

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. 19

SUNDAY, MAY 8, 1921.

PRICE THREEPENCE

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
<i>Advising the Clergy.—The Editor</i> - - - - -	289
<i>What is Christianity?—J. T. Lloyd</i> - - - - -	290
<i>The Irreligion of Napoleon.—Mimnermus</i> - - - - -	292
<i>Christianity and Labour—May Day Reflections.—A. D. McLaren</i> - - - - -	293
<i>The Relativity of Knowledge.—Keridon</i> - - - - -	293
<i>Christian Dope and Dope Merchants.—Athos Zeno</i> - - - - -	298
<i>A Modern Mystic.—William Repton</i> - - - - -	300
<i>My Uncle William.—Howell S. England</i> - - - - -	302
<i>Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letter to the Editor, etc.</i>	

Views and Opinions.

Advising the Clergy.

Suppose one were to button-hole an acquaintance and give him a long lecture on the need for his telling the truth. Quite properly he would resent the personal advice as an insult. If one were to ask a number of members of Parliament, or even members of the Government, to attend a meeting for the purpose of their being advised to the same end, they also would treat the advice in the same way. So would a group of business men, or newspaper men, or, indeed, almost any other group. Whether they were telling lies or not would not matter, they would all resent the personal application to them of a lesson which took for granted the fact that they were liars. But there is, apparently, one class who can be publicly branded by their friends as being liars, in either a negative or a positive sense, and neither they nor their friends see anything wrong or insulting about it. This class is the clergy. And the proof lies before me as I write. Professor Pringle Pattison, an eminent Christian, has just issued a pamphlet on "The Duty of Candour in Religious Teaching." It is addressed, primarily, not to the laity, but to the clergy. They are not told that it is their duty to find out what is true about the Bible, it is assumed they know. They are simply told that they ought to tell their congregation what they themselves know to be the truth. And, clearly, when a body of men are told that they should for the future tell their hearers the truth, the only possible inference is that they have hitherto been telling them lies. That is about as severe an indictment as could be brought against any body of men. If it is not felt to be an insult it can only be because the clergy are not generally regarded as being bound to tell the truth, and do not themselves think they are bound to tell it. Theirs is not an ordinary job; they are not bound by ordinary rules; the usual rules of mental rectitude do not apply.

* * *

When to Tell the Truth.

While I write there lies before me a number of newspaper reviews of Professor Pringle Pattison's pamphlet. And the striking thing about them all is that not one recognizes the plain and obvious inference from the Professor's exordium. It is taken for granted that the clergy are quite justified in teaching a thing

as true which they know to be false, so long as the rest of the people are not so well informed as themselves. They are only advised to speak when risks are run by maintaining silence. That is really the basis of the Professor's advice. He wants the truth about the Bible telling so that Christians may be armed against "rationalistic criticism." And, therefore, one must assume that if there were no Freethinking criticism of the Bible, and if there were no danger of Christians coming into contact with genuine information about the Bible, the need for the clergy speaking the truth would not be very acute. What the Professor is really saying in substance is:—

Gentlemen, it is impossible to go on for ever telling the old stories about the Bible. Thanks to Freethinkers the laity have within their reach as much information on the subject as you have, and not nearly so strong an inducement to keep their knowledge to themselves. So if you go on telling the ancient falsehoods about the Bible you will certainly be found out. And in finding out about the one thing they may find out about others. So, gentlemen, I advise you to practise a little candour—not too much, but just enough to allay the growing inquisitiveness of your congregations. And if you don't tell all the truth, you must really tell fewer lies. It is your duty to be candid—because it is no longer safe to be otherwise.

If these appeals to the clergy to tell their congregations the truth do not mean this, will some one be good enough to tell me what they do mean?

* * *

The Great Lying Creed.

It would be just as well if those who counsel the clergy to tell their congregations the truth were to ask themselves who is responsible for the fact that they have not been told the truth hitherto. For over 250 years the general truth about the Bible has been before the world. It is about half that period since Paine published his *Age of Reason*, written for the people. With what result, so far as the clergy and the official Churches were concerned? These, now admitted truths, were opposed by the whole force of organized Christianity. The men and women who strove to tell the people the truth about the Bible were hounded down, imprisoned, slandered, and persecuted in all sorts of petty ways. It was made a penal offence to tell the truth, to say things about the Bible that to-day are being said by highly paid professors of the Christian religion. Nearly all that Professor Pringle Pattison is now urging the clergy to tell their congregations, could have been told them—certainly in substance—from the pages of these despised Freethinkers. And one may certainly draw the further inference from the appeal to the clergy that during the whole of its history the Christian Church has been building itself upon a lie or a series of lies. It has taught lies, and it has induced the law to make it a penal offence to tell the truth. And even now its avowed reason for not persisting in its official lies is that it will no longer pay. The people are getting too wide-awake. And if their awakening takes the right course it should lead to the recognition of the fact that no more powerful agency

for the dissemination of falsehood than the Christian Church has ever existed. Certainly, if there is in this country a more demoralizing institution than the Christian Church we should be obliged by having our attention directed to its existence.

* * *

A Policy of Slander.

It seems almost impossible for a defender of religion to keep to the exact truth. Thus, among the reviews of the Professor's pamphlet to which I have referred is one from the *Manchester Guardian*, and signed "G. J." "G. J.," if he is of opinion that it is no longer safe to tell lies about the Bible, evidently has a different conviction about other matters. Referring to the *Freethinker* he says that from the current issue he sees that "the ancient gibes about the contradictions of the Bible, the story of Jonah and so forth are still being served up in the name of Freethought." The man who can take up any number of the *Freethinker* and then say that it is wholly or even mainly concerned with Bible contradictions evidences a capacity for falsehood that a mediæval priest might envy. The comment is just an illustration of that tradition of slander which it has been the work of the Christian Church to foster. The unbeliever must be pictured as either morally weak or mentally deficient. And exactly the same policy is applied to a paper such as the *Freethinker*. There is probably no advanced paper in England that is better known among newspaper men than is this one. Nor is there any which the religious world dreads more. They know that it is written with a purpose, that its contributors never fear to speak out, and that it has never made the mistake of confusing deadly dulness with profundity. And one can safely challenge comparison with any paper in Britain for what its late editor called "fundamental brain power." And as the *Freethinker* cannot be answered, the policy is to pretend that it is vulgar, abusive, anything that will keep people from reading it. It is just part of the policy which leads the clergy not to tell the truth about the Bible, and which Professor Pattison cautions them may lead to their being found out.

* * *

To Mend is to End.

I do not know whether "G. J." is a clergyman or not, but from the nature of his remark concerning the *Freethinker* one would suspect that he is. For the only circumstance that would justify a Christian complaining of the attacks which this paper makes upon Christian beliefs would be that they are not such as are accepted by Christians, and that we are so far misrepresenting these people. But the pamphlet in question, and "G. J.'s" own article, are proofs to the contrary. Professor Pringle Pattison complains that the mass of believers are left in "pre-critical darkness," and also that children are still being taught the story of the garden of Eden as fact, while "G. J." himself laments the "comparatively little headway the modern view of the Bible has yet made." So that our real offence would seem to be that we are telling the truth about the matter, not only about the Bible, but about religion as a whole. And the clergy do not like it. And those journalists who must not write what they think, and newspaper editors who are afraid of offending their religious readers must at least pretend that they do not like it either. They all see that some part of the truth must be told, but they desire to tell it in their own way, and so prevent the real inwardness of the position being seen. It would never do for the people to be told the truth about the Bible in such a way that they would realize that the Church has been the one institution that has stood between them and the truth for so many generations. That it has persecuted men and women for telling them what the Church must now admit is the truth, and that even now it is

only the fear of immediate exposure that leads the clergy to let a little of the truth out. If some of the truth must be told it must be wrapped up with elaborate stupidities about God's progressive revelation to man, or a more enlightened conception of the Bible. By this means it is hoped that one narcotic will take the place of another, and all the old imbecilities and puerilities will be retained in a slightly modified form. The offence of which the *Freethinker* has always been guilty is that he has insisted on the right of the people to know the truth about religion. For that men and women have been hunted from place to place and condemned to the life of common criminals. For that they are slandered and persecuted even to-day. And so long as a Christian Church possesses power that policy will be continued. For Christianity—essential Christianity, genuine Christianity—is something that cannot be civilized. It can only be ended. The anti-toxin of common sense and scientific knowledge is the real remedy for the poison of superstition. And the vendors of superstition know it. CHAPMAN COHEN.

What is Christianity?

ON the face of it this is an exceedingly simple and easily answered question. Professor Fisher, of Yale University, answers it thus: "Christianity is the revelation of God through Jesus Christ whereby reconciliation and a new spiritual life in fellowship with himself are brought to mankind" (*History of Christian Doctrine*, p. 1). A few pages further on in the same work Dr. Fisher adds: "The substance of Christianity is expressed in the word 'Redemption,' with its postulates and results." This definition has the Pauline Epistles and all the great Creeds of Christendom as its basis and justification. It inevitably follows, therefore, that Christianity is neither a philosophy of life nor a moral code, but a supernatural scheme or plan by which mankind, if they will, may be freed from the wrath to come, receive the forgiveness of their sins, and obtain the title deeds of the houses not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Paul calls Christ "the Beloved in whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. i. 6, 7). Peter assures his readers that they "were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers, but with precious blood as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ" (1 Peter, i. 18, 19). Further quotations are needless. With the exception of the Epistle of James, the supreme emphasis of the New Testament is on the death of Christ as the objective ground upon which God is entitled, even legally bound, to grant his forgiveness, peace, and fellowship to all believers. The central, all vital point in Christianity is the atoning, expiatory death on Calvary, which alone rendered it possible for God to justify and pardon the guilty children of the Fall. Taking the New Testament as our starting point, in conjunction with the deliverances of the Church at the various General Councils, no other definition of Christianity is conceivable. It is a Divine provision for the salvation of the human soul on the ground of, and through faith in the propitiation for sin which Christ becomes by virtue of his death on the Cross.

Let us examine this conception and its postulates. In his natural estate man is at enmity with God, and of necessity God is at enmity with him. God's wrath lies upon him, from which, in his own strength, he is powerless to extricate himself. He is a fugitive from justice whose doom is utter destruction. He is a debtor who cannot pay, the bankrupt of the Universe. Now, the second person in the Holy Trinity took com-

passion upon him, came down to earth, assumed his nature, and in that nature undertook to pay all his debts and to satisfy all the claims of Eternal Justice on his behalf. All that the condemned culprit has to do now is to accept this Christ as his surrogate, and throw himself upon the boundless merit of which his glorified person is an inexhaustible fountain. Once a man has done this, the load of wrath under which he lies falls off, and he is at peace with God, singing:—

Free from the law, oh, happy condition!
Jesus hath bled, and there is remission!
Cursed by the law, and bruised by the Fall,
Grace hath redeemed us once for all.

It should be borne in mind that man, who in his natural estate, is said to be at enmity with God, is yet represented as being God's child, the offspring of his heart. In Genesis he is described as the creature of God's hand, and elsewhere as the vessel formed by the Divine Potter, though we are not informed where the clay came from. Looking at man as God's creature, or as his child, the question that naturally arises is, on what ground are they at enmity with each other, the one made with the Maker, the child with the Father? For whatever the creature or child is, the Maker or Father alone must be held responsible. As Sir Oliver Lodge suggested long ago, *if man is a sinner God cannot be sinless*. To-day, many divines in all denominations, particularly in the Anglican Church, repudiate the Genesis story of the creation and fall of man, and, consequently, the Christian doctrines of the Atonement and the salvation based on it. That is to say, these advanced theologians toss orthodox Christianity down the wind, retaining only the term with a wholly different meaning attached to it.

Of course, the least defection from historic Christianity is a step in the right direction. One of the first enthusiastic followers of Jesus to openly break with popular Christianity in this country was Matthew Arnold, the distinguished poet and critic. *St. Paul and Protestantism* appeared in 1870, *Literature and Dogma* in 1873, and *God and the Bible* in 1875. Ostensibly those three works were written in defence of the Bible and Christianity. In the Preface to a cheaper edition of the second of those books, issued in 1883, he says:

The object of *Literature and Dogma* is to reassure those who feel attachment to Christianity, but who recognize the growing discredit befalling miracles and the supernatural. Such persons are to be reassured, not by disguising or extenuating the discredit which has befallen miracles and the supernatural, but by insisting on the natural truth of Christianity. That miracles have fallen into discredit is to be frankly admitted; that they have fallen into discredit justly and necessarily, and through the same natural and salutary process which had previously extinguished belief in witchcraft, is to be frankly admitted also. Even ten years ago, when *Literature and Dogma* was first published, lucidity on this matter was, on the whole, not dangerous, but expedient; it is even yet more expedient to-day. It has become even yet more manifest that by the sanction of miracles Christianity can no longer stand; it can stand only by its natural truth (p. 19).

Matthew Arnold remained a communicating member of the Anglican Church till he died in 1888, because he was unreasonably infatuated with a palpable illusion, namely, the natural truth of Christianity. Everything in Christianity is indissolubly linked up with supernaturalism, and for the great literary critic supernaturalism was nothing but an empty dream. Even God, as conceived by theology, was to him "a magnified and non-natural man." He could never get beyond the phrase that "for science God is simply the stream of tendency by which all things seek to fulfil the law of their being," or the phrase that he is "the

power not ourselves which makes for righteousness." Then he says:—

The phrase, "A personal First Cause, the moral and intelligent Governor of the Universe," has also, when applied to God, the character, no doubt, of a scientific definition. But then it goes far beyond what is admittedly certain and verifiable, which is what we mean by scientific. It attempts far too much. If we want here, as we do want, to have what is admittedly certain and verifiable, we must content ourselves with very little. No one will say, that it is admittedly certain and verifiable, that there is a personal first cause, the moral and intelligent governor of the Universe, whom we may call *God* if we will (*Ibid.*, pp. 71, 72).

In reality, Arnold was as great an Atheist as Charles Bradlaugh. For him miracles and the supernatural had fallen into complete discredit. His fault was that he did not go far enough on the road of doubt and rejection. And yet, with his up-bringing and mental environment, the wonder is that he succeeded in going as far as he did; but if he had allowed his own logic to have its full way with him, he would have proceeded much further. For instance, what evidence is there of the existence of "a power not ourselves which makes for righteousness" in this world? Or, if the existence of such a power is admitted, is it not equally certain that there is another power not ourselves which makes for unrighteousness, and often on a much larger scale? If there is one stream of influence, does it not inevitably follow that there is another stream of an opposite character?

Again, what are we to understand by "the natural truth of Christianity?" It is a phrase which Arnold never tires of repeating, but a moment's examination shows it to be meaningless. In a religion essentially supernatural there can be nothing quite natural. Incorporated in Christianity are not a few otherwise natural truths, but the very fact of the incorporation divests them of their naturalness. The Gospel Jesus said many things which are profoundly true, some of which, as recorded, are unconnected with supernaturalism, such as, "The things that come from within a man's heart, they it is which defile him," but the truths so expressed are as old as the hills, and had been given expression to by various teachers innumerable times before. Our contention is that to associate any truth with supernaturalism is to vitiate it and lessen its effectiveness. For example, social justice and love are high virtues, of which there can be no superfluity, and they have been insisted upon as such from time immemorial; but in the Gospels love to God and love to neighbour are correlated almost as cause and effect, genuine love to neighbour being regarded as a sort of outflow from love to God. It has been the consistent teaching of Christianity from the first that no man can faithfully discharge his duties without supernatural aid. An eminent divine, on seeing a criminal being led to his doom, exclaimed, "But for the grace of God there go I." Of course, such men as Arnold, realizing the absurdity of such a belief, eliminate from Christianity every trace of the supernatural and miraculous, but still call it, thus emasculated, by the old name. Adopting an antiquated phraseology, what such critics have done may be described as tearing out the soul of Christianity while retaining and hugging the body as if it were the soul. And yet they cannot see that what they offer us is not Christianity at all, but Secularism.

We owe Matthew Arnold a deep debt of gratitude. Intellectually he became a thoroughgoing Freethinker, while emotionally he remained in communion with the Church. To him conduct was three-fourths of life, the fourth part being feeling, or what he calls religion. His real answer to the question, What is Christianity? is, Naturalism or Secularism. But there is another

answer, supplied by some of the leading divines of to-day, much subtler than Arnold's, and considerably more disingenuous, the ablest exponent of which is Dean Inge. The next article will be devoted to a discussion of this, the latest answer from within.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Irreligion of Napoleon.

Whose game was empires, and whose stake was thrones,
Whose table earth. —Byron.

INTEREST in Napoleon Bonaparte has been quickened by the celebrations commemorating the centenary of his death. He appears to have been the last of the great soldiers who have impressed mankind, and modern warfare has not, since his time, produced a personality who sets the world alight before he is thirty years of age. Hence the centenary celebrations tempt many to hark back to the remarkable being who remoulded the face of Europe.

The trait that first and last most impresses us is the amazing personality of Napoleon. Not only was he a great general from early manhood, but even after his death this characteristic told in some inexplicable way upon those who came in contact with him. Ensign Duncan, a young English officer, who was on duty at Longwood at the time of Napoleon's death, and on two succeeding days visited the death-chamber, has recorded his impression. Writing home to his mother, he said that to see a man who had caused the world so much trouble lying dead in a small room was an awful sight. "It struck me so," he added, "I could have gazed on him for hours, have taken his hand and kissed it, but I could scarce breathe."

Since that day much ink has been spent on Napoleonic history and on Napoleon's personal traits. The austere Emerson regarded "the little corporal" as the supreme type of the man-of-the-world, and the critical Thomas Carlyle admired the one article of Bonaparte's faith: "The tools to him that can handle them." Napoleon's character has baffled so many men. Even his own brother was mesmerised, for, after the Emperor's death, he marvelled at the impression his dead brother had produced on men. "He was not so much a great, as a good man," he said, with touching simplicity. He was not the only man deceived by this Colossus, who bestrode Europe for a generation, and whose greatness endures beyond the quiet of the grave.

Critics who are so wise after the events say that Napoleon's conquests were splendid rather than useful; but they cannot deny that the ardour of his magnetic personality set France afire. It inflamed every soldier who dragged the heavy cannon over the weary sands of Egypt, and every warrior who carried his musket amid the terrible snows of Russia. Napoleon also imparted to his marshals something of his own impetuous and adventurous career. When victory begot victory nothing seemed impossible, for none then foresaw the melancholy and inglorious close of the Emperor's career, or that still later period when a charlatan Napoleon humiliated France to the very dust.

One interesting outcome of the centenary is the exploitation of Napoleon by editors who have turned Christian for half an hour for the purpose. We have, of course, been told anecdotes in which the Emperor is represented as pointing to the sky and talking like a simple-minded Christian Evidence lecturer. We have been informed that Napoleon compared the fame of Cæsar and Alexander with that of Jesus Christ, and that he thought the itinerant preacher had the advantage over the soldiers. The real Napoleon talked in a very different fashion, and was in no way respectable.

Napoleon preferred Mohammedanism to Christianity. He objected to the Christian religion because it damned Plato and Socrates, and he questioned the justice of eternal punishment for finite offences. He also agreed with the Mohammedans that Christians who worshipped three deities must necessarily be polytheists. "As for me," Napoleon broke out on one occasion, "my opinion is formed that Christ never existed." Further, he proclaimed himself a Materialist. In all this he was a true son of the great Revolution, which has changed, and is changing, the face of the civilized world.

Like so many statesmen, Napoleon was cynical in using religion and priests to further his schemes; but he frankly admitted the soft impeachment:—

It was by becoming a Catholic that I pacified the Vendee, and a Mussulman that I established myself in Egypt; it was by becoming Ultramontane that I won over public opinion in Italy. If I ruled a people of Jews, I would rebuild the temple of Solomon.

This patronage of superstition is understandable, if not defensible. The Roman Emperors did it systematically. Henry of Navarre retracted his Protestant views, saying that "Paris was well worth a mass." In more recent days the "Holy Carpet" of the Mohammedans has been saluted by British warships, and received with military honours at the hands of Christian soldiers. Napoleon's Catholicism was assumed to please the French people, the majority of whom were then Catholics. Yet his treatment of the Pope was sufficient to turn the aged prelate's hair white, and curl it afterwards. In forcing the Pontiff to attend his Coronation, he had no other object except that of impressing the crowd. His tolerance of the Roman Catholic Church was not for any higher motive than that of consolidating his rule, for he was sufficiently sagacious to know that priests would be better harnessed than as open enemies. Napoleon always used religion to further his ends. He was himself as irreligious as Voltaire, though he had none of that passion for humanity which distinguished the great writer.

Yet Napoleon could be very human at times. Whilst walking at St. Helena with some ladies, a heavily burdened peasant approached on the narrow road. "Respect the burden, mesdames," said the Emperor, as he stood back to let the man pass. Indeed, a mere catalogue of Napoleon's actions is more profitable than a string of epithets.

It would be possible to devote columns to so fascinating a subject, but space forbids. When Napoleon died a hundred years ago he was a disappointed man. After all his glories and victories he died like a poisoned rat in a hole. It has been said that it would be well if the sombre episode of St. Helena could be blotted out in the interests of Britain and Napoleon. It is not a bright page for either, it consorts with the dignity of neither.

MIMNERMUS.

THOUGHTS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

We have just enough religion to make us hate, but not enough to make us love one another.

When we desire or solicit anything, our minds run wholly on the good side or circumstances of it; when it is obtained, our minds run wholly on the bad side.

The stoical scheme of supplying our wants by lopping off our desires, is like cutting off our feet when we want shoes.

The latter part of a wise man's life is taken up in curing the follies, prejudices and false opinions he had contracted in the former.

All fits of pleasure are balanced by an equal degree of pain or languor; it is like spending this year's part of next year's revenue.

Would a writer know how to behave himself with relation to posterity, let him consider in old books what he finds that he is glad to know.—Swift (1667-1745.)

Christianity and Labour— May Day Reflections.

THE failure of Christianity was so manifest in the years of agony ushered into the world in August, 1914, that only those apologists who can rise to any height or sink to any depth with equal facility rushed to offer ready-made testimonials to Providence. This failure is equally patent in our social life. Labour is in revolt. It is organized for action and in the immediate future will play an all-important part in our political life. Hence, the Churches perceive quite clearly the close association between its ideals and those of the Christian religion.

In reality the Christian outlook is irreconcilable with the ethic of Labour. Christianity is a supernatural religion. According to the New Testament "the powers that be are ordained of God"; poverty, like slavery, is a settled economic condition to be relieved by alms-giving and benevolence. "The poor ye have always with you" is not uttered as a reproach: in the Christian world the soup-kitchen is not only a means of alleviating distress, it is in itself a desirable institution. "Blessed are the poor in spirit" is the counterpart of material poverty. The greatest of the many services which Christianity has rendered to the privileged classes is the "virtue" of humility.

To the writers of the New Testament no other attitude to social conditions was possible. It was the offspring of the doctrine of total depravity, which for centuries since has acted as a dead-weight on all agencies making for progress. The faithful are one flock, bound or free, but the distinction between them and those "under the law" is fixed irrevocably. The believer has no part with an infidel. You might as well try to mix fire and water as Christian exclusiveness and Labour solidarity. The Roman Catholics recognize this and in some countries have organized their own trade unions. Another defect of "applied Christianity" is inherent in its nature. No sound social economy could be established by men and women in daily expectation of the end of the world, and convinced that this life was only a preparation for another.

Authority in religious belief is inseparable from class-control in social life wherever there is power to enforce it. It is deeply significant that so many religious apologists nowadays set little store on the truth or falsehood of creeds, but rest their case on the value of "ultra-rational sanctions" as a cohesive social force.

But we live in an age of science, not authority. Evolution, accepted by the whole intellectual world, has generated a mental atmosphere in which supernaturalism is dying. Labour's supreme need at the moment is to adapt itself to this environment, and doctrines which have to be "harmonized with science" are worse than useless to it. No emphasis on particular conditions and no catch-phrases will save from shipwreck any cause that loses sight of central scientific truths. The support of a few intellectuals will not assure the success of the Labour movement, for vested interests are mental as well as material. The workers themselves must be intellectually equipped to hold their own. The Churches and their allies naturally show no alacrity to provide this equipment. Whatever doctrinal differences divide them, Anglicans, Nonconformists, and Roman Catholics are united to keep religious instruction in State supported schools and to hinder the nationalization of knowledge. Much of this instruction is notoriously at variance with the truths of science. Another matter of vital concern to the manual worker is the growing determination to end the tyranny of the Churches in regard to "Sabbath observance." Despite the admitted decline in Church attendance—doubtless for that very reason—Protestant

bodies maintain an obstinate opposition to every movement intended to give the mass of the people one clear day a week for physical and mental recreation.

The history of Christianity abundantly confirms what is here contended. It has made submission to authority the foundation of power; it has consistently allied itself with the privileged classes; it has opposed workers' combinations except such as it could itself control; it has stunted the intellect and exploited the emotions of childhood; and its dogmatic claims have been a standing menace to the spirit of free inquiry. That the power of Christianity to assert its authority is waning is due to the new values introduced by Free-thought. The guiding principle of these values is that the truth in regard to religion and everything else shall not remain the possession of a privileged class.

I have before me an old print depicting the Peterloo Massacre in 1819. "The mob was dispersed by several troops of horse." The "mob" consisted of working men, accompanied by their wives and children, and had assembled to "consider parliamentary reform." Eleven persons were killed and about 600 wounded. In that same year Richard Carlile was found guilty of publishing the works of Thomas Paine, and sentenced to three years' imprisonment and a fine of £1500. The period was as prolific in the prosecutions of infidels as in measures to stifle the political aspirations of the toiling populace.

We have just emerged from one of the many international struggles inherited from generations under the sway of superstition, only to find the air heavy with unrest. But we look forward. True, we cannot judge the Labour movement in the light of its future, but we may form a very just estimate of Christianity by its past.

A. D. McLAREN.

The Relativity of Knowledge.

THE above title is now an ancient phrase, and on account of its many metaphysical associations it may be in attractive, if not actually repellent, to many a reader.

If so, may I at once ask them to disabuse their minds of any false notion and prejudice, as nothing of the nature of metaphysics will be found in the following pages? There will be no display of word-splitting or phrase-chopping, alternately pricking and blowing transcendental soap-bubbles, or "looping the loop" in the dreamy heights of metaphysical cloud-land. On the contrary, there will be nothing but statements of plain facts or of obvious deductions from them—facts of universal experience, so that the reader can at once check the truth or falsity of the statements. So may I repeat that the object of this essay is not to expatiate upon "the impossibility of conceiving the absolute," or upon "the impossibility of the relativity of cognition"—the so-called "doctrine of phenomenalism"—but solely to stress the fact that the entire contents of human knowledge consist of elements or factors which are wholly related to a mundane and corporeal existence, and which have no meaning whatsoever save to a creature which is a material focus, existing in space and time, through which passes a constant stream of physical energy kindling the assemblage called body into life and consciousness as it passes through it.

These fundamental elements are obviously the four relations of: Similarity (and its opposite), Space, Time, and Energy. They may be termed, respectively, the psycho-physical, the spatial, the temporal, and the causal factors of knowledge, which in all its comprehensiveness and diversity has no other constituent element or factor. They are the entire warp and woof of cognition.

By way of parenthesis, I may point out that it is sufficiently obvious that these are the sole ultimate strands of knowledge, from the meanings of the universal interrogative particles of human speech. These clearly indicate the domain of knowledge from the nature of the information asked for. They are of four kinds: "What," "Where," "When," and "How or Why." And as they sum up the totality of the notions, in respect of which man is by nature "restively" ignorant, so they reveal, of necessity, the entire area or field covered by his knowledge.

The first asks for the group or *class* to which something "unknown" belongs or is like, and when the information is given, it becomes "known." The second asks for its position in *space*; the third wants to know the order of an event in *time*; and the last enquires after *causal antecedents*. And when all four are answered, man's knowledge of that particular object or event is complete and final until he begins to ask them over again in respect to some of the answers.

Again, however completely any one of these relations be abstracted from the related terms, and however much they may be compounded or permuted with each other, as in mathematics, or sublimed away as in metaphysics, the remnant or resultant possesses no significant meaning unless its roots are still embedded in the soil of these four relations of corporeal existence. If it be completely dissociated from that soil, its expression, be it ever so sonorous, "learned," and grandiloquent, will be mere "sounding brass and tinkling cymbal." And perhaps I ought to add, that it makes no difference, whether the knowledge is innate and instinctive, acquired through experience, or deduced by reason; its elemental factors are ever the same.

Before we proceed, however, to exemplify how these four factors enter into and permeate every conceivable form of "the known," it would be well to point out the three different ways or meanings in which the term "to know" is used in ordinary writing and conversation, as I may have occasion in the course of this essay to use it in all of its three senses.

1. In the first place it often stands for the first of the four factors, that is, for the act of re-cognition, as when we say "I knew him at once," "Do you know your coat?" "The ox knoweth its master's crib," "The sheep knows its own lambs." Or again, when the mother exclaims, on seeing the infant's face lit up with the smile of recognition, "The child knows me." In all these instances of knowing it is the cognition of identity. It is a knowledge of the "familiar," because it awakens recognition.

2. More frequently, however, it is used in a very different sense and, apparently, one with no connection with the former. It is used in the sense of a mental "record" or "register" of sense impressions and other forms of experience.

In this sense it has a very wide and varied application. For example, we say: "I know my lesson; I know French, Euclid, geography, history, etc.; or again, of the town or country where you were born or where you have lived, you say, you know it. In the same sense will an engineer or mechanic be said to "know" his machine or engine; a farmer to "know" his farm and his stock, or a merchant, the contents of his stores, etc. In every case it means that a multitude of diverse facts are registered in the mind; that the mind is more or less a complete record of them, just as a gramophone disc is a record of a song or a speech.

3. Often, however, it is used in much the same sense but with a fuller meaning. It is made to include, besides the mental or neural record of experience or instinct, the additional fact that this record is linked up and co-ordinated with the muscular system. In this sense knowledge may be defined as, "a disposi-

tion to act and think in a certain way." That is its meaning when we say: He knows how to swim, how to play the piano, or how to drive a motor. In the same way we say that a bird knows how to build its nest, a beaver its dam, or a spider its web. In this sense it explicitly embodies the truth I stressed in a previous essay, *viz.*, that mind finds its sole meaning in the muscular system.

These three meanings, though apparently distinct and different, are not independent. They are simply three stages or phases in the "life-history" of knowledge, somewhat analogous to the stages or phases in that of a corn field—the sown field, the growing corn, and the matured crops ready for the mower. So in the mind there must first be a "record" of experience, racial or individual, before a re-cognition is possible; while movement is the "fruit stage"—the end and goal of both recognition and record.

The record is potential and dormant; in recognition it quickens into actuality, and in movement the two realize their destined object in the preservation of the life of the organism.

Possibly another word of warning may not be wholly out of place, to wit, that the fusion between these primary elements of thought is much more intimate than is conveyed by the metaphor "woven fabric." The fusion of different metals in an alloy or of different minerals in a crystalline rock would be a much more apposite simile. The human mind, however, can isolate them in thought, so we will take them one by one and see how they unite and fuse and form that psychic conglomerate called "mind."

(To be Concluded.)

KERIDON.

A Ballad of Bells.

THE Curate may delight in what he teaches,
The Vicar may consider Heaven a dream.
The Parson may believe in what he preaches,
And Bishops may reflect a Godly gleam.
The choir boys may lisp in accents tender,
And suck their brandy balls until they stick,
The Verger's income may be mean and slender,
But Church bells fairly make me Sunday sick!

It may be true that Adam hated peaches,
And much preferred a solid rib of beef.
It may be, Eve, while lingering 'neath the beeches,
Devised a stunt ensuring Adam's grief.
It may be that the "Garden" was a City,
It may be that the serpent was a trick.
Yet I would scream, but not with hope of pity,
That Church bells fairly make me Sunday sick!

The Church's minions may be human leeches,
The men who print their hymns, a heathen band.
It may be that the Nuns should wear the breeches,
And show the Bishops where they really stand.
It may be that the Church is swift declining,
That Cinemas are fostered by old Nick,
But though the N. S. C. is brightly shining,
These Church bells fairly make me Sunday sick!

ENVOY.

Prince, you may tell how reason swift impeaches
The errors hid in skulls that are too thick.
Alas! I have no zest for what life teaches,
These Church bells fairly make me Sunday sick!

ARTHUR F. THORN.

The most extraordinary of all the things called miracles, related in the New Testament, is that of the devil flying away with Jesus Christ, and carrying him to the top of a high mountain, and to the top of the highest pinnacle of the temple, and showing him and promising to him *all the kingdoms of the World*. How happened it that he did not discover America, or is it only with *kingdoms* that his sooty highness has any interest?—Thomas Paine.

Acid Drops.

There is nothing special to be said, so far as we are concerned, in connection with the case of Archdeacon Wakeford. He has been found guilty of the offence for which he was charged, and that is almost the whole of the matter. In defence it might be said that other men do wrong as well as the clergy, and that is quite true. The case is only of interest as against those who still have a lingering belief that in some way the clergy represent a body of men who are superior to ordinary men. And that is not true. Of all the educated classes of the community they are, taken as a class, the least intellectual, and their morality, instead of being superior to that of ordinary men, is of a far more rudimentary character. Their notions of truth and justice, for instance, are much more rudimentary than those of the ordinary educated man of the world. And the air of what is called sanctity is just part of the pose that may be regarded as the surviving remnant of the magical halo that surrounded the primitive medicine man.

The Dean of St. Paul's is a curious mixture of conflicting moods and attitudes. He interprets Christianity symbolically. All its dogmas are symbols which, if taken literally, can do nothing but harm. The orthodox Church has always championed a "superstitious and childish theology," which has driven thousands of thoughtful people to Secularism. The Secularist, especially if he is a keen social reformer, says:—

Christianity offers me a happy home away in the clouds and in the distant future; and it tells me that I ought to invest my all in the shares of this undiscovered country. I suspect the whole thing to be a fraud; the only world I know is this earth, and I mean to make the most of it while I can, for myself and my mates.

If Christianity is taken literally, Secularism comes in as an inevitable reaction.

And yet the Dean poses as a theologian, an advocate of the belief in God, and of otherworldliness as the only force that can transform the world. This is the very acme of inconsistency. In an article in the *Evening Standard* for April 21, he expresses agreement with Professor Bury, who says that "it is to the slow and silent operations of science that we may look for a new world." Obviously, a world controlled by science would have no use whatever for God and otherworldliness. The Professor admits that it is doubtful whether men would be happier in a world under the control of science, and that probably it would "only mean a new and more efficient tyranny." To this the Dean retorts: "I would rather live under an efficient tyranny than under an inefficient anarchy, as we do now; but I do not see why a scientific state need be tyrannical."

Theologically the Dean is an anarchist, while politically he revels in Conservatism. Socialism is his pet aversion. Sociologically he is a Malthusian, firmly advocating the necessity of checking the growth of the population for the good of society. On this point he is unjust to the Socialists when he expresses the fear that the motive of their opposition to Malthusianism "is a very sinister one. They know that restriction of numbers would cure most of our social evils without a revolution." Despite his inconsistencies, however, we regard the Dean as a valuable ally, who unwittingly renders our Cause genuine service.

Collections are to be abolished at Fulham parish church. This is not a piece of sacrifice on the part of the clergy, for they have arranged to have "regular weekly gifts" made personally.

"Forty people live in one house in the parish, and it takes me two days every time I visit them," says the Rev. K. Banister, of Bristol. Does the reverend gentleman tell these unfortunate people of the beautiful mansions in the skies?

The Divorce Division of the High Court has to cope with a list of 2,705 cases. A large number represents petitions

brought under the Poor Persons Rules. This is a clear proof that the anti-divorce of England no longer represents the people.

The *Guardian* represents the Anglican Church as a national institution. It combines learning with piety, and a wrongly accentuated Greek word has as little chance of reaching its stately columns as false doctrine. It does not set so much store on "spiritual vision" as the *Christian World* does, and is not so devoted to candles and incense as the *Church Times*. It likes to begin a sentence with the words "We have consistently maintained," because that appeals to "right thinking" men and women who are on good terms with the upper side of things. After all, enthusiasm for lost souls is vulgar, and there is not much of it left now anywhere.

Its issue of April 22 contains a sermon, "Can we do without religion?" by Rev. F. Holmes Dudden. He solemnly assures us: "If there be no God and no Hereafter, then character, like everything else, will sooner or later be obliterated in the darkness of the end. So what is the use of a man's struggling?" It reminds us of a discussion we once heard between a Roman Catholic and a Secularist. "Why," exclaimed the former, "if I didn't believe in religion I wouldn't care what I did!" "Well, Mr. X," replied the Secularist, (a wage earner), "if that's the sort of man you are, I'm sorry for you, but I'm glad you let me know." The reverend gentleman is evidently anxious to make men see themselves as totally depraved creatures by nature. He asks, "What should we do if God were dead?" Well, the devil was a real live personage at one time, and since he died no one has ever missed him except the clergy.

The late Rev. W. H. Peers, of Wimbledon, left £4,936. It is not a large sum, but, unfortunately, it defies the Master's injunction concerning laying up treasure on earth, and Brother Peers will not reach heaven.

The latest readers of the Bible are the Patpatar, a Melanesian tribe, for whom the British and Foreign Bible Society has translated one of the Gospels. As the Patpatar have only a very limited vocabulary, and only five numerals, the translators must have had difficult work to convey to the chocolate coloured Christians the complex nature of the Trinity and the motherhood of the Virgin.

If it were not part of a sermon we should have thought that the Rev. Maurice Child was making an elaborate attempt at being humorous. But in a sermon reported in the *Church Times* on the "Qualities of Englishmen," he said that the outstanding quality of the Englishman was that of truthfulness or honesty. This quality is so palpable, "that it cuts across all our Continental relationships." Presumably no other nation can compare with us in this respect, and the Rev. Maurice Child pictures the world standing in awe-stricken admiration at the Englishman's truthfulness. Indeed, one American informed him that he was "astonished at the extraordinary honesty of speech of the ordinary Englishman." We fancy that that American was pulling Mr. Child's leg. We should say that either Mr. Child is a humourist or a pretty good sized fool.

Mr. Justice Darling said that the "ten commandments" were not apportioned by geographical limits. But religion is largely a matter of geography. Mohammedans are more common in Turkey than in England; and there are more hard-shell Presbyterians in Scotland than in India. Baptists are not thick upon the Boulevards of Paris, and so the list might be extended almost indefinitely. Moreover, Mohammedans worship one god and Christians have three; whilst the former are polygamists and the latter monogamists.

A great Christian theologian once said, "I believe because it is impossible." Millions believe for the same reason, but lack the courage to say so. In the human race virgin birth is impossible, and yet myriads believe,

or pretend to believe, that Jesus was born of a virgin. As far as we know, the dead cannot come back to life; and yet tens of thousands believe that Christ rose from the dead, and lived again for forty days. Indeed, it appears that the more impossible a thing is the easier it is for many to believe it.

Sir James Cantlie, lecturing on "The Bible and Hygiene" at Hampstead, referred to Moses as a Doctor of Medicine. We were unaware that Moses doctored anything except an account of his own funeral.

The Rev. J. E. Rattenbury has been preaching on "Hamlet in Genesis." Surely this is a mistake for *A Comedy of Errors*!

It is marvellous how fond the divines are of finding fault with and denouncing one another. Dr. T. R. Glover, of Cambridge University, has published a book entitled, *Jesus in the Experience of Men*, and Sir William Robertson Nicoll reviews it in the *British Weekly*. In the estimation of the Presbyterian divine, Dr. Glover's theology is fundamentally defective and misleading. Two glaring blemishes are pointed out and emphasized. Dr. Glover's most fatal mistake is that he does not think badly enough of human nature. He scarcely ever uses the term "guilt." Sir William discerns a "deep original wound in human nature," and affirms "the universal corruption of man's heart." Then, secondly, Dr. Glover does not believe that Christ's death was an expiatory sacrifice. He says: "Historically, Jesus has abolished sacrifice and banished the ideas that underlie it." Sir William imagines that he knows the truth, and can afford to sit in judgment on his younger and abler brother, but both are slaves of superstition, only the former is more so than the latter.

The sufferings of the clergy beggar description. Canon Cooper, Vicar of Filey, has commenced a walking tour through Belgium, France, and Germany. On Sunday the Archbishop of Canterbury preached at Buckingham Palace.

The Chairman of the London, Brighton, and South Coast Railway says that at a country station two porters earned more than the rector of the parish. Why not? The porters work six days a week instead of one.

The Lower House of Convocation the other day passed a resolution asking the King to appoint a Day of Humiliation "in view of the general tendency of the present day to ignore almighty God in public affairs." We don't know what the Day of Humiliation is supposed to effect, but those who ignore God will not feel humiliated, and those who do not will have nothing to feel humiliated about. Still, it may help to show what a dare-devil, go-ahead lot the clergy are, and what tremendous help they are in moments of national trouble. And the mere existence of the clergy is enough to make thoughtful people feel humiliated every time they look at them.

Glittering breastplates, formerly used by the Cuirassiers, are being sold by the French Government at about £3 per bundle. This opportunity should not be missed by the Church and Salvation Armies.

"Viator" writes:—

I spent the greater part of a day recently among the second-hand bookshops of the Charing Cross Road and its tributaries, and inspecting the barrows in the New Cut. Despite the complaints of profiteering which one hears on all sides, it can hardly be said that spiritual provender is expensive. Here is an abundance of it for a few pence. I noticed *The Pathway*, *The Young Man's Friend*, *Friendship's Offering*, and even an odd volume of Spurgeon all patiently awaiting buyers. An edition of *Law's Serious Call*, a real classic in its day, to which Dr. Johnson acknowledges deep obligations, was only appraised at ninepence. I wonder where the trade gets all this devotional literature and what it pays the poor vendors?

Such "works" can only make an appeal to those who are

concerned about the salvation of their souls, and the number of such is not so large as it used to be. But these devotional books were at least sincere, and made no pretence that criticism of "God's word" only strengthened their faith. Spurgeon clung to a material hell as affectionately as a South Sea Islander treasures his necklace of shark's teeth.

The American courts are being called on to decide whether Mrs. Eddy, the foundress of Christian Science, is alive or not. The question arose out of an application for an injunction to restrain any alteration of the Christian Science Manual of which Mrs. Eddy was, or is, the author. The applicants claim that Mrs. Eddy is still a member of the Board according to the doctrines of the Church, and the Court is being asked to say that she is not dead. It seems very unfortunate if Mrs. Eddy is not dead as she was buried, and generally speaking one might just as well be dead as buried. Perhaps the question will turn whether Mrs. Eddy really believes she is dead, as illness and death is no more than a belief according to Christian Science. In that case the Court will have to get Mrs. Eddy's evidence on that point. But how to get the evidence of an alleged dead woman as to whether she is really dead or not! That is the problem. But there is evidently a difference of belief in the Church, one lot having a belief that Mrs. Eddy is dead, and the other lot carrying their conviction no further than that she is buried. It is a very difficult point to decide. One wonders whether Mrs. Eddy was insured, and if so, did the company pay the policy?

Dean Inge is one of the few men of ability that the Churches possess. But even the most able man cannot avoid talking rubbish when he is defending religion. For it is impossible to defend a stupid position and talk sensibly. That will account for the Dean saying in the *Evening Standard* for April 28 that "Religion, the family, and private property" stand and fall together. And that is absolute nonsense. The family has nothing to do with religion. Certain forms of family life may be championed by religion, but even this is a matter of time and place, for there is no form that family life assumes which is not found in association with some form of religion. The root of the family is a man, a woman, and a child. And if Dean Inge means that without religion you would not have these he is saying something the absurdity of which should be clear, even to a parson. And if he does not mean this, one wonders what on earth he does mean. As he is talking about religion, he probably means nothing at all.

According to the *Catholic Herald*, in the various church notices in the Westminster Archdiocese it is intimated that by a decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, the words, "Blessed be Saint Joseph, her most chaste spouse," are to be added after the words, "Blessed be the name of Mary, Virgin and mother." A cynic might add the title of the song, "Poor, old Joe!"

At a week-night meeting at a provincial church a young man, waiting for his best girl, went in out of the wet. In the following issue of the parish magazine the editor remarked, "The proportion of men in the congregation was remarkable and significant."

Thom, of Govan, near Glasgow, was a master of pungent witticisms. On the day appointed for public national thanksgiving at the close of the American War of Independence the Rev. gentleman addressed his congregation thus:—

My friends, we are commanded by Royal Authority to meet this day for the purpose of public thanksgiving. Now, I should like to know for what we are to give thanks. Is it for the loss of thirteen provinces? Is it for the slaughter of so many thousands of our countrymen? Is it for so many millions of increased national debt? I see, my friends, you are all laughing at me, and I am not surprised at it, for, were I not standing where I am, I would be laughing myself.—*Glasgow Herald*, March 22, 1921.

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.

C. F. BUDGE.—A Monist is one who believes the phenomena of the universe to be the expression of a single "substance." These are divided into two main groups, consisting of what may be called spiritual and materialistic monists. In general the scientific attitude is a monistic one. A Theist is one who rejects revelation but who holds that a study of nature provides evidence for the existence of a God.

ALFRED writes:—"Thanks for providing us with so fine a text-book of the case against Theism as you have done in your *Theism or Atheism*. It is a work that every Freethinker should have by him for use against believers in the 'master superstition.' I know of no other work which can approach it for completeness and cogency." We feel flattered, and hope that we have done something to earn such high praise.

H. S. ENGLAND (Detroit).—Thanks for calling attention to the matter. We shall be interested in hearing the result of the enquiry. It would probably form the basis of an article.

II. L. (Ramsgate).—There is no excuse for any newsagent not getting for you any of the publications of the Pioneer Press. You should insist upon being supplied with what you want, or remove your custom elsewhere. You will be doing us a real service in helping to break down the boycott that exists.

TEROS.—We are afraid we cannot spare space for lengthy efforts in verse. They must be short and to the point.

S. R. (Belfast).—We quite agree with you as to your estimate of the article. It lacks conviction. But as it is addressed to another writer, we do not think we had better intervene.

W. GOUDIE.—We are flattered by your high appreciation of our work. Membership of the N. S. S. is not confined to Great Britain. The Society has members in all parts of the world. The Secretary is sending you particulars of membership.

W. H. HUNT.—As you put the facts the case is infamous. But at present few seem to care very much for real liberty in this country. All the political parties are struggling to impose their will on the people, and given any of them sufficient power there appears to be nothing at which they would stick. We shall comment on the matter in our next issue. Meanwhile we shall be obliged if you will tell us of any further developments that transpire.

C. CLAYTON DOVE.—Thanks for letter, but we have already one standing over from last week, and which, as you will see, covers the same ground.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

Next Sunday (May 15) the Annual Conference of the N. S. S. will be held at Swansea. We hope that delegates and members who are attending the Conference have not omitted to write saying what accommodation they require. Letters should be addressed to Mr. B. Dupree, 60 Alexandra Road, Swansea. The morning and afternoon meetings of the Conference are business meetings, and are open to members only, who must have their cards of membership with them. In the evening there will be a public meeting. The chair will be taken by the President, and Mr. Lloyd and Mr. A. B. Moss will be among the speakers. There will be a luncheon provided at a cost of about 3s. 6d., and it is particularly requested that those wishing to partake should write in advance to Mr. Dupree. Other announcements will be made at the Conference meetings.

Mr. Cohen was not, after all, able to keep his engagement at Failsworth last Sunday. He was confined to bed for a few days owing to an attack of influenza, and was hoping that he would be sufficiently recovered to travel and lecture. But the doctor was against it, and in truth it has been as much as he could manage to get through the necessary work. A holiday from work is at present not possible, so it is wisest to go slow for the moment. Still, he will get through all that is required and is quite confident of shaking off the dregs of the attack by the time of the Conference. He regretted very much having to disappoint his Failsworth friends, but it was wisest not to run risks, and in face of the doctor and the domestic powers that be, he was compelled to submit.

Mr. Lloyd very kindly took Mr. Cohen's place at Failsworth, so that from the point of view of a lecture the audience had nothing to regret. There were good meetings both afternoon and evening, and the collection realized a goodly sum in aid of the Society's funds. The proceedings were made the more interesting by the naming of the infant daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Pollitt. We think this young lady represents the third generation of Freethinkers. We wish her a quick passage over her infantile troubles, and with health and a long life to follow.

A lengthy and appreciative notice of *Theism or Atheism* appears in the *Positivist Review* for May. The writer considers the word *Atheist* to be unnecessarily provocative, and would prefer the term *Agnosticism* as the wider and less ambiguous term. This is a matter which we must leave to the judgment of readers. But if the book is sufficiently provocative to lead non-Theists to carefully examine the terms used in their discussions with Theists it will have served a good purpose, apart from what is the main purpose of the work—that of furnishing a reliable summary of the arguments against Theism. We are sorry to observe that the *Positivist Review* is feeling the greatly increased cost of publication and warns its readers that unless adequate help is forthcoming it may have to cease publication with the end of the year. We have so much in common with the Positivist movement that we should regard that as a real loss to English advanced thought. And we can hardly believe that Positivists will permit the editor's fears to eventuate in fact.

The *Bible Handbook* has been for some time out of print, and it is in constant request. A new edition has now been prepared and is on sale. It is issued by the Secular Society, Limited, cloth bound, at 2s. 6d. Practical printers who look at the book and note the amount of work, composition, etc., in it, will wonder how it can be done at that price. The answer is that as a business proposition it could not be done. When it was originally issued it was at 1s. 6d. paper, and 2s. 6d. cloth. To print it in these days, on good paper and well bound at its old price is to create a record in the publishing trade. We anticipate a good sale, for what is really a propagandist effort. Those ordering by post will enclose 4d. extra for postage.

We have a number of other works on hand which we hope to issue very shortly. One of these is a work by a new writer—new to our movement—entitled *A Critical Examination of Christianity*, and a new edition of Volney's *Ruins of Empires*, a work which if only for its historic importance most Freethinkers will be pleased to possess. Mr. Cohen has also a new work ready for publication, *A Grammar of Freethought*, and he has also collected a first volume of his *Freethinker* articles. We hope to have both of these on sale by the autumn. For the Secular Society, Limited, we are issuing shortly a new pamphlet by Mr. Lloyd on the subject of *God-Eating, Study in Religious Cannibalism*, and a volume on *Modern Materialism* by Mr. Mann. We have other things in view, but these are actually in hand.

The Birmingham Branch having brought its lecturing season to a close has arranged a series of Rambles for the summer months. The first will take place to-day (May 8). The party will meet at Steelhouse Lane tram terminus at 2 o'clock, and will reach Chester Road terminus at 2.45. That will enable them to pick up any friends who live nearer that end. It is then proposed to "Ramble" round Sutton. Tea will be provided at a nominal charge. We hope the weather will be favourable, and an enjoyable day's outing is then assured.

Racial and colour prejudice is very alien to the spirit and purpose of the Freethought movement in this country, and we are, therefore, pleased to call attention to the fact that the Inter-racial Rights Association is holding a series of monthly meetings at 8 Taviton Street, Gordon Square, W.C. The next meeting will be on May 15, when Mr. I. N. Thakon will speak on "Miscarriage of Justice in India on Racial Grounds." The meeting will be held in the afternoon at 4 o'clock and admission is free. Many of our readers will be sufficiently interested in India to attend the meeting. The subject should be an interesting one.

North London Branch opens its season at Regent's Park to-day at 6 p.m. Mr. A. D. McLaren will address the meeting. Subject: "The Break Up of Protestantism." Next Sunday, May 15, Mr. George Whitehead will occupy the platform. This will be the first time Mr. Whitehead has addressed and open-air meeting for the N. S. S., though he is a well-known Clarion Van speaker.

Christian Dope and Dope Merchants.

Breathing like sanctified and pious bawds,
The better to beguile.
If but one of his pockets could speak,
Would it not say he lies?

SOME quietly cynical, if unconscious, humourist has styled the people of the world to-day "the heirs of all the ages." Certainly, the Christian peoples exhibit all the airs of such a proud position. Apart from that the description is merely airy persiflage. In one realm, however, the more or less orthodox inhabitants of Europe and the Americas, together with a few other localities also under the blight of Christianity, may truly be called the heirs of all the ages—of superstition. They, literally, lie before us as such. Christianity is, in very truth and very essence, the great, or rather enormous, inheritance of all the superstitions that ever were, and all the Gods that never were, in all the ages of the past. There is scarcely a single superstition, from the earliest and most savage down to the latest and most refined, if one can use such a word in connection with Christian belief, of which we cannot find at least a relic in the doctrines, ideas, ceremonies, and other mummeries of Christianity. Taboos, fetishes, sacrificial murders, magic, worship of the genital organs, blood-lust, and all the mass of horrors and mysteries out of which, and

through which, the mind of human kind has developed to some glimmering sense of the universe, all are to be found in that conglomerate of superstition—Christianism. One of the worst features about Christian belief of all kinds is that it has terribly hindered the progress of human kind by preserving, in some degree of vitality, the gross, the foul, the ignorant, ideas of the infancy of the race, which would otherwise have died a natural death, as they became unnatural to the growing minds of men and women. Instead of "rising on stepping stones of our dead selves to higher things," the people have been kept prostrate in the mire by the Christian Mumbo Jumbo men putting these almost paleolithic mill stones of religion on their necks. Sometimes, emulating David of Holy Writ and bad repute, the Christian witch finders, rain makers, and "big fetish" men have utilized our dead selves of the long past as missiles to injure, if not to kill, the growing giant of human intellect.

Their central ceremony is certainly a survival in the twentieth century of an ancient cannibal feast. *Why* should the young people of to-day be degraded by being taught that they can obtain moral power by eating the flesh and drinking the blood, even symbolically, of a sacrificed man-god?

The chief emblem of Christianity is almost certainly a phallic one, with the grossness of the "idol" somewhat symbolized away. Our young folk do not wear the teeth, the skulls, or the scalps of German enemies as ornaments. *Why* should they wear the Cross?

The babe is, or should be, "born of love and hope, of ecstasy and pain, of agony and fear, of tears and joy—dowered with the wealth of two united hearts." *Why* should the proud young parents have their babe baptized to save it from "original sin" and "infant damnation?" *Why* should the young wife have to be "purified" by being "churched?"

Marriage is, or ought to be, the best, the highest relation of man and woman, "that great vow which does incorporate and make them one." *Why* should it be degraded by the "Christ" of the Canonical Gospels, by St. Paul, or by other bad old men or ideas in the marriage service?

We guard the growth of our children's minds from ignorance, in innocence, to full knowledge, by guiding them carefully in what they read. *Why* should the Bible, from its position in our schools, contaminate the minds and corrupt the morals of hundreds of thousands of children?

Death is the natural end of life, "A sleep and a forgetting." In normal, fully healthy life it is neither to be welcomed nor to be feared. To the poor or suffering, 'tis true, it may be a welcome relief, "the poor man's dearest friend, the kindest, and the best.....a blest relief to those that, weary laden, mourn." In the main, outside Christianity, it is not feared, nor dreaded. In face of death—a last walking on, or off, we all must do and might as well do with what dignity we can—the Christian religions make cowards of their victims as no other religion does.

Cowards die many times before their deaths;
The valiant never taste of death but once.
Of all the wonders that I yet have heard,
It seems to me most strange that men should fear;
Seeing that death, a necessary end,
Will come when it will come.

Why, above all, in the last scene, *Why* should the bed of death be surrounded by terrors and fears? *Why* should the Christian Mumbo Jumbo man, after hanging up his curtain of terror, retain his hold upon his dupes by removing the phantasy of fear, which he himself has raised, for a consideration?

Such "Whys" for the unwise could fill more space than our editor is likely to grant, even to the present writer! Sufficient for the purpose have been indicated. Readers can find similar questions for themselves—even to satiety. The Christian will find they can be

put *ad nauseam*. All serve to illustrate the indubitable fact that Christianity to-day is the great conglomerate, if not amalgamate, of superstition. Scratch a Christian in any of his beliefs (he's more likely to scratch you—if you're a Freethinker), and you will find the savage superstition oozing to the surface.

These burdens of Christian superstition are borne by the pilgrim in his progress to-day; such old Mumbo Jumbo men of the sea of Christian superstition still keep their legs around the neck of the modern Sinbad simply because these poor Christians do not think. The burden is accepted unthinkingly, as many inheritances are. It is, however, accepted and borne largely with doubt, and steadily increasing doubt at that. The tragedy of "the Great War" made many think who had never thought before about the Christian superstitions. It "showed up" to many, in quite a surprising way, the utter failure, futility, and folly of those same Christian superstitions. That development has made the Christian Mumbo Jumbo men furiously to think. These officials of Christianity, the bishops, priests, parsons, ministers, pastors, *et hoc genus omne*, are frantically attempting any and every sort of dodge to keep their business going. So far as it is kept going at all the evil work is carried on by the Mumbo Jumbo men in order to save their own position, and in the interests of those they serve. You can disbelieve as much as you like. You can be as complete an Atheist or Rationalist as you may. So long as you do not injure or destroy their authority, their position, their power, their superstitions (which many of them do not believe themselves), they do not care a fig-tree cuss. Do anything effective to wipe out the infamous, and they will, so far as they can, move heaven, earth, sea and hell to down you and damn you. Thomas Paine was a Deist, strongly an Anti-Atheist. He has just been refused a niche in the American Hall of Fame. Mark Twain was an Atheist, but he has been admitted. The cause of the difference in the treatment of these two great men, both Freethinkers, is easily to be seen. Perhaps the shade of Clemens will thank his wife for the honour he has gained.

Christianism really dates from its adoption by Constantine, a truly Christian Emperor. From that time, right down to the present day, it has served as dope of the worst kind to the people of Europe and the Americas. The Christian Mumbo Jumbo men are, and always have been, out and out (if not pure and simple) dope merchants in the interests of the tyrants of all sorts. "They have three words, God Heaven and Hell; well tyrants know their power, well pay them for the loan, with usury torn from a bleeding world." It is as dope merchants that they are fighting for their business to-day.

Out of the mass of evidence as to the truth of this charge I would briefly refer to three recent instances. The Catholic *Ecclesiastical Review*, of Philadelphia, published an article dealing with the Y.M.C.A. In that article the writer said:—

The Catholic authorities are aggrieved, not because the Central Committee of the Y.M.C.A. opens its doors to physical and educational benefits for the young, but because these offers are made the channels of propaganda which substitutes a paganized culture, under the name Christian, for the pure and sublime teaching of Christ. By teaching an easy, sensuous morality of well-groomed manners, well-informed intellect, and respectable enjoyment, in place of the self-denial, humility, obedience to the precepts of Christ and the Church established by him, the young may be weaned from the faith of their fathers.

Any comment on that admission is unnecessary. They object not only against "well-informed intellect," but even against "respectable enjoyment!" Presumably, the enjoyment in the Catholic Church (if there be any) is not that kind. The authority of Mumbo Jumbo must

be maintained at any cost. And even the Catholic Church is now revising its Bible!

Dean Inge wrote in the *Evening Standard*:—

Our industrial civilization has produced an overwhelming prevalence of that anti-Christian spirit which is sometimes called Materialism, but which I prefer to call Secularity. It is the one enemy with which Christianity can make no terms.

Certainly not—not from the Christian "big-fetish" man's point of view. He advocates an unpaid clergy. These clergymen and women are to earn their living in Secular callings; *but* they are to be licensed by the Church! They would get a permit to dispense Christian dope. "They would, of course, be chosen as being earnestly religious persons." Of course, that goes without saying. Elsewhere, Dean Inge laments that British workmen and women are not willing to reduce themselves to the position of the Chinese. In other words, the British workers are refusing to accept the Christian dope which would reduce what little standard of living they have, increase their hours of labour, decrease their wages, and mightily increase the wealth of Dean Inge's friends. "Can we endure to hear this arrogance?" Dean Inge's selfish purpose is as clearly evident as is that of the Catholic writer.

My third instance refers to yet another arm of the Christian octopus. Mr. W. T. Ellis wrote in the *Saturday Evening Post*, U.S.A.:—

One of the pathetic sights of our day is the spectacle of clergymen turned into vice-raiders, municipal reformers, prohibition enforcers.....To make the eternal timely, and to bring the infinite near, and to introduce burdened and dissatisfied men and women to the sufficiencies that lie outside the realm of physical senses—this is the mission of the minister. For him to accept any other position, however eminent, is a descent.....

Here, again, the confession is clear that the Christian Mumbo Jumbo men are in their business, not for the advance of morality, but with the purpose of administering the Christian dope to the people for the benefit of those who enjoy a monopoly of the good things of this world. Quite a lot of modern good and faithful servants, who have lent out their talents at usury and increased them many hundred-fold, keep "tame parsons" as Christian dope dispensers to their victims.

To safeguard the moral and physical well-being of the people a war is waged against physical dope with all its evils. That campaign is meeting with much success. The Freethinkers of the world are engaged in an even greater war against the worst evil of religious dope, that curse to the mental, moral, and social, well-being of the people of this world. The sword of truth was not lightly drawn by our predecessors against the hydra-headed monster of Christianity. Great victories were won. It is our privilege to carry forward the fight; and final victory is in sight. The frantic efforts and the dismal denunciations of the Christian "big-fetish" men prove that they know their baneful occupation will soon be gone.

"Our cause is ripe."

ATHOS ZENO.

Was the earth made for to preserve a few covetous, proud men to live at ease, and for them to bag and burn up the treasures of the earth from others, and these may beg or starve in a fruitful land; or was it made to preserve all her children? Let Reason and the Prophets' and Apostles' writings be judge, the earth is the Lord's, it is not to be confined to particular interests.....Did the Light of Reason make the earth for some men to engross into bags and barns, that others might be oppressed with poverty.....Therefore if the rich still hold fast to this propriety of Mine and Thine, let them labour their own lands with their own hands. And let the common people, that say the earth is *ours*, not *mine*, let them labour together, and eat bread together upon the commons, mountains, and hills.—*Winstanley*.

A Modern Mystic.

A STUDY OF "A. E.'s" "CANDLE OF VISION."
A good book is the precious life-blood of a master's spirit.
—Milton.

THE number of good books is very small; bad books—mere excuses for covering paper—are plentiful, they are as "thick as autumnal leaves that strow the brooks in Vallombrosa." With no small appreciation we have read and re-read *The Candle of Vision*,¹ by "A. E." It is not a book that can be used to kill time; neither is it a book to be read for amusement; again, it cannot be read for material profit; but it is one that we can honestly recommend to all seekers of truth. My readers will remember the story of the king surrounded by flatterers. These parasitical symbols induced the monarch to go abroad unclothed. A little boy was the only person to cry out that his majesty was naked. This outspokenness, coupled with the critical faculty, is the essence of free thought, and in this spirit we have examined this book. If, as a result, we can share our enlightenment with readers, this slight essay will be justified.

In his first chapter our author states that "desire is hidden identity," and he draws us to the first step beyond or above thought; he cites the instance of sages who, by intense meditation, find union with the object they contemplate. "All desire tends to bring about unity with the object adored." In the third chapter, under the title "The Slave of the Lamp," he writes:

I could not lose what was my own; I need not seek, for what was my own would come to me; if any passed it was because they were no longer mine.....It is those who live and grow swiftly, and who continually compare what is without with what is within, who have this certainty.

The acceptance of this conclusion gave our author a feeling of stoical fortitude or resignation. The brief lives of Shelley and Keats were crowded with enough experiences that could not fall to the lot of other men with Methuselah's fortune—or misfortune. Freethinkers may be left to settle for themselves the question of whether their severance from their respective Churches and Chapels was a sign of growth or decay. It is purely a question of statics or dynamics. If they rejected the crude symbolism of savagery for the fresh air of reason they grew swiftly and emerged to healthy virtues that are as tempered steel. We would rather be part of the unity including an apple tree in blossom than some foolish weak creature content for one scapegoat to pay the price of the world's redemption.

Here is a thinker who frankly states that for the acceptance of his experiences by his readers he must not fall back on authority, or appeal for trust. There is an honest ring about this that we like; is not this the substance of an attitude towards life that is as much a part of Freethought as the circulation of the blood is of life? One more quotation and we have finished with polite theft. From the chapter entitled "Meditation" we take this:—

Our religions make promises to be fulfilled beyond the grave because they have no knowledge now to be put to the test, but the ancients spake of a divine vision to be attained while we are yet in the body. The religion which does not cry out: "I am to-day verifiable as that water wets or that fire burns. Test me that ye can become as gods." Mistrust it. Its messengers are prophets of the darkness.

How many of our modern religions will stand a test of this description? No orthodox Church is big enough for the one who issues this challenge. He has shifted the battle ground from the region of faith and belief to that of proof, and on this ground the skittles

of theology can not only be knocked down but smashed to smithereens. The Christian religion is one gigantic assumption. Assume the existence of God. Assume the existence of Christ. Assume the existence of the Holy Ghost. As a pedlar of supernatural wares you are then well equipped to argue (with persecution in the background)—if you can get your opponent to fall into the trap of assumption. Water wets and fire burns; it is not necessary to traverse an Athanasian creed of chemistry to believe in these phenomena.

The Candle of Vision is a book that would play tricks with a conscientious reviewer; it abounds in stimulating thought, and one encounters many temptations to turn aside and become as perverse as Sterne himself. "A. E." has read deeply of Indian philosophy, and he mentions one exercise of the mind and will that my readers might try for themselves. Let them try to concentrate their minds on a mental object or abstract form for five minutes. "A. E." asserts that ploughing is much easier; and we readily agree with him. A succession of thoughts is so natural to us that an arrest and concentration of them is painful. This training will fit us for high adventure in the world of imagination and meditation. It will also help us to look on time spent in reading most of our newspapers as time lost—for there is nothing to gain from records of current knavery—except vexation of the spirit; and one should not pay to be insulted.

Most Mysticism is a close neighbour of mistiness—of fog; it appears to bear the same relation to religion as Agnosticism does to Atheism. The vocabulary of Mysticism in many cases is ambiguous, and, in this respect, we are reminded of an assertion in *Richard Feverel*.²

As Mr. George Underwood has pointed out in these pages, cosmic consciousness is only another term for a deeper and wider sympathy with humanity, and we believe that true Mysticism is only another name for that state or plane of thought in or on which, much of the world's activity is rightly regarded as foolery, or matter for comedy. Prospero is as much removed from Caliban as the true mystic is from the polite idiots who believe that man was born to work eight hours a day and die in the workhouse, in spite of the communal inheritance of machinery and solar energy. Mysticism is refined commonsense, and the potentiality of commonsense is infinite. And we do not think that "A. E." would resent the implication that he was an Atheist in regard to that form of Godology expounded by basso profundo and adenoidal parsons. The potentiality of free thought is infinite; when the last words on it are written it will become static and ready to die; "A. E." has gone farther ahead than many, and a pioneer who advances in the region of thought without the puerilities of Christianity is entitled to respect. Memo—an affirmation (dogmatic) of Freethinkers: we reject the "inborn religious" Christian theory; that theory belongs to the assumption trap—as also the existence of the soul. We might be induced to consider the soul with the Christian vocabulary under lock and key; organized Christianity's record in things temporal unfits it for authority in the finer things of life; we are on surer ground with Plato, Socrates, or Plotinus, or any thinkers who come to us without the rack, the gibbet, and the thumbscrew in the background.

Our author reminds us of Richard Jefferies, yet he strikes deeper into the heart of nature than one who wrote largely about externals. "A. E.," by meditation, strives to compose a theory of vowels and consonants, each with an affinity to idea, force, colour, or form. This, we venture to assert, is a worthier task with more honour and glory, than prating about a God of love amidst the shambles of Europe. It is an attempt

¹ Macmillan and Co., 7s. 6d.

² "When people do not themselves know what they mean, they succeed in deceiving and imposing upon others."

at the Gnosis of Man, and God can bide our time. Water wets, and fire burns, and Christian institutions are part of the machinery to keep slavery permanent—the book of life proclaims it this very day—our newspapers disguise it, and the ruck of Christian institutions at the present seem nothing more nor less than bill-posting stations.

The *Candle of Vision* was published in 1919; when it was written we do not know, but "A. E." makes a remarkable prophecy in it regarding his own country of Ireland. He states that there was to be one more tragic episode in Irish history, and events have proved him to be a true prophet. The present writer may be entirely wrong in his theory that life can be divided into three planes: physical, psychical and spiritual. Our plutocratic hogs dwell on the first with disaster to everybody; the European War proved it—it was something like a stupid child forgetting that fire burns. And "A. E.," and many others who can see that standing waters breed pestilence, know, and have the courage to state, that physical gratification is only one phase of life; whilst governments think and act as though there were no others. For thinkers, for poets, for independent writers who will not bend the knee to Mammon there is ostracism and the bitter bread to be eaten by all who take on themselves the pain and privilege of writing and speaking truth, because, as W. B. Yeats states, Providence has filled them with recklessness. Later generations accept their ideas, and the dead receive their long denied justification. Witness the poverty of Blake, and his present position in the only world worth living in—the world of ideas.

In conclusion we cheerfully ask Freethinkers to read this book; the author, Mr. G. W. Russell, is a man of many activities; he is associated with the publication of the paper *The Irish Homestead*; he is an artist, and a poet, and he recently honoured our gifted Premier with a visit when last in London. From agriculture and the practical affairs of Ireland to the *Candle of Vision* is a long step, but the atom and the mountain are part of the unity of earth, and life should be a striving to become a perfect man. "A. E." sets us an example, and Blake gave us a counsel of perfection when he wrote sixteen short lines and called them "Smile and Frown."

WILLIAM REPTON.

Correspondence.

THE HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS. TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—It would really be a pity to disappoint "Unorthodox" in not giving him an opportunity to refute those simple-minded Freethinkers who actually imagine (with a good many eminent Christians) that the four accounts of the Resurrection story are *not* in harmony. I therefore trust that Mr. McLaren will not mind if I butt in, with your kind permission. Of course, I do not pretend that I have made a very exhaustive study of the Resurrection alone—I find contradictions and discrepancies throughout the whole of the Bible. But in no other part of the Old Book are they found in such delightful abundance, and I am sure it will prove a most interesting discussion to all readers if "Unorthodox" will show us that the Gospel records are simply monuments of harmony and that some of us "champions" do not always live up to our "freethinking." First of all, at what time in the morning did the women visit the tomb? Mark: "At the rising of the sun." John: "When it was yet dark." Who came? John: "Mary Magdalene" alone. Matthew: "Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary." Mark: "Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome." Luke: "Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women." Was the tomb open or closed when they came? Luke: "Open." Matthew: "Closed."

Whom did they meet at the tomb? Matthew: "The angel." Mark: "A young man." Luke: "Two men." John: "Two angels." (I love the way in which these women were able at a glance to discriminate between men and angels. I wish "Unorthodox" would let us into the secret.) Where these men or angels in the sepulchre or outside of it? Matthew: "Outside." Mark, Luke and John: "Inside." Were they sitting or standing? Luke: "Standing." Matthew, Mark and John: "Sitting." Did Mary Magdalene observe the divine messengers when she first came to the tomb? Synoptics: "She did." John: "She did not." Who became frightened at the messengers? Matthew: "The keepers." Mark and Luke: "The women." Did the women see Jesus? Matthew: "They did." Luke: "They did not." Did the women tell the disciples what they had seen? Luke: "They did." Mark: "They did not." How many disciples visited the tomb? Luke: "Peter alone." John: "Peter and John." Did Mary know Jesus when he first appeared to her? Matthew: "She did." John: "She did not." Was she permitted to touch Jesus? Matthew: "Yes." John: "No." Where did Jesus appear to his disciples? Matthew: "In Galilee." Luke: "In Jerusalem." Were all the disciples finally convinced of the Resurrection? John: "They were." Matthew: "They were not." I think these will do to go on with, though, when they are all finally settled to our mutual satisfaction, there are heaps more for "Unorthodox" to put right. He will notice that I have not given chapter and verse. As "Unorthodox" has made a (presumably) deep study of the whole of the narratives, I am sure he will know every point I have raised and have a ready reply. It's the reply I'm after. But if he does challenge a single statement I have made above, I will in my next letter give him the actual Gospel words.

H. CUTNER.

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF MONTHLY MEETING HELD ON APRIL 28.

The President, Mr. C. Cohen, occupied the Chair. Also present: Messrs. Kelf, Lloyd, Moss, Neate, Quinton, Rosetti, Samuels and Silverstein. Misses Kough, Pitcher, and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting were read and confirmed.

The Annual Balance Sheet, duly audited, was received, together with the completed Conference Agenda, and ordered to be printed.

New members were admitted for Glasgow, Leeds, Upper Rhondda and the Parent Society, and permission was given to form a new branch to be called the Upper Rhondda.

Correspondence on various matters having been disposed of, on a report from the Swansea Branch of excellent propagandist work to date, it was agreed that a grant of £10 be made.

The President and Secretary reported further upon the possibility of engaging the services of Mr. George Whitehead for some out-door mission work in the Provinces, and it was resolved that a beginning should be made among the Northern Branches, and that all applications for Mr. Whitehead's services be made through the General Secretary.

A letter to the President from the Atheist Union of Berlin, President, Dr. G. Zepler, reciting the difficulties under which they were labouring in consequence of the present political and economic situation of the country, and stating their willingness to exchange literature and their need for financial support, was discussed. Resolved to send a donation of £5 5s. to help the cause of International Freethought.

The Executive learned with deep regret of the death of Mrs. Willis, wife of Mr. F. E. Willis, Executive member for the Midlands, and also of the sad bereavement of Mr. Smith, of Walsall, and the Secretary was asked to convey the unanimous sympathy of the meeting to these two gentlemen and their families.

The President read the Executive's Annual Report to be presented to the Conference, which was unanimously adopted.

The meeting then closed.

E. M. VANCE.
General Secretary.

My Uncle William.

I ONCE had an uncle, William Henry England,
His face was florid, his hearty laugh was loud,
His waist measure was like old Jack Falstaff's,
He was hail-fellow-well-met with every one he saw.

He was a member of the Red Bird Club,
All his old cronies called him Big Bill England,
And they liked him a lot

One day my big, bluff, boisterous uncle got religion;
He "experienced a change of heart," was "born again,"
and became a Quaker preacher!

It was some metamorphosis!

He always preached the same sermon; he preached it
over and over and over.

It was simply this,
"There is a reality in Christianity;
It is no cunningly devised fable."

I have heard him preach that sermon till the tears ran
down his cheeks,
He was mightily in earnest.
He believed that what he was saying was true.

And in a measure it was true.

The only trouble with uncle William was that he never
stopped to think.

Of course there is a reality in Christianity,
Just the same reality that there is in Mohammedanism,
and Judaism, and Buddhism, and Shintoism, and
Fetishism,

Just the same reality that there was in the mythologies
of the ancient Romans, and Greeks, and Egyptians,
and Chaldeans, and Aztecs, and Peruvians,

And in the mythology of our own barbarous ancestors in
northern Europe;

And in the mythologies of all other peoples who ever
lived, or who live now;

Just the same reality, no more, and no less.

For I see that man since he was man, has always created
God in his own image,

In the image of man created he him,
Male and Female, created he them.

And all these Gods alike, are merely figments of man's
imagination,

Fanciful figures with which he fills the twilight of his
dreams,

Fanciful explanations that do not explain,
But only render still more difficult the comprehension,
The phenomena that man in childish ignorance, called
them into being to elucidate.

Yes, in all the Gods alike, and in all the systems of
religion built up around those Gods, is the same
reality or rather unreality.

The second sentence of uncle William's sermon,
Is, however, exactly right just as it stands,
Although not exactly just as he meant it,
For in the better light of later knowledge,
The Christian fable clearly is not cunningly devised.

HOWELL S. ENGLAND.

Obituary.

We regret to record the death, after a long and painful illness, of Miss Augusta Amelia Britton, in her sixty-ninth year. Miss Britton was a convinced Freethinker, though not a member of the National Secular Society; but her brother, Mr. George Britton, of 52 Snells Park, Edmonton, was a zealous worker in the cause of Freethought under both Mr. Bradlaugh and Mr. Foote, and is still a member of the Society. Miss Britton was buried on Friday, April 29, in the Edmonton cemetery, when a Secular service was conducted at the graveside by the undersigned.

J. T. LLOYD.

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 Discussion: "Trade Unionism," opened by Mr. Ratcliffe; also Social.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C. 2): 11, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., "Poets and Preachers."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Mr. W. H. Thresh, A Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Regents Park): 6, Mr. A. D. McLaren, "The Break Up of Protestantism."

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

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

LEEDS BRANCH N. S. S. (Youngman's Rooms, 19 Lowerhead Row, Leeds): 3, Rev. Edwin Fieldhouse, "The Logical Necessity for a Personal First Cause"; Mr. A. Hugh will lead off with the negative.

SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH N. S. S. (3 Thompson Street, Tyne Dock): 6.30, Conference Agenda; Mr. R. Chapman, A Reading.

SWANSEA BRANCH N. S. S. (60 Alexandra Road): 6.30, Reception Committee Meeting.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, Ltd.

Company Limited by Guarantee.

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

Secretary: Miss E. M. VANCE.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

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.

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.

PIONEER LEAFLETS.

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

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

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

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

THE BIBLE HANDBOOK.

For Freethinkers and Inquiring Christians.

BY

G. W. FOOTE and W. P. BALL.

NEW EDITION.

(Issued by the Secular Society, Limited.)

Cloth Bound. Price 2s. 6d., postage 4d.

One of the most useful books ever published. Invaluable to Freethinkers answering Christians

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGDON STREET, LONDON, 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.

A New Life of Bradlaugh.

CHARLES BRADLAUGH

BY

The Right Hon. J. M. ROBERTSON.

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

With Four Portraits.

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

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

A 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.

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.