

# The FREETHINKER

FOUNDED · 1881

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

VOL. XXXVII.—No. 24

SUNDAY JUNE 17, 1917

PRICE TWOPENCE

## CONTENTS.

	Page.
<i>The Church and Society.—The Editor</i>	369
<i>The Glory of God.—J. T. Lloyd</i>	370
<i>How to Break the Boycott.—Mimmermus</i>	371
<i>Climate as a Factor in Organic Change.—T. F. Palmer</i>	372
<i>Christianity and the Way Out.—Alfred Russell</i>	373
<i>Let Us Prey!—C. B. W.</i>	374
<i>Acid Drops</i>	375
<i>Let's All Help</i>	376
<i>To Correspondents</i>	377
<i>Sugar Plums</i>	377
<i>Science and Spiritualism.—W. Mann</i>	378
<i>The Psychology of Insanity.—Y. C.</i>	379
<i>Notes from Scotland.—Caledon</i>	380
<i>Bowman and Others v. Secular Society, Limited</i>	380
<i>Notice of Meetings</i>	382
<i>Books, and Pamphlets</i>	383

## Views and Opinions.

### The Christian Revival.

If a revival of religion could be brought about by prophecy the Christian Churches in this country might look forward to a great increase in power after the War. For despite the now generally admitted neglect of religion during the War, and the many confessions that among the soldiers themselves for one that has had his religious beliefs strengthened a dozen have had theirs shattered, there is still plenty of talk about the revival of religion that is ahead. True, most of these prophets are careful to inform us that this revival is contingent upon certain happenings. If the Churches drop their sermonizing upon subjects that are without interest to the mass of the people, if class distinctions are ignored in the church, if more attention is paid to sociology and less to theology, if the Churches interest themselves in the state of the cities and cease troubling about the new Jerusalem, if, in short, the Churches cease to be Churches and throw their Christianity overboard, there will be a great revival of religion. Only in that case it doesn't seem that there will be much—from the point of view of the Churches—left to revive. Attempting to revive a corpse is never a profitable operation. \* \* \*

### The Churches and the Social Sense.

The immediate duty of the Christian Church, we are told, is to create and develop a social consciousness. The statement is quite in line with clerical arrogance and duplicity. The Churches cannot divest themselves of the idea that the direction and the control of society rests with them, and that if they fail, all fail. And, at the same time, their traditional fatuity prevents their realizing that the statement of the need carries with it a condemnation of Christianity. When Ruskin was told that the only friends of the poor were the clergy, he replied that that was the hardest thing he had ever heard said against them. For if they had done their duty there would be a sufficient sense of responsibility with all to make particular championship needless. We have had the Christian Churches in power for centuries.

They have enjoyed great power and controlled enormous wealth. What education existed was largely under their direction, and they have made a profession of religion the condition of an easy life or of promotion to office. If they could not command belief they have been able to enforce silence, and have manufactured hypocrites in their dread of intellectual honesty. If, then, our social sense is in so rudimentary, so unsatisfactory a state, what amount of confidence in the Christian Churches does that fact inspire? What have they been doing during the past? And are they likely to reverse their history in the future? \* \* \*

### The Policy of the Churches.

Fortunately for everybody, the creation of a social sense is not dependent upon the Churches. Neither is its development. A social conscience is one of the cardinal facts of human history. Man, as we know him, is its embodiment. What is needed to day is its development with a greater consciousness of its nature. At present its manifestation is—on any general scale—on the lower and less profitable level. In war, because that is quite impossible without co-operation and an appeal to "the consciousness of kind," we have driven home the lesson that every member of a human society is irrevocably committed to a share in its good or evil fortunes. In other matters it is conspicuously absent. And, in this respect, the evil influence of the Church is plain. From the moment War broke out it has preached vociferously in favour of co-operation in pursuit of the War, but it has remained significantly silent concerning other matters on which it might well have been vocal. Eloquent on the necessity for sacrificing human life, it has been dumb on the shameless plunder that has been going on in the supply of the people's food. It has preached the planting of our back gardens with potatoes, it has said nothing on the larger questions of the English land system—one of the worst in the whole of Europe. In the matter of education it has seen only the opportunity to more firmly establish sectarianism in the schools. And its leading representatives have openly welcomed the transference of human energy and ideas from the fruitful sphere of politics and sociology to the inconclusive theatre of war as offering an unprecedented chance of advantage to religion. We are not disputing the soundness of its instinct in all this, in a sense we admire it. For if there is one thing certain it is that the development of social life involves the decline of religion. Retard man's intellectual development and you maintain the strength of the religious idea. Prevent social development and you sustain the authority of religious institutions. These are generalizations which defy disproof.

\* \* \*

### Narrowing the Social Outlook.

Two things may be here said with perfect safety. The first is that the whole influence of Christianity has been in the direction of narrowing the scope of the social consciousness, and so hindering its development. In early societies where a religion includes the whole of the tribe there is less harm than when it includes no



more than a section of the people. In these circumstances—which become more important with the intellectual development of life—the welfare of society tends to become synonymous in the minds of religious believers with the acceptance of particular doctrines, and the orderly growth of the social sense is checked and diverted into positively injurious channels. We see this in the many generations during which heretics have been excluded from political office, and openly disfranchised as enemies of the State. Naturally, then, the social consciousness, instead of operating over the whole of society, is circumscribed in its application. The welfare of society becomes identified with the interests of a church, and a narrow, exclusive type of mind perpetuated. Nor is it without significance that side by side with the breaking down of religious barriers there has gone on a marked development in the sense of a community of interest as a prime condition of social well-being.

\* \* \*

#### Parasitic Religion.

The second important fact is that religion has all along maintained a parasitic existence. Feelings are claimed as religious that have no more vital connection with religious belief than has the multiplication table. The sense of right and wrong, care for others, the whole cluster of ethical sentiments and feelings are really social in origin, although ignorance often expresses them in terms of supernaturalism. How religion plays the parasite in social life is seen in the familiar phenomenon of "conversion." For this emphatically belongs to the period of adolescence. And the whole significance of adolescence is the development of a larger social self, the bringing of the young man or woman into a deeper and closer communion with the life of the race. Then we see enacted on a smaller scale what has taken place historically. The awakening social consciousness is interpreted as the "voice of God in the soul," a formative period that under wise guidance would be utilized in training serviceable citizens for the State, is seized upon by this or that church, with the result that the best years of youth are wasted, the community robbed of an intelligent self-reliant unit, and a mere sectarian created in place of a fully developed individual. The exploitation of the social sense in the interests of theology does not furnish so spectacular a page in the world's history as deaths at the stake, but it has had a more disastrous effect on the welfare of the race.

\* \* \*

#### The Beginning of the End.

Those who study the matter closely are at no loss to account for this emphasis on social duty by present-day religionists. It represents the final stage of a lengthy process. Preachers are to day forced to profess an interest in social topics, because whole masses of the population have lost interest in religious ones. Some may take up such topics willingly because of their strong human sympathies. Others do so because they are cute enough to observe that unless they modify their creed in accordance with the spirit of the age they and their religion will soon be left far in the rear. It is the last stand of a form of belief that once dominated life from the cradle to the grave. With many these tactics are obviously successful. But the number of those who see through the policy grows steadily. If religion means social service, the sooner it is called by its right name the better. Society gains nothing by squandering its energies in upholding, even indirectly, a system of beliefs which owe their origin to the ignorance of primitive savagery, and which were brought to maturity during the darkest and most deplorable period of European history.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

## The Glory of God.

THE *Shorter Catechism* declares that "man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever," the natural inference being that God's supreme ambition is to be the recipient of the never-ending praise and adoration of mankind. He hungers and thirsts after the magnification of his name, and those who gratify his selfish desire are promised ample reward. Joshua glorified the Lord by all his military conquests; and we read that, in return, "the Lord magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel" (Josh. iv. 14). The curious thing is that, although Jehovah is called the God of glory, whose glory is in himself, we are exhorted to make him glorious by bestowing glory upon him, with the assurance that if we regard his glorification as our chief end we shall enjoy him for ever. Such, briefly stated, is the teaching of the Bible concerning the glory of God, and the duty of glorifying him. In the *Church Times* for June 1 we find a remarkable sermon, entitled "The Glory of God," by the Ven. Cyril Hallett, M.A., Archdeacon of Rovuma, of which we can honestly say that it is thoroughly scriptural. The Archdeacon says:—

First in order, supreme in position, unrivalled in importance, stands the Glory of God.....Nothing that we can offer or do can contribute to his glory, for it is complete; nothing that finite man can give or withhold may augment or diminish his glory, for it is perfect. And yet it is the will, the gracious purpose, the Divine yearning of the Creator that we, his creatures, should give him glory.

The sheer absurdity of such a statement is undiscerned by the preacher, who tells us that God wants us to glorify him, not in order to add to his glory, which is impossible, but that "we may increase in his glory, that we may be 'changed from glory to glory,' that the refulgence of the glory which is of him and through him, may, through us, illumine the hearts of men in our homes and in our cities, throughout our country and colonies, to the uttermost parts of the earth." That is to say, we are to become glorious as the result of telling God how wonderfully glorious he is. God's glory is both complete and perfect, so that nothing we can offer, give, or withhold may either augment or diminish it, and yet we must glorify him in order to secure our own highest good.

According to Archdeacon Hallett there are three ways by which we may glorify God, namely, "praiseful thanksgiving, penitential propitiation, and prayerful pleading." In order to fully appreciate those points, we may state that the Venerable gentleman belongs to the Universities' Mission to Central Africa, which has built a beautiful cathedral at Zanzibar, and possesses several stations of considerable importance on the mainland. In June, 1913, a Conference of Protestant Missions with the Church Missionary Society was held at Kikuyu, British East Africa, the object of which was to consider a scheme or schemes of federation "with a view to ultimate union of the Native Churches in that section of the Dark Continent." At the close of the Conference there was a celebration of the Lord's Supper. There being no Anglican Church building in the place, the observance took place in a Presbyterian church. Four Protestant Missionary Societies were represented, and two bishops and the Heads of the Missions pledged themselves to recognize common membership between Federated Churches; to establish a common form of Church organization; to admit to any pulpit a preacher recognized by his own Church; to admit to communion a recognized member of any other Church; and to draw up and follow common courses of instruction both for candidates for baptism and candidates for ordination.



To outsiders such pledges seem eminently reasonable, but to the Bishop of Zanzibar every one of them was like a red rag to a bull. He published a long document, addressed to the Bishop of St. Albans, in which he gave forcible expression to his vehement disapproval of the findings of the Conference, and submitted the thesis that the Anglican Church, "at the present time, having regard to her exceedingly chaotic system of Truth, is entirely unfit to send missionaries to Heathen or Mohammedan lands." The Bishops of Mombasa and Uganda, who were present at the Conference and gave their support to the proposed scheme of federation, were charged with "depreciating the Ministry of which they are consecrated Heads." He is convinced that Episcopacy is the only Divinely appointed form of Church polity. He said:—

Episcopacy, and all that flows from it, is either God's Gift, or a terrible curse. If it be his Gift, dare we pretend that we have nothing to hand on to others? If it be not his Gift, had we not better renounce the Church that cherishes it as her life, and cast in our lot with those who long ago decided to go on without it? I can see no sin of the kind more terrible than that of preserving an outward form and organization of religion that offends many thousands of sincere believers in Christ, unless it happens that the outward is essentially filled with the Spirit of God. I have charged the Bishops of Mombasa and Uganda with heresy in their teaching of the meaning and value in Episcopacy.....On the day that a Bishop can communicate with a Protestant minister, deliberately and of set purpose, one of them is, it seems to me, bound in conscience to surrender the outward form which means so little to him, and yet so powerfully hinders the work of reunion.

Everybody remembers with what signal force and in what bitter spirit the ball of controversy was set rolling by the Bishop of Zanzibar's notorious pamphlet, a controversy which divided the Anglican Church into two stingingly hostile camps. Now, the sermon under review was delivered at the anniversary service of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa at St. John's, Red Lion Square, London, and the Archdeacon maintains that for the work done by this Mission we owe God praiseful thanksgiving. Evidently his Lordship of Zanzibar represents the Catholic party in the Anglican Church. Many years ago, two Catholic priests and the present writer were taken, through a mistake of their guide, to the Anglican cathedral instead of the Catholic at Zanzibar, and the former was outwardly so similar to what those priests had expected to see that they had expressed strong approval of it before the mistake was discovered. Then they very severely criticized the Catholic Party in the Anglican Church, making no effort to hide their contempt for it. The Anglican Bishop of Zanzibar denies the validity of the orders of non-episcopally ordained ministers, conveniently forgetting that the validity of his own orders is wholly repudiated by the Pope. The fact to be borne in mind is that each Mission believes that its own credentials are superior to those of all other Missions, while unprejudiced judges are doubtful whether much really useful work is done by any Mission whatever.

Speaking generally, we are profoundly convinced that no Church can sincerely call itself a displayer of God's glory; and there is no getting away from the fact that every Church spends much of its time in finding fault with and discrediting other Churches. Archdeacon Hallett fails utterly to show wherein or whereof God's glory consists, either in the Church or in the world. He tells us that the Deity is "Supreme in majesty, incomparable in power, unapproachable in perfection, infinite in knowledge, all-seeing and all-

loving, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning"; but neither the Church nor the world has ever supplied the slightest evidence of the existence of such a Being. Mr. H. G. Wells's *Invisible King* is finite, of whom it may legitimately be said that he has doubtless done his best, but that his best falls far short of the ideal. The Christian God *can* do everything and actually *does* nothing. He is omnipotent, and yet man, the creature of his hand, defies and thwarts him at every turn. He sits as King for ever, and yet the world he is supposed to govern in righteousness and truth is a veritable shamble. By a strange slip of the tongue the Archdeacon speaks of "this man-made world," thus giving the lie direct to a fundamental article of his own creed. We frankly aver that the world is wholly man-made; but we do not believe in an omnipotent Being of infinite knowledge, wisdom, and love, whose glory would be in his shame. In the Old Testament, Jehovah often showed his glory by putting his enemies to death, and he was often glorified as Lord of Hosts or Man of War. In Ezekiel, chapters xxxiii.-xxxix., there is a wonderfully vivid portrayal of his relation to Israel and Israel's enemies. He is even represented as commanding Gog to muster against the chosen people in order that he might manifest his glory in his defeat, whose overthrow he thus predicts:—

And I will call for a sword against him unto all my mountains, saith the Lord God; every man's sword shall be against his brother. And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him and upon his hordes, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing shower, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. And I will magnify myself, and sanctify myself, and I will make myself known in the eyes of many nations; and they shall know that I am the Lord.

Comment would be superfluous. All we need to say is that, with all the vehemence at our command, we repudiate such a Deity and positively decline to glorify him, preferring a man-made and a man-governed world, however imperfect the making and unsatisfactory the governing.

J. T. LLOYD.

## How to Break the Boycott.

Rough work, iconoclasm, but the only way to get at Truth.  
—Oliver Wendell Holmes.

It has been pointed out repeatedly in these columns that the Freethought Movement suffers from a boycott which is applied by Christians in the press, booksellers' and newsagents' shops, and at the municipal and private libraries. With rare exceptions, Freethought publications are ignored in the former, and kept out of the latter. Hence, it becomes increasingly necessary that every Freethinker should assist actively in the propagation of the literature of the Movement. Christian organizations spend annually tens of thousands of pounds in furtherance of their faith, and, incidentally, no small part of their propaganda is the vilification and misrepresentation of Freethought. A glance at the capacious catalogues of such organizations as the Religious Tract Society, the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, the Christian Evidence Society, and the many publishers who cater for the orthodox public, will be sufficient to show how complete are their methods, and how large is their success. These books, periodicals, and pamphlets, are distributed throughout the English-speaking world, and they penetrate into countless homes where Freethought works are never seen.

The clergy are past-masters at circumventing any



movement likely to prove dangerous to their superstition, and they have rare noses for heresy. The original Sunday-schools were initiated by laymen with the sole and laudable idea of imparting education to poor children on the one day in the week on which, in the dark days prior to the passing of the Factory Acts, they were free to receive it. Nowadays the Sunday-schools are not concerned with other than theological instruction, and the average Sunday-school teacher cares as much for real education as a pigeon cares for hydrostatics. Similarly with the public library movement, which was started with the idea of bringing serious and informative literature within reach of the poorest citizens. The clergy, of whom there are 50,000 in this country, have great influence on the local committees of these libraries, and their one and constant aim is to render such institutions, from their narrow and sectarian point of view, entirely harmless and innocuous. So long as the shelves of these libraries are stocked with the harmless volumes of the brothers Hocking, Miss Marie Corelli, Charles Garvice, Mrs. Barclay, and other purveyors of "the smooth tale, generally of love," they are quite content. The instant any attempt is made to place before the public works which make for sanity or for ordered thought, they at once display their animosity. The boycott is introduced, and the modern *Index Expurgatorius* contains the names of practically every author who is worth reading, from Bernard Shaw to Algernon Swinburne. None of the "intellectuals" escape, and Robert Blatchford suffers in the company of Eugene Brieux.

With the idea of combating this state of affairs, Freethinkers should ask for Freethought publications at the libraries which they use, and see that they are supplied. An excellent beginning could be made with Mr. Cohen's *Determinism or Free Will?* and with Vivian's *Churches and Modern Thought*. In extreme cases, the books might be presented to the library; but care must be taken that the volumes are not placed on a top shelf and quietly forgotten. So far as pamphlets are concerned, it is, perhaps, better to hand or post them to likely readers. Orthodox persons are often interested in controversial literature, and such introductions often means that regular readers of Freethought publications are obtained. Remembering that, in spite of a most rigorous boycott, many thousands of pamphlets are already in circulation, it must be apparent that, with the additional publicity, these figures may be largely exceeded in the immediate future. Literature should also be sold at all indoor and open-air meetings, and the sale entrusted as much as possible to the ladies of the Movement, who will thus find an outlet for their energies.

With regard to the *Freethinker*, it is useful to order the paper with other publications, so that the tradesman is faced with the dilemma of accepting or refusing a good customer. Another timely suggestion is for Freethinkers to join in any likely discussion in local papers. These organs often give far more space to readers' opinions than the large London newspapers. Letters should be terse, strictly to the point, and courteous, and should be written on one side of the paper only, and authenticated with the name and address of the sender, not, necessarily, for publication. Back numbers of the *Freethinker* should never be wasted, but should be left in trams, trains, and 'buses, or otherwise distributed. In order to prevent an improper use being made of these copies, it is wise to clip a piece from one of the corners, so that they may not be used as returns by unscrupulous newsagents. If these few hints are acted upon by our readers, it should prove of permanent benefit to the Movement. We should be pleased to hear from any readers who have any useful suggestions to offer in this connection.

Freethinkers must see to it that Freethought publi-

cations are circulated. Humility is a rare and fragrant virtue, but Freethinkers cannot surrender their rights at the behests of the clergy, however saintly. Let Freethinkers everywhere insist on their rights, and not only show that they are grateful for the work of the pioneers who suffered so much in the past, but that they are determined to extend their principles far into the future. After the long darkness of oppression the dawn has come:—

Not by eastern windows only,  
When daylight comes, comes in the light,  
In front the sun climbs slowly, how slowly!  
But westward, look, the land is bright.

MIMNERMUS.

## Climate as a Factor in Organic Change.

AMONG the multitudinous forces of Nature which operate in the transmutations of living matter the conditions of soil and atmosphere play a prominent part. It is a firmly established fact that changed conditions of life, constantly co-operating with the responsive powers of plants and animals, soon produce marked modifications in organic Nature. These organic responses to modified stimuli evolve those pronounced variations which superficially appear to arise spontaneously.

That the influences of climate exercise a powerful and permanent sway over the specific characters of floral and faunal organisms is demonstrated by a considerable amount of evidence. In his celebrated volumes dealing with the *Variation of Plants and Animals*, Darwin brought forward numerous instances of changes wrought by the effects of climate on cereals and other plants. The rapid changes displayed by the maize plants, introduced into Europe from America, afford striking proof of this. As Darwin states:—

During the first year the plants were twelve feet high, and a few seeds were perfected; the lower seeds in the ear kept true to their proper form, but the upper seeds became slightly changed. In the second generation the plants were from nine to ten feet high, and ripened their seed better; the depression on the outer side of the seed had almost disappeared, and the original beautiful white colour had become duskier. Some of the seeds had even become yellow, and in their now rounded form they approached the common European maize. In the third generation nearly all resemblance to the original and very distinct American parent was lost.

Nor are the marked influences of climatal conditions confined to grasses. The same phenomena are revealed by a study of forest trees. Twenty-nine different American trees when compared with their nearest European allies disclosed similar changes, although these trees were grown close together, and, so far as possible, under identical conditions. In the New World forms the leaves fell earlier, while their autumnal tints were brighter. The shapes of the leaves became different, and various other modifications occurred. All these variations Darwin attributed to the sustained action of another climate.

Botanists are agreed concerning the vast range of variation in the vegetable world, when floral forms are removed from their native surroundings to new conditions. Romanes doubted (*Darwin and after Darwin*, vol. ii., p. 206) whether a single plant species exists "whose distribution exposes it to any considerable differences in its external conditions of life, which does not present more or less considerable differences as to its characters in different parts of its range." The chemical nature of the soil, its organic constituents, the



atmospheric conditions of the growing season of the year, the amount of moisture available to the vegetation, are a few only of the innumerable phenomena which are conveniently summed up in the term climatal causes.

Climatic variation is plainly not restricted in its local manifestations to any special group of plants, because all the various forms of floral life participate in large measure in the changes observed. Moreover, unrelated floral structures display in numerous instances degrees of modification which correspond to the length of time to which they have been exposed to the modified conditions.

Distinct species growing on similar soils, elevations, and latitudes, present similar variations. One has only to compare plants growing on chalky land with plants found on fatter soils to observe pronounced variations. Various plants, again, are so influenced by sea-salt that they develop red-tinted fleshy leaves. That these and many other changes are due to differences in soil content and other external factors has been demonstrated experimentally.

In a humid atmosphere, such as that of Western Ireland—the most emerald part of the Emerald Isle—the green colour of the vegetation is wonderful. The same plants growing in England, particularly in our Eastern Counties, seldom, except in an unusually warm and moist spring, display the freshness of colour so noticeable in the Irish vegetation. Plants cultivated in permanently damp surroundings develop smoother leaves and darker blossoms. Aridity of soil and atmosphere, on the other hand, conduce to the appearance of paler flowers, and rougher and yellower leaves. Journeying through our own small island in an average season, it is easy to infer from the general character of the landscape the nature of the soil, the humidity of the atmosphere, and the normal rainfall of each particular district.

An imposing array of evidence has been accumulated proving how the combined influences of external Nature affect the various aspects of life. And as it has never been proved that organic changes, once they have become firmly fixed in an animal or plant structure, are not transmitted through heredity to descendants, we opine that such transformations must play, and, presumably, have ever played, a primary part in the drama of evolution.

Taking the animal kingdom as a whole, it is, perhaps, less susceptible to climatic influences than the more pliable plants. Yet, even among animals, proofs of external agency in the modification of organisms are quite numerous. It certainly seems absurd to suppose that the hairy coverings acquired by animals to resist the cold conditions of the Glacial Period were not transmitted through heredity from parents to progeny. But be that as it may, we possess in living animals salient examples of groups of creatures representing distinct genera, families, orders; or, for that matter, classes, which show clear signs of their combined response to the influences exerted by their environment. And it is also true that the degrees of specific change are more or less proportional to the amount of climatic change experienced by the organisms in question. Evidences of progressive animal modification may be plainly seen in the gradual changes which creep over animal forms as we pass from one part of a large land surface to another.

Dr. J. A. Allen prosecuted most extensive researches in connection with climatal variation in America. The birds and mammals were found to vary in size and colour with the changing climates of the larger areas investigated. Dr. Allen was compelled to consider these

phenomena as the consequence of the powers wielded by external conditions. Gould's studies in the distribution of bird life in Australia forced him to similar conclusions.

The seasonal variations shown in the summer and winter forms of certain butterflies lend themselves to the same solution as it has been shown that the action of cold or heat on the caterpillar or pupa influences the appearance of the perfect insect very materially. Weismann subjected the chrysalids of lowland butterflies to very cold conditions, and the mature butterflies were like those of alpine areas, thus proving that the northern "species" are really climatic or seasonal varieties. Edwards has obtained even more remarkable results.

Professor Packard, the eminent American naturalist, is of opinion that it is quite probable that nearly one-third, or, perhaps, one half, of the museum species, and species described in biological writings, are climatic or local varieties or species. And he points out that:—

Introduced species tend to vary much more than in their native lands. Children born of British, German, or French parentage become in the United States slightly taller than their parents; the soldiers of the United States Army during the Civil War of 1861-65 were found, by measurements made on 1,110,000 individuals, to average taller than those of the British Army.

Cave-dwelling animals yield testimony of environmental influence in several ways, and the direct influence of climate is shown in many organisms, such as the dog, cat, horse, cattle, sheep, &c., when these are taken to a foreign land.

Pronounced modifications are soon set up, and the animals depart more or less widely from their ancestors. One of the finest illustrations of this phenomenon is afforded by the changes undergone by the descendants of a common rabbit in Porto Santo. A doe rabbit and her litter were set free on that island in the fifteenth century, and their descendants are now one-third smaller, have considerably changed in colour, and vary greatly in other respects. Yet, when some of these rodents were returned to England, they soon commenced to resume their original colour.

The changes wrought in a few centuries in a new environment were truly astounding. As Darwin wrote:—

If the history of these Porto Santo rabbits had not been known, most naturalists on observing their much reduced size, their colour, reddish above and grey beneath, their tails and ears not tipped with black, would have ranked them as a distinct species. They would have been strongly confirmed in this view by seeing them alive in the Zoological Gardens, and hearing that they refused to couple with other rabbits. Yet this rabbit, which there can be little doubt would thus have been ranked as a distinct species, has certainly originated since the year 1420.

T. F. PALMER.

## Christianity and the Way Out.

IN modern times Christianity is adjusted to many tests by being dressed up in many colours of varying hues. The man who has imbibed evolutionary ideas, but does not wish to give up Christian essentials, drops the story of the Fall, and the Old Testament legends generally, but clings to New Testament doctrines, subject to certain omissions, such as the Atonement or the Trinity. How the play of Reason can be allowed to operate within certain limits only is a question which is not seriously taken into account, but the advantage of these



wriggling, elastic, views appears to be plain enough. Concessions can be allowed at will, so long as there are other essentials within easy mental reach. The rigid old Calvinists of earlier days would scarcely recognize Christianity in its modern garb, without the necessary label or labels to explain and differentiate. Biblical Inspiration is not acceptable to many within the fold of the Christian Church. Scientific explanations of the growth of the universe, the forces of nature and their varied manifestations, the evolution of animal and man, textual criticism, and the keen rapier thrusts of Rationalist critics, have destroyed the possibility of further belief in the Inspired Word. Many cling through ignorance still, or with lingering regrets stronger than the measure of their enlightenment.

To give up the idea of Biblical Inspiration equals throwing the whole array of Bible doctrines into the melting pot of criticism and analysis. The glamour departs, giving Reason and sense a chance to become busy. Old Testament history, with its impossible stories, repetitions, glorifications of war, revenge, murder, and obscene passages in the record, are soon disposed of. Like other ancient writings, it is a reflection, more or less obscure, of the tone, temper, and events of those times, with all which that involves, but nothing more. Prophets spoke and wrote, but the fulfilment of their prophecies, vengeful or benignant, depended, as to-day on the growth of events and human intelligence. Those portions of the New Testament which are outgrowths of the Old, naturally go the way of their predecessor. But a formidable list of doctrines remains to be tackled by the newly fledged opponent of Biblical Inspiration.

The central figure in the New Testament narrative is Jesus, the miraculously born, miracle working idealist with his Sermon on the Mount teaching, claim to be the Son of God, and opposition to temporal powers, terminating in his death by crucifixion, followed by his mysterious resurrection. If one be not prejudiced and timid, it becomes impossible to accept the story of the miraculous birth, especially as similar stories form part of other religions, and if one account be true, then all are acceptable. The miracles, subjected to critical examination, become incredible, if mental reservations are rigidly excluded. The doctrine of the Trinity, with its implications, is no more reasonable than the Virgin birth for one who has cast off the bondage of mental fear and subservience to priestcraft—Roman or Protestant. Christ's substitutionary death is an untenable theory, since human bloodshed (martyr or propitiatory) has no relationship whatever to human error, slight or grave, points of contact being absent, as the independent thinker readily perceives. Prayer to a personal God, whose existence cannot be postulated, becomes an unnecessary performance, however sincere the suppliant may be, as it is perceived that natural laws are not subject to the desires or caprice of individuals. Human aspiration does not come within the category of Christian prayer. The doctrines of Christ's intercession, founded on the contradictory statements regarding his mysterious rising from the tomb, the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper—really Pauline—and the supremacy of the life of faith in God, vanish into very thin air when rational tests are applied. The whole ingenious structure rests on acceptance of the Personal prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God-idea, with his antagonist the Devil, and their abodes of bliss and torment.

If, for many reasons often recounted by Secularist writers, these latter beliefs vanish or assume vague, abstract, impersonal form, the superstructure falls to pieces. When a man says he is an Atheist or Agnostic, he expresses, by implication, complete opposition to

Christian doctrine, and it is because many doubters of Biblical inspiration do not travel so far on their journey from orthodoxy that they remain doubters, adjusters, searchers who fail to really find. They renounce the more glaringly ludicrous doctrines—hell fire, the Trinity, or even the Virgin birth—but cling to others, altering the make-up to deceive the eye without satisfying the intelligence, and finding a comfortable half-way house—Unitarian or some other—ready to accommodate them. But the greater all-embracing detachment involves too much mental heroism and social ostracism. Readjustment of mental outlook, social relationship, walking in new paths, become necessary.

How can the way be cleared without being made too easy? The Bible in the schools and in the home requires to be secularized so as to form part of the whole secular teaching. This can be best accomplished by the exclusion of Bible teaching altogether from the school curriculum, to the joy of many a schoolboy, and its possible introduction later, in an amended form, with the supernatural elements eliminated or rendered harmless; for the Bible, as a record, has its place in history, and the means of studying both sides of a subject enable us to form judgments, besides supplying argumentative weapons: School Board candidates who do not favour Secular Education should be opposed or voted against. Social ostracism and its accompaniments must be met philosophically so long as there is no other way, but the possibilities of life in its richness and fulness open up new channels of endeavour and new fields of enquiry; for the world we live in, and the realms of wonder that surround us, the kingdoms of this world, our fellows and their ways, crooked and straight, possess meaning and interest hitherto unexplored. Restrictions are removed; a sense of freedom of action braces us up. All types, tastes, and inclinations can be accommodated within the confines of the non-supernatural. The greatest stumbling-block of all consists of Church vested interests. Church and commercialism, with incidental props, are linked together by congenial, strengthening, contacts, notwithstanding other worldliness. Churches and churchmen depend upon rich benefactors for patronage and support. War and the Sermon on the Mount can be squared by the followers of Christ. Disprove Christian doctrines, explain Secularism as an alternative, and you do much to clear away the fogs of superstition that have blinded the mental vision of thousands. Reason secures her rights, and much mental rubbish disappears. But the gateway to life's problems has been opened, and the problems await solution. Only by getting into close touch with these problems, studying them, and joining with the forces contributing to their solution, can Secularist effort reap its full reward.

ALFRED RUSSELL.

### Let Us Prey!

LET us pray, aye! let us pray;  
 So chant the glib-tongued priests;  
 Now just what for, let us pray  
 To look upon the feasts  
 Which our masters make away.  
 Let us pray for their long living,  
 For their safety from all tolls,  
 That they may be spared for giving  
 A little to us poor souls,  
 And our many sins forgiving.  
 Let us prey, aye! let us prey;  
 'Tis time we now regained our own;  
 Arm thou for the righteous fray,  
 To fight for more than meatless bone,  
 No more of "let us pray"—pay, prey!

C. B. W.



## Acid Drops.

The Dean of Durham, Dr. Hensley Henson, says that "on many devout minds the dark shadow of doubt has fallen," and the Rev. J. H. Shakespeare agrees that the Dean has "correctly expressed the wide difficulties which are felt to-day by many earnest and troubled minds." So are leaders of opposing Churches drawn together in the face of a common danger. Of course, doubt of Christianity has to be represented as something "dark"—that is part of the game. These people hover between describing disbelievers in religion as foolishly hilarious or suffering miserably under the shadow of an eclipse of faith. But we wish they would decide what we are.

For our own part, we feel neither elated at finding out that Christianity is ridiculously untrue, nor grievously cast down over the discovery. It is so ridiculous that we feel grown-up people ought to be ashamed of being suspected believing in its truth. And it is so useless, that requiring a great European War to prove it, so demonstrates the great lack of serious thinking on the part of the general public.

Mr. Shakespeare says it is perplexing to religious people to find that Germany, so largely under the influence of Lutherism, should have acted as it has done. But is that really surprising? Some of the most brutal things in human history have been done in the name of religion, and under the influence of religion. The massacre of the Huguenots, the crusade against the Albigenses, the age-long torture of the Jews, were all motivated by religion. One hardly knows whether this expressed surprise at religious people acting brutally is real or assumed.

Mr. Shakespeare says the great problem is "Why a God, and an omnipotent God, should permit such a world-horror as this War?" And he does "not think any adequate answer can be given at present." By adequate answer Mr. Shakespeare plainly means an answer favourable to his religion. He would not consider any other answer adequate. And, meanwhile, he will go on believing in the answer he dare not give. That is the art of being a Christian. Like a camel, he receives his burdens kneeling; and, as a proof of his faith, when an absurdity is offered him, he swallows it without effort.

Says the Bishop of London, in an interview published in the *New Age*, "Christianity abolished slavery by making master and man kneel together before the same Christian altar." On this one has visions of the abolition of slavery following the adoption of Christianity by master and man. And so it did—in a sense. "After they had been kneeling together for some eighteen centuries chattel slavery was abolished, as we all know. Meanwhile, the slave had been taught, from the same altar, that to resist the commands of his master was contrary to the Christian. And before chattel slavery was abolished, the same good Christians in this country had instituted the Factory System, under which children of nine and ten years were flogged to work and kept at work twelve and fourteen hours a day. And, still kneeling before the same altar, women were sent to work in mines, stripped nearly naked, and harnessed like horses to coal trucks. A wonderfully effective thing is Christianity! And no slaveholder in the world has ever objected to it. Slaveholders always had a strong desire to see their slaves kneeling before the same altar as themselves. They then felt their position quite secure.

At the inquest on Sophia Gardener, of Farm Lane, Fulham, who committed suicide by drowning, it was stated the woman was a constant church-goer, and had been to services four times daily. The restraining power of religion is not very evident in this case.

The death of Mr. Leopold de Rothschild recalls the fact that he was the third son of Baron Lionel de Rothschild, who was the first Jew who, as a Jew, represented a British con-

stituency in the House of Parliament. Christian charity is of such slow growth that it took nearly twenty centuries for Christians to remember that a Jew was a man and a brother.

A remarkable burst of Christian charity by Dr. Furse, Bishop of Pretoria, was recently exhibited at Johannesburg, when the bishop advocated the tarring and feathering of men opposed to military service. Evidently, Dr. Furse does not immediately expect the second coming of Christ.

Mr. Horatio Bottomley says that, in view of the very strict press censorship, editors should strike. The trouble is that they will not strike anything unless they are paid the usual advertisement rates.

The Rev. J. Morgan Gibbon, of Stamford Hill, is notoriously dogmatic and cocksure in all his pulpit and other utterances. Recently he devoted a whole sermon to a consideration of the religious signs of the times, according to his reading of which "religion is coming in upon us again." The majority of Christian leaders, among whom are the Dean of Durham and the Rev. J. H. Shakespeare, declare that the religious outlook is depressingly dark and discouraging; but Mr. Gibbon is in possession of much ampler knowledge and sounder judgment, and he assures us that "many who were indifferent are now eagerly pondering the answers of religion, while its great questions, Is there a God? Is the soul of man immortal? Is there an eternal difference between right and wrong? are the master-questions of the day for millions."

Is not Mr. Gibbon aware that whether such questions are the master-questions of the day for millions or not, they are certainly the questions, *not* of religion, but of people who *doubt the truth* of religion. The mere asking of questions betokens imperfect belief, if not more or less positive unbelief. Before the War there were millions of men and women who had never asked, "Is there a God?" It is the War that has forced the question upon them, and thousands of them have been driven by the logic of events to a negative answer. As many military chaplains have reluctantly admitted, the War has been and is a breeder of Atheists; and it is well known that Atheists do not believe in immortality. Mr. Gibbon ought to know that the difference between right and wrong is not a religious question at all, but a purely social one.

The Rev. F. C. Spurr, of Regent's Park Baptist Chapel, who has so often, for many years, asserted that Freethought is a dead and buried enemy, charges Mr. G. H. Wells with making a most ferocious attack upon the Christian doctrine of the Trinity in his *God the Invisible King*. We hold no brief whatever for Mr. Wells, but we must remind Mr. Spurr that the occupants of glass houses should refrain from casting stones. It has been Mr. Spurr's habit in Melbourne, as well as in London, to attack Freethought "in what one can only call an almost vicious way."

Wesleyan Methodist Church statistics show notable decreases in both Church membership and Sunday-school scholars. There is a decrease of 3,870 members, and 20,396 scholars. This discounts the clerical boast that the War is favourable to religion.

The clergy are not only exempted themselves from the operations of the Military Service Act, but at Camberley the magistrates decided that a lay-reader was exempt as a minister of religion. If this ruling holds good, it will add to the 50,000 parsons who are already exempted in this country.

The *Ploughshare*, a Quaker Organ of Social Reconstruction, for February, has the following paragraph:—

We are glad to learn that there is now a Theosophist Chaplain visiting Wormwood Scrubs, as this means that yet another religion is represented by adherents who refuse to violate its tenets by slaughtering their fellows. The privilege of having Chaplains for the various religions is one for which we should be grateful. There are still two notable exceptions, however—Agnosticism and Atheism—which compare very favourably with the other religions regarding the number of their adherents who have a conscientious objection to murder.



Canon Newbolt says that God is totally unlike all other beings, and never was a truer statement made. Indeed, God is so absolutely dissimilar to all other beings that it is quite impossible for sane people to believe in his existence at all. Fancy thoughtful people getting the following twaddle inflicted upon them:—

He is unlike any other king. Look back, dear brethren, on the reign of God. He sitteth in the heavens over all from the beginning. Who made this world? God. Who rules it? God. Who has watched over and woven into one great plan all the conflicting issues of life? God. Yes, on this Trinity Sunday, think of the reign of God.

And those who do really *think* of the reign of God are fully aware how infinitely absurd it is to believe in it.

The Vicar of Holy Trinity, Malvern, has just published a volume on *The Church and Social Questions*, and in it he says of his brother clergymen that, while many of them are repeating out-of-date truths,—

Too many also are up-to-date at second hand, and quote Scotch translators of German rationalists to mystified congregations. Some repeat moral platitudes in an emotional manner, and some spend all their time in denouncing the dogmas they have not studied, or the pietism of those with whom they have no sympathy. They have failed and we shall not mend matters or win men back into our Churches by talking politics in an ill-informed way.

The chance of the clergy winning men back to the Church is very small in any case. When men have gained the recognition of the falsity of Christian beliefs, it is absurd to talk of winning them back by altering the tone of the preaching.

The Vicar has some "nasty things" to say of the way in which some clergymen seek advancement, and of the methods adopted. Many, he says,—

write shameless letters of self-commendation in an attempt to secure preferment. Only recently I was told of an officer at the front who kept a Mess merry for days with extracts from the letters of clerical aspirants to a living of which he was patron. Some sent their photographs, and one sent instead the portrait of his wife, which no doubt made a stronger appeal.

No doubt!

Newspaper editors like to be thought up-to-date, but what are we to think of the *Daily Chronicle's* suggestion that the Kaiser is Satanic. In another column of the same issue is quoted Wilhelm's latest outburst, "To God alone is it known how long the War will last." A dreary devil who drivels devotion is centuries behind the times.

"Thank God," said the Bishop of Chelmsford, speaking at Ilford on June 9, "the War is to go on until our purpose is accomplished." Beyond the bare purpose of beating Germany, we do not suppose the Bishop of Chelmsford is any more aware of what is "our purpose" than we are; but why thank God for it? Could God stop the War before we have accomplished "our purpose"? And if the duration of the War rests with this hypostatized ignorance, why does he not see that "our purpose" is achieved, and so bring the War to a speedy end? Perhaps the Bishop will explain.

The Rector of Potter Hanworth asks, in the *Church Times*, whether an agreement on the education question cannot be reached. His idea of an agreement is peculiar and eminently Christian. He suggests that four representatives of the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of England, and the Free Church Council meet, and adopt as a basis for discussion (1) Christian teaching subject to the conscience clause, (2) parents to decide as to the special religious teaching to be given, (3) all teachers appointed to declare that they can give Christian instruction in accordance with the Apostles' Creed, (4) the appointment of teachers. That is all! And that is the Rector's opinion of a "common understanding"!

As usual, it is a common understanding between Christians that is aimed at. No one else matters. The impertinent egotism of these Christians quite prevents their realizing that

there are other people in the world beside themselves, and that the educational system must be finally settled, not upon the basis of what suits the sectarian interests of Christians, but upon the basis of what is just and equitable to all citizens. The suggestion of the Rector of Potter Hanworth deserves publicity only because it so well expresses the normal Christian attitude. One day these gentlemen will, perhaps, recognize that in the modern State, Christianity is no more than a religious sect, and that while it is justified in demanding the protection of the State in the pursuit of its legitimate interests, it has no right whatever to ask that the State shall aid it in forcing upon the public its ridiculous doctrines.

There is a discussion going on in the *Glasgow Herald* concerning the character of Socialist Sunday-schools. Enemies of the schools are keen to prove that the teaching therein is quite "materialistic" in tone. On the other hand, champions of the schools are pathetically, and foolishly, desirous of rebutting the charge, and urge that the "words and principles of Jesus are most earnestly studied and taught." We do not know if this is correct, but we feel that unless the teaching of these schools is "materialistic"—in the scientific and philosophic sense—they will be of little value so far as a sane and helpful Socialism is concerned.

General Sir William Robertson gave a company of cadets some good advice the other day, even though it was of a platitudinous character. "Be truthful and just," he said, and then proceeded to spoil his advice with "and let it be known on occasion that all you do is based on strong religious convictions." But Sir William Robertson must have known that amongst those whom he was addressing were some without strong religious convictions, and even with no religious convictions at all. What of these? Sir William surely does not mean that they are not, or cannot be, truthful and just. And if he does not mean that, his advice does not amount to much. Probably it was no more than a piece of customary cant, delivered without the slightest intellectual appreciation of all that it involved. All the same, it is a pity our public men do not cultivate a more respectable mental attitude in such matters.

## Let's All Help.

Is there any reason why we should not gain a thousand new readers during the next two months? We can see nothing impossible about the achievement—if our present readers make up their minds it shall be done. If some millionaire would come along and finance the cost of advertising the *Freethinker*, we would undertake to do it ourselves. But as no complaisant millionaire has come along, and as we have no capital to meet the cost of that plan, we are compelled to fall back upon the goodwill of those who take an interest in this journal because of the great Cause it serves.

We are gaining new readers all the time, although, thanks to the War, we are losing readers all the time, and thus not reaping the profit we should have gained under normal conditions. Still, we are more than holding our own, and that is certainly gratifying during a period when so many papers have had to suspend publication.

Now, we want our readers to make a supreme effort. If a thousand of them will resolve to find a new subscriber for us during the next month, they will not alone be greatly extending the influence of the paper—they will be giving very material help towards meeting the very, very heavy expenses attendant upon the production of the *Freethinker*. Most of our readers must know a likely subscriber. Let those who do, make a "dead set" at him or her until success crowns their efforts. Don't be beaten at the task. Summer-time is a season when everyone is more or less on the move, and there are thus exceptional opportunities for carrying on the good work.



To Correspondents.

- C. W. MARSHALL.—We long ago gave up wondering at the stupidities of educated men. Otherwise we should have spent our life in a constant state of wonderment. After all, there must be something to educe if education is effective; and in many cases this condition is lacking.
- T. FOWLER.—To act with courage is invariably the wiser and more profitable policy.
- WE are asked to say, in response to a recent inquiry, that the publisher of Madelin's *The Revolution* is Heinemann; price 7s. 6d. net.
- MR. J. DRISCOLL would like Mr. Mann to inform him, if possible, where he could find Mr. Maskelyne's exposure of the Davenport Brothers.
- R. EMINSON (Canada).—Subscription for *Freethinker* received. Your friendly criticism was justifiable and acceptable. We are pleased to have your appreciative sympathy with the worries and troubles of this War period.
- E. CRAWFORD.—Thanks for reference.
- H. AUSTIN.—Pleased to hear from a year-old reader who derives so much benefit from this paper. Your plan of showing that an Atheist is not ashamed of being known as one is the best way of encouraging those who do not believe in Christianity to speak out.
- C. MORGAN.—We do expect to get a number of new readers "when the boys come home" Your information as to the interest taken in the *Freethinker* by men in the Army confirms this view. So far as we can, we send out free copies to soldiers in various parts of the world, and we believe they are appreciated.
- L. N.—If we stopped to think of all the worries and troubles we may have to face, we might get discouraged. We find the best plan is to just go ahead and deal with each difficulty as it arises.
- T. P. WHITE.—Thanks for suggestion, which will be acted on.
- J. W. LEIPER.—A "Flag Day" for Freethinkers is not a bad idea, and we believe that, if enough sellers could be obtained, plenty would buy them. Half the people who buy these things have only the vaguest notion of what they are purchasing. Thanks for papers and addresses, to which copies are being sent. We are not "overworking"—only working hard.
- J. WELTON.—We do not see what more definite statement could be given.
- A. ROBERTS.—Shall appear, but cannot promise an early date.
- J. W. WHITE.—Pleased to hear you are back in England with all your old interest in the old cause. By all means do all you can and we will give all the assistance in our power. The Ingersoll cards are out of print. The address of the R.P.A. is 17, Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, E.C.
- MR. F. H. HORN writes to correct an error in our Report of the N.S.S. Conference. It was he who moved the election of Mr. Cohen to the Presidency on behalf of the Bethnal Green Branch.
- B. SIBLEY.—So far as we are aware, your letter did not reach us. The "*Freethinker*" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

Colonel Ingersoll was a great Freethinker and an admirable man. His writings have been of incalculable benefit in the dissemination of Freethought, and we should be the last to find fault with anything said in his praise. All the same, it sounds strange in English ideas to find the *Sun* (New York), announcing the decision of the Bowman Case, to hear that the Secular Society, Limited, was founded forty years ago, that G. W. Foote was one of the founders with Mrs. Annie Besant and Charles Bradlaugh, and that the purpose of the Society was to "spread Ingersoll's ideas." Needless to say, the Society was founded nineteen years ago, not forty; G. W. Foote was the founder—not one of them; Bradlaugh was then dead, and Mrs. Besant had left the Freethought Party. That the Society was founded for the purpose of spreading Ingersoll's ideas in England is a statement due to the *Sun's* reporter never having heard of Freethought apart from Ingersoll.

We recently heard from Mr. R. H. Rosetti, and all his London friends will be pleased to hear that so far he has

succeeded in dodging German shells and bullets. At the time of writing he was playing the part of cook. He says:—

Yesterday morning an exploding shell sent a shower of dirt and *debris* into the cook-house just as I was making the breakfast tea; so you can see one cannot feel dull with so much liveliness going on. Last year, at the Annual Conference, I had the great pleasure—to me—of voting for you as President of the N. S. S. Now, after nearly a year in the President's chair, surely everybody in the Movement must admit that your triumph on that particular Whit-Sunday has carried the flag of the Party with vigour and dignity through a very trying year.

Unfortunately, I cannot be at the Conference this year, but I have every confidence that it will re-elect you without a dissenting voice.

From here, I can assure you, the much-talked-of revival of religion in our Army is most conspicuous by its absence. There has been no church parade in my company since I have been here, but I have not heard a single complaint on that score. Scepticism is truly the spirit of the great majority of fellows I have come in contact with out here. They do not volunteer their scepticism, but once mention the mildest Freethought ideas and there are many professions of personal religious decadence.

Recently a N.C.O. of my company, in making out a report concerning me, looked up surprised when I said "None" in answer to his question, "What religion?" In quite a friendly manner he said he would come and have a talk with me, to which I responded with an invitation. A few nights later he duly arrived, and in a very short time my dugout was packed. The N.C.O. was, in argument, quite a gentleman, and it was a pleasure to discuss with him. If those who talk of a religious revival among the troops could have seen the apparently deeply interested audience in that dugout, it would not, of course, have altered their business cry of a demand for their wares, but would have shown what little hopes there were for actual realization. Amid much friendly laughter, the N.C.O. laughingly declared he was ——, and left the dugout to attend to some duties. (The line represents a word better left unwritten, although in common use among the troops.) Another N.C.O. continued to discuss—a gentleman also; but the evening finished with the verdict willingly given to the Freethought side of the discussion.

The Glasgow Branch has suspended its meetings during the summer, but a special meeting was held on Sunday last to consider and discuss the Report of the Conference sent by its representative, Mr. J. T. Lloyd. A vote of thanks has been sent that gentleman for acting as the Branch's representative. We would suggest that although indoor meetings are not now being carried on, the summer months should be utilized for thinking out a regular plan of campaign for the coming autumn and winter season.

A correspondent falls foul of a recent assertion of ours that physical force does not, and never did, constitute the real ground for the franchise. He professes surprise that the *Freethinker* should set up moral right as a public standard. For our part, we should be sorry to see the *Freethinker* stand for anything else. We cheerfully grant that physical force may be used to enforce a moral right, and the fear of physical force may have been the immediate cause of certain moral rights being admitted; but we quite fail to see how that affects our original contention. And even the use of physical force generally justifies itself by an appeal to public necessity, or to some other essentially moral consideration.

A correspondent sends us the following, from Mr. C. V. Heckethorn's *London Memories*:—

Mr. Walker was a founder at Rotherham, in Yorkshire, at whose works Thomas Paine made his first experiments on a large scale in iron bridges, having in 1787 presented to the Academy of Sciences in Paris a model of such a bridge. The famous one-arch iron bridge at Sunderland was the first result of Paine's experiments. It was cast at Mr. Walker's works. It was entirely Paine's idea, but the prejudice against his name and writings enabled an impostor to claim, and retain, the merit of the invention. Paine sent a full explanation of his plans and experiments to the Society of Arts, which was about to be printed in their Transactions, when the appearance of the *Rights of Man* put a stop to the publication: bigotry always was a stumbling-block placed in the path of science.



## Science and Spiritualism.

### XIV.

(Continued from p. 358.)

We are far from the time when Pascal could say "Miracles are as a flash of lightning that reveals." The lightning no longer flashes. Science stands ready to explain the first miracle that arises in support of a new religion.—Guyau, "The Non-Religion of the Future," p. 355.

Criticism is no respecter of things; it neither stops at mystery nor prestige, it breaks every charm, it pulls aside every veil. This power, utterly lacking in reverence, casting an unflinching and scrutinizing glance on everything alike, is from its very essence guilty of high treason against the divine and the human.....The cause of criticism is the cause of rationalism, and the cause of rationalism is the cause of the modern spirit itself. To curse rationalism is to curse the whole development of human intelligence from Petrarch and Boccaccio, that is, from the appearance of the critical spirit.

It is not from one argument only but from the whole of modern science that the tremendous result is derived. "There is no such thing as the supernatural."

Nature is simply human reason, it is the immutable, the exclusion of everything savouring of the whimsical; and our modern task will not be accomplished until we have destroyed the belief in the supernatural, no matter in what shape—the same that we have destroyed the belief in magic and witchcraft. All these belong to the same order of things.—Ernest Renan, "The Future of Science" (1891), pp. 37-38, 40-41.

THE most distinguished convert made by Madame Blavatsky was Mrs. Annie Besant, who is now President of the Theosophical Society. Mrs. Besant began life as a ritualistic High Churchwoman, the wife of a clergyman. She then went to the other extreme, becoming an Atheist and joining the National Secular Society. Then she became a Socialist, and ultimately a Theosophist. Her changes have been chameleon-like in their diversity, and there are not wanting those who prophesy that Mrs. Besant will ultimately find peace in the bosom of the Holy Roman Church.

In all her divigations Mrs. Besant has always been a follower of somebody else. It is the personal factor that has always swayed her in intellectual matters. The heroic figure of Charles Bradlaugh, defying gods and men in his titanic battle for liberty of speech and publication, captured her imagination and sympathy. She heard him lecture, and immediately gave in her allegiance, under the spell of Bradlaugh's glowing eloquence.

Mrs. Besant has been a voluminous writer during all phases of her diverse mental wanderings, but she has never contributed a single original idea to any of the causes to which she has at different times given her allegiance. She has adopted her opinions—and discarded them—like suits of clothes. Her intellect is at the mercy of her emotions. Such women are the natural prey of charlatans like Madame Blavatsky, who know full well how to bind them in the spell of their fascination.

Now, if the Mahatma missives were genuine, and were really, as Madame Blavatsky asserted, "precipitated" by "astral force" from the Himalayan Mountains by the mysterious Mahatmas, then they should continue to arrive after the death of Madame Blavatsky.

Madame Blavatsky died on May 8, 1891, and three months later (on August 30, 1891) Mrs. Besant made the sensational announcement to her old followers at the Hall of Science that she had received messages from the Mahatmas. Her words were: "You have known me for sixteen and a half years. You have never known me tell a lie. ('No, never,' and loud cheers.) I tell you that since Madame Blavatsky left I have had letters in the same handwriting as the letters which she received. (Sensation.) Unless you think dead persons can write, surely that is a remarkable fact." In an interview published in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, September 1, 1891, Mrs. Besant pledged herself definitely to "precipitation." In

answer to a question as to whether the letters came through the post, she declared: "No, I did not receive the letters through the post; the letters I receive from the Mahatmas are 'precipitated.'" As Mr. Edmund Garrett observes:—

Mrs. Besant did not overrate the extent of her public credit. She was implicitly believed by many who would not have troubled their heads at all over an assertion of Madame Blavatsky's. A "boom" was the immediate result—the second big boom in the society's history. Mrs. Besant had the satisfaction of seeing her statement honoured with a salvo of leading articles. "Can it be," the *Daily Chronicle* exclaimed, "that there are things in heaven and earth which philosophy and science have not yet dreamed of?"—(*Daily Chronicle*, August 31.) And it opened its columns to a flood of correspondence on Theosophy and things occult. Day after day a crop of letters attested the public appetite for the marvellous.<sup>1</sup>

Papers that had previously maintained a dead silence about Mrs. Besant's atheistic propaganda now filled columns about her adhesion to supernaturalism, because it countenanced the masses in their superstitions.

At the time of Madame Blavatsky's death, Colonel Olcott, the President of the Theosophical Society, was in India. Mr. William Q. Judge, the Vice-President, was in America, and Mrs. Besant was in London. With the death of Madame Blavatsky, the Society's one link with the Mahatmas seemed to have broken. The "Masters" allowed a whole "fortnight to elapse without giving any sign that they survived the decease of their high-priestess." The renewal of the "astral post" coincided, strange to say, with the arrival in this country of Mr. Judge, who, upon receiving the announcement of Madame Blavatsky's decease, telegraphed, "Do nothing till I come."

Of the machinations of Mr. Judge, of the manner in which he schemed and plotted to oust Colonel Olcott from the leadership of the Society and himself into it; of how Colonel Olcott, who swallowed all the Blavatsky miracles without winking, suddenly developed a previously unsuspected and very keen critical faculty when he found that Mr. Judge was designated by the Mahatmas as the successor of Madame Blavatsky in place of himself; of how Olcott was the means of exposing the new Mahatma missives as the fabrication of Mr. Judge—all these things are set forth in inimitable style, which the present writer could not hope to emulate, by Mr. Edmund Garrett in his *Isis Very Much Unveiled*.<sup>2</sup>

Enough to say that, at a Judicial Committee gathered from the ends of the earth to discuss the matter, Mrs. Besant recanted her sensational claim made at the Hall of Science as follows:—

.....When I publicly said that I had received, after H. P. Blavatsky's death, letters in the writing that H. P. Blavatsky had been accused of forging, I referred to letters given to me by Mr. Judge, and as they were in the well-known script I never dreamed of challenging their source. I know now that they were not written or precipitated by the Master, and that they were done by Mr. Judge; but I also believe that the gist of these messages was psychically received, and that Mr. Judge's error lay in giving them to me in a script written by himself and not saying so.....Having been myself mistaken, I in turn misled the public.<sup>3</sup>

Apparently it never occurred to Mrs. Besant that it was her duty to return to the Hall of Science and acquaint the audience with the manner in which she had been

<sup>1</sup> Edmund Garrett, *Isis Very Much Unveiled*, p. 25, to which reliable and entertaining work I am indebted for the narrative of Theosophic history after the death of Madame Blavatsky.

<sup>2</sup> I have to thank Miss E. M. Vance, our energetic Secretary, for a sight of this book—one of many obligations I am under to that gifted lady.

<sup>3</sup> Garrett, *Isis Very Much Unveiled*, p. 63.



deluded. At any rate, she never did so. The moral of this sordid story, and indeed of the whole history of Spiritualism, is that, however truthful, upright, and honest deponents may be, their testimony is worthless as a proof of the supernatural.

We shall conclude with a study of the methods of Eusapia Palladino, the last and, if we count the heads of the great scientists she deceived, greatest of all spirit mediums. For although she had been detected in fraud more than once, it must be remembered that she had not the advantage of Home, who was one of the first in the field, and operated before the many discreditable exposures had taken place and rendered the public rather more sceptical of these performances. Even with this disadvantage, Eusapia succeeded in deluding a greater number of scientists than all the other mediums put together. Among others who have testified to the genuineness of her phenomena are: Sir Oliver Lodge, Professor Richet, Professor Morselli, Camille Flammarion, Professor Lombroso, Professor Brofferio, Professor Schiaparelli, Dr. Ochorowicz, and Mr. Myers, besides many others who thought that her phenomena was partly genuine and partly trickery.

By the year 1890, through the frequent exposures of fraud, says Podmore, "the subject fell into increasing disrepute," and the Psychical Society "reached the broad conclusion that the phenomena degenerated precisely in ratio in which the precautions against trickery were rendered more effective, until sometimes a point was reached at which, the safeguards being absolute, the manifestations ceased altogether.....Then in 1892, Eusapia Palladino appeared on the scene. Eusapia— for by universal consent the gifted Neapolitan, she, too, an artist, has been assigned a place amongst her immortal countrymen who are known through the ages by their Christian names alone—Eusapia, then, is an Italian peasant woman, who from early youth has been possessed of mediumistic powers."<sup>1</sup>

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

## The Psychology of Insanity.

THERE is a well-known stock platitude that "everyone is mad on at least one subject," but that there is some excuse for the saying will be readily understood after a perusal of the interesting book bearing the somewhat forbidding title, *The Psychology of Insanity*, by Bernard Hart, M.D. (Cambridge University Press, 1s. 3d.). Any Freethinker will find it a most instructive introduction to psychology, a side of his or her subject well meriting careful study.

After giving a short history of insanity and the abominable treatment of the insane in the past, the writer, who believes in the psychological rather than the physiological treatment of mental trouble, proceeds to show that the modern psychologists have built their science on the same lines which led Dalton to conceive his atomic theory. Psychologic phenomena cannot be brought into the laboratory and dissected, but this does not prevent their laws being discovered by testing theory with facts.

Passing on from the weakness of mentality due to anatomic deficiency in the brain, a point easily comprehended, we are led into the more interesting discussion of hallucinations and delusions, with both of which subjects any one of us who have listened to speakers at meetings will be familiar. Hallucinations are termed visual, auditory, or tactile, according to the sense to which the false impression appears to belong. In the

extreme case of the God-finder it is probably olfactory. On the other hand, delusions are not false sensations, but false beliefs, such as a man believing himself to be the Emperor of the Fijis. Chapter iv. deals with the dissociation of ideas in the field of consciousness, and concludes as follows:—

Yet this dissociation of the mind into logic-tight compartments is by no means confined to the population of the asylum. Our political complexes are notoriously inaccessible to argument, and we preserve the traditional beliefs of our childhood, in spite of the contradictory facts constantly presented by our experience.

We then come to complexes, perhaps the most interesting chapters in the book. Again taking the "political" complex, we find that the victim's complex "causes him to take up an attitude towards the proposed measure which is quite independent of any absolute merits that the measure may possess." "The two mechanisms which manifest themselves in our example of the politician, the unconscious origin of beliefs and actions, and the subsequent process of rationalization to which they are subjected, are of fundamental importance in psychology. They may be observed every day in every individual. That a man generally knows why he thinks in a certain way, and why he does certain things, is a widespread and cherished belief of the human race. It is, unfortunately, for the most part an erroneous one. The prevalence of 'rationalization' is responsible for the erroneous belief that reason plays the dominating role in the formation of human thought and conduct. The 'reason' is usually evolved subsequently to satisfy our craving for rationality." Chapters vi. and vii. on Repression and Conflict approach more closely to the insanity part of the question, and show the danger to the mind of both, and is worthy of much attention to a nation whose religion is one of repression and morbidity. Take the following from chapter x.:—

All non-rational opinions and beliefs appear to their possessor as propositions whose truth is immediately obvious, and whose validity it is silly to question. They are held, moreover, with a peculiar emotional warmth and instinctive certainty which is difficult to defuse, and whose character will be at once appreciated by anyone with a reasonable capacity for self-introspection. Genuine knowledge, the product of scientific deduction from observed facts, appears in quite another guise to this. It is relatively cold and devoid of the warmth which accompanies non-rational beliefs. If truth is called in question we are not annoyed but merely stimulated to examine with renewed attention the foundations upon which it rests.....We shall easily recognize that non-rational beliefs and opinions are the product of complexes, and that the peculiar warmth we have described is the emotional tone which invariably accompanies the action of a complex.

After reading this book we begin to see the limitations of the human brain, the ease with which a "complex" may begin in the mind on a false foundation, and the way in which a "complex" becomes a "logic-proof compartment," the avoidance of which should be the object of all education and mental training, and that "the rational method adequately used would tell us that on the great majority of these questions there can be for us but one attitude—that of suspended judgment."

The average man who has not studied psychology at all, if asked whether he is always open to listen to any reasonable proposition which is put before him, will at once answer, certainly. Probably, however, not one in a thousand is really able to do any such thing. Y. C.

Canon E. A. Stuart, of Canterbury, left estate of the value of £35,546. This amount should be sufficient to ensure his going to the place where there is no winter.

<sup>1</sup> Podmore, *The Newer Spiritualism* (1911), p. 88.



## Notes from Scotland.

SURELY the Rev. Ross, of Kilmarnock, will now be pleased when the Lord Advocate has been forced to intervene in the Glasgow Tramway Draw. In his latest letter to the papers, the reverend gentleman gives his whole case away when he inquires, Why does the Corporation of Glasgow openly and knowingly flout the law? And he answers: They know that such lotteries are illegal, for the Churches were forbidden by law to have raffles for charitable and religious purposes. Did the reverend gentleman raise the question of the morality of bazaars and raffles, which were held daily, and which certainly had become a great nuisance, previous to the time when the law intervened and pronounced them illegal? It is certain the Church will gain nothing by its action in this matter, as the indignation expressed at their interference is very bitter.

Speaking at a public function last week, Lord Provost Dunlop, referring to the Tramway Draw, said that Mr. Dalrymple had conceived a brilliant scheme, which, he was credibly informed, the whole nation wanted to copy. They had been assailed with suggestions that they were committing a terrible crime; they were teaching the nation to be gamblers. He looked at it in this way, and he said this in face of all the clergymen who liked to stand up against him, that we were a democratic nation, and he saw no evil in it. The funds were going to a great and good object. The nation or the man who had not got the sporting instinct were not worthy of being called either a nation or a man. For the benefit of those people of tender conscience who would not accept a prize, they had put on the little red boxes; but while in one week the boxes had realized the enormous sum of £37, the War tickets in the same week had brought in £1,700. We were a democratic nation—£1,700 against £37; and yet we were told the £37 people were to rule the nation. He left it at that.

The Rev. Dr. McLean, in preaching his farewell sermon in St. Columba Church, Glasgow, said that what made the work of the Church most difficult of all was that science and civilization had made the world without so beautiful and so attractive to us that we were devoting too much attention to it, to the ignoring of the spiritual and eternal world. Those who could go back half a century, who knew the differences between Glasgow then and now, knew what obstacles science and civilization had been to worship. Amusement had been carried to an art and science, and the pursuit of pleasure during the week had been accompanied by the emptying of the Churches on Sunday. Perhaps the Rev. Dr. McLean would like to get back to the times when the clergy had the power to compel people to attend church or suffer under the pains and penalties then in operation.

The Rev. Angus Mackay, of the Free Church, Kingussie, said the other day: "I regard the attitude of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Moderator of the Church of Scotland towards Sunday labour on allotments as a grievous and terrible mistake. There is no doubt that these breaches of the Sabbath Day have been followed by very unfavourable weather." It does seem peculiar that some of the potatoes planted on the Sunday were up and above ground quite as early, and in some cases before those planted on the weekdays; and besides, is Sunday not the only day out of the seven on which the reverend gentleman does anything in the way of work or exercising the faculties of his stupid wee brain?

When the children's church service was over, an old lady asked one of the boys which one of the hymns he liked best. She was amazed when he replied that he liked "the one that spoke about the wee fellah that pinched the old man's watch. What he referred to was:—

The old man meek and mild,  
The priest of Israel, slept.  
His watch the temple child,  
The little Levite, kept.

CALEDON.

## Bowman and Others

V.

## Secular Society, Limited.

(LORD SUMNER—continued from p. 364.)

If later cases seem to dwell more on religion and less on considerations of State, I think, when examined, they prove to be of small authority. In Waddington's case (i B. and C. 26) there seems to have been little argument, and no decisions were cited. *R. v. Davison* (4 B. and Ald. 329) decides in effect that contempt of God in court may be also contempt of court. In 1838 Baron Alderson told a York jury (*Reg. v. Gathercole*, 2 Lewin 254) that "a person may, without being liable to prosecution for it, attack Judaism and Mohammedanism, or even any sect of the Christian religion (save the established religion of the country), and the only reason why the latter is in a different situation from the others is because it is the form established by law, and is, therefore, part of the constitution of the country. In like manner, and for the same reason, any general attack on Christianity is the subject of criminal prosecution, because Christianity is the established religion of the country." The defendant, in fact, had not made any general attack on Christianity, but, being a Protestant clergyman, had foully aspersed a Roman Catholic nunnery. Whether this strange dictum was material or not, and whether it is right or not (and Baron Alderson's is a great name), it only shows that the gist of the offence of blasphemy is a supposed tendency in fact to shake the fabric of society generally, its tendency to provoke an immediate breach of the peace is not the essential, but only an occasional feature. After all, to insult a Jew's religion is not less likely to provoke a fight than to insult an Episcopalian's; and, on the other hand, the publication of a dull volume of blasphemies may well provoke nothing worse than throwing it into the fire.

Hetherington's case (5 Jurist, O. S., 529; 4 State Trials, N. S., 563) was a motion in arrest of judgment. Even here, along of the propositions that the old Testament contains the law of God, and that "it is certain that the Christian religion is part of the law of the land" (per Mr. Justice Patterson) we find Lord Chief Justice Denman saying: "As to the argument that the relaxation of oaths is a reason for departing from old law, we could not accede to it without saying that there is no mode by which religion holds society together but by the administration of oaths, but that is not so, for religion.....contains the most powerful sanction for good conduct." *R. v. Moxon* (4 State Trials N. S., 721) is of small authority. Later prosecutions add nothing until Lord Coleridge's direction to the jury in *Reg. v. Ramsey and Foote*. For thirty years this direction has been followed, nor was it argued by the Appellants that the publication of anti-Christian opinions, without ribaldry or profanity, would now support a conviction for blasphemy. It is no part of your Lordships' task on the present occasion to decide whether Lord Coleridge's ruling was or was not the last word on the crime of blasphemy, but the history of the cases and the conclusion at present reached go to show that what the law censures or resists is not the mere expression of anti-Christian opinion, whatever be the doctrines assailed or the arguments employed.

It is common ground that there is no instance recorded of a conviction for a blasphemous libel, from which the fact, or, at any rate, the supposition of the fact, of contumely and ribaldry has been absent, but this was suggested to be of no real significance for these reasons. Such prosecutions, it was said, often seem to be persecutions, and are, therefore, unpopular, and so only the gross cases have been proceeded against. This explains the immunity of the numerous agnostic or atheistic writings so much relied upon by Secularists. All it really shows is that no one cares to prosecute such things till they become indecent, not that, decently put, they are not against the law. Personally, I doubt all this. Orthodox zeal has never been lacking in this country. The Society for Carrying into Effect His Majesty's Proclamations against Vice and Immorality, which prosecuted Williams in 1797, has had many counterparts both before and since, and as anti-Christian writings are all the more



insidious and effective for being couched in decorous terms, I think the fact that their authors are not prosecuted, while ribald blasphemers are, really shows that lawyers in general hold such writings to be lawful because decent, not that they are tolerable for their decency though unlawful in themselves. In fact, most men have thought that such writings are better punished with indifference than with imprisonment.

My Lords, with all respect for the great names of the lawyers who have used it, the phrase, "Christianity is part of the Law of England," is really not law; it is rhetoric, as truly so as was Erskine's preroration when prosecuting Williams, "No man can be expected to be faithful to the authority of man who revolts against the Government of God." One asks what part of our law may Christianity be, and what part of Christianity may it be that is part of our law? Lord Chief Justice Best once said in *Bird v. Holbrook* (4 Bing. at p. 641, a case of injury by setting a spring gun); there is no act which Christianity forbids that the law will not reach; if it were otherwise Christianity would not be, as it always has been, held to be part of the law of England; but this was rhetoric too. Spring guns, indeed, were got rid of, not by Christianity, but by Act of Parliament. "Thou shalt not steal" is part of our law. "Thou shalt not commit adultery" is part of our law, but another part, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," is not part of our law at all. Christianity has tolerated chattel slavery; not so the present law of England. Ours is, and always has been, a Christian State. The English family is built on Christian ideas, and if the national religion is not Christian there is none. English law may well be called a Christian law, but we apply many of its rules and most of its principles with equal justice and equally good government, in heathen communities, and its sanctions even in courts of conscience, are material and not spiritual.

Frequently as the proposition question appears in one form or another, it is always as something taken for granted and handed down from the past rather than as a deliberate and reasoned proposition. It constantly has been used in charging juries as to unmistakably scurrilous words, where there was neither opportunity nor occasion for defining the limits of legitimate religious and irreligious opinion. I question if the foundations of the criminal law of blasphemous libel were ever fully investigated in any court before Ramsey's case. Even then Lord Coleridge passed over numerous decisions. To be sure, his omissions were faithfully dealt with soon afterwards by Mr. Justice Stephen, one of his own *pupils*, in a popular periodical, and this paper your Lordships allowed Mr. Talbot to read as part of his argument, to which, nevertheless, it added nothing either in learning or in cogency. Such observations, too, have often been employed by Judges of first instance in cases relating to charitable trusts, where there was equally little need for any analysis of the proposition or for discussion, either historical or juridical, of its implications. It is fairly clear, too, that men of the utmost eminence have thought and said advisedly, that mere denials of sundry essentials of the Christian faith are indictable as such. Hawkins, in his *Pleas of the Crown* (Bk. i. ch. 5, ss. 1 and 2), says that "all blasphemies against God in denying His Being .....as well as all profane scoffing at the Holy Scriptures" are punishable offences, and adds as the reason for punishing the latter that offences of this nature "tend to subvert all religion or morality, which are the foundation of government." Blackstone (Bk. iv., ch. 4) describes a class of crimes consisting in "offences more immediately against the Almighty, by denying His being or providence or by the contumelious reproaches of our Saviour Christ" and "all profane scoffing at the Holy Scriptures." Probably few great judges have been willing to go further in questions of religious liberty than Lord Mansfield in his eloquent address to this House in *Evans v. Chamberlain* of London (2 Burns Eccl. Law, 218). Yet there he says: "The eternal principles of natural religion are part of the common law; the essential principles of revealed religion are part of the common law, so that any person reviling, subverting, or ridiculing them may be prosecuted at common law." Again, the very careful Commissioners on the Criminal Law, of whom Serjeant Starkie was one and Sir William Wightman another, observe in their Sixth Report: "Although the law

forbids all denial of the being and providence of God or the Christian religion, it is only when irreligion assumes the form of an insult to God and men that the interference of the criminal law has taken place." Nevertheless, it seems too clear to need citation of authorities (the opinions of the majority of the Judges in your Lordships' House in *Shore v. Wilson* having been fully discussed) in order to show that a temperate and respectful denial, even of the existence of God, is not an offence against our law, however great an offence it may be against the Almighty himself, and, except for *Cowan v. Milbourne*, it has never been decided outside of the region of charitable trusts that such a denial affects civil rights. I cannot bring myself to think that it does so. What, after all is really the gist of the offence of blasphemy, or of its nature as a cause of civil disability? Ribaldry has been treated as the gist, which must be a temporal matter; as between creature and Creator, how can the bad taste or the provocative character of such a denial come into question? The denial itself, not the mode of it, must be what merits the Divine anger: but that is an offence against God. Our courts of law, in the exercise of their own jurisdiction, do not, and never did that I can find, punish irreligious words as offences against God. As to them they held that *decorum injurias dis curæ*. They dealt with such words for their manner, their violence, or ribaldry, or more fully stated, for their tendency to endanger the peace then and there, to deprave public morality generally, to shake the fabric of society, and to be a cause of civil strife. The words, as well as the acts, which tend to endanger society differ from time to time in proportion as society is stable or insecure in fact, or is believed by its reasonable members to be open to assault. In the present day meetings or processions are held lawful, which, a hundred and fifty years ago would have been deemed seditious, and this is not because the law is weaker or has changed, but because, the times having changed, society is stronger than before. In the present day reasonable men do not apprehend the dissolution or the downfall of society because religion is publicly assailed by methods not scandalous. Whether it is possible that in the future irreligious attacks, designed to undermine fundamental institutions of our society, may come to be criminal in themselves, as constituting a public danger, is a matter that does not arise. The fact that opinion grounded on experience has moved one way does not in law preclude the possibility of its moving on fresh experience in the other; nor does it bind succeeding generations, when conditions have again changed. After all, the question whether a given opinion is a danger to society is a question of the times, and is a question of fact. I desire to say nothing that would limit the right of society to protect itself by process of law from the dangers of the moment, whatever that right may be, but only to say that, experience having proved dangers once thought real to be now negligible, and dangers once very possibly imminent to have now passed away, there is nothing in the general rules as to blasphemy and irreligion, as known to the law, which prevents us from varying their application to the particular circumstances of our time in accordance with that experience. If these considerations are right, and the attitude of the law both civil and criminal towards all religions depends fundamentally on the safety of the State and not on the doctrines or metaphysics of those who profess them, it is not necessary to consider whether or why any given body was relieved by the law at one time or frowned on at another, or to analyse creeds and tenets, Christian and other, in which I can profess no competence. Accordingly I am of opinion that acts merely done in furtherance of paragraph 3 (a) and other paragraphs of the Respondents' Memorandum are not now contrary to the law, and that the Appeal should be dismissed.

#### LORD BUCKMASTER.

My Lords, the terms of the Will of the Testator and the circumstances leading up to this Appeal do not demand close attention, for according to the Appellants' arguments the whole question to be decided depends upon the meaning of the Third Article of the Memorandum of Association of the Respondent Company, and upon the determination of whether this article, properly construed, renders the



real object of the Respondent Company either criminal or illegal as contrary to the common law. The point of construction must be decided by considering the fair meaning of the language used and without resort to external means. Neither the documents preliminary to the incorporation of a Company registered with a Memorandum of Association, nor the action of Directors after a Company has been formed, can properly be received in evidence for the purpose of determining what the objects of the Company may be.

Clause 3 sub-head (a) of the Memorandum defines the main object of the Company in these words: "To promote in such a way as may from time to time be determined, the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief; and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action." Upon this follow a series of objects which in themselves it is not suggested are obnoxious to the law, while the last sub-head of the Clause is in general terms, and gives power "to do all such other lawful things as are conducive or incidental to all or any of the above-named objects." Without this last provision the true construction of the Memorandum would involve the view that if the defined objects could be attained, either by lawful or unlawful means, it was only those that were lawful that were permitted. But the latter provision makes the meaning quite plain. This conclusion, however, does not affect the Appellants' case, which depends upon the assertion that there are no lawful ways by which the objects of the Society can be carried out. It is said that the true meaning of the Memorandum is to encourage the propagation of doctrines directly contrary to the Christian faith—doctrines that are inimical to the central principle of Christianity and incapable of reconciliation with any essential portion of its creeds. Lord Justice Warrington, indeed, thought that to promote such objects would be to promote Atheism, and as this may be a material matter it is necessary to state the reasons why I am unable to accept this view.

Natural law may, as it seems to me, be properly regarded as part of the Divine purpose revealed through the instrument of reason; and if natural knowledge be accepted, as on this assumption it must, as equivalent to the truth, then, to take that as the basis of human conduct, as the first part of the clause directs, does not, to my mind, necessarily mean that a belief in God is thereby excluded. The latter part of the clause, which says that human welfare in this world is "the proper end of all thought and action," is more difficult. That human welfare is a proper end of thought and action few would dispute—it is the end on which the noblest minds have concentrated their highest effort; even if it be regarded as the sole object, I can conceive it being steadfastly pursued by people who possessed a firm belief in a supreme invisible Power using the instrument of man's agency to accomplish the Divine will. That this clause of the Memorandum defines an object contrary to the generally accepted conception of the Christian faith is, I think, assented to by all who have heard this case, and from this view I am not prepared to dissent. It is not necessary, and if unnecessary it is certainly not desirable, to attempt a definition of what the law would regard as the essential features of that faith. It is sufficient to say that the Respondent Company has as its main object the propagation of doctrines hostile to the Christian religion, and the question to be determined is whether it is, in consequence of illegal association, incapable of receiving or holding property.

(To be concluded.)

Inquiry into the evidence of a doctrine is not to be made once for all, and then taken as finally settled. It is never lawful to stifle a doubt; for either it can be honestly answered by means of the inquiry already made, or else it proves that the inquiry was not complete. "But," says one, "I am a busy man; I have no time for the long course of study which would be necessary to make me in any degree a competent judge of certain questions, or even able to understand the nature of the arguments." Then he should have no time to believe.—*W. K. Clifford.*

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

### COUNTRY.

#### INDOOR.

NEWCASTLE ON-TYNE BRANCH N. S. S. (Colingwood Hall, 12A Clayton Street): 7, Business Meeting and Chat.

### LONDON.

#### INDOOR.

MR. A. D. HOWELL SMITH'S DISCUSSION CLASS (N. S. S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street): Thursday, June 21, at 7.30.

#### OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 6.15, Miss Kough, "The Old Order Changeth."

FINSBURY PARK N. S. S.: 11.15, H. V. Storey, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley Road): 7, Mr. Burke, "Faith and Science."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill): 3.15, Percy S. Wilde, a Lecture

REGENT'S PARK N. S. S.: 3.15, George Rule, a Lecture.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, A. D. Howell Smith, B.A., a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station): 7, Mr. Miller, a Lecture.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Messrs. Shaller and Saphin; 3.15, Messrs. Kells and Dales; 6.30, Messrs. Hyatt, Saphin, and Yates.

## Population Question and Birth-Control.

POST FREE THREE HALFPENCE.

MALTHUSIAN LEAGUE,  
QUEEN ANNE'S CHAMBERS, WESTMINSTER, S.W.

## WORLD-WIDE DEMOCRACY.

I have received a number of post cards, letters, and offers of help to inaugurate a journal relative to the above, including writers, soldiers, sailors, and general readers, but I must have hundreds more before I can make a start. When arrangements are complete, particulars will be posted to all who send me a post card.—E. ANDERSON, 11 Salisbury Road, Forest Gate, E 7.

## Prayer: Its Origin, History, and Futility.

BY

J. T. LLOYD.

Price TWOPENCE.

(Postage ½d.)

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGDON STREET, E.C. 4.

## War and Civilization.

BY

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Price ONE PENNY.

(Postage ½d.)

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGDON STREET, E.C. 4.



**Books Every Freethinker should Possess.****HISTORY OF SACERDOTAL CELIBACY.**

By H. C. LEA.

In two handsome volumes, large 8vo., published at 21s. net. Price 7s., postage 7d.

This is the Third and Revised Edition, 1907, of the Standard and Authoritative Work on Sacerdotal Celibacy. Since its issue in 1867 it has held the first place in the literature of the subject, nor is it likely to lose that position.

**THE WORLD'S DESIRES; OR, THE RESULTS OF MONISM.**

An Elementary Treatise on a Realistic Religion and Philosophy of Human Life.

By E. A. ASHCROFT.

440 pp., published at 10s. 6d. Price 2s. 6d., postage 5d.

Mr. Ashcroft writes from the point of view of a convinced Freethinker, and deals with the question of Man and the Universe in a thoroughly suggestive manner.

**NATURAL AND SOCIAL MORALS.**

By CARVETH READ.

*Professor of Philosophy in the University of London.*

8vo. 1909. Published at 7s. 6d. net. Price 3s., postage 5d.

A Fine Exposition of Morals from the standpoint of a Rationalistic Naturalism.

**THREE ESSAYS ON RELIGION.**

By J. S. MILL.

Published at 5s. Price 1s. 6d., postage 4d.

There is no need to praise Mill's Essays on Nature, The Utility of Religion, and Theism. The work has become a Classic in the History of Freethought. No greater attack on the morality of nature and the God of natural theology has ever been made than in this work.

**Recent Acquisitions.****WILLIAM HONE: HIS LIFE AND TIMES.**

By F. W. HACKWOOD.

Large 8vo. With numerous Plates. Published 10s. 6d. net. Price 3s., postage 5d.

William Hone was one of the group of Radical Reformers who played so conspicuous a part in the battle for free speech and a free press in the early part of the nineteenth century. The accounts of his trial before Mr. Justice Abbott and Lord Ellenborough for publishing parodies of the Athanasian Creed and the Lord's Prayer are of interest to all Freethinkers.

**THE ENGLISH WOMAN: STUDIES IN HER PSYCHIC EVOLUTION.**

By D. STAARS.

Published 9s. net. Price 2s. 6d., postage 5d.

An Evolutionary and Historic Essay on Woman. With Biographical Sketches of Harriet Martineau, George Eliot, and others.

By THE HON. A. S. G. CANNING.

**INTOLERANCE AMONG CHRISTIANS.**

Published 5s. Price 1s. 6d., postage 4d.

**RELIGIOUS STRIFE IN BRITISH HISTORY.**

Published 5s. Price 1s. 6d., postage 5d.

**THE POLITICAL PROGRESS OF CHRISTIANITY.**

Published 5s. Price 1s. 6d., postage 4d.

*The Three Volumes post free for 5s.*

**THE CRIMINAL PROSECUTION AND CAPITAL PUNISHMENT OF ANIMALS.**

By E. P. EVANS.

A Careful Study of one of the most curious of Mediæval Superstitious Practices. There is an Appendix of Documents which adds considerably to the value of the work. Published 1906. With Frontispiece.

384 pp. Published 7s. 6d. Price 2s., postage 5d.

**Books.****DETERMINISM OR FREE WILL?**

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

*Issued by the Secular Society, Ltd.*

**CONTENTS.**

I. The Question Stated.—II. "Freedom" and "Will."—III. Consciousness, Deliberation, and Choice.—IV. Some Alleged Consequences of Determinism.—V. Professor James on "The Dilemma of Determinism."—VI. The Nature and Implications of Responsibility.—VII. Determinism and Character.—VIII. A Problem in Determinism.—IX. Environment.

Cloth, 1s. 9d., postage 3d.

**A BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF FREE-THINKERS.**

By J. M. WHEELER.

Price 3s. net, postage 5d.

**THE BIBLE HANDBOOK.**

By G. W. FOOTE and W. P. BALL.

For Freethinkers and Enquiring Christians. New Edition. 162 pp. Cloth. Price 1s., postage 2d.

**FLOWERS OF FREETHOUGHT.**

By G. W. FOOTE.

First Series, with Portrait, 216 pp. Cloth. Price 2s. 6d. net, postage 4d. Second Series, 302 pp. Cloth. Price 2s. 6d. net, postage 4d. The Two Volumes post free for 5s.

*(Now Binding.)*

**Pamphlets.**

**SOCIALISM, ATHEISM, AND CHRISTIANITY.** By C. COHEN. Price 1d., postage ½d.

**CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIAL ETHICS.** By C. COHEN. Price 1d., postage ½d.

**THE RELIGION OF FAMOUS MEN.** By WALTER MANN. Price 1d., postage ½d.

**BIBLE AND BEER.** By G. W. FOOTE. Price 1d., postage ½d.

**WHY AM I AN AGNOSTIC?** By COLONEL INGERSOLL. Price 1d., postage ½d.

**MISTAKES OF MOSES.** Pioneer Pamphlet, No. 3. By COLONEL INGERSOLL. Price 1d., postage ½d.

**WHAT IS AGNOSTICISM?** By G. W. FOOTE. Price 1d., postage ½d.

**ROME OR ATHEISM?** By G. W. FOOTE. Price 2d., postage ½d.

*About 1d. in the 1s. should be added on all Foreign and Colonial orders.*

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGTON STREET, E.C. 4.



# Three New Pamphlets.

## Christianity and Progress.

BY  
**G. W. FOOTE.**

Revised Edition, with a New Chapter on "Mohammedanism and the Sword."  
A complete and crushing reply to the claim that Christianity has aided the progress of civilization.

Price Twopence. Postage ½d.

## Pagan and Christian Morality.

BY  
**WALTER MANN.**

The truth about the alleged originality and value of Christian teaching on the subject of morals. With a useful list of authorities.

Price Twopence. Postage ½d.

# Freethought and Literature.

By **MIMNERMUS.**

The Freethinking beliefs of the world's greatest writers demonstrated by their own works.

**PRICE ONE PENNY.**

(Postage ½d.)

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGDON STREET, E.C. 4.

## NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

*President :*

**CHAPMAN COHEN.**

*Secretary :*

MISS E. M. VANCE, 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

### Principles and Objects.

Secularism teaches that conduct should be based on reason and knowledge. It knows nothing of divine guidance or interference; it excludes supernatural hopes and fears; it regards happiness as man's proper aim, and utility as his moral guide.

Secularism affirms that Progress is only possible through Liberty, which is at once a right and a duty; and therefore seeks to remove every barrier to the fullest equal freedom of thought, action, and speech.

Secularism declares that theology is condemned by reason as superstitious, and by experience as mischievous, and assails it as the historic enemy of Progress.

Secularism accordingly seeks to dispel superstition; to spread education; to disestablish religion; to rationalize morality; to promote peace; to dignify labour; to extend material well-being; and to realize the self-government of the people.

### Membership.

Any person is eligible as a member on signing the following declaration:—

I desire to join the National Secular Society, and I pledge myself, if admitted as a member, to co-operate in promoting its objects.

Name.....  
Address.....  
Occupation .....  
Dated this.....day of.....19.....

This declaration should be transmitted to the Secretary with a subscription.

P.S.—Beyond a minimum of Two Shillings per year, every member is left to fix his own subscription according to his means and interest in the cause.

### Immediate Practical Objects.

The Legitimation of Bequests to Secular or the Freethought Societies, for the maintenance and propagation of heterodox opinions on matters of religion, on the same conditions as apply to Christian or Theistic churches or organizations.

The Abolition of the Blasphemy Laws, in order that Religion may be canvassed as freely as other subjects, without fear of fine or imprisonment.

The Disestablishment and Disendowment of the State Churches in England, Scotland, and Wales.

The Abolition of all Religious Teaching and Bible Reading in Schools or other educational establishments supported by the State.

The Opening of all endowed educational institutions to the children and youth of all classes alike.

The Abrogation of all laws interfering with the free use of Sunday for the purpose of culture and recreation; and the Sunday opening of State and Municipal Museums, Libraries, and Art Galleries.

A Reform of the Marriage Laws, especially to secure equal justice for husband and wife, and a reasonable liberty and facility of divorce.

The Equalization of the legal status of men and women, so that all rights may be independent of sexual distinctions.

The Protection of children from all forms of violence, and from the greed of those who would make a profit out of their premature labour.

The Abolition of all hereditary distinctions and privileges fostering a spirit antagonistic to justice and human brotherhood.

The Improvement, by all just and wise means, of the conditions of daily life for the masses of the people, especially in towns and cities, where insanitary and incommensurable dwellings, and the want of open spaces, cause physical weakness and disease, and the deterioration of family life.

The Promotion of the right and duty of Labour to organize itself for its moral and economical advancement, and of its claim to legal protection in such combinations.

The Substitution of the idea of Reform for that of Punishment in the treatment of criminals, so that gaols may no longer be places of brutalization, or even of mere detention, but places of physical, intellectual, and moral elevation for those who are afflicted with anti-social tendencies.

An Extension of the moral law to animals, so as to secure them humane treatment and legal protection against cruelty.

The Promotion of Peace between nations, and the substitution of Arbitration for War in the settlement of international disputes.