tribe, foredoomed to wander, passed from Dan in Palestine into the Don country, thence by way of Dneister, Dneiper, and Danube to Danzig, whence they went to Denmark. From that country they spread out fanwise, travelling north-west to Edinburgh and Dundee, south-west to Londonderry, Dundalk, and Donegal, and south via Doncaster to London, Dunmow, and Dungeness. So much is perfectly clear.

The British-Israel World Federation has, in our opinion, stopped short while on the very shores of a veritable "South Seas of discovery." Following the trail becomes fascinating work. None will deny the tremendous significance of a Danbury and three Danvilles in the U.S.A. But Dan and his tribe went still further afield. We find that they made a brief incursion into the heart of Africa, visiting Dongola in the Sudan, and Danakil in Abyssinia. One might hazard the guess (though we philologists never guess; besides, there are difficulties about Ham) that the Sudan itself was colonized by them. In India they wandered far and wide, ranging from Dungarpur in Rajputana to Dinapur in Bihar; from Dindigal in Madras to Dondra in Ceylon.

It is a mistake, however, to suppose that philology lends its aid to geography alone. Applying the same principles we are led to discover a vast amount of information of a personal character about the tribe of Dan. Whatever his constellational crest may have been, it is evident to the meanest intelligence that Dan certainly rejoiced in a floral emblem at least—the dandelion. He was of sallow, or dun, complexion. He was careful of appearance—was, in fact, a dandy. We learn that in his day there were no barbers' nostrums, and the whole tribe suffered badly from a plague of dandruff. He was a food-reformer, a one-meal-a-day man (dinner); he was a spirit-drinker (Dunville), and a keen business man (dinar and denarius). This last-named quality deeply impressed the Greeks, for it was in a shower of gold that Jove woo'd Danae.

Enough has been said to indicate the possibilities in this tremendously wide field of studies. We urge the British-Israel World Federation to still more fruitful efforts in this direction. Particularly do we commend the method of Comparative Philology which

established the identity of the Brit-Ish with the Covenant-Men. It is but right, of course, that Hebrew, the language of Paradise, should be given pride of place as the basic tongue for instituting comparison. But we humbly suggest that He who confused the tongues at Babel has revealed Himself in other languages to such as have faith to receive the revelation. We may mention here, with all modesty, that we ourselves have made tentative excursions in this field, and with startling results. Space forbids more than a brief indication of a Divine Revelation vouchsafed (we believe that is the word) to us regarding one of our pressing modern problems.

It is notorious that Prohibition finds most favour among religious bodies. This is not as it should be. We beg the British-Israel World Federation to set its face against an insidious campaign that, on the evidence we deduce below, can have emanated from none other than the Devil Himself. For choosing for our comparative study two languages separated by the whole extent of Europe, namely Turkish and Welsh, we discovered the following remarkable phenomenon. The word "kuru" in the former tongue means "dry"; while "cwrw," of identical pronunciation, in the latter means "beer." Can any sane person deny that this is a direct command to stick to beer when one is thirsty? We think not.

D. JAY.

The Pope's Green Island.

THE Orangemen in the North of Ireland always resisted every attempt at giving a measure of "Home Rule" to the rest of the Irish people on the plea that Home Rule would eventually end up in "Rome Rule"? Any amount of Protestants in the Southern portion of the "Isle of Saints," threw themselves into the Home Rule camp, and now they find under a "native" Government that the Orangemen were right, and that the Southern portion of the island is completely under the control of the Roman Catholic priests; with the Army, Police, and other public bodies "dedicated" to the "Sacred Heart," and the schools, hospitals, poorhouses, convent laundries, and lunatic asylums, and orphan homes in charge of the nuns, who are mostly of foreign extraction. In fact all the means of life, and death, and resurrection are in the hands, and coffers of the "Catholic Truth Society" of Ireland, which Society is under the control of the Pope of Rome . . .

Slowly and surely the people are being led back to the past; the monastic system is growing up every day by the simple means of the wealthy foreign communities from France, Germany, Holland, Italy, and other countries purchasing thousands of acres of the best land in the country, with the castles and mansions of the former "Saxon" landlords thrown in; thus the poor people are exchanging one type of landlordism for another, but as the new have the blessings of Rome and the keys of heaven in their "grip," the unfortunate people allow the land of their fathers to pass quietly into the hands of the "holy fathers" without even a murmur, whereas in former times they shot their "foreign" landlords wholesale. Superstition is a wonderful and dreadful thing, and visitors to Dublin recently, during the "emancipation" circus must have been greatly impressed to see this city of slums and slavery decorated with the Papal colours, and to witness an entire population grovelling on their knees when the "King of Kings" was borne past? What a triumph of Ignorance over Reason when thousands fall in the dust to pay homage to something that has de-nationalized and de-humanized what was once the Irish Nation? If this

great mob were told they were worshipping the "body" of a crucified Jew they would tear to pieces the person who told them.

It is done in the cradle; shaped and sand-papered in the schools; and polished off in the Sodalities; there is no escape for the Irish Roman Catholic youth, even emigration cannot save them; they are simply transferred from one sodality to another.

All the schools, Roman Catholic, are in the hands of the Christian Brothers or Nuns; the direct result of this is, that hardly any young man or woman can earn a living as a teacher in "Southern Ireland." The parents sell their last cow or pig to pay for the "education" of their boys and girls in some of the hundreds of "colleges" run for profit by the "good" nuns, or brothers; and at the same time the heads of the "colleges" are well aware when the last fee is paid the poor boy or girl has no chance of a job as a teacher owing to the swarm of foreign religious teachers already in the country; and swarming in every day. The end of this "education" is the emigrant ship; a job as a dishwasher for the girl "student" in America; and for the boy a cab-washer. This looks like obtaining money by false pretences.

Frank Hugh O'Donnell, in his book some years ago, *The Ruin of Education in Ireland*, stated that girls coming out of the convent schools were "only fit for throwing flowers in front of religious processions," and as he was an Irish Roman Catholic, and attended their colleges, he should know what he was writing about.

The children of the labouring class attending the so-called "National Schools," are turned out on the road after ten or eleven years of "education" by the Nuns, and most of them are unable to scribble their names; they know all about prayers, a tremendous lot about "hell"—especially in their slum "homes"—a fair share about "heaven," and for the rest of their lives they are looking for the "shower of roses" which the Nuns taught them the "Little Flower" is growing in her heavenly garden to drop "some day" on the "Isle of Saints"? One would imagine a shower of rashers or sausages would be more welcome to "God's poor"? Most of these young fellows end their days in other "colleges," also run by "good brothers," viz., Industrial Schools, the jumping-off ground to jails and the scaffold. Even the public hospitals are now "manned" by the Nuns, and the Roman Catholic girls are being pushed out on the streets to take up some other "profession"? The amount of hard cash obtained around the death-beds of dying patients runs into thousands of pounds monthly; all thrown into the lap of Mother Church; as the flames of hell are always kept bright and hot to dry the ink on the last will of "miserable sinners"?

The Poorhouses are another source of income to the Church, pay and pensions on this earth come the way of the "good sisters"; and many a pauper leaves a golden store behind so as to "divil-dodge" his way into paradise. The Convent Laundries bring in thousands of pounds to the Nuns, as the "Mary Magdalens" are prisoners, and their sweated labour will be duly rewarded—when they obtain their liberty by death—when they are "washed in the blood of the Lamb," after scrubbing their lives away making wealth for their religious exploiters.

The Lunatic Asylums are well stocked with religious maniacs, the victims of the terror thundered from the altars about the clerical gold mine—the Christian hell.

The Orphan Homes are overcrowded with battalions of bastards, in former times the "British

garrison" were blamed for the immorality in the "Isle of Saints"; but now that excuse is dead, and every other day young Roman Catholic girls are convicted for the murder of their illegitimate children, in spite of the silly teaching of the Nuns and their boasting about their "pure religion."

Even the homes for the blind are used for money-getting, for the blind women and girls can knit even in the night when the rest of humanity are asleep?

Another organisation calling itself "The Irish Vigilance Association," also under the control of the priests; is trying to force the reading public to think and read only what is published in the *Universe*, the *Irish Catholic*, the *Messenger of the Sacred Heart*, and other such rags which pander to the mob, to servant girls, and the brothels; in fact, the fellows at the head of this "Association" are striving hard to bring about a new Inquisition.

The Irish Roman Catholic priests for centuries are "telling the story" to their congregations, that what they are now teaching is the same as Saint Patrick taught when he converted the Sun-god and Wind-worshippers of Erin 1,500 years ago. For seven centuries after Saint Patrick—whose grandfather, Potitus, was a priest, and Patrick's father, Calpurnius, was a deacon—the Irish were Christians in every part of the Island; yet in 1154, Pope Adrian IV. issued a Bull to Henry II. of England.

"In order to banish vice (Patrick's religion?) from thence, and in order to widen the bounds of the Church (Adrian's) that a penny tax (Peter's Pence) should be placed on each house in Ireland, to be paid to Saint Peter." This plainly shows that the Irish Christian religion established by Saint Patrick was not the Roman Catholic religion of Pope Adrian IV.; and the Island was drenched in blood in establishing the religion of the Vatican.

The fact of the matter at the time was, Rome was afraid the Irish would establish a Church of their own with an Irish Bishop at its head; hence the Bull of Adrian to Henry to conquer Ireland and bring it in subjection to Rome. Any person gazing on the Papal Flags in Dublin during "emancipation week," can only agree that the Roman Bull and Roman Rule is carried out to the last letter of Vatican law. Any number of Irish Roman Catholic priests are well aware of the Roman circus staged in Ireland; but whenever any of them tries to protest, they are "silenced" or banished to die in exile. If they refuse to be banished they are "unfrocked" and dogged and spied upon until their life is a misery in the "Isle of Saints."

P. MURPHY.

The Higher Pantheism.

DOUBT is faith in the main: but faith, on the whole, is doubt:

We cannot believe by proof: but could we believe without?

Two and two may be four: but four and four are not eight:

Fate and God may be twain: but God is the same thing as fate.

Body and spirit are twins: God only knows which is which:

The soul squats down in the flesh, like a tinker drunk in a ditch.

More is the whole than a part: but half is more than the whole:

Clearly, the soul is the body: but is not the body the soul?

God, whom we see not, is: and God, who is not, we see:

Fiddle, we know, is diddle: and diddle, we take it, is dec.

A. C. SWINBURNE.

The Passing of A Pioneer.

WITH A WARNING TO FREETHINKERS.

ONE of the noblest and bravest of mankind has passed from our ken into the wider universe that surrounds us. To have known him intimately, as we did, was a privilege; to have loved him, as one could not avoid doing, was to taste of that essence of life that has made art, culture, and civilization itself.

William Charles Owen, our friend, teacher, and co-laborator-in-thought, was born in India of aristocratic stock, on February 16, 1854, and died at Worthing on July 9, 1929. He came of a military family, and was destined for a professional career, narrowly escaping being called to the bar.

He talked, as a young man, with Sir Richard Francis Burton, a family connexion; he came across the writings of Henry Thomas Buckle, Henry George, Auberon Herbert, and Herbert Spencer; and—from a conventional and worldly point of view—the mischief was done. Upon Owen descended the vision of Humanity, and for well over half a century he devoted his fortune, his time, his superlative talents, his tongue, his pen—in a word, his very life—to the liberation of humanity from what he considered its bonds, social, intellectual, economic.

There is no need here to praise his writings; readers of those journals that have been for so long enriched by Owen's pen, know well enough the clarity of his thought, the massiveness of his style, his always-conscientious pen-craftsmanship; above all, his dauntless, unshakable pluck.

Both by pen and tongue, like Thomas Paine, and William Cobbett, in some respects his forerunners, Owen devoted himself unflinchingly and unquestioningly to service of humanity. If ever there was one who loved his fellow-men, like Abou Ben Adhem, it was William Charles Owen. With heart and brain we can say, in echo to his own heart and brain, "May his tribe increase." When it does, we shall have no fear for the future of Humanity.

Passionately as he loved his fellow man, as passionately he hated the lies, cant, humbug and mockery that form the sombre and dolorous background to our social life. He could bear no bar between man and man. Loving all humanity, and hating puritanism in all its disguises, he was a true Citizen of the World; he helped and inspired all who met him by the charm of his personality, his encyclopædic knowledge, his blunt but always kindly honesty.

He was many things in the course of his life; orator, poet, reformer, revolutionary, actor, actor-manager, journalist, linguist, dramatist, editor; and, had he chosen, he could have had "roses, roses all the way, and myrtle mixed in his path like mad." But he chose joyously the stern way of the lonely, misunderstood, stubborn, hated reformer, and the world rewarded him accordingly.

Despising worldly success, he died quite poor but entirely unembittered; beloved completely by a little circle of close friends; admired all over the world by a few hundreds—one can scarcely say thousands—who were at one with him in his passion for Freedom, his love for Humanity. That he wished; that he had; that, for his simple needs, sufficed.

In religion an Agnostic, in politics an Anarchist, he had—and he knew it—no place in conventional professional life, in ordinary penny-a-lining. His love being for humanity, his gifts were at their disposal. He asked nothing from gods or men, save only to serve. And he served well and faithfully.

Children and animals—dogs especially—he adored. To him they represented the hope of humanity, the vast, dumb, elemental forces of Nature. Life is one; and the old man renewed his youth in loving its growing forces.

If there be a continuation of conscious life after the passing, if there be other lives to be lived on this earth, if the progress of the ego be, in truth, eternal, we shall know and love our old Friend again. If! Like him, we do not know; what we *do* know is that his place is empty, and that there is a void in our lives that cannot be filled.

There is here no space to tell of his adventurous career; his experiences in the Klondyke gold-rush; his great part in the Mexican Revolution; his conflicts with Authority; his victories over tyranny.

For many weeks he suffered cruelly, unconscious of the hastening end; never did he complain; and, until his hands and eyes failed him, he continued to serve mankind with his pen, in the quieter interval between spasms of fierce pain.

A personal word, and I must end. To him I became "Vicky"; and in affectionate chaff we called him "Professor," a title that, in some whimsical way, fitted him perfectly; for, with his violently revolutionary outlook, he mingled a delicious old-world courtesy in all social intercourse. Both as host and as guest he was ideal. And he loved his "peg" and his cigarettes. He was beloved by everyone who met him; I know not a single exception.

He died "like one who draws the drapery of his couch about him, and lies down to pleasant dreams." And how well he deserved those pleasant dreams is the proud and glad knowledge of us who loved him.

Our old friend's body is laid in Washington, a beautiful and secluded hamlet in the shadow of the South Downs; William Drury of Binsted, an old friend and admirer, presided at the interment on July 13; many friends were present, including Mr. T. H. Keell, Editor of *The Freedom Bulletin*, Mr. E. H. J. Frost, Mr. Peter Goodman, Miss Lettice Newman, Mr. Eric Richmond, Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Earle, Mr. and Mrs. Aldred of *The Sanctuary*, Mrs. Doris Zhook, Mr. J. W. Graham Peace, Editor of *The Commonwealth*, Mr. M. Warriner, Miss Vernon-Jones, Mr. John Turner, Miss Taylor, Mr. J. J. Batson, Mr. White, Mrs. Askew, Dr. Sheavyn, and Mr. and Mrs. V. B. Neuburg. Nearly all of these contributed exquisite floral tributes, which were also received from "Grouser," Deirdre, *The Sanctuary*, Miss Skill-ling and Miss Pollock, Mrs. Hadwen and Miss Griffiths, *The Commonwealth Land Party*, and the *London Freedom Group*.

Speeches in honour of our Friend were made by Mr. William Drury, Mr. Graham Peace, Mr. T. H. Keell, Mr. John Turner, Mr. V. D. Neuburg. The thirteenth was a perfect July day, such as our Friend loved.

After the burial, a few friends and literary colleagues made a pilgrimage to *The Sanctuary*, where Owen's last few years were spent. Through the courtesy of Mrs. Vera Dennis-Earle, a delightful little social was held, whereat the philosopher's life and doctrines were discussed and eulogised.

The Importance of a Secular funeral being specifically mentioned in a Freethinker's will was exemplified in our Friend's case. He omitted to take this precaution, and, after the speeches, a friend was reading from his works, by way of epilogue to the ceremony, when a senile and frenzied servant of "God" rushed up in holy rage, and, with true Christian charity, attempted to forbid any further proceeding "on consecrated ground," as though any ground that holds loved dust were not equally "consecrated." Happily this zealous and humble follower of the gentle and pious Jesus was too late to prevent the speeches. Let every true Freethinker learn to protect himself, his friends, and his ashes, ere it be too late, from the foul and leprous Church of England. *Ecrasez l'infame!*

VICTOR B. NEUBURG.

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for every thing, we are out of tune;
It moves us not—Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.

Wordsworth.

The Meeting of the Waters.

There is not in this wide world a valley so sweet
As that vale in whose bosom the still waters meet:
The last rays of feeling and hope shall depart
E'er the bloom of that valley shall fade from my heart.

VERY trite and obvious, no doubt, but profoundly and beautifully significant; simple but immortal lines of the Irish Thomas Moore, the only rival in the like of Robert Burns of many a Scottish "Avoca." Burns, said Ingersoll, the tuneful American, made those Ayrshire streams sing his name for ever. But this is the Age of Wheels and faster things; let us hope, also, the Age of Reason it is so in one journal, at least in this green and pleasant land. Twenty miles inland in speed and comfort, within a wide horizon of historic undulating pastoral charm, and one is set down in the quiet God-fearing respectable village of Mauchline, in the heart of Ayr, the Mecca of Burns' maturest muse. But for the moment one would only escape from book and biography, past and future, and live one fleeting present of undiluted, unpolluted joy: "Oh, threats of hell and hopes of paradise, one thing is certain this life flies! And as my host—surest of poetasters and sweetest of Freethinkers—and I, leave our women folk to talk of things domestic, and steal an hour or so to revisit the lower valley. It is a high and pure delight of soul and sense, the inner and the outer scene—even the sadness thereof. How many Summers had we seen and sighed for, and this on its way to join all that had gone before, with all their ephemera of man—still, we live and hope and enjoy novelty which is never new! There was a sky of cloud and blue, of tempered sun, the bushes by the wayside were tossing and blanching in a bravura wind. We arrive at the Bridge and the Mill and pause before an alcove of trees and fern in the exquisite setting of gardener Nature's old inimitable hand, a grotto for the memory!—Still o'er those scenes . . . ! The whole is embosomed in wild wood; at the water's edge, in thickening green, is a lofty grove of noble trees; opposite, the small alluvial holm where, tradition says, the Poet wrote *Man was made to mourn*.

But, oh, what crowds in every land are wretched and forlorn! Always, if we care to look, the dismal background of the most opulent scene. So the shadow of pessimism lurks in even those Arcadian shades. So oft the too apprehensive spirit would find soothing and sanctuary in such a leafy screen. So we shut out all but personal cares, and trust the tramp and beggar may have his interregnum too. So good people go to Church and thank God they are not as other men—without perhaps the saving grace of reflecting that God made those others as they are—that is, if he made anything—it is quite simple and quite shattering, but faith survives. Two streams forgather amicably here, the Lugar and the Ayr, and in gentle confluence make way through hermit woodlands to the sea. Kneec deep in flowers and grass in dappled shade, we ascend the left bank of the former tributary stream towards its famous sandstone gorge; rippling here, there still and deep, under shaggy banks, growing more precipitous, but still with verdure clad; we pause at last on the brow of a high cliff, above a deep and silent pool, while left and right, under arching boughs, the eye surveys enchanting vistas of the river. Fern and grass and tree and flower reflect themselves in a liquid world below, moving in sweet but mournful mimicry of the actual scene. It is the very awesomeness of beauty. There is a tingling of the tissues. One feels as though "drawn" towards those syren deeps, and trembles at destruction. Lead us not into temptation; but the spell abides; the holy of holies, the heart's core, yea, the heart of hearts of Ayrshire. So we had been to Church, so had our homily, so lovingly, if imperfect, pass it on.

ANDREW MILLAR.

Bigotry is a kind of rheumatism, which twists a man's soul into all sorts of deformities.—Henry Simon.

Take away the fear of hell and the power of the clergy will vanish.—Lamennais.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

THIS FREEDOM.

SIR,—I agree with Mr. Victor B. Neuburg in the *Freethinker* of July 14, that to exchange "God" for Respectability, or Jesus for Jix, is not to be a Freethinker at all.

If I want to be respected by the herd, I must think and do (or pretend to think and do) as the herd does or approves.

Not that the crowd *believes*, but it is *afraid*—and most of the hatred to our propaganda arises, not so much from concern for Mumbo Jumbo, as from fear as to what would result if Freethinking became a *habit*.

Nearly all the taboos and conventions are grounded upon superstitions, and if these are undermined, what may not follow? The hand that wrote *The Age of Reason* wrote also *The Rights of Man*.

We are indeed living in what H. G. Wells has described as "the bleak dawn of civilization," and the greatest enemy to all progress is FEAR.

A.H.M.

ATHEIST OR AGNOSTIC?

SIR,— . . . And some of us actually thought the hoary old discussion was dead, buried, and even obliterated for ever! Yet here come Mr. Boyd Freeman with the same old arguments in favour of "Agnostic," which I, for one, heard *ad nauseum* when I first joined the Movement twenty-five years ago, and he doesn't seem to have even an inkling of the obvious reply. He puts up the same old "Atheist," the *bête noire* of the Christian Evidence speaker, and the reverent Rationalist, and shies like blazes at him, and then actually thinks the *Atheist* is knocked out! Not quite as simply done as that, Mr. Freeman, I assure you.

What I want to know—I used to ask a similar question of my Rationalist friends, *in vain*—is, whether the "Atheist" Mr. Freeman talks about, is (1) a product of the imagination like Mr. Victor B. Neuburg's delicious "Z—" in *Gospel Gleanings*; (2) a friend of Mr. Freeman's; or (3) some representative Atheist whose works, or published utterances, we can study for ourselves? If the latter, I want chapter and verse for any statements showing that Atheists say (a) "Therefore there is no God." (b) "He does not study the universe dispassionately." (c) "His main purpose is to 'prove' there is no God." (d) He . . . does not face the riddle squarely. (e) He is (like the Theist) *too cocksure*. (f) that "(in effect) he *knows*" and—but that will do for a start.

H. CUTNER.

PROFESSOR DIXON AND BEER.

SIR,—Professor Dixon has been extolling beer as a beverage above tea and coffee. As recently as 1923, an American thinker, R. H. Towner, produced a work on *The Philosophy of Civilization*, in which there is abundant evidence in support of Dr. Dixon's view as to the importance and value of alcoholic beverages.

May I just give one instance. The author says, "In the early rise of Moslem civilization, and the brilliant achievements of Moslem intellect and arms they were a wine-drinking people." He then points out that in the fifteenth century fanatical Mullahs began a Holy War against Alcohol. Coffee was discovered and became the preferred beverage of pious Moslems. A century later coffee-drinking had spread to all classes. "The change in Moslem intellect between these two periods is startling. In the former or wine-drinking period, the Moslems included all the most brilliant minds of the age. In the field of mathematics especially they towered above all past ages and over all their contemporaries . . . They introduced to Christendom the science as well as the name of Algebra. In the ninth century Moslems knew that they lived on a round earth, taught geography from globes, understood many of the basic principles of astronomy and calculated the Obliquity of the Ecliptic . . . From this brilliant height

the Moslem intellect, after three centuries of substitution of coffee for alcohol, declined to a point lower than their Oriental or polygamous neighbours, or than Asiatics generally."

WILLIAM LEAVIS.

SIR,—In your issue of August 4, Mr. C. M. Beadnell accuses me of having said that a British ton was 2,204 lbs. I never did. I said, and I say again, that a metric ton is 2,204 lbs. I never alluded to either British or American tons.

My point was, and is, that a number of well-known scientists make very inaccurate statements about well-known things, and that such inaccuracy makes me distrustful of their statements on matters which I cannot judge from my own knowledge.

R. B. KERR.

SIR,—The article by Mr. Boyd Freeman, "Atheist or Agnostic, surprised me. This surprise may be intensified by a perusal of his *Priestcraft*, of which I secured delivery two days ago. Until Freethought criticism compelled believers to modify their claims "God" was a definite personal entity, and to many is so yet.

One cannot go through life in a state of permanent doubt, and I submit that if anyone is ever justified in being certain of anything and then saying so, it is that the Christian "God" is non-existent.

Other readers views would be interesting.

H. BAYLIS.

Society News.

MR. WHITEHEAD'S second week at Plymouth opened inauspiciously in consequence of incessant rain on the Sunday which prevented both meetings from being held. But the other five meetings compensated for the opening disappointment as they were the most enthusiastic of any yet addressed by Mr. Whitehead in this town. Two speakers for the Protestant Truth Society, by occupying our platform on several evenings in opposition, helped to generate interest, and to attract large crowds from rival meetings to those of the N.S.S. Judging by the applause and the general attitude of the audiences, our lecturer's replies were found convincing. Indeed, the constant complaint of the opponents was that we had a packed audience in favour of Atheism, although both sides were listened to with exemplary fairness. The meetings were favourably commented upon all over the town, and on the last evening the speaker received an encouraging ovation and numerous congratulations for the good work done. Unfortunately this enthusiasm did not extend to the branch, for although some assistance was received from Messrs. Winter and Lyndon, practically the whole of the work for the two weeks, including the duties of chairman, literature seller, collector and platform porter were left to the secretary, Mr. J. MacKenzie, to whom we are much indebted. It is not encouraging to the lecturer, nor fair to the member, for one man or two to have to do the work of a Branch. There is such a thing as killing a willing Secularist. This hint though reluctantly given is necessary in the interests of the movement.

Mr. Whitehead will be in Swansea district until August 16.

ON Monday, at Great Harwood, our speaker had a debate with a student from the Theological College. Much interest was created in the town, and a large crowd turned up, in which were several clergy. Both sides were listened to with attention, and our case evoked a more sympathetic response than we anticipated.

On Friday, a lecture was given at Cliviger, near Burnley. It was a first venture there, and probably the first Freethought lecture most of the audience had heard.

The Sunday afternoon lecture at Hapton drew a large number of people, even though most of them stood at a respectable distance from the speaker. There was considerable interruption from a man with more vocal power than understanding.—J.C.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Lecture notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.5, by the FIRST POST ON TUESDAY, or they will not be inserted.

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Shorrols Road, Walham Green): Saturday, 8.0, Various Speakers; Effie Road, Walham Green Station, Sunday, 8.0, Mr. F. P. Corrigan.

STREATHAM COMMON BRANCH N.S.S., 6.30, Mr. F. P. Corrigan—A Lecture.

FINSBURY PARK BRANCH N.S.S., 11.15, Mr. F. P. Corrigan.—A Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Regent's Park, near the Fountain): 6.0, Mr. L. Ebury.—A Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (outside Technical College, Romford Road, Statford, E.): 7.0, Mrs. Grout.—A Lecture.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Common): 11.30, Mr. F. Mann; Brockwell Park, 6.30, Mr. F. Mann; Wednesday, Clapham Old Town, 8.0, Mr. F. P. Corrigan; Friday, Liverpool Street Camberwell Gate, 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Mr. F. P. Corrigan—A Lecture.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.0, Messrs. James Hart and R. G. Lennard; 3.30, Messrs. E. Petts and B. A. Le Maine; 6.30, Messrs. B. A. Le Maine and A. H. Hyatt. Freethought meetings every Wednesday, at 7.30, Messrs. J. Hart and R. G. Lennard. Every Friday, at 7.30, Mr. B. A. Le Maine. The *Freethinker* can be obtained outside Hyde Park during our meetings.

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH N.S.S.—Friday, August 9, Queen Street, Spennymoor, 7.30, Mr. J. T. Brighton—"Who is God? What has He done?"; Saturday, August 10, Anthony Street, Stanley, 7.30, Speakers—Messrs. J. C. Keast and J. T. Brighton. Tuesday, August 13, Herrington (near Barn) 7.30, Mr. J. T. Brighton—"Will Christianity Save Humanity?"

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S.—Ramble to Camprie Glen. Meet at Bishopbriggs Car Terminus at 12 o'clock prompt.

SWANSEA BRANCH N.S.S.—Mr. G. Whitehead will lecture in Swansea from August 10 until August 23.

Mr. J. CLAYTON will lecture at the following places: Friday, August 9, Infield (Barnes Square), 8; Sunday, 11, Accrington, 7.0; Monday, 12, Higham, 7.30; Tuesday, 13, Padham, 7.45; Friday, 16, Worsthorpe, 7.45.

Miscellaneous Advertisements.

A BUSINESS MAN writes: "Some years ago I engaged an Accountant to write up my annual accounts, and send the Returns for Income Tax purposes to the Inspector of Taxes. I had been greatly bothered in previous years but, since then, I have had no worry or trouble of any kind with this matter. I believe it is an advantage in every way for anyone in business, whether large or small, to pay an Accountant to deal with the authorities, as the fee is more than saved by securing all, and full, allowances and deductions due under the Income Tax Acts."—Write to ACCOUNTANT, 11 Salisbury Road, Forest Gate, E.7, if you need help with your business accounts.

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