

# 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. 16

SUNDAY, APRIL 17, 1921.

PRICE THREEPENCE

## PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
Religion and "Birth Control."—The Editor - - -	241
Faith and Creed.—J. T. Lloyd - - -	243
"A Rotten Profession."—Mimnermus - - -	244
The Origin of Christianity.—W. Mann - - -	245
Christ and the Clergy.—G. O. W. - - -	246
Bible Blasphemy.—Arthur B. Moss - - -	250
A Unique Heathen.—Nancy E. Sankey-Jones - - -	251
Pages From Voltaire.—George Underwood - - -	253
Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.	

## Views and Opinions.

### Religion and "Birth Control."

I have a special purpose to serve in again pointing out that one of the chief consequences of the long reign of Christianity has been to develop a quite unnecessary amount of mental cowardice and general hypocrisy. Human nature being what it is this could hardly have been otherwise. All force follows the line of least resistance, and mental force is no exception to the rule. Where the social environment is such that an exceptional measure of independence of character and strength of conviction is required to run counter to established opinions, it is the person who is blessed with unusual endowments who will do so. For nearly fifty generations Christianity has possessed the power to make it more or less uncomfortable for all who practised independence of thought and speech. With the aid of the stake, the torture chamber, the prison, boycott and slander, it has made people realize that the most costly pleasure one can purchase is that of mental independence. By a species of social selection it has killed off the better mental type and preserved the worst. It could not be otherwise, for the simple reason that it only needed that a man be born without the capacity for critical thought, or be enough of a coward or a hypocrite to keep a still tongue to escape all the penalties that the Christian Church might devise. Unbelief plus silence and hypocrisy was always safe. It was unbelief plus straightforward speech that was dangerous. And the sum of the process is that for fifty generations the Christian Churches, so far as it was in their power, selected the coward, the mentally timid, the unthinking and bade them be fruitful and multiply. What it could do to suppress the opposite type it did. If we are not all intellectual cowards to-day Christians may at least congratulate themselves on the fact that their religion has done its best to make us so. It has not achieved complete success, but it really has deserved it.

\* \* \*

### "In the Name of God"—or Man?

Quite recently the *Northern Echo* devoted some of its space to a notice of a "Mothers' Clinic" which has been opened in London by Dr. Marie Stopes. Dr. Stopes does not hold a medical qualification, but she has been interesting herself in Malthusianism, which has lately assumed a more "respectable" guise under

the name of "Birth Control." And in noticing this work, the *Northern Echo* quite justifiably remarked:

For what public opinion socially crucified Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant a generation ago, it now almost worships Dr. Marie Stopes.

Those who know the fight that Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant fought on this question will not think the tribute ill-deserved, and the last thing that one would have expected would have been that those interested in Malthusianism, or Neo-Malthusianism, or Birth Control, should resent the association. But Dr. Marie Stopes has seen fit to resent the association of herself with two such dreadful people as Bradlaugh and Besant, and she promptly said so in a letter to the editor. And as I have no desire to misrepresent the lady, I give that portion of her letter in full:

I should be much obliged if you will give me this opportunity of making public the very essential difference between my message and that of Bradlaugh and Besant. They were fundamentally Freethinkers and Atheists; indeed, I have in my hand at the moment Mrs. Besant's famous pamphlet published by the Freethought Company, and on the inner side of the cover is advertised her book, *My Path to Atheism*. My message, on the other hand, is in the name of God, and is delivered essentially as an extension of Christ's own teaching, specially applicable to the needs of the present community and rendered possible by recent advances in knowledge.

Furthermore, the physiological information given by Besant and Bradlaugh is crude. Although much remains yet to be discovered, much advance has been made since their day, and the physiological methods I have encouraged the public to use are very much sounder than those they advocated. Furthermore, my message does not confine itself merely to birth control, but covers the whole realm of the social and creative relation between man and woman.

\* \* \*

### Sharper than a Serpent's Tooth.

Now I do not wish to say anything disrespectful where a lady is concerned, but I am bound to say that anything more dishonouring to a writer I have seldom read. There is not the slightest acknowledgement of the fact that it was Bradlaugh and Besant who did more than any other two people to create a movement in favour of study of the whole population question. No recognition of the truth that without this fight, in all probability, Dr. Stopes' Mothers' Clinic would never have existed, for in the face of her letter one can hardly picture her doing what Bradlaugh and Besant did; no word of thanks for Bradlaugh having started the Malthusian League nearly sixty years ago, nor of the important circumstance that Bradlaugh went into the fight for the express purpose of establishing the right to publicly discuss the very thing for which Dr. Stopes now claims public sympathy and support. Her great concern is to establish—she evidently thinks that assertion and proof are the same thing—that her message and that of Bradlaugh's and Besant's are fundamentally different. And that they are most decidedly not. However stated, they are fundamentally the same. It is their fundamental identity alone

that makes her work of any value whatever. Whatever in her writings does not come under that heading is mere sentimental talk mixed up with much that is very questionable, and with certain assumptions concerning the relations of parents and children for which there is very little scientific warrant. To put the matter briefly, Dr. Stopes is doing in safety what Bradlaugh and Besant did at the risk of imprisonment and in the face of persecution. She is doing this because of what they did, and she thanks them by publicly dissociating herself from them and their work.

\* \* \*

#### Our Debt to the Past.

The essential feature of Bradlaugh's fight was the right to publicly discuss the advisability of a conscious limitation of the population. Without that Neo-Malthusianism is of no value whatever, and "Birth Control" is of no value either. Nor is there anything else that is of value in Dr. Stopes' books. And speaking by the card, I feel warranted in saying that this is also the vital part of her "Mothers' Clinic," for one can hardly think that its value lies in telling mothers and fathers that they ought to love each other and to love their children. That sort of advice is as old as the hills and can be had by the bushel from any of the Churches. It is true that there is a great deal of this sentimental eye-wash in Dr. Stopes' books, but that one may treat as a mere cover for her real message. To say that Bradlaugh's and Besant's physiological information was "crude," is idle and misleading. In the first place, the original pamphlet for which Bradlaugh was summoned was published for no other reason than to establish the right of publication, and the contention of the prosecution was that it was unlawful to publish the physiological details given in the pamphlet. The upsetting of that argument paved the way for Dr. Stopes giving substantially the same details in her books. Secondly, Mrs. Besant's pamphlet was issued half a century ago. How many matters of science are there that do not look crude at a distance of fifty years? The main thing, the thing that is absolutely damning to either the straightforwardness or the intelligence of Dr. Stopes is that the vital feature of the crusade is the deliberate control of parentage by those most immediately concerned. Does Dr. Stopes not believe in that? If she does not, will she be good enough to explain what is the value of her "message," and what does she mean by advocating "Birth Control"? If she does believe in that, will she please tell us what is the vital distinction between her message and that of the two brave fighters from whom she so hurriedly dissociates herself?

\* \* \*

#### A Distinction Without a Difference.

The real reason for Dr. Stopes wishing to dissociate herself from her benefactors is given in the first passage of her letter. Bradlaugh and Besant were "fundamentally Freethinkers and Atheists." More, on the inside of Mrs. Besant's pamphlet there actually appeared an advertisement of her book, *My Path to Atheism*. The iniquity is thus made plain. Moreover, Dr. Stopes' message "is in the name of God, and is delivered essentially as an extension of Christ's own teaching." But will Dr. Stopes, in the name of God, inform us as to what difference there is between a message delivered in the name of God and the same message delivered in the name of common sense and humanity? And will she also tell us on what part of Christ's teaching she bases her doctrine of Birth Control? Does it make any real difference whether one controls births for the one reason or the other? All that one can gather from her explanation is that Dr. Stopes is either unable to overcome the religious teaching of her younger years, or that she is catering for the religious prejudices of other people. In neither

case does Dr. Stopes differ from multitudes of other people, but reformers—real reformers—should be made of sterner stuff. Liberty of thought and speech has been won neither in this nor in any other country by men and women who have been afraid of being thought to be saying anything that was opposed to religious beliefs. And there is no great honour in delivering a message in the name of God. Most of the fraudulent messages of the world have been delivered in that way and under that sanction. "Thus saith the Lord" is almost always an indication of insanity or imposture, and it is unfortunate that Dr. Stopes, who really has a valuable "message" to deliver, has gone out of her way to range herself under the flag that has flown over the world's greatest and most disastrous impostures.

\* \* \*

#### Religion, the Enemy.

Unfortunately Dr. Stopes illustrates, in the direction indicated, a very common type of mind. If one takes the reforms of the last century only, reforms in the world of labour, of education, in criminology, in the enfranchisement of women, and in the establishment of free speech and of free publication, it is the work of the despised Freethinker which stands out most clearly, not that of those who spoke "in the name of God." Yet as the reforms gain ground it is always the common, the religious type of mind, that steps in and reaps the credit for what has been accomplished. The reason is that a reform established belongs to all, it is the property of the "herd mind," and the unusual type that made the reform possible is forgotten. One can afford to smile at that, but it is a little more serious when those who call themselves reformers go out of their way to belittle those who have gone before, and who, but for these same reformers, would never exist. It is all an illustration of the workings of Christianity with which I deal in my opening paragraph. We are living in a social environment that is saturated with the traditional influences of Christianity. We are the representatives of an ancestry that has been debauched and demoralized by centuries of Christian teaching, and by the careful cultivation of the mentally undesirable. The consequence is that many of those who mean well and who see the truth move under the domination of the traditional fear of Christianity. They have the courage to dare much, but they lack the supreme courage to dare the monster of religious bigotry. Perhaps that courage will come in time. Those who lack this courage have usually the grace to keep silent about their dead and gone Freethinking benefactors. Dr. Stopes, rashly daring, acts otherwise. One can only hope that she wrote in ignorance of what it really was that Bradlaugh and Besant fought for. She is a newcomer at the work. One hopes that time will bring a greater knowledge and a keener appreciation of those who laboured in the field before she came upon the scene.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

#### GOD IS EVIL.

If God exists, He is essentially hostile to our nature ..... We attain to science in spite of Him, to well-being in spite of Him, to society in spite of Him; every step forward is a victory in which we crush the Deity..... Why did'st thou deceive me? Why did'st thou submit me to the torture of universal doubt? The Satan that lies in wait for us, it is Thou! But now, thou art dethroned, and thy power broken. Thy name, for ages the last word of the scientist, the sanction of the judge, the strength of the prince, the hope of the poor, the refuge of the repenting sinner, Thy name, Thy incommunicable name, henceforth abandoned to scorn and curses will be hooted among men. For God means foolishness and cowardice; God means hypocrisy and deceit; God means tyranny and destitution; GOD IS EVIL.—Proudhon.

### Faith and Creed.

HERE is a middle-aged man, a Sunday-school teacher, who sadly confesses that, like thousands more, he too has nearly lost his faith in God and humanity. He was brought up on the old Theology, and without much difficulty he swallowed all the articles of the orthodox faith; but as he grew older and learned to think for himself he found that they disagreed with him. His intellectual digestive organism, failing to convert them into soluble and diffusible products, ready for general absorption, has for some time now been performing the operation of ejecting them one by one until already scarcely one remains. But, alas, poor man, he is a Sunday-school teacher, and without faith how on earth can he teach religion to those committed to his charge? So, greatly distressed, he flies to an eminent theologian for advice, saying: "I am sure you are aware of the fact, as I am, that few young men are having anything to do with the Church or Sunday-school. They certainly are not prepared to accept or believe that which some of us thought we believed." This is an intensely interesting case, and one naturally wonders how an eminent theologian, the author of several well-known theological works, will deal with it, and as it is a typical case, it may prove worth our while to watch the theologian at his work. As usually happens, the man of God's very first move is a false one; and he does not even attempt to make another. In reality it is not a move at all, but a clumsy evasion, or subterfuge. In other words, his first argument is an escape from argument. To his anxious inquirer he says:—

The reason of your trouble is that, like many more of us, you confound "faith" and "creed."

That sentence is wholly fallacious. From that fallacy, however, he flies off at a tangent and indulges in the following strange utterance:—

According to the Scriptures there are two revelations of God—his revelation in Nature and his revelation in Grace. As old Sir Thomas Browne puts it in a sentence which I quoted lately from his *Religio Medici*: "There are two books from which I collect my Divinity: beside the written one of God, another of his servant Nature, that universal and public manuscript, that 'lies expanse'd unto the eyes of all'; those that never saw him in the one have discovered him in the other."

If that extract were true, it would be utterly irrelevant: but it is not true. Both of the so-called revelations are alike theological inventions. One must be a Deist or a Theist before Nature can be regarded as a revelation of God. To a scientist, as such, Nature is a system governed by physical and chemical laws. It is to the theologian alone that "the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handywork," but even the theologian is bound to admit that the revelation in Nature and the revelation in Grace not only do not agree with, but positively contradict each other. The so-called God of Nature is cold, stern, cruel, relentless, absolutely unforgiving, "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation," while the God of Grace is represented as soft hearted, full of compassion and gracious, and plenteous in mercy and truth, who, "so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." Of necessity, two such contradictory deities annihilate each other; or, in other words, a God with two wholly opposite characters ascribed to him cannot possibly exist.

The point emphasized by our theologian, however, is that the interpretation of each of the alleged revelations is progressive, the revelations themselves being

"infinite and inexhaustible." It is perfectly true that the knowledge of Nature is constantly growing from more to more; that science, through its many branches, is gradually opening up the treasures of Nature and making them visible unto all who care to look; and that we understand Natural Law much better than our forefathers did; but it is not true that the supposed knowledge of yesterday abides when yesterday's theories have had to be discarded, because the supposed knowledge was based on those abandoned theories, and is thereby proved not to have been true knowledge.

After that digression we return to the fallacy already mentioned. Our divine becomes more or less ingenious at this point. His contention is that as there is progress in science, "there is progress also in theology." When the celebrated American divine, Dr. Charles Hodge, of Princeton Theological Seminary, published his famous work, *Systematic Theology*, in 1872, the present writer asked a popular teacher if it contained anything new, and the answer was, "My friend, believe me, there is and can be nothing new in theology." Now we are assured that the revelation of God in the Bible either is not complete and final, or is so hidden therein as precious ore that it will take countless æons to dig it out and exhibit it in the fulness of its quantity and glory to the bewildered human mind. Well, our divine is heartily welcome to his strange theory; but it is a theory unverified by a single historical fact. The divines of to-day are quite as unable

To vindicate Eternal Providence  
And justify the ways of God to man,

as were the sages of three and four thousand years ago. It is true that once secular knowledge has been acquired it abides, but no knowledge of God is procurable on any terms. Our divine informs us that "the doctrinal definitions of yesterday are no longer adequate to-day"; but the true reason is that the doctrines of the past have become unbelievable. Canon Barnes repudiates the doctrines of the Fall and the Atonement simply because they rest on no valid data in history or in reason. A creed is simply a systematized statement of the beliefs held by the majority of Christians at the time of its formation; and it ceases to be an accurate statement only when the beliefs alter or die out. Between "faith" and "creed" there is no other difference whatever. It is, therefore, an obvious fallacy to say that "the faith abides, but our creeds pass." Our creeds pass only when our faith is either greatly modified or destroyed. Our theologian says:—

Here is the trouble, especially in a time of upheaval like the present, that we are apt to confound faith and creed, the revelation and our partial and imperfect definitions of it, and fancy that when the latter pass the former also does. Hence emerge two tendencies. Some cling blindly to the old order of thought and dread the new, while others would let not merely the old beliefs but the truth which they imperfectly expressed "go by the board," and abandon the faith.

Here again the theologian falls into a fatal error. In theology there is no truth apart from the beliefs, and the truth varies in exact proportion to the variation of the beliefs embodied in it. The truth is not the same to a Unitarian as it is to a Trinitarian. The awful controversy between the Athanasians and the Arians before, during, and after the Nicene Council centred on the question which of the two factions possessed the truth, not on which of them had framed the more accurate definition of it. For those angry disputants it was their respective beliefs that constituted the truth; and each party accused the other of harbouring a lie, and not the truth.

The line of argument pursued by the theologian does not meet the perplexed Sunday-school teacher's case in the slightest degree. What the latter has almost

lost is not merely a formal creed, but his very faith in God and man. He does not say on what ground he lets his faith depart; but we know full well that multitudes of men and women are unbelievers in God because he has never done anything to justify their faith in him. Some of them have had experiences which render further belief in him impossible. When a certain temptation assailed them they implored him with impassioned vehemence to send them deliverance, but everyone who had not sufficient strength of his or her own to resist yielded to it and fell. With ignorant and credulous folk God's reputation in such cases is safeguarded by their superstitious trust in the false old adage: "God helps only those who help themselves," an adage which, even if true, would make the least proof of the reality of God's help absolutely impossible. Looking at the history of the world in general, and of Christendom in particular, does not Atheism present itself as the only rational faith? Is not the no-God theory the only one that fits the facts? Our wonder is not that the Sunday-school teacher has nearly lost his faith in God, but that he still retains a solitary shred of it. Most likely, when he has parted with the last tittle of it, his faith in humanity will return to him.

J. T. LOYD.

### "A Rotten Profession."

It is an absolute crime that you should sanction the instilling into the minds of children statements which are not true, and which the instruction they receive a few years later will infallibly upset. —T. H. Huxley.

We shall never enfranchise the world without touching people's superstitions. —G. W. Foote.

THE inimitable Bishop of London, in a recent speech at the Mansion House in aid of the East London Church Fund, dwelt at length on the poverty of the clergy, and described the unhappy workers in the Lord's vineyard as belonging to "a rotten profession." This statement upset some of the Bishop's supporters, and his lordship was constrained to explain later that he was thinking only of the material point of view, and was not at the moment concerned with other aspects of the case.

The plaint of clerical poverty is, however, largely a matter of heated rhetoric. The Bishop of London himself is a bachelor with an income of £200 weekly, a sum sufficient to keep forty working-class families in comparative comfort. Nor do the bishop's colleagues, like Nebuchadnezzar, eat grass. The Bench of Bishops receive, between them, £180,700 yearly, with emoluments in the shape of palaces and palatial residences. Within the narrow confines of the City of London £50,000 is spent each year on ministering to the spiritual needs of a small resident population of caretakers, policemen and their wives, and Jewish people. The latter, who form a large proportion of the total, never trouble the pew-openers. The Church of England has also property in the City of London worth over £2,000,000. As an index of the work done in the City the summary of confirmations for one year, 1919-20, shows that in the East City 62 candidates were confirmed, and in the West City 90 were similarly received into the Church. Nor is this all, for recently the Church authorities decided to sell nineteen derelict City churches in order to use the money so obtained in other directions. This state of affairs is by no means a solitary example. There is so much waste of man-power in the Church that it may truly be said to be the Church of the clergy rather than that of the people. There are no less than 1,877 parishes with a population under 200; and 4,802 with a population under 500. In all his appeals for money the Bishop of London appears to have forgotten the vast resources of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners,

Queen Anne's Bounty, and other sources of clerical income.

The clergy are not nearer the poverty line than millions of their countrymen. It is absurd to pretend otherwise. In so many parishes the parson with his big and expensive vicarage too often is a miniature reproduction of the bishop in a palace too large for him and for the times. The late Judge Rentoul stated that at the annual banquets given to the clergy at the Mansion House seventy-four bottles of champagne were drunk, costing about £40. He added that he actually saw those figures, and he was told that the amount was every year about the same. It is singularly appropriate that this same Mansion House should have been the scene of the Bishop of London's complaint of the starvation of the wretched clergy.

From a purely material point of view the Church cannot fairly be described as "a rotten profession." It is, however, "a sorry trade" when judged by intellectual standards. The 25,000 clergy of the Church of England subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, and these articles make most curious reading. They include the belief that Christ went bodily to hell; that a spirit can be at the same time a father and a son, and also proceed from itself as a ghost; that Adam was the first man, and that he ate forbidden fruit, in consequence of which countless millions are damned to everlasting torture; that the Roman Catholic religion is a vain invention; that the Bible is the Word of God; and that King George the Fifth is the head of the Church of Christ.

To these Articles of Faith, among others, every Church of England parson subscribes. We know that great numbers of them do not believe in them, or observe them; that they are taking money by false pretences. Their main reason for remaining in the Church are "purple, palaces, patronage, profit, and power," as a former cheerful dean of St. Paul's Cathedral happily expressed it. The right to appoint clergymen to benefices is sold for money in the open market, as if it were so much coal or a quack medicine. Parliament, be it noted, makes the religion, and the landlords appoint its professors, or barter the appointment to the highest bidder. Is it not "a sorry trade?"

The ecclesiastical canons are still in force, except they conflict with the laws of the land, and the courts have decided that they are binding on the clergy. The first dozen canons are aimed at Nonconformists, and all but one ends with a curse, a distinguishing mark of vertebrate Christianity. If you deny the royal supremacy in Church affairs you are cursed. If you deny that the Anglican Church teaches the doctrine of Christ you are cursed. If you say that the Prayer Book is out of harmony with the Bible you are cursed. And so on, and so forth, in the true spirit of Christian charity. But that the law of the land overrides these canons, everybody who refused to attend Church should be cursed, and the names read out in churches.

It is a grievous and a bitter thing that boys and girls, silly women, and ignorant people, should be taught such nonsense in language which leads them to believe, and is carefully calculated to that end, that millions of their countrymen are outcast. It is an affront to the spirit of Democracy. For no one can be a loyal Churchman without renouncing his mental and moral freedom, and placing his civil loyalty and duty at the mercy of a petticoated priest. Parsons claim to be sacred persons. Unless a man accepts them and their dogmas, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. That is Church teaching for the masses, tempered with polite reservations for the classes. Is it not "a rotten profession?"

MIMNERMUS.

If we only think justly, we shall always easily foil all the advocates of tyranny.—*Haslitt*.

## The Origin of Christianity.

### XIII.

(Continued from page 235.)

It is wholly uncertain who were the authors of the Gospels and when they were written. Matthew, Mark and Luke must have been either copied, with additions and modifications from each other, or from some earlier original which has been lost. There is no proof that the Gospel of John was written by John the Apostle. There are very good grounds for thinking it was not, and he is the only evangelist who professes to have been an eyewitness of what he relates. Luke is admittedly a compilation. The title of "the Gospel according to St. Matthew" suggests an unknown author. The statements of the Gospels are, therefore, uncertified hearsay. They are not, and do not pretend to be, the statements of eyewitnesses of the facts related, and intrinsically those facts are as far removed from the common standard of probability as the history of the Creation or the Flood.—*Sir James Fitzjames Stephen, "Nineteenth Century,"* October, 1887.

THE four Gospels nowhere contain a statement of the time when they were first written. The ordinary Christian, unacquainted with the results of New Testament criticism, takes it for granted that they were written down by the disciples immediately after the crucifixion of Christ, about the year A.D. 30, and that they were written down in the order in which they appear in the New Testament, first the Gospels, then the Epistles, concluding with the Apocalypse, or book of Revelation. No Christian scholar would attempt to defend such a proposition to-day. It is admitted by Christian scholars themselves now that the writings of Paul and the Book of Revelation are older than the Gospels. Professor Percy Gardner, who is an earnest Christian, in his book, *A Historic View of the New Testament*, treats this as an acknowledged and established fact; he says: "Of course the writings of Paul are the earliest Christian documents which have come down to us" (p. 77). And again, "The extant letters of Paul are of an earlier date than the Synoptic Gospels" (p. 209). Professor Gardner also cites the learned Greek scholar Dr. Westcott as saying: "The Gospels were the result, not the foundation of the apostolic teaching" (p. 104). That is, the Epistles were not founded upon the Gospels, but the Gospels upon the Epistles.

Professor Schmiedel tells us that the Gospel of Luke "cannot have come into existence until about the year 100, because the author was well acquainted with the writings of the Jewish historian Josephus who composed his chief work in the year 93 or 94."<sup>1</sup> Of course it may have been written much later. For instance, I am quoting from Schmiedel's work published here in 1908, but if some future critic were to date my writing by the same date, he would make it thirteen years too early. Schmiedel puts the date of the Gospel of John at A.D. 140,<sup>2</sup> and the Book of Revelation "in the year 95 or 96."<sup>3</sup>

In the year 1874 an anonymous work was published entitled *Supernatural Religion*; it caused a great sensation among the learned by proving that the Gospels were composed much later than had been previously believed. Such was the interest and excitement aroused by this large and expensive work that a second edition was issued a few months after its publication, and six editions were published within five years. The author is now known to have been Mr. Walter Cassels, a nephew of the highly orthodox Dr. Pusey. Matthew Arnold says of the author of this work:—

He seems to have looked out and brought together to the best of his powers every extant passage in

which, between the year 70 and the year 170 of our era, a writer might be supposed to be quoting one of our four Gospels; and it turns out that through all of them there is the same sort of variation, inexplicable in men quoting from a real Canon, and quite unlike what is found in men quoting from our four Gospels later. This we say he has done; and here, at any rate, if not against miracles, he may claim to have been successful in establishing his complete induction. We call him a learned and exact writer from the diligence and accuracy with which he has conducted this investigation; he deserves the title..... this, which it is the main object of his book to show—that there is no evidence of the establishment of our four Gospels as a Gospel Canon, or even of their existence as they now finally stand at all, before the last quarter of the second century, nay, that the great weight of evidence is against it—he has shown,<sup>4</sup> and in the most minute and exhaustive detail..... His point we say he has proved. No fineness of accomplishment, no pursuit of the author of *Supernatural Religion* into side issues, no discrediting of him in these, will avail to shake his establishment of his main position, where the facts are for him and he has collected them with pertinacious industry and completeness.<sup>4</sup>

The Rev. Dr. Samuel Davidson, in the last edition of his *Introduction to the Study of the New Testament*, says of the same book:—

The learned work furnishes efficient aid to rational enquiry, and deserves to be studied by all lovers of free investigation. The assaults which were made upon minor details leave its main position unharmed.

It is often claimed by Christian Evidence lecturers that Bishop Lightfoot gave a complete answer to this work. Here is the testimony of a Christian theologian, and Doctor of Divinity, Professor Otto Pfeleiderer. He says of the work, *Supernatural Religion*:—

The answer which Lightfoot, the late Bishop of Durham, offered in the name of orthodoxy in a series of articles in the *Contemporary Review*, subsequently published as a book, is extraordinarily weak..... the short sighted scholar found nothing better to do than to submit the author's examination of references in the Fathers to the Gospels to petty criticism, while even if all the Bishop's deductions were correct, the general result of the author's inquiries would not be in anyway altered. It is not surprising that in his reply to Bishop Lightfoot, which has recently appeared, the author not only adheres to his historical positions as not upset, but that he also repeats his general conclusions in a form of more pronounced antagonism. For his refutation, it needed really other means than Bishop Lightfoot had at his command.<sup>5</sup>

In dealing with the origin of Christianity it is of great importance to fix the time when the Gospels first appeared. If, instead of being written down immediately after the crucifixion, they were not written until the year 150 or 170, that is from 120 to 140 years later, it not only destroys their historical character, but many books and writings which were thought to be quoting from, or founded upon the Gospels, are really older than the Gospels, and the Gospel writers are quoting from, or using, their ideas.

The next point to consider is, where were the Gospels written? Bearing in mind the fact that they were written in Greek, a language which, as we have seen, was anathematized and forbidden in Palestine at that time, they must have been composed by foreign Jews speaking and writing Greek in one of the many Greek cities.

W. MANN.

(To be Continued.)

<sup>4</sup> Matthew Arnold, *Contemporary Review*, March, 1875, pp. 525-6.

<sup>5</sup> Professor Pfeleiderer, *The Development of Theology since 1825*, pp. 396-7.

<sup>1</sup> *The Johannine Writings*, p. 191.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 200.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p. 227.

## Christ and the Clergy.

CAN a Christ-like man remain in the Church as a recognized member of the regular clergy?

What do I mean by a Christ-like man?

I mean a man who is like Jesus in the way that he arrives at and holds his beliefs, and in the honesty and earnestness with which he does what he believes to be right; not like him in all that he believes or all that he does, but like him in what is called his spirit. In order to be like Jesus it is not necessary that a man should believe that demons inhabit the bodies of some persons and may be cast out by some superior power, or to believe in a place of torment into which some people will have to go after death, or to believe in a personal God who directly answers our prayers, or that it is a good thing to be poor—although Jesus seems to have believed these things. There are very few of the clergy who believe what Jesus did, though it is hard to make them admit it.

In order to be like Jesus it is not necessary that a clergyman should be very poor and go tramping about the country preaching and performing miracles and living more or less on charity, or that he should be unmarried, or that he should die a martyr's death. A parson might believe just what Jesus believed and do what he did and yet be very unlike him; he might closely imitate Jesus, but one who merely imitates him is very unlike Jesus, for an imitator is precisely what he was not.

To be like Jesus is not to believe what he did, but to be an independent thinker as he was, and to believe what seems to you to be true whether anybody else believes it or not, and to proclaim your belief in the eyes and teeth of contrary public opinion, because you cannot be happy unless you do. To be like Jesus is not to do *what* he did but *as* he did, to do what seems to you to be right, even if you thus become peculiar and get yourself into trouble, suffering, or even death.

Consequently, I say that there is no place in the Church for a Christ-like parson if such a one's honest thinking leads him out of the beaten track of creed statements, and more especially if his honest thinking leads him to question the present methods of piling up unearned riches.

Suppose that some conventional parson were here now, someone, for example, who lives in luxury, hobnobs with millionaires, and hardly knows, except by hearsay, that there is such a thing as a deserving pauper; someone who preaches the fall of man, the wrath of God, the atonement of Christ and the resurrection of the dead; or who preaches with that charming indefiniteness that characterizes so many popular parsons—suppose that I could buttonhole such a parson and say to him:—

Do you believe all you preach?

And he should answer:—

Yes.

Do you preach all you believe?

Yes.

Do you always do or try to do what you believe Jesus would do if he were in your place?

Yes.

Do you believe that all the rich people in your church get their money in a way that Jesus would approve?

Yes.

Do you believe that poverty is according to the will of God?

Yes.

Do you believe that Jesus looks down from heaven upon your Church and approves of it as an institution as nearly after his own heart as may be?

Yes.

If I could believe that he spoke the truth in giving

these answers I should be obliged to admit that, according to my own definition, he was a Christ-like parson. His teaching and conduct may be as different from those of Jesus as black from white, but if he came to his beliefs by independent thinking, if he is conscientious and follows his honest convictions of what is right for him to do even though they lead him into friendship with legal defrauders of the poor, into a palace for himself and the best of good living, I am bound to admit that he is honest and praiseworthy, although it may seem to me that his mental and moral machinery is sadly out of gear.

There is nothing impossible in such a parson being perfectly honest. There are, no doubt, priests who honestly believe they can pray souls out of purgatory—for a consideration. There are parsons, I suppose, who think that the sprinkling of a few drops of water will keep a little baby out of hell. Martyrs have been roasted by men as honest as themselves. We know there are honest fools; perhaps there are honest knaves; and there may be honest parsons who believe what they preach and try to do what they believe to be right. But when a parson honestly believes what is contrary to the opinion of the majority and speaks and acts in accordance with that belief, the Church has no room for him. I do not refer to theological beliefs. Any Church has the right to say to its clergy: "These are the doctrines we desire you to preach. When you can no longer preach them you must go." But there are social questions upon which a Christ-like minister cannot speak and act freely and retain his place in the Church. Jesus was hanged, not so much on account of his religious teaching, as because he was a disturber of the existing social system. His religious beliefs were not essentially different from those of his own countrymen, and he probably would have been left alone if he had not attacked the priests and politicians of his time. But he denounced the dignitaries of the Church and called for woes upon the rich for the way in which they made long prayers and at the same time taxed the poor and "devoured widows' houses." This severe criticism enraged the authorities because it meant change, and if there is anything that those on top in the Church and State fear and hate it is change. Any change may rob them of their pomp and power and pelf, and hence they firmly believe in keeping things as they are, right or wrong. Why should a king, a pope, a bishop, a cabinet minister, or a millionaire want any change? Is not everything all right for him? I venture to say that no man can champion the cause of the workers as against the monopolists and retain his position in the pulpit, because the Church has no use for men who preach unconventional views, no matter how good or useful they may personally be.

It must not be supposed that I think all honest clergymen must necessarily be always trying to lower the legal appropriations of the monopolists, and thus raise the wages of the workers. Far from it. I think many parsons honestly believe that it is God's will that many persons should be poor, because there must be people to do the dirty work of the world, and nobody would do it who was not poor; and it is a very admirable arrangement that God has made so many persons out of such coarse material that they can do dirty and exhausting work that profiteers, with their delicate and refined organisms, could not do, and endure filthy conditions of life that clergymen, with their fine nerves, could not endure. And besides, cannot these coarse labourers, if they are contented and humbly obey their superiors, get to heaven when they die, and what are a few years of earthly hell compared to an eternity of bliss? To be sure they may have a hell of drudgery here and a hell of brimstone hereafter, but it is all according to the will of God anyhow, so it must be all right, as we could easily understand if our minds were not finite.

The laws that enable a few privileged persons to monopolize banking, land and trade are believed by most of the clergy to be perfectly just, and they honestly think that the millionaires have been endowed by God with a money-making faculty that other people do not possess. They do not see that the only difference between Captain Kidd and John Rockefeller is that Kidd held a pistol to one man's head at a time, while Rockefeller works under a law that mortgages the labour of thousands. These parsons are honestly ignorant. I do not say that if they are honest they must agree with me or others on the social question, but I say that if they do happen to get hold of and preach some social doctrine of a just distribution of wealth there is no place in the Church for them. And as long as this is so, the Church will remain a stumbling block to progress and a hindrance to human happiness and goodness. I do believe that while the Church worships Jesus she persecutes everybody who tries to be like him in advocating unpopular truth. Nor can the Church be reformed, because the only way in which she can be what she should be is by altogether ceasing to be. And she should be allowed to die a natural death by the withdrawal from her of all those who believe in mental and moral freedom.

G. O. W.

### Acid Drops.

The recent eclipse passed off quite satisfactorily from all points of view, and the weather was on its best behaviour during the time it lasted. But things were not always so. Once upon a time good Christians saw in eclipses and comets signs of God's anger, and the forerunners of disease and disaster as a consequence. Ecclesiastics preached and prayed and the people groaned and trembled. It was a very profitable position for the Church, and naturally it fought against a saner view of things so long as it could. These newer views were denounced as devices of the devil to lure the people to destruction, and they who were bold enough to champion them did so at the risk of imprisonment and even death. To-day all is changed, and a phenomenon which under the rule of the Christian Church set men and women whimpering like children, became a show for children and a study for adults under the reign of science.

An American citizen named Challoner has been startling New Yorkers by saying that in the next world "there is a police force armed with iron truncheons." He forgot to mention whether there was a statue of Liberty there too.

A correspondent in the *Leeds Mercury* is distressed at the fact that we hear a great deal of the rights of man but very little of the rights of God. He complains that God has to endure the neglect and slights of his creatures. Poor God! But one would have imagined that a God who needed man's encouragement and attention was hardly worth bothering about. If there is a God he should be able to get along very well without man's assistance, while, on the other hand, it is God who should be attending to man, not man to God. The theory that it is man's business to go round bothering his head as to what God requires is a legacy from the times when it was believed that the people belonged to the king, and that it was his right to do with his subjects exactly what he pleased. And both theories were meant to enable knaves to fatten upon fools.

Someone asked the Rev. James Adderly whether he thought it advisable to have young girls at church in order to attract young men. Mr. Adderly replied that he certainly would not have girls at church for that purpose, but mournfully added that he didn't know why young men stayed away from church. If we were permitted to hazard a guess we should say it was because they were

waking up to the truth about religion. There are, after all, limits to the extent to which one can impose upon people, and the most stupendous of frauds must come to an end sooner or later.

Was President Harding elected to serve "God" or "Country"? His constant use of the phrase "God and Country"—putting "God" first—would rather seem to reflect upon the quality of the Conquering Hero's patriotism. We need "Hundred Per Cent. Americans" in the White House. Until we read the President-elect's inaugural address we had always laboured under the impression that God originally gave this country to the Noble Red Man. We stand corrected. It now appears that in 1492 he changed his mind, and sent some of his European children—our forefathers—over to this continent to do the "Benevolent Assimilation" act. They acted! And the Red Brother bowed his head, more or less submissively, to the Divine Will.

A Scarborough clergyman has distinguished himself by refusing to allow two little bridesmaids into church because they wore ribbons instead of hats on their heads. It appears to be a rule that women may not appear in church with uncovered heads, but if the clergy are going to enter into a dispute with fashion, they are asking for trouble, and plenty of it.

Samuel Taylor, a Bethnal Green publican, who died suddenly, was stated at the inquest to have had a heart weighing thirty-nine ounces, four times the normal size. Christian Evidence lecturers please note!

"Father is regarded by the children as a survival of the Stone Age, and his 'thou-shalt-nots' are considered prehistoric absurdities," said the Rev. Mr. Degen at Coalville, Leicestershire. The remark is far more correct when applied to reverend fathers than male parents.

The *Methodist Times* seems to be in the hands of rigid Sabbatarians, who object to every secular use of Sunday. They wrote to the Prince of Wales urging him to withdraw his patronage to what they call "the exploitation of Sunday cinemas in connection with the Warriors' Day Fund." His Royal Highness replied by saying that he could not comply with their request, with which reply they express deep disappointment. The root of the opposition of the Nonconformists to the Sunday opening of cinemas and other places of amusement is their craven fear of competition. As it is, their places of worship are being alarmingly deserted, and they are astute enough to foresee that, if they had to compete with theatres, music halls, and picture houses, the men in the pulpit would have to address themselves to empty pews. And then, of course, this country would be completely ruined.

The Southend-on-Sea Bench of Magistrates, which appears to erupt an unusual proportion of churchwardens, chapel sidesmen, and even a little of the Salvation Army, granted permission for Sunday cinema performances for Earl Haig's Warriors' Day Fund, but withheld the music licence. Such meanness is worthy of Christians.

The Rev. S. W. Hughes, minister of Westbourne Park Baptist Church, in succession to Dr. Clifford, indulges in reckless and unverifiable assertions. The other Sunday evening he quoted Prince Troubetzkoy's saying that "in Russia national disaster synchronized with the growth of irreligion." When did the Russian national disaster occur? Has Mr. Hughes never read *The Terror in Russia* by the late Prince Kropotkin, in which a harrowing account is given of the atrocities perpetrated under M. Stolypin's government? Does the reverend gentleman imagine that the national disaster synchronized with the fall of the most tyrannical monarchy that ever existed? Writing in 1909 Kropotkin said:—

Suffering and martyrdom are certainly unavoidable in every struggle for freedom. But the amount of suffering and cruel repression now prevalent in Russia surpasses

everything that is known from the lessons of modern history.

During that period the Greek Church was all-powerful throughout the country.

Even granting that Russia is just now groaning under a Reign of Terror, are the conditions of life worse, in some respects at least are they not much better, than they were while the last of the Tsars was ruler? The United Kingdom still prides itself upon being governed on Christian lines—are we much nearer the ideal here than they are in Russia? Is Mr. Hughes really proud of Christian civilization as now exemplified in Great Britain and Ireland? The reverend gentleman is talking sheer nonsense when he says that "Materialism is demanding a social Utopia while at the same time incapacitating the people for its realization." Materialism, as such, has absolutely nothing to do with social conditions and morality. What he calls "irreligion" really means Secularism, which is a philosophy of life, while Materialism is simply an interpretation of the universe in terms of matter. Mr. Hughes says: "You have to study irreligion in terms of Nemesis; Russia is doing that today." Beyond a doubt, that is what the clergy ought to be doing at this moment.

The Lambeth proposals for a reunion of Anglicans and Nonconformists are being followed with close attention by the Roman Catholic community in England. A contributor to the *Catholic Times* (April 2) quite confidently predicts that all efforts of the kind will end in signal failure. "Nowadays it is the tradition of the Churches itself which is being disputed. The whole teaching and authority of the Church and of the Bible from beginning to end is contested. The old controversies between dissident communions are dead." They are. As long as it was possible to raise the hue and cry for a good heresy hunt over Darwin or plenary inspiration, there was hope for religion of a sort. But to get men and women properly excited about the Eastern position, the number of candles to be placed in a given position, or the quantity of incense to be burned, this is a different thing altogether. The *Catholic Times'* writer is full of regret, bordering upon downright sadness, at the sight of all this energy which, "if brought to the common fund, might do so much good," being wasted upon ephemeral and unproductive work. If the hundred or more Protestant sects would only turn their eyes in the right direction! A truly imposing edifice, where eternal concord reigns, offers a safe refuge from every storm of doubt and spiritual distress. Yet so many will insist upon examining the foundations of the structure, or boggle at historical details. Cardinal Manning said that the task before the faithful in England was to break an Imperial race. If anything in this line is to be done at all, there is no time to be lost, or England may forget that she once really was a Christian nation.

Replying to a correspondent in the *British Weekly* for April 7, Professor David Smith frankly admits that there are many indecent, foul, and repulsive passages in the Bible, and no admission could be truer; but he makes the false claim that such passages "were written that we might realize the abysmal depravity of the fallen race, and its sore need of Divine visitation and the cleansing of heavenly grace." Dr. Smith is entirely mistaken, and only betrays a deep rooted and incorrigible prejudice when he oracularly declares that, while the writers of the Bible express their reprobation and detestation of the unspeakable filth and indecencies recorded, "the classics expatiate on similar and worse pollutions, only to revel in them and gloat over them." This charge against the classics, as a whole, is fully as unjust as was the same gentleman's assertion, made in the same organ of the Nonconformist conscience some years ago, that in Pagan Greece and Rome there was no pure love, but only lust, between the sexes, and no genuine parental and filial affection.

We must, however, do Dr. Smith the justice of pointing out that, apart from the blemishes just mentioned, his article contains much that is true and beautifully

put. The following is a specimen, for which we thank him:—

In earlier and simpler times things were mentioned with naive frankness which nowadays are treated with reserve. The reason is hardly that we are purer than our fathers, but rather that we are more artificial, and perhaps the truth is that our outward propriety is no better than a cloak. "To the pure," says the Apostle (Titus i. 15), "all things are pure"; and prudery is nothing else than hypocritical lasciviousness.....In Fielding's day talk was rougher than in ours, but I rather think life was more wholesome then. Our social propriety is very large veneer.

It is essential, say manufacturers and mine owners that the price of coal should be brought down. It is also essential, says the overburdened ratepayer, that the rates should be reduced. May we suggest that there are two ways in which a start might be made. In the first, the Church might give up its tax on the community in the shape of mining royalties. That would, of course, have the inconvenience of directing attention to the whole subject of mining royalties, but we might not be worse for that. And the Church preaches the ethical benefit of sacrifice. And for the relief of the rates the Churches and Chapels might be made to pay their share of the rates which at present they unload on the whole of the ratepayers. To hear some of the "advanced" clergy fulminating against the endowment of privilege while the very church in which they are preaching is endowed—by force—out of the pockets of the ratepayers, is an example of the complete hypocrisy with which the whole of religion is surrounded.

The *Church Times* says that there never was a time when the education of a clergyman was of so great importance as it is at present, and it says that "nothing like enough care is taken to see that he is equipped with an adequate amount of knowledge." We sympathise with the complaint, but we do not see how it is to be remedied. In the first place, the clergyman never was properly educated, if by that we mean instructed in all that bears on his religion. A clergyman's education consists, in the main, in teaching him to repeat certain things about the Christian religion with the verbal facility of a parrot of a superior species. He is told certain things about Christian history, and is crammed with information about the history of certain Christian doctrines, taught how to perform certain ceremonies, made familiar with certain arguments in their favour, and there his education ends. The consequence is that there is no one so hopelessly ignorant of the real nature of religion, and of other branches of knowledge bearing upon it, as is the average clergyman. And it is not surprising that the average educated man of the world should treat the clergy with a good humoured contempt, and an entire absence of intellectual respect.

For a clergyman to receive an effective education he should first of all have a good course in anthropology. That would teach him something of the origin and history, and he would then be in a position to estimate the intellectual value of the beliefs he is to teach. Then he should be instructed in the relation of religious beliefs to the social culture of the times, which would enable him to form some understanding of the conditions under which religious beliefs are perpetuated. Then he should go through a course of psychology in both its normal and abnormal—particularly the latter—aspects. He would realize the manner in which emotional and mental states that are common to all are given a special interpretation by religions. He would also see how abnormal and pathological frames of mind are misunderstood by religionists, and are interpreted as being due to inspiration, possession, communion with deity, etc. The history of religions and of religious doctrines would come later, and would serve as illustrative comment on what has already been mastered. By this time the clergyman would have been educated, and would really understand religion—of course, he would by then run the risk of not believing in it, but one can't have everything. And if the *Church Times* really wants the clergy to be educated it must be prepared to face the risk. Otherwise, the clergy must continue to be the least educated of all the educated classes in the community.

## To Correspondents.

"JAYEMSEE" of Pecalusa.—See "Acid Drops."

F. BECKOR (Basle).—There is no verbatim report of Mr. Cohen's lecture that we could use. He may perhaps write on the subject some day. To reprint the book you name would be an infringement of copyright.

ROGER ANDERTON.—Each writer in the *Freethinker* signs his contribution and he alone is responsible for the opinions expressed. All we are responsible for is that the subject discussed shall be properly treated and shall be of sufficient interest to warrant insertion. We do not see that an opinion as to the value of war, of the methods adopted by governments in the conduct of wars, or of the inevitable influence of war on the morals of a people is at all inconsistent with all due respect to the men who take part in the war under the impulse of what they believe to be their duty. We agree with you that so long as men work secretly to gain their ends there will always be a danger of war, and we know of no government that does not pursue that policy. To assume that our government is the only honest one on earth is the assumption made in every country, and is only an exhibition of national egotism or stupidity.

T. O'NEILL.—Sorry we cannot trace the passage to which you refer.

H. O. BOGER.—Our meaning was that the Catholic Church aimed at making the State a department of the Church. Under Protestantism the Church became a department of the State. An attack on Christianity thus became an act of treason in a sense in which it was not under Catholicism. In practice the distinction may have been slight as the State usually obliged the Church by punishing the heretic, but there was an important legal distinction.

A. L. MOREHEN.—(1) The date of the beginning of the Christian era was not fixed till the fifth century. (2) You will find one collection of Jewish stories about Jesus in *The Jewish Life of Christ*, published at this office. (3) The Sabbath mentioned in the Old Testament is not the Christian Sunday but the Saturday. (4) *The Bible Handbook*, by Foote and Wheeler, is in the press and will be issued shortly.

"CHEMIST" (Chicago).—Thanks for cuttings. We should be further obliged if you would date the cuttings; the date is sometimes of importance.

T. ORR.—The Sunday question seems, as you say, to be attracting considerable attention in Scotland. And it is a good sign to find some of the daily papers coming out on the right side. It is in these directions that we see some of the results of steady Freethought advocacy.

V. J. HANDS.—We are not surprised at your being puzzled by the booklet you sent. It is not the profundity of the production but its obscurity that is puzzling. The author seems to be amiable enough, but not quite clear as to what his ideas are.

R. TAYLOR.—Pleased to have your letter and to know that you are getting to work. The choice of the prospective members in their secretary is a very wise one. Shall hope to see you in the autumn. Miss Vance will write you on the other matter.

H. BAYFORD.—Sorry to hear of Mr. Black's indisposition. Hope that he will soon be better.

*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 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.

There is a little over five weeks between the issue of this paper and the date of the Annual Conference. We hope to see a good gathering of Freethinkers, particularly of those in South Wales, and also should like to see every Branch represented. Where it is not possible for a Branch to send a delegate direct we should like to see them represented by proxy. The Agenda will be in the hands of Branch Secretaries by now, and they would be able to instruct proxies as to voting. There will probably be an excursion arranged for the Monday, and as the Mumbles is close at hand that would make an ideal place for a day's outing. Either there or in the neighbourhood. Further particulars on this head will be given later. Meanwhile, those who do intend visiting the Conference should write early saying what kind of accommodation they wish provided, together with the length of their stay. Mr. B. Dunpree, 60 Alexandra Road, Swansea, is acting as Reception Committee Secretary, and communications on the matter should be addressed to him. The earlier the better.

Mr. Cohen was booked for South Shields on April 24, and had promised, while on Tyneside, to deliver one or two week-night lectures. Owing to the uncertainty of the position at the moment it has been thought advisable to postpone the lectures for the moment. The date is therefore cancelled. Travelling, hiring halls, and advertising is nowadays an expensive business, and with trade and employment in the mining districts as they are, there would certainly have been a heavy financial loss, and Mr. Cohen has no desire to travel several hundreds of miles in search of that sort of thing. He has to face quite enough in the normal course of affairs. And he has so much work on hand at the moment that he can well do with the time at home. But the visit is postponed, not abandoned.

We are pleased to learn that in spite of the distracted interest in the mining centres of South Wales, Mr. Lloyd had capital and enthusiastic meetings in Ton Pentre and Treherbert on Sunday last. Like ourselves, he is greatly impressed with the advance of Freethought in Wales, and there is no doubt but that if the proper men can be found to look after the work, the future of Freethought there is assured. We shall hope for steady work when the autumn season commences.

One of our readers is anxious to see regular Freethought work started at Woolwich. He is prepared to act as Secretary to any Branch that may be formed, and Woolwich is a place in which there should be no difficulty in getting a number of Freethinkers together who are willing to carry on a regular propaganda. If any or all of these will send their names into the Secretary of the N. S. S., we shall be pleased to do anything we can to forward the matter.

Meanwhile there is a chance for Freethinkers in South Wales to co-operate in a little propagandist work. The Executive has for long had in view the engaging of a lecturer for regular work in various parts of the country. Such a man has now presented himself, and the Executive is minded to make a start with South Wales. What is required is that those who are interested in the matter, and who will undertake certain local arrangements, should write at once to the General Secretary saying what can be done and where. This is a splendid chance for some open air work to be done during the summer. The Executive will, of course, make itself financially responsible for the lecturer. It is hoped to make a commencement during May. But our friends in Wales must write at once, otherwise arrangements will have to be made for another part of the country.

## THOUGHTS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

Query, Whether churches are not dormitories of the living as well as of the dead?

A very little wit is valued in a woman, as we are pleased with a few words spoken plain by a parrot.

A nice man is a man of nasty ideas.—*Swift*.

## Bible Blasphemy.

ONE would have thought by this time, when we have nearly completed the first quarter of the twentieth century, that a successful prosecution for Blasphemy under the old Common Law, with the late Lord Chief Justice Coleridge's interpretation of it, would have been well nigh impossible. Christians have so modified their beliefs in recent years that they have left little room for attack. Indeed, their creed and arguments crumble to pieces of their own inherent weakness. They have, however, always objected to ridicule; most of them recognizing that many of the Old Testament stories, and some of the best known teachings of the New Testament, could not possibly survive the severe but logical method of argument known as the *Reductio ad absurdum*. Nevertheless, this method is applied most effectively on all other topics of debate and nobody objects. Politicians use it very frequently, and lawyers do not disdain to employ it when they think they can "laugh their opponents' case out of Court" as the saying is. Even cartoons are considered a legitimate weapon in political warfare, but they are tabooed in religious controversy. But most people draw the line at vulgarity. Coarse or vulgar remarks on any subject are very offensive to sensitive natures, but since the great war we have had to put up with a great deal of vulgarity in a variety of ways that most of us are getting used to it by this time. To punish a man with three months' imprisonment for vulgar expressions or bad taste on religion seems to me to be outrageously severe. Not three months but three hours punishment for such an offence would be quite adequate. Indeed, the moment a sensible person was censured by a judge for so far transgressing the bounds of decent controversy, that would be punishment enough. But Christians were always severe when dealing out punishment to Freethinkers, and I suppose we ought to congratulate ourselves that the thumb-screw, the rack and the stake have been abolished in civilized countries, and only the "convict cell," coarse bread and water, and loss of liberty remain as arguments to convince the defiant and vulgar minded Freethinkers of the superiority of the persuasive methods of Christianity over those of Freethought. However, let us consider this question of Blasphemy for a few moments, and see what it really means to-day. It is a peculiar kind of offence; only a believer in the Being whose reputation is attacked can commit it, and even then time and circumstance have to be taken into account.

The Jew cannot blaspheme the Christian God, because he does not believe in him; the Christian may say what he likes against the gods of the Brahmin and the Buddhist; the Mohammedan may speak disrespectfully of all the gods of the Christian trinity, and Christians may return the compliment by calling Mahomet an impostor, as many of them do; but each of them must be careful that they give utterance to their blasphemous expressions at the proper time and place. The Jew must not attack the Christian Deity in an English church, nor the Christian sneer at Jehovah in a Jewish synagogue, nor either of them ridicule the Mohammedan Deity in a mosque in Turkey; but in their own city and at the proper season each may blacken the Deity of the other. And although Christians object to ridicule when applied to their own cherished beliefs, they do not hesitate to ridicule and laugh to scorn the beliefs and sentiments of Freethinkers when it suits their purpose. Did they not hold up to ridicule and contempt the teachings of Darwin when he first formulated the doctrine that man had evolved from lower forms of animal life and had come up from an ape-like ancestry? Did they not laugh at the Materialist when he ventured to affirm that "Nature was the

universal Mother that produced all phenomena as the fruit of her own womb without the meddling of the gods"? Freethinkers did not propose to call in the aid of the police to assist them to uphold their beliefs. They simply relied on reason and persuasion. Real Blasphemy, however, consists in an attack by a believer on the reputation of his own Deity. Most Christians believe in the story of "The Flood" as narrated in the seventh chapter of Genesis, though they dispute among themselves as to whether it was a local or a universal deluge.

According to the Bible story, after man had been on the earth a comparatively short space of time he became so extremely wicked that God contemplated the destruction of the whole human family. Although, according to most Christians, God created man perfect in the Garden of Eden, after the fall he became inherently depraved and the "Sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair and they took them wives of all which they chose" (Genesis iv. 2). After that giants were born and things went from bad to worse, so much so that "God saw the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." "And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart." (Genesis vi. 5, 6.) Consequently, the Lord resolved to destroy man from off the face of the earth, he and all the beasts of the field, the creeping things, the fowls of the air, in fact everything that breathed the breath of life—for he repented that he had made any of them. What these latter creatures had done to offend the Lord Genesis does not say. Anyway, the Lord resolved to make short work of the whole lot of them. However, we are informed that Noah "found grace in the eyes of the Lord," and the Lord made a covenant with Noah to save him and his family, but the rest of the human family he resolved to drown "at one fell swoop," leaving nothing alive on the earth but Noah, his family, and a certain selection of animals that the Lord instructed Noah to take into the Ark with him. And the greater part of chapter vii. and the whole of chapter viii. are taken up with the terrible story of the Flood, in which tens of thousands of human beings were destroyed mercilessly, men, women and children being sent to a premature and watery grave in addition to millions of animals, who had, for all we know to the contrary, done nothing to offend Jehovah. Now I ask, is it not blasphemy for Christians to represent that "a good, kind Heavenly Father" could be guilty of such a terrible catastrophe? No human being however cruel could have been guilty of such an unspeakable horror; and yet when a Freethinker tries to rescue the reputation of the Jewish God, who is also the Christian God, from such an infamous charge it is the Freethinker who runs the risk of bringing himself within the grip and peril of the law and not the Christian. Is this not grossly unfair? Then look at the story of the punishment of the poor Egyptians by a long series of plagues, including those of frogs, lice and flies. Not satisfied with destroying harmless cattle with a grievous murrain, not content with supplementing these with frightful plagues of hail, locusts, darkness and the slaughter of the first born, this Bible God allowed the Israelites to utterly "spoil the Egyptians," robbing them of jewels and other valuable property, and ultimately bringing them to the Red Sea to perish in the waves, that the Israelites might exult over their death, and all this was done because the Lord "had hardened Pharaoh's heart" so that he would not let the children of Israel go. Is not this story a libel upon the character of any good God?

Barbarous deeds recorded in the Bible are of two kinds, those perpetrated by the hand of the Deity himself, and those to which he gave explicit sanction.

The slaughter of the Amalekites by Joshua had the approval of Jehovah; and shortly after Moses, Aaron, and seventy of the elders had had an interview with the Lord and had seen him in his great glory from the summit of an exceeding high mountain, Aaron descends and the people call on him to make them a god that they can see, as they have grave doubts as to the existence of the one above the clouds. Aaron, with Jewish simplicity, thought that a golden god was the most appropriate under the circumstances. So he bade them bring their jewels of silver and gold and he made them a golden calf, and many of them have worshipped that god ever since. But observe what follows. As soon as Moses came down from the mountain he gave the following instructions:—

Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said Who is on the Lord's side? Let him come unto me. And he said unto them, Thus said the Lord of Israel: Put every man his sword by his side and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour.

And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses, and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men" (Exodus xxxii. 26, 28).

But this is not all. As the noble Othello exclaimed in his despair, "On horror's head horrors accumulate." If we turn over the leaves of the Bible we may read how Jahveh commanded Moses to war against the Midianites, slaying them without mercy, and preserving only the maidens to satisfy the brutal and lustful natures of a horde of soldiers. (Numbers xxxi. 7-18.)

Is not this blasphemy in the real sense? Is not this a libel on any god of goodness that was worthy of the worship of mankind either in the past or the present, and how can any high-minded Christian defend such conduct to-day?

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

## A Unique Heathen.

IN the person of Theodore Schroeder America certainly has a most unique "heathen" as he calls himself. Mr. Schroeder is an Agnostic who really thinks he knows, an Atheist who does not deny the existence of God: he is anti-Christ without ever having specifically denied the truth of any Christian doctrine. He is an emissary of Satan without having a speaking acquaintance with his infernal majesty. In short, Mr. Schroeder is the embodiment of a new method for discrediting the Christian's Christianity, and all other mythical religions. It is of such a man that I wish to give some account.

Soon after Mr. Schroeder entered the University of Wisconsin he was enrolled as a student of mechanical engineering. After considerable difficulty he graduated from the department of civil engineering. For a few years he worked in the profession with at least as much success as comes to the average young engineer. During his college career he came under the influence of Robert G. Ingersoll. Then he studied law. After graduation he practised this profession for ten years, among the Mormons of Utah. His first literary work was inspired by that experience. First he used the heretical Mormonism as a tool with which to discredit the more orthodox Christianity. Next he proceeded to make vigorous verbal assaults upon Mormonism from the standpoint of a Freethinker. Figuratively speaking, "he ate a fricaseed Mormon for his daily breakfast." Almost everything else written against Mormonism was from the standpoint of orthodox Christianity. Many of Schroeder's essays against Mormonism, of course, incidentally shed a disturbing sidelight upon more orthodox Christianity, and that made it unique. In his study of Mormonism Mr. Schroeder thought he found a "sexual determinant"

for all the peculiarities of the Mormon's theology. Since then he has extended that "crotogenetic interpretation" over into the larger field of Christian mysticism in particular, also mysticism in general.

Before proceeding far with this propaganda, he set himself the task of discovering his legal rights and obstacles. Someone had told him he was in danger of arrest as an "obscenist" and "blasphemer" if he published such erotic interpretation of mystical religion. In Utah one unsuccessful attempt was made to have him indicted for some anti-Mormon pamphlet. Thereupon grew a free speech campaign such as no other man has ever produced, either in quantity of output or in the extent of the research involved. Thus Mr. Schroeder became a "super-specialist on liberty," and the controlling spirit in the Free Speech League, which was incorporated by his friends. A published bibliography of *Theodore Schroeder on Free Speech* covers all possible subjects from so-called "obscenity" to revolution and "blasphemy." Where others have achieved eternal fame by defending a little more intellectual liberty than was current in their day, Schroeder has made himself a suspicious character by boldly defending more of intellectual freedom than most "libertarians" consider "safe and sane." Schroeder seeks to hasten the time when "no one will be prevented from receiving even the most odious opinion about the most obnoxious subject expressed in the most offensive manner by the most despised person."

Parallel with this free speech labour, but with minor emphasis, Schroeder was writing articles and doing much studying in preparation for his work in the field of the psychology of religion. First he made himself fairly expert in the old school of sexual psychology of Kraft von Ebbing, of Schrenk-Notzing and of Havelock Ellis. Somewhat tardily Mr. Schroeder became a convert to Freudian psycho-analysis, as a better means of understanding psychology. With characteristic enthusiasm he made himself an expert in that latest field of psychologic investigation. He began by submitting himself to a personal psycho-analysis by Dr. William A. White, Superintendent of the U.S. Government Hospital for the Insane, Washington, D.C. Along with this work he was making some independent investigation of the religiously insane inmates, and of some freak religionists outside of the asylum. Although he is without medical degree, by his defences of psycho-analytic theory and practice he now frequently appears in those professional journals which discuss sexual psychology and psychoanalytic therapy. However, he is not interested in psychoanalysis as a means of treating hysteria or insanity. With him it is merely a new approach, or a new tool for the interpretation of our religious, legal, moral and political beliefs and institutions, and even our philosophic creeds. In this field of work he again comes near having a monopoly. His special point of emphasis, however, is on the use of psychoanalytic theory and technique for the investigation of religion, especially mystical Christianity and other mystical experiences.

With so much by way of outline I will proceed to summarize briefly his work as a psychologist of religion. In this field, as with most other fields of endeavour in which he has worked, he stands quite alone. Practically all specialists in the scientific study of religion are essentially *religious* psychologists. These generally use their psychologic intelligence to bolster up religious dogma and to increase the efficiency of the clericals. Mr. Schroeder is the lonely example of the psychologist of religion, the tendency of all of whose work is to discredit everything that can properly be called religious. But Mr. Schroeder is a genetic psychologist, which means that he is dealing only with the problem of the psychologic *why* of people's beliefs and professions. He cares little or

nothing about *what* it is that people believe, nor does he seem to be much concerned even about the truth of their beliefs. However, with unflinching regularity his explanation of *why* people adopt this or that creed or ceremonial, in order to give it religious importance or a great moral value, always tends to make it somewhat discreditable to admit that one is religious. From the religionist's standpoint this is so because Schroeder always reduces mystical religion to a personal sexual origin. It has been said, with some colour of truth, that Ingersoll only made Agnosticism respectable, while Schroeder makes the very psychologic essence of religion to be disgraceful. Of course, he would not say this. From his viewpoint the essence of religious experience always has in it a factor of sex ecstasy, and Schroeder himself does not see anything shameful in sex. For him all sexual manifestations are to be accepted and understood in the same spirit that we deal with lungs or eyes.

Early in his researches Schroeder saw the necessity of discovering and defining what it was that was to be investigated. Almost everything may be and has been labelled religion. Therefore, he said, one must get behind the labels, creeds and ceremonies to discover and discuss the differential essence of religion. One must distinguish, not between a true or "false religion" and that which is not religious at all, even though called religious. We must distinguish between religion and a more or less crude scientific belief about a religious subject matter. So he reasoned, and then by a long process of progressive elimination Schroeder reached the conclusion that the differential essence of religion is a more or less ecstatic experience, which is interpreted as certifying to its own transcendental or superhuman origin and to the inerrancy of some associated social or religious doctrine, ceremonial or metaphysics.

This then was the thing to be investigated. The end was to be an understanding of this subjective "transcendental" experience, not in terms of something super-human or super-physical, but in terms of something else, already somewhat better understood. Here Mormonism furnished him the first clue, as, indeed, it furnished him also the stimulus for the whole of this particular line of research. If the "psychogenetics" of Mormonism could be legitimately generalized, then the essence of the religious impulse was the sex impulse, with its ecstasies, its phantasies, or both. Yet very often these experiences were not understood to be sexual because the physical factors were "emotionally" inhibited from consciousness and disguised in "psychologic symbols" as the Freudian psychologists call it. Schroeder imagined that he had made a new discovery, and set out boldly to justify this vanity. But here he was disappointed, for he soon found that many observers had ventured similar opinions. However, these earlier advocates of sexuality in religion seldom, if ever, ventured a broad general statement on the subject. Phallic worship demonstrated the influence of sex in the religion of primitive peoples. The alienist had frequently discovered a sexual factor in religious insanities. But these observers commonly assumed that this sexual factor belonged only to the religion of primitive people or to some few who were clearly insane. Relying upon his observations among Mormons, Schroeder ventured the hypothesis that the sexual factor was an equally important determinant in the religious experiences of the relatively normal person. Thus from the observations of others, combined with his own, he reached the hypothesis that all mystical experience, such as is the very essence of real religion, is merely a psychologic state due to sexual causes, but wrongly ascribed to some extraneous and occult, supernatural or divine cause.

Many tell him they need religion. He asks: why

do others need religion when I do not? For him the answer is found in a feeling of inferiority, which impels others to search for something as a "compensation" or a "neutralizer." If the particular person is unable to get a compensatory feeling of importance through his relations with his actual environment, then Schroeder believes the victim tends to seek to accomplish it by means of something phantasmal, and through that the victim identifies himself with something superhuman. So the inferior achieves a compensatory feeling of importance which balances the account. In this way many come to feel as worthy, or much more important, than their neighbour. The former victim of depression has literally lifted himself out of the slough of despondency by his boot straps, and now appears happy in consequence of his delusions of grandeur. This is the comfort of religion.

But Schroeder's next question is, why does this other person feel himself so inferior and so unable to overcome that feeling through activities in the material world of his surroundings? Again the answer comes: "Sex." Sometimes an organic inferiority exists, but even this does not necessarily, nor in all the afflicted ones, require religion as a neutralizer. Why is religion a seeming necessity in so many specific cases? Again the answer is: "Sex." It is, of course, impracticable to justify this conclusion in a brief review like this one. That task requires a long essay if not a volume on Freudian psychoanalysis, as applied to the religion of mystics and to hysterics. Mr. Schroeder tried to summarize this for me in a paragraph, and here it is:—

Sexual fear and shame based upon irregularities of conduct, or of unconventional desire, and the accompanying and resultant moral self-reproaches, create the need for a super-moral compensation. Over the emotional conflict resulting from sex there ultimately comes a morbid concentration upon sexual matter. The shame increases and that means that the need for masks and compensatory exaltation also increases. With the growing erotic morbidity also comes an increased capacity for psycho-sexual ecstasies, and their accompanying phantasies. As the need grows for a super-moral neutralizer of the fear and shame the ecstasy and phantasy are ascribed to something superhuman. By thus identifying themselves with the super-physical, or transcendental, or whatever they may call this "higher" stuff, these afflicted ones exalt themselves above their more healthy minded and sexually more normal living humans. The intensity of their zeal and fanaticism is the exact measure of the moral shame and fear which it conceals and from which the religious phantasm was created. So comes need for religion out of our emotional conflict over sex. While their sexual lives furnish the occasion for self reproach, fear and shame, it also supplies a neutralizer for the self reproach, fear and shame. It also supplies a mask and an emotional neutralizer for these depressions by creating that mystical experience, and its intellectualization in terms of religion or metaphysics.

So Theodore Schroeder supplies the medical and psychologic journals with evidence that this erotism is the true explanation of all that properly belongs to the very essence of religion. With such an explanation for the acceptability and valuation of the religion of personal experience, "what need is there," he asks, "for denying or disproving its metaphysical and theological dogmas?" Will Schroeder's "erotic-genetic interpretation of religion" be more illuminating and effective to helping people outgrow the emotional need for religion, than the direct attack upon its dogmas? Not until it is popularized. But will it even then? We cannot know until his work is completed and the historian of the future makes up the record.

NANCY E. SANKEY-JONES.

Here or nowhere is the eternal fact.—Emerson.

## Pages From Voltaire.

A DIALOGUE BETWEEN A BRAHMAN AND A JESUIT.  
(ON NECESSITY AND FREE WILL, AND THE GENERAL  
CONCATENATION OF EVENTS.)

*Jesuit.*—It is not improbable that you are indebted to the prayers of St. Francis Xavier for the happy and long life you have enjoyed a hundred and four score years. Why, it is life-time of a patriarch.

*Brahman.*—My master Fonsuca lived three hundred years. That is the usual length of life among us Brahmans. I have a very great respect for Francis Xavier, but all his prayers would never have put nature out of her destined order. If he had really been able to prolong the life of a gnat for one single instant beyond what the general sequence of causes and events allows of, this globe of ours would have had a quite different appearance from that in which you see it at present.

*Jesuit.*—You have a mighty strange opinion of future contingents. Why, you must be wholly ignorant that man is free, and that our free will disposes of every thing in this sublunary world at its mere fancy and pleasure. I can assure you that the Jesuits alone have contributed not a little to some very considerable

*Brahman.*—I would not question for a moment the learning and power of the reverend fathers, the Jesuits. They are an invaluable part of human society; yet I can scarcely believe that they are the sovereign arbiters of human transactions. Every single human being, whether Jesuit or Brahman, is one of the springs which act in the general movement of the universe, in which he is the slave, not the master, of destiny. Tell me now, to what cause did Genghis-Khan owe the conquest of Asia? To the very moment in which his father happened to wake up as he was in bed with his wife; to a word which a Tartar chanced to let fall some years before. I, for example, the very person you are now looking at, I am one of the chief causes of the deplorable death of Henry IV., for which, you may see, I am still much afflicted.

*Jesuit.*—Your reverence is pleased to be merry upon the matter. You the cause of the death of Henry IV.!

*Brahman.*—Alas! it is too true. This happened in the nine hundred and eighty-three thousandth year of the revolution of Saturn, which is the fifteen hundred and fiftieth year of your era. I was young and brainless. I thought proper, on a time, to take a walk, which I did by moving my left foot first, on the coast of Malabar, from which movement the death of your Henry IV. evidently followed.

*Jesuit.*—How do you make that out? As to our society which is accused of having a hand in that affair, we knew nothing about you and your Malabar incident.

*Brahman.*—I will tell you how fate thought proper to order the matter. By moving my left foot first, as I told you, I unluckily pitched my friend Eriban, the Persian merchant, into the water, and the poor fellow was drowned. My friend, it seems, had a very handsome wife, who ran away with an Armenian merchant; this lady had a daughter who married a Greek; the daughter of the Greek settled in France, and married the father of Ravaiillac. Now, had not every item of this happened just as it did, you can see that the affairs of the houses of France and Austria would have turned out in quite a different way. The system of Europe would have been wholly changed. The wars between Turkey and the German Empire would have had a different issue; which issue would have had an effect on Persia, and on the East Indies through Persia. So you see it is plain to demonstration that the whole depended on my left foot, which was connected with all the other events of the universe, past, present, and to come.

*Jesuit.*—I must have this affair laid before some of our fathers who are theologians.

*Brahman.*—In the meantime, I must tell you, father, that the maidservant of the grandfather of the founder of the *Feuillants*<sup>1</sup> (for you must know I have dipped into your histories was also one principal cause of the death of Henry IV. and of all the accidents which it produced.

*Jesuit.*—This servant-maid must have been a very domineering slut!

*Brahman.*—Not at all! She was a mere idiot, by whom her master had a child. Madame de la Barrière, poor soul, died at last. She who succeeded her was, as your chronicles relate, the grandmother of the blessed Jean de la Barrière, who founded the order of the *Feuillants*. Ravaiillac was a monk of this order. With them he imbibed a certain doctrine very fashionable in those days, as you know well enough. This doctrine taught him to believe that the most meritorious thing he could do was to assassinate the best king in the whole world. What followed is known to everyone.<sup>2</sup>

*Jesuit.*—In spite of your left foot and servant-maid of the grandfather of the founder of the *Feuillants*, I shall always hold that the glorious action committed by Ravaiillac was a future contingent which might very well not have happened; for, after all, man is certainly a free agent.

*Brahman.*—I don't know what you mean by *free agent*. I can attach no definite idea to the words. To be free, is to do whatever we think proper, and not to will whatever we please. All I know of the matter is, that Ravaiillac voluntarily committed the crime, of which he was fated to be the instrument. This crime was nothing more than a link in the great chain of destiny.

*Jesuit.*—You may say what you will, but the affairs of this world are far from having any such dependence as you are pleased to imagine. What signifies, for instance, this idle conversation of ours, here on the shores of the East Indies?

*Brahman.*—What you and I say in conversation is no doubt sufficiently insignificant; but, for all that, were you not here, the mechanism of the universe would be extremely changed from what it is.

*Jesuit.*—There your Brahmanic reverence is pleased to put forward a huge paradox.

*Brahman.*—Your Ignatian fatherhood may believe me or no, as you like it. But assuredly, we should never have had this conversation together if you had not visited the East Indies. You would never have made this voyage, if your St. Ignatius Loyola had not been wounded at the siege of Pampeluna, or if the king of Portugal had not persisted in discovering the passage round the Cape of Good Hope. Now, tell me, did not the king of Portugal, with the help of the compass, completely change the fate of this world of ours? But first of all it was necessary that a certain Neapolitan should make this discovery of a compass. In the face of these facts have you the audacity to say that everything is not wholly subservient to one constant and uniform course of action; which, by an indissoluble but invisible linking together of things, unites all that lives, or acts, or dies or suffers on the surface of our globe?

*Jesuit.*—What then would become of our future contingents?

*Brahman.*—What do I care what becomes of them? But yet the order established by the hand of an eternal and almighty ruler must certainly subsist for ever.

*Jesuit.*—On your showing we ought not to pray to God at all.

<sup>1</sup> A religious congregation founded in 1577. It was an offshoot of the Bernardines, and was remarkable for the austerity of its rule.

<sup>2</sup> The Jesuit Ravaiillac assassinated Henry IV. in 1610.

*Brahman.*—It is our duty to adore him. But what do you mean by praying to God?

*Jesuit.*—What everyone means by it. That he would grant our petitions, and favour us in all our wants.

*Brahman.*—I understand you. You mean that a gardener might obtain clear sunshine weather at a time when God has ordained from all eternity to produce rain; and that a pilot should have an easterly wind, when a westerly wind ought to refresh the earth, as well as the seas? My good father, to pray as we ought to, is to submit ourselves wholly to providence. So good evening to you. Destiny now requires that I should now visit my Brahminess.

*Jesuit.*—And my free-will urges me to give a lesson to a young scholar.

*Englised by* GEORGE UNDERWOOD.

### Correspondence.

#### FREETHOUGHT ON TYNESIDE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The way of progress, like that of the transgressor, is hard, and our plans to bring Mr. Cohen to our district a fortnight hence have been frustrated. This will be a keen disappointment to all those who were expecting to see and hear him for the first time, as well as those who have been favoured by making his acquaintance previously. But we must take our courage in both hands, and when the atmosphere has again cleared somewhat, we will see to it that a campaign is launched and that we do all we can to make it successful. It is very regrettable that we should be bereft of the strong reasoning of our President in these trying times, his presence would have proved a veritable inspiration to all. But regrets are vain and the inevitable must be met. Let us hope that the Pioneers of Freethought on Tyneside will not be cast down, but that they will quietly determine to bide their time.

J. FOTHERGILL.

#### THE HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS.

SIR,—In your issue of March 27 your contributor, A. D. McLaren, speaks of "the discrepancies" (p. 197) between the four gospels on the resurrection story, and names one or two as examples, at least, from his point of view. May I point out that I have made a study of the Gospels relative to this question, and find *not* "discrepancies" but *harmony* between the four writers, and if you care to open your columns to a discussion between your contributor and myself, he to outline the contradictions, and I to refute them, I think it will be illustrative to your "freethinking" (?) readers that their champions do not always live up to their claims as such, but are just as guilty of swallowing things without thinking properly about them as (I freely admit) the average "believer" (?) Please observe I put both in quotation marks to be perfectly fair.

"UNORTHODOX."

### Obituary.

MANCHESTER BRANCH.—It is with deep regret I have to record the death of Mr. William Alfred Griffis, of Rose Villa, Mornington Road, Sale, which occurred rather suddenly on April 1. Mr. Griffis was in his 85th year and had been a staunch and active Secularist for over half a century. He was a prominent member of the Branch and was associated with the old Secular Hall in Rusholme Road. He often acted as Chairman for Charles Bradlaugh and the late G. W. Foote, and had lively recollections of the Freethought meetings in the old days, and of Bradlaugh's Parliamentary struggle in the 'eighties. The body was cremated at the Manchester Crematorium on April 5, when Mr. Monks, the Branch President, conducted a Secular Service.—HAROLD I. BAYFORD.

### 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.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Johnson's Dancing Academy, 241 Marylebone Road, near Edgware Road) : 7.30, Social Gathering—Music and Dancing.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W. 9) : 7, Mr. Corrigan, "The Class War."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C. 2) : 11, Joseph McCabe, "Is there an Ethical Decay?"

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Stratford Engineers' Institute, 167 Romford Road, Stratford, E. 15) : 7, Public Discussion : "Is Religion a Social Necessity?" Opened by Mr. R. H. Rosetti.

#### COUNTRY.

##### INDOOR.

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

WHEN Buying a Piano, Sewing Machine, Gramophone, Wringer, Baby Carriage, Furniture, or High Class Toys for the Kiddies, try HORACE DAWSON. Terms arranged with *Freethinker* readers. Send inquiries.—"DAWSON'S CORNER," Wood Green, N. 22.

### 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.

**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., post-  
 age 1d.  
 CREED AND CHARACTER. The Influence of Religion  
 on Racial Life. Price 7d., postage 1½d.  
 DOES MAN SURVIVE DEATH? Is the Belief Reason-  
 able? Verbatim Report of a Discussion between  
 Horace Leaf and Chapman Cohen. Price 7d., post-  
 age 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., post-  
 age ½d.

By WALTER MANN.

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

By 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.

**Pamphlets—continued.**

By G. H. MURPHY.

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

By COLONEL INGERSOLL.

IS SUICIDE A SIN? AND LAST WORDS ON  
 SUICIDE. Price 2d., postage 1d.  
 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 Farringdon 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 FARRINGDON STREET, E.C. 4.

**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 FARRINGDON STREET, E.C.

**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 FARRINGDON 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.

## RELIGION AND SEX.

Studies in the Pathology of Religious Development.

BY  
**CHAPMAN COHEN.**

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

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

Price Six Shillings. Postage 9d.

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

## Determinism or Free-Will?

By **CHAPMAN COHEN.**

**NEW EDITION** Revised and Enlarged.

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

Well printed on good paper.

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

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

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.

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 "FREETHINKER."

THE *Freethinker* may be ordered from any newsagent in the United Kingdom, and is supplied by all the wholesale agents. It will be sent direct from the publishing office post free to any part of the world on the following terms:—

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

Foreign and Colonial—One Year, 15s.; Six Months, 7s. 6d.; Three Months, 3s. 9d.

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

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