

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. 39

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 1920

PRICE THREEPENCE

## PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
God's Will.—The Editor - - - - -	609
"The Pattern in the Mount."—J. T. Lloyd - - - - -	610
Booming the Bible.—Mimmermus - - - - -	612
Rupert Brooke.—H. Truckell - - - - -	613
Capital Punishment.—G. O. Warren - - - - -	614
Our Sustentation Fund - - - - -	617
Responsibility.—Keridon - - - - -	619
Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.	

## Views and Opinions.

### God's Will.

Those readers of newspapers who are fond of police-court cases are at present having their taste gratified by the brutal murder of a young girl, whose body was found on the beach at Eastbourne. We are not now concerned with either the murder or the murderers, but with an item that reaches us through a cutting sent us by a correspondent. The author of the passage, to which our attention is drawn, is the Rev. T. P. Stephens, and he says, in a letter to the *Daily News*, that the coffin which carried the murdered girl's body to the grave bore the inscription, "Thy will be done." The reverend gentleman is indignant at this method of, as he says, laying another crime at the door of God. But is there any real justification for the indignation? Of course, we do not believe that God has any responsibility, either positive or negative, for the poor girl's death. But, then, we do not believe in God, and that makes a very considerable difference. If we did believe in him, and in his government of the world, and if we were, as we trust we should be, quite logical in the inferences from our belief, then we should say, in all genuineness of spirit, "Thy will be done," and we should feel it derogatory to God to assume that his will would not be done. For a God who is God ought to have his own way with things. Indeed, as he made things, it is difficult to see how it can be otherwise. A God who can only work his will by permission of someone else, or by negative permission, such as their doing nothing to prevent his getting his own way, is a God whose greatness exists, so to speak, on sufferance. And in that case the right reading should be, "Thy will be done—if others will be good enough to permit it."

### A Brace of Absurdities.

Now, there are two theories of God, one ancient and one modern—the exact student will pardon the division, for as a matter of fact they are both very old, and they are both still in use. According to one, God is omniscient and omnipotent. That is, he knows everything, and he can do anything. There is biblical warranty for that belief, for we are told that with God all things are possible, and are also assured that not a sparrow falls to the ground without the knowledge of

God, although that knowledge does not, it will be observed, prevent a good many sparrows falling. His omniscience sees them falling, but his omnipotence does not hold them up. Now, if that theory is correct, the motto on the murdered girl's coffin was quite in order. It was God's will she should be killed, for the simple reason that, had it not been, she would still be alive. Everything that is in the world, the good and the bad, the wise and the silly, the pain and the pleasure, are part of his plan, exist by his will, and would not exist if he made up his mind that they should not be. There is nothing that happens without his knowledge and without his sanction. It is useless calling in the devil, or the opposition of man's will. In either case you destroy the omnipotence and the omniscience of God. He means well, but he is perpetually finding his good intentions frustrated by man or the devil or by both. And beside, as on the theory of creation God made both man and the devil, it is only relieving him of the responsibility at first hand to saddle him with it once removed. It is a subterfuge that can satisfy none but fools.

\* \* \*

### A Limited Liability God.

The other theory converts God into a limited liability company, and is chiefly valued by Theists because it drowns a few vague ideas in a sea of phrases. It is a kind of mongrel pantheism without the logical force that pantheism has so often possessed in the hands of its most famous exponents. According to this theory, we must not saddle God with the responsibility for what occurs because he can do nothing without our co-operation, and if that is withheld, his intentions, which are always good, are frustrated. It is the motto of the mining camp "out West," where over the piano was hung the legend, "Gentlemen, please don't shoot the pianist; he is doing his best." That was a reasonable request, because in that case the victims were not asked to admire the performance or to worship the performer, but merely to restrain the expression of their feelings within the limits of polite society. But in this case we are asked to refrain from blaming God because he does *not* "do all things well," and to praise him because he does them so badly. And it does not really touch the essence of the case. A God who is merely a fellow worker in the universe will not meet the requirements of the Theist. It leaves the question of the responsibility for the existence of the order of things, including the passions, the weaknesses, and the follies of man, untouched. It saves God's character at the expense of his judgment. It leaves him neither supreme power nor supreme wisdom. He is no more than a well-meaning blunderer in a world in which his own existence is the greatest blunder of all.

\* \* \*

### God and Nature.

And, after all, the excuse that God would do well if man would only permit him breaks down before the fact that very many of the evils that afflict humanity



cannot by any possibility be traced to human wrongdoing. In China at the present moment there are, according to Press telegrams, about twenty millions of people in danger of starvation owing to the failure of the harvest. If that is not God's will, whose will is it? In Europe there are many hundreds of thousands of children suffering starvation, and the consequences of starvation, as a result of the war that God did not stop, although, from the speeches of the clergy, one must conclude that he took part in it once it had started. What had these children done? Their only possible offence was that their parents were of one country rather than another; and semi-starvation, with all the ills that it brings in its train, is surely a hard punishment to inflict upon these children for not having selected their parents with a better regard to eventualities. In Italy an earthquake has destroyed dozens of towns, killed hundreds of people, and wounded thousands. Churches have been destroyed with the same prodigal disregard for the nature of the building as wine shops and gambling houses. Was that not God's will? If not, whose will was being worked out there? How can the exercise of man's freewill explain these things? If there is a God, these things are an expression of his will. It is not merely a case of "Thy will be done." It is his will that is being done. If there is a God behind nature, nature is the expression of his character. There is blood upon the hand; and all the apologies of word-spinning theologians should not blind a reasonable person to the presence of the stain.

\* \* \*

#### Wait Till You Are Dead!

There remains the usual resort of the bemused believer, that all this is a mystery, that we only see through a glass darkly, but that if we could see clearly enough, or see the end of it all, we should see that all is for the best, and that God's plans work out well in the end. And if we do not get all that we ought to have in this world, we shall get it in the next. Then we shall see that all our pains were for our good, that they were really blessings in disguise. We are not really suffering; we only think we are, and, although we grumble to-day, there will come a time when we shall thank God for treating us as he has done. But if because we cannot see the end of things, therefore much of our pain may eventuate in pleasure, may it not also happen that much of our pleasure may result in pain? If we have to wait for the end before we can pass an opinion, then the opinion that God is good is as unwarrantable as any other. We don't know; on this theory no one knows; and if no one knows, can we conceive anything more supremely idiotic than to pay thousands of parsons hundreds of thousands a year to tell us all about it? And how do we know that our wrongs will be redressed hereafter? No one comes back to give us reliable information; and the Churches which profess to have it in their possession have usually been wrong whenever they have made statements on any subject on which they could be brought to the test of reliable fact. Is the whole thing more than a huge confidence trick? Or is it more than an illustration of the historic truth that all religions begin in fear and end in fraud?

\* \* \*

#### God—Ignorance

When a man dies suddenly, and on an inquest the cause of his death is discovered, the course is plain. If he dies from heart disease, the coroner says so. If from poison, he says so. But if no cause of death was discoverable, then the verdict used to be, "An act of god," and one jury added to the absurdity of the verdict by saying that death was due to a visitation of God *under suspicious circumstances*. But in that verdict

lies a whole philosophy. For the verdict was nothing more than an expression of ignorance. It was a confession that they did not know what was the cause of death. Had they known, they would have said so. There is precisely the same element observable in other directions. If a man is struck dead by lightning, it is called an act of God. If he is killed by a bullet, there is a verdict of homicide. And on bills of lading the shipowner specially guards himself from the liability due to loss of cargo by "Act of God." Always the same element—that of the uncertain, the unknown, the incalculable. Logically, when men come to such conclusions concerning the acts of God, it should be the duty of the authorities to issue a warrant for his arrest, or at least to publicly denounce his conduct. But they do nothing so manly or so straightforward. What man does is to go down on his marrow bones and thank him for his many kindnesses, and never seems to think that a God with a grain of intelligence might resent such an obvious sarcasm. Fortunately the Freethinker is saddled with no such demoralising and oppressive belief. He does not mistake his ignorance for knowledge, and then fall down in worship before the creation of his own uninstructed imagination. He recognises his limitations, and while the realization of ignorance paves the way for real knowledge, its deification endows it with a disastrous perpetuity.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

#### "The Pattern in the Mount."

MR. T. E. RUTH, Mr. F. C. Spurr's successor at Melbourne, is a man with a brilliant reputation as at once a close thinker and popular orator. Formerly Baptist pastor of Princes Gate, Liverpool, he won distinction as platform speaker at the 1907 Spring Assembly of the Baptist Union, and also at the annual meeting of the National Free Church Council at Leeds the same year. He went to Melbourne for the benefit of his health, and there also he has enjoyed great popularity. This year he has been on a visit to this country, and a few Sundays ago he occupied Dr. Clifford's old pulpit at Westbourne Park, London, where the present writer had the pleasure of hearing him. One of his sermons on that occasion was published in the *Christian World Pulpit* for September 8, and is well worth reviewing. The text is Heb. viii. 5: "See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern that was showed thee in the mount." With the ethical teaching of this eloquent discourse, dissociated from its theological context, we are in heartiest sympathy; but, unfortunately, its theological setting vitiates it completely. The sermon begins with an absurd denial of the reality of matter. "The seen," says Mr. Ruth, "is but the output of the unseen. Matter is a child of mind. The reality of the universe is spirit." This extreme Idealism is held by very few philosophers, and many orthodox divines repudiate it. Certainly Tennyson does not teach it in his "Flower in the Crannied Wall," to which the preacher alludes. It is at least doubtful that "there is more in a brick or stone than can be measured or scheduled," though there is clearly more in a brick than in a stone. Curiously enough, Mr. Ruth, after asserting that "matter is a child of mind," takes a piece of paper, a hymn sheet, as an illustration of the alleged truth of such an assertion. Of course, a piece of paper is a product of human thought, and in a hymn sheet there is, of necessity, much sentiment, good or bad; but, surely, neither is less real on this account. Does the reverend gentleman deny the reality of matter when he affirms that "the reality of



the universe is spirit"? As a matter of fact, he cannot tell us what spirit is, or prove that it exists at all. Then comes the following cocksure declaration:—

It is not simply poetic sentiment, it is not merely religious instinct—it is sheer scientific necessity that regards the material universe as the vesture of Eternal Mind. There is no other conclusion open to logic. In the midst of material things we are in the presence of God, of the World's Supreme Thought and Will.

That is a proposition absolutely incapable of verification. To say that it is the only conclusion open to logic, or that it arises from sheer scientific necessity, is undiluted nonsense. No science under the sun has ever discovered Eternal Mind, or any mind at all, as an entity. No doubt, Mr. Ruth is a sincere believer in God, but knowledge of God he has not. He may honestly say, "I believe that God exists"; but he has no right to aver in the name of reason or logic, "God is." Equally fallacious are his asseverations concerning man. The Bible tells us that man was made in the image of God, and Mr. Ruth repeats the statement, but, by whomsoever made, the statement is based upon belief, not knowledge. Of course, if we believe in God, we may have fellowship with him in exact proportion to the strength and intensity of our faith, as we may with any other fictitious character in literature. Even the devil may fling ink bottles at you, if you believe in him as Martin Luther did, but not otherwise. To say that fellowship with God is a reality of experience proves nothing; but it is a highly significant fact that the fellowship always begins on man's side, never on God's. It is true enough that "prayer is a psychological reality"; but that furnishes no evidence whatever that prayer is either heard or answered. It is an obvious fallacy to attach any evidential value to the fact that Christian experience is a subjective reality. Dreams are fully as real while they last; and in the same sense. Because he entertains this false conception of man, Mr. Ruth says:—

God is, and Man. God is Architect, man is builder. If man were merely a machine, there would be no moral character, no Church, no city, no State, no Empire.

This brief extract raises a point of supreme importance, namely, if man is not a machine, what is he? Indeed, the preacher's own statement implies that he is a machine, though *plus* something more and different; and our question is, what is that something more and different? Our contention is that all human activities are purely mechanical, governed wholly by physico-chemical laws. Is it not true that we do everything because, machine-like, we cannot do otherwise? What are morals but gregarious instincts developed into gregarious habits? Professor Loeb puts the case thus:—

We are active, because we are compelled to be so by processes in our central nervous system; and as long as human beings are not economic slaves, the instinct of successful work or of workmanship determines the direction of their action. The mother loves and cares for her children, not because metaphysicians had the idea that this was desirable, but because the instinct of taking care of the young is inherited just as distinctly as the morphological characters of the female body. We seek and enjoy the fellowship of human beings because hereditary conditions compel us to do so. We struggle for justice and truth since we are instinctively compelled to see our fellow beings happy. Economic, social, and political conditions, or ignorance and superstition may warp and inhibit the inherited instincts, and thus create a civilization with a faulty or low development of ethics (*The Mechanistic Conception of Life*, p. 31).

Yes, man is an eating, drinking, thinking, social machine, invariably doing the bidding of mechanical

laws. With all Mr. Ruth's remarks on the need and value of noble ideals I am in perfect agreement; but when he claims supernatural origin and supernatural guidance for them I am forced most emphatically to differ from him, because history affords not a single shred of evidence of such origin and guidance. The evolution of society has proceeded for countless ages along exclusively natural lines. We see the gregarious instinct at work among ants and bees, even among wolves and tigers, and all the way, up till we reach humanity. Savages are in subjection to the gregarious instinct as well as the most civilized nations; but everywhere the social evolution is distressingly slow. As Mr. G. T. Wrench points out in his interesting *Grammar of Life*, this slowness is due to a deplorable antagonism between the various instincts of our nature. He says:—

The three instincts which promote the action of mankind—the individual, reproductive, and gregarious—do not act in harmony. Between them is the same ding-dong battle, the same struggle for existence, the same desire for stability, the same necessity of change. To understand the phenomena of life, it is essential to realize this struggle between the instincts for mastery (p. 72).

From this conflict of the instincts spring jealousy, hatred, class distinctions and antagonisms, and all sorts of national and international tragedies, such as rivalries so often leading up to bloody wars; and our sole hope for the future lies in scientifically conducted measures and methods for the practical harmonization of the instincts, a task towards the accomplishment of which theology has done less than nothing. The so-called simple religion of Christ has proved historically a tragic fiasco. In its evolution it has brought into operation disastrously anti-social and unethical forces which modern civilization and culture have not yet succeeded in completely eradicating. Clergymen generally forget that Christianity has been on trial for nigh two thousand years, and that its official advocates in all ages have been in the habit of confidently predicting that shortly it would transform the world. Mr. Ruth himself admits that the ideal and the actual are two wholly different things, not even on speaking terms with each other. It is our firm conviction that Christianity has been and is, on the whole, an obstacle in the path of progress, and that no substantial social and moral advance is possible until it has been removed. Mr. Ruth confesses his inability to join in singing "lustily, as with the noise of brazen trumpets":—

We are not divided, all one body we,  
One in hope and doctrine, one in charity.

He cannot help thinking "what a big lie it is, what a travesty of the real situation"; and yet he eulogizes the religion whose failure he acknowledges. In point of fact, and in spite of all the hard work of the clergy and others, supernaturalism is being steadily abandoned, and Reason is slowly coming into its own. As the late Mr. Foote used to say: "Secularism is the philosophy of this life, without reference to another; it recognizes no providence but science, and no saviour but human effort; and it regards the public welfare as the criterion of right and wrong." J. T. LLOYD.

OLD AND NEW FAITH.

Faith in a divine power, devout obedience to its supposed will, hope of ecstatic unspeakable reward, these were the springs of the old movement. Undivided love of our fellows, steadfast faith in human nature, steadfast search after justice, firm aspiration towards improvement, and generous contentment in the hope that others may reap whatever reward may be, these are the springs of the new.—John Morley.



## Booming the Bible.

The only hope for the future of society lies in the absolute extermination of Christianity.—G. W. Foote.

Move upward, working out the beast,  
And let the ape and tiger die.—Tennyson.

FREETHINKERS who imagine that the battle with Orthodoxy is over, and that the Churches of Christ have surrendered, because a fashionable preacher, here and there, assures a credulous congregation that the book of Genesis is but an early edition of the *Origin of Species*, had better read the annual report of the British and Foreign Bible Society. The present issue is the 116th, and it covers so wide a field that it should appeal to the taste of the jaded Freethinker, bored to distraction by the multifarious financial appeals from the innumerable churches, chapels, and tin-tabernacles of Christendom.

The editor of the report is a smart publicist, and he relieves the monotony of his plaintive appeal for cash from his readers by introducing quotations from the reports of the Society's agents, some of which have an unconscious humour of their own. The extracts, elegant and otherwise, are used with the unerring skill of the patent medicine advertisers, who attract readers to their pills and potions by all the resources of literary artifice.

As an example of the up-to-date method of conveying information, one may refer to the statements that in the year under consideration 8,515,930 copies of the Christian Bible and portions of the Bible were issued. The Society's income amounted to £386,259, including £69,810 received from legacies, and £136,202 from sales. This total leaves out of account the Society's Emergency Fund, towards which £3,228 was received last year, the balance of the fund now standing at £38,719. Since its foundation in 1804 the Bible Society has issued 310,813,000 copies of the Christian Scriptures, of which 99,000,000 have been in English. It will be seen that the Society's work is not languishing, despite the assertion of the editor that the Church "is recovering from shell-shock."

In short, the report is a mixture of keen business and oleaginous piety, but the reader must remember that the report is intended to invite subscriptions, and instructions as to legacies and the payment of cheques and money orders are given in detail in the volume. In former years the ordinary reader used to be dazzled by the information that H.I.M. the German Emperor, and other blue-blooded royalties, had contributed to the Society's coffers, but of late these names have mysteriously disappeared. Perhaps the editor thought that in these "shell-shock" days it was more prudent to be democratic. Hence the royalties have disappeared with the "Chinese Presbyterians," a quaint sect that once adorned the Report.

One thing the Report brings out quite clearly, and that is that the Germans are not all Atheists. Five pages of the report are devoted to the work of the Society among the Teutonic Christians, Catholic and Evangelical, and the total circulation of Bibles is given as 147,257, as compared with 246,807 in 1918, and 357,837 in 1917. The Report also states that the German Bible Societies did "much good work." Curiously, whilst a certain amount of scepticism is noted in the Belgian, French, Italian, and Tuscan reports, there is no mention of it in the report of the work in Germany.

Another point worth noting is that there is still opposition to the Society's work on the part of Roman Catholic priests all over the continent of Europe. The Spanish report also shows priestcraft at work:—

The church at Limpias, in the province of Santan-

der, contains an image of Christ crucified. Quite recently a friar declared that he had seen this crucifix move its eyes and breathe and sweat drops of agony. Immense crowds of pilgrims visited the church last year; and though only a few of them have been favoured with similar visions, the image is now quite popular all over Spain, and photographs of it are profusely exhibited in the windows of every Roman Catholic bookshop.

Indeed, the reports of the colporteurs are full of surprises. At Jerusalem there are three at work, and the superintendent writes:—

The majority of British soldiers sum up their feelings and experiences of Palestine thus: "Well, if this is the Promised Land, let those have it to whom it has been promised.

With what art does the editor describe the risks and dangers of a colporteur's life:—

Last year in Cairo two colporteurs were severely beaten during the political riots. In Persia another was plundered by bandits. Another was robbed by highwaymen outside Palermo. In Venezuela two colporteurs were arrested as suspected revolutionaries.

Ingersoll once said that when a thing was too stupid for the pulpit it was passed on to the missionaries. The truth of this jest is seen in the account of the work of the Society in Africa, China, Northern Canada, Argentina, and the South Seas. In all these places (and elsewhere) copies of parts of the Bible are sold and expounded literally. This happens, be it noted, at the time when the clergy at home are assuring everybody that literal interpretation is a thing of the past.

There is much to make any Freethinker pause and reflect in the 200 pages of this report. Freethought has not only to make headway against gross ignorance, but against a most heavily endowed system of superstition. The British and Foreign Bible Society is but one of many similar institutions which have enormous incomes. Hardly a week passes but one or other of these organizations receive legacies, and collections are made constantly in the various branches associated with them. Freethought propaganda, on the other hand, is most severely handicapped. Its publications are boycotted in the libraries and at the bookshops. In spite of it all, the "intellectuals" are making headway. If Freethinkers would support systematically, and contribute regularly, far more literature could be issued and circulated. Every Freethought pamphlet, and every copy of the *Freethinker*, are ambassadors for reason against superstition. In fighting this stupendous battle, we are opposing a superstition entrenched behind mountains of money-bags. In money lies the power of the Clergy and their Book, but, as Shakespeare reminds us, gold can "knit and break religions."

MIMNERMUS. 1

### GOD.

I would not be an angel and with the angels stand,  
To laud a silly God, Sir, who fools with either hand;  
I'd rather be a pumpkin, an oyster, or a slug,  
I'd rather be a tapeworm, a trichina, or a bug;  
I'd rather be the parasite of monkey, man, or cod,  
Than be a praying parasite of anything called "God."  
That name denotes all folly, all vice, and every crime,  
That man has e'er exhibited in all the course of time!  
Ay, choose from human language, from every babbling  
tongue,  
From every speech e'er spoken, or clicked or growled or  
sung—  
Select the word most pregnant with every evil sense,  
Most full of downright wickedness, of folly and pretence—  
You'll find, I'm very certain, when the round of tongues  
you've trod,  
The word most direly hateful is the tiny nomen, *God!*  
—Joseph Symes.



Rupert Brooke.

It is a strange thing, if our Freethought philosophy be so narrow, cold, and "materialistic" as our opponents say, that so large a proportion of the poets should be counted among us. From Chaucer, with his anti-clerical, even anti-religious, sallies, down to the poets of to-day, the same pervading air of freethought is found. Marlowe, Shelley, Swinburne, Thomson were of the militant-Atheist type; Byron, Keats, Clough, Arnold, Watson, Buchanan, Hardy, expressly unbelievers; Browning "reverently" sceptical; Burns irreverently so; even Tennyson alive at least to the existence of a problem; and, greatest of all, Shakespeare, a Secularist by omission and commission. Nor is this phenomenon by any means confined to our own country. Among the Germans, Goethe, the most intellectual of all poets, hated the cross, and was a Monist of the school of Spinoza; Lessing was among the "left wing" of the Pantheists; Schiller a philosopher of the same outlook; and Heine, the very type of the mocking Freethinker. Belgium's greatest poet, Verhaeren, was passionately anti-religious; while the French poets, from Moliere to Hugo, are irreligious in the best sense.

To the list of our English poets of Freethought we may now add another and a well-loved name. Rupert Brooke is indeed a notable addition. His poetical work, though small in quantity, is of great and lasting value. Perhaps what most surprises us is the suddenness of his maturing. The poems of his 1911 volume are, in general, of hardly average value; there is certainly nothing in them deserving of immortality. Yet, three years later, he was doing work of the highest order, perfect in art, daring in conception, ringing with sincerity. And then the voice, after these few notes of perfect song, ceased for ever. It is a repetition of the fate of Keats, but with a more dramatic suddenness; for Keats died by degrees of consumption, whereas Brooke was struck down in the full flush of life.

Of his essential freethought there is no doubt. Mr. Marsh, in his brilliant little biography of the poet, candidly declares that Brooke had no religion at any time after he began to think for himself. In one of his letters to an American friend, Brooke narrates an anecdote about a British "Tommy" in France, whose objection to the continent of Europe mainly rested on the so frequent sight of "Jesus Christ and his relations behind bloody bits of glass." This, says Brooke, admirably illustrates at once the insularity and the cheerful Atheism of the English race; and he adds that he can see the humour of it, "though myself cheerful, insular, and an Atheist." Nothing could be clearer; yet over the grave of this man stand two crosses, at the head and the feet; and one of them bears the inscription, "Here lies the servant of God, Rupert Brooke." By what right do these crosses stand there? By what right do Christians misrepresent the dead? How would an English priest feel if he knew that someone would erect over his grave a stone calling him Atheist?

Brooke's freethought is equally obvious in many of his poems. He believes that death ends all.

They say there's a high windless world and strange,  
Out of the wash of days and temporal tide,  
Where Faith and Good, Wisdom and Truth abide,  
"Aeterna Corpora," subject to no change.....  
Poor straws! On the dark flood we catch awhile,  
Cling, and are borne into the night apart.  
The laugh dies with the lips, Love with the lover.

Again, in "Heaven," one of the finest pieces of sarcasm in English poetry, he ridicules the idea of immortality, narrating how "Fish, fly-replete in depth of

June," lie at the bottom of the pool and debate on the future life.

Fish say, they have their stream and pond :  
But is there anything Beyond?  
This life cannot be All, they swear,  
For how unpleasant, if it were!  
One may not doubt that somehow, Good  
Shall come of Water and of Mud;  
And sure, the reverent eye must see  
A Purpose in Liquidity.  
We darkly know, by Faith we cry,  
The future is not Wholly Dry.  
Mud unto mud! Death eddies near :  
Not here the appointed end, not here!  
But somewhere, beyond space and time  
Is wetter water, slimier slime!  
And there, they trust, there swimmeth One  
Who swam ere rivers were begun,  
Immense, of fishy form and mind.....  
And under that Almighty Fin  
The littlest fish may enter in.....  
Fat caterpillars drift around,  
And Paradisal grubs are found;  
Unfading moths, immortal flies,  
And the worm that never dies.....

Brooke's generous, if sometimes uncritical enthusiasm, which made him, though a man of means, champion the cause of the poor and become a militant Socialist, also led him to see in the war at its commencement a great assertion of the heroic in man, a great effort to vindicate justice. He enlisted, and wrote while in service some of his finest poems. Everyone has seen his sonnet beginning

If I should die, think only this of me :  
That there's some corner of a foreign field  
That is for ever England.

That there was no real narrowness in this patriotism is shown by the conclusion of the same sonnet: what he meant by patriotism was his love of the English lanes and heaths; it was the sentiment in his heart "washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home."

The letters, the poems, and the life must be taken together. There is much in the poems themselves to indicate the abounding mental alertness, the joy of life, the enthusiasm of beauty that glowed in this young man; but it is in the letters that his humour overflows with a rush that nothing could restrain. Even Byron could not write letters like these that flowed from him among the islands of the South Seas. Here, indeed, is "cheerful Atheism," a young genius laughing at the shows of life as he swims and dives and breaks through the lagoons and the woods with his "dear brown people" of the isles.

Rupert Brooke was one of the great individual losses of the war. He said that there were only three things worth doing: to read poetry, to write poetry, and to live poetry. He did all three, and perhaps the last best of all.

H. TRUCKELL.

The educated wealthy minority, having freed themselves from the Church hypnotism, believe in nothing at all, and look upon every faith as an absurdity, or as merely a useful means of keeping the masses in subjection. The immense, poor, uneducated majority—consisting of people who, with few exceptions, are really sincere—being still under the hypnotism of the Church, think they believe in what is suggested to them as a faith, although it is not really a faith, for instead of elucidating to man his position in the world it only darkens it. This situation, and the relations of the non-believing, insincere minority to the hypnotized majority, are the conditions which shape the life of our so-called Christian world. And this life—both of the minority which holds in its hands the means of hypnotization, and of the hypnotized majority—is terrible, both on account of the cruelty and immorality of the ruling classes, and of the crushed and stupefied condition of the great working masses.—*Tolstoy.*



## Capital Punishment.

Most people think that when a murder has been committed the only way to make things right again is to commit another murder. For it is a mistake to suppose that when the State kills a man it is not murder. In fact, it is the worst kind of murder, because it is done with cool deliberation, and the wretched victim is pinioned so as to render him absolutely helpless. Moreover, it is done with the assistance of the Church, so as to foster the idea that so foul a crime can be committed in a way that makes it right.

How did this fiction arise, that one murder can be made right by another? It certainly cannot be entertained by rational beings. When a natural law is broken it never can be mended. There is no such thing as atonement for the breach of a natural law, because the consequences are necessarily eternal. The idea that the murder of Jesus Christ could atone for the sins of humanity is absurd, because the consequences of sin—the violation of natural law—must be suffered for ever. There is no possible escape from them. We talk about vindicating the majesty of the law, but no such thing can be done by us. Natural law will vindicate its own majesty, but it will not pretend that it can ever be mended. It will follow the offender like a bloodhound, and will make him suffer to the last atom the consequences of his sin, but there will be no fiction about making things all right again.

Legal murder is sometimes justified upon the ground that it tends to protect society, but it does nothing of the kind. Most murders are done in moments of passion which renders the murderer practically insane for the time being, while a deliberate murderer thinks he can conceal his crime. Experience has shown that capital punishment does not prevent crime, for when it was inflicted for a score of offences it merely brutalized the people instead of improving them. The plain truth is that capital punishment is a survival of ancient barbarism, the commonly accepted reason for which has been entirely exploded. And this survival among people who profess to worship Jesus Christ, or to have even decent respect for his memory, is shameful beyond words. Jesus believed in no revenge at all. But his professed followers are these bloodthirsty people who insist on an eye for an eye and a life for a life. Go throughout the churches and you will find nearly all the clergy and laity passionate advocates of the gallows and the lash. Is there not always a chaplain on the scaffold with the wretch about to be hanged? And did you ever know of one who appealed against the iniquity as he stood there an accomplice in the crime? No, and you never will as long as the Church is hand in glove with the State, as she is now.

The hangman and the priest standing side by side upon a scaffold, accomplishing a legal murder, are good evidence of the part that conventional religion plays in the social drama of the day. The State is there in the person of the hangman, and the priest is there in his well-known rôle of helper of the State by making the public believe that this act of cruelty and revenge is all right, because it is in accordance with the will of God.

Now, why do we retain this vicious and disgraceful practice of taking revenge in kind upon murderers? One reason is because most of us believe that crime can be prevented by punishment. You see, most people still believe in hell. That means believing in a God who tortures people in the next world for the religious sins committed here, and with a punishment that has

no natural relation to the crime, for anybody can see that a brimstone fire is not the natural consequence of unbelief in anything. And this popular religious belief affects us in all our social relations. Instead of recognising the natural law of punishment that no wrongdoer can possibly escape the natural punishment of his sins, we think that we must help nature to do her proper work by inflicting all kinds of arbitrary and absurd punishments. What relation has a dark closet to stealing jam? Or going to bed supperless to disobedience? Or thrashing with a cane to lying? And yet these punishments are inflicted upon children by parents who imitate the foolishness of their imaginary God. And as long as people believe in a God who invents and inflicts arbitrary punishments for sins for which men are only partly to blame, they will devise unnatural and vengeful methods of torture and death for crimes to which men are driven by their environment.

Any rational mind would conclude that the proper thing to do with a bad man is to try to turn him into a good man. If a man is too dangerous to be allowed his freedom, he should be confined, but not for purposes of punishment—only for purposes of reformation.

Any observant and rational person can see that there are natural laws which enforce themselves without the aid of judges and juries and policemen. But we shall never learn to trust in natural law until we cease to believe in a God who neither obeys nor trusts in the laws of Nature.

But there is method in all the prevailing penal madness. We have not got into this illogical tangle without a reason. Long ago men began to make social laws which violate natural laws, and all the present machinery of justice is an attempt to stave off the necessary results of our violation of natural laws. We have allowed a few men to monopolize the natural opportunities of wealth-production inherent in the land, and instituted a great system of fraud and violence to protect their unjust privileges. The natural result is that poverty is widespread, and poverty is a nest in which thieves and murderers are hatched, and the prison and the gallows are the contrivances of the legal thieves and murderers to protect themselves from the illegal thieves and murderers. And they are wretched failures, because no human contrivance can protect you when you throw the universe out of harmony, as you do when you put one idle millionaire in the midst of a thousand able-bodied and unemployed paupers.

It is easy to see what the prison and the gallows are. They are instruments for the intimidation of the poor if they try to recover some of the wealth that is daily juggled out of their hands. Did not the gallows do a great work for the pious, rich people when it put an end to that reformer in Palestine a long time ago? He has been debased into a God and is now worshipped by the very class that killed him then. But he was a low social agitator when they hung him. Did not the gallows do a great work for the American slave-owners when old John Brown was hanged for his devotion to the oppressed?—He is a national hero now, but he was a despised criminal then.

It is easy enough to see why capital punishment is retained so long after it has become so shocking to the public that it has to be inflicted in secret to preserve it. But you may be sure that when society is guilty of no wrong to the poor and stands in fear of no vengeance from the oppressed, the occupation of the hangman and his companions, the jailer and the priest, will be gone.

G. O. WARREN.



## Acid Drops.

From the *Saturday Review* we see that the Recorder of the City of London has declared that since prisoners have been allowed to give evidence perjury, not only in the Divorce Court, but in all criminal courts, has become terrible. On this the *Review* adds the following comment:—

This is only what might have been expected. Formerly the sanctity of the oath was maintained by the double sanction of religion and the law. Now that many people have ceased to believe in Heaven and Hell and the Bible, nothing restrains them from perjury but the fear of prosecution.

We wonder if the writer in the *Review* is quite as simple as this statement would make him appear? Has he forgotten the times when there was a regular trade in the manufacturing of evidence for use in the courts? And does any judge really trust a witness's evidence because it has been prefaced with a "S'welp me Gawd"? And is there a liar on the face of the earth who can hold a candle to the religious liar when he means business? Look at the lies of one body of Christians against another body of believers! Look at the record of the Churches in the manufacture of forged evidence to support their claims, or at the bogus miracles worked up to impose upon an ignorant people! The man who does not believe in Christianity may set a small value upon truth-speaking, but the man who has a strong belief in it is almost certain to do so. All history and all experience teaches that.

We see that at the finish of a run of the Devon and Somersetshire Staghounds the poor hunted creature ran into a stable for shelter, and fell exhausted. What a sight! And what "sport"! A poor semi-domesticated animal which has to be urged into running away, and then, rushing into a stable and falling down from exhaustion. That is sport in a Christian country. Naturally! "Doth God care for oxen?" asks Paul contemptuously. And we presume the same query applies to other animals.

As "A Working Man" says, in the *Daily News*, to clip the Bible is to destroy it and to treat the doctrine of the Fall as untrue is to undermine Christianity. A Christian has no right to yield any ground to the scientists unless he is prepared to cede the whole. Christianity is an edifice which cannot possibly stand after the foundation has been removed.

Dr. Jowett, though an oracle of great renown, confesses ignorance on one point. He does not know how to reach and arrest the attention of the masses who are outside all the Churches. He urges the brethren to try prayer as one of the possible means, in the hope that God may do what they cannot. The truth is that, to the overwhelming majority of the non-religious crowds, God is non-existent; and it is a certainty that the policy of the clergy will only deepen their antipathy to religion. The days of blind belief are rapidly passing, never to return, we trust.

Last week we referred to the proposal of the New Zealand Legislative Council to meet the Roman Catholic denunciation of civil marriage as illegal by making such attacks illegal. The *Church Times*, commenting on the proposal, says it is proposed to punish by fine or imprisonment those who preach the Catholic doctrine of marriage. That is sheer nonsense. The proposal is only to stop the Roman Catholic priests, and other priests, playing on the minds of timid or ignorant young folk by prohibiting them denouncing a civil marriage as illegitimate. We think the *Church Times* is correct that the Catholics will, in this matter, have the support of the Church of England in New Zealand. About the only time that the various bodies of Christians can stand together is when they are practising some wrong against the whole community. Religion does lead to a certain unity in rascality, and produces all the ethical harmony of a high-class thieves' kitchen.

But we would remind the *Church Times* that it is only the sanction of the State that makes the marriage in a

church of any more value than marriage by jumping over a broomstick. If that sanction is withdrawn, the religious marriage has no validity whatever. The Christian marriage had no validity before the State took it under its patronage, and it will have no validity when that patronage is withdrawn. And the sensible course would be for the State to insist upon a civil marriage in every case, thus placing all its subjects upon an equality, and leaving all fancy ceremonies to the caprice of the individual. It must come to that some day.

According to the Bible Society Report for 1920, there are sceptics in Tuscany. Replying to a colporteur, a woman said: "Christ did not write the Gospels, and who can tell that the Apostles wrote the truth."

We have often pointed out that the Bible is "blue" in places. In the latest report of the British and Foreign Bible Society there is this passage: "In Columbia three (colporteurs) were imprisoned for selling the Scriptures, under a law which forbids the circulation of immoral literature." Those bagmen of Orthodoxy did not feel like singing "Hail, Columbia," we warrant.

At the Parish Church, Wembley, a big Bible has been mutilated, and prayer-books torn and thrown about. So far, no one has been struck by lightning wielded by an outraged deity.

Prayer is the method recommended in the Bible whenever believers want anything very badly. The Westminster Abbey authorities, however, lay more stress on the proceeds of a ball, and dance tickets have been sold for the benefit of the Abbey Restoration Fund.

Quite an optimistic gentleman is Bishop Weldon. He preached at Edinburgh on a recent Sunday to a joint congregation of the Established and United Free Churches, and during the sermon said he would predict that in fifty years' time such a service will be held without causing any surprise. A very bold prophecy. Christianity is the religion of peace and brotherhood; it has been in existence only a matter of nineteen centuries, and the Bishop thinks that in another fifty years all sorts of Christians may meet together without a free fight taking place. Wonderful! And the remarkable thing is that all these varieties of Christians do meet together quite amicably when they are concerned with subjects other than religious ones. It is only when they get on religion that the fur begins to fly. If we could only inoculate these people with a fitting sense of humour, Christianity would soon be as dead as a door nail.

The professed concern of the Churches for the working man will deceive no one who is not led away by phrases and who is conversant with the Church's record. So we are not surprised to find the *Daily Herald* quoting the following from a circular issued by the Church Army to its agents:—

In naming wages for the "disabled" men for whom you find employment, you can justly take the State pension into consideration. The men are not yet in the labour market, and do not expect union wages, nor must you expect full work from them.

Now there seems no reason whatever why an employer in paying a man should take into consideration any other sources of income he possesses. The pension is to the man, not a grant to the employer. And so long as the pension is below a thousand a year we may be certain the man has earned it before it is granted. The game of the Church Army is plain. On the one hand, it gets the employer cheap labour, and is able to make a call on him for subscriptions; on the other hand, it enables it to talk to the working classes of the good it does—without disclosing the way in which it does it, and so attract some of the emptier-headed of them to the Church.

The *Church Times* quotes the epigram that "parsons are like manure—when scattered over the land they fertilize it, when collected in one place they become a public



nuisance." As a matter of fact, only the last clause in the epigram is true, the middle clause being utterly false, parsons being equally a public nuisance whether they are scattered abroad or collected in one place. As Meredith says, they are "sappers of our strength," which is much worse than being "a public nuisance."

There is one aspect of the miners' threatened strike that is worth noting, which sheds some light on the ethics prevalent in a Christian country. The main quarrel is about the sixty-six million which is derived from the profit on coal sold abroad. Coal consumed at home is sold at a price that meets expenses, and includes the mine-owner's profits. The export coal is sold at a largely enhanced price. But the buyers of this coal are, in the main, our late Allies, whose nobility and unselfishness we praised so highly during the war. Of all the Allies, Great Britain is the best off—with the exception of America. And we show our admiration of the unselfish character of the Allies, by charging them a price which leaves the country an enormous profit on the deal. And neither the miners nor the Government, nor the people, including the clergy, see anything reprehensible in the practice. And we of the Freethought party are called the materialists, who would rob life of its idealism and conduct of its unselfishness!

The Rev. T. Rhondda William, of Brighton, though a New Theologian, is fully as dogmatic as the wildest advocate of the Old Theology. For example, he declares in the most positive manner that God loves and cares for the individual, often doing for him what he cannot do for himself. All we know is that those who profess to be God's people show no outward sign of being the recipients of such love, care, and help.

Speaking at a meeting of the Australian Anglican Synod concerning Prohibition, Canon Blehy remarked that compulsion was not the method of Christ. The Canon, perhaps, has never heard of the fear of Hell.

The *Daily Mail* sees in Canon Barnes' recent sermon before some members of the British Association as a pleasing sign of the new co-operation between religion and science. These journalists have such wonderful eyesight. They so often see the thing that is not.

A leading article in a recent issue of the *Morning Post* concluded with the observation: "The young people of to-day are our ever-present Spring, the only Future we can hope for, and, as some hold, our only personal immortality." Now, that is coming about as near the truth as one can in an English newspaper. The "as some hold" is obviously a saving clause to prevent the readers of the *Post* denouncing the heresy of the writer. We shan't be at all surprised to find some of these papers presently daring to mention the *Freethinker* by name, instead of merely borrowing from its columns without acknowledgment.

At Worthing the magistrates have just granted permission for Sunday cinema displays. Great opposition was shown by the local clergy, who naturally wished the Sunday performances to be limited to their own theatres, with themselves taking the star parts, but the magistrates evidently thought it advisable to vary the Sunday shows. And in that we cordially agree.

The ridiculous project of the Government in backing a Jewish State in Palestine seems to be stirring up a pretty hornet's nest. This is being kept quiet, according to the *Church Times*, through the censorship which our liberty-loving Government still exercises over the Press. Very few people seem to be aware of the fact that the censorship still exists, thanks to the fact that we have added to the system an hypocrisy which keeps the public in the dark concerning the suppression of news. But it appears that the new State is resented by Christians, Mohammedans, and Jews, who are native to the place. The matter is working out precisely as we said in these columns that it

would. There is nothing whatever in common between the inhabitants in Palestine and the European Jews. They are not even one in actual religion. They may use the same word, but we know from our experience of Christians how little that means in actual practice.

There is only one sane way of ending the Jewish question, and that is—on the one hand to teach Christians to forget their Christianity, and, on the other hand, to teach Jews to forget their Judaism. The sole ground on which it may be argued that a Jewish State is necessary is that Christians so ill-treat them that some refuge must be provided them from Christian malignity. If Christians can behave decently, that reason disappears, and there would not be a boatload of Jews from all over the world who would wish to settle in Jerusalem. And if the Jew can be brought to the point of seeing that his religion is no more than a belated system of primitive savagery, the line that divides him from others will break down. As in so many other directions, it is religion that is at the basis of a social injustice, and the only cure is a good dose of Free-thought. The real liberator of the Jew, and also of the Christian, is the man who can make them throw their religion overboard.

The *Daily Telegraph* discussion on "Is it a New World?" continues, and its course illustrates well enough the policy pursued in the Press, as well as the conception of intellectual honesty, current in this Christian country. For the letters, with a rare exception now and again, are of the stupidest possible character. Second Adventists, religious cranks, advocates of biblical prophecy, etc., are given a free hand, and if one is to form an opinion based solely on the letters which the *Telegraph* publishes, one must conclude either that the *Telegraph* is read only by the most stupid section of the population, or that the whole of the population is verging on the imbecilic.

Now, we do not believe that either alternative represents the truth. The people of this country are not such fools as the letters would lead one to believe, and fools are not the only ones who read the *Telegraph*. The letters are obviously undergoing a process of selection; only those of a certain type are permitted to appear, and an encouragement is thus given to the perpetuation of certain opinions that might otherwise be disturbed. It is not conceivable that some sensible letters have not been written, but by not permitting their appearance encouragement is given to certain other forms of opinion which are favoured by the policy of the paper. It is a form of misdirection of public opinion that makes the newspaper Press one of the greatest obstacles to reasonable progress. A paper that would give space for the expression of all sorts of opinions, and fair news of all sorts of movements, would be a great instrument of education and a real factor of progress. At present no such paper exists in the whole of the country. And the five years of war, during which the papers pursued a deliberate policy of suppression and the manufacturing of "desirable" information, has converted a tendency always present in the Press into a settled policy.

Christians are always pretending that they never heard of Atheists, but, whenever a minister gets hold, they suddenly find the word useful. A case in point is that of the Rev. J. W. Laughland, of Pembroke Chapel, Liverpool, who has been dubbed an Atheist. Doubtless, there is no reason for the term as applied to the reverend gentleman, but he has our sympathy in his affliction.

Stories about bleeding statues are still coming through from Ireland, and the priests are, as usual, making all the capital they can out of it. The statues are said to bleed whenever a particular boy happens to be present. Well, we will make a sporting offer to the priests. A miracle of that kind performed in a priest's house, or away from careful observation, must always give rise to some suspicion. We beg to offer our office as the scene of the experiment. Let them send along the statue and make it bleed here. If it does, we promise to suspend the publication of the *Freethinker* for ever. And that would really be a miracle worth performing.



## Our Sustentation Fund.

We think our friends will agree that there has been a very gratifying response to the statement made as to the present position of the *Freethinker*. Quite apart from the subscription list, it is encouraging to find that whenever there is need for help it is quickly forthcoming. Asking for monetary assistance is never a very pleasant task, but so far as can be it is robbed of its unpleasantness. We are quite unable to print more than a very meagre selection of the kind words that have accompanied most of the subscriptions, and we can do no more than briefly express our thanks to the writers. If we have earned only a few of the pleasant and encouraging things that are said we are content, and feel repaid for our labours.

Mr. H. Jessop sends cheque with the remarks:—

How you stand the worry and trouble governing the prices of paper and labour, with little or no capital, is marvellous to me. And amidst it all you give us the best Freethought paper published. I am delighted with the response to your appeal, and I sincerely hope that you will receive double the amount of your deficit.

Mr. M. Barnard says:—

The very slightest suggestion of the non-appearance of the *Freethinker* makes me feel anxious. I would deny myself rather than miss it. Its continuous uncompromising vigour and relentless logic make it a delight to its friends and a terror to its opponents. It inspires in me a feeling of personal responsibility for its welfare and for that of its editor. I much regret that my subscription is not in proportion to my esteem, but I treasure an inward hope that one day by a turn of fortune's wheel I may be wealthy, and then there shall be no more financial worries for the *Freethinker*.

Mr. J. B. Middleton writes:—

It is a real pleasure to me to enclose cheque for £5 towards the *Freethinker* Sustentation Fund. I marvel to think how well you have come out. It is the duty of all readers to get their hands down and pay up. I can only say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

A grateful Freethinker encloses P.O. and hopes that he may "start a long line of other grateful Freethinkers." Needless to say, we hope that his wish will be realised. Mr. R. H. Welling thinks the list of subscriptions shows that if the guineas of the Freethought party were as plentiful as their good wishes our treasury would be full to overflowing. M. Blakeman, as a reader of two years' standing, regrets that the paper did not come his way earlier. Mr. A. C. Rosetti hopes that the Fund will reach a proportion that will free us from financial anxiety for some time.

Mr. R. Wilson encloses cheque with the message:—

"It is a pleasure to give to such a cause. I only hope that you will be long spared to carry on your excellent work. Mr. W. Brooke thinks the paper "would be cheap at sixpence, for there is nothing so good." In this he is supported by "Working Journalist," who says: "There is no other paper in the country that can be at all compared with the *Freethinker*, and which can be purchased at so low a price. To say that it is the equal of the sixpenny and ninepenny weeklies is scant praise—it is unique of its kind."

I conclude these notes on the letters received with a communication which I at first hesitated to print. But on consideration I feel that it is due to the writer to give his offer publicity, the more so as he is not a wealthy man, and it is sheer interest in the cause that prompts his writing. I therefore print his letter with the briefest word of comment. For the present I am not at liberty to give the name of the writer, as he pre-

fers that both his letter and subscription should appear over the name of "Medical." Here is the letter, with a few words of a purely personal character withheld:—

Three things—(1) I enclose a cheque for £5, and hope to butt in again before the Fund closes.

(2) I hope that I am wrong, but I fancied I detected in your statement of September 12 a note of weariness, and perhaps also of discouragement. If that is so, no one can feel surprised. The strain of the last five years is enough to try any man, and many of your friends and well-wishers, who have noted the amount of work through which you get, must have had some misgivings as to how long you can go the pace. For your own sake, and for that of the movement, I hope that you are taking every care.

(3) I am not a wealthy man by a long way, but I should like to see the suggestion of "C. W. B." carried out, and the £1000 mark touched this year. There must be a thousand readers who are able to put down a pound note, and who can do so without their feeling any strain. If that sum is raised it will give you two or three years to which you can look forward without uneasiness, and may perhaps enable you to get relief in other directions. I think that your readers should see to this being done.

(4) So far as I am concerned I make the following proposal. I am ready to make one of a sufficient number to raise the full £1000 in sums of £50. If enough cannot be found to give £50 each, let it be in sums of £25. Failing that, I will send along my cheque for another £20 so soon as the sum of £480 is reached, and if the full £975 is subscribed I will send a further cheque for £25, which will make my contribution £50 in all. I hope you will not hesitate to put this proposal before your readers. I am sure it can be carried out if all who can will lend a hand.

It would be unfair to "Medical" not to make this offer public, and I do so. And it would be mere affectation to pretend that I should not feel immensely relieved if I could see three years ahead without financial worry. In all probability it would mean the end of appeals for financial help, as, apart from other considerations, things by that time will have settled down. Anyway, the matter is now out of my hands, and in the hands of others. "Medical" may be trusted to keep his part of the undertaking to the letter.

For the rest, I will only say that I am neither weary nor disheartened. I am disappointed at things not being by now easier than they are, but as determined as ever to keep on with the fight. And in the end we shall win. The old paper will keep on with the old message, relying on the sanity of its teaching, the loyalty of its friends, and undismayed by the attacks of its enemies.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

Previously acknowledged, £147 6s.

H. Jessop, £25; "Anonymous" (in memory of the late Sir Hiram Maxim), £20; "Medical," £5; "A Grateful Freethinker, No. 1," 11s. 9d.; Mr. and Mrs. Bullock, 5s.; "Belgravia," 10s.; J. Shipp, 10s.; G. Lunn, 5s.; G. L. Alward, £2 2s.; A. W. Coleman, £1; Miss D. W. Coleman, 10s.; H., 2s.; "Anno Domini," 10s.; "Working Journalist," 10s.; J. Hampson, 10s.; H. E. Latimer-Voight, £1; M. Blakeman, £2; O. Friedman, £1; W. Owen, £1 W. S. Clogg (in memory of some good old times in Victoria Park and for the sake of the dear old *Freethinker*), £1; J. S. Norman, £1; W. Lamb, £1; Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Rosetti, 10s. 6d.; F. Wykes, 10s.; J. G. Finlay, £2; J. Shepherd, 10s.; A. H. Deacon, 2s. 6d.; H. Smith, 10s.; S. Hicks, £1; R. H. Wellings, 10s.; J. C. Day, 5s.; E. Parker, 10s.; R. Bell, 5s.; J. O. Restall, 5s.; J. B. Palfryman, £1; J. Roos, 5s.; R. Daniell, 5s.; J. Mathews (Liverpool), 10s.; T. Dixon, £1 1s.; H. Dawson, 10s.; F. Greyton, 10s.; total, £218 10s. 3d.



## To Correspondents.

C. SADLER.—We can, of necessity, only answer your question in the very briefest manner. Natural laws are neither good nor bad. Goodness and badness are qualities which we give to forces in relation to ourselves and because of their effects on us. Man's interest lies in studying natural laws in order to so act as to utilise their incidence, and thus produce the greatest happiness to himself and his fellows. Man's nature, either bodily or mental, is not adapted in the best possible way to the conditions of existence. It is, as a matter of fact, full of flaws. Hence the possibility and the necessity of continuous improvement.

J. ROBERTSON.—Thanks for efforts on behalf of the Fund.

ONE of our readers inquires for the author of the lines, "I shall journey through this world but once. Any good that therefore I can do let me do it now. For I shall not pass this way again." Perhaps one of our readers can oblige with the reference.

J. WEEKS.—We are obliged for help and promise.

W. J. LAMB.—We have many readers on board ships, and the paper passes round with general appreciation.

G. LUNN.—But for the state of the printing world we should have made a selection by now of our "Views and Opinions," and republished them. We have been asked to do so by a number of readers, but we must now wait awhile till things get more settled.

H. STRONG.—Verses hardly up to standard. Idea is good, but the lines are rather strained.

J. DRISCOLL.—The N. S. S. will be having more badges done as early as possible. They could not, however, be produced at the old figure. We would consider the question of a *Freethinker* badge if we could secure a suitable design.

W. H. PORTER.—We are sorry to hear of Captain Munro's death. We have quite a clear recollection of him, although it is many years since we met him in the flesh. We have a remembrance of talking over some of his experiences as captain of a merchant vessel, and his contrasting the Turk with the Greek. "The Turk," he said, "is a gentleman, but if one is not past master in all the arts of stealing one won't get away with one's shirt when dealing with Greeks." We can quite understand his being a notable character where he lived.

W. E. JARMAINE.—We think there are still some places in which Church rates are paid, but in the majority of cases they have been compounded for a lump sum paid under a special Act passed for that purpose.

E. J. HICKS.—Thanks for suggested design for *Freethinker* badge. It looks very good, but we may receive other designs, and we shall have the material for a choice.

A. RUSSELL.—We are obliged for MSS. It will prove very useful.

J. HAMPSON.—We are not surprised, but are none the less obliged, to find that your newsagent disposes of nearly all the copies of this paper you guarantee. It is a capital way of finding new readers, and so building up our circulation. All we need is for the public to once get the taste of the *Freethinker*. "You find, we keep," is still our motto to those who wish to help.

MR. J. W. WOOD writes asking "Who am I?" since he is referred to in connection with the Fund as "J. F." and "J. B." Wood. That is an example of base ingratitude. We go out of our way, and strain our printing resources to give the man two variations on his initials, and still he is not satisfied! And isn't E. and F. as good as W., anyway? The prejudice that some people show for one name rather than another, merely because it is upon certain scraps of paper, is remarkable. We decline to humour such fancies by saying that we made a mistake in transcribing the name.

W. J.—We think we had better leave the matter with those that are discussing it. We cannot express our opinion on every subject that comes forward. You are not alone in your appreciation of Miss Prewett's articles.

*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:—*

*The United Kingdom.—One year, 17s. 6d.; half year, 8s. 9d.; three months, 4s. 6d.*

*Foreign and Colonial.—One year, 15s.; half year, 7s. 6d.; three months, 3s. 9d.*

## Sugar Plums.

Mr. Cohen lectures to-day (September 26) in South Wales. In the afternoon at three o'clock he will speak in the Athenæum Hall, Llanelly, and at seven, in the Elysium, High Street, Swansea. Admission to the latter meeting is free, with reserved seats 6d. We hope there will be good gatherings at both places.

*The Life of Charles Bradlaugh*, written by his daughter and J. M. Robertson, has for some time been out of print, and, with the present cost of printing, there is, we suppose, little chance of its being re-issued. There is all the more reason to welcome a new "Life," by Mr. J. M. Robertson (Watts & Co.). All the facts of Bradlaugh's life are set forth clearly, briefly, and thoroughly, and in some way the new life gains on the old one because of its brevity and compactness. The time has not yet come for other than an avowed Freethinker to do justice to a man such as Bradlaugh, and the effect of Mr. Robertson's sketch will be to impress those who are not already acquainted with the details of Bradlaugh's life that they are in touch with one of the really great vital forces of the nineteenth century. That a man setting out with his superb physique should have found his health breaking down before he was fifty years of age is evidence of the stress of the fight and of the unselfish way in which he spent himself. In this he followed the run of the bulk of Freethought leaders. One notable exception to this was George Jacob Holyoake, who lived to a good old age, and who seems to have always been careful of his health. But in the main the story has been one of ungrudging expenditure of self, with a fairly early end.

We are pleased to see Mr. Robertson writing with firmness and cogency of Bradlaugh's attitude towards religion and Atheism. There has been several attempts of late to tone Bradlaugh's attitude in these directions, and one is the more pleased to find a chapter headed "Anti-Religion," and in which the author asserts, on both his own behalf and on that of Bradlaugh's, that Agnosticism is just Atheism confused, and that the stupid distinction between religion and theology had no place in the mind of so careful a thinker as Bradlaugh. Religion, to a careful thinker, means Supernaturalism, and nothing else.

We hope the new "Life" will have the circulation it deserves. If it does, we predict a very large sale. In the usual way the Pioneer Press does not stock outside publications, but in this case we have made arrangements for a large supply, and can supply our readers direct. The book will be issued to the public on September 25, and orders can be dealt with from this office on and after that date. The price is 2s. in paper covers, postage 3d., and 3s. 6d. in cloth, postage 4d. The work contains four portraits of Bradlaugh at different stages of his career.

Since the increase in the parcel post rates we have had several grumbles from readers with regard to the cost of getting parcels sent on. We have, of course, no control over that, and do not share in the extra charges made by the Post Office. But we may remind all and sundry that any of our publications may be ordered through their local newsagents, just as they may order the *Freethinker*. And it remains with them to see that they get what they



order. But we supply all the wholesale agents in the country, and there should be no greater difficulty in their getting anything that is published at this office than there is in securing publications from other offices. And we hope to get the co-operation of our readers in breaking down any boycott that may be attempted.

We have received from "The Vine Press," Steyning, Sussex, its first venture in the art of fine printing. It takes the form of an attractive little anthology of anonymous poetry, and is called *Lillygay*. Most of the poems are simple love songs of a sad or joyous character, with a few of the old border ballads, like "Johnnie Faa," "The Elphin Knight," and the incomparable "Lyke-wake Dirge." The illustrations are woodcuts, by Eric and Percy West. We find them a little too consciously primitive in their careful avoidance of drawing and design. We hope the new private press will find the support it deserves.

Apropos of last week's note on advertising, Mr. H. Latimer-Voight writes that he quite agrees with Mr. Macconnell that Freethinkers should use their own paper more freely as an advertising medium. He also says that Freethinkers should as far as possible deal with those firms that do so advertise. Mr. Latimer Voight, we know, does, so far as he can, practice what he preaches, and for our part, we should, of course, like to see the advice acted on. We do have plenty of applications for advertising spaces, but we do not desire any but genuine business ones. We have no intention of permitting the columns of the *Freethinker* to be used for "quack" or doubtful advertisements, however tempting the financial offer may be. But we see no reason why genuine business men should not find the *Freethinker* a very suitable medium. Those who have tried appear to be quite satisfied with the result.

The Manchester Branch N. S. S. will conclude its rambling season on Saturday, September 25, at Heaton Park. On this occasion it will be an outing for the children. Sports and games have been arranged. Meet at Heaton Park, near the Lake, 2.30. Sports commence at 3 p.m. prompt. Full teas provided at the Café, or tea only for those bringing their own food. It is hoped that Freethinkers and friends will see to it that the youngsters are at the appointed place early, so that they may be given a full and happy time.

## Responsibility.

### THE GUILT OF GOD.

Many and various have been the methods and devices adopted by priest and theologian "to justify the ways of God to man." But they are all based upon or related to the dogma that ascribes to man a free-will. It is argued that if human woefulness, despite its vastness and depth, can be shown to be the outcome of man's voluntary acts and self-determined conduct; that if all his sufferings can be fathered upon his own "will" then the Supreme Controller is free from responsibility or blame. The other dogma, that God made us—"will" and all—and not we ourselves is left out of account and ignored.

One could imagine from this argument that we existed as a "will" before our birth and that we insisted on becoming incarnate not only without God's approval or permission, but deliberately against his divine wish or counsel. And, moreover, that we made this choice apparently with a full knowledge of the dire consequences which bodily existence would mean for us.

Such in brief are the logical implications of the contention that all man's miseries and villainies are of his own making.

It is not our intention in this paper to touch upon the hoary dispute between Determinism and Free-will. That subject has been quite recently and fully dealt with by very competent writers. Our object is merely to point out that the bulk, if not all, of human ill, does not originate in the volition of the sufferer at all; that human sorrow and suffering, except at most an insignificant and fortuitous moiety, lie altogether outside the pale of the individual's will. And that whoever or whatever is responsible for man's miserable lot on earth it is not the sufferer himself. Let us now examine this proposition in some detail.

To begin with, it is a fact of common knowledge that a vast amount of human suffering is due to collisions with natural forces. Not a day, not an hour, not a minute, probably not a second of time elapses without life having to pay its toll to physical nature in the form of a tragical disaster in some part of the world. The elements in their courses take no more notice of man's existence than if he were a lump of clay. The storm dashes a child against the jagged rock with the same violence as it does a lifeless pebble or floating sea-weed.

Just as the earthworm that comes in the way of the garden spade is cut in two, so is man treated when he happens to cross the path of a natural force. It knows no distinction between human and non-human; between living and lifeless. Storms, floods, earthquakes, volcanic outbursts, explosions, fires, invariably leave in their trail scenes of desolation and death. What protection is the human "will" against such calamities were it infinitely free!

Now as the deity is credited with having ordained these colossal forces and with still controlling and wielding them, he is therefore responsible for whatever sufferings they cause. Human law would at once declare him guilty whether it be due to neglect or intention.

It is true the unreflecting and thoughtless ascribe any narrow escape to the exercise of a special providence, and they imagine that if he occasionally appears to "pluck a brand from the burning," he displays infinite mercy. How many he allows to "burn" to the finish does not matter! Does the erratic partiality of a despot when added to the callousness of a tyrant transform the monster into an angel of light. What they actually do while attempting to whiten the divine character is to make it still blacker.

Another prolific source of human misery, suffering, and tragic deaths is microbial and parasitic life. These agents of destruction and death affect mankind directly and indirectly—indirectly by destroying man's food materials and other necessities of life. There is probably not a plant of the domestic variety which is free from the periodic ravages of some fungus disease or parasitic life; and it is a perennial cause of widespread and often acute distress in some part or other of the world.

Every year the wheat, the potato, the cotton, and the hop crops, for example, are liable to be more or less ruined by such living agents. Sometimes insects join in the fray and take an active part in the work of devastation, as in the case of the migratory locust, which in Eastern countries often swarm together in such countless legions as to darken the sky in their excursions from place to place, devouring every blade of vegetation of the hapless country



upon which they alight and plunging its inhabitants into the throes of famine.

No wonder the Jews were in such terror of their visits and regarded them, as the savage mind, ancient and modern, always does, as divine visitations for some religious neglect!

But these indirect injuries are small as compared with those endured in our own bodies, for man is more subject to their deadly attacks than any form of life. What is the medical profession with its towering importance in modern life but an index of the extent to which social well-being is destroyed by an impaired, disordered, or enfeebled body—*i.e.* by some form of illness. And it is now well-known that every contagious or infectious disease or septic disorder (and they form the bulk of our maladies) is due to some living germ.

Now these are not blind forces like those we first considered; but are by nature aggressive foes always on the watch to attack and slay us. Indeed their very life virtually implies our death; for not only do they live on our flesh and tissue but generate toxic products which tend to poison us.

Besides, man was immeasurably worse equipped to fight them than is the case in the lethal struggle that goes on night and day in the jungle.

There, the foe is at least a visible object, and the prey is usually equipped with some means of defence or escape—a protecting covering, fleetness, agility, capacity for flight, for burrowing, or for mimicry. But man's microbial foes are invisible, and, till yesterday, he did not know of their existence; much less that filth and dirt were their normal habitats—self-protection was therefore quite impossible to him.

Quite obviously, the great Artificer, if there be one, is on the side of the microbes, and is very determined that they shall win. How very much he remembers Ahriman, or the power of Darkness, in the Persian Myth of the eternal struggle between Good and Evil.

The priests, however, considered that man's predicament was not yet pathetic enough, so they called in the aid of their deity who obligingly gave them a "revelation" which put him on a false scent; for according to this divine guidance all man's maladies and bodily afflictions were due to the agency of evil spirits which swarmed around him and entered his body and set up within it various diseases to rack it with pain.

He was further misled by this same revelation into the belief that uncleanness was a virtue. And as "dirt and filth" is the very soil in which they grow and multiply, he unwittingly became himself the instrument of breeding his own lethal foes. Man's helplessness was now at a minimum and the microbe was installed supreme.

Now since man and microbe, pestilence and people, slayer and slain originated in the same divine will—were ordained by the same divine being; and as the microbe and parasite, packs of cunning devices, are designed, if designer there be, to prey upon the victim without any regard to his health or life, the responsibility and guilt of the alleged maker and designer cannot be questioned. If the diphtheria bacillus which chokes the child originated in a self-conscious will then that will is responsible for its death.

Let us now turn from the indictments of physics and biology and pass on to consider the pain and anguish which spring from the social medium and see if here they originate in the will of the sufferer. We will take a rapid survey. Probably the most prolific and constant source of social misery is some form or other of man's enslavement by man: the exploitation of the masses by the privileged, the tyrant, and the despot; of the weak and the poor, by the rich and the powerful; and of the meek and the docile, by the crafty and deceitful.

To this permanent form of misery, add the agonies of those who have experienced the horrors of war or have endured the villainies of persecution, and you will get a faint conceptual image of what man has suffered at the hands of man.

There is, however, another class of social sufferings more pitiful still. I refer to the tragic drama of child-life in all countries and all ages.

"Can tongue declare or pen indite" a millionth, yea a million millionth, part of the agonies endured by helpless childhood. Oh, the infinite myriads of innocents that have been done to death by brutal parents, relatives and guardians, and by the hosts of ravenous monsters who have exploited child-life to indulge their insatiable greed.

Now bearing in mind that these innocents came on the stage of existence not of their own accord, not by their own will, we have a right to ask, was it not an unmitigated crime to give these innocents "being" if the granting was made by or in accordance with some controlling Will which also possessed foreknowledge and power. Indeed, we may further ask *could* he have watched the innocents writhing in agony or slowly done to death with the stolid indifference of a stone *if* he possessed an emotion resembling human pity?

It admits of only one answer—an emphatic, No. Criminals are "condemned to death"; to be "condemned to life" as these innocents were (and are) was a fate infinitely worse than death: death terminates suffering; life begins it.

We may, however, state this truth in terms more general, thus—suffering is inherent in the very scheme or order of sentient life; its very roots are laid in tragedy. One-half of the sentient world lives by devouring the other half. It is a scheme in which pity for pain has no place; its presence would upset the whole animal order. Indifference to suffering is the very key-note to the entire sentient "refrain." *Love*, or the emotion between the sexes and between mother and offspring are most prominent features in the animal world—for they are essential factors to perpetuating the species, but of *pity* there is no trace till it appears in the self-consciousness of man, and even there its power, as an impulse to action, is still weak and fitful.

As the free-will dogma is thus transparently inadequate to exonerate the deity of guilt, efforts have been made to supplement it with a counter-dogma that God's will is *not free*! In works on "The Method of Divine Government" it is shown that the divine will is not really free; that it is so circumscribed and limited by his other attributes and acts as to be helpless to prevent the ceaseless flow of human misery! What impotent omnipotence!

The counter-dogma certainly rests on firmer grounds. It is easily shown that the deity is *not free*; but then what good is such a deity? The



effort, however, shows both the plight and the resourcefulness of the theologian.

If his eyes were opened he would see that the whole difficulty and mystery springs from the baseless assumption that such a being exists.

The obvious conclusion from the preceding argument is, not that the world is ruled by a gigantic man-like fiend, but that it is *not ruled at all*; and that pain evoked no pity till a new emotion awoke in the human breast, where it became a fresh impulse in the history of life.

KERIDON.

### Correspondence.

RE MR. WELLS AND ATHEISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In the current part of his *Outline of History* Mr. Wells says, "The key to German historical teaching is to be found in Count Moltke's dictum, 'Perpetual peace is a dream. War is an element in the order of the world ordained by God.' (Gladstone, we have noted, in his Tory days, showed the same pious acquiescence in the family slaveholding)." Talking of the Kaiser, he says, "God he described as his 'Divine Ally.' In the old absolutisms the monarch was either God himself or the adopted agent of God; the Kaiser took God for his trusty henchman. 'Our old God,' he said, affectionately."

All this, of course, was very reprehensible on the part of the Kaiser, Gladstone, and Moltke. Each evolved from his inner consciousness a God after his own image, with the same ideas as to right and wrong. But does not Mr. Wells do the same thing himself? He has presented us with a new "God, the invisible King," who shares all Mr. Wells' ideals and aspirations, and is going to lead the human race to their realization. Is it not evident that Mr. Wells' God is as much a figment of the imagination as theirs?

A. W. DAVIS.

SIR,—I am afraid it will be a long time before our scientists, philosophers, and leading novelists who have given up the various Theistic interpretations of the universe will adopt the habit of straightforwardly saying so. Especially when Atheists themselves too frequently "fence" when called upon to define their Atheism.

After reading your "Views and Opinions" for September 12, in which you put forward one long plea for a more straightforward and outspoken attitude toward religion on the part of public men and women, I turned to the article on "Atheism or Agnosticism?" by J. T. Lloyd.

What did I find? I found what seems to be the too-much-worn plea that, "Atheists do not say, 'There is no God,' but they do affirm that 'there is no evidence of the existence of such a being as the God of the theologians.' They do not deny the divine existence, but they do reject every definition of it ever set before them."

When I turned to the letter of M. Barnard on p. 590, I found practically the same thing: "The Atheist would be merely dogmatic in saying that in an infinite universe there might be something somewhere of a God."

Now why the Atheist should not say "There is no God," or deny the existence of a God, in the same sense as he or anyone else would say "there are no ghosts or hobgoblins," or deny the existence of ghosts and hobgoblins, I, for one, cannot understand.

Human knowledge being founded upon such facts as are known to us, and no satisfactory evidence being as yet available in support of the existence of any God so far defined, it seems to me quite legitimate for an Atheist to deny the existence of God, without bowing the knee before the bogey of "there may be something divine after all, if we only knew."

The position, taken up by so many Atheists, that "the Atheist does not say 'there is no God,' because he is without idea of God," is as intelligent and illuminating as the position of the Theist, who denies the existence of Atheists, because he is "without idea of Atheists."

The one says he cannot deny the existence of that of which he has no idea, while the other says he cannot believe in the existence of that of which he has no idea.

Which would be quite correct if the one had no idea of a God and the other of an Atheist. But in reality they both have the ideas which have been presented to them by their opponents.

The passage quoted by Mr. Lloyd from Bradlaugh's "Plea" is one of the most unfortunate that Bradlaugh could have written, although I see the position is accepted by J. M. Robertson in Vol. 2, p. 115, of H. B. Bonner's *Charles Bradlaugh*.

"I do not deny God, because I cannot deny that of which I have no conception," may be good forensic argument, but it simply ignores the fact that Bradlaugh had many ideas of God, as is proved by his criticism of Theism in the "Plea." How could Bradlaugh have become an Atheist if he did not know "what you mean by God"?

E. EGERTON STAFFORD.

### GOD AND EVIL.

SIR,—I am obliged to Mr. Jameson for calling my attention to your criticism in "Acid Drops" of August 8.

Your remark raises the question of evil in the world, and is based on the assumption that because evil exists God cannot exist. Now we both make assumptions (and so does everybody, whether they profess to or no), and I wish to ask which is the more reasonable. I assumed, as I always do to a congregation in church, that all present believed in the existence of a God who is training mankind by discipline. Calamity follows inevitably on long-continued selfishness; therefore man is responsible for bringing it, not God; and if it did not come after sin, then the Bible is wrong. You call this reasoning from the wrong end. Doubtless, for an Atheist; but I was talking to Theists, and it is desirable even with theists to deal with one thing at a time. From the Theistical standpoint I maintain that was sound reasoning.

Now observe your assumption. You mean the same thing as I do by evil, viz., man's wrongdoing, not simply suffering; and you imply that it is incompatible with the existence of God. But how can anyone be sure of this?

The intellectual ground of my assumption is that on any other the universe becomes, as far as I can see, absolute nonsense. But for yours I cannot see any ground whatever.

If, on the other hand, by evil you mean suffering, then I can only traverse your premise, which to me is the prevailing falsehood of the present day. Millions of Christians are victims of it: but perhaps you don't hold to it, so I pass it by.

Again, it is not clear from your compressed remark whether you mean that evil disproves the existence of God, or only the existence of a *good* God. I should suppose the latter. If so, note the exact point of divergence between us.

You mean this: Men do wrong, therefore if there is a God who made them he can't be good. We rejoice: Why not? If God's motive in creating man was that a *free* being should get into personal touch with him and learn by free choice to choose the right kind of life, then we have no right to argue as if our failure indicated that we ought to have been made machines. A machine is dead: We are most of us stupid, conceited, and vicious, but we are alive.

In short, your premise is a criticism of Creation. But have you any right to criticize Creation if you deny that there is a Creator?

E. LYTTLETON.

### "SI DIEU N'EXISTAIT PAS, IL FAUDRAIT L'INVENTER."

SIR,—I notice that one of your correspondents has asked in what work of Voltaire's the above well-known line occurs. He will find it among the *Epîtres* (Letters in verse), No. C iv., *Œuvres complètes*, vol. ix., p. 307 (Hachette, 1878). This poem was written in 1769, and was addressed to the anonymous author of *Les Trois Impos-teurs*, a Freethinking book which Voltaire stigmatized, in his deistic fashion, as full of rank Atheism, without particle of wit or philosophy. The passage that leads up to the celebrated plea for a divine maker of the universe may be Englished thus:

I grant you that my house may be over-run with vermin, but it must have been built by someone, and whoever denies this hides the fool under the philosopher's cloak. Consider Zoroaster, Minos, Solon, consider the martyr Socrates, and the great Cicero! They all worshipped a



ruler, a judge, a father. For humanity this sublime system is necessary, it is the divine social bond, the foundation of all justice, a curb to evil-doing, an incentive to well-doing. If the divine impress were obliterated from the heavens above, even if a God did not exist, we should have to make one.

The idea, of course, apart from the epigrammatic expression, is a commonplace of deistic philosophy. There is a line in Ovid (*Arsamatoria*, 1, 637) which phrases the notion in a similarly compact form:—

Expedit esse deos, et ut expedit esse putemus.

In one of Tillotson's sermons we have the idea expressed in a more prosaic fashion:—

If God were not a necessary being of himself, he might almost seem to be made for the use and benefit of men. (93rd Sermon.)

GEORGE UNDERWOOD.

#### WOMEN AS SAVIOURS.

SIR,—I am disposed to support Frances Prewett on two grounds, first, that neo-Malthusianism is so obviously open to abuse; second, that it is a suppression of the struggle for that full life, natural and cultured, which motives the Socialist movement. Zola's *La Fécondité* is a splendid effort to arrest the tendency implicit in regulated vice and in the neo-Malthusian regimen. I believe that the weight of such modern medical opinion as is conscientiously concerned with social well-being distinctly favours the Prewett ideal.

E. T. K.

[Miss Prewett will reply to her critics next week.—*Editor.*]

### THE SECULAR SOCIETY, Ltd.

*Company Limited by Guarantee.*

Registered Office: 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

Secretary: Miss E. M. VANCE.

THIS Society was formed in 1898 to afford legal security to the acquisition and application of funds for Secular purposes.

The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of inquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularization of the State, etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

Members pay an entrance fee of ten shillings, and a subsequent yearly subscription of five shillings.

The liability of members is limited to £1, in case the Society should ever be wound up.

All who join the Society participate in the control of its business and the trusteeship of its resources. It is expressly provided in the Articles of Association that no member, as such, shall derive any sort of profit from the Society, either by way of dividend, bonus, or interest.

The Society's affairs are managed by an elected Board of Directors, one-third of whom retire (by ballot), each year, but are eligible for re-election.

Friends desiring to benefit the Society are invited to make donations, or to insert a bequest in the Society's favour in their wills. The now historic decision of the House of Lords in *re Bowman and Others v. the Secular Society, Limited*, in 1917, a verbatim report of which may be obtained from its publishers, the Pioneer Press, or from the Secretary, makes it quite impossible to set aside such bequests.

*A Form of Bequest.*—The following is a sufficient form of bequest for insertion in the wills of testators:—

I give and bequeath to the Secular Society, Limited, the sum of £— free from Legacy Duty, and I direct that a receipt signed by two members of the Board of the said Society and the Secretary thereof shall be a good discharge to my Executors for the said Legacy.

It is advisable, but not necessary, that the Secretary should be formally notified of such bequests, as wills sometimes get lost or mislaid. A form of membership, with full particulars, will be sent on application to the Secretary, Miss E. M. VANCE, 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

### Obituary.

We regret to learn that a very old Freethinker has just passed away in the person of Captain A. E. Munro, late of Hull. We remember him as a very old member of the N. S. S., and he was actively engaged in the work in Hull some twenty years ago. Of late he lived at Withersea, where, according to the local Press, he was quite a well-known character. The *Hull Daily Mail* speaks of him as "a fine old man, hating fraud, but generous to the deserving, with ever a kindly feeling for the poor." The paper also informs its readers that "his views on religion were not at all orthodox"—which is the way in which a paper in this Christian country usually lies when it has not the courage to tell one openly. For Captain Munro was an avowed Freethinker. And he was not the kind of man, unless he altered very considerably in his later years, to have pretended to be that which he was not. The immediate cause of his death was cancer of the tongue, and the paper prints a portrait of him which is quite a characteristic one. We are quite sure that he deserves all the compliments paid him.

### 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.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Stratford Engineers' Institute, 167 Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7, Bradlaugh Sunday—Demonstration. Speakers: Messrs. A. B. Moss, F. Shaller, and T. J. Thurlow.

##### OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 5, Mr. W. H. Thresh, "Charles Bradlaugh."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Regent's Park): 6, Mr. A. D. McLaren, A Lecture.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3, Bradlaugh Sunday, Messrs. Hyatt, Shaller, Brandes, and others.

#### COUNTRY.

##### INDOOR.

ASSOCIATION OF ENGINEERING AND SHIPBUILDING DRAUGHTSMEN (Merseyside Branch).—*See Advt.*

LEEDS BRANCH N. S. S. (Youngman's Rooms, 19 Lowerhead Row, Leeds): Every Sunday at 6.30.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Col. Arthur Lynch, M.P., "Ireland."

SWANSEA AND DISTRICT BRANCH N. S. S. (Elysium, High Street, Swansea): 7, Mr. Chapman Cohen, "Christianity's Collapse and the World's Peace."

GLASGOW BRANCH N. S. S.—Ramble. Meet at Parkhead Cross, 12 noon. Bring rations.

MANCHESTER BRANCH (N. S. S.): Saturday, September 25, Outing to Heaton Park; Children's Sports; meeting against Lake about 2.30.

YOUNG LADY, age 21, seeks position as Lady's Companion—Address L. B., c/o Freethinker Office, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

### GLASGOW BRANCH N. S. S.

#### SOCIAL AND DANCE.

Diamond's Hall, 45 South Portland Street,  
GLASGOW.

Friday October 8, 1920.

8 p.m. till 2 a.m.

Tickets, 7s. each, may be obtained from members of the Committee, or the Secretary—

**GEORGE SCOTT,**

44, HAZLEWOOD, DUMBRECK.

*Tickets should be secured at once.*



**Pamphlets.**

By G. W. FOOTE.

CHRISTIANITY AND PROGRESS. Price 2d., postage 1d.  
THE MOTHER OF GOD. With Preface. Price 2d., postage 1d.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF SECULARISM. Price 2d., postage 1d.

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 1 1/2d.

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

DEITY AND DESIGN. Price 1d., postage 1/2d.  
WAR AND CIVILIZATION. Price 1d., postage 1/2d.

RELIGION AND THE CHILD. Price 1d., postage 1/2d.

GOD AND MAN: An Essay in Common Sense and Natural Morality. Price 3d., postage 1/2d.

CHRISTIANITY AND SLAVERY: With a Chapter on Christianity and the Labour Movement. Price 1s., postage 1 1/2d.

WOMAN AND CHRISTIANITY: The Subjection and Exploitation of a Sex. Price 1s., postage 1 1/2d.

CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIAL ETHICS. Price 1d., postage 1d.

SOCIALISM AND THE CHURCHES. Price 3d., postage 1d.

CREED AND CHARACTER. The Influence of Religion on Racial Life. Price 7d., postage 1 1/2d.

By J. T. LLOYD.

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

By MIMNERMUS.

FREETHOUGHT AND LITERATURE. Price 1d., postage 1/2d.

By WALTER MANN.

PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN MORALITY. Price 2d., postage 1/2d.

SCIENCE AND THE SOUL. With a Chapter on Infidel Death-Beds. Price 7d., postage 1 1/2d.

By ROBERT ARCH.

SOCIETY AND SUPERSTITION. Price 6d., postage 1d.

By H. G. FARMER.

HERESY IN ART. The Religious Opinions of Famous Artists and Musicians. Price 3d., postage 1/2d.

By A. MILLAR.

THE ROBES OF PAN: And Other Prose Fantasies. Price 1s., postage 1 1/2d.

By COLONEL INGERSOLL.

MISTAKES OF MOSES. 32 pp. Price 1d., postage 1/2d.

IS SUICIDE A SIN AND LAST WORDS ON SUICIDE. Price 2d., postage 1d.

LIMITS OF TOLERATION. Price 1d., postage 1/2d.

CREEDS AND SPIRITUALITY. Price 1d., postage 1/2d.

FOUNDATIONS OF FAITH. Price 2d., postage 1d.

By D. HUME.

ESSAY ON SUICIDE. Price 1d., postage 1/2d.

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.

**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.

**Determinism or Free-Will?**

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

**NEW EDITION Revised and Enlarged.**

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

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.

**DEPARTMENTS.**

Mail Order Terms:  
Cash with Order.

Men's Suits and Overcoats to Measure, a speciality. **Macconnell & Mabe,** Ready-mades. Tailors and Outfitters  
Costumes, Blouses, and Rainproof Coats.  
Household Drapery. **NEW STREET,**  
Boots and Shoes. **BAKEWELL.**

**PIONEER LEAFLETS.**

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

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

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

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



Freethinkers please note—Support those who support the "Freethinker."

# WHAT IS NEUMETAL ?

It requires no Tools. No Acids. No Heat.

It Permanently Stops Leaks. Mends Cracks. Plugs Holes.

Useful in every Home. Needed by every Mechanic. Handy for every Motorist.

A Tube of Neumetal is a Time, Money, and Labour Saver.

Iron, Tin, Aluminium, Granite Ware, Tanks, Boilers, Stoves, Pipes, Roofs, Household Utensils.

Large Tube (six times the size of a small tube), **2s. 6d.**; Small Tube, **1s.** (post free).

*Directions given with every tube.*

When Ordering state for what purpose required, as Neumetal is stocked in two qualities—WHITE LABEL for Aluminium, Tin, Porcelain, etc.; YELLOW LABEL for Iron, Stoves, Gaspipes, etc.

**THOMAS CRANE, Limited,**

(Dept. 31) **43 DOYER STREET, PICCADILLY, LONDON, W. 1.**

## DOES MAN SURVIVE DEATH?

**Is the Belief Reasonable ?**

Verbatim Report of a Discussion

BETWEEN

**Mr. HORACE LEAF**

(Representing the Glasgow Spiritualist Association)

AND

**Mr. CHAPMAN COHEN**

IN THE

**St. Andrew's Halls, Glasgow.**

Neatly Bound in Coloured Wrapper. Price **7d.**  
Postage **1d.**

*Special Terms for quantities for propaganda purposes.*

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

## 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 9d.)

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

## Association of Engineering and Shipbuilding Draughtsmen.

MERSEYSIDE BRANCH.

During the Winter, 1920-21, the following Series of Lectures (amongst others) are to be given:—

The Sea Shore; Coal and Coal Mining; Abraham Lincoln; Outlines of Industrial History; The Formation of Sun and Stars; The Evolution of Society; Automatic Telephony; The Philosophy of Life; Schools of Political Economy; The Gyrostat and Its Uses; Marxism and Darwinism.

The Lectures will commence at the end of September. All *Freethinker* readers are invited to attend, and to write for Syllabus, price 3s. each to—

**S. CLOWES,**

14 Caldby Road, Aintree, Liverpool.

## A New Life of Bradlaugh.

**CHARLES BRADLAUGH**

BY

The Right Hon. J. M. ROBERTSON.

An Authoritative Life of one of the greatest Reformers of the Nineteenth Century, and the only one now obtainable.

With Four Portraits.

In Paper Covers, **2s.** (postage 3d.). Cloth Bound, **3s. 6d.** (postage 4d.).

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGDON 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:—

The United Kingdom—**One Year, 17s. 6d.**; **Six Months, 8s. 9d.**; **Three Months, 4s. 6d.**

Foreign and Colonial—**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.