

The FREETHINKER

FOUNDED · 1881

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

Registered at the General Post Office as a Newspaper.

VOL. XL.—No. 16

SUNDAY, APRIL 18, 1920

PRICE THREEPENCE

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
Religion in the Schools.—The Editor	241
"The Spirit of Christ."—J. T. Lloyd	242
The Sacred Scene-Shifters.—Mimnermus	244
Does Man Survive Death: Is the Belief Reasonable?	244
God.—G. O. Warren	250
The Strength of Desire.—Ignotus	251
Spiritualism: Why it is Popular.—Arthur F. Thorn	252
Writers and Readers.—Geo. Underwood	252
Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.	

Views and Opinions.

Religion in the Schools.

The National Secular Society and the *Freethinker* have always taken the question of Secular Education seriously. Year in and year out, they have kept the subject before the public, and have never permitted the substantial issue to be clouded by vague talk about the retention of the Bible in the schools on account of its alleged literary value, or as a fount of English language undefiled. The truth being that the Bible is neither a part of English literature nor a fount of English language—so long as we use literature in the sense of a part of the body of writings that fall in that category, or language in the sense of that actually spoken by the people. Biblical language represents a type of English which slowly grew up, and was confined to the Bible and ecclesiastical uses. It can be found nowhere else. Writers used the Bible, when they felt so inclined, exactly as they used writings in other languages. It is certain that the real reason for retaining the Bible in the schools is neither literary nor linguistic. The Bible is a priest's book, and the priest wants it there for his own reasons. When we find people who call themselves reformers using the apologies of the clergy as a reason for not going the "whole hog" and clearing religious instruction out of the schools, one may just set it down to the habitual timidity of so many when faced with a clear logical issue. If people of an advanced turn of mind cared less for the opinions of those whom they were attacking, and showed a little more genuine respect for their own, affairs would be in a more promising state.

* * *

A Crafty Game.

It is now evident, unless something happens in the immediate future, that the Government is bent on making another attempt to reinforce religious instruction in the schools. It is probably part of the bargain between Mr. Lloyd George and the Conservative Party—which is essentially the Church Party—and the fact of the former professing Nonconformity does not affect the assumption. It is, indeed, noticeable that the Prime Minister, who was so much in the habit of sprinkling his speeches with religious phrases, has ceased the practice since he moved nearer the Conservatives. Mr.

Fisher, in his recent speech, foreshadowed the form the Government proposals are likely to take, and they may be taken as the conclusions of the private conferences held between leading Nonconformists, Churchmen, and representatives of the Government, about which we have warned our readers from time to time. It was altogether a species of backstair trafficking, characteristic of a Government of tricks and difficulties. When it is all arranged behind the scenes, the Government will come forward with a measure and offer it for discussion—with the case decided beforehand. It is the game of the Secret Treaties and the Peace Conference over again. These proposals will probably take the form of an abolition of the right of local option with regard to religious instruction, a re-grouping of children, with opportunities for definite and denominational religious teaching, a revised and revived form of right of entry, and a disguised form of tests for teachers. The net result will be that, if the Government's intentions are realized, religion will be more strongly than ever entrenched in the schools, and we shall have commenced the new democratic era by giving a fresh lease of life to a power that, as Kingdon Clifford said, destroyed two civilizations, and came near to wiping out a third.

* * *

The Call for Courage.

The question of the new Government move came up for discussion before the Annual Conference of the National Union of Teachers on April 6, but it is to be regretted that it was handled without courage, and, therefore, without wisdom. The Executive moved a resolution—which was carried—that merely asked for more information, while protesting against "right of entry," and objecting to religious tests. Neither of these positions offer a logical foothold, and if teachers can swallow religious instruction, it is a matter of mere expediency whether, in certain cases, clergymen are to be allowed to give it or not; while, if religion is to be taught, the parson is right in saying that there must be some religious test, and the teacher's objection to it is quite indefensible. It is clearly absurd to say that religion may be taught in the schools, but (a) it must not be a religion of the definite kind in which people believe, (b) the parson, who is theoretically the one best qualified for the job, must not teach it, and (c) there must be no tests as to the fitness of the teacher who is to give the religious instruction. Such an attitude is scarcely likely to increase the general respect for the intellectual calibre of teachers or to rouse admiration for their courage. The logical issue is the right issue, and that is, whether religion should be in the schools at all. There is only one logical and vital question—Secular Education. And that is the one issue that the National Union of Teachers seems afraid to face. The overwhelming majority of teachers recognise how valueless is religious instruction in the schools from the point of view of character-training. No conference of teachers would dare defend it on that ground. An overwhelming majority would also rather see religious instruction

abolished than retained, and yet the one Union that could quickly bring about this act of justice towards the whole community, remains silent, or so timidly resistant, that the clergy trouble less about their opinion in the matter than that of any other class. It is a pitiable spectacle!

* * *

A Foolish Policy.

The mover of the Executive's resolution said:—

We wish to give every religion its fair opportunity, provided there is no religious test for the teachers, and that it does not interfere with the progress of educationWe must have a free hand, subject to the principles of the Christian religion.⁴

That we may take as the official view of the National Union of Teachers, and it only serves to emphasize what we have already said. If every religion is to be given a fair—that is, an equal—opportunity in the schools, that would be to reduce the whole thing to confusion. It would mean such a pandemonium of sectarian teaching as to render the whole thing absurd. And it leaves the injustice of the system which teaches the religion of a section, with money raised by the taxation of all, quite untouched. In saying what is said in this resolution, the National Union of Teachers is declaring that so long as the teachers are made to feel no special inconvenience from the Government proposals, they will go on supporting the present iniquitous system, which turns thousands of teachers into hypocrites by forcing them to hide their opinions on religion and teaches children as true religious beliefs which are known to be false. To add the proviso that the regulations must not interfere with the progress of education is mere verbiage. So long as religion remains in the schools, it will continue to interfere with the progress of education in the future as it has done in the past. It gives play to considerations in the selection of teachers that should never be allowed to operate. It penalizes, more or less, those teachers who will be honest at all costs. And it affords cover for the cultivation in the child of habits of mind that are more or less injurious to its value in after-life as a force in the development of the world's affairs. As teachers—even as citizens—it is quite out of place to stipulate that the education given should be "subject to the principles of the Christian religion." With that the State has properly nothing to do. In India, the Imperial Power holds itself absolutely aloof from all religion, and concerns itself with Secular Education alone. Some of our colonies follow the same sensible plan. Why cannot we adopt the same rule here? And why does not the N.U.T. give a genuine lead to educational policy by insisting upon the value of a policy to which the pressure of events will drive it sooner or later?

* * *

A. Fight for Civilization.

One of the teachers, speaking at the Conference on April 7, said of the teachers as a class:—

Ours is a subject profession. We have few rights; many masters, and a respectful attitude, and we are owned by the State and loaned to the religious bodies for a consideration.

This is wittily but bitterly true. School teaching in this country, instead of being one of the most honoured of callings, has been the least honoured, and the poorest paid of the professions. The teacher has been, historically, under the control of the parson or the squire, or petty Councils, that have often been less respectful to the teachers than to the dustmen. Teaching has indeed been a subject profession, and tradition is as hard to kill with those who suffer from it as it is with those responsible for its administration. The tone of the N.U.T.

Conference on the subject of religion in the schools is a reflection of this tradition. It is still living in the shadow of the fear of the clergy. And yet the N.U.T. is strong enough to put forward a bold policy, and enforce it, if it only evolves the courage to do it. More than any other body, it could help to see to it that the children should be no longer used as so many pawns in the game between Church and Chapel, and themselves as so many catspaws. Teachers ought not to be members of a subject profession, with few rights and "a respectful attitude." Teaching should be one of the most honoured, as it is one of the most important, professions in the State. But it will never be that, and teachers will never be playing the part they should play, until the parson is cleared out of the schools in both person and proxy. With one or two exceptions, the clergy have no interest in education. Their sole concern is to capture the child in the interest of this or that sect. The future of the race is being largely decided in the schools. The clergy know it, and act accordingly. They are fighting for the control of civilization, and teachers can, if they will, play an important part in preventing the consummation of that disaster.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

"The Spirit of Christ."

DR. RUSSELL WAKEFIELD, Bishop of Birmingham, has always taken an active interest in social life. As vicar of the parish church of St. Marylebone, London, he was noted for his devotion to the cause of the people as members, not merely of the Church, but of the community. He was a member of the Royal Commission on Poor Law and Chairman of the Central (Unemployed) Body for London. For two years he was Mayor of Marylebone. He was also recognized as an authority on education and unemployment. Since his elevation to the Bench of Bishops he has given frequent expression to his humanitarian sympathies and eagerness to be of service in the emancipation and elevation of the masses. Recently he delivered an address on "The Spirit of Christ in Municipal Life" at St. Edmund's, Lombard Street, in which one is not surprised to find a considerable amount of sound sense and practical wisdom. As reported in the *Christian World Pulpit* for April 7, in the first half of it he deals with civic government and service on purely humanitarian lines, just exactly as an orthodox Buddhist or Secularist would do. Not a single word occurs to indicate that the speaker is a Lord Bishop or even a Christian. It is Secularism in its purest form that meets our eyes. Dr. Wakefield says:—

You look upon a city slum, you know that it is evil; you are aware that the child death-rate in that slum is twice as high as the child death-rate of the suburb in which you live. You know that vile temptations assail the dwellers in the slums, the men and women, at every step they take.

The right reverend gentleman talks very sensibly about the housing question, about the public health, about the need "to set to work to do something, to ensure better environment for the people, open spaces, baths, the lessening of child labour, the getting of libraries, and that which we sometimes have forgotten but which has such an effect upon the life of a crowded city, good lighting." That is common sense, which often falls from the lips of an Atheist with equal earnestness; pure humanism, which commends itself to all alike. Even Charles Bradlaugh and George William Foote, who firmly repudiated supernaturalism, cherished and gave repeated utterance to the self-same sentiments, for which

they got no credit, in their lifetime, from the Christian public. The Bishop continues:—

The closer you get to people the more you love them, the more you desire to help them.....Now, such are some of the things that to my mind make civic work very delightful, and it passes me altogether how people can consider there is not something that is actually inspiring to all that is best in one to strive for the immediate well-being of those amongst whom you live.

So far, we are in entire accord with the speaker. It is perfectly true that no one can work for the welfare of society without being in earnest, or without sincerely loving one's fellow-beings. This is self-evident, admitted as frankly by Freethinkers as by the Bishop of Birmingham. We agree that all men and women should have the franchise, and that, having it, they should intelligently and conscientiously use it. The Bishop exclaims:—

And yet what do you find? That 40 per cent. is, I believe, a high average nowadays in voting for civic position. I would, I tell you quite honestly, disfranchise the man or woman who three times, for instance, failed to register his or her vote, because they do not deserve to have the vote at all. There is no real fire; there is no real love of their fellow human beings.

Quite naturally his lordship, every now and then, puts in just a word for "that man," whom he is not anxious to name, and for this we cannot legitimately blame him. He is a minister of religion, a fact he can never completely forget. On the whole, however, he keeps supernaturalism in the background. What he insists upon is humanity, and there can be no genuine humanity without love. "I am a man," he says, "therefore nothing human can be a subject of indifference to me." But we cannot love people unless we have a certain amount of belief in them. Of course, the War has had a demoralizing effect upon multitudes of people. This is candidly admitted by the speaker, who says that "the War has made the people undisciplined, and it is no wonder"; but still he claims, and he may be right, that the roughness, discourtesy, and undiscipline displayed by so many just now is superficial, and that there is even in the worst a better and nobler nature to which an appeal may successfully be made.

In the second half of his discourses, however, we are obliged to part company from the Bishop, who here introduces his supernaturalism thus:—

We must not be merely utilitarian. No work must be done except with the feeling, I am a co-operator with God. He has put me here in some sense or other to make the world the better for my being here. He has not put me here to get money for myself. He has not put me here to have an easy time. He has put me here into a world which is a family, and I have got to do all I can to bless and benefit that family. We are fellow-workers with the great God himself.

We do not wish to cast any doubt upon the honesty and sincerity of the Bishop's supernatural belief; but we do not hesitate to assert that his method of expressing that belief is an unwitting insult to thousands and millions of his fellow-beings. He has a perfect right to regard himself as a co-worker with God; but he oversteps his right when he declares that no work must be undertaken except with that conviction. Why, some of the world's best, most efficient workers to-day believe neither in God nor in a hereafter. The Bishop is not a mere utilitarian, or, in other words, it is not the *usefulness* of the work done by him that counts, but the feeling that in doing it he is co-operating with God. We maintain, on the contrary, that they who do good simply because it is good occupy a much higher ground than those who do it mainly because it pleases God. Dr. Wakefield acts upon the same principle as the Apostle Paul acted

upon when he affirmed that if he did not believe in the next world he would certainly go to the Devil in this. Besides, not only is the Bishop unjust to himself as a social worker, but he is more unjust still to the God whose co-worker he claims to be. He brings the Supreme Being down to his own level and standard. Some Christians there are who represent God as incapable of doing any work except through them, they being his instruments. According to these, such is the method by which he has seen fit to get his work done, though they confess it is an insoluble mystery why he should have adopted such a plan. According to Paul and the Bishop, God does work, only he likes to take us into partnership. Now, what does God do, if God there be? What evidence is there that he works at all? All know perfectly well that the world's work is shockingly neglected; but is it not self-evident that if God is a worker, an almighty worker, the chief responsibility for that neglect must lie at his door? The Bishop admits that he himself is weak, imperfect, and sinful, and that at best he is but a miserably poor worker; but does that description apply to God also? By his very phraseology, Dr. Wakefield compromises the Divine worker himself.

No less manifest is the Bishop's unfairness to crowds of his unbelieving fellow-beings. One would infer from his language that non-Christians not only do no work at all, but are forbidden to undertake to do any because of their unbelief. Has his lordship forgotten that Professor David Cairns, in his well-known book, *The Army and Religion*, adduces evidence to show that among the eighty per cent. of soldiers who were totally ignorant of what Christianity is and of what the Churches stand for, were to be found the greatest number of good-hearted, noble-minded, and heroic men in the whole Army. The same courageous Professor now tells us that in Scotland, with a population of 4,800,000, the membership of all the Protestant Churches amounts to only 1,400,000, while that of the Catholic Church reaches half a million, thus leaving not far short of 2,000,000 outside the Christian pale altogether. Is it reasonable to assume that those two million Scottish people are utterly useless members of society? Dr. Cairns knows better, and it would be sheer nonsense to say that the bulk of the social work of the world is being done by the Churches. The fact is that the Churches are being deserted more and more because they have failed to fulfil their self-appointed mission, because they pretended to be and to do what was infinitely beyond them either to be or do, and are now being found out, with the inevitable result that outside all of them the process of industrial, economic, and social reconstruction is steadily going on as if they did not exist at all. What is the driving force, the motive-power, behind this tremendous process? The gregarious instinct, the social sense, groping its way towards fuller and grander manifestation in all the relationships of life. What mankind need above all else is not belief in and co-operation with God, but belief in and co-operation with one another; not the spirit of Christ, but the sense and spirit of natural brotherhood and comradeship among themselves.

J. T. LLOYD.

FUNCTIONLESS FACULTIES.

Any faculty we have that we keep without a function, first wails and then becomes withered, and sometimes diseased, and even malignantly diseased; and sometimes dies; and the whole body, individual and corporate, suffers from carrying about in it, to bed and board, to business and pleasure, to prayer and work, this workhouse or lazaret, or it may be churchyard, of effete, or vicious, or cadaverous organs.

—J. J. Garth Wilkinson.

The Sacred Scene-Shifters.

Gold? yellow, glittering, precious gold?
Ha, you gods! Why this? What this, you gods?
Why this
Will lug your priests and servants from your sides.
—Shakespeare, "Timon of Athens."

THERE has probably never been a time in the history of the Established Church of this country when that Church has possessed such little hold upon the public as it does at the present time. To put the matter bluntly, the average man distrusts the Church and its ministers, and asks himself whether the latter are really honest in all they profess. Let us look at a few recent incidents, and conviction will be forced upon us that there is something radically wrong, and that there is considerable justification for the feelings of utter indifference with which the bulk of the population regard the Established Church at the present day.

"Keep the home fires burning" is the motto of the Anglican bishops and superior clergy at this national crisis, and their actions show that they are willing to cast into the flames any principles—except that of self-preservation. The very men, who, a few years ago, ridiculed democratic ideals as the idle clamour of the public-house and the market-place, are now engaged in hastily extemporizing democratic coverings, as the characters in a popular farce constructed the furniture of a home out of wooden boxes and travelling-trunks covered with shawls and rugs.

The Church's stage carpentry is well done. All the scenery is in place, with the convenient doors that enable the new quick-change artistes to vanish at one side as Conservative-Imperialists and to reappear at the other discreetly dressed as Social-Democrats. We cannot tell how long this farcical diversion will occupy the attention of the audience of the faithful. Ordinary folk, however, are unlikely to be deceived for long by this clerical camouflage, which, when discovered, will tend to lessen what little influence the clergy possess with the mass of the nation.

Leopards do not easily part with their spots, and it is idle to pretend that "my-lorded" and be-gaitered mediæval peers living in palaces will suddenly be converted to democratic views. The cautious hostility of the Bishops to all progressive measures introduced to the House of Lords can never be forgotten. When Nonconformists wished to educate their sons at the Universities at their own expense, the Bishops turned deaf ears. When Free Churchmen wished to bury their own dead with their own rites, the Bishops again were hostile. When it was proposed to remove the disabilities of Catholics, Jews, and Freethinkers, the Bench of Bishops attempted to block the way. In scores of instances affecting the welfare of the working classes, the Bishops emulated the example of the priest and the Levite who passed by on the other side. How can these spiritual lords silence the sneer of the cynic at such an abdication of moral authority, at such an evasion of plain duty? Democrats cannot forget such things. They cannot forget that the Church permitted a service for the blessed "King Charles the Martyr" to disfigure the Prayer Book for generations, and to-day that it offers prayers for the individual members of the Royal Family. They cannot forget that when the Labour Movement was weak, the Bench of Bishops was always among its bitterest enemies. To-day, when the Labour Movement is a real and growing force in politics, these unctuous prelates speak smoothly and pretend that they have always been friendly. So anxious are they for popular approval that they have introduced a solitary Labour

hymn in their services, and pretend that their clergy are "starving" working-men.

The Church itself is undemocratic, and a survival of the Middle Ages. It professes to care for education, but all it cares for is to give a Christian bias to education. The proof is that in Church schools the teachers are worse paid than carters and dustmen. The clergy know that to be a Christian one need not be well educated; one only needs to be brought up with a proper respect for the Church and its ministers. The strength of religion lies in the unthinking and uninformed masses. The average Christian is a man who does not understand his own religion; who does not know what he himself believes or disbelieves; and has never given an hour's real study or thought to his own or any other faith.

So long as the Church points to a mythical Christ as a social reformer, it is doomed. According to the legends, Jesus accepted the Roman yoke, and submitted to the many iniquities of Cæsarism. He made no attempt to change the social order or the social organism. The system of taxation in the Roman Empire was abominably unjust. Christ said never a word against taxation. Labour was then simple slavery, but Christ never denounced slavery. As a social reformer, he should have denounced these iniquities. The amelioration of our social status must come from other sources than Christ. If the Church cannot face this conclusion, its fate is sealed.

MIMNERMUS.

Does Man Survive Death: Is the Belief Reasonable?

A Debate between Mr. Horace Leaf and Mr. Chapman Cohen, in the St. Andrew's Hall, Glasgow, Thursday, February 26, 1920. Chairman, Mr. Rosslyn Mitchell, LL.D.

THE CHAIRMAN: Ladies and Gentlemen,—We are met here to-night to listen to a debate upon a subject which is of very vital interest to us all, and, in order to prevent the necessity of putting upon one of the dialectic contestants the obligation to prove a negative, the subject of the debate has been expressed in the words, "Does Man Survive Death: Is the Belief Reasonable?" We are happy in having that subject discussed by two men who, by their knowledge and experience and their study, are perhaps the two best equipped in this country for the purpose. (Applause.) The method to be adopted is as follows: Each side will speak for thirty minutes in laying down the fundamental proposition. Thereafter, there will be an allowance of twenty minutes to each side for laying down the fundamental proposition, and, after that, ten minutes will be allowed to each to wind up the debate. In the last item of ten minutes each, no new matter will be introduced. There will be no resolution put to the meeting. Each person will have to decide for himself, or herself, as to which side has convinced him or her as to the reasonableness of the belief in the survival of man after death. I now call on Mr. Horace Leaf to lay down the fundamental proposition affirming the question which is before the meeting. (Applause.)

MR. HORACE LEAF: Mr. Chairman, Ladies, and Gentlemen,—I want you, if you will, please, first to pay attention to the title. You will see that the question under discussion is not a specific one in so far as it relates to any particular body of opinion; I mean such as the Spiritualists', or the Christians, it is a general subject, and one which can be dealt with from every conceivable point of view that applies to a subject so wide and so

important. So I want you, if you will, to endeavour to follow me a little later in what may seem to you to be a somewhat technical argument, and not directly touching upon the subject in the way you would suppose a Spiritualist such as I am would naturally approach. I want, first of all, to emphasize the importance of the subject. I know it will seem like covering ground that is unnecessary; but I do not think that is so. The subject is probably the most important in the world from a purely speculative point of view. It has affected every country, and, so far as we can judge, it has done so ever since the human race has been upon this planet. But it has become increasingly important at the present time, for a reason which is familiar to us all. The Great War has not merely upset the general condition of countries, but, as you know, it has brought forward one of the most appalling things we are able to conceive of. It has caused, we are told, something like eight millions of young men in the prime of life, and full of untold possibilities to cease their life in this world, as we think, out of time; and I suppose that every family in the Western world, at least, has been in some way directly or indirectly affected; some so closely that no one can express their feelings upon the matter, as they are so intense, or understand how much the subject must mean to them. The question which now occupies the minds of the men and women interested seriously in the subject of existence is, What has become of these men? The question applies to every case where someone quits this world and goes into the next.

Now, there are two answers, which are very well defined. One is the spiritualistic answer (I use the term in its broadest sense), and the other is the materialistic answer. The first is the spiritualistic, affirming that, when an individual is thus killed, or dies, it does not mean that consciousness is destroyed, but that there are other conditions of existence to which the consciousness passes, conditions which are adjusted to, or to which that consciousness is adjusted. It views humanity as a duality, a spirit and a body, and it maintains that the material body is nothing more nor less than an instrument which is temporarily used by the consciousness for some purpose or other; a purpose which seems to be fairly clear during the individual's sojourn in this world. But the other answer is diametrically opposed to that. It maintains that man is essentially a planetary creature, that he is brought into existence in this world, and that at death he ceases as a consciousness to exist. You know the general position which is taken up from a scientific point of view so far as that particular view is concerned. It is maintained that consciousness is really the result of some subtle physical combination, and, as a rule—and it would seem quite rational—we attribute the particular combination, or the main part of it, to the organ known as the brain. I apologize for using an old illustration, which is the best I can find. It is maintained by people who take this view that the brain secretes consciousness just in the same way as the liver secretes bile; and we know that with the destruction of the liver, when that subtle combination of matter breaks up, then the power to produce this particular fluid ceases. So, when there takes place, as at death, a profound change in the construction of the brain, it maintains that the consciousness is dissipated in a similar way.

There is a sentimental argument against that, and I want to use it. I use it because, in common with all Spiritualists, we do not regard sentiment as being unimportant. It very often misleads us, but there are other sentiments which seem to be essential to the general well-being and comfort of humanity in this world; and, since sentiment is a very powerful thing, it must be

regarded as something important in connection with us. When the average person asks himself what he would do in such circumstances as those which we are facing in this proposition, he would say: "If I had charge of affairs, I would arrange things differently from the way they seem to be arranged, or are said to be arranged by the materialist." He would maintain that there are qualities in mankind which cannot be adequately expressed in this life. He would say:—

I feel within myself power, energy, and ambitions which circumstances will never allow me to give expression to, no matter how favoured I may be in life. Be it that I am the freest individual that the world has ever known and every opportunity is laid at my feet to be what I will, I know that I cannot be what I will. I might make a most excellent doctor. I would also like to be an equally excellent lawyer, or legislator; I would like to be able to express myself in the highest degree in every conceivable way that mankind can do that is useful to the individual, and may be said to be praiseworthy so far as the human being is concerned.

But when we take the great mass of people, what do we see? We see that they are not able to express themselves adequately in any one particular line of life. Take the average individual of this city, and what is it you see outside the favoured few? You see men and women wasting, as it were, powers which, if they had better opportunity, might enable them to become as great as any character that the world has known. We know the powers are there, and we say that if death comes and destroys that individual without having given him a better opportunity somewhere else to express himself in the fullness of his being, then there is something radically wrong in the universe, be it organized and controlled by a deity or by iron laws. It means that you take the world as you conceive it and bring it before the one seat of judgment that you as an individual are qualified to bring it before; you bring it before the judgment of your own mind, the only thing you can be actually sure of, and you condemn it from the materialistic point of view and you would, if you could, do your best to alter it. Don't you think that that sentiment comes from somewhere? It is so real that I believe it is writ large in the breast of every honest man and woman. It is something that speaks wherever the rational mind is to be found, and it becomes essentially a quality of being which makes us ask this question. Since it comes out so effectively and widely, are we to deny it any meaning? Now, I want to get nearer home, if you will. I play upon your feelings, if you like. It is not so long since I sat at the bedside of my own father. He died ripe in years. As I took his hand in mine and felt life ebb from him, there went from me, with the departure of that life from him, a yearning—"If I only had my way, I would not only never lose touch with you, but, be nature what it will, I want to meet you again." Now, it is no use saying that that is sentiment pure and simple. It is a fact which touches nearly every man and woman that ever lived and ever will live. It comes when friend dies, when son dies, when daughter dies, when parent dies; and it comes to you so powerfully that you more than ever would say, "If nature has denied me the possibility of meeting them again, and knowing them again, then nature is the cruelest thing, alive or dead, be it what it will." (Applause). And, remember, that is a universal feeling.

Well, now, I want to come down to the more scientific and specific argument. I can only speak of my opponent's position as I have discovered it from reading his works. I say, honestly, I have a very profound respect for my opponent—(Applause)—and I fully believe that there is not only no more capable man, but I believe he

is a most seriously-minded man and most earnest in any opinion which he takes up. In other words, I believe that Mr. Cohen is a Materialist, because he does not believe there is sufficient evidence, or any evidence, to support the Spiritualistic position. (Applause). And I want to tell you that I am a Spiritualist, because I know that there is evidence to prove that position. (Applause). And I can give you credentials, which I think essential, for, although the Spiritualists present probably know more about me than I do about myself, there are, nevertheless, strangers here who may not understand the grounds that have led me to give my declaration.

Spiritualists are generally regarded by their opponents as being insane, and, so, I must ask you to bear that in mind when I tell you what I have to tell you. For fifteen years I have devoted my whole time—not part of it—to the study and expounding of this subject. That is nearly half of my life. I have been present, not at hundreds, but at thousands of Spiritualistic *seances*, and I had seen almost every conceivable kind of psychic phenomena, and I was privileged to take part for two years with Dr. Crawford, of Queen's University, Belfast, in those enquiries into the physical phenomena of Spiritualism which have led him to write a series of books in favour of that Spiritualism which he formerly opposed.

Well, now, the materialistic position maintaining that mind is the product of the substance of the brain, one which is usually held by Atheists, is the one which I understand Mr. Chapman Cohen maintains. We know that people who take up the materialistic point of view are the most positive of people, as a rule. That is one of their characteristics. They need to be very positive to come and destroy the hopes of a large section of the people; for I fully agree that if we do not survive death, let us know it. Don't, by any means, let us move in the dark and deceive ourselves whatever our feelings may be. But I do think that the evidence should be such as to leave no reasonable doubt in the mind of any man or woman, and I want to put to you two propositions which arise from that proposition. They are these. If it be true that mind is the product of the substance of the brain, then, any change in the mind must be accompanied by a corresponding change in the brain, and *vice versa*. Any change in the brain must be accompanied by a corresponding change in the mind, as they are one and the same thing. If anything, the physical is the basis in this case of the mental. You may make allowances for minor differences, that is to say, that, if the mental defect is slight, or the physical defect is slight, you may not be able to trace anything out of the normal; but, when it comes to profound changes as in the case of a person who is raving mad, it should follow as a natural consequence that the brain of that person, when examined after death, should be as profoundly changed in its structure as the mind has been in its functioning. I maintain that is a just proposition.

What does science have to say upon this matter? I am going to read to you an extract from the works of two materialistic scientists, and they are experts on mental and nervous diseases. The extract which I put before you is taken from page 724 of a work known as *Nervous and Mental Diseases*, written by Messrs. Church and Peterson. Now, they tell us, and they had a very extensive experience, not only in America, but on the Continent, writing a text-book for students; they had an opportunity of examining many brains of people who had died insane, and they say:—

The most careful investigations of the central nervous system have so far discovered no pathologic-anatomical basis for mania. The theory still prevails that there is a congestion of the higher brain-centres underlying the

manifestations of mania, *but this theory lacks the support of observed facts*. We are, therefore, constrained to look upon the disorder as functional in its nature, as due to a morbid change in the nutrition of the cells, in the way of deficient or perverted metabolism.

They say in plain terms: We have examined the brains of many people who have died of mania, and, although they died raving mad, we have found their brains so healthy after death that we have been obliged to assume that a change has taken place which we have not been able to perceive, but, clinging to our materialism, we must assume that it is there, notwithstanding the fact that this theory lacks the support of observed facts.

Now, I maintain that a statement so fair as that, and one which is being constantly supported, is one which should cause any person who adopts the materialistic theory and declares that man dies at death, because mind and brain are one and the same thing, to pause and ask whether he is justified in saying that when it stands on so shaky a theory.

Let us take the other extreme. I am going to mention the name of a great Scottish doctor—Dr. Abercrombie. I mention him because I take something from his book which mentions many great names. He refers to cases well known, and well known to this day, where the brain has been most markedly diseased but the mind has been healthy. Listen to these cases. He says there is the case of a lady in whom one-half of the brain was reduced to a mass of disease, but who retained all her faculties to the last, except that there was an imperfection of vision, and had been enjoying herself at a convivial party in the house of a friend a few hours before her death. A man mentioned by Dr. Ferriar, who died of an affection of the brain, retained all his faculties entire till the moment of death, which was sudden. On examining his head, the whole right hemisphere, that is one-half of his brain, was found destroyed by suppuration. In a similar case recorded by Dr. Diemerbrock, half a pound of matter was found in the brain; and in one by Dr. Heberden, there was half a pound of water. A man mentioned by Mr. O'Halloran suffered such an injury of the head that a large portion of the bone was removed on the right side, and, extensive suppuration having taken place, there was discharged at each dressing, through the opening, an immense quantity of matter mixed with large masses of the substance of the brain. This went on for seventeen days, and it appears that nearly one-half of the brain was thrown out, mixed with the matter. Yet the man retained all his intellectual faculties till the very moment of dissolution, and, through the whole course of the disease, his mind maintained uniform tranquillity.

Now, I maintain this, that, while these arguments throw Materialism into a grave condition of doubt, they strongly support the contention that the human consciousness belongs to something which, while functioning in the physical body, is, nevertheless, only using the brain as an instrument. I could give you much more evidence that at times it is able to overcome the deficiencies of the physical organ in ways that would strike you as very singular and profound, and assert its authority under such conditions as described. I want Mr. Chapman Cohen, if he will, to tell me, if he does not consider this kind of evidence sufficient, what kind of evidence he requires for the belief that man survives the change of death. (Applause.)

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Chapman Cohen will now lay down his fundamental proposition. (Applause.)

(To be continued.)

Acid Drops.

"It is getting very much easier to believe in the resurrection," says Dr. Orchard, which is really in the nature of a discovery, seeing that there are probably fewer who believe in that doctrine to-day than at any previous period in the history of Christianity. Dr. Orchard's reason for his belief is that psychical research was playing a great part, and physical science had also played a great part in its newer theories of matter. Now we think we may say without undue egotism that we are as well acquainted with both the results of that curious hotch-potch called "psychical research," and with the meaning of recent scientific results as is Dr. Orchard, and we challenge him to produce a single fact from either department in favour of even the survival of personality after death. Statements, such as those made by Dr. Orchard, impress those who do not understand the real trend of scientific development, to others it is sheer verbiage.

The "old, old story of Jesus" does not head the bill at the churches as it used to do. A free cinema show is among the attractions at St. Bartholomew's Church, Birmingham. A newspaper report states that the programme included films of Continental travel, a submarine attack, and the killing of a whale. These do not appear to be sacred subjects, unless the whale was Jonah's "fishy" landlord.

Providence has been in a playful mood again. A tornado in the United States killed over 200 people and injured thousands, besides damaging property valued at millions of pounds. At Elgin many people were killed in church, the building collapsing and burying the people in the debris.

In a leading article, the *Daily Mail* (London) denies indignantly that the Christian religion is a "moral opium" to lull people into acceptance of the bitter facts of life. In the same issue of the paper there is a report of the ceremony of giving sixpences to widows of the parish at St. Bartholomew's Church, Smithfield. At Westminster Abbey gifts were also distributed to old people.

Scotland is religiously on the downgrade. The craze for dancing is obtaining a terrible hold even on the religious communities. The Rev. James Houston, B.D., of Glasgow, says that "whist drives and things of that kind are being held in Scottish Churches." Amusements, of course, are things of the world, and Christians are called upon to hate the world and all its things. At a meeting of ministers, missionaries, and Christian workers, attended by nearly 1,000 persons, recently held in Glasgow, a resolution was unanimously passed strongly condemning the introduction of dancing, whist drives, and such things among young people in the churches. The truth is that *spiritual* religion is becoming a thing of the past even in Scotland.

The Christian religion is supposed to uplift those who follow its precepts. That "uplift" is not manifest in the case of the Rev. C. Burston, of Taunton, at whose inquest a verdict of "alcoholic poisoning" was given as the cause of death. It was stated that during the week preceding his death he drank sixteen bottles of whisky. At Pontypool, the Rev. C. E. Luton was charged with embezzlement from the Ministry of Pensions, and forgery. The defalcations discovered amounted to over £2,000.

The Rev. T. Sykes, General Secretary to the National Brotherhood Council, writing to the *Daily News*, says that the Church of England "is more concerned about ecclesiastical dignity and etiquette than the welfare of mankind." Brother Sykes should know these things.

An interesting volume relating to a Unitarian minister (the Rev. Mr. Hargrove) has just been published by Williams

and Norgate. It is written by Professor Jacks. Hargrove was the son of a minister of the Plymouth Brethren. Then he joined the Roman Church, and became one of the Dominican Order of Preaching Friars; but later on he renounced Catholicism, and settled down as pastor of the Mill Hill Unitarian Church in Leeds. The story of young Hargrove's early days at home with his fanatically religious father are appalling. He declares in the diary he kept when he was fifteen: "I was born in sin, and in iniquity did my mother conceive me." He was worried about prayers for the dead, and purgatory and baptismal regeneration! Humour is naturally scarce in this book, but there is a good story of Hargrove going to say Mass at an up-country church in Trinidad, and finding in the vestry the wooden image of a "buck nigger" attired in dress coat, silk hat, and patent leather boots, which he learned had long been venerated by the negroes as St. Anthony of Padua!

At the Duke of York's Theatre last night, says the *Star* diarist, I met Mr. Russell Thorndike. He recalled how they wrote a "revue" some years ago, and were held up for an opening chorus to be sung by a crowd of land girls. Eventually Miss Sybil Thorndike harmonized the well-known hymn "We plough the fields and scatter." "And," added Mr. Thorndike, with a twinkle, "so far as I know, nobody recognized it."

A London daily paper warns its readers that school teachers may "drop revolutionary tincture into the draughts of learning that they give young people." No daily paper protests against the reactionary tincture which has been so used for many generations.

Mr. George Lansbury is more pious than many a professional parson. In his book, *These Things Shall Be*, he says that love of humanity is associated with love of "God." Will Mr. Lansbury explain how the poet Shelley, who was an Atheist, obtained his enthusiasm for humanity? And Mr. Lansbury must have overlooked his praise of Lenin.

The priest of Villeneuve St. Georges, near Paris, is much upset at the scantiness of attire affected by French brides. To overcome a difficulty, the man-of-God might lend the ladies some of his old petticoats.

One always feels a little satisfaction in seeing a doctor compelled to drink some of his own medicine, and it is amusing to find the *Church Times*, in a recent issue, complaining that a certain film story "exhibiting the lowest type of Englishman and contrasting him with an exalted type of Chinaman" is likely to do harm with the millions who visit the picture theatres. Now, if this picture had followed the usual missionary lines, in which the Chinaman, being a non-Christian, is depicted as cunning and brutal and treacherous, and the Englishman, being formally a Christian, as the embodiment of goodness, the *Church Times* would, we expect, have made no comment. The inference would then have been flattering to Christians and helpful to missionary work. But it is quite a reversal of the natural order of things to put a Christian as the superior of the Briton. It is decidedly unchristian; and we are not at all surprised at the protest.

It would be an interesting study to trace how far this kind of cultivated egotism is responsible for the evil in the world. Certainly it is part of the psychology of the average Christian that all non-Christians are naturally and inevitably his inferiors. And that feeling finds its counterpart in the national egotism that places the people of other nations on a lower level than the one that is judging them. Or, again, it determines the attitude of the white to the coloured man. The white man all over the world *feels* that the coloured man is an inferior animal. Sometimes he says so quite frankly, but invariably he feels that it is so. The prevailing note with the white man in Africa and India is that the coloured people must be kept under. They must be taught to respect

the superiority of the white. The white may treat them kindly, if this superiority is recognized, much as he would be kind to a good-humoured dog; but the coloured man must recognize his place in the world. The white man, particularly the white Christian, sees all differences in terms of moral value, and the standard is set by himself. It is this kind of feeling that provides the groundwork for the exploitation and ill-treatment of the coloured people all over the world. Ordinary rules do not quite apply to them. They must be kept under at all costs. And in the cultivation of this state of mind, which brutalizes without teaching brutality, and demoralizes through a professed teaching of morals, there is no agency quite so powerful as is the Christian religion. Its egotism is profound, and there is hardly a vicious feeling that cannot find a concealed satisfaction under its auspices.

At Wigan the Rev. Canon Forest was recently announced to speak on "My Neighbour's Wife." No one under sixteen years of age was admitted. We are surprised that a venerable canon should use language of such a character that young people may not hear it. But perhaps the suggestion of naughtiness was only an advertising dodge, and those who went would feel injured at not hearing worse things than were actually uttered.

At a Special Conference of Missionaries and Church Workers held in Glasgow, a resolution was passed deploring inroads of worldliness and pleasure-seeking on the life of the Church. The complaint is specifically directed to the growth of dancing and musical entertainments in connection with the Churches. The complaint, from the religious point of view, is very Scotch. But it is to be noted that the worldliness complained of refers exclusively to pleasure. No complaint is laid against people on the ground of their getting big interests on their investments, amassing fortunes, etc.

We have said often that in Christendom money is the one thing that is really worshipped, and we note a confirmation of this in the *Evening Standard* for April. We see from that issue that a conference is to be called in Brussels of representatives of forty of the world's States, including Germans, Austrians, etc. When something of this kind was proposed more than three years ago, and subsequently, the proposal was rejected on the ground that we could not even consider meeting at the same table representatives of enemy countries. But that was to discuss the question of saving lives and promoting civilization. The present Conference is to consider finance, and that is a very different proposition—to Christians.

The clergy are not all starving working men. The late Rev. H. V. Ellis, of Alderton, Suffolk, left £18,809. The Rev. G. W. Ure, cousin of Lord Strathclyde, has been appointed vicar of Harrow.

Christian Evidence lecturers, and other old-fashioned admirers of the Design Argument, will kindly note that a lamb, possessing two bodies, two tails, four ears, eight legs, but only one head, was born at Lee Hall Farm, Staffs.

Liverpool Cricket Club has decided to play games on Sundays. So far, none of the committee have been struck by lightning.

It would be surprising—did one not know the character of the English religious press—to note that those papers that have been vocal concerning the imaginary suppression of religion in Russia, and have given columns of "atrocities" by the Bolsheviks, should be so silent concerning the suppression of Freethought in places such as Hungary where reaction has gained the upper hand. Thus Count Batthany, writing to the *Daily News*, in defence of his Government, admits that "many people" are sentenced to "a few years' imprisonment" for remarks made in favour of Communism or against religion, etc. That opens up a pretty picture of the amount of freedom enjoyed by the

people of Hungary. But we notice no tears are being shed in the religious press on their account. Kill ten men in the name of man and your crimes are as black as hell, and your villainy as monumental as the Pyramids. But kill ten thousand in the name of God and all may be forgiven.

Dean Inge's Easter sermon at St. Paul's Cathedral did not contain much of a cheering and inspiring nature. He said that the belief in the Resurrection "is very faintly held, even by very religious people. It is kept in reserve as a consolation to the mourner, and is then handled very timidly." The consequence is the rapid secularization of religion, which Christian leaders so ardently deplore. According to the Dean, the only proof of the Resurrection is Jesus Christ himself, which to the overwhelming majority of people is no proof at all. One would naturally infer that the inevitable tendency of such an outspoken discourse would be to weaken, rather than strengthen, the belief of those who heard it.

How hopelessly behind the times the divines are! Addressing the students of the Pastors' College, the Rev. Dr. Carlile said that "the reconstruction of society is the multiplication of individual conversion," which is tantamount to admitting that society will never be reconstructed. Conversion is already very largely a thing of the past.

The pulpit has fallen on evil days, but Dr. Carlile assures us that its renaissance is about to dawn. "There is a great day for the ministry," he adds. There *was* a great day for priests during the Middle Ages, but that day is gone never to return. Just now the ministry is at a serious discount, and the priest is without his throne.

Some time ago we called attention to a court martial held in Mesopotamia to fix the responsibility for the destruction of the tree of knowledge. One of our readers, concerned in the damage done, now sends us particulars of the event. About thirty soldiers had gone for a trip up the river, and paid a visit to the famous tree, situated on what is said to be the site of the Garden of Eden. For the purpose of having their portraits taken as many as could climbed on the tree, and the weight of the men brought down the tree. There was some trouble with the natives over the affair and a court martial resulted. The outcome is that a mosque, at the cost of £350, is to be erected—presumably at the cost of the British. Thus ends one more Biblical landmark, and the natives, probably gain in the deal.

The *Daily News* is getting very irreverent. Here is a sentence or two from a recent issue: "Frenchmen remember Mr. Lloyd George's solemn oath that 'as the Lord liveth' we did not want an inch of German colonial territory," and they wonder whether the Lord still liveth. That is quite daring for this valiant organ of the Nonconformist conscience.

SHEFFIELD BRANCH N. S. S.—At our last meeting, Mr E. G. Bayford, F.E.S., gave an address on "Books which are Doing Our Work." Mr. Bayford owns a wonderful collection of rare works, and he is thoroughly acquainted with their contents. The lecture was voted the most delightful Mr. Bayford has yet delivered. On Easter Tuesday a good muster of our members spent the day visiting Conisbro' Castle and Edlington Woods. The picnic was most enjoyable. Further outings will be arranged for the summer months. The Branch begs to thank a friend from Bootle for another gift of books to our library—three volumes of *A History of Christianity*.—H. IRVING.

Where Cicero and Antoninus lived
A cowed and hypocritical monk
Prays, curses, and deceives. —Shelley.

C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

April 18, Swansea: April 25, Mardy.

To Correspondents.

R. J. STEWART.—The two-volume edition of Voltaire's *Dictionary* is not uncommon, and usually costs from 8s. to 10s. a volume. A second-hand dealer might be able to get you vol. ii. alone. You might try Foyle's, of Charing Cross Road.

"RESERVOIR."—Charles Bradlaugh had two daughters, and both busied themselves in Freethought work. One died many years ago. The other, Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, is still living.

C. LEWIS.—Thanks. To go on making readers for the *Freethinker* is good work.

J. E. ROOSE.—In endorsing Paine's suggestion that Britain, France, and America might guarantee the peace of the world, we were not traversing the proposition that the alliance must have some amount of force at the back of it. It would only mean, at most, armies and navies owned privately, so to speak, would have to disappear, as carrying weapons by private individuals in some countries has disappeared, and their place would be taken by a force that would be used in common, for a common purpose. If peace is only to be maintained by each country remaining armed to the teeth, then the sooner we leave off blackguarding "Prussianism" and pay it formal homage, the better. We shall at least present to the world the redeeming virtue of honesty.

E. J. D. asks us to correct an error in his last week's article. The words printed "neutral disposition," p. 234, col. 2, second line from bottom, should read "neural disposition."

NEMO.—See "Sugar Plums."

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.

All Cheques and Postal Orders should be crossed "London, City and Midland Bank, Clerkenwell Branch."

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

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

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 15s.; half year, 7s. 6d.; three months, 3s. 9d.

Sugar Plums.

To-day (April 18) Mr. Cohen will lecture twice—afternoon and evening—in the Docker's Hall, Swansea. There will, no doubt, be the usual good audiences. On Sunday next (April 25) Mr. Cohen lectures at Mardy in the afternoon at the Workmen's Hall, and at Ferndale in the evening, also at the Workmen's Hall. Good meetings are anticipated. This will bring Mr. Cohen's lecturing season to a close, and he will not be sorry for a little relief from running up and down the country. It will give him more time for other things that require attention.

In the course of a week or two the *Freethinker* will have reached the fortieth anniversary of its birthday. No other Freethought paper has had so long a life, and we do not think it shows any signs of old age. We are not anticipating a rush of birthday presents, so we venture to ask for one—and that is for as many of our readers as can do so to present us with a new subscriber. Unfortunately, the keen struggle for existence that confronted all papers during the War did not come to an end with the Peace. Wages are higher than they were during the War, and paper is still

scarce and very dear. Over a hundred papers have further raised their price to subscribers since the beginning of this year, and further rises are foreshadowed. At a meeting of paper-makers the other day a very black future was depicted for paper users; so we must be prepared for a continuation of the present difficult times. That is why we are asking for a birthday gift, in the shape of a new subscriber, from as many of our readers as can rise to the occasion. It will help us, and it will be a stroke of service to the Cause.

The recent debate between Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Mr. Joseph McCabe is now published by Messrs. Watts and Co., at the price of one shilling. The discussion follows the usual lines, in which one party is desirous of proving that the whole thing is rooted in fraud, and the other narrates a series of more or less marvellous occurrences. Indeed, what strikes one about Sir Arthur's defence of Spiritualism is the extremely low level on which he sets his case. His is the Spiritualism of yesterday rather than that of to-day, although, as he appears to have represented no one else but himself in this discussion, it would be unfair to saddle the better class of Spiritualists with the responsibility for his statement of the case. Mr. McCabe has little trouble in proving that there is an immense amount of fraud connected with Spiritualism, although it is just possible that much of the fraud may be of a different order from that brought under review in this discussion. An unintended humorous aspect of the debate is the serious manner in which the testimony of certain "Professors" is discussed, as though there has ever been a folly or a stupidity known to man on which eminent "Professors" might not be cited. The argument from authority is always a dangerous one on which to rely, and the conclusions of eminent men often need as careful watching as do those of the man in the street. Still, it is something to get the matter brought before the public in the form in which it is here presented, if only because it may lead to a scientific discussion of the whole subject.

We note that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle describes himself as having been once a "Rationalist," and in a preface it is noted that he was once a member of the Rationalist Press Association. We do not know in what sense Sir Arthur is using the rather nebulous word "Rationalist," but if it is used in the sense of one who rejects all kinds of supernaturalism, we doubt if he was ever that. A non-Christian, maybe; but, then, we do not think he is a Christian now. So far as our knowledge of his writings goes, he always believed in some sort of a God, and if the master superstition is retained, the rejection of a few minor ones does not seem a very notable achievement.

We are pleased to learn that Mr. Moss gave a much-appreciated lecture in South London on Sunday last. Unfortunately, the Trade Union Hall is not large enough to warrant extensive advertising, but so soon as a larger hall can be obtained, more will be attempted in this direction.

The Socials of the West Ham Branch have proved themselves so successful that another one has been arranged for Saturday, April 24, at the small Earlham Hall, Forest Gate, E. Admission is free to all Freethinkers, and the function commences at 7 o'clock. There will be the usual varied programme. The hall is easily reached by either tram, bus, or train.

I do not call supernatural beliefs insane; but the fury of fanaticism against heresy, all attempts to answer argument with penalties, are a kind of madness, none the less when there is method in it. In a rational mind it will inspire compassion for those who know not what they do, and a profound horror of the one thing that turns hearts to stone—Superstition dressed in Authority.....Again, there are people to whom Christianity is so priceless, so essential, that in maintaining it their hearts freeze—they lose charity, sweetness, veracity. In making the Christian the man is unmade.

—Moncure D. Conway, "Lessons for the Day."

God.

WHAT is meant by the word God? Not the phenomena of nature, but an infinite being with a distinct personality, who existed before there was any matter, who would exist if matter were destroyed, who exists apart from matter, who is omnipotent, whose will is the supreme law of the universe, who can supersede, contravene, and violate the order of sequence between cause and effect, who can and does answer prayer, who bears a special relation to individual human beings and they to him, who is the first cause and the last effect, who created all that is and can destroy it.

I submit that this is a fair description of what religious people call God, and that all we know of the universe tends to prove that he is a wholly imaginary being. The idea that this universe is controlled by an infinite arbitrary being is contradicted by all the investigations of scientists, who can work only in association with matter. All that they know goes to prove that matter always was; that there can have been no first cause—a causeless cause being unthinkable; that every effect has always had a natural cause, and that the orderly sequence between cause and effect never was, is not, and never will be broken; that prayers are never answered, and that individuals are taken no account of by anybody or anything in the universe, except other individuals. Cancers grow, ships are wrecked, murderers kill, floods, lightning, storms, and disease devastate communities, worthless tyrants rule and rob industrious and peaceful people, greedy man-starvers and child-killers roll in unearned wealth, the most honest and thoughtful men of their times were burned at the stake and had their tongues pulled out by the worst men of their times, some of the noblest men now languish in prison or rot in graves where they were flung by Christians in loathsome power, and since the beginning of history it is certain that prayer never had any effect on these horrors one way or the other. There is not one fact established to show that any God knows or cares about any of these things.

It is true that some progressive thinkers have created a new definition of God. They talk of God, and even insist upon his personality; but when they say God they mean nature, and when they say personality they seem to mean that God is a person who includes all other personalities, thus extending the old-fashioned doctrine of the Trinity into a doctrine of the billionity. The sum total of their beliefs seems to be: Everything that is is God, and the universe is a Person. But when a man tells me that the universe is a person he does such violence to language that he might as well tell me that I am dearly loved by a bag of coffee, and that a sack of coal is my familiar friend. These progressive religionists are simply reading new meanings into old words, for the fact is that without the word God the Church and supernatural religion would disappear, and though they have given up the old idea of God, yet they cling desperately to the word. But unless there is a God who can and will answer my prayers, who will heal me when I am ill, who will save me from being robbed by the monopolists, who will at least say or do something to enable me to distinguish him from the changeless forces of nature, there might as well be, and so far as I am concerned, there is no God. There is some sense in the Presbyterian God, if a man can believe himself one of the elect and is selfish enough to be glad he is saved, even if his little child is roasting in hell forever. But there is no sense in the new-fashioned God, because, although he is God, he is powerless in the matter of his own laws and does nothing for anybody.

I say that religionists have no right to do all they can to prevent scientists from telling the results of their investigations, which necessarily involve the absence of an arbitrary God, and then, when the public are leaving the church, pack up this word "God" and carry it over to the camp of Reason and say: "We believe just what you do. You say there is no personal God. That does not bother us. Look at these lovely flowers and those blazing suns and this drunken tramp. It is all God. We have lumped the whole thing, the good and the evil, angels and devils. It is all natural. It is all the universe, and the universe is an Infinite Person."

This is the last ditch of theology, and I do not see why great and good men are so willing to take refuge in it. To me it seems much more honest and truthful to say: "So far as we know, there is no God. That misleading idea must be given up. Whence this universe came, what keeps it going, what will become of it, we do not now know; but scientific research is always advancing, so that the why and wherefore of things may yet be discovered. Meantime, we will drop all the empty talk that is current about the word 'God.'"

If there is any God, he is to blame for poverty and crime. It is unthinkable that there can be a good God, considering what the history and present state of the world is. If you were God, would you allow our present sweet, pure, and Christian politicians to starve millions of harmless people to death by their infernal blockade? Would you allow the daughters of this land to prostitute themselves in loveless marriages or in the open streets because the idle landlords and usurers make it so hard for an honest woman to make a decent living? Would you allow honest and clear thinkers to lose you, and only fools and charlatans to find you? Things as they are can be explained either upon the theory of the Calvinistic monster or upon the theory that there is no God. If Calvin was right, everything is running according to the will of God, and it is none of our business, for God runs things to suit himself. If there is no God, then everything in the animal, vegetable, and mineral world has been getting along as best it can.

I do not know where I came from, or where I am going to; but I know that society is not arranged for my happiness or for that of the vast majority of my fellows, and I am doing my small part to improve things while I am passing along this way.

I admit that it is provoking not to know more about the whence, why, and whither of things than we do; but I do not see how it could be otherwise. And I think that it is simply wicked for a man to sit idle and pity himself because he does not know things when so many are miserable because they do not have things that they ought to have. The free use of all the idle land would be far better for humanity just now than to know where it came from. To break up the present monopoly of banking would do infinitely more good than to find out the origin of life. To rescue children from factory hells and redeem women from the horrid slavery they now endure would be better than to find God. To worship a God of whom we know nothing, and who, if he exists, is so careless and hard-hearted, does not seem to me half so important as to be of some use to our suffering brothers and sisters in the great human family.

G. O. WARREN.

A man's charity to those who differ from him upon great and difficult questions is in the ratio of his own knowledge; the more knowledge, the more charity.—*Dr. Norman Macleod.*

To divest oneself of some prejudice would be like taking off the skin to feel better.—*Fulke Greville.*

The Strength of Desire.

ETHICS that derive their sanction from supernaturalism have always failed. Yet the principal argument of Christians is that the discarding of Christianity would open the floodgates of immorality. It is the falsest argument in the parsonic repertory, but it is widely assented to.

Now, what we must keep steadily in view is that a system of morality is only useful and beneficial in so far as it serves the interests of the community and the race. A good ethical system, so to speak, serves social convenience and advances social happiness. It keeps the licentious individual from running amok. But when it begins to trench on personal freedom in matters that are debatable, or interferes with the exercise of personal freedom which has no anti-social effects it becomes a pernicious system. As Lord Macaulay pointed out when the Puritans acquired civil power they used the powers of government not merely to enforce decency but to enforce their own peculiar "sanctity." And, of course, in doing so, they revealed their incompetence as impartial administrators. Nevertheless, we are not by any means to assume that Puritanism is dead. Indeed, the War seems to have furnished it with a reinforcement of power. And it is depressing to read the maudlin effusions which have been appearing in print about the "Pilgrim Fathers."

There has been much discussion of the proposed reform of our divorce laws. Clear thinking is, of course, impossible to those who regard marriage as an ecclesiastical sacrament and not as a civil contract. That omniscient mountain of vanity, Mr. G. K. Chesterton is a dogmatic sacramentalist, and has spread himself in a volume which furnishes reasons for lamentation over the persistent general idolatry that prevails in our midst. The sheep-like tendency of man was never more pronounced in these islands than to-day. Independent thinking is as rare as moral courage.

In a rude, primitive state love is free. Natural selection gets full play and leads to promiscuity, polygamy, or polyandry. It is a question, however, whether the actual abolition of our existing restrictive laws affecting marriage would lead to a worse state of things than at present obtains. From the point of view of the State, as well as from that of the individual, it is probably true that monogamy will produce the highest degree of happiness, and most securely protect offspring, where numerically the sexes are pretty equally balanced. But, even in such circumstances, monogamy cannot be effectually established by ordinance. It must receive general social consent. A learned student of birds once declared that he believed birds were more monogamous than human beings. So it is quite evidently possible to overrate the importance of artificial laws.

And this brings us to consider the strength of desire. In a correspondence which has been appearing in the *Saturday Westminster Gazette* an elderly orthodox person, "F.C.O.," avows himself an ardent Chestertonian, and indulges in a violent and unmannerly attack upon one of the apologists for the reformers, particularly for this assertion: "If two people married or single fall really passionately in love they will not care two pins about any law, human or divine." "F.C.O.'s" characteristic comment—he is evidently a gentleman with an ungovernable temper—upon that statement is this: "This statement is founded only on sickly sentiment of the 'feuilleton' order and is entirely untrue." Unfortunately for "F.C.O." all the evidences available in history and experience are against him. Desire, if sufficiently strong,

knows and regards no law. That royal harpist, seducer, and murderer, David of Israel, is about as low a type of manhood as one can find in the annals of any time. With our modern and more secular standards of justice we are not to be deceived by his crocodile eyewash. The Bathsheba incident revealed King David for the greedy sensualist and sneaking coward that he was. For him there was not the excuse that he had been suddenly swept off his feet by an all-controlling, all-possessing, over-mastering passion of love. Nay, he saw the lady on the roof—are the adventures of the nocturnal tom cat not suggested here? and she was fair to look upon! So he added her to his harem, and issued orders for her husband, Uriah (who was away fighting for King David), to be placed in the hottest part of the battle. Perhaps the supreme surprise of the whole thing was that Bathsheba's child by this royal adulterer became the wisest man that ever lived! He followed in father's footsteps in one cardinal respect anyway:—

King David and King Solomon
Led merry, merry lives
They could not count their concubines
And could scarcely count their wives,
But when old age came creeping on
It brought to each some qualms—
So Solly wrote the Proverbs
And David wrote the Psalms.

And now people shake their heads when a churchwarden goes alone for a week to the Continent!

Religious systems have either etherealized lust or degraded pure love. Every individual differs from another so materially in thought, feeling, and experience that it is impossible to establish cast-iron rules to regulate the most intimate relationships of life. Oh, that every man and woman could read and understand Lea's *Sacerdotal Celibacy* and Cohen's *Religion and Sex*! Engineers, in excavating the ruins of monasteries, have found thousands of skeletons of babies. Can we imagine anything more revolting than the law of celibacy? The supernatural is always producing the unnatural. One of the instructions given to the Commissioners in the time of Henry VIII. with regard to the confiscation of the English monasteries was "to see whether the Abbote in every case have any boyes lying with him."

We do not claim that writers like George Moore and H. G. Wells are sure guides in the matter of sex questions; but their views are preferable to the puritanical pruriency of the prudes. These latter have always keen noses for filth. They can see uncleanness where nobody else can. And these are the people who sit in censorious judgment upon such a woman as George Eliot! Good God!

What are we to think of a religion that claims to speak with authority on sexual relations and which finds reasons for canonizing such a person as David of Israel? When Warren Hastings was impeached, it was urged in his defence that he had been deified by certain Indian tribes. To this it was answered that Indian tribes were in the habit of having bad gods as well as good gods, and that many of them had well-packed pantheons. Are the Christians in advance of the Hindoos? Apparently not.

It is impossible to kill desire; but it is possible to direct it into channels of beauty and of truth. "Conquest" was the desire both of Mr. Tupman and Wilhelm II. of Germany—in each case misdirected. Colonel Ingersoll, when challenged as to whether he could have made a better job of the world than its Creator, replied in the affirmative, and added tellingly that he would have made good health and not disease catching. If our aspirations and efforts are wrongly—that is, supernaturally or extra-naturally or unnaturally—directed, we shall achieve unhappiness individually

and nationally; and if we persist in our courses, we shall revert to barbarism.

Surely the Great War must have proved the disastrous results of uncontrolled and misdirected desire. Selfish ambitions, ignoble desires, greedy personal rivalries and jealousies, mental distortion, physical disease, are all the fungi that grow from the decay that is the fruit of war. Behold how great a fire a little spark kindleth!

Desire, if strong enough, knows and regards no law, human or divine. Our present foolishness is to try to sap the strength of desire. It cannot be done. It would not be to the good if it could be done. But if we can evolve a sane system of ethics based upon social necessity—the plan for which Secularism stands—then we shall find that freak desires will be the rare exception. Freaks may become inevitable in the course of evolutionary development, but the more strongly we insist on an informed obedience to Nature's laws, the rarer still they will become.

It is in the general exercise of the arts of peace—in a general absorption in the task of reconstruction—that Secularism has its great part to play. But if we could strangle desire, we would make wise changes impossible and devitalize the individual.

IGNOTUS.

Spiritualism: Why it is Popular.

IN a world that produces so many millions of incomplete lives, so many pathetic failures, so many inexplicable tragedies and insane complications, man, in sheer self-defence, creates the great antidote—immortality. Man creates out of his great need the unproved dream of eternal life.

In fiction the public demands a happy ending; the novel-reader thoroughly dislikes a story that does not round itself off satisfactorily, but ends sadly, like real life, in the minor key. This is what the fiction-reader dreads more than life itself; he wants a happy ending—he demands it; and a cursory study of modern popular fiction will show very clearly with what result.

Humanity wants a happy ending to the tragedy of life; humanity dislikes the idea that life may be tragic; that human beings may, after all, be nothing more than ephemeral aspects of the eternal—glorified mayflies living a short space of time and then returning to the oblivion from which they came. This is very unpleasant; it shocks the childish egotism of man. He invents a way out—he devises an illusion, one that compensates for the cruelty of Nature; he conjures up immortality; he finishes the story of life on a bright and happy idea; in fact, he postpones the end.

Under normal conditions of life, and taking for granted that death is the end of all, then man is most assuredly a tragic figure. But man dislikes tragedy; he prefers musical comedy. He dislikes the great dramatist who determined that man's life should be tragic. He says: "I will be the dramatist of my own life, and I will introduce a happy ending. I will contrive a way of escape from my tragedy; I will extend the play—all sorts of wonderful and extraordinary things may happen."

As the tragedy of life becomes more obvious, supernatural ideas, including Spiritualism, become more popular. We have experienced five years of bloody nightmare in which millions of men, women, and children have suffered such anguish as would put the creator of hell into the shade. We are beginning to realize that the whole business of war was a colossal fraud: that it was, indeed, born out of a puerile stupidity, and, in consequence, we are also beginning to realize that life itself is extremely tragic. The feeling will pass

in time, but at present we are tending to realize that man does not very much matter in the general scheme of things. We have, in short, been disillusioned. Wives who lost husbands; mothers who lost sons; sweet-hearts who lost lovers; children who lost fathers—all are being forced to realize that the whole business was a gigantic fraud, a monstrous mistake, a diabolical catastrophe. "But life cannot really be like that," exclaims the duped victims of life's tragedy. "Surely there must be some compensating factor; some divine adjustment; some extra weight in the life-balance that will eventually throw the credit into man's spiritual pocket." Enter the Spiritualist! He has the "goods"—further, he intends to deliver the goods: he is out to supply a long-felt want. Faith in a future life is revived in the Agnostic masses. The powers that be at once perceive the very considerable value of Spiritualism as a reactionary force; they boom it like Pear's Soap and Beecham's Pills. Like the former, it washes well, and, like the latter, it goes down still better. Spiritualism becomes a mental fixture in the public brain. Then the Church yawns in its long sleep: rubs its bleary eyes and sits up. "What's this?" asks the Church, staggering to its feet and feeling for its carpet slippers. "What's this—a revival of faith in immortality! Miracles will never cease; this is where I come in." Forthwith, the Church makes indecent haste to become associated with the revival of faith, and eventually a parson is leading the boom. Oh! gentle readers—is it not simple?

ARTHUR F. THORN.

Writers and Readers.

A CRITIC OF PARTS.

THE profound stupidity of the recent sanguinary struggle for supremacy between the civilized nations of Europe, the poignant irony of it, the desolating expense of spirit in a waste of shame, all this is borne in upon us when we recall the bright and buoyant spirits, the fine flower of our mental and emotional culture, cut down in the hour of radiant promise or actual achievement by the fell hand of death. Who of us can measure the loss to English philosophy and sociology by the death of that brilliant and versatile young Irish don, T. M. Kettle, whose small collection of studies, *The Day's Burden*, is for me, at least, a priceless possession. In Dixon Scott, too, we recognized a potential master of English prose, a critic of letters with a balanced and independent judgment finding expression in a rich and complicated style. While in Percy Vaughan we Freethinkers saw a militant opponent of all phases of current superstition, a scholarly and urbane controversialist of the Leslie Stephen type. It was, however, of our young poets that death took his heaviest toll. Rupert Brooke, Alan Seager, R. W. Stirling, Wyndham Tenant, Vernede, Edward Thomas, had helped, or had given promise, of helping to bring about a new poetic renaissance, a romantic movement equal in splendour and vigour to that which marked the first quarter of the nineteenth century. All of them were singers rather than fighters, alike by nature and education, and the pathetic thing about it all is that the voice they heard calling to them came not from this mother-country of ours, this precious stone set in a silver sea, but from the megaphonic mouthpiece of some political demagogue bellowing out his insincere phrases about Prussian militarism, and a world made safe for Democracy.

It is to one of these young men, in some respects certainly the most promising of them, that I wish to direct the attention of my readers to-day. I have been re-reading with unqualified pleasure the verses of Charles Sorley (*Marlborough and other Poems*) in the light of the letters which his friends have brought together to form a biography; (*The Letters of Charles Sorley with a Chapter of*

Biography, Cambridge, University Press, 1919). Taken together, the two books reveal a personality remarkable for its joyous sanity, profound seriousness, a fairly wide range of intellect, and a critical detachment of a quite surprising quality. On the biographical side there are only a few facts to record. Sorley was the son of the Knightbridge Professor of Philosophy at Cambridge, Mr. W. R. Sorley. He was born in Old Aberdeen in 1895, and from 1900 his home was at Cambridge. From 1908 to 1913 he was at Marlborough, and before leaving was elected to a scholarship at University College, Oxford. He spent six months in Germany after leaving school, returning to England at the outbreak of the War. He was gazetted Second Lieutenant in the Seventh (Service) Battalion of the Suffolk Regiment in 1914, Lieutenant in the November of that year, and Captain in the following August. He went out with his draft to France on May 30, and was killed in action on October 13, 1915. The letters, which were written his parents, to the Master of Marlborough, and a few intimate friends, cover the short period of four years, and are remarkable for their clear, simple, nervous style, quite unlike the usual expressions of your exceptionally gifted school-boy.

Sorley was a credit to the educational methods of our great public schools where sound scholarship is combined with healthy open-air games. He was a brilliant boy, but no prig. In his case pubescence was happily not difficult with the result that he had no misgivings as to the state of his soul, no craving for an abnormal and saintly life, no call to religious conversion. Although his tastes and studies made him familiar with the poetic expression of the emotion of sexual love the passion itself seems not to have been awakened in him. The sexual complex had not emerged into consciousness. To judge from some recent novels of public-school life it usually emerges too soon. In Sorley's case this limitation on the emotional side will explain his inability to feel the exquisite beauty of the love-poetry of Rupert Brooke, while much of the world's greatest poetry must have been for him a mere intellectual pattern, not a breathing and palpitating reality. But this emotion would have emerged in time, and the complex would have harmonized with other complexes more perfectly, perhaps, because there would have been no precocious emergence. As it is, we see young Sorley in his letters growing in wisdom and critical sanity before our eyes.

At the age of seventeen he read a paper to his school-fellows on Mr. Masfield's poetry, praising with the courage of an inexperienced youth what was then considered to be the high water-mark of poetic realism, and what in a few years he would have dismissed as an inexpensive exploitation of the language of common folk relieved by fluent sentimentalism. Like some of our young men who are young enough to know better, he curses Tennyson and Browning, and even Swinburne, finding their philosophy and art shoddy and immature beside those of Masfield and Housman. At the same time his English master had made him read Pater, who, he tells us, is the dullest and most stilted author he has ever read, and moans over his being forced to spend an hour every Sunday with this brute's *Appreciations*. It is a far cry from 1880 to 1912; but Pater can afford to await the time when readers shall have more leisure and more brains. In 1914 Sorley is in Germany, learning the language in a middle-class German family, with a Frau Doctor for his instructress. He has passed now from Masfield to Thomas Hardy, delighting in the earlier romantic comedies, appreciating the more sombre beauty of *Tess* and *Jude the Obscure*, paying a grateful tribute to the poems, and noting the Shakespearean qualities in *The Dynasts*. Hardy was a permanent possession, Masfield a passing fancy. Here Sorley was on the right track, for Hardy is really an immense force in modern poetry. He harmonizes with the spirit of the time, which is more careful of thought than of form. From Hardy he goes on with infallible judgment to Ibsen, whose plays he read in the admirable German version, and, what was more to the purpose, he saw them on the German stage, acted by players who know how to get the most out of Ibsen's symbols. Sorley's judgment at nineteen is uncannily mature. His

preference is the greatest of Ibsen's plays, *Johan Gabriel Borkman*. He absorbs Ibsen, and then turns with an instinct for critical rectitude to Goethe. He sees the massiveness, the poise, of the intellectual thinker and creator; but he sees also the element of weakness in him as a man, the overweighting of the heart by the mind. He notes a book on Goethe and Schiller, and says that it lets out quite unconsciously the terrible dryness of their entirely intellectual friendship and (Goethe's, at least) intellectual life. If Goethe (he goes on) really died saying "More light," it was very silly of him; what *he* wanted was more warmth. We can measure the intellectual vigour of a young man who at seventeen is uncritically enthusiastic over Mr. Masfield and two years later can put his finger on the weak spot in a Goethe or an Ibsen.

Sorley, too, was just as an acute a critic of life as he was of letters. He saw the weakness as well as the strength of German civilization. The Teutonic unashamed love of feeding reminded him of the Homeric Greeks, as did also their open hospitality. He finds something of Elizabethan curiosity in the German nature, and suggests that it may account for their success in acting Shakespeare. It is not unlikely that they are some three centuries behind us in the more complex culture of life, for, although they have good beer and poetry, and the greatest music, their prose is "cobwebby stuff." He notices the sugary platitudes of Eucken, an amiable man, but not at all the European figure that some of our *Hibbert Journal* philosophers make him out to be. An excellent bit of sub-acid criticism is this about the Webbs (Sidney and Beatrice):—

Sidney Webb, besides being a Fabian, is beyond all other things a Husband. Every week, in the *New Statesman*, many articles on Socialism appear by Sidney and Beatrice Webb. Whether Sidney dictates and Beatrice writes, or Beatrice writes and Sidney applies the blotting paper, or Sidney's soul and Beatrice's soul work in such close partnership (as is so fashionable nowadays) that they both think of the same thing at the same time (like the seventy clerks who translated the Septuagint, all working in different cells and having no communication with each other, and they all finished at the same moment and the seventy results were word for word the same; which proves that Abel really lived and God wrote the Bible)—I don't know. And at the Fabian Summer School the same sweet conjugality hovers around. On Monday afternoon Beatrice Webb will give an address to mothers on the Necessity of State Motherhood, and Sidney Webb will take the chair. On Monday evening Sidney Webb will give an address to Men of Full Age on Statecraft and the State-Soul; the chair will be taken by Mrs. Sidney Webb. They live in a perpetual halo of mutual admiration, put their trust in figures, write articles to show how easily the whole world could be put right, but have not up to date succeeded in making it any better.

Throughout the letters we get the level-headed, witty, and irreverent sizing up of reputations complacently accepted at their own valuation by an uneducated or semi-educated public. Paul or Saul is put politely on one side with Browning and the politicians. Insincerity, incompetence, and bumptious ignorance are branded by the sure and light hand of our youthful critic, a rebel against imposing names and big authorities. On another occasion it will be my pleasure and privilege to give the intelligent reader an idea of what Sorley was like as a poet. For my part, I may say that I am inclined to set him above Brooke, and on pretty much the same level as Flecker and Edward Thomas.

GEO. UNDERWOOD.

Such is the facility with which mankind believe at one and the same time things inconsistent with one another, and so few are those who draw from what they receive as truths, any consequences but those recommended to them by their feelings, that multitudes have held the undoubting belief in an Omnipotent Author of Hell, and have nevertheless identified that being with the best conception they were able to form of perfect goodness.—*John Stuart Mill*, "*Autobiography*."

Correspondence.

JACK LONDON.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—As an admirer of the late Jack London's undoubted genius, I cannot let your contributor Mr. G. E. Fussell's statement that, "as a writer of imaginative fiction in which real people are seen at work and play," Jack London "does not signify," pass unchallenged.

Anyone who, having read all Jack London's books, makes such a statement, shows himself singularly deficient in understanding.

Admittedly, Jack London wrote a considerable number of rubbishy pot-boilers, but to judge the author of *Martin Eden* by those works alone is as unfair as to judge the intellectuality of H. G. Wells by *The War of the Worlds* or Grant Allen by *Dumeresque's Daughter*.

Not in *Martin Eden* only does Jack London's work rank with that of the masters, but there are at least a dozen of his short stories which show a perfect insight into the innermost workings of the modern, the primitive, and the Oriental mind. Such stories as *To Kill a Man*, *A Piece of Steak*, *The Apostate*, *The Chinago*, and all the "Sitha Chorley" stories stand alone, and such is in itself a gem. Then, if the psychology of the dog is wanted, the last word has been said in *White Fang*.

(Madame) FAITH LESSELS.

THE ETHICAL CODE.

SIR,—In reply to Mr. Fothergill, I am sorry I wrote "mon-ethicist." It insists on getting itself printed "non-ethicist" which changes my mon-sense into non-sense. The perverse little prefix!

By *mon-ethicist*, I mean one who believes that, *circumstances remaining unchanged*, what is right for one person is right for any other or for any number. Of course, it would be wrong for me to seat myself in Hyde Park on a chair on which another person is already seated. But, then, his being seated there has altered the circumstances. When he took his seat he was acting quite rightly; the chair was then an unoccupied one. It would be right for an engine-driver to conduct a train loaded with passengers or for a surgeon to amputate a crushed or diseased limb and wrong for me to do either. The training and experience of these persons constitutes a circumstance which, in my case, would be wanting.

But if it is wrong for John Smith to take a shilling by means of threats and menaces, it must be equally wrong for the Right Hon. John Smith, M.P., to do so. There is no material alteration of circumstances. Millions of people, other than those whose lives are at stake, might vote for me to drive the railway engine or amputate the limb; that would not make it right for me to attempt either of these operations. I hope Mr. Fothergill will not raise the hypothesis of inability to find a practised engine-driver or of consent on the part of the passengers, because either of these would constitute an *altered circumstance*. What I am anxious to know is, given a million persons, each one of whom is entirely devoid of the right to do a certain thing, how can they confer on a member of Parliament the right to do that thing? *Ex nihilo nihil fit* and a million times *no right equals no right* even when the Parliament concerned happens to be one of Mr. Fothergill's Parliaments which has got its first letter too near the camera.

As to "the rule of life which tends to produce most happiness" it is the whole business of ethics to show what that rule is. To merely quote the formula "the rule of life," etc., is to evade the business, not to carry it through. Personal tyrants think theirs is the best way to secure the happiness of "my people." So does the tyrant called *majority* think, also, of *his* special brand of tyranny.

There is much in Mr. Fothergill's letter of which I could make not altogether unentertaining sport, but he is too good and too old a friend of just and progressive causes to be treated lightly, and to discuss each point seriously would occupy more space than I dare hope for. We must leave much to be understood, and still more to be supplied by those of your readers who have seen both Mr. Fothergill's reply and my original letter.

ROBERT HARDING.

Obituary.

The Glasgow Branch has lost one of its oldest and staunchest members by the death of Mr. John Harrison at the age of seventy-five years. He was a man of the cheeriest disposition, there was no half measures with him so far as Freethought was concerned. He had always a ready answer to give to those who differed with him. He leaves behind him pleasant memories to those who had the privilege to know him. The Secular Service was conducted by Mr. Lancaster.—J. L.

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.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Johnson's Dancing Academy, 241 Marylebone Road, near Edgware Road): 8, Mr. Maurice Maubrey, "The Light that Failed."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W., three minutes from Kennington Oval Tube Station and Kennington Gate): 7, Mr. C. E. Ratcliffe, "Some Spiritualistic Experiences."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C. 2): 11, Joseph McCabe, "The Science of Death and the Science of Life."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Stratford Engineers' Institute, 167 Romford Road, E.): 7, Mr. H. Spence, B.Sc., "Arboreal Man."

OUTDOOR.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Mr. Samuels; 3.15, Messrs. Ratcliffe, Dales, and Baker.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

LEEDS SECULAR SOCIETY (Youngman's Rooms, 19 Lowerhead Row, Leeds): Every Sunday at 6.30.

PLYMOUTH AND DISTRICT BRANCH N. S. S.—A Meeting of this Branch will take place on Thursday next, April 15, in Room No. 7, Plymouth Chambers, Drake Circus, at 8 p.m., when a lecture will be delivered by Mr. Darton on "The Natural History of the Pulpit." Freethinkers residing in Plymouth and district please note.

SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH N. S. S. (3 Thompson Street, Tyne Dock): 6.30, Conference Agenda; Election of Delegate.

SWANSEA AND DISTRICT BRANCH N. S. S. (The Dockers' Hall, Elysium, High Street): Mr. Chapman Cohen, 3, "A Freethinker's View of the League of Nations"; 7, "Ghosts: A Study in Survivals."

FREETHINKER WANTS £200 for the development of his business as General Outfitter. Money would be returned within three years at longest, and good interest paid. Preferring to deal with one of similar ethical views, he hopes this advertisement will serve the desired end.—Reply to PROVIDER, c/o Freethinker Office, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

WANTED.—Unfurnished Flat in North London; married; no children.—Particulars to A., c/o Freethinker Office, 61 Farringdon Street, E.C. 4.

WANTED.—Small House in North London, from June or later; Rent about £40 per annum; very urgent. Reply "FREETHINKER," c/o Freethinker Office, 61 Farringdon Street, E.C. 4.

PRINTING.

Superior Workmanship, Quality, Value.

W. H. HEARSON,
The Library, **UTTOXETER.**

Population Question and Birth-Control.

POST FREE THREE HALFPENCE

MALTHUSIAN LEAGUE,
48 BROADWAY, WESTMINSTER, S.W. 1.

Pamphlets.

By G. W. FOOTE.

MY RESURRECTION. Price 1d., postage ½d.
 CHRISTIANITY AND PROGRESS. Price 2d., postage 1d.
 THE MOTHER OF GOD. With Preface. Price 2d.,
 postage 1d.
 THE PHILOSOPHY OF SECULARISM. Price 2d.,
 postage ½d.

THE JEWISH LIFE OF CHRIST. Being the Sepher
 Toldoth Jeshu, or Book of the Generation of Jesus.
 With an Historical Preface and Voluminous Notes.
 By G. W. FOOTE and J. M. WHEELER. Price 6d.,
 postage 1d.

VOLTAIRE'S PHILOSOPHICAL DICTIONARY. Vol.
 I., 128 pp., with Fine Cover Portrait, and Preface by
 CHAPMAN COHEN. Price 1s. 3d., postage 1½d.

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.
 GOD AND MAN: An Essay in Common Sense and Natural
 Morality. Price 3d., postage ½d.
 CHRISTIANITY AND SLAVERY: With a Chapter on
 Christianity and the Labour Movement. Price 1s.,
 postage 1½d.
 WOMAN AND CHRISTIANITY: The Subjection and
 Exploitation of a Sex. Price 1s., postage 1½d.
 CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIAL ETHICS. Price 1d.,
 postage 1d.
 SOCIALISM AND THE CHURCHES. Price 3d., post-
 age 1d.
 CREED AND CHARACTER. The Influence of Religion
 on Racial Life. Price 7d., postage 1½d.

By J. T. LLOYD.

PRAYER: ITS ORIGIN, HISTORY, AND FUTILITY.
 Price 2d., postage 1d.

By MIMNERMUS.

FREETHOUGHT AND LITERATURE. Price 1d., post-
 age ½d.

By WALTER MANN.

PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN MORALITY. Price 2d.,
 postage ½d.
 SCIENCE AND THE SOUL. With a Chapter on Infidel
 Death-Beds. Price 7d., postage 1½d.

By H. G. FARMER.

HERESY IN ART. The Religious Opinions of Famous
 Artists and Musicians. Price 3d., postage ½d.

By A. MILLAR.

THE ROBES OF PAN: And Other Prose Fantasies.
 Price 1s., postage 1½d.

By COLONEL INGERSOLL.

IS SUICIDE A SIN? AND LAST WORDS ON
 SUICIDE. Price 1d., postage 1d.
 LIMITS OF TOLERATION. Price 1d., postage 1d.
 CREEDS AND SPIRITUALITY. Price 1d., postage ½d.
 FOUNDATIONS OF FAITH. Price 2d., postage 1d.

By D. HUME.

ESSAY ON SUICIDE. Price 1d., postage ½d.
 LIBERTY AND NECESSITY. Price 1d., postage 1d.

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

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

Remainder Bargains for Freethinkers.**WAR AND THE IDEAL OF PEACE.**

By G. H. RUTGERS MARSHALL.

Price 2s. 6d. Postage 6d.

ANTI-PRAGMATISM.

By A. SCHINZ.

An Examination into the Respective Rights of Intellectual
 Aristocracy and Social Democracy.

Published at 6s. 6d. Price 2s. 6d. Postage 6d.

THE MORAL PHILOSOPHY OF FREETHOUGHT.

Being a New Edition of the "Philosophy of Morals."

By Sir T. C. MORGAN.

Published at 5s. Price 2s. 6d. Postage 5d.

GAMBETTA: His Life and Letters.

By P. B. GHEUSI.

Large 8vo. Portraits. 1910.
 Published 12s. 6d. Price 3s. Postage 6d.

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

Special Offer of Garden Seeds!

Germination Power the Highest.

1 pint Broad Beans; ½ pint English Wonder, ½ pint William
 Hurst. ½ pint The Lincoln, ½ pint Quite Content Peas;
 ½ pint Runner Beans, ½ pint Dwarf Beans; also one large
 packet of the following—Beet, Broccoli, Kale, Cabbage,
 Carrot, Cauliflower, Cress, Lettuce, Mustard, Onion, Parsnip,
 Parsley, Radish, Turnip, Vegetable Marrow, and six varieties
 of Flower Seeds.

On Approval and Carriage Paid for 5s. P.O. List Free.

LEONARD CHEETHAM.

Seed and Bulb Merchant,

Waleswood, near Sheffield.

A FIGHT FOR RIGHT.

A Verbatim Report of the Decision in the House of Lords
in re

Bowman and Others v. The Secular Society, Limited.

With Introduction by CHAPMAN COHEN.

Issued by the Secular Society, Limited.

Price One Shilling. Postage 1½d.

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

PIONEER LEAFLETS.

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

- No. 1. What Will You Put in Its Place?
- No. 2. What is the Use of the Clergy?
- No. 3. Dying Freethinkers.
- No. 4. The Beliefs of Unbelievers.
- No. 5. Are Christians Inferior to Freethinkers?
- No. 6. Does Man Desire God?

Price 1s. 6d. per 100.
 (Postage 3d.)

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

A BOOK FOR ALL TO READ.

DETERMINISM

OR

FREE-WILL ?

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

NEW EDITION Revised and Enlarged.

Some Press Opinions of the First Edition.

"A clear and concise exposition of the Determinist philosophy The need for such a work, one that should be popular in tone, without being superficial in character, has long been felt by both the general reader and the student of philosophy."

Harrogate Guardian.

"A defence of Determinism written with ability."—*Times.*

"Mr. Cohen has written just the book that Rationalists have long been inquiring for."—*Literary Guide.*

"Mr. Chapman Cohen never wastes phrases, and is scrupulously careful in the choice of words..... There is probably no better popular summary than this of Mr. Cohen's."—*Ethical World.*

Well printed on good paper.

Price, Wrappers 1s. 9d., by post 1s. 11d.; or strongly bound in Half-Cloth 2s. 6d., by post 2s. 9d.

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

A Book that no Freethinker should Miss.

Religion and Sex.

Studies in the Pathology of Religious Development.

BY

CHAPMAN COHEN.

A Systematic and Comprehensive Survey of the relations between the sexual instinct and morbid and abnormal mental states and the sense of religious exaltation and illumination. The ground covered ranges from the primitive culture stage to present-day revivalism and mysticism. The work is scientific in tone, but written in a style that will make it quite acceptable to the general reader, and should prove of interest no less to the Sociologist than to the Student of religion. It is a work that should be in the hands of all interested in Sociology, Religion, or Psychology.

Large 8vo, well printed on superior paper, cloth bound, and gilt lettered.

Price Six Shillings.

(Postage 6d.)

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

WIGMORE HALL,

Wigmore Street, W. 1.

SATURDAY EVENING, APRIL 24, 1920.

At 8 p.m.

Master GEORGE ROTH

Violoncello Recital.

ASSISTED BY

DOROTHY ROBSON

(Vocalist).

At the Piano - - ELLA IVIMEY.
Chappell Grand Pianoforte.

Tickets (including Tax), 12s., 5s. 9d., and 2s. 4d., from
Mr. GEORGE ROTH, 58 George Street, Baker Street, W. 1.

The Parson and the Atheist.

A Friendly Discussion on

RELIGION AND LIFE.

BETWEEN

Rev. the Hon. EDWARD LYTTTELTON, D.D.
(Late Headmaster of Eton College)

AND

CHAPMAN COHEN

(President of the N. S. S.).

With Preface by Chapman Cohen and Appendix by Dr. Lyttelton.

The Discussion ranges over a number of different topics—Historical, Ethical, and Religious—and should prove both interesting and useful to Christians and Freethinkers alike.

Well printed on good paper, with Coloured Wrapper.
144 pages.

Price 1s. 6d., postage 2d.

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

Fine Sepia-toned Photograph of

Mr. CHAPMAN COHEN.

Printed on Cream Carbon Bromide-de-Luxe.
Mounted on Art Mount, 11 by 8. A High Class Production.

Price 2s. 3d., post free.

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

Flowers of Freethought.

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

First Series, 216 pp. Cloth. Price 3s. net, postage 6d.

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

THE "FREETHINKER."

THE *Freethinker* may be ordered from any newsagent in the United Kingdom, and is supplied by all the wholesale agents. It will be sent direct from the publishing office post free to any part of the world on the following terms:—One Year, 15s.; Six Months, 7s. 6d.; Three Months, 3s. 9d.

Anyone experiencing a difficulty in obtaining copies of the paper will confer a favour if they will write us, giving full particulars.

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