

# 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. 18

SUNDAY, MAY 1, 1921.

PRICE THREEPENCE

## PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

|   | Page. |
|---|-------|
| "S'welp Me God."—The Editor - - - -                                     | 273   |
| "Watchman, What of the Night?"—J. T. Lloyd - - -                        | 274   |
| "A Fellow of Infinite Jest."—Mimnermus - - - -                          | 276   |
| What Means This Strike?—J. Effel - - - -                                | 276   |
| Religion as a Social Factor.—E. Egerton Stafford - - -                  | 277   |
| A Family Talk.—William Hill - - - -                                     | 278   |
| The Origin of Christianity.—W. Mann - - - -                             | 282   |
| What I Believe.—G. O. W. - - - -  | 283   |
| N. S. S. Conference—Agenda - - - -                                      | 284   |
| Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc. |       |

## Views and Opinions.

### "S'welp Me God."

In pronouncing sentence the other day in an action for damages Mr. Justice McCardie thus delivered himself on the practice of perjury in the Courts:—

I deem it to be the duty of a judge to take serious notice of all perjury that may appear to be committed before him. The offence is on the increase. Men are losing their sense of the sanctity of the oath. They swear falsehoods with levity because they imagine prosecutions for perjury do not follow. No one, perhaps, save a judge, can appreciate fully the gravity of this crime of perjury. It strikes at the very root of the power to give justice. It saps the foundation of right as between man and man, and therefore I shall send these papers to the Public Prosecutor for his consideration.

With the main part of this deliverance I find myself in complete agreement. But I am doubtful whether lying is on the increase. So far as I can judge, people do not lie in ordinary matters more than they did years ago. And if they do not lie more outside the courts there seems no reason for assuming that they tell more lies inside than used to be the case. The probability is that the judge was only illustrating from the Bench one of those periodic outbursts of moral fervour which Macaulay said was characteristic of the British public, and which made it so supremely ridiculous. And having eased himself so far he will probably never inquire why it is that some people put themselves to the trouble of telling lies, why it should be so common, or what are the conditions that would lead to people making it a practice of telling the truth. His remedy is obvious. Let a prosecution follow. Some day Mr. Justice McCardie may make the discovery that, as often as not, it is exactly the fear that punishment will follow that induces so much falsehood both inside and outside the courts.

\* \* \*

### The Sanctity of the Oath.

Justice McCardie, it will be observed, attributed the alleged increase of perjury to the fact that men are losing their sense of the sanctity of the oath. But was the oath ever a guarantee of truth? Could people ever be divided into truth tellers who took oaths and liars who did not? Can Justice McCardie, in the course of his experience, place any greater dependence on a witness who has taken an oath than on one who has

not? If he can, his business must be a very easy one. If he cannot, will he please explain what on earth he means by the sanctity of the oath? It sounds very much like the sanctity of nonsense. More, we should rather like to know whether there is any greater reason why a man should tell the truth in court than out of it? He should, of course, tell the truth both inside and out. But why be so shocked because a man is a liar when in court? After all, he is in court only what he is outside; it is the liar that is to be despised, and the conditions of his being a liar are settled long before he appears in front of one of his majesty's judges. And for that reason the test of the oath is obtrusive in its absurdity. A truthful man will tell the truth whether he is on oath or not; and a liar will lie whether he is on oath or not. "S'welp me God" doesn't make the slightest difference either way. Some perception of this seems to have struck Justice McCardie, since he added that people commit perjury because they imagine prosecution will not follow. So it is not, after all, a question of the sanctity of the oath, but of the certainty of detection. That is a poor enough motive for telling the truth, but it is not what Justice McCardie set out with, and one hopes, as a layman, that his law is less peccable than his logic. I should really have thought more of Justice McCardie had he confined himself to a reprobation of lying and left the matter of the oath altogether alone.

\* \* \*

### A Stupid Practice.

But the conjunction of the oath with the fear of prosecution if detected in a lie is, to a Freethinker, rather suggestive. It suggests a close alliance between knavery and piety. The Christian, unable to tell the truth without the help of God almighty does not compare to advantage with the Freethinker who can speak with at least as great a degree of veracity unaided. Nor does it reflect much credit on religion when a judge, hearing that a man believes in God, declines to accept the assurance that he is telling the truth on his bare word, he must swear to it. It was a curious satire on religion when in 1888 the law was made to the effect that while a Freethinker might be believed in a court of justice on his bare word, no judge could believe a Christian unless he swore to it. In this state of affairs would it not be as well if Christians made up their minds to abolish the oath altogether from the courts, and judges to make sensible observations on the value of truth rather than nonsensical remarks about the sanctity of the oath, and the need for its sanctity being enforced and illustrated by the public prosecutor? After all, the state of things which brought the oath into the courts no longer exists. The oath, with its appeal to God almighty belongs to the days when trial by ordeal was part of the judicial procedure. In those days people who believed in a God believed also that he did something. And among the things he was believed to do was that of protecting the innocent and confounding the guilty. So when a man was accused, and he cared to submit to the test, he was made to walk across red hot bars, or swear on some sacred relic, or fight a duel, and the way in which he came through the ordeal, by divine

help, was proof of his innocence or guilt. But no one takes that view to-day. God, perhaps because the number of Christian offenders has become too numerous for his personal attention, no longer strikes the guilty or protects the innocent. The witness who has taken the oath and then proceeds to lie with all the vigour of a mediæval bishop or a modern war propagandist is not struck dead, he doesn't even blush. The oath is out of date. "S'welp me God" is as useless as "In the name of the Prophet." It is time that the courts took a witness on his face value as a man, instead of treating him as a natural rogue unable to tell the truth without a large measure of divine assistance.

\* \* \*

#### The Reason Why.

Still, I agree with Justice McCardie that there is a tremendous lot of lying about. I only disagree, with some doubts, as to whether this lying is on the increase, and with certainty, that if it is it has nothing to do with lack of veneration for the oath. Let us settle upon the general fact that people do not tell the truth as they ought. And then one might ask, Why should they? What encouragement do they get to speak the truth? If a man tells the truth about religion what kind of a reception will he get, even from his majesty's judges? The odds are that he will be advised by them that he would do well to keep his opinions to himself. If he goes in for public life what inducement has he to speak the truth there? Why there is not a constituency in this Christian country of ours that would give its votes to a candidate who told it the whole truth. He must either say things he does not believe or refrain from saying all that he does believe. And the country is at the moment actually governed by special laws which say that a man may be imprisoned, not because what he says is not the truth, but if he says anything which, in the opinion of the government, it is inadvisable that he should say. And the very judges who complain that witnesses do not tell them the truth will pass sentence and calmly tell the prisoner that it is not a question as to whether what he says is true or not, but whether it is likely to lead to disaffection. In that kind of environment can we expect people to tell the truth merely because they are in a court? Truth telling is not something that can be put on and off as one changes one's coat to suit the temperature. It is a mental habit. So is lying. And whether a man tells lies habitually, or whether he tells the truth habitually, will depend upon the habits he has formed and the environment in which he has lived. People have not lost their respect for truth, they never had it. Their education does not tend to encourage it. And things being as they are the marvel is that there should be so great a respect for truth as there is.

\* \* \*

#### Our Hateful Ancestry.

How could the Christian oath be successful in inducing Christians to tell the truth? Truth telling is, to begin with, not one of the Christian virtues. Salvation is not gained by the Christian through the search for truth, but by an act of belief. There is nothing in the New Testament that would lead a man to place any special value on mental development, and there is certainly no encouragement given to it in Christian theory or practice. Nor have Christians ever scrupled to lie when the interests of their creed might be served thereby. I do not think that for sheer, downright, deliberate, thorough-paced lying any institution the world has seen can hold a candle to the Christian Church. Its record is littered with forged documents and false statements. It has told lies about its own history, and manufactured innumerable falsehoods about its opponents. And on the other hand it has

done its best to convince everyone that the best way to make sure of an easy life is not to bother about what is true or false but only what is safe. The consequence of all this has been that generations have grown up in an environment in which less regard is paid to intellectual integrity and self-respect than to anything else. The love of truth is not born in an environment of that kind. I do not believe that lying is on the increase, only that it is much commoner than it ought to be. And for that we have surely to largely thank the influence of a religion that has for centuries done its best to suppress the truth seeking and truth speaking type of mind, offered the prizes of life with lavish hands to the hypocrite and time-server, and met the genuine seeker after truth with the prison, or social ostracism.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

#### "Watchman, What of the Night?"

THIS is an old question which is also always new. It has served as the text of several articles in this journal. Its meaning is, how is the world getting on, or what do the signs of the times convey to us concerning the immediate future? The first thing that strikes us is that there are numerous watchmen, few of whom agree as to the correct answer. They occupy different observation towers, and their visions vary in proportion as their respective points of view vary. One of the present day watchmen, the Rev. J. A. Hutton, D.D., of Glasgow, supplies a very interesting, if somewhat elusive, report in a sermon delivered at the last annual assembly of the National Free Church Council held in Manchester. The sermon appeared in the *Christian World Pulpit* for April 13. Dr. Hutton is exceptionally keen sighted, but in presenting his report he safeguards himself by resorting to exceeding vagueness. A little while ago, from his watch tower, came the mournful confession that the world had lost and forgotten God, that the conception of man generally associated with the Christian religion was fading out of men's minds, and that, consequently, life was no longer lived by the rule of God. That report was noticed in these columns at the time it appeared in the *British Weekly*. Without a doubt that report was essentially true. At Manchester he discussed "some of those moods and attitudes of life which, not among the thoughtful only, but as a general and accepted dispensation, are prevailing in our time, and which give us our immediate task." He says that "one of the most elusive attitudes of man towards life is to think seriously about it at all." This may be true of ignorant and careless people, who never or seldom do any thinking for themselves; but certainly it is not true of the non-religious as a class. Most preachers imagine that, unless a man thinks of life religiously, he cannot think about it seriously at all; but Dr. Hutton must know that multitudes of the most thoughtful people are wholly non-religious. This is a point, however, with which he is not concerned in the discourse under review.

Dr. Hutton is, of course, a theologian, and in his view Christianity is a religion rooted and grounded in theology. In this view we are in heartiest agreement with him, but we totally differ from him when he suggests that it is not possible to have "a reasoned understanding of this life of ours without a recognition of the part that Christ and God can take in it." In our own view to introduce Christ and God into the consideration and management of life is to render a reasoned understanding of it utterly impossible. A Christian lives by faith, not by reason. Dr. Hutton is by no means blind to this fact, as his ingenious sermon on the text, "We see in a mirror darkly," abundantly shows. In the present discourse also he unwittingly makes a like disclosure by his treatment of the doctrine of forgiveness. He charges preachers

with allowing themselves "to be misunderstood as meaning that forgiveness is absolutely free and unconditional." According to the New Testament, the only condition of forgiveness is faith in the finished work of Christ. Dr. Hutton declares that the war has "taught us again the Shorter Catechism"; but surely he forgets the Shorter Catechism's famous definition:—

Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.

According to that definition forgiveness is absolutely free and unconditional, if the recipient thereof believes. The late Dr. Dale taught that forgiveness is an accomplished fact, Christ having purchased it for all mankind with his precious blood, and that all sinners have to do is to accept it. We are already forgiven, but God treats us as lost sinners until we believe that we are forgiven.

Dr. Hutton waxes furiously sarcastic over Sir Oliver Lodge's well-known saying that to-day men are not troubling about their sins; but he does not deny its truth. In its theological meaning sin is an outworn superstition. Only ignorant and credulous people ever did worry about their sins, and even within living memory the worry was so intense that it drove not a few to raving madness. As intelligence grows the sense of sin naturally declines. What is sin? Dr. Hutton can only define it as "an infringement of some supposed law and order of things." Professor Peake's definition is as follows: "Sin consists in the fact that we do not rise to such perfection as lies within our grasp" (*Christianity: Its Nature and Truth*, p. 112). Neither definition can claim to be rational. Who knows anything about "some supposed law and order of things?" The very vagueness of the phrase condemns it. The only law known to us is that of Nature, which a man may disregard to his own undoing; but Nature never forgives, however penitent the transgressor may be. Of course, people who attend churches presided over by such men as Dr. Hutton do worry about their sins; but their worry is directly or indirectly a product of the pulpit. In the absence of that worry the pulpit would soon cease to be. It is on the sense of sin that the clergy live. To them it is of vital importance to prevent it from dying out. Nevertheless, in spite of all their tremendous efforts to keep it alive, its days are numbered. Indeed, Dr. Hutton acknowledges the truth of Sir Oliver Lodge's saying by his stern, angry protest against it. He exclaims:—

If Sir Oliver Lodge meant to say men were right, then he has only given us an illustration of the old saying that the cobbler should keep to his own last. If he meant it marks a moral advance, then I cannot imagine a piece of more concentrated folly.....If it were true that men are not worrying about their sins, the more reason for serious men worrying about their own sins and the sins of others. The world has always been saved by the elect. Christ died for our sins; that is to say, the sin of men worried our Lord to death. That is precisely what we see beneath the surface to-day.

After his wholly unsatisfactory treatment of sin Dr. Hutton asks:—

How can God forgive sin? How is forgiveness possible, even to God, in a moral universe? How can God deal with a thing so that it will be as if it had not been? I throw a stone into placid water; the ripples might go on to infinity and drain it. Now, how can God stop those ripples? How can God stop the consequences outside of me which are now out of my power to recall, and how can God so deal with me that I can honourably lift up my head again and resume life? These are the questions.

Yes, verily, those are the questions which the reverend gentleman asks but utterly fails to answer. He admits that "upon the plane of mere reason there is no solu-

tion of the problem whatever," and he is unable to ascend to any other plane simply because there is no higher one. Consequently he revels in the false inference that "the truth about man is never upon the surface," and that "beneath the surface" the more distinguished Russian writers teach the true doctrine of Divine forgiveness. "These don't say—though they mean—as Paul said, 'How can a man be just before God? How can God forgive a sinner?' They rather ask, 'How can a man who has sinned forgive himself?'" Such is Dr. Hutton's view of "the supreme literature of the soul" in Russia to-day; but if we inquire humbly and politely what the Russian solution of the problem is we are told that "they ponder this question in a way which is absolutely beyond the power of the Western mind to follow in imagination, for it is the tomb of the Russian man of genius, from which they cannot look up and see the stars." Again we ask, but what is their solution? and again we get the answer that "there is a sense in which it is no solution, except so far as that it is always something of a solution to any great question when men have come to ponder that question seriously." Do what we may we cannot find out what the solution is. There is a solution, and the highest Russian literature has almost discovered it, that is to say, it has come to ponder it very seriously; but we are so blunt and stupid that we cannot understand it. Dr. Hutton has got hold of it, but because of our dulness he cannot communicate it to us. His imagination is sprightly enough to follow and appreciate it, but ours is so feeble and obtuse that we cannot even see it at all. In reality, however, Dr. Hutton himself perceives it only through a mirror made of metal, with the result that he cannot describe it to others. He believes there is something on the other side of that piece of metal, but he is not quite sure even of that much. "Certainty," he tells us candidly, "in any condition of life is a deadly condition of the mind: it is the end of faith." He merely believes in God's forgiveness, and he imagines that it is a reality of his experience. Knowledge of it he has not, nor can acquire, however fervently he may long for it.

"Watchman, what of the night?" Whichever watch of the night it may be, from six to nine, from nine to twelve, or from twelve to three, the original watchman, Isaiah, is doubtful, during an Assyrian invasion of Egypt, to what extent Idumæa would fall within the invader's sweep, and so to anxious inquirers he returns an enigmatical, evasive answer: "Morning cometh, and also night; if ye will inquire, inquire; go, come again" (Isaiah xxi. 11, 12). The watchman on the tower of the Free Church Council is equally uncertain as to what he really sees. As he looks abroad, what he discerns most clearly is despair treading close upon the heels of hope, and often tripping it up. As we read his report, we can almost hear the sound of hope's halting feet as it tries to crawl along. All through the discourse one feels that this watchman is conscious that something of vital importance to the Church has been lost which must be recovered at all costs, or religion is doomed. What is it? Faith. Can it be recovered? Who can tell? The prophet on the watch tower of Zion is in great fear as to the issue. As for himself he will have nothing to do with reason, faith being his vote. To him the following is the most beautiful saying in the world: "These all died in faith, not having received the promises." He puts his cross opposite the name of faith, crying aloud, "The thing I am out to live for and die for is my faith." What makes him so sad is the fact that an ever increasing majority of his fellow beings are placing their cross opposite the name of Reason, fully convinced that enlightened Reason is the only possible Saviour of the world. And are not the growing majority right?

J. T. LLOYD.

## "A Fellow of Infinite Jest."

Laughter is the property of man. —Rabelais.

A fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy. —Shakespeare.

AMBROSE BIERCE, soldier, author, humourist, is better known in the United States than in England. In America his works have been collected in a handsome edition in twelve volumes; but in this country he is represented by stray books which are the joy of discriminating lovers of literature. His career is in respects remarkable. When over seventy years of age he left San Francisco to fight with General Villa in Mexico. A generation earlier he had fought in the American Civil War in the Federal Army, rising from a common soldier to the rank of major. At the close of the Civil War he wondered whether to devote his life to military or to literary pursuits. He decided to be an author, and made a reputation on both sides of the Atlantic. As a story-teller he rivals Kipling, Poe, and Maupassant. For humour he has been credited by many with being the finest satirist since Jonathan Swift.

Why Bierce's books are not as popular as those by Mark Twain, Jerome K. Jerome, and Finlay Dunne, the creator of "Martin Dooley," is a mystery. That he is as funny as either is evident. If his humour is not appreciated by the public to the extent of those others, it may be because he has chosen to expend it largely upon a disrespectful perversion of religion. The proper study of mankind is man, and possibly the only burlesque that causes the wide mouth of the general public to broaden to a grin must also concern nature, and not the alleged supernatural. Bierce deserves a place beside the other humourists mainly because his work is of a rarer quality than theirs. Two of his books with the quaint titles *The Fiend's Delight* and *Cobwebs from an Empty Skull* revealed a mordant satire that is absolutely unique, and they were as full of profanity as an egg is full of meat. The title page of *The Fiend's Delight* was provocative. It was ornamented with a drawing showing a sooty devil toasting a fat baby at a large fire, whilst underneath the letterpress reminded the reader that every day one should do a worthy action. Another facet of Bierce's genius was revealed in the book, *In the Midst of Life*, a series of powerful short stories largely concerned with military episodes in the American Civil War, which for bare horror outdid Sheridan Lefanu.

Discussing his works, Gertrude Atherton said that Bierce had the most realistic imagination of any of his contemporaries. This quality overflows in his humour. Here are a few examples taken at random from his writings:—

I once knew a man who made me a map of the opposite hemisphere of the moon. He was crazy. I knew another who taught me what country lay upon the other side of the grave. He was a most acute thinker—as he had need to be.

If a jackass were to describe the deity, he would represent him with long ears and a tail. Man's ideal is the higher and truer; he pictures him as somewhat resembling a man.

In calling a man a hog, it is the man who gets angry, but it is the hog who is insulted. Men are always taking up the quarrels of others.

Camels and Christians receive their burdens kneeling.

It is wicked to cheat on Sundays. The law recognizes this truth, and shuts up the shops.

Most people have no more definite idea of liberty than that it consists in being compelled by law to do as they like.

To pick out passages haphazard is not doing real justice to a brilliant writer. Not only does a jest's prosperity lie in the ear of him who hears it, but it has

its life in atmosphere of its own, and there are few plants so tender in the transplanting. While the creator of "Mr. Dooley" is welcomed, and the author of *Three Men in a Boat* is passing popular, one cannot help regretting the inadequate appreciation that Bierce has won on this side "the herring pond." Of course, all reading people must know his writings; but that the larger public should not have an opportunity of testing what he has written is unsatisfactory.

The function of a laugh maker is often under estimated. The man who grins at you through a horse collar, and sets you laughing back at him does you a service.—The physiological value of laughter has never been correctly appraised. Although doctors bestow a certain patronage on cheerfulness, and give it a minor place in the pharmacopœia, no one will dispute that the humourists are the benefactors of society. The great Rabelais, himself an incomparable humourist, declared that laughter is the peculiar property of man. We tend to lose sight of this truth, and we are less wise than our forefathers. The man that has no music in his mind is discontented. Just as certainly the man who laughs apologetically is only half a man. It is only by gay hearts that the best work of the world is done.

MIMNERMUS.

## What Means This Strike?

THE fashionable church was crowded with fashionable people to hear the fashionable preacher renowned for his eloquence, his wide learning, his championship of the cause of the poor, and above all his wonderful courage and outspokenness. This evening's address had the alluring title "What means this strike?"

There was a rustle of expectancy as the orator rose in the pulpit. A tall spare man, with a wealth of coal-black hair brushed back, very large eyes, a big mouth and a conspicuously small chin, the face of an ascetic, a mesmerist or a lunatic. In clerical garb, with cultured speech, the ideal man for the position he occupied. He opened the sacred volume on the lectern and stood staring over the heads of the congregation for a full half minute before commencing.

"And Gawd said 'Let there be light.'" His rich voice of melodious timbre uttered the words simply and without rhetoric, but it was at once noticeable that he was speaking with suppressed emotion, that he felt the deep seriousness of his subject, the peril of his fellow countrymen; and, above all, his own awful responsibility before God. Again there was a tense silence as once more the preacher gazed over the heads of his congregation. But the simple words, simply spoken, with that simple earnestness had made an instantaneous appeal. Hearers were now completely *en rapport* with the speaker. A moment he stood thus, motionless, as it were entranced, then his long arms shot outwards and upwards, his inscrutable eyes were raised ecstatically, and he shook back a stray lock of hair with a characteristic gesture of the shapely head. Inspiration once more came to him. He found voice again.

"And Gawd said 'Let there be light.'" "But how," he thundered forth in resonant tones vibrant with feeling, "how, in the name of Gawd, can we have light without coal?"

A thrill, almost a shock, ran through the listening congregation. A few accustomed to the preacher's virility of thought, and familiar with strong language were unmoved, but there were not many men present. The women—or rather, ladies—were strangely touched, lifted, as it were, from their wonted complacency, jolted out of their static acquiescence in the commonplace by the glorious audacity of the thought, galvanized by the direct appeal of the unanswerable

question into an eager desire for a something better, higher, or deeper.....a something they vaguely felt stirring within them, an impulse, an urge, a yearning, an uplift, as yet formless and vague, a spiritual unrest, an awakening of that better self which lay dormant, half stifled, by our soulless society and the gross materialism of the age.

Coal, the preacher continued, was the life blood of the nation, the vital food of the body politic. When, in His infinite wisdom and foresight Gawd Almighty planted the coal deep within the bowels of the earth, it was clearly the divine intention that those miners should, in the sweat of their brow, bring forth coal. Who were those men who set themselves up in direct opposition to the will of Gawd? Ah, my brethren, what is a Hodges or a Bob Smillie in the sight of Gawd Almighty? When He separated the dry land from the waters of the earth, was it not the vilest of blasphemy that such as these so-called leaders—he called them mis-leaders, nay, Atheists!—should cry out, "Remove the pump-men?"

We are told that the miner's life is a hard one, and he for one did not doubt it. But as one who toiled unceasingly in the Lord's vineyard, without even the Sabbath for rest, with no trade union to appeal to, with no earthly leader, he was content to wait, humbly and patiently for that glorious day when a voice would say, "Well done thou good and faithful servant."

Ah, if only the miners could see it in that light, if only he, as the humble instrument of Gawd, could bring them to the way of the Cross! But a wave of unrest, of Bolshevism, of infidelity—sown, he did not doubt, by the pernicious seed of Freethought, planted by infidel lecturers—had swept over the once Christian villages of South Wales, and the pits of Scotland, bursting into flame, flooding the mines, and drying up the springs of human sympathy.

While no doubt these men had grievances, he counselled his hearers not to let their feelings overcome their reason. Clearly it was the will of Gawd that the miner's toil should be arduous. For could not He have placed coal on the hill-top or made it as easily accessible as the sands on the sea shore? But, ah, should they not bow submissively to the omnipotent will, and thank Gawd from their hearts for his precious gift of work, spending their leisure time in His house rather than in dog racing, in gambling, in jazz palaces or in night clubs?

"What means this strike?" he asked of his fellow workers. He could not disguise from them the extreme gravity of the situation; the forces of red revolution and anarchy were abroad in the land, but he thanked Gawd that with the Tripe-lights—he meant the Triplice—saner counsels had prevailed. Ah, thank Gawd, the railwaymen were not going to down trains. But let them not give way to transports. The dark night was not yet over.

Our beloved land had but recently emerged victorious from a devastating war, a conflict in which, thank Gawd, he did his bit (as chaplain at the White City). But the war with all its harrowing horrors was clearly in accordance with Divine will, for was it not written "There shall be wars, and rumours of wars," but nowhere in the Holy Scriptures do these words occur, "There shall be strikes, and rumours of strikes." Ah, having won the great war, let us not lose the great peace, the peace that passeth all understanding.

He had seen it stated—he made the statement with all caution and reserve—that there were faults on the side of the owners. But if the employers, faced with the dread alternative of taking their capital out of the country in their desperate anxiety to keep the workers in employment, were driven to reduce wages, were they not the humble instruments of Providence making secure a glorious hereafter for the miners? Is it not written "Blessed be ye poor, for yours is the

Kingdom of Heaven?" What is a paltry thirty shillings a week to the glories of the New Jerusalem?

How wonderful are the ways of Gawd! What lessons we may learn if we be but humble of heart. The snow which even now encircles this sacred edifice, falling on the homeless and the rich alike, is a clear evidence to believers of Gawd's attitude in this strike, a clear call for coal, a command from on High to resume work.

Ah, my dear brethren, let us pray fervently that the counsels of prudence and unselfishness and Lloyd George shall ultimately triumph. Our ship of state is in the gravest danger; even now many of the crew are on the rocks. When a vessel is foundering what is to be done? Do we think then of wages, of ballots, of pools, or card votes? No, with everyone self is subordinated, there is but one thought, "Save the ship," there is but one cry, "All hands to the pumps."

Would to Gawd that that were the miner's cry today, would to Gawd they could throw overboard their paltry differences—and their leaders—and Capital and Labour joining hands, marching shoulder to shoulder, pumping coal through the arteries of the entire system, bring the good ship "Industry" out of the shoals and quicksands of Bolshevism and irreligion into the quiet haven of contentment, of good will and mutual understanding.

J. EFFEL.

## Religion as a Social Factor.

### II.

(Concluded from page 267.)

THE argument put forward in the interest of religion that social progress has only been made in the past, and can only be made in the future by man acting in an irrational manner is one of the most stupid mis-readings of sociological development that have ever seen the light. It amounts to saying that the more we act rightly the more disorderly will social life become. Or, in other words, do the right thing and it is sure to be wrong.

Yet, over against the plea for irrationality, under the guise of supra-rationalism, is the history of mankind, overloaded as it is with evidence of individual and social blundering, very largely the result of our relatively irrational ordering of life.

Imagine a financier advocating and working according to the theory that he would be more successful if he irrationally invested his money in the most doubtful concerns. Most of us would vote him a fool. Yet, we are asked by the religious sociologist to eliminate rationalism from our lives, to be as irrational as possible, and seek supra-rational sanction for all we do.

Rationalism in philosophy is the attempt to acquaint ourselves with the facts of life, and then to draw correct inferences therefrom. Rationalism in practical life is the attempt to act rightly in relation to known facts. There is no need of supra-rationalism or something higher than reason.

Emotion may often be stronger than reason, it may as often be more beautiful, but it is not, or should not be, higher as far as the ordering of life is concerned. If men and women treated each other with greater reasonableness, social reconstruction would be more rapidly accomplished and progress to higher forms of human life would be much more easily won.

In the course of his struggle for religion as a necessary factor in social life, Mr. Chatterton-Hill is reduced to saying that, "The fullest expansion of life can thus only be reached by means of the harmonious co-operation of science and religion, or rather, by means of the *completion* of scientific knowledge by religious belief" (p. 521).

In what way religious belief is to complete scientific knowledge one is at a loss to understand. A man's

beliefs may, and often do, happen to be knowledge, but a belief is frequently something very different from knowledge.

One may believe that the sun is capable of standing still, but that is not knowledge; and a scientist, with a good water-tight compartment in his brain, may believe all manner of religious doctrines, but all his religious beliefs put together will not add one iota to his store of knowledge.

On page 526 of *Heredity and Selection in Sociology* Mr. Chatterton-Hill informs us that, "If individual life is to possess an adequate sanction, then it must derive its sanction from a social principle, or rather, from a social principle which rests, in its turn, upon a supra-social basis."

Thus, once more he takes us up into the clouds of the supra-social and seeks, like all religionists, the authority of a hypothetical other-world for the ordering of conduct in this life, instead of deducing from a knowledge of the facts with which we have to deal, the principles according to which man must conduct his life if the betterment of human social life is to be accomplished.

The supra-social basis of our author is, of course, a religious or spiritual basis, embodied in an organization called a Church, and the Church selected as the most adequate embodiment of the supra-social principle is the Roman Catholic Church. Surely there is some curious misreading of history and sociology going on when the Roman Catholic Church can be taken for the most beneficial, co-ordinating, and socializing power in human life.

All Churches depend very largely for their success upon the submission of their adherents to the teachings and dictates of the few who set themselves up in places of authority, but it is doubtful whether any Church, at least in modern times, depends so much upon abject submission and the stultification of intellect as does the Roman Catholic Church.

A plea that this Church embodies a spiritualizing power, necessary to maintain the purity and stability of society, is given the negative by the fact that the authority of the Roman Catholic Church is claimed to be the same whether the pope and his priests are of exemplary character, or the most unscrupulous men on earth. One suspects that the sociologist who sees in the Roman Catholic Church the highest power for social integration is wearing a pair of coloured spectacles.

There is not much of an essentially socializing nature in a Church that can adopt the methods of an Inquisition against those who fail to accept her teaching; nor is the high social value of such a religious institution as the Roman Church easily realized when we read such details as the following:—

A Spanish abbot was discovered in the year 1130 to have seventy concubines, and a bishop of Liege in 1274 was deposed for having sixty-five illegitimate children. enactments had to be passed forbidding priests to live with their mothers and sisters because of the prevalence of incest among them; nunneries and monasteries were hotbeds of debauchery; and congregations who had an unmarried priest to minister to them stipulated in some cases, with a view to the protection of their wives and daughters, that he should keep a concubine. J. F. Nisbet, *Marriage and Heredity*, p. 45, following Lea's *History of Sacerdotal Celibacy*.

The truth of the matter is that, whatever there is of social value in the Roman Church, or any other Church, it is due not to religion but to the fact that large masses of men must develop some social qualities, whether they have a religion or not, if they are to have daily intercourse.

Religion may be a mode in which certain social tendencies express themselves; it may just as surely be a means of social disruption. In the nature of the

case no religion is a binding force except for those who accepts its tenets, and all religions, being mainly built up of emotionalism, are very liable to disruptions.

Religious hatred and persecution are historical facts which prove that religion is not necessarily a socializing power, and the fact that every science has pushed religion more and more into the background, as the work of discovering our many sided relationship to the universe has proceeded, negatives the theory that we must have religion as a social factor.

Religion helps us to understand nothing. It persists because there are so many elements of our social childhood with us. It belongs to that childhood and is a kind of publisher's remainder, recording man's early mental experiences, more especially with regard to the problem of his relationship to the universe as a whole.

In relation to bodily health and soundness of mind the social value of religion is far outweighed by its disastrous tendency to prevent progress. Fortunately for society the spirit theory of disease has been largely replaced by the careful and minute study of the structure and the processes of the human body. Medicines have, in the main, taken the place of magic and exorcism. Perhaps one might say the black bottle has supplanted the black art.

Not even in the sphere of morals is it possible to prove that religion is necessary as a social factor. The most powerful religious potentates may be the greatest moral reprobates on earth, and the most holy and god-fearing men of business may be the most heartless scoundrels, crushing the lives out of the very people whom they recommend to put their trust in God.

If a man is known to be a sound moral character there is no necessity to estimate his morality in terms of religion. But, if a man is known to be a very religious character it is necessary to know his moral life in order to make an estimate of his social value.

Religion is not a mainstay of society, it is one of the products of social life and must gradually disappear as the conditions which make its existence possible cease to persist. The chief conditions of the existence of religion are the comparatively widespread ignorance of the main facts of man's relationship to the universe, and the manipulation of that ignorance, in their own economic interest, by those who have secured the means of authority and power in society.

E. EGERTON STAFFORD.

### A Family Talk.

THE Monkey sat on the Branch of a Tree,  
Looked down at the form of a Man;  
And he said to himself, "I'm glad I'm free  
To do what I will when I can.

"I wonder if that poor creature down there  
Would like to change places with Me?  
I on earth, on my two hind legs,  
And He on the Branch of a Tree."

"I wonder if He would very much like  
To possess a wonderful tail!  
And very long fingers, and very long toes,  
And hair for a coat of mail?"

The Monkey coughed; the Man, he heard;  
Looked up and smiled, then said,  
"Don't worry yourself, dear Monkey, please,  
Life's short; we shall soon be dead.

I wouldn't like to change places with you,  
For it's not long ago, you see,  
When I had a tail, long toes and hair,  
And sat on the Branch of a Tree.

What I shall be in the Great Beyond  
I have'nt the slightest clue:  
But what I was in the Great Gone-by  
Was something very 'like you."

WILLIAM HILL.

## Acid Drops.

The Englishman is nothing if he is not moral. No matter what he does in any part of the world he still retains the moral pose. And it has become such a part of him that he takes in himself more effectually than he takes in other people. The average Englishman appears to seriously believe that we are all over the world for the benefit of the natives. He is quite convinced that there is no home life anywhere in the world so moral as English home life, and that there are no people so truly moral as are the English people. He holds up his hands in pious horror at the "indecent" books that are published abroad, forgetting the fact that an immense trade is done in these things in *English*. And to hint to him that an English statesman will tell a lie, is almost to invite a personal assault. The Englishman is a moral animal. Whether he is lying, or stealing, or annexing, or fornicating, he insists on being moral. What he does makes no difference to that.

The Underground Railway is the most recent place to witness an outbreak of British morality. Messrs. Pope and Bradley submitted to the railway authorities a poster advertising their clothes. The picture has a couple dancing in the foreground, and that passed all right. But the background—oh, the background! That depicted a number of historical characters, Cleopatra, Elizabeth, Charles II., Nell Gwynne, etc., and that did cause trouble. The authorities, being very moral Britons, cannot see their way to permitting such a display, for they point out that these people "are historical personages whose moral characters were not above reproach." And without setting themselves up as moral censors, they think it only right "to see that all passengers can travel on our railways without fear of offence." Oh, shades of Mary Magdalene, Edward the seventh, and King Solomon! And what a susceptible lot must travel on the underground! We presume that in future anybody whose picture appears on the walls of the Underground stations must supply the directors with a certificate of character.

The coal shortage has provided a use for the stacks of theological works that second-hand booksellers have accumulated. A Folkestone bookseller announces for sale books to be used as fuel. He told a newspaper man that the books were mostly theological for which there was no sale whatever. We fancy that this is about the best use that most of these works have ever been put to. Probably booksellers in other parts of the country will follow the example of this Folkestone one.

Photographs of the Bishop of Exeter, the Mayor of Exeter, and the Rev. E. P. Powell appear in a picture paper—presumably published for those who cannot read. The three are met together in public to pray for industrial peace. We suggest that their time would be better employed in studying finance and banking; they will find that the usurer, otherwise known as the financier, has them and the nation in his pocket. And the superstition of finance plus the superstition of skirted priests are the only two effective barriers that prevent men from looking in each other's eyes without wanting to murder one another.

It is useless to complain about human nature when it can be moulded by the Press to any shape required. A few years ago it was hatred of the German that was the one thing desirable. To-day—well, see for yourself. Your heart has to be stout, you have to be no fair weather follower of the *Gay Science*. Will the clergy strip off the mask of the Press? Will they bite the hand that feeds them? It is safer for them to discuss mixed bathing—it is as easy as picking out fallacies in "Bishop Blougram's Apology" on a wet afternoon.

Providence is said to watch the fall of the sparrows. It is not so careful of human life. There were 57,747 street accidents in the United Kingdom last year, and 2,837 were fatal.

The visitor to London cannot help noticing all sorts of glaring notices in front of our Churches. We, of course, are used to them. Among these notices one of the most prominent during the past week was headed "Calling out of the Army Reserve." In West Kensington, cheek by jowl with this, we have just come across another to the effect that "all persons wishing to use armorial bearings" must pay a special fee for permission to do so, and "an additional fee for the use of same on carriages." A few weeks previously, in another parish, our visitor might have seen a placard on the public hoarding announcing that "a male child, fourteen years of age," was a charge on the rates, and would be emigrated to Australia or Canada unless those, if any, interested in the boy claimed him. Such notices are a fair index to the factors which make up our social environment. England is a Christian country.

It is not a bad thing to be reminded occasionally that we still have such things as heralds in England, and that the misappropriation of armorial bearings is subject to penalties. The Church building is only the official medium for announcing the fact, but it is a very appropriate one. Professor Durkheim tells us that the totem is much more than a mere name. "It is an emblem, a veritable coat-of-arms whose analogies with the arms of heraldry have often been remarked." A leading Cambridge intellectual was once asked how it was that a "stupid race" like the English accomplished such great things. Queen Victoria's alleged eulogy of the Bible as the source of all our greatness was quite an asset to orthodox Protestantism for a time. Rudyard Kipling, however, whose talk about big things is a sort of acquired habit, thinks our absent-mindedness deserves some of the credit. May we suggest "armorial bearings" as the true source of England's greatness?

There is a whole chapter of condensed history in the above-mentioned notification. The defects of our education system, and especially the neglect of science, have been prominently before the public for five or six years. On the one hand, the "upper" classes are said to be lacking in even a rudimentary knowledge of the world around them; on the other, there is an insistent demand for far better training of our artisans. But it used to be a common saying, meant to prove the democratic nature of our political constitution, that any Briton, no matter how lowly his birth, had the chance of becoming Prime Minister or Archbishop of Canterbury. These were the two offices that seemed to be regarded as the supreme prizes of high ambition for those born a long way from Mayfair. It is not difficult to picture in the mind's eye the son of a wage-earner—say the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes' converted bootmaker—becoming the Primate of all England and proudly substituting Cantuar for Smith or Jones. But what an aspiration in the twentieth century! When we think of the capacity going to waste among our boys we are quite distressed.

Mr. Ian Hay, writing of the new army, says that the British soldier is filled with pride at the thought of belonging to the army of one of the leading military powers of the world. And that is all that the war has done for us! The war that was to end war has ended by making us one of the leading military powers. We warned our readers all along that it was doubtful if our militarists hated militarized Germany. They were jealous of her. And now we have annexed Prussianism they are content, for we are the leading military power of the world. And that is the outcome of the "great war." And we call man a rational being!

More of the Dead Sea fruit of German Atheism keeps coming to light. *The Challenge* (April 15), referring to Pastor Friedrich von Bodelschwingh, the "venerable philanthropist" who founded Workers' Colonies in Germany, says that the "Colony of Mercy" near Bielefeld was "a paradise of loving social service." In pre-war days visitors to Bielefeld were always shown the various institutions that formed part of Bodelschwingh's "Inner Mission." His "Arbeiterheim" (Workers' Home) has been the model for many similar institutions

here. The "venerable" pastor was chaplain to the Prussian forces in the campaigns against Denmark, Austria, and France, and quite as good a patriot as any of his Lutheran kinsmen in August, 1914. The Prussian royal family bestowed unstinted patronage on him and his work, just as our own governing class delighted to pat "General" Booth on the back. David von Bodelschwingh, the son of the founder of the Inner Mission, was one of those who signed the manifesto of the German pastors early in the war defending Germany's cause and their own attitude to it.

Discussing religious education in Wales, the writer of "Welsh Notes" in the *Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury* (April 18) indicates clearly enough why so much effort is needed to keep before the public the necessity of religious instruction in the schools, and the dread consequences that will follow its exclusion from them.

The life which is necessary to support religious faith must be nourished religiously.....The co-operation of the home is most sadly lacking.....In the average home religion is reduced to a soft option and all responsibility for active participation in religious training is simply disclaimed.

Where, then, is either the child's "religious instinct" or the nation's "intense conviction" that religious instruction is essential to the right training of this instinct? If the preceding extract represents feeling in Wales, admittedly a somewhat religious country, it throws an instructive light on the alleged "outcry" against "godless schools" in our Dominions. Those who know these regions are well aware that the agitation of the Bible-in-school Leagues is factitious, that it is no uncommon thing for judges in the Supreme Courts to give the educational system the highest credit for its influence on the moral life of the community.

The Rev. T. W. H. Jacob, of Sandown, Isle of Wight, writes in the *Southern Echo* expressing his conviction that "the threatened national strike was over-ruled by God and brought to nothing by means of the twelve hours prayer at Westminster." What a pity it is that the prayers did not cover the whole of the trouble and include the coal question as well. But that is just like these praying specialists, they stop short just where one would like them to go on. Perhaps they forgot to mention to God almighty that the cause of the whole trouble was the coal question. If so, and he needs reminding that the coal trouble is not yet over, some of these praying gentlemen will again wrestle with the Lord on the subject. But what a God, to need twelve hours prayer to get him to do what any sensible person would do at once if he had the power. And what followers! All one can say is that they are worthy of each other. And all these people have a vote!

The Rev. Thomas Tiplady, of Huddersfield, is still worried over the *Freethinker* and its editor. He lets himself go in a paid space in one of the Huddersfield papers in order to tell the people what he thinks of them both. And his opinion is far from flattering. Under our influence it seems that certain misguided souls, "having ceased to honour God," have ceased to honour themselves, and so send Mr. Tiplady copies of the *Freethinker*. Mr. Cohen is in a peculiarly bad way. It is not surprising that he is an Atheist because the quality of his logic is so poor. "To become a Christian he will have to take lessons in logic, and consult a mental optician who will enable him to see a few, at least, of the outstanding facts of life." But all are not so hopeless as the editor of the *Freethinker* and his supporters. Mr. Tiplady knows of Freethinkers whom he honours. These have not found the light, "but they are looking for it." Now we know the *Freethinker* that Mr. Tiplady likes. He is one who is trying his hardest to swallow Christianity. Not one who definitely rejects, but one who wishes he could accept it. Mr. Tiplady is a curious person, and the Freethinkers whom he honours are quite as strange. Perhaps they only exist in Huddersfield.

In the *Church Times* just now priests' wives are airing their views regarding the ministry of women in the

Church. Some of them advocate and others oppose the conferment of Holy Orders upon members of the female sex. With the controversy itself we are not concerned, but we confess to being highly amused by the manner in which it is being conducted. Both sides appeal with equal confidence to the will of God. "A Priest's Wife" says that many women desire to be admitted to the priesthood "because they believe it to be the mind of Christ." "Another Priest's Wife" declares that such women "desire what to us would appear to be a perversion of the will of our Blessed Lord." It is too funny for words. Neither side knows anything of either God or his will. One lady, Constance M. Coltman, however, hits the nail on the head when she calls attention to essential inconsistency of advocating asexuality as regards juries and denying it as applied to the Christian ministry, an inconsistency of which the *Church Times* is glaringly guilty.

Professor David Smith is an enthusiastic believer in the Virgin Birth. Jesus was, not born by ordinary generation. In reality he was not born at all. Dr. Smith's account of it is quite original and startling. He says:—

When it is written that the Incarnate Saviour was "conceived in the Virgin of the Holy Ghost," the meaning is that his humanity was a fresh creation, like the First Adam's, from the hand of God. The Virgin's womb was only, as it were, the nidus where "that Holy Thing which should be born of her" (cf. Luke i. 35) was cradled and nourished. He derived nothing from her.

Egregious! Sheer nonsense! Is it any wonder that unbelievers are rapidly multiplying?

The movement in favour of Sunday recreation is growing. The Beckenham Urban District Council has just decided that organized games shall be permitted this summer "as an experiment." We have little doubt as to the result of the experiment. The example may incite other Councils to tell the local chapelites to go to the Devil and allow games in their parks and recreation grounds.

We are indebted to the *Christian World* for the information that religious instruction in the schools in Germany appears to be collapsing. The City of Bremen has abandoned all religious instruction. In Leipzig, although the law requires religious teaching, the schoolmasters decline to give it. We are very glad to hear this, and hope that it is quite true. We have had the Germany soaked in religion, it will be well to have a Germany that is saturated with Freethought. Well for Germany, that is. It will not be quite so well for other countries if they continue to cram their children with doctrines and ideas that belong to savages.

The other day, in the Divorce Court, Lord Mersey drew attention to the fact of a man drawing something like £4 a week receiving State aid in the expenses attendant on his case. We think a far more important fact is the scandal that legal proceedings are absolutely prohibitive to many unless they happen to have a long purse. What is really needed is such a simplification of the law that it shall be understandable by anyone of ordinary understanding, and a drastic cutting down of the legal charges. The first would bring about the second. As it is, there is hardly another place in the world where the profession of the law is such a thieves' paradise as it is in England. When Upton Sinclair was in England someone was expatiating on the system of "graft" in America, and dilating on its wickedness. Sinclair explained that the distinction was that the Americans had to get by graft what in England men could through established institutions. It was a case of "graft" established and "graft" not yet established. But America may yet reach the position of this country in that matter.

Some twenty years ago a friend of ours was one of the principals in a suit in this country. The same suit had, for business reasons, to be brought in Berlin. In the latter place the expenses of the case were £40. In London, by the exercise of the most rigorous economy, the cost was just over £200. An identical verdict was secured in both places. Justice in England is not sold, but it is a terribly expensive rate at which it is bought.



**G. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.**  
May 1, Failsworth.

### To Correspondents.

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

W. MACFARLANE.—Thanks for correction. It was a mistake. Professor Jones' opinion of Herbert Spencer is doubtless of importance—to Professor Jones. It has become a fashion of late to disparage Spencer, but that will pass. And when every allowance has been made, we should like some of these disparagers to inform us what other philosopher of the nineteenth century stands the test of time so well as Spencer. Some of his conclusions have of necessity become out of date, but had he been as vague as many he would have escaped this from sheer obscurity as to meaning.

F. W. HAUGHTON.—It is certainly startling to those unacquainted with the primitive character of the Christian intelligence to find such crusades as the "Millions now living will never die" insanity. But it helps to drive home the truth that there are very large numbers of Christians who are no better than savages, intellectually. And that consideration should explain, not justify, a great deal that is taking place in the social world. Shall you be in London again soon?

F. R.—Our position with regard to the psychological factor in history has been stated over and over again in the *Freethinker*, and you will find it dealt with in the concluding chapter in *Determinism or Free Will*.

GAMALIEL SENIOR.—Your "Scripture Reader" is doing what is not uncommon with such people—saying that which is not true. Bishop W. M. Brown's address is in his book *Communism and Christianity*. He will be quite surprised to learn that he doesn't exist, and has never been a Bishop.

AT. FRONT ROW.—Thanks for parcel. We are unable to say when there will be lectures in the neighbourhood of Tottenham. It will depend upon local efforts.

J. COOKSON.—Thanks for getting new subscribers. You will find all you require in the *Bible Handbook*, which will be on sale almost immediately.

A. W. MALCOLMSON.—We cannot say what newsagent supplies this paper at Brighton. But it can be ordered from any newsagent, and at any of W. H. Smith's shops or railway stalls. If you have any difficulty in getting your order supplied we shall be obliged if you will write us.

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

The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E. C. 4.

The National Secular Society's office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E. C. 4.

When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, giving as long notice as possible.

Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E. C. 4, by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E. C. 4, and not to the Editor.

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

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

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

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—

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

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

Read, not to contradict and confute—not to believe and take for granted—not to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider.—Bacon.

### Sugar Plums.

Mr. Cohen lectures to-day in the Secular Sunday-school, Pole Lane, Failsworth. His subject at 2.45 is "Free-thought," and at 6.30 "What we Pay for Christianity." Admission is free.

We publish in another column the Agenda of the National Secular Society's Conference, which will take place at Swansea on Whit-Sunday. We think that the various motions will afford the basis for an interesting discussion on a number of very important topics, and we shall be surprised if this does not turn out to be the case. We are expecting a good rally of Freethinkers from all parts of South Wales, and are also hoping that the Conference will act as a spur to renewed propagandist activity.

There is one item on the Agenda in which we have a special interest, and that is the President's statement *re* the National Secular Society's Trust Deed. At both the Manchester and Birmingham Conferences resolutions were passed authorizing the Executive to go ahead with the work of placing the finances of the National Secular Society upon a basis of full legal security. And it was finally decided that the best method was to proceed by way of a Trust Deed, which is the way in which the funds of all the Nonconformist churches are secured. What has prevented this being done in the case of the N. S. S. is that up to recent years the objects of the Society as described in its "Principles and Objects" would have been declared illegal, and the purpose of the Trust, therefore, invalid. This bar was finally removed by the decision in the Bowman case, and there is no longer the least possibility of any English court declaring the objects of the N. S. S. to be illegal. The way thus became clear for placing the N. S. S. upon the same basis, so far as the validity of a Trust Deed is concerned, with the non-established religious organizations of Great Britain. This is a great point to have reached, and the creation of this Trust Deed marks another milestone along the road to the complete equality of all opinions before the law. And every little helps. Every advance brings us a step nearer the time when the law will act with absolute impartiality so far as religious and non-religious opinions are concerned.

Mr. Cohen will have to make a full statement on this matter at the Conference. All we need say now is that the Deed has been most carefully drawn up so as to guarantee the complete authority of the Annual Conference and, under it, the Executive. There are five trustees, three of whom are the President, Secretary, and Treasurer of the Society in virtue of their office. The other two will be appointed. The function of the trustees will be of a purely financial character. It will be their duty to receive all legacies, or gifts to the Society, money or property will be held by them in the name of the Trust, and they will only disburse funds on a properly drawn resolution of the Executive. Provided that resolution is properly passed and presented to them their financial responsibility in the matter ends. The other details in the Deed are all subordinate to these main purposes.

It is a great thing to know that after having for over half a century been a legal outlaw, the members of the National Secular Society may feel that their funds are in a position of absolute legal security. And those who wish to benefit the National Secular Society by their wills, or by substantial gifts may do so with a sense of complete security. Their money can only be spent upon the purposes for which the N. S. S. exists. Soon after the Manchester Conference, at which the original resolution was passed, a friend informed us that he had placed the N. S. S. in his will for £500, and we have no doubt that there are many others who will follow so excellent an example. There is only one thing that now remains to be done, and that is to secure the abolition of the Blasphemy laws. They are both a danger and a disgrace while they remain.

A life of Ingersoll, brief in compass and moderate in price has long been sought after by Freethinkers in this country, and this want has now been well met by Mr. C. T. Gorham in *Robert G. Ingersoll* (Watts and Co.). The life is well and interestingly written and contains four plates, one of which gives us a picture of the father of the famous American Freethinker. It would be a poor compliment to Mr. Gorham's work to say that it leaves the reader satisfied. Had it been less well done the reader might have felt that he had had enough. As it is he feels that he would like more, and one closes the book with a feeling of regret that there is not more to read. Anyway, we congratulate Mr. Gorham on having written an interesting sketch of one of the most arresting figures in the history of American heresy. The book is published in two forms, in paper covers at 2s. and in cloth at 3s. 6d. The Pioneer Press has on hand a stock of this work, which is uniform with the *Life of Bradlaugh*, and can supply it direct. Postage: paper 3d., cloth 4d.

## The Origin of Christianity.

### XV.

(Continued from page 261.)

We have, then, in the representation of Jesus (in the Gospels) something like a picture coming to us from the easel of an artist. The painter may have had an actual model to work from, but all the adjuncts with which he has elaborated his subject are purely ideal. *He puts him into what attitude he pleases, surrounds him with all required accessories, and makes him express the story he wishes to illustrate in the way he thinks most effective.* The shadows are deepened, the light is thrown in vividly, and the foreground brilliantly coloured. But the picture at length is found defective. It does not meet its ends. It requires fresh colouring to raise its effects. It then falls into the hands of other painters, such as are the professional restorers, who overlay it with further efforts of art....The primitive Jewish design is barely perceptible, and for practical purposes gone. The Gentile over-layings predominate, and alone feed the apprehensions.—T. L. Strange, "The Sources and Development of Christianity," 1875, pp. 188-9.

THE Epistles ascribed to Paul, whether written by Paul or not, are now, as we have seen, recognized to be older than the four Gospels, for he never mentions or quotes from them. Paul was a native of Tarsus, a Graeco-Asiatic city of Cilicia.

The successors of Alexander the Great were Greek kings, ruling oriental lands and people. In some cases they founded new cities, like Alexandria. In other cases they altered the constitution and imported new citizens, favourable to their rule, into already existing cities and gave them new names. Alexander gave his name to the new city of Alexandria which he created; there were several Antiochis and Seleucias named after his successors. Tarsus itself was renamed Antioch, but the name fell into disuse, chiefly because so many other cities bore the same name.

To establish these Oriental-Greek cities on a permanent basis, the Greek kings introduced colonists, and experience taught them that the best colonists for their purpose were Greeks and Jews, only among them were to be found that familiarity with ideals, and power and habit of thinking and of working for future and remote ends which these kings needed in their colonists. It may seem strange, says Professor Ramsay,—

that the Jews should be found by Seleucid kings their best and most loyal subjects outside of Palestine, for those kings were considered by the Jews of Palestine to be the most deadly enemies of their race and religion. But the Jew outside of Palestine was a different person and differently situated from the Jew in his own land. Abroad he was resigned to accept government of the land in which he lived, and to make the best of it; and he found that loyalty was by far the best policy. He could be useful to the government; and the government was eager to profit by and

ready to reward his loyalty. Thus their interests were identical.<sup>1</sup>

The mixture of Jewish, Greek, and Oriental races stimulated intellectual curiosity; the orient and the occident met and exchanged views and opinions, and tried to understand one another. These Grecian-Asiatic cities were founded between 300 and 100 B.C. Tarsus, Syrian Antioch, Pisidian Antioch, Loadicea, Thyatira, Ephesus, Smyrna, Troas, Pergamum, and Philadelphia were all founded, or refounded by Greek kings, and it is important to notice that it is these very cities which form the scene of Paul's missionary labours. It was in the mingling of Jewish, Greek and Oriental religions that Christianity arose. Professor Ramsay says:—

Almost every city that plays an important part in the early Christian history was founded, or at least refounded and increased in population by a Seleucid or other monarch from one or another of the various dynasties that ruled over parts of Asia Minor.<sup>2</sup>

The same writer goes on to speak of the intellectual curiosity aroused by this amalgamation of various nations, he says:—

This philosophical speculation cannot be properly conceived in its historical development without bearing in mind the mixed population and the collision of Jewish and Greek thought which belonged to those great Graeco-Asiatic cities. It united Greek and Jewish elements in arbitrary eclectic systems. The mixture of Greek and Jewish thought is far more conspicuous in Asia Minor than in Europe.....all along the great roads leading east and west across Asia Minor—the minds of men were filled with crude attempts at harmonizing and mingling Oriental (especially Jewish) and Greek ideas. Their attempts took many shapes, from mere vulgar magical formulæ and arts to the serious and lofty morality of Athenodorus, the Tarsian, in his highest moments of philosophy.<sup>3</sup>

Professor Ramsay says of the colonists planted in these Greek cities:—

The language of the settlers was Greek, the language of trade and education, and it was through these cities that a viceroy of Greek civilization was spread over the Asiatic coasts. The country people for centuries continued to use the native language, and even the native part of the city population long spoke the native language alongside of, or to the exclusion of Greek. But Greek was the sole language of education, of government, and also of trade on anything except the humblest scale. Those who learned to read and write learned to read and write in Greek; and the native languages have left hardly any written memorial.<sup>4</sup>

That explains why our Gospels and Epistles, although written by Jews, were composed in Greek. Also the fact that the Epistles being written by people living in the country of which they are writing do not make the geographical and historical blunders so prominent in the Gospels, the authors of which were probably Jews born out of Palestine and had no first-hand knowledge of the country.

Having laid the foundations, we propose in future articles to deal with the origin of the myth of Jesus, the supposed founder of Christianity. W. MANN.

We may say that we have now reached a stage at which it is admitted by everyone who counts (except at the Vatican), that there is nothing in earth or heaven which may not legitimately be treated without any of the assumptions which in old days authority used to impose.—J. B. Bury.

<sup>1</sup> *The Expositor*, December, 1901.

<sup>2</sup> *The Expositor*, May, 1906, p. 462.

<sup>3</sup> *The Expositor*, December, 1901, p. 410.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 412-413.

## What I Believe.

I PROPOSE briefly to state what I believe, and ask you to consider whether my beliefs are dangerous to the morality or happiness of mankind. I say what I believe because it is my first principle, as a Freethinker, that each of us should think and believe for himself. My beliefs do not bind you; your beliefs do not bind me.

I believe that there is not one scrap of scientific evidence of the existence of the Hindoo god Brahma, the Mohammedan god Allah, the Jewish and Christian god Jehovah, or any other god, by any other name, that has ever been worshipped by any people, or any other god that can be described in words. I believe it is impossible to show that there exists in the universe any being that thinks or lives apart from what is commonly called matter. I believe it is impossible to show that any person will continue to think and live after he is dead, although I think that many spiritualists believe that this has been done, and I respect their opinions, just as I respect the honest opinions of Christians, while I challenge the truth of their alleged facts.

Do I then deny the existence of any god and the future life of any man? Absolutely, no; relatively, yes. Absolutely, we know nothing, but relatively we know much. We do not absolutely know that there is not some world where cats and dogs grow on trees, where the clergy are all Christ-like and the politicians all honest. But relatively we do. We know that observed facts are all against there being any such world. I do not absolutely know that there is no God nor any future life, but the facts of the universe seem to me to be all against there being either. If anything can be scientifically proved we know that no person can live or think without what is known as a material body.

A common objection to such a belief is that it tends to make us unhappy and destroys the basis of morality. Even if this were true, it would have nothing to do with the truth or falsity of the belief. The only vital question about any belief is: Is it true? Consequences have nothing to do with it. Whether a person who believes as I do will be happy or not on account of such beliefs will depend upon his temperament. At the present stage of human development it seems to me that a very happy life is impossible for those who think deeply and feel keenly. But I also think that to believe in no God is much more productive of happiness than to believe in any God who will allow one idler to live in a palace at the expense of a thousand workers who fester in slums and tenement houses; who will support one woman in unearned luxury by working others to death or driving them to vice. And I would rather die and be cremated and have my ashes sprinkled about my garden, there to bloom next year as some lovely flower than die and be sent to hell while worse men are in heaven, or to heaven while better men are in hell. I do not claim that my belief is a very happy one, but it is so much happier than to believe that any little child will be eternally roasted for not going to Sunday-school that I have no wish to exchange it for the horrible creed of orthodox Christianity; and it is so much nearer to ascertained facts than any other belief I know of, that I cannot but hold it until somebody convinces me that it is false.

And as to whether my belief tends to destroy morality, I have only to say that those who hold it intelligently are about the most high-minded and morally clean persons I have ever met.

Leaving the subject of religion all too quickly, I come to my economic beliefs. I believe that involuntary and undeserved poverty is a social curse out of which flow nearly all crime, vice and unhappiness. A

poor man is almost necessarily a slave, and may easily become a criminal. And I believe, further, that this wide-spread poverty does not arise, primarily, from the laziness, extravagance or drunkenness of the poor. As a rule the poor are more industrious, thrifty and temperate than the rich. If, apparently, there are more drunken idlers among the poor than among the rich it is because the poor are much more numerous and because the vices of the poor are more exposed to the public view than those of the rich. What the poor do everybody knows because the poor have little or no privacy. What the rich do few know because in their vices they can avoid publicity. Involuntary poverty is not the fault but the misfortune of its victims. It is caused by unjust conditions of society under which the workers are deprived of a large part of the wealth they produce. Look at the number of persons who do not earn their living by productive labour: beggars, thieves, criminals in prison, kings, presidents, soldiers, professional politicians, landlords, usurers, protected manufacturers, government officials and I know not how many others. All these have to be supported, and whatever goes to them must come out of what the workers produce.

I have not space to fully explain just how the workers are made to support all these idlers, but it is really very simple. Modern life resembles the three card trick and the three cards employed are known as rent, interest and profits. There is also a fourth card in this game of life called compulsory taxation, but the worst cheating is done with the other three. Now, I believe in getting rid of rent because it is something that idlers appropriate out of the earnings of workers. This could be done by the simple plan of having each person control only as much land as he himself needs for purposes of production. That would set vacant land free for the use of those who wished to use it, and then no one would have to pay rent for the privilege of living on this earth. I also believe in getting rid of interest, because it is something that is not produced by the person who gets it, and I think this could be done by breaking up the present monopoly of banking and thus enabling all persons possessed of sound credit to obtain banking facilities at a fair price.

I also believe in getting rid of profits, and I think this would follow on the abolition of rent and interest. But I do not believe in doing these things by violence. I think they cannot be done in that way. The only way in which they can be done is by getting people to think. The masses must first come to see what are the causes of poverty and then the right methods of removing those causes, and there can be no doubt that the right methods are peaceful methods. The present social system is vitiated by wrong beliefs—superstitions—and the only way in which it can be improved is by undermining those superstitions and putting true beliefs—facts—in their place. This can only be done by thinking, speaking and writing. This is where I stand then to-day.

In the domain of religion, I stand for a careful study of facts and the acceptance of whatever logical deductions may follow from those facts, and for a rigorous exclusion of all fairy tales and baseless assumptions; and in the domain of economics I stand for the right of everybody to produce all he needs and to keep all he produces. I stand for absolute freedom of thought and against all authoritative statements of doctrines; for perfect freedom of speech and against all forms of persecution for the expression of opinion; for brave and earnest men and women and against bad gods and evil spirits; I am for making this world a better place to live in, whether there is another world or not; for absolutely free competition and against all monopolies; for the slave and against the tyrant; for the people and against those who rule them by violence; for the poverty stricken workers and against the

wealthy idlers, *unless those idlers can prove that they do not get what rightfully belongs to the workers*, but I believe that if a man, without the protection of statute law, can earn £1,000,000 he has as much right to it all as if it were only ten shillings.

I believe that the only just way to obtain wealth is by wages or by free gift. I do not believe that wealth should be held in common or equally divided, but that each person should be secure in the possession of what he justly obtains.

I believe that women should be as free as men; that they should have complete control of their persons. I believe that divorce should be as free as marriage; that men and women should be free to arrange their relations to each other to suit themselves, without any interference by force of the government.

I believe in voluntary co-operation in the production of wealth and in social harmony by mutual consent, but not in statute laws enforced by armed policemen and soldiers. I believe that *all* persons who use physical weapons against their fellows are enemies of progress and are dangerous to society.

I recognize that the harmonizing of society can only be achieved by education in economic science and that sociologic evolution is necessarily of a slow growth which cannot be hastened by sudden or violent changes.

G. O. W.

## National Secular Society.

### ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

THE DOCKERS' HALL, HIGH STREET, SWANSEA.

WHIT-SUNDAY, MAY 15, 1921.

#### Agenda.

1. Minutes of last Conference.
2. Executive's Annual Report.
3. Financial Report.
4. Election of President.  
Motion by Bethnal Green Branch :—  
"That Mr. C. Cohen be re-elected President of the N.S.S."
5. Election of Secretary.  
Motion by the Executive :—  
"That Miss E. M. Vance be re-elected General Secretary."
6. Election of Treasurer.  
Motion by the Bethnal Green Branch :—  
"That Mr. C. G. Quinton be elected Treasurer."
7. Election of Auditor.  
Motion by the Executive :—  
"That Messrs. H. Theobald and Co. (Incorporated Accountants), be appointed Auditors."
8. Nominations for Executive.  
SCOTLAND.—Mr. James Neate, nominated by Glasgow Branch.  
WALES.—Mr. J. T. Lloyd nominated by Swansea Branch.  
N.E. GROUP.—Mr. C. H. Kelf, nominated by Newcastle Branch.  
Mr. A. B. Moss, nominated by South Shields Branch.  
N.W. GROUP.—Miss Pitcher and Mr. R. H. Rosetti, nominated by Liverpool and Manchester Branches.  
MIDLAND GROUP.—Miss M. Pankhurst and Mr. J. G. Dobson, nominated by Birmingham Branch.  
SOUTH LONDON.—Mr. F. R. Corrigan, nominated by South London Branch.  
NORTH LONDON.—Miss K. B. Kough, nominated by North London Branch.  
EAST LONDON.—Mr. H. Silverstein, nominated by Bethnal Green and West Ham Branches.

9. Motion by Birmingham, Manchester and South Shields Branches :—

"That in view of the recent, and the recurring cases of Blasphemy, it be an instruction to the Executive to take immediate steps to circularize members of Parliament with a view to the abolition of these iniquitous laws, that a campaign should be initiated throughout the country with a view to the education of public opinion on this matter."

10. Motion by Mr. A. B. Moss :—

"That in view of the many recent cases before the Courts in which freedom of publication and the free expression of opinion is seriously threatened, this Conference is of opinion that the formation of an Independent Committee, made up of representatives of all shades of liberal opinion, for the purpose of watching such cases, is desirable, and hereby authorizes the Executive to take whatever steps may be necessary to bring such a Committee into existence, and so safeguard the invaluable right of freedom of propaganda."

11. Motion by the Executive :—

"That Clause V., Rule 17 be amended so as to read, "All motions to be submitted to the Annual Conference must be forwarded to the General Secretary at least four weeks before the meeting, the complete Agenda to be issued to the Branches at least fourteen days before the Conference."

12. Motion by Birmingham Branch :—

"That this Conference calls upon the Government to institute legislation providing for the repeal of all laws which authorize the exemption from taxation of churches and places of worship in the United Kingdom, and so end a practice which throws a part of the maintenance of churches and chapels upon the entire body of ratepayers."

13. Statement by the President *re* Trust Deed for the National Secular Society.

14. Motion by the Manchester Branch :—

"That in view of the determined efforts of various sections of the Christian community to maintain a form of Sabbatarianism that has had so depressing an effect upon the national character, this Conference urges upon all Freethinkers to do what lies in their power to maintain an active agitation in favour of the complete secularizing of the day of rest so that it may be spent in ways that will really contribute to the physical, mental, and moral health of the community."

15. Motion by Mr. R. H. Rosetti :—

"This Conference deplores the fact that notwithstanding the bitter experience of the late war, that vicious competition in armaments which has repeatedly shown its inability to promote the cause of peace should continue; it deplores the fact that the public mind should still be debauched by talk of future wars, and that the resources of this and other countries should be expended on the building up of large naval and military establishments, and urges upon the nation that the ideal of Thomas Paine of a League of Nations, formed for the maintenance of peace and the settlement of all international disputes by legal and reasonable methods, should be substituted for the present ineffective appeal to arms."

16. Motion by West Ham Branch :—

"That having advocated during the whole of its existence a reform of the marriage laws to secure equal justice for husband and wife, with a reasonable liberty and facility of divorce, this Conference of the National Secular Society expresses its pleasure at the advances already made in this direction, and protests against the intrusion into the subject of religious prejudice and bigotry, and demands that, marriage being an essentially civil institution, its contract and dissolution shall be settled solely with a view to social well-being and the interests of all the parties involved."

17. Motion by Mr. J. T. Lloyd:—

"This Conference deplors the repeated failure of the Government to settle the education question on lines of justice to the whole of the community, and in view of the constant attempts to arrange a compromise with the various Christian sects in such a manner that their religion will continue to be established in the State schools, thus receiving endowment from public funds, insists that the only policy of peace and justice is to confine the education given in all State aided schools to purely secular subjects."

The Conference will sit at the Dockers' Hall. Morning Session, 10.30 to 12.30; afternoon session at 2.30. Delegates will be required to produce their credentials at the doors. Members, the current card of membership. Only members of the Society are entitled to be present. A public meeting will be held at 7 p.m. in the Elysium.

By order of the Executive,

C. COHEN, *President.*

E. M. VANCE, *Secretary.*

## Correspondence.

### HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Whether orthodox critics will appreciate my efforts to prove harmony between the Gospels on the resurrection of Christ I am not prepared to say. The question that concerns me for the present is, Will Mr. McLaren and readers of the *Freethinker* do so? In his letter he says, "the divergencies are to him contributory evidence," "that the resurrection narrative is mythical." Very well. Now suppose I remove these contributory causes of unbelief out of his way, will that not be "contributory evidence" that he is wrong in supposing the resurrection to be mythical, and that he also may be mistaken in his views *re* the Virgin birth and other things in the Bible now rejected by him? But one thing at a time. The resurrection of Christ is the foundation truth of Christianity, and if that is mythical Christianity crumbles to pieces. See 1 Cor. xv. 17, 18. I am not troubling about the orthodox critics mentioned, and from whom quotations are given, but I am about A. D. McLaren, Esq., and am out to convert *him* to my way of thinking *if I can*, and then perhaps he will prove a better man than to help D.D.'s and professors to see things as they should. So once more I ask him to favour myself and readers of the *Freethinker* with the divergencies he has in mind that I may begin the task I have set myself hopefully to do. "UNORTHODOX."

### CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

SIR,—I ought, perhaps, to have made the reservation in my last that caning is certainly the natural and appropriate penalty for actual *violence*, especially for cruelty to weaker children, which, however, it never is inflicted for, although severely applied for any lack of abject servility to teacher, failure to understand a lesson, or any trifling technical offence, in all of which cases it is illogical and futile. The unimaginative thoughtfulness of teachers is nowhere better exemplified than in their notions of punishment, which they exercise with such alacrity that they do not even trouble to inquire into the matter at all. As one governess (her name is appropriately the feminine of "bully") told me, she whips all children sent up by the under-teachers without any investigation whatever, to which my reply was that the work could then be just as well done by a whipping machine! The next most common reprisal, the writing out of some puerile phrase like "I must not talk in class" one hundred times, or the copying of a lesson or "lines," is also bad, as it cramps and ruins the handwriting, while failing to stimulate the intellect, which the learning by heart of some good passage of prose or poetry certainly does and fills the mind with noble thoughts, for which the child may later in life thank his instructor. An hour's drill is also a good exercise, irksome yet healthful. I do not dispute the effectiveness of "Parent's" spankings, but discipline and firmness can be upheld in a less barbaric fashion,

though certainly there is a vast difference between a father thus correcting his own child, any injury to whom he will himself suffer for, and an irresponsible strange man so attacking him, far more if the child is a girl, when such an assault is disgusting and revolting in the extreme, both as besmirching the modesty and delicacy which she has a right to retain unsullied, and as arousing the vilest passion in the man of which human nature is capable, the horrible instinct of sadism, latent in all of us, but which only a few have the power to exercise. Yet this, it seems, is directly the object of that abominable body, the Liverpool Corporal Correction League. Plenty of teachers will doubtless approve of their advice, as many seem to experience a fiendish delight in child torture, and particularly in breaking down their self respect. One irascible vixen here pulled a little girl's arm right out of its socket, another was given a pinch that resembled a dog bite, while I have met many deafened for life by beatings on the ears with hands, sticks and heavy books. As one little martyr said to me: "They learns us nothing, sir, they 'ate us." Surely "Parent" cannot approve such outrages as these!

EVACUSTES A. PHIPSON.

### CRUELTY TO CHILDREN.

SIR,—I am pleased and quite agree with Mr. Effel, but I do not consider that his pleasing article proves my theories wrong or proves anything else, for that matter, of any real importance. He is pleased to shirk the issues, seeking silly sentiment, popular prejudices and exciting anecdotes instead of facing forcing facts. That he should be pleased to have six children is his own look out, hardly mine, and I should not be blamed. That I should please three boys is my own pleasing concern and although pleased to accept pleasant sympathy, pleasing as pleasant sympathy always is, I am less pleased and willing to accept any blame on either of these matters. Perhaps I have mistaken the point of the article; perhaps it had no point; perhaps it does not blame me for having children at all! Thousands of children have passed through Mr. Effel's hands. I have only three and they neither increase nor multiply by numbers. Neither do I deal in children preferring to deal in facts. Perhaps Mr. Effel will forgive me considering his article highly interesting but somewhat absurd and fastidious, dealing as it does with the fearsome, ferocious, feeble, fickle and foolish father instead, as one might have supposed from the heading, with the child or with the argument.

PARENT.

### DR. MARIE STOPES AND THE FREETHINKER.

SIR,—I am very glad you criticised Dr. Marie Stopes; the *Freethinker* seems to be almost the only journal concerned with *justice*. You will see by the enclosed cutting that her book has been pronounced to be "obscene" (that convenient word to modern inquisitors) by two judges out of three in "pious America." I feel sure that we Freethinkers, so far, sympathize with the authoress and wish her a victory. But I am told, by those who have heard her, that she is by no means broad-minded, or even scientific, on such questions as psycho-analysis and sexual inversion, and I wonder what she now thinks of Puritan tyranny and surviving taboos?

TAB CAN.

[The cutting referred to is a press notice that one of Dr. Stopes' books has been declared obscene by a United States' Court.—Editor.]

### "THE NEW BIBLE" OF H. G. WELLS.

SIR,—Mr. Wells seems sometimes to pose as an intellectual pontiff and presents theses so bizarre, and yet so agreeable to the ill-instructed millions, that every seasoned student of sociology and history must on several occasions have reckoned him among those modern sophists who please the conventional crowd and stiffen the opposition to rational thought and morals. Of course, consistency is not his forte and he seems often to be in a hurry. The author of an *Invisible King* now wails for a New Bible. The Bible was "the cement of Hebrew-Christian Societies"; "our modern Communities are no longer cemented." So we are to have a Wells' authorized version of wisdom and knowledge! It is a peculiar historical perspective that blames us for "allowing the Bible to become antiquated and remote." Liberty for properly equipped teachers to instruct boys and girls of, say, fourteen and upwards upon the evolution of religion and of literature is more important than replacing the

Bible with a Wells' manual of wisdom and knowledge. It is an education department permeated with the modern spirit that is required. The Bible served for the ages of slavish belief. It is teaching to think that our age demands. Good manuals are wanted in all departments of

[Several letters are held over till next week. We again impress upon correspondents the need for brevity.—Editor.] study and interest. As for the cement of communities, it is the spirit of Communism that will solve that, as the true spirit of science, that is, social knowledge, is solving technical problems. E. T. K.

Dates.

SOME students who take the New Testament seriously Are having a terrific discussion about dates : They are trying to determine definitely the dates Of the "Miraculous Conception," the "Virgin birth," "The Crucifixion," and "The Resurrection."

Oh what a waste of good gray matter!

Let me see : what are the definite dates of all the alleged facts in Cinderella and The Little Glass Slipper, Jack and the Bean Stalk, Puss in Boots, and Jack the Giant Killer?

Pshaw, and also Shucks!

Once upon a time is definite date enough for any fairy tale.

HOWELL S. ENGLAND.

Obituary.

I have the painful duty of recording the death of Mrs. Willis, wife of our member and lecturer, Mr. F. E. Willis, which took place on Tuesday the 19th inst. from heart failure. Her death was painfully sudden, as in a few hours after the attack she passed away. Sympathy is expressed on every hand for she was ever ready to render help where distress and sickness needed it. The Birmingham Branch will miss a pleasant and familiar figure at its meetings. The funeral took place at Yardley cemetery on the 22nd., members of the Branch attending. A Secular service was used.

Mr. E. Smith (Walsall), a staunch Freethinker and supporter of our movement, has had to face one of life's terrible calamities by the death of his wife and her mother, the result of a motor car accident on the 10th inst. The car in which they were seated was overturned in a collision and, together with a daughter, all were pinned underneath with the above fatal result. The daughter escaped with bruises and shock.

At a meeting of members of the Birmingham Branch, N. S. S., on the 21st inst. a vote of condolence was unanimously passed to Mr. Willis, Mr. Smith and members of their families in their bereavement. The news came as a painful surprise to the meeting.

J. PARTRIDGE. Branch Secretary.

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.

PROPAGANDIST LEAFLETS. 2. Bible and Teetotalism, J. M. Wheeler; 3. Principles of Secularism, C. Watts; 4. Where Are Your Hospitals? R. Ingersoll; 5. Because the Bible Tells Me So, W. P. Ball; 6. Why Be Good? G. W. Foote; 7. Advice to Parents, Ingersoll. Often the means of arresting attention and making new members. Price 1s. per hundred, post free 1s. 2d. Samples on receipt of stamped addressed envelope.—N. S. S. SECRETARY, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C. 4.

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.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand) : 3.15, Mr. McLaren, "Christianity and Labour—May Day Reflections."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park) : 3.15 and 6.15, Mr. E. Burke, Lectures.

HYDE PARK.—3, Mr. Shaller, A Lecture.

REGENTS PARK.—11.30, Mr. Jenkins, A Lecture.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

FAILSWORTH SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Sunday-school, Pole Lane, Failsworth) : Mr. Chapman Cohen, 2.45, "Freethought, What it is and what it is not" ; 6.30, "What we Pay for Christianity."

LEEDS BRANCH N. S. S. (Youngman's Rooms, 19 Lowerhead Road, Leeds) : 6.30, Mr. Bertnell, "Poetical Selections."

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.

BARSAC—Sound Dry Wine, 1917 vintage, 60s. per dozen bottles, delivered.—E. PARIENTE, 34 Rosemont Road, Richmond, Surrey. Agents wanted, good commission.

**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.  
 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 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 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 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.

## 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 FARRINGDON 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 FARRINGDON STREET, E.C. 4.

## RELIGION AND SEX.

Studies in the Pathology of Religious Development.

BY  
**CHAPMAN COHEN.**

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

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

Price Six Shillings. Postage 9d.

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

A New Life of Ingersoll.

**ROBERT G. INGERSOLL**

BY  
**C. T. GORHAM.**

A Biographical Sketch of America's Greatest  
Freethought Advocate. With Four Plates.

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

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

More Bargains in Books.

## The Ethic 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 FARRINGDON STREET, E.C. 4.

## THE "FREETHINKER."

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

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

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

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

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