

# THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED · 1881

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

VOL. XXXVIII.—No. 9

SUNDAY, MARCH 3, 1918

PRICE TWOPENCE

## CONTENTS.

	Page.
<i>The Puzzle of God.—The Editor</i>	129
<i>The Newest Apologetic.—J. T. Lloyd</i>	130
<i>George Leslie Mackenzie.—Mimnermus</i>	132
<i>A Metaphysical Apology for Suffering.—Keridon</i>	134
<i>Official Education for Poor Children</i>	134
<i>Acid Drops</i>	134
<i>Our "Round-Up."—C. C.</i>	136
<i>To Correspondents</i>	137
<i>Sugar Plums</i>	137
<i>Belief in God.—G. W. Foote</i>	138
<i>Cambridge and Education.—Geo. Underwood</i>	139
<i>Letters to the Editor—Biology and God</i>	140
<i>Why a Clergyman?</i>	141
<i>Existence of God</i>	141
<i>Society News</i>	141
<i>Notice of Meetings</i>	142

## Views and Opinions.

### The Puzzle of God.

Some of my Scotch readers may be familiar with the old rhyme:—

There was an auld woman of 'Sydney  
That had a disease of the kidney;  
She prayed to the Lord that she might be restored,  
An' he could if he would, but he didnae.

If so, the lines must have often occurred to them during the last few years. For all real believers in God must assume that God "could if he would" have prevented this awful catastrophe of war, but he "didnae"; and the concern of his most faithful followers must be to find out why he "didnae." And on that rock the ship of faith, so far as thousands are concerned, bids fair to become a complete wreck. Apologies for God are, of course, offered; but they carry little or no conviction. God is neutral, argue some; he is powerless to overcome the resistance of the human will, argue others; he has some wise end in view, and therefore permits the catastrophe; suggest others. But all these apologies ring hollow. Neutrality has little to commend it on behalf of one who has the power to enforce right and prevent wrong. An impotent Deity is still less satisfactory. Men have always worshipped God because they thought he could do something; and to find he can do nothing when something is most needed is to remove all reason for bothering with him. And the God who would but won't is still less satisfactory. People are beginning to object to be moved this way or that in obedience to the arbitrary will of a Deity about whom they know nothing. Secret diplomacy is as objectionable in heaven as it is on earth. Of course, if there is a God of this kind, one who drives human beings hither and thither, as millions of men are driven to slaughter on the battlefield, so be it; but the time is passing when people may be expected to admire a system or a Deity that is an outrage on the finer human feelings.

\* \* \*

### A Quietist Deity.

The new incumbent of the City Temple, Dr. Fort

Newton, says "the bitter tragedy of Atheism is, there is no one there." We do not see there is anything either bitter or tragic in the recognition of an absence of Deity; although there would be something tragically horrible in his presence. And in practice, what is the difference between a God who is not there and a God who does nothing? The more thoughtful—or the more astute—among believers warn us not to expect any interference by God with natural order. God, they say, works only through natural laws. Well, as an Atheist, we agree in the folly of expecting a miraculous alteration in the course of Nature; but what part does God play in the process? The Atheist says: "I do not believe in a God, and see no proof of his existence. Natural forces seem adequate to all that exist, and I cannot get beyond them." The Theist replies: "Yes, I agree so far; still, there is a God who is responsible for the whole cosmic order." Maybe; but where, in practice, is the substantial difference between these two positions? Neither believe in the actual interference of Deity in natural processes; both accept the universality and invariability of natural causation. Each, therefore, cancels the interference of God so far as life is concerned. The "bitter tragedy" of not believing in a God is evaded by professing a belief in one who is not the slightest good for anything or anybody. A hypothetical tragedy becomes an actual farce. The Theist commits suicide to save himself from slaughter.

\* \* \*

### God and Nature.

God's character, we are told, is vindicated not by a series of interferences with natural order, but by the order itself; less by the process than by the end. Thus, destruction and disease are facts, but a more perfect form of life emerges from the carnage. Hatred and love exist, but the latter is the more powerful factor. All this, and more may be granted, but it does not meet the real issue. If God's goodness is shown by the removal of obstacles to development, what is shown by their existence? Is it carelessness or cruelty? A tiger benefits by dining off a sheep, and the cosmic process is justified—to the tiger. And in the evolutionary process it is wildly untrue to argue that perfection is gained through suffering—at least, so far as the individual is concerned, and pleasure and pain are never other than individual. Some suffer and others profit. Consider the generations of men that have lived cherishing degrading superstitions, practising brutal customs, butchering and being butchered, before their descendants began to glimpse a more humane mode of life. How can we excuse the cruelty of such a process because some one benefits at the end? Surely, if there is a God, we are entitled to demand that progress shall not be bought at so frightful a price. The Atheist does not deny the process, he does impeach its morality. He declines to acknowledge as good a being who could deliberately call such a process into existence. If there is a God the world may exhibit his power, but common decency protests against the pretence that it demonstrates his goodness.

### Morality and God.

A great deal is said by preachers about the power of love in the world. And, thanks to man's social heredity, it is true that the power of love is more persistent than that of hatred. Yet nature—or God, if there be a God behind nature—cares nothing for the *morál quality* of our actions. Whether we act in a spirit of hatred, or of love, strive to establish a right or to perpetuate a wrong, matters not. All we see in nature is a non-moral cause and effect. Says Maeterlinck:—

If I am guilty of a certain excess or imprudence and incur a certain danger I have to pay a corresponding debt to nature. And as this excess or imprudence will generally have had an immoral cause.....we cannot refrain from establishing a connection between this immoral cause and the danger to which we have been exposed, or the debt we had to pay.....And we are content deliberately to ignore the fact that the result would have been the same had the cause of our excess or imprudence been.....heroic or innocent. If on an intensely cold day I throw myself into the water to save a fellow creature from drowning, or if, seeking to drown him, I chance to fall in, the consequences of the chill will be absolutely the same, and nothing on this earth or beneath the sky—save only myself, or man if he be able, will enhance my suffering because I have committed a crime, or relieve my pain because my action was virtuous.

What Maeterlinck is here emphasizing is the absolute indifference of nature as to whether our motive to action be good or bad. The desire to do right may lead to disaster; the endeavour to help others may call down swift punishment. The cowardice that keeps me from attempting to save a child from a burning house may preserve my life. The courage that sends me into the flames may end in death or disablement for life. If there is a God at the back of this frightful lack of moral discrimination the most and the best that can be said for him is that he does nothing. And what use has the world for a God of that kind? If man is left to reap the full consequences of his folly, or of his ignorance, what is the use of God? It is easy to talk of the "tragedy" of viewing the universe as a cluster of non-conscious forces with life as a mere iredescent bubble; but far more demoralizing is the contemplation of a universe in which God sits—to quote Mr. W. H. Mallock, like "some blackguardly larrikin kicking his heels in the clouds, not perhaps bent on mischief, but indifferent to the fact that he has caused it."

\* \* \*

### The Hopelessness of Theism.

The bitter tragedy would, indeed, be if there were someone there; if, behind all the unmerited suffering and gratuitous cruelty of the world, there existed an all-powerful, intelligent Being to whom all this was part of a coldly calculated scheme. To the Atheist, the universe is simply non-moral; the Theist leaves all the difficulties where they were, and only succeeds in making the world profoundly immoral. At most, our struggles represent the fight of human intelligence against non-conscious forces; and we have the inspiration, based on experience, that, cleansed of superstition and armed with sufficient knowledge, human nature is adequate to the task of improving social life. Ignorance and superstition lie at the root of nine-tenths of our troubles, and the time and energy now squandered on religion would, if properly applied, make a substantial reduction of our difficulties in the course of a single generation. But in the name of God we make mysteries of our problems, and then despair of their solution. We create difficulties where none need exist, and ignore others that are only too palpable. The old Romans, among the numerous altars they erected, built one "To the Gods

who take no heed." It was a curious thing to do; but one day the world will recognize it as a true description of every variety of deity, from the Mumbo-Jumbo of an African savage down to the attenuated abstraction of a modern Christian.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

## The Newest Apologetic.

V.

To the apologists the most puzzling of all problems at the present time is that of war. For three years and a half the pulpit has been forced to face it, and the longer the War continues the more perplexing it becomes. War is unquestionably a count against Christianity, and Mr. Mozley admits that it "never weighed so heavily as at the present time." The following is his statement of the problem:—

This is not only a matter of external controversy between Christian and non-Christian, but of internal controversy between Christian and Christian. Whether war is ever a Christian duty, what conditions must be fulfilled to make a particular war a Christian duty, objectively-considered, on the part of one of the combatants (it is obvious that, from an objective standpoint, war can never be a duty binding on both sides), how the Church, which is supernatural, should in each different country encourage patriotism, and yet deter from mere jingoism, foster national self-respect and abate national arrogance—these questions, and others like them, are most keenly probed among Christians in this time of war (*The Achievements of Christianity*, pp. 57, 58).

To a discussion of this subject the author devotes ten pages of his book; but his guiding principles seems to find expression in these lines:—

Whate'er thou deem'st on earth  
Most evil, scan it well;  
A buried seed of worth  
Doth surely in it dwell.

On that assumption a Christian, naturally, is not prepared to say dogmatically "War is never lawful for the Christian; the Christian man may not take up arms, even in self-defence." It is true that if a Christian could take up that position, even theoretically, for him war would not be a problem at all; and, as a matter of fact, there are professors of Christ who take their stand on that principle, with the result that they come into open conflict with the State. With one exception, the parties engaged in this War are Christians, whose boast it is that they are fighting for the establishment on earth of the kingdom of heaven. Mr. Mozley maintains that "war can never be a duty binding on both sides"; but the truth is, that in this War both sides claim that they are fighting for the right, with the result that part of the author's argument necessarily falls to the ground. In its own estimation, each party is simply doing its duty. The point, however, is that the enormous majority of Christians believe that there are times when it is lawful even for them to use physical force against their foes. Indeed, many wars, such as the Crusades and the wars between Catholics and Protestants in Reformation times, have been of a purely religious character. Mr. Mozley confesses he does "not think it can be doubted that anything like a powerful anti-war sentiment has been deplorably absent from (at the latest) the third century of our era." To anyone acquainted with ecclesiastical history it is self-evident that the Christian Church, throughout the days of her might, harboured a war-like spirit, and not seldom engaged in actual warfare. Our author concludes that she was not at any time "seriously impressed with the moral problem of war," and he excuses her on the ground that, subsequent to the

fall of the Roman Empire and the sweeping down of the barbarians from the north, "she had to deal with men and nations to whom war was as the breath of their nostrils." But Urban II. believed in and advocated war as in full harmony with the will of God. Standing on a lofty platform in the market-place of Clermont, his Holiness did his utmost, as Gibbon puts it, to "spread the flames of war from the Atlantic to the Euphrates." Urging the nations to undertake the first Crusade, he said:—

It is indeed the will of God, and let this memorable word, the inspiration surely of the Holy Spirit, be for ever adopted as your cry of battle to animate the devotion and courage of the champions of Christ. His cross is the symbol of your salvation; wear it, a red, a bloody cross, as an external mark on your breasts or shoulders, as a pledge of your sacred and irrevocable engagement.

Mr. Mozley refuses to discuss the question, "Is war wrong?" or, "Is war compatible with Christianity?" preferring to ask, "Is it ever right for a Christian nation to go to war?" to which question, he declares, "we may, without treachery to our first principles, return an affirmative answer." Curiously enough, he avers that in "a perfect Christendom there would be no war, since the causes from which wars spring—causes which always involve on one side, and may involve on both sides, a morally vitiated outlook—would disappear"; a statement which implies the inevitable inference that war is essentially anti-Christian. An imperfect Christendom is an irrefutable evidence that the Christian religion has been a colossal failure. Despite all its pompous claims for itself, it has broken all its pledges, dishonoured all its promises, discredited all its prophecies, and trampled all its ideals under foot. It appeared on the scene as a supernatural device to set right a disjointed world; but after nineteen centuries the world is still in a state of woeful imperfection, crying out for deliverance as passionately and as hopelessly as ever. Does not Mr. Mozley realize that if war is incompatible with a perfect state of society, it must be incompatible with Christianity, whose alleged function it is to produce such a state? And does it not necessarily follow that when a Christian joins in a bloody conflict, he thereby confesses that he is acting disloyally to his ideal in a world imperfectly Christianized? It may be true, as Mr. Mozley says, that "war, with all its evils, has been an instrument, terrible and clumsy, and yet neither wholly fruitless nor simply ignoble, in human and moral progress"; but he forgets that it has been so in a world swayed by purely natural and selfish motives, and over which the supernatural has never exerted the slightest influence. The emancipation of the slaves in America was achieved by force of arms, simply because the slave-owners did not perceive that slavery was wrong; but that war was not waged by the Church, but in defiance of her teaching, and the man directly responsible for it was an Agnostic, believing neither in Christianity nor yet in war. In that case, war was an instrument, terrible and clumsy, for the establishment of right by might, and Lincoln used it because no other means was available. It may be said of the French Revolution that it put an end to certain gigantic evils; but, like the American Civil War, it was not conducted in the name of the Church. The Church has never been distinguished as a factor in political and social reforms, many of which she has discouraged and even opposed.

Now, if in a perfect Christendom there would be no war, and if it be the mission of Christianity to produce a perfect Christendom, there is absolutely no escape from the conclusion that war is, in its very nature, anti-Christian, and that when a Christian fights for his country he proves that he is a patriot first and a Christian "a long

way behind," and by implication Mr. Mozley admits the truth of this statement. And yet he declares that the Church "could not (for it was not her belief) proclaim that it (war) was either essentially and always a moral evil, or productive of evil alone." Consequently, he takes his stand with the enormous majority of Christians, affirming that there are occasions on which it is lawful for Christians to take up arms in defence of what they believe to be the right. The absurdity of this position appears when we realize that the Germans, as well as the British, are Christians, who are convinced that they are doing their duty in waging this frightful conflict, and that both sides are praying for victory to the same God.

As an apologetic, *The Achievements of Christianity* is a conspicuous failure. The section dealing with war is utterly irrelevant, for surely no one would ever dream of pronouncing war a Christian achievement. Mr. Mozley quotes Lecky, who says that "Christianity for the first time made charity a rudimentary virtue"; but is it not true that charity in the form of alms doled out to the poor has been a curse rather than a blessing? Christianity has never attacked the social and economic conditions under which poverty has invariably prevailed, but has contented itself with urging the poor to be duly submissive, paying proper respect to their "betters," and promising them a reversal of conditions beyond the tomb. Such is the direct lesson to be drawn from the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, and such has been the teaching of the Church in all ages. "Ye have the poor always with you" is a Biblical expression that has been fruitful of incalculable mischief. "Society," says Sir Thomas More, "is a conspiracy of the rich against the poor," which means that the rich have been guilty of exploiting the poor to their own advantage; and in the Church they have instituted charity as a virtue that covers up the sin of exploitation. Does Mr. Mozley really regard charity as a satisfactory substitute for justice? Our author states that the graces of chivalry did something to lighten the horrors of the battlefield; but chivalry is not a *Christian* virtue, but was introduced by the Goths. He further asserts that it was due to the faith of Christ that "a public conscience was created in connection with the character of sports and of theatrical performances," which resulted in the abolition of gladiatorial shows in the year 404; but, as a matter of fact, those humiliating spectacles were not discontinued till much later; and it is well known that throughout the ages the Church has winked at most cruel sports, even in Great Britain as well as in Spain and other countries. Tertullian, for example, condemned not merely the gladiatorial shows because of their brutality, but all forms of secular amusement. To him an actor was an abomination. He says:—

No one that goes to the play thinks of anything else than to see and to be seen. Is it possible, while listening to the declamation of the actor, to think on the sentence of a prophet, or in the midst of the song of a eunuch, meditate on a psalm.....The Creator of truth loves nothing that is false, all fiction is, to him, falsification. He who condemns all hypocrisy will never pronounce him good who counterfeits voice, sex, age, love, anger, sighs, and tears.

To the writers of the New Testament and to the Fathers of the Church generally, the world and its things were hopelessly corrupt, spiritual pleasures alone being permissible. Tertullian, the most powerful and eloquent of all the divines of the third century, says:—

Tell me, pray, have we any other desire than that which was the desire of the apostle, to depart, viz., from the world, and be with the Lord? Wherever thy wishes are there are thy pleasures.....For what is there more joyous than reconciliation with God, thy Father and thy Lord—than the revelation of truth, the knowledge of

error, the forgiveness of so many past sins? What greater pleasure than the contempt of such pleasures, and of the whole world?

According to Mr. Mozley the writers of the New Testament and the Fathers were radically mistaken, and "Christianity is not committed by its principles to think of the next world as its only interest"; but we venture to contradict his assertion. Christianity is fundamentally a religion for the world to come, not for this; but the priests exploited both it and those who professed it to their own enrichment and comfort here below. Consequently, its achievements, in relation to the people at large, have been few and far between, and, at best, indirect; but, in relation to the Church, as an institution, they have been multitudinous, and of a most substantial character. In so far as they possess evidential value the Freethinker finds them of inestimable service to the cause he has so much at heart. He claims them as witnesses *against*, not *for*, the truth of the Christian religion.

J. T. LLOYD.

### George Leslie Mackenzie.

Alas poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio; a fellow of infinite jest; of most excellent fancy.—*Shakespeare, "Hamlet."*

THE other day I purchased on a bookstall a soiled and well-worn copy of George Leslie Mackenzie's *Brinstone Ballads*, and it set me thinking of the personality of the man whose lively verses were, years ago, one of the constant delights of *Freethinker* readers. The book was to me a veritable link with the past. For the name on the title-page was of one who was my familiar friend. It was not often that we met, but I loved him well. If I were writing one of those chilly obituary notices, I could not make a great story of what he had done with his life. He was a minor writer, and not a famous author. Yet to those near to him he had the qualities which are quite as precious as those which make for fame and reputation. He had a merry heart and a kindly one. There was never a company not the merrier that he was in. Many are duller because he is dead. For he possessed that vagrant, potent thing which men call charm. No wonder he took hold of one's mind as he took hold of one's hand, with a warm, affectionate grip that lasted.

Although a good speaker, Mackenzie was never at his happiest in the garish light of publicity. He loved better a few friends with whom he could talk metaphysics and literature, especially of the great French authors, for whom he had a real liking. He had the spirit of the idealist without the sharp edges that sometimes make the missionaries of ideas less attractive to the world than one might wish. He was, above all, sociable in his idealism. A most modest man, he preferred the position of a common soldier in the Army of Freethought. This is the kind of work which does a man honour but brings him none. He would have sympathized with the modest Frenchman who, when Napoleon took him familiarly by the ear, and offered him the Legion of Honour, answered, "Thank you, sire, but could not your Majesty give it to my father?"

His professional position would have made most men cautious, but timidity was unknown to him. All his contributions to the *Freethinker* were signed with his name. It was in the scant leisure of a busy career that he composed his verses, and he chose the metrical form of writing because it demanded a certain amount of skill in using words. He was under no illusion as to the merits of his verses. "I know too well what a poet ought to be," he once told me, "to imagine I am one."

For, in my impetuous way, I had dubbed him "The Laureate of Secularism."

Mackenzie only published one book, but it was, to use Lord Morley's expressive phrase, "a thunderous engine of revolt." Within a couple of hundred pages, *Brinstone Ballads* contained an astonishing amount of wit, satire, and argument. It was a happy idea on Mackenzie's part to commence his very profane book of verses with lines on "Genesis," and to finish with some verses on "Cremation." In this volume he proved himself the most uncompromising rhymester that ever attacked superstition in general and Christianity in particular. He showed the orthodox faith no sort of mercy, and his statement of his point of view is well worth reading. So comprehensive an indictment of a vulnerable institution could hardly fail to contain a great deal of truth.

I first met Mackenzie on a South London tramcar. We fell into conversation, and I offered him a copy of the *Freethinker*. He replied, "I not only read it, but I write for it." "Who are you?" I queried, and I recall his humorous smile as he answered, jocularly, "Mackenzie, if it doesn't *mak enzie* difference." My first impression was something of a shock. You could hardly imagine that this quiet, smiling, respectable, professional man could write a lyric, or turn a profane phrase against the orthodoxies of the world.

A thorough Freethinker, there was no shadow of turning, no trace of compromise about George Leslie Mackenzie. It was this, perhaps, even more than his ability which earned for him the confidence and admiration of his friends of many years. I saw him for the last time at Southend, and he then talked with difficulty, and I could not but admit that my dear old friend had then only a short time to live. Since then the fates have had their way with him. His name is with many other names, and the sight of his book has set me thinking of him. I can, in my mind's eye, see him now as he stood quietly watching the sun shining on the sea that stretched far away. Now he is—

gathered to the quiet west,  
The sundown splendid and serene,  
Death.

MIMNERMUS.

### A Metaphysical Apology for Suffering.

OF all the square pegs which man has ever worried himself with the task of fitting into round holes, probably the most irresistibly seductive, yet hopelessly futile, is the postulate that an omnipotent, omniscient, and beneficent God is the "director and organizer" of sentient life, and implicitly the "author" of sorrow and suffering. And probably of all the defensive pleas which have been put forward for the assumption, the most sophistic and hollow is that advanced by the "individuation" apology of the metaphysician now revived by Mr. Archer in his book on *God and Mr. Wells*.

For the sake of those who may have not read the book we shall quote those sentences which are meant to convey or imply his contention and "argument." He starts by repudiating the idea that "sentience"

was an article capable of accumulation like money and merchandise, in enormous aggregates—as though pleasure, and more particularly pain, were subject to the ordinary rules of arithmetic, so that minor quantities added together, might mount up to an indefinitely gigantic total.

Though this statement does not lack in dogmatic emphasis, yet the argument is seen only "as in a glass

darkly." Mr. Archer's allusions are too tangential to be explicit, and his language too rhetorical to be precise. For that reason we subjoin the following alternative expressions in case they might prove to the reader to be more definite or lucid:—

Individuation forbids the adding of units of sentience.

Individuation is, beyond doubt, the boundary and limit of human misery.

The sufferings of victims cannot be added together.

There has not been, and never can be, in this world more suffering than a single organism can sustain.

Every sentient organism is immured in his own universe.

The pith of this "individuation" morality, when divested of its metaphysical garb, seems to be that a responsible moral agent may inflict, or allow to be inflicted, as much suffering as he likes, without incurring any increase of guilt, provided only it falls to the lot of different or new individuals. For example, to starve, torture, or burn a *million* sentient beings is no bigger a crime than if only *one* victim were involved, since their agonies "cannot be added together." It is a moral principle quite befitting a *fiend*, Satanic or human, but one infinitely incompatible with the idea of a benign God. For, after the perpetration of one crime, it could freely indulge its villainous propensities without scruple or fear. Well may the Huns exult so deliriously over their ceaseless *repetitions* of the most revolting crimes, since, by this divine morality, it steps them no deeper in guilt!

Mr. Archer, however, does not appear to have ever troubled himself with the task of inquiring into the meaning of "adding," either as a physical or as a mental process. The "aggregating" or "adding" of sentience differs in no particular from what it is in respect to every economic attribute of "money and merchandise."

In this contention Mr. Archer confounds two independent issues. He identifies sentience, or the *capacity* of feeling pain, with the pain itself. Sentience and suffering are, of course, "causally" related, yet they are wholly independent in respect of their computability, or of the moral responsibility attached to them. Sentience is an attribute of neural substance, and shares the nature of all attributes save that of extension, gravity, and inertia in being insusceptible of direct measurement for the obvious reason that no unit—the *basis of all reckoning*—can be delimited or carved out of it. The fact is not in the least degree unique to sentience, as Mr. Archer seems to think.

Sweetness, edibility, or any other economic attribute is no more measurable in terms of itself than sentience is. Extension, however, being spatial, and gravity through having spatial effects (motion or displacement), are divisible into portions which may act as units. These two attributes, being fundamental and absolutely general, are made to serve as proxy-units of any of the specific properties associated with them. The only calculation, therefore, that an attribute is capable of is that obtained through reckoning the individuals or units in which the particular property appears; that is, by counting the proxies of "volume" and weight. And the prevalence of sentience is estimated in exactly the same way by counting sentient beings.

When, however, we come to consider *Suffering* as an estimable quantity, we are on a totally new ground. We have shifted from the potential to the actual; from capacity to sensation or experience. Now, sensation, either as pain or pleasure, is the mental product of the acting and reacting capacities of object and subject conjointly. Sweetness is neither in the molecule of sugar, nor yet in that of the brain, but is the "physic offspring" of their joint activities. This mental offspring

of pleasant or painful experience, however, is born into consciousness with two new and characteristic attributes—*viz*, a sense of Duration and of Intensity; and the measure of suffering, if practicably measurable, would be the product of these two factors.

But in the name of all reason, what would have been gained by measuring it? Would its sum total be any different through being expressed as a numerical multiple of some arbitrary unit of spatial elements, as if the act or process of calculating possessed some magic power over the computed magnitude! Calculation has no more effect upon the quantity calculated than a shadow has upon the object that casts it. Did Mr. Archer suppose that if the gigantic total could not be expressed in human units, the prosecution would be non-suited by a forensic quibble on a technical point, and that his august client would be thereby acquitted! Human devices of computation are wholly irrelevant to the question of divine guilt; the indictment is not preferred extraneously by some *advocatus diaboli*, but is implicit in each experience of pain, agony, or anguish, irrespective even of the status or of the individuality of the sufferer.

Mr. Archer, by the by, does not even refer to the time factor—a most remarkable omission, since to say the least, it is not of less moment than intensity in the ceaseless tragedy of sentient existence. The common question is not merely how acute was the pain, but how long it lasted? Hell's ineffably abhorrent fiendishness was due to its eternal duration rather than to its imaginary agony, though that was the most excruciating known to sentient flesh.

Again, as regards moral responsibility, suffering is likewise on a totally independent footing. Sentience implanted as a sentinel to safeguard the organism, is susceptible of a plausible defence, though very inferior to the instinct that intuits danger without having occasion to taste a single painful experience. The moral responsibility and guilt of the postulated author and director of sentiency arises not from the endowment but from the ordering of living existence in a way that the capacity is evoked into activity as *bootless* suffering. And above all, from the grafting upon the animal stock of rapacity and passion the endowment of self-consciousness—a superadded capacity to which the deluge of mundane evil is mainly due; it enabled man, with whip, lash, and goad, to exploit the sentiency of his fellow-creatures in order to gratify his natural cruelty and his insatiable greed.

The fact that each sufferer is "immured in his own universe" does not extenuate the divine guilt; on the contrary, it magnifies it to infinity. This fact makes it impossible for the sufferer to ease his pain by sharing it with his fellows; or for them to soothe his agony by sharing with him their life, health, or joys. The keen enjoyment of those who feast can bring no relief or soothing to the pangs of the starving, whether far or near. The predicament of a sentient being is not unlike that of a person immured in a building destined sooner or later to be set on fire, but which is so isolated that neither escape nor relief is possible; and thus imprisoned, he is doomed to endure his agonies alone. And this is the "individuation" predicament that Mr. Archer considers to confer upon the divine artificer immunity of guilt!

Inalienability is not, by the by, unique to sentiency; it is an essential truth of all attributes due to their *functional* nature. But though it is thus impossible to "aggregate" or intensify an attribute by any process of concentration, it is usually possible to amass its concrete embodiments so as to produce a simultaneous effect. One molecule of an explosive will burst no shell, but infinite millions of them will rend the toughest into frag-

ments. You may make a bonfire sky-high by piling up masses of wood, but the combustibility of its ultimate elements is absolutely "inalienable," and is therefore, as such, incapable of being amassed or intensified. So with sentience; yet a hungry nation may demolish a throne, though a starving individual is impotent.

In his parable of the one hundred million people, each of whom is born with an allowance of £5, in which he cynically compares suffering to spent capital, he follows the abhorrent example of Paul, in which the Apostle defends his God for dooming his *sentient* creatures to an eternity of torture, by comparing his divine right to do so to that of a potter over his *non-sentient* clay! The method of apologists has not changed!

Mr. Archer usually admits or defends intrinsic absurdities, and critically discusses trumped-up claims that merit nothing but ridicule or silent contempt. He fortifies citadels, but tilts like Don Quixote at some windmill, or charges some flock of sheep with amusing energy. But what is the use of erecting a picturesque literary structure if, as he freely admits, he has no better foundation for it than a bed of quicksand? Having admitted that 2 and 2 may make 5, whatever is then to be gained by elaborating a lengthy argument to "prove" that they cannot amount to 5½! None, save that of having a book to sell. Nothing is better calculated to endow an absurdity with immortality than to discuss it seriously, or talk about it with straight faces; and for this reason I consider that Mr. Archer has done the cause of Rationalism a *disservice* by discussing the Wellsian God.

The problem of evil is created solely by the "postulate"; abandon that, and all mystery vanishes. It is the natural and inevitable outcome of the cosmic evolutionary process.

KERIDON.

#### OFFICIAL EDUCATION OF POOR CHILDREN.

On one occasion, when I was in one of the largest and poorest of the London Elementary Schools, where the children looked as pitifully sordid and poverty-stricken as I have ever seen them, I asked a few questions of one small girl in the front row of a class. Her outside dress consisted of an old dilapidated waistcoat worn over a dingy flannelette nightgown, while a ragged piece of serge fastened around the waist with a safety pin did duty for a skirt. But she was only one among a classful of rags and tatters.

"What is your name?" I asked, by way of starting conversation.

"Victorine," the forlorn-looking little thing replied.

"And what is your lesson about?" I then inquired.

"Therdelfykorrickul," she informed me.

Seeing the bewildered look on my face, the head mistress, who was showing me round, said, "Enunciate your words more carefully Victorine, and speak slowly."

Victorine understood what "speak slowly" meant, and so she said very deliberately, "The—Delphic—Horrickul."

"So you are learning about the Delphic Oracle. And what are you going to do when you grow up?" was my next query.

"I'm going to work in the laundry, like mu'vver!"

We went into another classroom; here more ragged, unwashed clothes greeted me on every hand. I had no need to ask the subject of the lesson, for the girls were facing a blackboard on which was written, "The Characteristics of Shelley's Poetry." After I had seen more tatters in a third room, where a lesson was being given on "Infinitive Verbs," I said to the head mistress, "If I had this school, do you know what I should do? I should take a class at a time, and give out needles and cotton, and tell them to do the best they could to sew up the rags in their dresses and their pinafores. I would not mind if they did not put on patches even to a thread in the regulation way, so long as they made some attempt to run together those rents and slits and yawning

gaps. I would let the other lessons go, till this was done. And I would not let a girl take her place in a class in the morning till she had mended, as well as she could, any rents she had worn to school."

The head mistress shook her head. "That would not be practical; you see, it isn't in the Syllabus."

I don't pretend to understand the inwardness of Syllabuses but I couldn't help wondering if there wasn't an opening here for a new one. While so much unpractical stuff is taught to the poorer classes in Elementary Schools, is it any wonder that the children know so little of the things appertaining to daily life?—*Flora Klickmann*, "Between the Larch-Woods and the Weir."

#### Acid Drops.

If God Almighty has a sense of humour, the world just now—particularly the Christian part of it—must keep his face "all smiles." He will have noted that, while his Christian followers could not tolerate Sunday labour in the interests of education or rational enjoyment, they can put up with it quite easily when it becomes a question of carrying on a war. He will also have observed that with the same people the preservation of babies has become a burning question, when there threatens to be a shortage of men for the armies of the future. Lastly, he will see that, after opposing the equality of the sexes for centuries, a number of Churchmen are now busy seeing how her services can be utilized in the "ministrations of the Anglican Church." Woman has the vote, and the more astute are realizing it is time that something was done. And, of course, full Christian warranty will be found for all they are doing—as it was found for all they have done.

Catholics believe in miracles at Lourdes and elsewhere; but they realize that all the saints in the calendar are powerless in the present world shortage of food. Cardinal Bourne has absolved English Catholics from the necessity of fasting, and exhorts them "to follow strictly the advice and regulations issued by the Government in the matter of food." In plain English, Catholics are exhorted to look to the Government, and not to God, for their daily bread.

Defenders of the design argument will be pleased to note that a Northumberland ewe, belonging to Mr. J. Dunwoody, a Sheffield district farmer, has given birth to four lambs, one of which has two perfect heads.

The wife of Thomas Geoffrey Wall Henslow, formerly rector of Stanton St. Quentin, near Chippenham, has been granted a *decree nisi* of divorce on the grounds of his cruelty and immorality. The restraints of religion are conspicuous by their absence in this case.

This from the *Daily Sketch* :—

I wondered to what extent the Kaiser would give thanks to the Almighty over the peace with the Ukraine business. His speeches, messages, and telegrams have of late demonstrated a *molto crescendo* of blasphemous piety. In pre-war days I regarded the Kaiser as a cleverly foolish person, who walked about with a lectern on his head and had no sense of humour. Now he has proved himself a criminal lunatic of the first order, and *any mental specialist will tell you that a constant invocation of the Deity is one of the surest symptoms of the malady.*

The italics are ours. And, we may add, that a constant invocation of the Deity is not connected with certain forms of brain disease alone. It is just as common with rogues of all varieties.

Sacred images are not so carefully looked after by Providence in this country as they are on the Continent. Thieves who broke into St. Paul's Church, Sheffield, and failed to find money in the collection boxes, vented their spite by smashing up a religious figure,

Dr. Fort Newton, the American minister of the City Temple, London, in a sermon on "The Larger Rationalism," said: "When a man comes to me with intellectual difficulties I want to say to him—I do not always do so: 'What have you been up to?'" Dr. Newton has very quaint ideas of the charity that "thinketh no evil."

Wonderfully and fearfully made are the theologians of all schools. In his correspondence column in the *British Weekly* for February 21, Professor David Smith says that since it "took God countless ages to create the world by the patient process of evolution," it is no wonder "that its recreation also is slowly accomplished." Does it not strike the reverend gentleman as passing strange that a world created by a perfect Deity should stand in need of recreation? Does he admit that the first creation of it was a colossal failure? And if the first creation turned out so disastrously, what guarantee is there that the second will fare any better?

Dr. Smith tells us that "the preparation for the Saviour's Advent occupied millenniums," and now since his advent nearly two milleniums have come and gone, but the kingdom he came to establish is still a thing of the future. So Dr. Smith solemnly informs us, and he is right; but it never occurs to him that he is unconsciously stating the most powerful of all arguments against the truth of the Christian religion. His acceptance of evolution renders his Theism and Christology laughably absurd. He knows the facts, but ignores their natural significance, thereby showing their absolute incompatibility with the so-called doctrines of grace.

Smaller newspapers, and its attendant restrictions, have not eliminated frivolity from the pages of the press. A recent paragraph is worth quoting: "Charlie, the pet seagull of the Bishop of Ely, who has been a feature of the palace garden for the past twenty-six years, has just died at the age of thirty-five."

The *Christian World* states that Gipsy Smith, the evangelist, has been asked by the Government to go to the United States on a special mission to help to draw England and America more closely together.

The Young Women's Christian Association is appealing for a modest sum of £183,000 to extend its work in connection with clubs and rest rooms, and the Young Men's Christian Association has already raised enormous sums for canteens and huts. Will this end in the endowment of Unsectarian Christianity?

The Bishop of London says he has made a habit of reading a chapter of a devotional book each morning. It is a pity his lordship did not give details. *Thomas a Kempis* and *Billy Sunday's Sermons* are both devotional works.

It is the business of parsons to gain adherents, and incidentally pecuniary enrichment, of their particular organization. It is, therefore, not a matter of surprise that, at the beginning of the War, they attempted to use the military machine for their own ends. Apparently they imagined that the horrors of the Front would cause the soldiers to be ready material for conversion to the dying faith. But the result has not come up to their expectations. Indeed, we may say they are disappointed. Undaunted, however, on this road, attention is now being paid to the raid-shelters of London, and in these assemblies, with the effrontery of their class, they are attempting to force upon people of all shades of opinion the nostrums of their trade.

An instance of this is reported to us from West Ham, where a cleric of St. Matthew's Church imposed himself upon the gathering in a Council school one evening last week, taking possession of the piano, handing out hymn-books, and, with the aid of one or two of his congregation, started something in the nature of a revival meeting. We are pleased to learn that, by way of protest, his little band of pilgrims were

effectually silenced in the middle of a hymn by the rest of the refugees singing the popular song commencing, "What's the use of worrying?" Of course, it is quite impossible to expect that bigots will see that ratepayers have the right to use Council property without interference, but sharp rebuffs like this may teach them in time.

The Young Men's Christian Association made a special appeal for billiard tables, and received in response over eight hundred, the majority full size. Many people regard the Christian religion as a game, but few associated it with billiards.

Mrs. Sarah Begent, of Folkestone, has died at the age of 101, and editors are making paragraphs concerning her longevity. At that early age Methuselah was trundling a hoop.

The World's Student Christian Federation, which claims to have 189,000 members, advertises a Day of Prayer. Pity the sorrows of a poor old deity!

The Parish Priest of Clones is very plain-spoken on the question of the Church and the children, and for that we thank him. Addressing his congregation, he said that some of the teachers in Ireland were trying to do away with clerical management, and objected to the parish priests being their employers and paymasters. But, asks Canon McNeal, "Who else but the Church had the right to appoint them and be their paymasters? The Church must control the schools and appoint and pay the teachers, and not.....any official of the Civil Government." He also "warned the teachers to have nothing to do with a movement to do away with clerical management, and those who identified themselves with such would find themselves expelled from their positions." Now, that is good Christian practice, and again we thank Canon McNeal for being so straightforward. We know where to find him; and other people will know what to do with him.

An elderly lady died at Birmingham through swallowing her false teeth while singing a hymn at a local chapel. Had the lady been attending a Freethought lecture there would have been a powerful and impressive moral.

The glorious free press of England! The *Times' Literary Supplement* has been repeating the nonsense about the poet Shelley being "naturally Christian." Is it too much to expect that journalists should be "naturally truthful?"

Cardinal Logue has been speaking disparagingly of the Republican form of government. His Eminence has the consolation that heaven is his home.

"Out of 100 people who see visions, 99 are telling lies or are lunatics," says Mr. Hilaire Belloc. Presumably, the odd one-per-cent. is a truthful Roman Catholic.

The vicar of Goring was fined £5 costs for assaulting a choir boy aged fourteen. It seems the boy was singing out of tune, and refused to bow to the altar, so while the congregation were singing a hymn he sent the boy out, followed him, and, as a result, the boy's mother found behind the lad's ear a lump "nearly as big as a hen's egg," and other injuries. The vicar contended that he had a perfect right to thrash the boy, but the magistrates took a different view, with the result as above. But a vicar giving out a hymn to keep the congregation busy while he goes out to thrash a choir boy, and returning in time to finish the service, is quite a fine illustration of the inwardness of Christian ethics.

Four columns of the *Times* were taken up recently by Cardinal Bourne for a "Message to the Nation." The message is inserted as an advertisement, and, we presume, must have cost a good sum. And in the whole of the four columns Cardinal Bourne succeeds in saying no more than that the

Catholic Church alone can save the world—which is precisely what all the other Churches are saying, and with just as much warranty in fact. We cited one passage from this "Message" last week, and our readers are therefore in a position to judge of its value. And when a Cardinal of the Catholic Church can insist, in four columns, that the Church to which he belongs has already stood for liberty, we can only congratulate him on the cool impudence of the assertion.

We should dearly like Cardinal Bourne's explanation of the state of, say Spain, which, more than any other country in Europe, has been under the domination of the Catholic Church. And the fact of one country after another being compelled to curtail the activities of the Church because its interference in social and political life threatened human progress, requires explanation. Cardinal Bourne says that people are becoming impressed with the ability of the Roman Church to bring back peace and justice to the world; and that, we take it, is no more than a bid for support from a class whose purpose is, not the progress of the world, but the conservation of their own interests.

And this, we think, gives the true inwardness of Cardinal Bourne's Message. The *Times* is not a working-class paper, it is not even a middle-class paper. It is the organ of the "upper classes," and, in the present state of the world, these feel anything but secure. They are beginning to wonder what will happen after the War, and the Churches are equally doubtful as to what will happen to them. And Cardinal Bourne's "Message" is just a bid for support, financial or otherwise, from those who have most to fear from any genuine scheme of social reconstruction. How far it will be successful we do not know. But we may be sure that the Churches and vested interests will work together till the end.

Lord Halifax is still greatly disturbed over the appointment of the new Bishop of Hereford. He says that if the Bishop's views are to remain unchallenged, it will be impossible for Christians to pray:—

Grant us so to eat the flesh of Thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink His Blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by His Body, and our souls washed through His most Precious Blood.

Why it reads like the invocation of a tribe of cannibals! Even as imagery it is disgusting. Not even a period of food shortage can reconcile the really civilized mind to such language. Of course, Lord Halifax would explain that the language doesn't mean what it implies, and, doubtless, it doesn't—to him. But those who know something of the nature of religious signs, will readily recognize the hopelessly savage basis on which such symbolism rests.

What funny ideas of Atheism some people have! Mr Max Pemberton, the novelist, says that Sir Robertson Nicoll told him of a man who lost all his money through the Whittaker Wright frauds. Then he went home and burned his Bible, and afterwards professed to be an Atheist. Evidently becoming an Atheist is like using Pear's soap instead of Sunlight, or wearing a soft shirt instead of a starched. You have only to say "I will be an Atheist," and the thing is done. The appalling *ignorance* (we use the term deliberately, for a man may be educated and yet appallingly ignorant) indicated by such a statement is marked. Or perhaps it is an indication of reliance on the ignorance of those who are being addressed.

The following story is reprinted from the *Star*:—

While the Rev. Joseph Johnson, of Marlinton, W. Va., was conducting a baptism in the river he felt something in one of his trousers legs.

He stopped the ceremony several times while he was putting a convert under the water as a cold, clammy thing got further up his leg, and finally passed the belt line and got into the folds of his shirt.

At the close of the service he found the intruder was a one-pound bass, which he took home and ate at dinner.

It is a pity that the reverend gentleman, having secured the

bass, was unable to transform it into five thousand. Was the fish trying to pull his leg?

We have every sympathy with the idea of a League of Nations, which, indeed, seems the only way by which future wars may become less likely. But we cannot see the connection between that and the "Prince of Peace," who is invoked in a manifesto just issued, and bearing the signatures of a number of well-known parsons. Whenever the idea of a League of Nations actualizes, it will be due to forces that have no connection whatever with Christianity. And if the "Prince of Peace" has never been able to keep any group of his followers out of war up to the present, there seems little warranty in invoking his name now. The idea of a United States of Europe belongs to Thomas Paine—who first used the phrase "The United States of America"—as much as to any other man. But it would never do for the parsons to admit that.

The "Bishop's Coadjutor" of Colorado thinks that Denver City has too many Episcopal Churches, and suggests abolishing five of the existing nine. If this suggestion is acted on we hope the citizens of Denver will not be outdone in this line by the Bishop. They ought to close those remaining to show they appreciate his excellent example.

### Our "Round-Up."

SOME time ago we set ourselves, with the cheerfully given help of our readers, to secure a thousand new readers. In the midst of a world-war, with so many readers leaving the country, and with other difficulties to face, it would not have been a matter for surprise had we failed to accomplish our purpose. But, instead of failure, we have to report success. The thousand has been secured. The circulation of the *Freethinker* now stands at about one thousand copies per week more than when we assumed editorship.

But success is useless unless it leads to further triumphs. The new readers secured must act as a base from which to gain a still further increase. And we are now out for a second thousand readers. They can be got as easily or more easily than the first thousand. We venture to say that if a quarter of the number of our present readers set to work, we could have them in a week. There are thousands waiting to become subscribers, but they must first make the acquaintance of the paper.

And that is just where the help of our friends is indispensable. Nothing can take the place of their individual interest and assistance. It is only with their aid that our 1918 "Round-Up" can be made effective.

So we again ask the help of all to secure this new thousand readers, and to secure them now. We are pegging away under such difficulties as no Freethought paper ever had to face, and we are making headway. That is the compensation for all our struggles.

The *Freethinker* is at present one of the few papers, if not the only paper, in England that remains unaltered in size and price. We are keeping it so under a great strain, because we are thinking of the period after the War. When that time arrives, we want this paper to be in a position to command the attention of the country in a greater measure than it has yet done. And there will then be a greater need for the *Freethinker* than there has ever been.

Really, the future of the paper is in the hands of its readers. We know they are interested in it in a way that holds good of few papers published. That is why we do not hesitate in asking their help. It has been cheerfully and fruitfully given before. We know it will be cheerfully and fruitfully given again.

C. C.



## C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

March 3, Sheffield; March 17, Southampton; March 24, Manchester; March 31, Blaengarw; April 7, Goldthorpe; April 14, Glasgow; May 5, Abertillery.

## To Correspondents.

- J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—February 24, Manchester; March 17, Abertillery; March 24, Leicester; April 28, Nuneaton.
- "FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—H. Dawson, 2s; E. Langridge, 5s.; S. W. Soper, 5s.; C. F. Simpson, 10s. 6d.
- "TAB CAN" writes *apropos* of a Mr. A. C. Bowler leaving £40,000 to the Lancashire Congregational Union: "The 'Dead Hand' again! In these days the Christians have not the best intellects, or even a majority of believers, out of the population; but their wealth is enormous, and attracts parasites. Also they are well organized, so that if a religious pig squeals, it starts all the styes in the kingdom."
- A. WILDMAN.—Very pleased to hear of the accession of new members and the growth in the number of *Freethinker* readers.
- J. BURY.—The only work of the kind you inquire for is Mr. Cohen's *Foreign Missions*, but that is now out of print. The publishers of Mr. Clodd's work is Methuen & Co.; price 10s. 6d.
- H. Y. C. CLARK.—Book is being sent; but only 2s. was enclosed, not 3s., as stated.
- H. DAWSON.—Pleased to learn that the *Freethinker* "charms" you more than ever. We agree that the times are hopeful for a big Freethought offensive. The position of this paper after three-and-a-half years' of war is evidence to that end. And the membership of the N. S. S. is stronger to-day than it has been for years.
- C. BROADHURST.—We are sending you a copy of the paper for a few weeks at our own cost.
- S. P. (Manchester).—Sorry, but rather too lengthy for use in the *Freethinker*.
- C. P. MILMAN.—Gibbon refers to stories that the Crusaders before Jerusalem were at one time so pressed for food that they ate human flesh, and similar stories were current in antiquity. But we do not recall any modern instances.
- J. McCRACHIN.—See "Acid Drops." Naturally, the clergy will fight for the control of the children. It is vital to their interests. If they lose the child they lose everything.
- S. AMES.—We note your suggestion for a series of articles explaining in non-technical language some of the more important experiments of Professor Loeb and his fellow-workers. Will see what can be done.
- W. H. OWEN.—Your lecture notice bore the post-mark "February 18, 8.30"; but it was not delivered at this office until the morning of the 20th. The delay may have been due to the air raids, but secretaries should see that their guide notices are sent in good time.
- R. CHAPMAN.—Sorry to hear of your indisposition. Hope it is nothing serious, and that by this time you are better. No report of the lecture was taken.
- R. N.—Thanks. Can use next week.
- C. F. SIMPSON.—It was very thoughtful of you to forward 10s. 6d. towards the increased cost of paper, which, by the way, is greater week by week. We are crediting the Sustentation Fund with your donation.
- F. T. KNOTT.—Thanks for getting two new subscribers. We believe that with the French or Continental order of Freemasons the Theistic form is abolished. Many Atheists have declined to belong to the English order on account of the theistic pledge. We appreciate your regard for "our wonderful *Freethinker*."
- The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 62 Farringdon Street London, E.C. 4.*
- The National Secular Society's office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.*
- When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, giving as long notice as possible.*
- Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4 by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.*
- Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, and not to the Editor.*
- Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.*

Friends who send us newspapers would enhance the favour by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention. The "*Freethinker*" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office 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.

Mr. Cohen delivers two lectures to-day (March 3) in the Builder's Exchange, Cross Burgess Street, Sheffield. The afternoon meeting is at 3.30, and the evening one at 6.30. Admission to both meetings is free, and this will give a good opportunity for Freethinkers to induce the attendance of their Christian friends and acquaintances.

Lance-corporal Rite sends us the following from France:—  
S. O. S.

On my front the line of Christianity is being subjected to a most intense bombardment by your literature, so intense that this part of the line will have to be relinquished.

This is in reply to a parcel of literature that was sent out from this office for distribution. We are glad to know that our munition is proving so effective, and we should be glad to be able to send out on a more extended scale.

This evening (March 3) Mr. F. E. Willis lectures at the Repertory Theatre, Birmingham, on "Sacred Fetishes." Mr. Willis is just back from a visit to the Front, and will, doubtless, have something interesting to say about the state of religion as he saw it amongst the soldiers. A Freethinker's story will be worth hearing after so many parsons.

A South Shields stalwart, Mr. J. Fothergill, has been showing up a local parson, the Rev. S. Kearney, in a letter to the *Shields Daily Gazette*. A Sunday concert was given in the Queen's Theatre, Shields, in aid of the South Shields Soldier's Fund. The Rev. gentleman had taken exception to the hour, 7 p.m., at which the concert was held, evidently fearing that the inhabitants of Shields would go the concert rather than to church, and suggested it should commence at 8 p.m. Mr. Fothergill very sensibly points out the inadvisability of late hours for the young people, and strongly resents this clerical interference. We are glad to see the Editor of the *Shields Daily Gazette* has published his letter.

We are asked to announce that the postponed lecture of Mr. T. F. Rayner on "The Life and Work of Charles Darwin" will be delivered in the Waverley Hall, St. Mary's Road, Southampton, this evening (March 3). Local Freethinkers will please note.

This paragraph is a hint to those N. S. S. members who have not yet sent on their annual subscriptions, they now become due in January! And while we are about it, we may remark that if members feel inclined to enlarge their annual subscription, no fault will be found. Needless to say, the Society cannot pursue its work properly on the basis of its minimum membership fee, and if non-members feel inclined to forward a substantial sum to the Society's funds, we are convinced the General Secretary's heart will stand the shock.

The annual report of Brechin Established Church notes that the total church collections works out at less than a halfpenny per member. The Rev. Mr. Bisset, commenting on this, says that he dreads the introduction of farthings into Forfarshire. For ourselves, we should hesitate to charge the congregation with niggardliness without knowing the quality of the sermons preached. Some that we have read would be well paid for at two a penny.

Owing to the transposition of a line, a contemporary was made to say, "The Archbishop of Canterbury has been confined," presumably referring to his Grace's indisposition. Hasty readers might have imagined that the age of miracles had not passed.

## Belief in God.

*A Lecture by the late G. W. Foote, at St. James's Hall, on October 29, 1909.*

### II.

*(Concluded from p. 119.)*

THE savage was ignorant; he could not help believing supernaturalism. He could not help it in his ignorance of explaining the world in terms of his own nature, just as a little child will talk to a doll or a teddy bear, or even a chair or a table; so the savage who was, and is, the child of the Race, regards everything moving about him as alive.

You and I in a thunder-storm may be physically frightened, but we are not morally frightened. Why? Because we know something about the thunder-storm. We know that the noise, which is the most appalling part of it, is absolutely nothing; and the lightning, which may be dangerous, is, nevertheless (considering the few accidents that occur), of infinitesimal danger to any one of us; and so a man may, if he be of a certain temperament, feel his whole being dilating with the storm, and he may enjoy the magnificent spectacle.

But look at the savage: he knows nothing about thunder-storms; the noise is not a nothing; it is a grim reality to him. The noise is the roar of a being vastly greater than himself, but of the same nature; the lightning is the flash of his anger; and the savage prostrates himself in the dust, with eyes searching the ground, afraid to look up, and beseeching the great power overhead to sweep by and spare him, whoever else is lost. For you will find that religion and selfishness always did, always do, and always will go together.

Now, what makes the difference between the savage and the civilized being? Knowledge. That makes the great difference. Knowledge. And as all the gods in the world were created out of ignorance by the imagination, so reason, working upon knowledge, will destroy them all.

I say that religion and supernaturalism are one and the same thing. If you understand a thing, what does that mean? You can assign its natural explanation; and if you don't understand a thing its ten to one you will say God or the Devil is in it. All the clergy trade upon ignorance. I never heard a clergyman try to prove the existence of God from anything which he understood. He always asks: "Do you understand this material fact?" and you say "No." "That is God."

Why just take an illustration or two: You know the clergy used to say "Who made the World?" and as nobody knew (they are always ready to rush in where other people fear to tread) they said: "God made it," and the people who heard it said: "God made it." And the two ignorances countenanced each other. But by and by, you know astronomers explained the origin—the growth and decay—the destruction of worlds. Everlasting creation and everlasting destruction out of the same infinite reality in nature's method; and so the clergy gave up who made the world. They said we must drop that now. So they asked: "Who made all the species of animals, to say nothing of plants, in the earth?" Species, you know, they said, which always keep apart from each other, and however much they may seem to be running into each other, nevertheless maintain parallel lines. "Who made them? You don't know? You give it up? God made them."

By and by Charles Darwin came. He explained the origin of species, and the clergy dropped that. Then they asked; "Who made man?" And they stood up with that supreme air of wisdom which characterizes them,

and said:—"Brethren, who made man? Who made you? Who made me? Brethren, do you think that anything short of infinite wisdom made me?" If you had looked at him you would not have thought it. Which reminds me of Mr. Victor Hugo. Addressing the priests, he said: "You tell me that God made man in his own image, then if he is like you, he is a very ugly thing."

Now, Charles Darwin explained at last the origin of man, and the clergy said to each other (the knowing ones, I mean): "We must drop that." So now they ask: "Who made life? you don't know; you give it up? God made it." The same old answer of impudence to ignorance. Science has explained all along the line, and you and I await the further explanations of science.

Whenever a catastrophe occurs, many men and women become at once religious. If an earthquake occurs, that is the hand of God. If a volcano belches out lava and destroys the whole population of a city, that is the hand of God. On the other hand, if a great good fortune happens, the same people see the hand of God in that too.

In anything unusual which they cannot explain, there is the hand of God—but more usually in evil. If a man is going out with money in his pocket, and his wife or his sweetheart on his arm for a good day's outing, he is not religious. Talk religion to him, he says, "tomorrow." But if the train gets into an accident and he pulls through, he feels religious at once; and without troubling his head about all the poor devils who are dead, religion drops in, and he says: "Thank God I am alright."

And men pray to God—not all of them now—but still most do at times, if not, regularly. They ask for what they know in many cases they will never get. Ingersoll said: "People ask God to do sheer impossibilities. Why the other day I heard a man, with his eyes shut, asking God to give Congress wisdom." Well, we do as bad. I don't want to discuss politics, but look at the House of Lords. I say, look at them; and yet if the Church of England is read up you would find that the Lord is supplicated to endow the Lords of the Council and all the Nobility with grace, wisdom, and understanding. And they have not got it.

Thomas Carlyle, in his old age, said despondingly to Mr. Froude that "God does nothing new." The philosopher of Chelsea need not have taken so long to discover this truth. He might have perceived it fifty years sooner if he had not been blinded by the religious prejudices—or, as they are generally called, the religious principles—of his early training.

We do not deny, we are not concerned to deny, the Pantheism of a Spinoza, or the idea of God as a vast irresponsible power, governing the universe by general and unchangeable laws, and working out far-distant ends without a special attention to the individual happiness or misery of his sentient creatures. Such was the deity of Pope, who sneeringly asked, "Shall gravitation cease as you go by?" He overlooked the fact that the constancy of gravitation is a poor relief to the man whose head is broken by a falling chimney-pot. He also overlooked the fact that the God behind such a law does not come into any sort of moral relationship to his "children." Indeed, it is nonsense to call them his children. He is not even their step-father. To call him "Our Father" is a wretched abuse of language. But the other God, the God of the clergy, the God who sees and hears and notices all that happens—that God is fairly entitled to be called a Devil. To know that outrage and murder are to be committed, and not to move a finger to prevent them, is the sublimation of infamy. The outrager is

inspired by his lust, the murderer by his passion, but the callous onlooker is the lowest of the three in the sink of degradation.

## Cambridge and Education.

AN Oxford man of my acquaintance who, by the way, is nothing if not malicious, assures me that sausages are the only things associated in most people's minds with Cambridge. As I always make a point of avoiding this article of food, I am unable to question the truth of his assertion. I willingly accept his eulogy of its gastronomic virtues. If nothing else, it is both solid and mysterious, and thus is, perhaps, no unfitting symbol of the spiritual characteristics of the English race: Yet I am not wholly inclined to agree that Cambridge scholarship shows up badly against the Cambridge sausage, however good it may be. The University has always been, and is now, very strong in science. In history, Prof. Bury has a European reputation for both knowledge and acumen; and in English letters, Dr. Greg, Mr. McKerrow, and others, manage to combine exactitude with enthusiasm; while Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch brings to his lectures on our literature an unacademic skittishness, a refreshing want of reverence for official critical opinion and accepted reputations. I am afraid that my Oxford friend knows as much about Cambridge scholarship as I do about the sausage; or, shall I say, as Mr. Belloc does about Gibbon.

### I.

However that may be, Cambridge does not always give us that light and leading in intellectual matters which we have a right to expect from her. The bulky co-operative *History of English Literature* is a mere dead weight—a vast mausoleum. As a memorial to the great dead it is as impressive as the hideous mortuary sculpture in the Abbey. And now we have *Cambridge Essays on Education* (Cambridge University Press, 7s. 6d., net) on similar co-operative lines, and equally futile, if not so preposterously dull. It is made up of eleven essays, edited by Mr. A. C. Benson, who is not remarkable for breadth of thought, and it is introduced by the amiable and fussy publicist, Lord Bryce. The object of the book is to restate and enforce by argument sound principles in relation to education. And in view of this laudable design it is curious to note that elementary or democratic education is quietly passed over. If here or there it happens to be mentioned it is nowhere discussed. When we consider that 80 per cent. of the democratic educative material of the country passes through the elementary mill, we wonder at the fatuity of Mr. Benson in not inviting a specialist to give us his views on this side of the subject. But education for Mr. Benson and many others simply means public school education—the training fitted to turn out good bureaucrats and “vocal,” not thinking journalists and politicians. Then too, strangely enough, Mr. Benson, from his masculine point of view, seems to think that women have no need of education; at any rate, he has forgotten to ask a woman to write on the principles underlying the education of her sex. There is an essay by the Master of Mill Hill School on education as a preparation for practical life for which women have shown, as we might have expected, pre-eminent aptitude. Yet you may search in vain for the slightest hint that the services of women, practical or intellectual, are of any importance whatever. Can any man in his right senses wonder at the feminist movement when intelligent men are so stupidly highbanded?

The fault lies less with the writers of the different essays than with the editor who invited them to in-

struct us on certain subjects. It was for him to provide and see that every side of the subject should be discussed. But Mr. Benson is merely an amiable man-of-letters with a charming style, and a little practice in one branch of education. He is the last man we should have asked to bring together a collection of essays on the principles of education. Then, again, co-operation does not make for breadth and poise of ideas. It is questionable if any one of the writers would have ignored two important aspects of the subject if he had had to cover the whole ground himself. The title of the book, if not a misnomer, it is certainly misleading. We are led to expect a complete survey, and are put off with a sectional one.

### II.

But I would not have the reader assume from my depreciation of the volume as a whole, that it is not good in parts. It is both very bad and very good; and some of the most stupid and some of the wisest things are said by parsons. The Master of Wellington School writes on the subject of “Religion at School.” Now, the healthy school-boy is, by nature, non-religious. He is inclined to associate religion with sneaks and prigs. If chapels are compulsory he attends, of course; and habits once formed may last throughout life. But mere acquiescence in the national form of religion is in itself a dubious blessing. It makes for hypocrisy; or, at least, indicates easy-going pragmatism, which sets truth below utility. Mr. Vaughan believes in compulsory attendance. He also insists on the moral effect and religious value of confirmation at school, which he thinks will last on through life. It may, in some cases; but I doubt if these particular boys would have been any the worse if they had not been confirmed at school. On the other hand, I have known many boys on whom it had no effect.

No doubt I may be told that the teaching is at fault. “How seldom,” the writer says, “does a Christian education teach one anything worth knowing about Christianity?” He then goes on to desiderate the qualities of an effective teacher of the national religion. He must be as broadminded as he is devout. He must assimilate the ideas of Harnack and Inge on the philosophy and history of religion; and, I suppose, must face the more disturbing criticism of Professor Drews and Mr. J. M. Robertson. But he will treat, if not the Old Testament, at least the New Testament, with becoming reverence. Of course, he will not try to drag his pupils to the point to which these books have brought him after years of study—that would not be a wise economy of truth. But what if one or two pupils of a more inquiring turn of mind should bring back with them some of the R.P.A. cheap reprints which they may have heard their parents and friends discuss? What a deep impression will be left on the mind of a boy who finds that his religious and moral guide has been hiding the truth from fear of its consequences, and supporting doctrines and facts in which he no longer believed. The ideal of religious education for Mr. Vaughan is that the boy should *know in his heart* (not in his head, which has nothing to do with religion) the meaning of the mysterious terms Incarnation, Atonement, Resurrection. And this heart-knowledge will no doubt save him from scepticism when, later on in life, he finds that these cardinal facts of Christianity are either rejected or symbolized by the more intelligent, if less logical, of the supporters of Christianity.

As to the inculcation of the so-called Christian virtues of truthfulness, temperance, chastity, courtesy, I venture to think that a Rationalist with the moral fervour of Mr. F. J. Gould would do more in six months with

ordinary tractable material, the average decent-natured boy, than the parsons would in six years.

### III.

I do not wish to give the impression that all the essays in the volume are as nugatory as the one on "Religion in the School." There are at least two that are a pleasure to read. Dean Inge is always interesting because he always allows himself a freedom of thought which is noticeably piquant as coming from a parson. He writes on "The Training of the Reason." The aim of education, he says, "is the knowledge, not of facts, but of values. Values are facts apprehended in their relation to each other and to ourselves. The wise man is he who knows the relative value of things. In this knowledge, and in the use made of it, is summed up the whole conduct of life." He points out that we English gave too much importance to common sense, and that in all classes there is a profound distrust of ideas, often "amounting to what Plato called 'misologia,' *hatred of reason*. An Englishman, as Bishop Creighton said, not only has no ideas, he hates an idea when he meets one. We discount the opinion of a man who bases his judgment on first principles." We are not a quick-witted race, and if our actions are, in the main, on the side of rectitude, it is more by instinct than thought.

"Recent philosophy," he tells us, in a witty passage,—has encouraged these advocates of common sense, who have long been pragmatists without knowing it, to profess their faith without shame. Intellect has been disparaged and instinct has been exalted. Intuition is a safer guide than reason, we are told, for intuition goes straight to the heart of a situation, and has already acted while reason is debating. Much of this new philosophy is a kind of higher obscurantism; the man in the street applauds Bergson and William James because he dislikes science and logic, and values will, courage, and sentiment. He used to be fond of repeating that Waterloo was won on the playing fields of our public schools, until it was painfully obvious that Colenso and Spion Kop was lost in the same place. We have muddled through so often that we have come half to believe in a providence which watches over unintelligent virtue. "Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever," we have said to Britannia. So we have acquiesced in being the worst educated people west of the Slav frontier.

This surely is as well said as it is worth saying, and Dean Inge is equally wise when he says of the Englishman's call of "duty" that it is an empty ideal until we know what our duty is. He notes the confusion of means and ends implied in irrational accumulation, and the unhealthy reaction of the so-called practical man on educational ideals. Wisdom, he assures us, must be sought for its own sake, or we shall not find it. The trained reason is disinterested and fearless. He is dead against the examination system, with its dependence on the memory, which has been "called the most worthless of our mental powers." The importance of a good curriculum, he thinks, is exaggerated. It matters less what a boy learns than how he is taught. He would have him trained in two branches, science and humanism; and it is a sign of more intelligent ideals of education that he insists that the Greek and Latin should be read *in mass in translations*. In fine, the essay is packed full of ideas. It is a genuine contribution to educational thought.

### IV.

If Dean Inge's attitude is refreshingly rational, Professor Bateson's is outspokenly rationalistic. His essay on the place of science in education goes to the root of the matter. Some of the things he says will startle the official educationist. He holds that many men are con-

genitally unscientific; they form the section from which are drawn the heads of government, temporal and spiritual—the lawyers, administrators, and politicians. To force science upon them would not alter their cast of mind in any way, this intellectual type being vocal rather than rational. We remember the foolish blunder a Home Secretary made over glycerine some while ago, and only lately the Bishop of London said that Nature helped him to believe in God, basing his belief on the fact that we are not "blown off" the earth as it rushes through space, and "declaring that that catastrophe had been averted by 'Someone's' wrapping twenty miles of atmosphere round the planet."

"Does anyone think," says Professor Bateson,—

that the Bishop's slip was due to want of scientific teaching at Marlborough.....I would rather suppose that such sublunary problems had not interested him in the least, and that he no more cared how we happen to stick on the earth's surface than St. Paul cared how a grain of wheat germinates beneath it, when he similarly was betrayed into an unfortunate illustration.

Professor Bateson's suggestion—and in my opinion a wise one—is that every boy should be taught science in such a way as to confirm his scientific bias, if he has one; if he is congenitally unscientific, the fact will soon show itself, and he can be trained for one of the "vocal" professions, the basis of which is a more or less pragmatic compromise. He may become a light in the Church, in politics, law, or journalism, where ideas do not count for much, but he will be out of his element in science.

Professor Bateson has a righteous contempt for the humanists (often parsons) who are fond of telling us that science is vulgarly utilitarian—that it does not work in the sphere of ideas. "The splendid purpose which science serves," he says, "is the inculcation of principle and balance, not facts." The man of science to-day is as much opposed to religion, with its apocryphal glosses of evidential truth, as was Huxley to revelation. And "were Huxley here he would treat Bergson and his allies with the same scorn and contumely that he meted out to the Bishop of Oxford." "Agnosticism," he goes on, "is the very life and mainspring of science." We must believe nothing under compulsion. The whole essay is a proof of the value of ideas based on Rationalism the lead of which is followed with unwavering courage.

The other essays, which discuss the places of Literature, Athletics, Citizenship, Leisure in Education, do not call for any special comment. They say many things with which one agrees, but do not break new ground. They do not compare with the outspoken work to which I have given prominence.

GEO. UNDERWOOD.

## Correspondence.

### BIOLOGY AND GOD.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—You have before now received letters asking for advice with regard to books which would be useful to the student of Freethought. On one or two occasions lists of books have been given in our beloved paper. Will you permit me to draw attention to a small introductory work on Biology, which I have found to be both interesting and instructive? It is *Biology*, by W. D. Henderson, M.A., B.Sc. (Jack's "The People's Books," 7d.). The above-mentioned work contains so much compressed writing, in its eighty odd pages, that I think the Freethinker who takes a non-expert interest in Biology would do well to read it. This subject being the Science of Life, it is one of the most important spheres of study to the modern Freethinker. And

who is the Freethinker who does not wish to know something of the scope and method of Biology?

In his "Introduction," Mr. Henderson maps out the field of biological study, pointing out "that Biology does not concern itself with the particular kinds of plants and animals; that is the aim of the special sciences of Botany and Zoology, but it has to answer questions dealing with the form and structure of living things, with their activities, their origin, and the factors in their evolution" (p. 9).

The work contains chapters on "The Origin of Life," "Cell Division," "Sensitivity in Plants and Animals," "Response to Certain Stimuli on Plants and Animals," "Reproduction," "The Struggle for Existence," and "Heredity." Of all these I cannot write now, but the impression left after the reading of the book, which is written only from the standpoint of a scientist, is that Biology is on the side of a Naturalist philosophy of the universe—if the reader be not of a biased mind. Without being dogmatic on the subject, the author sums up the modern biological position relative to the "Origin of Life":—

Looking now at the evolution of living matter by the light which is shed upon it by the evolution of matter in general, there must have been a gradual process of change from material which was lifeless to material which has all the characteristics of what we call living matter. Now this gradually evolved material may have been in the form of minute ultra-microscopic particles, and so no traces of it are found in the geological record (p. 12).

This last sentence should be well kept in mind. The chapter on "The Criteria of Life" impresses upon us the difficulty of drawing a strict line of demarcation between the living and the non-living. While the chapter in which the evolution of the single-celled forms of life to the multi-cellular organism is outlined, causes us to reflect—if step by step we can trace the connection between lowly forms of life and the most complex forms, why should it not be possible for the lowest forms, to have developed from non-living forms of matter? But I must leave the reader to his own reflections, and close with the following quotation, which will give food for thought on the struggle for existence:—

If anyone doubts the reality of this struggle, let him take a brief glance at the various forms of animals. Throughout the world there is a superabundance of weapons and of armour. From the simplest forms with their offensive threads we pass to the stings of insects, the large pincers of crabs and lobsters, the teeth of sharks, the horns and hoofs and fangs of mammals. With armour it is just the same; thus we have the shells of crabs and molluscs, the scales of fishes and of reptiles, and the hair and feathers of mammals and birds (p. 74).

What agents for the expression of divine love!

B. E. F., France.

E. EGERTON STAFFORD.

#### WHY A CLERGYMAN?

SIR,—I am an Atheist, father of ten children, eight of whom are living. I have tried to give them a good education, also tried to teach them the duties of being truthful and honest to others; in fact, I have done my best to make them, as they became men and women, fit citizens of the country. I find that they have to suffer for the supposed sins of their father, as witness the following: In response to an invitation from a large Tyneside firm a daughter of mine presented herself recently for a test examination for a clerkship. On the form she had to fill up was a request that she must give names of at least two persons of whom inquiry might be made as to character, etc. To this no sensible person could object.

But, mark, one must be a *clergyman*! Think of it! In this country where one hears such blessed words as Freedom, Toleration, and Equality, I, an Atheist, must go to a clergyman begging a favour of him, or otherwise my children will be punished. Well, my girl went through with the work set down for examination in spite of the fact that she was unable to give more than one person's name for reference. Until now she has not heard anything from the firm; of course, she may not have satisfied them as to her efficiency, but I expect that the clergyman's name being omitted has prejudiced her case. If such has been the fact, is it not intolerable that such a thing should take place at the present day,

especially when we are boasting so much about freedom? It seems hard that after keeping them at school beyond the age when they could leave, my daughter is nearly sixteen years of age and still going to school, and I have paid a large fee to get her into a Higher Grade School, she has attended private classes in the evenings, all of which means a sacrifice. In conclusion, let me say my object in writing is to draw the attention of the public to the above facts, in the belief that any fair-minded person who has any such condition attached to the employment of anyone beginning their apprenticeship, will at least give them a chance to choose whom they may select for references, instead of a hard and fast line as in the present case.

JUSTICE.

#### EXISTENCE OF GOD.

SIR,—I quite agree with "Freethinker's" suggestion in your last number as to adopting the measure, in discussions with Christians, of first asking them to define their idea of God.

"Freethinker's" friend gave the definition—"the spirit of goodness," etc.—and "Freethinker" says that we scarcely disagree with this.

May I be allowed to point out that the expression used is ambiguous? It may mean the idea (or ideal) of goodness, as it may mean the spirit (or spiritual being) with the attribute of goodness. From the account given, it is obvious that "Freethinker's" friend used it in the latter sense, and in that sense we do disagree.

R. H. N.

#### Society News.

South London Branch N.S.S.—It will be seen from our list of to-day's meetings that a debate will take place at the Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road (near Kennington Road Tube Station). The subject is, "That Modern Secularism is Useless as an Instrument of Social Reform." Mr. F. Vickers, a well-known South London Socialist, will open in the affirmative, and Mr. P. S. Wilde will oppose. The question is of current interest, and a good attendance is being anticipated, as the moon will not be favourable for a hostile air-raid. The Annual Meeting of the Branch will be held on Wednesday, March 6, at 8, at the above hall.—W. HANMER OWEN, Hon. Sec.

West Central Hall (London).—Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner's excellent lecture was received with much applause, and followed by a good discussion. This is the final lecture of the series, as we are unable to obtain the hall for next month, much to our regret.—E. M. VANCE, Gen. Sec.

North London Branch N.S.S.—Miss Boyle is always inspiring and stimulating, and, in spite of the ever-dreaded air-raids, a fair audience enjoyed her lecture on Sunday evening. To-day, Mr. Joad, of the Fabian Society, pays us his second visit. We expect a brisk discussion, and hope North Londoners will attend in full force.

Nuneaton Branch N.S.S.—Mr. T. F. Palmer delivered two greatly appreciated lectures here on Sunday last. Everyone present appeared to enjoy the addresses, and there was quite a good sale of literature. Our next lecture will be on Sunday, March 10, by Mr. Willis, of Birmingham.—A. T. JOHNSON, Hon. Sec.

Unconscious fun is often very happy. In the Admiralty Court recently a marine witness, taking up the card on which the oath is printed began loudly, "I swear by the Admiralty God."

Rita, the well-known novelist, has published a book, entitled *The Wrong End of Religion*, which her publishers describe as a "slashing attack on the hypocrisy of modern religion." Although the thunder is borrowed from Freethought writers, the book should flutter the dovescotes of orthodoxy.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, Mr. Cyril E. M. Joad, "The Prussian Theory of the State." Open Debate.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, near Kennington Oval Tube Station): 7, Debate. "That Modern Secularism is Useless as an Instrument of Social Reform." Affirmative, Mr. F. Vickers. Negative, Mr. P. S. Wilde.

OUTDOOR.

HYDE PARK. 11.30, Mr. Saphin; 3.15, Messrs. Dales, Swasey, and Shaller.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Repertory Theatre, Station Street): 7, Mr. F. E. Willis, "Sacred Fetishes."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate); 6.30, Thirty-sixth Anniversary of the Opening of the Secular Hall.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Clarion Cafe, 25 Cable Street): 7, Mr. J. A. Hammond, "The World of Space."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Baker's Hall, 56 Swan Street): 6.30, Mr. J. Sanders, "Two Great Greeks and Philosophy."

SHEFFIELD ETHICAL SOCIETY (Builders' Exchange, Cross Burgess Street): Mr. C. Cohen, 3.30, "Why Men Believe in God"; 6.30, "Do the Dead Live?"

SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Waverley Hall, St. Mary's Road): Mr. T. F. Rayner, "The Life and Work of Charles Darwin."

SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Hall Buildings, first floor, Fowler Street): 6.30, Mr. J. L. Carr, "What Freethought Has Done For Me."

South Place Ethical Society, SOUTH PLACE, MOORGATE STREET, E.C.

Sunday Morning Services.

March 3, at 11 o'clock—

DR. F. H. HAYWARD.

"Shakespeare's 'King Lear' and the Meaning."

March 10, at 11 o'clock—

JOHN A. HOBSON, M.A.

"The Emotion of the Ideal."

GENERAL SERVANT (Plain Cooking) of Good Character Wanted. Two in Family. Good Wages.—Apply by letter to MRS. BRADLAUGH BONNER, 23 Streathbourne Road, Tooting Common, S.W. 17.

WANTED.—The New Moral World, by Robert Owen, and other Works by the same author. Also Works by Richard Carlile and "Isis." Good prices given.—X., Freethinker Office.

To South African Residents, SETTLERS, AND TRAVELLERS.

READERS of the Freethinker and sympathisers with its cause will always be welcome to call on or correspond with the following:—

Names for the above list are requested, and will be published from time to time free of charge.

Contributions towards the expense of printing should be marked S. A. I. D.—i.e., South African Information Department.

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 Free-thought 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 incommodious 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.

**PROPAGANDIST LEAFLETS.** New Issue. 1. *Christianity a Stupendous Failure*, J. T. Lloyd; 2. *Bible and Teetotalism*, J. M. Wheeler; 3. *Principles of Secularism*, C. Watts; 4. *Where Are Your Hospitals?* R. Ingersoll; 5. *Because the Bible Tells Me So*, W. P. Ball; 6. *Why Be Good?* G. W. Foote. *The Parson's Creed*. Often the means of arresting attention and making new members. Price 9d. per hundred, post free 1s. Samples on receipt of stamped addressed envelope.—N. S. S. SECRETARY, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C. 4.

**Population Question and Birth-Control.**

POST FREE THREE HALFPENCE.

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

**THE TRUTH SEEKER.**

FOUNDED BY D. M. BENNETT, 1873.  
CONTINUED BY E. M. MACDONALD, 1883-1909.  
G. E. MACDONALD - EDITOR.  
L. K. WASHBURN - EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTOR.

*Subscription Rates:*

Single subscription in advance	- - -	\$3.00
Two new subscribers	- - -	5.00
One subscription two years in advance	- - -	5.00

To all foreign countries, except Mexico, 50 cents per annum extra. Subscriptions for any length of time under a year, at the rate of 25 cents per month, may be begun at any time.

*Freethinkers everywhere are invited to send for specimen copies, which are free.*

THE TRUTH SEEKER COMPANY,  
Publishers, Dealers in Freethought Books,  
62 VESEY STREET, NEW YORK, U.S.A.

**Pamphlets.**

By G. W. FOOTE.

- BIBLE AND BEER. Price 1d., postage ½d.
- MY RESURRECTION. Price 1d., postage ½d.
- THE ATHEIST SHOEMAKER. Price 1d., postage ½d.
- CHRISTIANITY AND PROGRESS. Price 2d., postage ½d.
- THE NEW CAGLIOSTRO. Price 1d., postage ½d.

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

- DEITY AND DESIGN. Price 1d., postage ½d.
- WAR AND CIVILIZATION. Price 1d., postage ½d.
- RELIGION AND THE CHILD. Price 1d., postage ½d.
- CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIAL ETHICS. Price 1d., postage ½d.

**Pamphlets—continued.**

By J. T. LLOYD.

- PRAYER: ITS ORIGIN, HISTORY, AND FUTILITY. Price 2d., postage ½d.

By WALTER MANN.

- PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN MORALITY. Price 2d., postage ½d.

By MIMNERMUS.

- FREETHOUGHT AND LITERATURE. Price 1d., postage ½d.

By COLONEL INGERSOLL.

- MISTAKES OF MOSES. Price 1d., postage ½d.
- WOODEN GOD. Price 1d., postage ½d.
- THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION. Price 1d., postage ½d.
- DO I BLASPHEME? Price 1d., postage ½d.
- HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH. Price 1d., postage ½d.
- IS SUICIDE A SIN? AND LAST WORDS ON SUICIDE. Price 1d., postage ½d.
- THE GODS. Price 2d., postage 1d.
- LIVE TOPICS. Price 1d., postage ½d.
- ABRAHAM LINCOLN. Price 1d., postage ½d.
- LIMITS OF TOLERATION. Price 1d., postage ½d.
- ROME OR REASON. Price 1d., postage ½d.
- CREEDS AND SPIRITUALITY. Price 1d., postage ½d.

By J. BENTHAM.

- UTILITARIANISM. Price 1d., postage ½d.

By LORD BACON.

- PAGAN MYTHOLOGY. Price 3d., postage 1½d.

By D. HUME.

- ESSAY ON SUICIDE. Price 1d., postage ½d.
- MORTALITY OF SOUL. Price 1d., postage ½d.
- LIBERTY AND NECESSITY. Price 1d., postage ½d.

By M. MANGASARIAN.

- MARTYRDOM OF HYPATIA. Price 1d., postage ½d.

By ANTHONY COLLINS.

- FREEWILL AND NECESSITY. Price 3d., postage 1d.

By DIDEROT AND HOLBACH.

- CODE OF NATURE. Price 1d., postage ½d.

By P. B. SHELLEY.

- REFUTATION OF DEISM. Price 1d., postage ½d.

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

## For a Freethinker's Bookshelf.

### THE ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY.

By L. FEUERBACH.

Translated by GEORGE ELIOT.

A Drastic Criticism of Christianity in terms of Psychology and Anthropology.

Published 7s 6d. net. Price 3s. 6d., postage 5d.

### BYGONES WORTH REMEMBERING.

By GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE.

Two Volumes. Published 7s. net. Price 3s., postage 6d.

### THE POSITIVE EVOLUTION OF RELIGION.

Its Moral and Social Reaction.

By FREDERIC HARRISON, D.C.L.

A Criticism of Supernaturalistic Religion from the standpoint of Positivism.

Published 8s. 6d. net. Price 2s. 6d., postage 5d.

### STUDIES IN ROMAN HISTORY.

By DR. E. G. HARDY.

Vol. I.—Christianity and the Roman Government.

Vol. II.—The Armies and the Empire.

Published 12s. net. Price 3s. 9d., postage 6d.

### DARWINISM TO-DAY.

By PROFESSOR V. L. KELLOGG.

A Discussion of the present standing of Darwinism in the light of later and alternative theories of the Development of Species.

Published 7s. 6d. net. Price 3s., postage 5d.

### 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.

### 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.

### 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.

### THE NON-RELIGION OF THE FUTURE.

By MARIE JEAN GUYAU.

Published 17s. net. Price 4s., postage 6d.

### 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.

### 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.

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

### NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED.

## THE MOTHER OF GOD

By (THE LATE)

G. W. FOOTE.

With Preface by CHAPMAN COHEN.

Should be read by every Freethinker.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

(Postage ½d.)

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

### LIFE-LIKE PORTRAIT

OF

G. W. FOOTE.

Art Mounted, 10 by 7. With Autograph.

SUITABLE FOR FRAMING.

Price ONE SHILLING.

(Postage: Inland, 3d.; Foreign, 6d.)

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

Printed and Published by THE PIONEER PRESS (G. W. FOOTE AND CO., LTD.), 61, FARRINGDON STREET, LONDON, E.C. 4.