

The

# FREETHINKER

FOUNDED · 1881

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

Registered at the General Post Office as a Newspaper.

VOL. XLI.—No. 12

SUNDAY, MARCH 20, 1921.

PRICE THREEPENCE

## PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
<i>Christianity and Sex.—The Editor</i> - - - - -	177
<i>Christian Magic.—J. T. Lloyd</i> - - - - -	178
<i>The Challenge of Culture.—Mimnermus</i> - - - - -	179
<i>The Origin and Development of Morals.—A. E. Maddock</i>	180
<i>The Origin of Christianity.—W. Mann</i> - - - - -	182
<i>Freethought in New York.—Athos Zeno</i> - - - - -	186
<i>Book Chat.—George Underwood</i> - - - - -	188
<i>Obituary</i> - - - - -	189
<i>Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.</i>	

## Views and Opinions.

### Christianity and Sex.

The Act which empowers women to sit on juries also gives to judges the power to say whether a jury shall in any particular case be made up wholly of women or of men. And in certain cases this is being acted upon, naturally in the name of morality. Whether it is really in the interests of morality is quite another matter. Personally, I have a fairly strong conviction that it is not. Thus in a case appearing before Justice Darling, the judge decided that the women should be discharged from the jury, and one readily admits that in so doing he was acting in what he quite believed to be the interests of decorum and decency. It is not at all a question of motive, but rather one of consequences and causes. For example, the case to which I have referred was a trial in which it was alleged that certain people had slandered a doctor concerning his relations to one of his patients, and the expressed grounds of the judge's decision was that certain very offensive documents would have to be read. But the jurywomen were of full age, and presumably of average intelligence. And both they and the men were, also presumably, capable of judging a case in which sexual irregularities were alleged with the requisite detachment of mind, freedom from prejudice, and without any undue tendency to unnecessarily read immorality into what might be only the friendly relations of two persons of opposite sexes. To assume otherwise is to impeach the whole of our jury system, is to say that jurors are so swayed by prejudice, or in certain cases are so dominated by unclean suggestions that neither separately nor together can the sexes be trusted where sexual relations are concerned.

\* \* \*

### Indecency by Innuendo.

Now, I repeat, Justice Darling was quite evidently animated by a most laudable motive in ordering the withdrawal of the women members of the jury. Of that there is no question. Neither, to my mind, can there be any question that the motive has its roots in a view of education that is radically wrong and essentially unclean, and in this respect there is no guarantee that one of his Majesty's judges will be more enlightened than the average costermonger. What is the underlying assumption of our general

education? It is that the sexual relationship is something that is essentially unclean, something that is to be hidden, must not be dealt with in a mixed assembly of men and women, and that if dealt with at all, must be discussed behind closed doors, or with lowered voice, or by innuendo rather than by direct and simple statement. The prevalence of this conviction is very largely owing to the dominance for so long of a religion such as Christianity, which while never succeeding in making a people really clean, has succeeded in making unclean many aspects of life that are not really so. The immediate and general consequence of this is a suggestion of uncleanness to everyone who happens to have occasion to deal with the topic of sex. Up to that point we have a very considerable sympathy with the position of a judge placed as Justice Darling was placed. He probably felt that a jury of men and women could not discuss a question where sexual irregularities were concerned with the necessary detachment of mind and coolness of judgment. And that is a far more serious impeachment of our social system than is any number of sexual irregularities such as the Courts are concerned with from day to day. If men and women cannot be trusted to judge a case where the relations of the sexes are concerned, or to discuss the evidence together in such a way that genuine decency is not affronted, it would be well to withdraw such cases from juries altogether on the plain ground that their minds are not healthy enough for the purpose, and to leave the matter altogether in the hands of the judges.

\* \* \*

### A Protest Wanted

It may be said that I am talking in the air and overlooking the facts of the situation. And to that criticism I must concede that, as a matter of fact, the average man and woman would not care to discuss together a case in which a sexual offence is concerned. But that is not against my case; it is part of it. The fact is not questioned, it is the groundwork of the indictment. And so long as the fact remains, the indictment will lie against the social atmosphere with which we are surrounded. For there is really no reason why adult men and women, whose education has been conducted along healthy lines, should not find it possible to conduct a discussion on sexual matters without the air of unclean suggestiveness that hangs over a conclave of clergymen when they are considering a question of this nature. To label a subject as indecent is to take a long step towards making it so, for average human nature is not at present strong enough to stand out against the suggestion. It is to give full scope for the sly look, the half smile, the suggestive word, all of which are at present so largely associated with sexual matters. Worse still, it throws the handling of these subjects into incapable hands, and opens the way to the cultivation of a traffic in undiluted pornography. And this condition of things will remain until such time as men and women have the courage to demand that the subject of sex shall be discussed between them, and the latter to protest against being ordered off a jury because the subject is

too indelicate for them to handle. And for my own part I am glad to see that a meeting of women, The National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, held the other day in London, formally protested against women being excluded from juries on account of their sex. Cleanliness of mind on the subject of sex will never be secured by banning the subject, but only by bringing it into the light of day. And it will never become a clean subject until men and women are able to discuss its bearings on social life together with decency and mutual respect.

\* \* \*

#### Manufacturing the Indecent.

I said above that for the prevailing state of things Christianity is mainly to blame. Some of my readers may remember the outcry that was raised some years ago against the statuary that adorned a medical society's building in the Strand. The agitation was commenced by a Christian propagandist, and was taken up by one of the morning "yellow papers." The figures were nude, such, the public was informed, as no one ought to be permitted to see. And quite naturally, on receipt of the information, the public went in crowds to have a look. Nor do I find it difficult to believe that for a time many did find suggestions of indecency where none but a Christian propagandist had before discovered it. But the agitation died down, the newspapers found something else that paid them better to exploit, the statues remained, and to-day none of the thousands who daily pass those figures find in them the slightest suggestion of indecency. Had the medical society given way and removed the statues, or covered them with tarpaulins, the indecency—the manufactured indecency—would have been perpetuated, and the unclean mind of the Christian propagandist have found renewed encouragement in his work of national demoralization. But it is quite obvious that there was nothing indecent in the statuary. And it is equally obvious that had the society removed those figures, kept them in an inner room, and advertised their exhibition "to men only" at a shilling admission, it might have added considerably to its income. For there is no lack of a market for real indecency in a Christian community, the police know that quite well. All that is lacking is a sufficiently healthy tone of mind to destroy the market by making it unprofitable.

\* \* \*

#### An Unclean Creed.

Now those statues in the Strand, and the ineffective agitation concerning them is a fair representation of the influence of the Christian Churches on matters of sex and of morality in general. Morality to the Christian was never anything healthy or natural: it was something to be imposed on man as hard labour is imposed on a convict. And sex was something essentially unclean. It was not, as modern thinkers know, the source of some of our best and noblest impulses, and probably the foundation of all the moral impulses, it was the source of all impurity, the greatest danger to man's spiritual development here and the most fruitful cause of his damnation hereafter. Man was taught to shun woman as a standing danger to his spiritual health, the ready agent of the Devil in all his attacks on the male, and the supreme test of his "purity" was his readiness to lead the life of an unsexed celibate. The consequence of this was that the Christian Church dealt with questions of sex mainly to emphasize its uncleanness and impurity. That is what most Christian preachers have in their minds even today when they are dealing with the topic. And Christian literature for centuries is almost wholly deficient in a recognition of the ennobling and really purifying consequences of the sex relation and of family life. That the Christian Church should have

for so many centuries exercised a dominating influence on the world's education is one of the greatest disasters that has ever befallen human history. It is the result of the many centuries of Christian rule from which we are suffering to-day. It is not purity of mind that prevents men and women meeting together and discussing a problem, or problems, that affect each of them no less, and no more, than the other; it is rather that their Christian training has left them with conceptions of life that are not clean enough for them to be able to do so. The very conception of sex raises in the mind saturated in Christian teaching and Christian influences ideas that are of necessity unclean and demoralizing, and the breaking down of that tradition is one of the essential preliminaries to the purifying of life.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

### Christian Magic.

RELIGION and magic are twin-sisters, and they are never apart. Mr. F. B. Jevons is clearly mistaken when he says that "from the fallacy of magic man was delivered by religion"; and he is equally wrong in the statement that "man, being by nature religious, began by a religious explanation of Nature." With the various kinds of magic, black, natural, white, celestial, goetic, we are not now concerned, our only present point being that supernatural religion is essentially magical. When the Gospel Jesus asked "Who is it that touched me?" he disclosed the true nature and methods of his *Évangél*. The woman, who had suffered from an issue of blood for twelve years, and spent all her living upon physicians, touched the border of his garment and was immediately healed. Probably he did not feel that touch, as the multitudes were pressing and crushing him; yet the record attributes to him the statement: "Somebody did touch me, for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me." Now, basing a Lenten address on that alleged incident, Archdeacon Bevan entitled it "The healing touch of Christ." According to the teaching of the Gospels, the Book of the Acts and the Epistles, the Church possesses the same healing touch. In the Epistle of James we read:—

Is any among you sick? let him call for the elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save him that is sick, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he have committed sins, it shall be forgiven him.

The healing touch of Christ is spiritual as well as physical. What he did for the bodies of men and women he did also for their souls. Indeed, he came into the world on purpose to cleanse it miraculously from all its corruptions, to make it, in fact, a new world. Such is the claim made on his behalf by all his ministers. They call him the Divine Physician whose heart is aglow with redeeming love. Curiously enough, however, he is represented as exercising his healing function only on those who have faith in him. This is the subterfuge by which the divines explain the gigantic failure of Christianity. Archdeacon Bevan says:—

The world is impatient of the spiritual touch that is needed to elicit the virtue or power that is in the Christian religion. Christ is to do everything, man is to do nothing. That, in brief, is the popular demand which has sometimes, as we know, found expression even in hymns. But it may be said, does not this way of putting things imply that our Lord had no saving attitude towards the masses of men but only towards the spiritually receptive few?

Of course, the reverend gentleman is convinced that it implies no such thing, though he admits that Jesus never appealed to the masses, nor even spoke of them. "There is hardly a word in the Gospels relating to the

uplifting, the conversion, the amelioration of the people taken in a body." Then comes the following:—

It was Christ's aim—I had almost said his policy—not to emancipate the individual by means of the many, but to reach the many through the individual. He knew what we forget, that no one man is like any other man, and that human souls cannot be dealt with or saved in the bulk.

Does the Archdeacon imagine that thoughtful men and women will be satisfied with such flimsy excuses for the immeasurable impotence of the Christian religion? Has it never occurred to him to wonder whether its colossal failure is not rather due to the inherent falseness of all it claims? There are numerous theologians to-day who do not believe in the miraculous, who explain away in various ways even the miracles ascribed to Jesus. We go further still and reject even the supernatural itself; but if the supernatural is only a dream, it follows of necessity that the Gospel Jesus is a purely mythical character, like Osiris, Attis, or Mithra. In that case, we need no further evidence that Christianity is untrue. It never possessed any magical power whatever and all the miracles it is said to have performed are fairy tales.

Archdeacon Bevan's mistake is that he neglects to draw the only natural inferences from facts he frankly recognizes. For example:—

Many good people seemed to look for so much that was unwarranted, both as the result of the war and from the various spiritual efforts that attended it, and we are now hearing of grievous disappointment with visible results. Let us remember, however, that the most real results are always those that are neither visible nor tangible.

Now, if results are neither visible nor tangible, on what ground does Mr. Bevan speak of them at all, much less declare them to be the most real? What all of us are fully cognizant of is that the war did not bring the people back to God, that, in reality, it made many Atheists. The Archdeacon admits this, but having admitted it he goes on to aver that, "all the same, and in spite of appearances to the contrary, it is my faith that a public spirit will ultimately prove to have been evoked." We, too, believe that better times are coming, that society shall be reorganized on sane and equitable lines; but one of the most indispensable conditions of the coming reformation is the disappearance of all sense of reliance upon the supernatural, or the substitution of knowledge for faith, of the service of man for the worship of God, and of this world for the next. "One world at a time" is an excellent motto. Even Archdeacon Bevan is forced by the facts to declare that it is practically impossible to make the best of two worlds. Christians pride themselves upon being citizens of heaven, but they have never distinguished themselves as servants of the earth. As Mr. Bevan truly says:—

When one reads St. Paul's epistle to the Galatians or the Corinthians, or St. John's messages to the seven Churches of Asia Minor, it does not appear that the religious communities as such were much better than they are now, or that the success of the Cross could be more accurately gauged by numbers in those days than in these. And so certainly with the later history of Christendom. Religion was rather impaired than strengthened by the so-called conversion of the Roman Empire, and in the wholesale baptisms of the Teutonic and Scandinavian tribes Northern Christendom received a leaven which, as we have now discovered, it has not yet succeeded in destroying.

Even from the standpoint of a dignitary in the Anglican Church, Christian magic, like all other forms of magic, never demonstrated its reality by its accomplishments. It has never been productive of any benefit to mankind, while the belief in it has resulted in tremendous harm.

J. T. LLOYD.

## The Challenge of Culture.

The common anthropomorphic ideas of God and the reliance on miracles must, and will, inevitably pass away.  
—Matthew Arnold.

The times are ripening for his poetry, which is full of foretastes for the morrow.

—Augustine Birrell on Matthew Arnold.

The most efficient, the surest-footed poet of our time.

—Swinburne on Matthew Arnold.

Arnold was really as much an Atheist as Bradlaugh was.  
—G. W. Foote.

WHEN Matthew Arnold returned from a visit to the United States, he told with glee a story of Barnum. The famous showman, he said, had invited him to his house in the following terms: "You, sir, are a celebrity. I am a notoriety. We ought to be acquainted." Arnold was indeed a celebrity. The American railwaymen labelled his luggage "The Matthew Arnold Troupe"; but many years before that the poet was "wearing his rue with a difference," and attracting attention. At Oxford he had made a sensation with a eulogistic poem on Oliver Cromwell, whose memory was then execrated at that ancient seat of learning.

From that time Arnold attracted the attention of cultured people. Yet he never became popular in the wide sense. With the exception of *The Forsaken Merchant*, *Desire*, and a sonnet on Shakespeare, which are frequently met with in anthologies, he cannot be said to have gained really extensive notice. The bulk of his verse, outside intellectual circles, is little known, but his work stands in a remarkable way the wear and tear of the years.

Arnold, as a poet, possessed an exquisite tact, a self-restraint which is only paralleled in the great writers. His use of epithets was masterly:—

His eyes be like the starry lights—  
His voice like sounds of summer nights—  
In all his lovely mien let pierce  
The magic of the universe.

Once more:—

So have I heard the cuckoo's parting cry,  
From the wet field, through the next garden trees,  
Come with the volleying rain and tossing breeze,  
The bloom is gone, and with the bloom go I.

In Arnold, as in Wordsworth, there is an ever present sense of the largeness and austerity of Nature:—

The solemn peaks but to the stars are known,  
But to the stars and the cold lunar beams,  
Alone the sun arises, and alone  
Spring the great streams.

Remembering that Arnold was educated in an early Victorian and strictly religious family, it is surprising how he broke completely and finally with Orthodoxy. His imagination became completely secularized. This is seen clearly in his language about death. Thus, in his monody on his friend, Arthur Hugh Clough, he sings:—

Bear it from thy loved, sweet Arno vale  
For there thine earth-forgetting eyelids keep  
Their morningless and unawakening sleep  
Under the flowery oleanders pale.

In *Geist's Grave*, his fine poem on the death of a favourite dog, he strikes the same note:—

Stern law of every mortal lot!  
Which man, proud man, finds hard to bear,  
And builds himself I know not what  
Of second life I know not where.

But thou, when struck thine hour to go,  
On us, who stood despondent by,  
A meek last glance of love did throw,  
And humbly lay thee down to die.

Thy memory lasts but here and there,  
And thou shalt live as long as we,  
And after that—thou dost not care!  
In us was all the world to thee.

The magnificent lines on *Dover Beach* show his Rationalism:—

The sea of faith  
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore  
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd;  
But now I only hear  
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar  
Retreating, to the breath  
Of the night wind, down the vast edges drear,  
And naked shingles of the world.

In religious matters Arnold has been described as lukewarm. Yet, it must be admitted, that his foes were those of his own household, and he held his own way manfully. Writing to his mother, he said:—

One cannot change English ideas so much as, if I live, I hope to change them, without saying imperturbably what one thinks and making a good many uncomfortable. The great thing is to speak without a particle of vice, malice, or rancour.

In a letter to his sister, he wrote:—

The common anthropomorphic ideas of God and the reliance on miracles must, and will, inevitably pass away. This I say not to pain you, but to make my position clear to you.

Nobody can doubt that the writer meant every word that he wrote, and the irresistible inference is that in all his theological works—if, indeed, such playful works can be called by such a horrid name—he intended to work to that end. Arnold always held the opinion that his own country was intellectually below France, that the French were logical, whereas we are not; and that there was a serious danger in the British love for compromise. There are, he held, delusions for which laughter is the proper cure. When Voltaire exposed religious persecution to the ridicule and contempt of civilized mankind, he did a real service to humanity. And Arnold occasionally imitated Voltaire, as in his sly, witty, and sarcastic description of the doctrine of the Christian Trinity under the apologue of the three Lord Shaftesburys. It is well worth quoting:—

In imagining a sort of infinitely magnified and improved Lord Shaftesbury, with a race of vile offenders to deal with, whom his natural goodness would incline to let off, only his sense of justice will not allow it; then a younger Lord Shaftesbury, on the scale of his father, and very dear to him, who might live in grandeur and splendour if he likes, but who prefers to leave his home, to go and live among the race of offenders, and to be put to an ignominious death, on condition that his merits shall be counted against their demerits, and that his father's goodness shall be restrained no longer from taking effect, but any offender shall be admitted to the benefit of it on simply pleading the satisfaction made by the son—and then, finally, a third Lord Shaftesbury, still on the same high scale, who keeps very much in the background, and works in a very occult manner, but very efficaciously, nevertheless, and who is busy in applying everywhere the benefits of the son's satisfaction and the father's goodness—in an imagination, I say, such as this, there is nothing degrading, and this is precisely the Protestant story of Justification.

Matthew Arnold omitted this passage from later editions of his book, because he thought that it had given pain to the real Lord Shaftesbury, but he never unsaid the passage. Arnold was under no illusions as to the levity of his attacks on religion. Writing to his sister, he said: "The religious world which complains of me would not read me if I treated my subject as they say it ought to be treated." Besides poking fun at the Trinity, Arnold never showed weariness of the pleasant pastime of bishop-baiting. Even the divinity which hedges an Archbishop had no terrors for him. All his life he was girding at the Nonconformists, and he used to quote his own front name with emphasis as an instance of the sort of thing civilized folk had to put with at the hands of religious people.

Arnold was inimitable. Combining with great poetic gifts the resources of a scholar, a philosopher, and a man of the world, he helped to change the ideas of his countrymen in a marvellous way. His work was done in the scant leisure of a busy life, for he was an inspector under the Education Department; but he found time to write prose and verse of enduring value. Rarely has liberty found a tenderer interpreter or sweeter singer. MIMNERMUS.

## The Origin and Development of Morals.

### I.

#### THE SCIENCE OF ETHICS.

THE following article is an attempt to show in brief and systematic form the fundamental principles of Rationalistic Ethics. It will contain nothing that is not quite familiar to any one who has studied morals in the light of evolution, but it may be of some interest as an attempt to define and elucidate a subject which is still to a great extent obscured and confused by its connection with supernaturalistic ideas. If the moral problem is ever to be properly understood it cannot be too strongly emphasized that it is a purely scientific problem, and has no more to do with religion than has geometry or physics.

For it seems to be a universal law that every department of human thought becomes really alive and progressive only in proportion as it emancipates itself from the domain of supernaturalism. All currents of thought tend to stagnate; all fields of inquiry remain hopelessly barren so long as they continue under the influence of religion. This is well seen, for instance, in the case of philosophy. All Oriental philosophies have been closely associated with religious and metaphysical ideas, and these philosophical systems have consequently been distinguished for their immobility and their unprogressive character. They have been from their very inception stagnant and inert, and so they remain at the present time. Greek speculation showed the first attempt of philosophic thought to free itself from the trammels of religion and to associate itself with rational knowledge, and hence it developed an activity, an intellectual strength and independence, unknown to the old Oriental systems. In the Middle Ages religion, now in the form of Christianity, again became dominant, and the Scholastic Philosophy affords a conspicuous and melancholy example of its influence. In those days philosophy was indeed "the handmaid of religion," and a wretchedly bad handmaid she was under the dominion of such a mistress. With the close of those dark ages, and the rise of the three immortals, Bruno, Descartes, and Spinoza, the second great emancipation began, and philosophy has ever since pursued its independent way, following the light of reason and leaving for ever behind it the shadows of supernaturalism.

Science exhibits the same phenomenon. All the ancient cosmologies were closely bound up with religions, and were conspicuously unprogressive. These childish products of human invention, resulting from imperfect and untrained powers of observation, once established in the beliefs of men, remained fixed and unchangeable as long as religion had any say in the matter. Astronomy was the first of the sciences to free itself from religious control, and hence, having had the longest start in the intellectual

race, is the most advanced of all the sciences at the present time. Biology and Psychology have been the latest to emancipate themselves, and the latter is even now not entirely free from the influences of supernaturalism, for the operation of immutable law and determinate order, acknowledged in the case of all the physical sciences, is still in many quarters denied to the operations of the mind, where a vague element of "freedom" is supposed to exist.

Finally, the science of Ethics still remains very largely under the dominion of religion which, having from its very origin exercised an authority over morals, shows extreme reluctance to relinquish its ancient sway. Moral conduct is still supposed to be dependent on divine commands and supernatural sanctions. Right and Wrong are held to be matters within the jurisdiction of Churches and priests. Conscience—really nothing but a social instinct—is alleged to be a divine gift supernaturally bestowed, and is shadowed by that air of mystery which religion loves to throw around its fetishes.

It is for this reason that Rationalism must strive to make good its claim to Ethics as a science in every sense of the word. It is for this reason that we must spare no effort to wrest this, the highest of the mental sciences, from the obscurantist dominion under which it has lain so long, and from the deadening influences which have retarded its progress. For it cannot be denied that though we claim Ethics as a science it is still, owing to the tutelage of religion under which it has so long existed, far from being in a thoroughly scientific condition.

Science may be defined as systematized knowledge based on a foundation of demonstrated truth. And this demonstrated truth, derived from the two sole sources of human experience, observation and experiment, must itself be founded on certain fundamental principles or axioms of the human mind. In geometry and the mathematical sciences generally the whole body of knowledge is immediately derived from these fundamental axioms, and hence acquires its character of peculiar certitude and exactness. In the physical sciences observation and experiment come into play, and as both these methods of research are liable to error the certitude and exactness are not so great as in the mathematical sciences; but, nevertheless, a fundamental axiom—the law of causality—lies at the base of all observation and experiment, and this fundamental axiom is of the same nature as the "necessary truths" of mathematics—it contains a deeper and more basic element of truth than is yielded by experience.

If Ethics is to be regarded as a science it must come under this definition and must conform to these conditions. It must be a body of systematized knowledge based on a foundation of demonstrated truth, deriving its authority from some indisputable and fundamental axiom of the human mind. And obviously our first business in dealing with Ethics as a science is to find this moral axiom, if such there be.

## II.

### THE NATURAL BASIS OF MORALS.

PURE mathematics, geometrical and analytical, deals with relations of space and number, and hence its fundamental axioms are naturally found among those primary spatial and numerical relations which appeal to the intellect as "necessary truths." Ethics deals with feelings of Pleasure and Pain,

Desire and Aversion, and we may therefore as naturally expect to find the moral axiom somewhere among the primary and fundamental relations subsisting between these feelings. And here, as is well known, we do find it in the simple, absolute, and indisputable axiom that all sentient beings desire pleasure and avoid pain. That this is in the nature of an axiomatic truth as absolute as any of the axioms of mathematics we see at once when we define the ideas conveyed by the terms "pleasure" and "desire." We can only define pleasure as that which satisfies desire, and we can only define desire as a feeling which calls for pleasurable satisfaction, and hence the statement that all sentient beings desire pleasure is merely to say that they seek that which satisfies desire, which certainly looks axiomatic enough, and might even be regarded as a mere futile truism. But since the whole imposing edifice of mathematical science has been reared on axioms of the same kind, it may be that this moral axiom may not turn out quite as futile a truism as it seems at first sight to be.

The feelings of Desire and Aversion lie at the root of the sentiments of Right and Wrong. These sentiments are indissolubly bound up with the promotion or inhibition of some natural outflow of feeling—with the satisfaction or non-satisfaction of some instinct—and hence they take their rise along with this, the most primal and universal of all instincts, the desire for pleasure and the aversion from pain. If this desire and aversion are absolute and inevitable, equally absolute and inevitable must be the feeling of the "rightfulness" of pleasure and the "wrongfulness" of pain. If sentient beings are so organised that they *must* desire pleasure and avoid pain, then surely for them pleasure must be "right" and pain must be "wrong." It may be objected that Right and Wrong are ethical sentiments, and do not apply to individual pleasures and pains except in relation to social welfare or the reverse. This is quite true of the developed sentiments of Right and Wrong, but we are here dealing with the basis of morals and not with morality itself, and it cannot be denied that these sentiments are primarily associated with the mere feelings of satisfaction and non-satisfaction of the desire for pleasure. Even at the human stage of evolution, among the lowest savages, there seems to be no clear demarcation between the idea of wrong and the idea of injury. A savage, hurt by the accidental rolling of a boulder down a hill, would not clearly distinguish between the feeling aroused by such a mere injury and the sense of wrong which the civilised man would feel only if the boulder had been purposely rolled down the hill by some other human being in order to injure him. To the savage, beside the sense of the actual injury a vague sense of wrong would attach to either incident. We see the same thing in the case of very young children, even under civilisation. A child accidentally hurting itself by contact with a piece of furniture will sometimes beat the table or the chair in anger, and this feeling of anger seems to be precisely the same feeling as that with which it would slap another child in a quarrel. The true ethical feeling of moral right has developed out of that primary feeling of "individual right" which is not really a right at all, for a right must properly imply a claim which other individuals are under some obligation to respect—it must involve an element of reciprocity.

Thus we reach the conclusion that the feeling of desire for pleasure—or happiness if we prefer that word—and the feeling of right to pleasure form, in their fundamental and primary association, the natural basis of morals. This view will not, of course, commend itself to some persons, especially to the supernaturalist who regards the moral sense as having been divinely bestowed. To him this grounding of morals on the selfish gratifications and unreasoning angers of beasts and savages will seem but a sordid and degrading theory—an ethic of the slime. But such a criticism would seem to justify the naturalistic view rather than to condemn it. If the physical organ of the moral sense—the brain of man—has arisen from the humblest beginnings in the simplest forms of sentient protoplasm, as few will now deny, it is only reasonable to expect that the functioning of that organ must have had equally humble beginnings in the world of consciousness.

A. E. MADDOCK.

(To be concluded.)

## The Origin of Christianity.

### IX.

(Continued from page 165.)

Three things will ever strike the reflecting mind as unaccountable in the contemplation of the sacred writings. The first is that a religion, emphatically known as the *Roman Catholic*, should have originated in Judea; the second, that a New Testament, as emphatically known as the *Greek*, should have been the work of persons, not only Hebrews, but by their own admission, "unlearned and ignorant men," a qualification which, with all due submission, be it said, men possessed of a foreign tongue could scarcely with propriety lay claim to.—A. Vance, "*Vox Clamantis*," 1868. Introduction.

ALL the manuscripts of the New Testament that have come down to us are in Greek. There is not an ancient Hebrew manuscript in existence. Perhaps it will be replied that as our earliest manuscripts do not reach back earlier than the fourth century after Christ, and therefore are not the earliest or original copies, therefore they may be translations of the Hebrew originals. This does not meet the case, for scholars tell us that the Gospels are not translations from the Hebrew but are original Greek compositions, and, in fact, among scholars the New Testament is always known as the Greek New Testament. This leads us, as the Rev. Dr. Giles remarks,—

to inquire why the early records of Christianity have come down to us in a language which, as far as we know, none of their writers were either able to speak as their native tongue or likely to have learnt in the course of their early education.....it is still less likely that the books which have come down to us could have been written by those Jews to whom they have been ascribed. For the first Christians, and especially the twelve apostles, were taken from the lowest classes of the people, who by no possibility can be supposed to have been acquainted with literary composition even in their own language, but much less so in Greek, which they could have heard spoken only by those who were in the civil or military service of the Empire.<sup>1</sup>

It has been alleged by some, anxious to get over this difficulty, that Greek was known all over the East at the beginning of the Christian era. If this were true, then, as Dr. Giles remarks, "The ancient world might justly claim that superiority over the moderns which the fancy of some writers, perhaps more in the spirit of amusement than of truth, has sometimes been

pleased to assign to it" (p. 37). However, as the same writer further remarks, the supposition is "negatived by facts.....as it is by the improbability that, when the means of spreading knowledge among the people were infinitely less than now the difficult knowledge of a foreign tongue should have made so great a progress as that which is suggested in the case before us now" (p. 37).

That Greek was unknown to the inhabitants of Palestine we have the best of evidence for asserting. For Josephus, the Jewish historian, who lived between the years 37 and 100 of our era, and wrote his *Antiquities of the Jews* in Greek, for the use of the Greeks. Josephus himself tells us in the preface to this work: "I grew weary and went on slowly, it being a large subject and a difficult thing to translate our history into a foreign and to us unaccustomed language." Again, in the last chapter of the same work he says:—

I have also taken a great deal of pains to obtain the learning of the Greeks and understand the elements of the Greek language, although I have so long accustomed myself to speak our own tongue that I cannot pronounce Greek with sufficient exactness: for our nation does not encourage those that learn the language of many nations.<sup>2</sup>

Josephus tells us how he came to learn Greek. He was in command of the Jews when the Roman besieged Jotapata; upon the fall of that place Josephus was taken to Rome where he was kept in honourable captivity, and having found favour with the emperor Vespasian, and afterward of Titus, he says: "I got leisure at Rome, and when all my materials were prepared for that work I made use of some persons to assist me in learning the Greek tongue."<sup>3</sup> It should also be borne in mind that Josephus was a renegade and accompanied the Roman army of Titus to the siege of Jerusalem, acted as interpreter for the Romans, and was regarded by his countrymen as a traitor and an apostate. It is certain that if he had not been taken to Rome he would never have learned Greek.

It is true that the Old Testament had been translated out of Hebrew into Greek, but the translation was not made in Palestine but at Alexandria in Egypt, and, as we shall see, it was banned in Palestine.

When Alexander conquered Egypt, 323 years before Christ, he founded the city of Alexandria, and the Ptolemys, the Greek kings who ruled over Egypt after the death of Alexander, favouring the Jews, many of whom fled there owing to foreign conquest and domestic dissensions, Alexandria soon became a kind of metropolis of the Jewish dispersion.

One of the Ptolemy's wishing to have a Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible to place in the great Alexandrian library, commissioned some of the learned Jews to do the work; this translation is known as the Septuagint. The day upon which this Greek translation was presented to the king being kept as an annual festival, in which eventually the whole population of Alexandria used to take part.

The Palestinian Jews, however, looked upon the translation of their sacred writings into another language as a profanation, and they kept the same anniversary as a day of national mourning. The day being marked in the Palestine calendar, "The law in Greek! Darkness! Three days' fast!" The Rev. Baring-Gould says: "The Jews of Palestine viewed with dislike and mistrusted the translation into Greek of their sacred books. They said it was a day of sin and blasphemy when the version of the Septuagint was made, equal only in wickedness to that on which their fathers had made the golden calf."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Works of Josephus*, 1834 edition; pp. 27-549.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 788.

<sup>3</sup> Baring-Gould, *The Lost and Hostile Gospels*, p. 18.

<sup>1</sup> Rev. Dr. Giles, *Hebrew and Christian Records*, 1877; p. 36.

Not only the Septuagint, but the Greek language itself was considered accursed. The Talmud declares: "Cursed is the man that shall rear swine, and that shall teach his son Greek."<sup>5</sup>

The Rev. Baring-Gould says:—

The names of "Greek" or "friend of the Greeks" were used as synonymous with "traitor" and "apostate." Seventy years before Christ.....the heads of the synagogue solemnly cursed from thenceforth whosoever of their nation should for the future teach the Greek tongue to his son.—*The Lost and Hostile Gospels*, p. 17.

Bearing these facts in mind, how comes it that the four Gospels, professing to be the work of poor and ignorant men living in Palestine, are composed in Greek? And not only composed in Greek but they actually use and quote from this accursed and banned Septuagint copy of the Hebrew Scriptures!

Moreover, according to the Gospels, the scene of Christ's ministry is laid in Galilee, from whence also he draws his disciples. Now the people of Galilee were the most boorish, uncouth and ignorant of all Palestine. As the learned, but anonymous, author of *The Gospel History* (p.90) points out:—

His ministry, therefore, must have been among a population who were despised by the Jews of Jerusalem, who spoke a dialect which the more cultivated Jews laughed at; who were considered in religious matters to be ignorant and unorthodox, and who were proverbially called "Galilean fools."

Renan says, "The Galileans were the most ignorant people of Palestine, and the disciples of Jesus might be counted amongst the persons, the most simple of Galilee."<sup>6</sup> Emanuel Deutsch, the great Hebrew scholar, speaks of Galilee as the "Bœotia of Palestine. 'The faulty pronunciation of its inhabitants was the standing joke of the witty denizens of the metropolis.'"

It is as certain then as anything can be that the four Gospels were not written in Galilee, or, in fact, anywhere else in Palestine, for Greek was not allowed to be taught there, or the Septuagint, from which the Gospels quote, was not allowed in the country.

That the Gospels were originally composed in Greek and not in Hebrew is certain. The *Encyclopædia Biblica*, which represents the high water mark of Christian scholarship, in the article on the "Gospels" declares categorically "our Gospels were from the first written in Greek."<sup>7</sup> Desperate attempts have been made by Christian scholars to prove that the Gospels were composed in Hebrew because the traditions of the Church said they were. But even if a Hebrew origin for the Gospels could be established, this would not prove their authenticity, for Hebrew was as unknown to the inhabitants of Palestine as Greek. Dalman, who is a Christian theologian, who has made an exhaustive study of this question, tells us that Aramaic (Syriac) was the mother tongue of the Galileans, and, in fact, of the whole of Palestine at the time of Christ; he says: "From all these considerations must be drawn the conclusion that Jesus grew up speaking the Aramaic tongue, and that He would be obliged to speak Aramaic to His disciples and to the people in order to be understood."<sup>8</sup> Hebrew being only understood by the priests and the well educated. The *Encyclopædia Biblica* says of Palestine, "The masses did not understand Hebrew."<sup>10</sup>

(To be Continued.) W. MANN.

<sup>5</sup> Sola, p. 49. Hershon, *Talmudical Commentary*, p. 87.

<sup>6</sup> Renan, *The Apostles*, p. 10.

<sup>7</sup> Cited by C. N. Scott, *Foregleams of Christianity*, 1877; p. 199.

<sup>8</sup> *Encyclopædia Biblica*; Article, Gospels, Vol. II. p. 1870.

<sup>9</sup> Gustav Dalman, *The Words of Jesus*, p. 11.

<sup>10</sup> *Encyclopædia Biblica*; Article, Gospels, Vol. II. p. 1871.

## Acid Drops.

There is a proposal to place in a sealed chamber of a building now being erected in the Strand a number of things illustrating the life of to-day for the benefit of the historian of the future. The suggestion is quite a good one, the only difficulty being that what appears of importance to us to-day may not appear very important to the, we hope, more enlightened inhabitants of a few centuries hence, and many things that would really help them to understand us will in all probability be omitted. Most of the things selected run to inventions and to articles in everyday use. But the best thing would be to preserve illustrations of the mental types of to-day, as that would enable the historian of the future to share our thoughts, and so really recreate the mental life of the early twentieth century. And if that were done it would be necessary to preserve a few specimens of the religious thought of to-day, and to hand faithful samples of the deliverances of some of our leading lights on religion, not merely the utterances of priests, but also of laymen, and not merely of uneducated laymen, but of those who pass for what is called educated specimens of the nation.

If this suggestion were adopted one would like to include a couple of articles recently contributed to the *Spectator* by Lord Hugh Cecil. The articles are concerned with "Christian Fellowship," and Lord Hugh discusses the taking of Communion from authorized or unauthorized persons with all the gravity of a South Sea Islander discussing the danger of breaking one of his tribal taboos. That should cause the future to wonder what the people of to-day considered the real distinction between savage and civilized, and to smile at the delusion of the poor people of to-day thinking themselves civilized merely on the strength of a few mechanical inventions which any savage could master in a very little while. That side of Lord Hugh's mind is certainly not far removed from the savage stage. But Lord Hugh's great trouble is that there is spread over a large part of non-conformity and a small part of the Church of England the belief that human nature is naturally good, or at least that it is not naturally bad. Christian reunion will, he says, be only possible among those who hold firmly that human nature is naturally bad, "that humanity is in a state of moral perdition." That is quite sound from a Christian point of view, but what a confession of belated ignorance on the part of an educated man? A god is to be praised as good for having made a man naturally bad! And the hand of religious friendship can only be held out between those who believe that doctrine. If Lord Hugh Cecil had laid it down as an article of faith that man is naturally and incurably stupid it might have been held that he had proven his position.

Now one can imagine what would be the judgment of the civilized historian of the future when he comes across that sealed chamber in the ruins of the Strand if it contains a real representation of the religious life of to-day. He will either put us down as a mixed race of a handful of scientific thinkers ruling over a nation of savages, or he will put us down as a race of humbugs. He will say, "Here lived a people who knew something of meteorology, but who prayed for rain or sunshine while confessing that prayers had nothing to do with either. These curious folk prayed to their god to cure disease long after they had established the cause of illnesses and epidemics. They prayed to their fetich for victory in battle, while impressing upon the people that everything depended upon what they did, and when the war was over they rewarded generals for having won what they attributed to the deity. They believed that a bit of bread could be transformed into the blood and flesh of a man, and invited young girls to come to their temples to partake of this symbolic cannibalism. If they really believed in their religion they were not civilized people at all, but savages with a more elaborated ceremonial than most savages. And the universal manner in which these ceremonies were performed, while side by side with them there went on actions and professions of belief of an entirely different character, label these people as having been the greatest humbugs that the world has ever seen. For the striking

thing is that they appear to have been engaged in the strange task of humbugging each other." That, we imagine, will be the verdict of the historian of the future, and it will be well deserved.

Apropos of the above, a correspondent takes us to task for speaking so disrespectfully of the Bishops who, he says, are after all men of position. Well, the world is full of illustrative material for the observant psychologist, and this is not at all a bad item. There is no reason whatever why one should apply a different canon of judgment to men in position than to those who are not in position. A really healthy public can exist only when men and women are strong enough to criticise men in position equally with those who are not. The hypnotism of position is always more or less bad. In public life it makes for corruption, and in other directions it is the groundwork of that flunkeyism which is so pronounced a feature of English life generally.

A war memorial cross, containing a three feet figure of Christ, in the St. Martin's Churchyard, Scarborough, has been partially destroyed by fire. "How these Christians love one another!"

And old-age pensioner, who owed a debt of £47, was ordered to pay one shilling a month. As it will take 78 years to pay the amount, the later instalments will have to be posted across the battlements of Heaven.

In an article in the *London Evening Standard* on "Darwin Further Justified," Professor Keith, F.R.S., says: "This latest advance not only opens up new vistas of inquiry, but assures Darwinians that the greatest Englishman of the nineteenth century had set them out in the right path to reach the truth concerning the origin of man." Remembering the years of clerical animosity, this is pleasant reading in an influential paper.

The Oxford Diocesan Council is upset at the unpleasant fact that children bring farthings to church. Adults are not even so scrupulous, as they contribute foreign coins and trouser buttons. It seems a matter for special petition to the Throne of Grace.

The Archbishop of Buenos Aires has decreed that no priest shall give the sacrament to any "woman, maiden, or child who is not so dressed that her arms, shoulders and breast shall be completely covered by a material which is not transparent." Now we wonder what the Archbishop would say to a man who tried to imitate David, that man after God's own heart, if he tried to dance before the altar in the costume that David wore on a certain celebrated occasion?

The *Workers Dreadnought* speaks of the *Freethinker* as "the paper the religious world simply dreads for its outspoken views." We believe that to be a true description, and it is shown by the absolute silence concerning it in the general press. There is probably no other journal so well-known among writers for the press as is the *Freethinker*, but it is evidently a rule that it must not be mentioned. It may be borrowed from, but not acknowledged. That, in its way, is a compliment to its effectiveness. The same compliment was paid Bradlaugh in regard to his *Freethought* work. An absolute silence was maintained concerning it. Our consolation is that while we are not dependent upon the press for our position in the world we can afford to treat it with contempt. What the press does not make it cannot break.

The Sunday Recreation question has reached an acute and amusing phase at Southend-on-Sea. The local Corporation having decided in favour of Sunday band performances on the pier find themselves in conflict with the Borough Justices who are "uncuid guid" folk who object to music on the pier during Church hours. The question is raised whether the Bench has any juris-

diction over the pier, which extends over a mile out at sea.

We see from the *Ayr Advertiser* that the Moderator of the Church of Scotland, on a recent visit to Ayr, reminded the people that the relations between the Church and the people used to be of the closest character. So a writer in the just named paper informs the public why this was so, at least in one direction. It seems that the book on which the Moderator based his statement was the *Obit Book*, and that was kept, says the writer, because in those days on the death of a person the Church always seized "quot," which was "generally the best of everything on the premises, especially the best cow." And the writer properly adds, "The Church kept in close contact with the people, in order to rob them more effectually at death." The only point on which we complain is that it might have been said with justice that the practice has been universal and continuous, and the Church did not wait till death to rob its dupes.

The other day we saw on the film Barrie's *Admirable Crichton*. For some reason or other the play is prefaced with the text from Genesis that God made man in his own image. The play is wholly concerned with a group of unmistakable snobs. And that set us wondering what Barrie had in his mind when he placed that text before the audience. Was it intended as a satire on the god-idea? Or was it only one of those pieces of stupidity that even the cleverest of men appear to find it impossible to avoid when they are talking about religion?

"Every self-respecting woman," said the Bishop of Durham, "ought to be ashamed of appearing in public with her person garnished like a savage Indian with scalps of his victims." But clergymen themselves do not at all object to appearing in public dressed like ancient Assyrian priests.

A flamboyant writer in a daily paper asserts that British justice is so excellent that even "the Mahommedan in our midst can go into court confident of a fair trial." We suggest that the Mahommedan tries to get a Sunday music licence from a Bench composed of Churchwardens and Nonconformist deacons. He will need as much confidence as a sheep before a committee of butchers.

A great deal has appeared in the press of late in connection with psycho-analysis, and in a general way we advise our readers not to pay any attention to what is said in the papers about it. Psycho-analysis is, in our judgment, one of the most important contributions that has ever been made to the science of psychology, but the articles appearing in the press appear to be written by the type of scribbler who believes that whenever he wishes to write on a subject all he has to do is to spend a few days at the British Museum and "mug" up the matter. These men can turn out articles and books without end, and they are much appreciated—by readers who are more ignorant than they are. So we advise our readers who really wish to understand the subject to go to first hand authorities and study for themselves.

We were led to write the above on account of a letter which appeared in the *Church Times* of March 11. Some of the writers to that and other papers have been dwelling upon the injury to children of teachers and others psycho-analysing them, which to anyone who understands psycho-analysis is the most utter drivel. But this writer finds another ground of complaint. This is that "it offers to the average man and woman a new rational code of behaviour based on science instead of faith." That appears to be a very serious objection—to a Christian. To make behaviour rational is distinctly dangerous to Christianity. It reminds one of the case of the Bishop of Exeter who many years ago justified his confirming a number of inmates of the Eastern Counties Asylum on the ground that the weak minded had a natural tendency towards religion.



## C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements

March 20, Stratford Town Hall; March 27, Leeds; April 3, Huddersfield; April 24, South Shields; May 6, Failsworth.

## To Correspondents.

Those Subscribers who receive their copy of the "Freethinker" in a GREEN WRAPPER will please take it that the renewal of their subscription is due. They will also oblige, if they do not want us to continue sending the paper, by notifying us to that effect.

A. RADLEY.—Lecture notices must reach this office not later than the first post on Tuesday morning. Yours did not reach us till Wednesday.

R. MORRIS.—Pleased you found *Theism and Atheism* so comprehensive and useful in your discussions with Christians. We intended it to serve that purpose.

CHEMIST (Chicago).—Thanks for cuttings. We have seen the book and quite agree with you as to the value of it.

J. R. LICKFOLD.—Mr. Cohen's *Theism and Atheism* was sent out to all the usual papers in the ordinary way. We are not greatly concerned over their passing by the book in silence. That is, in its way, a compliment. If it had been a half-hearted sort of thing, full of evasions and compromises, more notice might have been taken. But we are not dependent upon the ordinary press and can, therefore, afford to smile at the boycott. We are pleased to have your high opinion of the work, and also your assurance that "numbers of enthusiastic disciples will do their best to circulate such a valuable work." You will be pleased to learn that the book is selling as rapidly as anything that Mr. Cohen has published.

A. A.—We have not lost sight of the Freethinker Fellowship, but we have had so many things demanding attention of late that we have had no time to attend to it. But we will deal with the matter as soon as we can.

W. J.—The Jesus Christ of the New Testament is, in our opinion, pure myth. The question of the existence of some historical person around whom the myth gathered is quite another question. But assuming such, that is certainly not the New Testament character.

A. TAYLOR.—The Industrial Christian Fellowship, with which is incorporated the Christian Social Union, is condemned by its name. While working men allow themselves to be drugged by such means we have little hope of either them or their cause. The fact of there being a number of labour leaders on the prospectus does not add to its value. If they hope to capture the Churches, it says little for their intelligence.

MR. HARDWICK.—Sorry, we have not been able to get the information you require.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—F. W. Silke (S.A.), 21s.; H. Bailey, 1s.

F. W. SILKE.—Glad you wrote us. There has been an oversight. Books are being sent.

A. BRENTON.—Thanks for copy of magazine. Will use material later.

F. DAWSON.—We agree with you that all Freethinkers should do what they can to secure the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws, and also that it lies within the power of everyone to do something to make this end certain by increasing the number of Freethinkers in the country. If all would do as you suggest, drop a pamphlet or a paper here and there, and never miss a chance of letting loose a word in reason, there would be many more Freethinkers than there is at present, and a much healthier public opinion as a result.

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

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. 6.; half year, 8s. 9d.; three months, 4s. 6d.

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

## Sugar Plums.

More than one Branch of the N. S. S. has invited the Annual Conference, so it is left for the Branches as a whole to decide where it shall be held. Voting papers have gone out, and we would ask them to be returned without delay. Nominations for the Executive should also be sent in at once. It is probable that there will be excursion trains running this year, and that may make it more convenient for delegates and members to be present. There is nothing like having a good representation at the annual gathering.

To-day (March 20) Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Town Hall, Stratford. His subject is "What we Pay for Christianity," and admission is free, with the usual collection. Stratford Town Hall may be reached from almost any part of London by either 'bus or tram, or by train. This will be Mr. Cohen's last lecture in London this season.

Next week (March 27) Mr. Cohen lectures in the Trade Union Institute, Leeds. There will be two lectures, afternoon and evening, and arrangements are being made for visitors for tea. All will help to make the arrangements more effective if they will write Mr. W. H. Youngman, 19 Lowerhead Row, Leeds.

We gave our readers a sufficiently plain account of the Blasphemy trial in last week's paper for them to understand the situation. Since then Mr. Gott has written from prison asking the Society if it can do anything for him, and offering to leave the matter in its hands. We were not very hopeful that anything could be done at this stage, but in order to make sure, Mr. Cohen arranged to consult Counsel on the matter, with a view to an appeal. The matter was gone into with great care and at considerable length, but the conclusion reached was that there was not the slightest chance of doing any good in that direction. Had there been the slightest hope of success Mr. Cohen would not have hesitated to advise the Society, in spite of Mr. Gott's declining the offer previously made, to apply for leave to appeal. But it was altogether too late.

The fact is that the place for the chief effort to be made is before the jury. After that it is a question of law simply, and if one has the possibility of an appeal in mind, the case before the jury needs to be conducted with a view to that eventuality. In this case it was not done, and, as was hinted in the "Special" of last week, protests that might have been made by the defence were not made, and issues that should have been raised were left untouched. The plain truth is that, while it is always a matter of the gravest difficulty to get a jury of Christians not to convict in a charge of Blasphemy, it is simply hopeless when those charged have so hazy a conception of the issues involved and of the methods of defeating the prosecution. We are sorry that the Society was left so powerless, but the defence has only itself to thank for the present position.

Something happened to the postal delivery last week with the result that several Branch notices reached us too late for use. Among these was an intimation from the Manchester Branch that the last Social of the season will be held in the Co-operative Hall, Downing Street,

on Saturday, March 19. The Social will be preceded by the annual members meeting at 3 o'clock. It is hoped that all will attend as some more than usually important business is to be done, including the providing of a fresh meeting place for the special lectures. In this matter, involving as it does the future work of the Branch, important topics will come up for consideration, and all members should make a special effort to be present.

Mr. J. T. Lloyd visits Glasgow to-day (March 20) and will lecture in the City Hall Saloon at 12 and 6.30. His subjects are "Mr. H. G. Wells, The Rev. Mr. Rattenbury, and the Portrait of Jesus." We hope to hear of crowded meetings.

The lecturer at the Friars Hall this evening will be Mr. W. H. Thresh. His subject is, "A Search for a Soul." On Sunday next Mr. Moss will lecture in the same hall, and that will bring the lectures this season to a close. May we ask our London friends to make both these meetings as widely known as possible.

We are advertising this week a most remarkable book by a remarkable man. It is not often that a real Bishop has the courage to say exactly what he thinks about the Christian religion, but in his *Communism and Christianity* Bishop William Montgomery Brown does this. Bishop Brown was a member of the American Episcopal Church, and both he and his wife are now both ardent advocates of Freethought. The book consists of over 200 pages, and is a criticism of Christianity from the standpoint of Darwinism and of sociology from the standpoint of Marxism. The matter is thus highly controversial, and is of the thought provoking order that is likely to do good whether the reader agrees or disagrees with the author. The book is not published for profit, indeed, we should say that Mr. and Mrs. Brown are losers on the venture. The Pioneer Press has secured a supply and can sell them at 1s. 6d. per copy, with a special discount for those who would like to take quantities for distribution. We are expecting a rush of orders and have already written for a further supply to be sent over. •

Another work of which the Pioneer Press has secured all the remaining copies is *The Ethic of Freethought* by Professor Karl Pearson. There is no need to say very much of this well-known work, and Professor Karl Pearson's quality is too well-known as a scientific thinker to make any words of commendation superfluous. The work ranges over a wide area of Freethought, history and sociology and makes a handsome volume of about 450 pages. Published at 10s. 6d. it is being sold at 5s. 6d. postage 7d. We strongly advise those of our readers who would like a copy to write at once.

The Glasgow Branch of the N. S. S. is attempting an experiment with which we wish them the fullest measure of success. A committee has been appointed with power to take from members and friends loans free of interest for the purpose of investing the same in the acquisition of a hall or meeting place. The money collected will be placed in the bank and will be used for no other purpose than the one indicated. Ample safeguards are made to prevent either the alienation of the funds or the premises if any are acquired. The money will be taken on the understanding that if the sum collected by the end of 1922 is not sufficient to warrant proceeding with the venture it will be returned. There should be quite enough Freethinkers round about Glasgow to warrant proceeding with the venture, and the question of getting a suitable meeting place which the Branch may consider its own is a very pressing one. If it succeeds it may encourage Branches to launch out in a similar direction.

The following reaches us from York, and will be of interest to all who are doing what they can to bring this paper to the notice of likely subscribers:—

Enclosed is the wrapper of a paper called the *Freethinker*, sent to me from Saltburn-by-the-Sea. The paper

bears the date February 27, 1921. I fail to recognize the handwriting and, knowing no one at Saltburn, my curiosity is naturally aroused as to the sender. Therefore I take this mode of thanking the sender. I do assure him that it has interested me very much and given me much food for thought as I have been and still am doubting of the truth of the teachings of the Christian Churches. I have sought the truth by diligent work amongst them, ultimately to find the same things underlying all their teachings, hypocrisy and selfishness, leaving me full of doubt as to the real truth of any teachings save my own, Look to thyself, Believe in thyself, Help thy neighbour when thou canst and treat the world as it treats thee. That, Sir, is now my religion. I should very much like to enter into correspondence with the sender of the *Freethinker* as I hunger and thirst for truth. The two articles marked in the copy sent are fine, deep and forceful.

Lieut-Colonel Magrath writes:—

Allow me to congratulate you on the publication of *Theism or Atheism*, which I have read with much pleasure. Mr. Chapman Cohen, the talented author, has put the issue so clearly and courageously, and his arguments are so irrefutable that I hope the work will catch on and have a wide circulation. When a clean sweep of priests, creeds, dogmas, and religions is made, and when scientific materialism becomes the accepted view the world will be immensely benefited, and life become immeasurably happier.

## Freethought in New York.

FREETHOUGHT is, beyond dispute, the greatest of all causes. It possesses, too, the grandest of all pedigrees. No Church, no party, no movement, can boast of such a pedigree as is the heritage of the Freethinker, a long line of noble and courageous intellect. In the real meaning of "aristos," Freethinkers may truly be termed "the aristocrats of intellect." Full democracy is but the quantitative extension of *that* aristocracy. The Freethinker, reading the story of the struggle in the past—recorded on the pages of such a book as J. M. Robertson's *Short History of Freethought*—and reflecting upon the lineage of our principles, may well be conscious of a justified and honourable pride. That is the time-aspect of our glory. The space-aspect of our cause is proportionately grand and great. The Freethought cause is world-wide, as is no other body of people, or trend of thought. Sometimes in crowded cities, where many meet and united efforts can be made. In other places isolated individuals or small groups keep our victorious banner flying, though the printed page and the solace of unfettered thought are all that sustain their courage and keep them in touch with their comrades in the conflict that is as old as human thought itself. It is then that the value of our *Freethinker* is appreciated, ever more fully than when we are within easy reach of Fleet Street or *The Broadway*.

Ploughing the ocean—especially the Atlantic Ocean in winter time—is a hard life. I am oft-times tempted to wish that I were a *real* Christian, possessing "these signs" that "shall follow them that believe." Then I could do all that Jesus Christ of the Canonical Gospels did (or is said to have done). I should get out and walk, and keep dry, even unto a dry country. However, not being a Christian (being not yet insane), and, therefore (according to the writers of the Canonical Gospels), not being able to do the same things that the "Christ" of these Gospels did, I have to do the best I can, and cultivate the spirit of philosophic imperturbability. This, the grand philosophy of Secularism, par excellence, enables one to do. There are compensations to be found in every walk (or voyage) of life, sometimes sans seeking. Such compensatory pleasure do I find in many ports across the seas, in meeting Freethinkers from time to time. The Christian in jail or lunatic

asylum looks forward eagerly to the visits of the chaplain. I, living, working, and voyaging in the midst of the (more or less) orthodox, always embrace the opportunity of comparing notes with fellow Rationalists or Atheists and learning what I can.

In this manner, being recently in New York on a Sunday, I had the pleasure of attending a meeting of the "Freethinkers' Society," and enjoyed some conversation with a few of the "Saints" of America afterwards. Such a Sunday is, to a wandering philosopher, what an oasis is to the traveller in the desert. 'Twas splendid weather, more like July than December. The streets, trams, and trains of li'le ole New York were crowded by holidaying folk enjoying the relief from their toil. Automobiles were as numerous as Christian sinners on the road to Hell. Their pace was quite as fast. No Sherlock Blake was required to tell me that the Christian Killjoys' threatened "Blue Laws" had not (yet) become law. Under those conditions, it was highly gratifying to a visitor Freethinker to see such a fine audience assembled for what might be styled an ordinary or regular society meeting, not a special "public" one. It must be even more a matter of satisfaction to the enthusiastic leaders of the society. It is a fine reward for their labours of love to obtain so good (and growing) support. Not the least part of their reward is the presence and "opposition" (sometimes) of Christians. We in Britain long for that in vain. The Christians here have lost heart (and faith) too much to attempt to tackle Freethinkers in debate. There was a well stocked bookstall near the door, and many of the books, booklets, and pamphlets, published "in the other side" (of the Atlantic), will well repay perusal. The good old *Truthseeker*, with as fine a record there as "our" *Freethinker* has here, was well in evidence, and is, at least, as good to-day as ever. *The Profits of Religion*, by Upton Sinclair was one of my purchases. It is good propaganda. As vigorously as he ever attacked the wild beasts and crawling reptiles in the jungle, he here hits out at all the plain and fancy superstitions, Christian and otherwise, with which America is cursed. And some of their "fancy religions" are even weirder than the freaks we have in Britain. *The Profits of Religion* can be recommended as a splendid gift-book to give to any one still in the chains of Christianism. The slips in it are just sufficient to induce your Christian friend to discuss the subject, in itself a great gain.

A reasoned and forcesome address was delivered by Mr. James F. Morton, Jun., on the subject of the "Exemption of the Churches from taxation." I understand that Mr. Morton, in a way, has specialized on this subject, and made it particularly his own. The lecture was full of interest to me, and, with such lecturers available, the future of the "Freethinkers' Society of New York" ought to be marked by sound and rapid progress. Such seems to be the case. Space will not permit any lengthy account of the address, but reference may be made to one or two points of special interest.

Mr. Morton said he had recently debated this question in a leading newspaper. His opponent had been a collector of taxes, and, on what might be termed the mechanics of taxation, he knew as much as any man in the States. Yet, on the important question of exempting the Churches, he never attempted to argue about it on principle. He defended the exemption of Church property from taxation entirely as a matter of expediency. That was a fine illustration of the evil influence of Christianism. His chief defence for the exemption of Churches from paying the taxes which, in justice, they ought to pay, was that the Churches, with their surroundings, gave "breathing-spaces" which were very valuable in a city, like New York, of sky-scrapers and tall stories. (Mr.

Morton failed to point out that the Christian Churches indulge in the "tallest stories" to be found in this world, let alone in New York.) But that that is *not* the cause of their exemption was proved by the fact that ordinary citizens owning relatively low (in stature) houses, with large gardens around, or owning vacant land not built upon (which made even better "breathers") are not exempt. The same lack of principle in the Christian is exhibited in the "argument" that Churches are, or should be, exempt because of the good they do. Their "works" of charity and philanthropy are said to entitle them to escape from paying their fair share of public taxation. If that were a sound principle, then all citizens who spent a fair proportion of their money on philanthropic objects, should also be exempt. The logical outcome of such a principle would be that taxes should be paid only by the "bad," the immoral, the criminal members of the State! Which was absurd. No! Religion was peculiarly a personal matter. Those who gathered together in any church for meetings, etc., did so as a voluntary, private undertaking, and had no right to ask the main body of the people to help them to pay for their religious performances. There should be a complete separation between the State and any, or all, religion. The United States was (in theory and by written constitution) a purely Secular Government. It was different from Great Britain, and other European countries, which were encumbered with an established or State religion, and in which the constitution was largely a matter of tradition, custom, and precedent. They, the U.S.A., had a definite, written Constitution, one of the finest that had ever been drawn up. That Constitution contained the highly significant clause, "No religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States." Farther than that, a Bill of Rights, of eleven amendments, was attached to their democratic Constitution as a greater safeguard, and as a condition of ratification by the original States. "To the eternal honour of the framers of that bill of rights, the first words of its first article are, 'Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.'" Later, the heroic Grant, in his presidential message of 1873, said:—

In connection with this important question, I would also call your attention to the importance of correcting an evil that, if permitted to continue, will probably lead to great trouble in our land before the close of the nineteenth century. It is the acquisition of vast amounts of untaxed Church property.....I would suggest the taxation of all property equally.

And President Garfield said, in 1874:—

The divorce between Church and State ought to be absolute. It ought to be so absolute that no Church property anywhere, in any State, or in the nation, should be exempt from equal taxation; for if you exempt the property of any Church organization, to that extent you impose a tax upon the whole community.

In spite of all this, Christians (with a few honourable exceptions) had been successful in the grossest treason against American principles, and had obtained vast amounts by what was nothing more nor less than unprincipled Church graft, barefaced robbery of the people. I can only refer to one other point in Mr. Morton's educative and interesting lecture. It is a reminder to British Freethinkers (if such be needed) that the Christians to-day, as ever, will stick at no contemptible trick for the glory of God, and the filling of the Church's purse. In the State of New York they had managed to get in a law that, land owned by Churches should be exempt from taxes if they merely expressed the intention of building upon it. Thus, they could, and did, buy land, hold it until it had

risen enormously in value, then, having paid no taxes to the community, sell it at a greater (doubly) unearned profit and build a church on cheaper ground, if they built one at all. Trinity Church, of New York, had about \$30,000,000 in property, the result of one church alone not praying for, but preying upon the people of New York. This was a glaring example of Christian graft and robbery. The pastor of the Brick Presbyterian Church, of New York, did not hesitate to say that the removal of the exemption graft (equals thievery) would kill many churches. No Freethinker had ever said any worse about any Church of Christianity.

These are only a few salient points from a lecture that was full of meat, and worthy of the meeting. Anyone who is interested in knowing what organized, deliberate, unprincipled, unblushing robbery of the people has been committed by the various sects and sections of Christianity in America can find full details of the scandalous graft in a pamphlet, "Exempting the Churches," by James F. Morton, Jr., published by the Truth Seeker Company, of Vesey Street, New York, price 25 cents. In the United States the Churches have not, as it were, inherited the power of robbery from their ancestors. They certainly *did* inherit the principle of robbery. Starting with a purely Secular government, they had to establish not the Church, but the system of robbery by the Church. This they have done successfully. As successfully, they have extended it. They have flourished on it, financially; but their Christian roguery has not enabled them to increase their membership in the same ratio as their wealth. Nay, more, Christianity is on the decline, though, perhaps, the decline is not quite so noticeable as in Britain. Christianity is organized hypocrisy. It has always been organized robbery ever since it was started on its infamous career by Constantine. It may truly be said that, in place or time "The more it changes, the more it is the same thing."

The Freethinkers of New York are doing well; they are full of enthusiasm, and their "souls" are full of hope. They have concentrated their activity on nine specific "political demands." These they are determinedly fighting for. They may vary in their opinions on "general" or party politics. But as *Freethinkers* they are united on their nine political demands. In pressing these demands, each point gained stands for a big step forward in progress and equal liberty. Each and all of the nine demands are based upon the Constitution, and are, therefore, fully Constitutional, and nine times justified.

The only hint of weakness that I could discover (a weakness, or once a weakness that was inferred by me, not categorically stated by me) was a certain tendency to lethargy and indifference on the part of some of the Freethinkers in America. That we suffer from in Britain, too. There *and* here, we have eye to remember that constant vigilance is the price of liberty. The slightest symptom of relaxing on our side draws forth the cloven hoof of Christianity for another kick at humankind. Are we doing all we might, and ought, in Britain? Might we not, as successors to Bradlaugh, Foote, and that noble line (including Thomas Paine) be more strenuous in our work for Freethought as the initial step in, and the basis of, all sound progress and liberty? As has been said, the great Freethought movement is world-wide, as no other is. There are, however, special associations between America, France and Britain. For one thing, each of them has a certain claim on the noble Thomas Paine. I fear me that all of these countries have failed to do justice to that hero of the fight for freedom. Still, we can all learn from each others' work and difficulties, and we ought to do so. We can mutually benefit by a greater rate of exchange in ideas

and methods. We may at times chip each other as to "Who won the Great War?" We shall not quarrel with the Freethinker of any country who achieves a big push in the Greater War for progress. We shall merely try to emulate them in their success. For we are all alike inspired by the same grand motto, "ha verité oblige."  
ATHOS ZENO.

### Book Chat.

Infinite riches in a little room.—Marlowe, "The Jew of Malta."

There are few Freethinkers, I imagine, who have not had occasion to thank Messrs. Dent and Sons for cheap, handy and, in the main, trustworthy editions of our own and foreign literature. We were not always so well provided for. It is a far cry from Routledge's "Universal Library" of the eighties of last century with its unhandy appearance and limited range to the "Everyman" series, which are not only an inestimable boon to the poor scholar, but also a delight to those of us who are fastidious enough to hold that a great book should not come to us in mean attire. Everyone must commend the wisdom of these publishers in setting themselves the very highest possible standard. From a business point of view it was worth while, because they had and have still no competitor.

Their latest venture, to which I wish the success it deserves, is a series of cheap pocket-volumes intended to help lovers of literature who wish to read seriously and thoughtfully selected books of great writers both standard and modern. It is called "Kings Treasuries of Literature," and the editorial work is under the general supervision of "Q," the unacademic Professor of English Literature at Cambridge. They are pleasant little volumes, light in the hand, well printed, and strongly and tastefully bound. The price is low—1s. 6d. or 1s. 9d. net.

The selections, so far as they go at present, represent literature on its more imaginative and lighter side. If the reader, as I hope he does, shares my admiration and affection for that peculiarly English form, the discursive essay, he will not be slow to make a companion of the volume devoted to the best of modern essayists, "Alpha of the Plough." His essays, I may remind the reader, are witty, wise and urbane comments on life, manners, and literature. He is a worthy descendant, in the direct line, from Lamb and Stevenson. What gives him a peculiar value for us is that he is always an emancipated thinker with a decided bias to a naturalistic interpretation of life.

Those of my readers who are not ashamed to confess that they prefer good fiction to indifferent philosophy, bad sociology and worse biography, who would rather be amused than edified to boredom, will find, in the first batch of thirty volumes, some of the best of Dickens (*The Tale of Two Cities* and the admirable short stories), Anatole France (a little known, but delightful fairy story, with a group of analogues inviting to a comparative study of the legend), Joseph Conrad (*Youth* and *Gaspar Ruiz*), these two stories showing Mr. Conrad at his best both as a profound observer of human nature and an incomparable artist. Then there is Mr. Hardy's charming rustic comedy, *Under the Greenwood Tree*, and what is more, the publishers promise some of Balsac's best short stories and other things of interest.

In poetry there are a number of anthologies and the usual selections from Tennyson, Wordsworth, Coleridge and Burns. The last should commend itself to our Scottish readers, many of whom, I am afraid, treat their national poet as an annual occasion for fulsome eulogy, then forget him for the rest of the year. For the literary edification of the well-meaning, if not over-wise, inhabitants of North Britain the editor of the selection has thoughtfully appended a group of sixty-eight questions

and exercises for the purpose, I presume, of testing the reader's knowledge of the poet's work and biography. I trust our Scottish friends will benefit by the suggested examination. An intelligent study of Burns ought to help them to appreciate the poetry of our own day, which is well represented in this series by a comprehensive selection.

If I may, I should like to suggest to the supervising editor the inclusion of a sprinkling of works of a less innocuous character. Many people would be grateful for one of the eighteenth century versions of *Candide*, for a representative selection from Thomas Paine, and for the best of the poetry of James Thomson the second, and a version of Remy de Gourmont's masterpiece, *Une nuit au Luxembourg*.

#### WITS OF THE COFFEE-HOUSES.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century there was no such thing as public opinion in the modern sense of opinion formed by reading without the exercise of thought. The threepenny and sixpenny pamphlets did what our newspapers or monthly journals do nowadays. These pamphlets were written by men, or groups of men, who met for exchange of thought at one of the many fashionable coffee-houses. It is pretty certain that the opinions there expressed were more startling, more subversive of conventional ideas than those which happened to get into print. We can picture to ourselves the gloomy and freethinking Dean Swift delighting his friends with an ironical and sarcastic commentary on Christian ethics. Anyhow, we know that Richard Bentley, a learned but tactless and vulgar academic bully, described the coffee-houses as hot-beds of Atheism. Bentley is supposed to have put down the wicked Freethinkers. He replied to Anthony Collins' *Discourse of Freethinking* (1713), but apparently did not understand the argument of the *Discourse*; at any rate he made no attempt to meet it. In his heavy, arrogant and abusive way he had convicted the Freethinker of mistakes in classical scholarship, and thereby gained a victory as easy as the one he had had over Charles Boyle on the subject of the Epistles of Phalaris. There also he had ignored the point at issue.

This brow-beating Cambridge Don became the butt of the lively and elegant Oxford wits. Dr. William King published ten witty *Dialogues of the Dead* (1699), in which he used a rapier pointed with irony and sarcasm to arouse the blind fury of the Cambridge bull. These amusing dialogues are now reprinted in the second volume of "The Scholars Library" (Philip Allan and Co., 15s. net). The book is called *A Miscellany of the Wits*. It contains another pamphlet of King's *A Journey to London in the year 1698*. This is a satire on the absurdly trivial matters described by foreign travellers, and was no doubt witty enough at the time. Now all its wit has evaporated and what remains is an instructive picture of the superficial aspects of London in the last year of the seventeenth century.

The longest piece in *A Miscellany* is Arbuthnot's *Law is a Bottomless Pit: or the History of John Bull* (1712). Swift tells us that it was the work of his friend John Arbuthnot, but the paternity may have been composite, like many other things that came from the Scribblers' Club. It is the story of a law-suit between John Bull and Nic. Frog (Holland), on the one hand, and Lord Strutt (Philip III. of Bourbon) on the other. The law-suit is, of course, the war of the Spanish succession. It is written from the point of view of the Tories who were against the war. Although as lively as it is instructive reading, it is not as well-known as it ought to be, but the present reprint, carefully edited by Mr. K. N. Colville, will ensure its being studied and enjoyed. I have an idea that it was reprinted by Henry Morley in Cassell's little "National Library." It is a pity we have no Arbuthnot nor Swift nowadays to scourge our follies. The materials for an Aristophanic comedy are here right enough, and we might, at a pinch, find a satirist with the Greek aristocratic contempt for demagogic ignorance, but I am afraid there would be no spectators. GEORGE UNDERWOOD.

## Correspondence.

### THE LATE MR. STITT.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Apropos of Mr. R. Chapman's obituary notice which appears in a recent (March 6) issue of the *Freethinker*, I can testify to the great loss sustained by the Freethought cause in the death of Mr. Richard Stitt, of Crook. He was one of the most faithful, fearless, and courteous champions the movement ever possessed. He never was known to lower his lance when faced in debate with a Christian foe. While his courage was indubitable, he, nevertheless, had a heart as tender as a child's. His generosity toward everything that appealed to his sense of justice was proverbial. Nearly all the prominent leaders of the Secular movement in the latter part of last century had frequently experienced and enjoyed his kind hospitality, as he pressed them to make his home their centre of gravity when lecturing in the district, which was very often in those days. Most those had predeceased him, Mr. Moss, I think, being the only surviving one. Those already gone include Mr. Foote, Mr. C. Watts, Mr. Symes, and Mrs. Laws. His never failing optimism was highly infectious. I considered it an honour to be included among a large circle of intimate friends.

JOHN ROBINSON.

### THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

SIR,—Mr. Jameson cannot conceive that I think of any belief in my own existence as parallel to the belief in God: and he adds, "The existence of other people is much the same," that is, "too obvious to admit of proof": a curious expression by the way; I suppose Mr. Jameson means "too obvious to require proof," or "to admit of doubt." But they are parallels. I have quoted H. Spencer's dictum "All knowledge is a verification of assumptions." The reason why other people's existence is obvious to Mr. Jameson and me is that we both assumed it as a fact, at a very early date in our respective lives, long before we knew what proof meant, or existence (as to this do we yet know?) At a still earlier date we assumed our own existence, that is, we acted and thought as if it was true, and very soon knew that it was; nor is our certainty disturbed by learning that scores of our deepest philosophers say they doubt other people's existence, and scores more admit that it cannot be proved. If there were an individual Christian who said that Mr. Jameson's conviction, based on experience, is nothing to him, neither of us could bring him round by reasoning. So with the existence of God. If A, a Theist, says he knows it by experience, B, an Atheist, can only say he doesn't. That leaves A's conviction undisturbed, but doesn't it explain why B remains unconvinced?

E. LYTTTELTON.

The heart of man is set to be  
The centre of this world, about the which  
Those revolutions of disturbances  
Still roll; where all the aspects of misery  
Predominate; whose strong effects are such  
As he must bear, being powerless to redress;  
And that unless above himself he can  
Erect himself, how poor a thing is Man!  
—Wordsworth (*Excursion*, Book IV).

## Obituary.

We regret to record the death, after a prolonged and painful illness, of Mrs. Nellie Drew, of Finchley, in the thirtieth year of her age. The cremation took place at Golders Green on Monday March 14, when a secular service was conducted. Though not a member of any Secular Society, Mrs. Drew was a thoroughgoing Freethinker. In Mr. Bradlaugh's time her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Stone, of Church End, were active workers in the cause, and found great delight therein. All their children are Freethinkers, and Mrs. Drew died in the faith in which she had been brought up and spent her short life.

J. T. L.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON. INDOOR.

FRIARS HALL (236 Blackfriars Road, four doors south of Blackfriars Bridge) : 7, Mr. W. H. Thresh, "A Search for a Soul." (Silver Collection.)

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Johnson's Dancing Academy, 241 Marylebone Road, near Edgware Road) : 7.30, General Discussion, "Secularism."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, off Kentish Town Road, N. W.) : 7.30, Mr. Joseph H. Van Biene, "Iaekkel."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W. 9) : 7, Mr. P. Wilde, A Lecture.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C. 2) : 11, Joseph McCabe, Esq., "The Chances of Reaction."

STRATFORD (Town Hall) : 7, Mr. C. Cohen, "What we Pay for Christianity." (Silver Collection.)

COUNTRY. INDOOR.

ASSOCIATION OF ENGINEERING AND SHIPBUILDING DRAUGHTSMEN (Merseyside Branch) : Thursday, March 24, G. J. Gibbs, F.R.A.S., M.I.M.E., "The Spectroscope and its Uses."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (City Hall, North Saloon, Candle-riggs) : 12 noon, Mr. J. T. Lloyd, "Mr. H. G. Wells, The Rev. Mr. Rattenbury, and the Portrait of Jesus" ; 6.30 p.m., "Earth a Colony of Heaven." (Silver Collection).

LEEDS BRANCH N. S. S. (Youngman's Rooms, 19 Lowerhead Road, Leeds) : Concert at 3; Tea at 5.30; Lecture at 7.30 by Mr. Bert Bertnell, "Gems of Secular Poetry." Tickets for tea 1s. 3d.; concert and lecture free.

BOOKS FROM THE LIBRARY OF MISS E. M. VANCE.—Earth's Beginnings (Robert Ball), 3s. 6d.; Proceedings of Society for Psychical Research, Vols. i.-vi., 1882-1890, Six Vols., £1 15s.; Illustrations and Proofs of the Principle of Population, 1822 (Francis Place), 12s. 6d.; William Godwin, his Friends and Contemporaries, 1876, Two Vols. (C. Kegan Paul), 8s. 6d.; Somnolism and Psychism, 1851 (J. W. Haddock, M.D.), 10s. 6d., Scarce; Voltaire's Tales, Romances and Satires in one Vol. Portrait. Published by Edward Truelove, 10s. 6d., Scarce. Send for List of scarce Freethought works, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C. 4.

50 IVORY VISITING CARDS, Ladies or Gents, neatly printed, 2s. post free; 100 for 3s. post free.—Box No. 8, Freethinker Office, 61 Farringdon Street, E.C. 4.

FREETHINKERS support a Fellow-Freethinker. VELVET HEARTH RUGS. Beautiful designs and colours. A really good hardwearing Rug, and a beautiful addition to any room. Sample Rug, 27 ins. by 60 ins., 15s.; 6 for £4 5s. 12 for £8 5s.—E. T. EAMES, 15 Notson Road, S.E. 25.

"BILLIARDS IN MUFTI." By a Freethinker and Punch contributor. You'll smile, whether you play Billiards or not, and in the unlikely event of your doing neither, you'll certainly exclaim "It's CLEVER!" No home complete without one. Post free, 2s. 3d. from MACCONNELL & MABE, New Street, Bakewell.

WOMEN AND CHILDREN First this time. We have now a Beautifully Illustrated Catalogue of Fashions of Readymades for Women and Children for the present season. The number is strictly limited, and we can send them out only on the condition that they are returned to us—we pay carriage both ways. For value and stylishness we are sure the goods cannot be excelled. Hitherto the ladies have given us but poor encouragement. We sometimes wonder if most of them still go to Church.—MACCONNELL & MABE, New Street, Bakewell.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

President: CHAPMAN COHEN.

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

Principles and Objects.

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

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

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

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

Membership.

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

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

Name.....

Address .....

Occupation .....

Dated this.....day of.....19.....

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

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

A FIGHT FOR RIGHT.

A Verbatim Report of the Decision in the House of Lords in re Bowman and Others v. The Secular Society, Limited. With Introduction by CHAPMAN COHEN. Issued by the Secular Society, Limited. Price One Shilling. Postage 1½d.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 Farringdon Street, E.C. 4.

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. 5. Are Christians Inferior to Freethinkers?
No. 6. Does Man Desire God?

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

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 Farringdon Street, E.C. 4.

**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 1½d.

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

DEITY AND DESIGN. Price 1d., postage ½d.

WAR AND CIVILIZATION. Price 1d., postage ½d.

RELIGION AND THE CHILD. Price 1d., postage ½d.

GOD AND MAN: An Essay in Common Sense and Natural Morality. Price 3d., postage ½d.

CHRISTIANITY AND SLAVERY: With a Chapter on Christianity and the Labour Movement. Price 1s., postage 1½d.

WOMAN AND CHRISTIANITY: The Subjection and Exploitation of a Sex. Price 1s., postage 1½d.

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

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

CREED AND CHARACTER. The Influence of Religion on Racial Life. Price 7d., postage 1½d.

DOES MAN SURVIVE DEATH? Is the Belief Reasonable? Verbatim Report of a Discussion between Horace Leaf and Chapman Cohen. Price 7d., postage 1d.

THE PARSON AND THE ATHEIST. A Friendly Discussion on Religion and Life between Rev. the Hon. Edward Lyttelton, D.D. and Chapman Cohen. Price 1s. 6d., postage 2d.

By J. T. LLOYD.

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

By MIMNERMUS.

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

By WALTER MANN.

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

SCIENCE AND THE SOUL. With a Chapter on Infidel Death-Beds. Price 7d., postage 1½d.

By ARTHUR F. THORN.

THE LIFE-WORSHIP OF RICHARD JEFFERIES. With Fine Portrait of Jefferies. Price 1s., postage 1½d.

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 ½d.

By A. MILLAR.

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

By G. H. MURPHY.

THE MOURNER: A Play of the Imagination. Price 1s. Postage 1d.

**Pamphlets—continued.**

By COLONEL INGERSOLL.

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

CREEDS AND SPIRITUALITY. Price 1d., postage ½d.

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

By D. HUME.

ESSAY ON SUICIDE. Price 1d., postage ½d.

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

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

**IN FREETHOUGHT SHOES.**Let us hope every *Freethinker* reader already walks figuratively. Allow us now to put you in the way of treading in them literally. Strong everyday ones first of all—these matter most, as you wear them oftenest.

Men's Kip Derby Nailed Boots ...	25/6 per pair, 6's to 11's
Youths' Do. do. do. ...	16/6 .. 2's to 5's
Boys' Do. do. do. ...	14/- .. 11's to 1's

This is the strongest boot made for every kind of outdoor work.

Kip Derby Boots, Seam Back, Through Fronts, Toecaps, Driven-up Soles, same prices and sizes as above.

This is a smarter, yet strong model, suited to factory and school wear.

Women's Box Hide Open Tab Boots ... 16/6 per pair, 2's to 7's  
Excellent for every kind of rough work, and for factory duties especially.

Boys' and Girls' Sturdy School Boots, Box Hide Open Tab, 11's to 1's, 14/-; 7's to 10's, 11/6 per pair.

CASH TO ACCOMPANY ORDERS. POSTAGE FREE.

All these are made in the quaint little village of Stoney Middleton by men whose forbears for generations did the same work. We are offering you here only the very best they do, and, at the prices, the value is startling. Money will be gladly refunded if you are not satisfied.

MACCONNELL &amp; MABE, NEW STREET, BAKEWELL.

**A NEW EDITION.****MISTAKES OF MOSES**

BY

**COLONEL INGERSOLL.***(Issued by the Secular Society, Limited.)*

32 pages. PRICE TWOPENCE.

(Postage ½d.)

Should be circulated by the thousand. Issued for propagandist purposes.

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

**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 FARRINGTON STREET, E.C. 4.

### More Bargains in Books.

## The Ethics of Freethought.

BY  
KARL PEARSON.

Essays in Freethought History and Sociology.

Demy 8vo, 431 pages, Revised Edition.  
Published 10s. 6d. Price **5s. 6d.** Postage 7d.

## The Foundations of Normal and Abnormal Psychology.

BY  
BORIS SIDIS, A.M., Ph.D., M.D.

Published 7s. 6d. net. Price **4s. 6d.** Postage 9d.

## Kafir Socialism and the Dawn of Individualism.

*An Introduction to the Study of the Native Problem.*

BY  
DUDLEY KIDD.

Published 7s. 6d. Price **3s. 9d.** Postage 9d.

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

## THEISM OR ATHEISM?

BY  
CHAPMAN COHEN

### CONTENTS:—

#### PART I.—AN EXAMINATION OF THEISM.

Chapter I.—What is God? Chapter II.—The Origin of the Idea of God. Chapter III.—Have we a Religious Sense? Chapter IV.—The Argument from Existence. Chapter V.—The Argument from Causation. Chapter VI.—The Argument from Design. Chapter VII.—The Disharmonies of Nature. Chapter VIII.—God and Evolution. Chapter IX.—The Problem of Pain.

#### PART II.—SUBSTITUTES FOR ATHEISM.

Chapter X.—A Question of Prejudice. Chapter XI.—What is Atheism? Chapter XII.—Spencer and the Unknowable. Chapter XIII.—Agnosticism. Chapter XIV.—Atheism and Morals. Chapter XV.—Atheism Inevitable.

Bound in full Cloth, Gilt Lettered. Price **5s.**  
(Postage 3d.)

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

### A Volume without a Rival.

## The "FREETHINKER" for 1920

Strongly bound in Cloth, Gilt Lettered, with full Index and Title-page.

Price **18s.**; postage **1s.**

Only a very limited number of Copies are to be had, and Orders should be placed at once.

Cloth Cases, with Index and Title-page, for binding own copies, may be had for **3s. 6d.**, postage 4d.

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

## Stratford Town Hall

SUNDAY, MARCH 20.

C. COHEN.

"What We Pay for Christianity."

Doors open 6.30 p.m.

Chair taken 7 p.m.

Opposition and Discussion cordially invited.

All Seats Free.

Silver Collection.

## SUNDAY LECTURES

(Under the Auspices of the National Secular Society)

AT

FRIARS HALL, 236 Blackfriars Road

(4 doors South of Blackfriars Bridge.)

March 20 — W. H. THRESH,

"A Search for a Soul."

March 27 — A. B. MOSS.

"Freethought in the Churches."

Doors open at 6.30 p.m.

Chair taken at 7 p.m.

Opposition and Discussion cordially invited.

Admission Free.

Silver Collection.

A Remarkable Book by a Remarkable Man.

## Communism and Christianity.

BY

Bishop W. MONTGOMERY BROWN, D.D.

A book that is quite outspoken in its attack on Christianity and on fundamental religious ideas. It is an unsparing criticism of Christianity from the point of view of Darwinism, and of Sociology from the point of view of Marxism. 204 pp.

Price **1s. 6d.** post free.

Special terms for quantities.

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

## THE MYSTERY MAN.

It pays your Tailor to pose as, with his measurements, his cuttings and clippings, and his try-ons, but a scientifically cut Suit made at one operation, without any try-on, will be a revelation to you.

We are doing these by post for men in all ranks of life.

From £3 12s. to £9 1s. 6d.

Patterns and our Scientific Self Measurement Forms free on application.

MAGCONNELL & MABE, NEW STREET, BAKEWELL.

## 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, 18s.; Six Months, 7s. 6d.; Three Months, 3s. 9d.

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

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