

The FREETHINKER

FOUNDED · 1881

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

Registered at the General Post Office as a Newspaper

VOL. XLII.—No. 20

SUNDAY, MAY 14, 1922

PRICE THREEPENCE

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

| | Page. |
|--|-------|
| <i>Propaganda and the Boycott.—The Editor</i> - - - | 305 |
| <i>Anglican Bishops in a Quandary.—J. T. Lloyd</i> - - - | 306 |
| <i>Science in Cold Storage.—Mimnermus</i> - - - | 307 |
| <i>Christianity and the Masses.—W. Mann</i> - - - | 308 |
| <i>An Eighteenth Century Freethinker.—George Underwood</i> | 309 |
| <i>N. S. S. Conference</i> - - - - - | 313 |
| <i>“Religio-Charity Fakers”</i> - - - - - | 314 |
| <i>The Limits of Social Liberty.—A. E. Maddock</i> - - - | 315 |
| <i>A Mother of Freethinkers.—Andrew Millar</i> - - - | 316 |
| <i>Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.</i> | |

Views and Opinions.

Propaganda and the Boycott.

Some of my readers may remember that a couple of years ago I went down to Weston-super-Mare to deliver a lecture in the pier pavilion. It was not the best kind of a place in which to lecture during the winter, but there was no other hall in the town that could be obtained. The very good folk who controlled the halls declined to let a building for a Freethought lecture on a Sunday, and so we had to take the best that could be got. The meeting was a small one, but it was attentive and appreciative, and the friend who was responsible for the local expenses was satisfied with the experiment. He said, and was right in his judgment, that the effect of the meeting would not end with the lecture, nor did it. It was the first time that a Freethought meeting had been held in the town, and it was very much talked about by those who were too timid to attend. Indeed, I mean it as no reflection on those who did attend when I say that the most effective work was probably done among those who stayed away. They could keep out of the pier pavilion, but they could not shut it out of their minds that a lecture attacking Christianity had been given within the sacred precincts of Weston-super-Mare. Moreover, our friend has since kept up a very persistent propaganda in the shape of the distribution of literature, and has had two large posters displayed on the walls of the town advertising this journal. All this has done much good, and as the sequel will show, has led to some amount of talking. We have had orders for literature sent to the *Freethinker* office, and have received letters of enquiry from many people who have told us that it was through seeing one of these posters, or through having a pamphlet given them, that they first came into contact with our movement. The whole is a good example of what may be done by persistence in propaganda, and I feel sure that the gentleman who was generous enough to set the whole thing going will be gratified at the result. If only the same energy and persistence were shown all over Britain we should see a more rapid change than we can see at present.

Our “Free” Press.

I have been obliged to give this little sketch of what I may call the inner side of the movement in order

that readers may understand what follows. Another gentleman, occupying a position in the town which precludes his name being published, sends me a leading article from the local paper, the *Weston Mercury*, which shows that the “good” folk are beginning to feel a draught. At a guess, I would say that the article is the result of people bothering the editor with requests for something to be done to stop this deadly propaganda—the article does not read as though it were spontaneous. The editor does not argue against the Freethought position—one congratulates him on his wisdom in that—and he says that he is—

not so silly as to entertain the old-fashioned notion that Freethinkers are men of evil life, or that they seek to crush out all reverence for religion or regard for ethical standards from a desire to establish a kingdom of bestial indulgence here on earth as a preliminary to that Nothingness which according to them lies on the other side of the grave.

(Perhaps, when the editor has a little spare time, he will be good enough to tell us what Freethinker wishes to crush out all regard for ethical standards, or ask himself whether adopting another ethical standard is quite the same thing as the rejection of moral rules and regulations?) What he does is to ask, “What is the use of it all?” and to wind up his article with a suggestion of a boycott that is both cowardly and contemptible.

* * *

Timid Bigotry.

I take the last point first. The last sentence in the leading article is, “The Weston-super-Mare Billposting Company, I believe, censors all matter displayed on its hoardings, but apparently the significance of this Freethought poster propaganda has not been fully appreciated.” Now the poster in question is simply an ordinary poster advertising this paper. It contains not a single word that could be called offensive by anyone. It simply advertises the paper. It follows, therefore, that what the editor objects to is this paper being permitted the use of the ordinary channels of advertisement. He does not say so in as many words; what he does is to call the attention of the billposting company to the fact that they are advertising a Freethought paper, and leaves the rest to them. That is why I call the suggestion cowardly and contemptible. It is cowardly because a bigot with courage would have said outright that the advertisement should be suppressed. And it is contemptible because there is nothing meaner—and, I admit, more Christian—than these attempts to suppress opinions which cannot be intellectually silenced. Of course, it would not be an unprecedented event if the editor's hint were to be acted on and the company declined to exhibit any more *Freethinker* posters. But if the editor of the *Weston Mercury* succeeded in what I take to be his purpose, is he simple enough to imagine that this will stop the propaganda of Freethought? On the contrary, it will only show the more clearly the need for work in Weston-super-Mare and urge local Freethinkers to see that it is done. But the remark is a plain incitement to the Billposting Company to refuse

to any longer advertise the *Freethinker*. Whether it succeeds or not we shall see. In any case, we are inclined to take the alarm of the editor of the *Weston Mercury* as a compliment to our effectiveness. The *Freethinker* is the one paper in Britain the religious world is afraid of. They know that it cannot be intimidated, it is not to be bought—except at so much per copy—and I fancy some are beginning to realize that it has firm friends who are resolved to see that it shall not be crushed.

* * *

The Logical Outcome.

I have only space for a brief comment on the editor's question as to the use of it all. He says, supposing that our aims succeed :—

What happens? Simply that an ennobling and consoling belief has been shattered, and that nothing has been left in its place; that the man, the woman, and the child, created in the divine image, have been reduced to the condition of lay-figures dumped for a brief hour on the stage of human existence and then thrown into oblivion. It is a ghastly aim and once accomplished, *cui bono?*

I cite this because it helps one to realize what a terribly back number the writer must be. It never dawns upon him that Freethinkers may think the belief in Christianity is degrading, and therefore, if they have any sense of social duty, are bound to seek its destruction. Nor does he see that in his appeal to the Billposting Company to adopt the weapon of the boycott he is himself disproving his own statement. There is clear evidence here, not of the belief being ennobling, but of its power to lower and degrade. For, after all, suppressing an advertisement is only one step, and the mere beginning. After that there could be no hesitation at suppressing the paper itself, and even the writers. If the editor will be only logical and courageous he must ask for the paper to be suppressed, and, more important still, the writers who are out to destroy this "ennobling and consoling belief." The one thing follows from the other; and I confess that I could respect more the courageous bigot who put forward the whole of the programme. At present we have only what the editor thinks the public will stand. He is bigoted within the limits of safety; courageous so long as the display of courage does not expose him to risk. May I beg him to try to develop a little courage and consistency in the matter. If he is doing it under pressure from local readers, why not tell them to go to the devil? If his incitement is spontaneous, why not be logical and go the whole hog?

* * *

What Freethinkers Can Do.

Quite seriously, however, this element of the boycott is one that we are always up against, and it is one that Freethinkers all over the country ought to do what they can to frustrate. It is only those in a position such as ours who can appreciate the steady malignity with which the boycott is conducted against the *Freethinker*. There is no more widely read paper in the country, it is read in all circles, from the highest to the lowest; its ideas are freely annexed by newspaper writers, but its name is seldom mentioned. Even in the last blasphemy case, but for the action of the *Freethinker*, we should have seen a sentence of nine months' hard labour for speaking disrespectfully of a myth pass unnoticed by the public, and although the influence of the paper was able to draw wide-spread attention to the case and to make it the starting point of a new agitation for the repeal of the Blasphemy laws, there was no mention made of this journal. This, as I have said, is in its way a compliment, but it is an expensive one. And we neither hunt for compliments, nor do we wish to pay for them. It keeps us struggling where we should have

ease, and it robs our movement of much of its effectiveness. This is one reason—perhaps the chief one—why I am spending so much time with the *Weston Mercury*. I desire to remind Freethinkers that the weapon of the boycott is always at work, and that they have it within their power to weaken it considerably, if not to break it down altogether. They can help us to see that the paper gets the publicity it deserves. We cannot pay for advertising; if we could we have no doubt but that papers such as the *Weston Mercury* would be glad to place a column at our disposal. We must rely upon our friends, and if Freethinkers all over the country did what they could in this matter, there are enough of them to break this ridiculous weapon in the hands of those who use it. Freethinkers have shown the bigots that they will not be crushed. Their work now is to show them that they will not be boycotted. Freethought asks only to be heard, and it is content that if it is once heard it will be heard again. The bigots know that as well as we do. Hence their fear of our being heard. Every new reader for the *Freethinker* is another nail in the coffin of Christianity.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Anglican Bishops in a Quandary.

In the Upper House of the Convocation of Canterbury, at its recent meeting, there was a full-dress debate on the subject of Modernism. The Lower House had already discussed several of the peculiar views expressed at the Cambridge Conference of Modern Churchmen, held last year, and presented to the Upper House a gravamen thereon. There was also a letter from the English Church Union addressed to the Archbishop of Canterbury, in which his Grace is politely reprimanded for having disparaged the importance of certain opinions advanced at that Conference, which were characterized as subversive of fundamental truths of the Christian Faith. This alleged disparagement occurred at the February Convocation when, in reply to a petition on the subject from the English Church Union, his Grace declared that there was a danger of drifting "into a condition of exaggerated apprehension or exaggerated feeling," as if there were "a great phalanx of heresiarchs set in battle array against the doctrine of the Church Catholic." The letter concluded thus :—

We would urge upon your Grace that the "apprehension" or "feeling" in regard to this controversy can hardly be "exaggerated," since it touches the vital points of the Nature and Being of God; the Godhead of Jesus Christ; the Doctrine of the Incarnation; and the Holy Blessed and Glorious Trinity, as set forth in Holy Scripture and the Catholic Creed.

Then followed lengthy quotations from the report of the Cambridge Conference in the *Modern Churchman* for September, 1921. As a matter of fact, there were two petitions before the Upper House. Beside the gravamen brought up from the Lower House and the petition of the English Church Union, a petition was presented by the Bishop of Oxford, signed by forty-one persons, "in criticism of and in opposition to the petition of the English Church Union," to which his lordship exhorted his brothers not to accede. He shared the Archbishop's opinion that the menace from heresy was grossly exaggerated. The Bishop of Gloucester, however, who presented the petition of the English Church Union, was decidedly of the contrary opinion, and technically he was undoubtedly right. He pathetically alluded to his consecration oath to banish and drive away erroneous and strange doctrines. "After careful consideration of the report of the Girton Conference he felt he ought not to remain

silent." He quoted several Modernist opinions which he pronounced heterodox and dangerous.

The Bishop recalled in eloquent language the scene of the Council of Nicæa. The Arians, he said, were willing to accept a definition of Christ as "the power of God," because locusts were also called "the great power of God." The seriousness of the present position was emphasized by the fact that the opinions expressed at Girton were those of ordained men holding responsible positions and bound by most solemn pledges. The gravamen dealt with erroneous interpretations concerning the Godhead of Jesus Christ and his incarnation, and concerning the doctrine of the Holy Trinity.

His lordship moved a resolution declaring that adherence to the teaching of the Catholic Church as set forth in the Nicene Creed is essential to the life of the Church, and the Bishop of Norwich seconded it. Dr. Pollock condemned some of its terminology, contending in particular that the word "adhesion" left too large a latitude. He maintained that the Thirty-nine Articles state the truth and exclude error. As long as there is genuine loyalty to the Creed, room should be left for the discoveries of every age. But though he seconded the resolution, he was really against it. "There was an element of timidity in constantly proclaiming their terms of belief. People outside might think they protested too much."

The Bishop of London, of course, strongly supported the resolution, assigning three reasons for so doing. One reason was that they could not afford to ignore the appeal from the Lower House.

His deepest and most fundamental reason for supporting the resolution was his growing conviction that the line taken by the editor of the *Modern Churchman* would lead the way to complete Scepticism about the Person of Christ in the next generationIt was a fallacy to argue that because God usually worked through the normal, the abnormal must therefore be excluded from consideration. Either the claims of Christ were true, or the person who uttered them was utterly false. He felt they were very much at the parting of the ways. He was all for freedom of investigation, but they were bound as bishops to keep the Faith whole and undefiled, not only for the present generation, but for generations yet to come.

For once we are in full agreement with Dr. Winnington-Ingram, not in his adhesion to the orthodox Creed, but in his attitude to Modernism. In itself Modernism is not one whit more believable than Catholicism, and even the *Church Times* is forced to admit that neither can boast of its success in winning the masses. Modernism is rooted and grounded in the soil of Scepticism. It still retains the old orthodox terms but empties them of their orthodox meanings. As one of the Modernists recently said: "We employ the word God, for example, in teaching our Sunday-school children, but we treat it as signifying the ideal of human character, not as the name of a being of boundless dimensions and power." From the orthodox point of view, that is sheer Atheism.

After several prelates had given their more or less hearty support to the resolution, the Archbishop summed up the debate. He paid a warm tribute to the episcopal speeches "as being the speeches of those who were not only scholars but men of discretion and knowledge of the world." The Archbishop is himself a man of consummate tact in dealing with difficult situations. The truth is that the Modernists are both numerically and intellectually an exceedingly strong party in the Anglican Church. The Dean of Carlisle and Principal Major are exceptionally scholarly and able men, for whom even Bishop Gore is by no means a match; and in the party there are many others whose mental endowments are of a high order.

Naturally, his Grace does not wish to exclude them from the Communion of the Church.

He adhered absolutely to what he had said last session about the exaggerated importance attributed to the whole matter. The Conference at Girton had not been summoned to rally people to a particular point of view. Discussion was necessary and good, since the harm done by controversy in the past was largely due to a lack of conference. There was a world of difference between a blunt denunciation of error and the ventilation of opinion.....If the Modern Churchmen could bring their teaching within the range of the Church's doctrines, they did not wish to lose them; but he foresaw the possibility of their position becoming "intolerable to them and to us."

The resolution was carried unanimously; but it will remain, as perhaps it was intended to remain, a dead letter. The Modernists will not be excommunicated as dangerous heresiarchs, as Dr. Gore thinks they ought to be. They will be tolerated, and their influence will spread broadcast. They are rapidly making converts from the ranks of the orthodox. Had they lived four hundred years ago every one of them would have been put to death without a moment's hesitation. Servetus was burnt at the stake, though he differed far less from John Calvin than the Dean of Carlisle or Principal Major does from Bishop Gore or the Bishop of London. The Church of to-day is more tolerant than the Church of the fourteenth or fifteenth century because the Creed means infinitely less to it, or, in other words, because the Church itself is unconsciously on the road to unbelief. Whole-hearted, ardent believers are now few and far between. The world's trend is towards Freethought, and it is as irresistible as the tide. Even the bishops, with one or two exceptions, cannot be looked upon as worthy successors of either their Catholic or their Protestant predecessors of a few hundred years ago, while, without knowing it, the Modernists are allies of the apostles of Freethought. After all, the world *does* move, however slowly.

The only possible conclusion from the attitude of the bishops towards the Modernist movement within the Church, is that authoritative theological discipline is a thing of the past. The Creeds remain unaltered, but the power to enforce conformity to them no longer exists, which proves that the Church is in a state of hopeless decay. Modern knowledge is undermining ancient beliefs, and monarch Reason is at last sufficiently awake to create an atmosphere in which credulity and superstition cannot thrive. Consequently, the Upper House of the Canterbury Convocation is too conscious of its weakness to deal drastically with the rationalizing movement within its borders.

J. T. LLOYD.

Science in Cold Storage.

In religion,
What damned error, but some sober brow
Will bless it and approve it with a text.

—Shakespeare.

THOMAS CARLYLE once described man as a "two-pronged radish." The term was more critical than accurate, and it would scarcely have won the approval of Darwin or Huxley. Yet Carlyle erred in most distinguished company, for if the Deity, who, it is alleged inspired or wrote the Bible, could not recollect accurately such an elementary fact as that the whale is not a fish, although he is supposed to have created millions of them, there is every excuse for the sage of Chelsea.

The writers of the Bible were as careless and inaccurate as politicians and Christian Evidence

lecturers. They often contradicted themselves, and, when bankrupt of ideas, resorted to the most unblushing "padding." Frequently they wrote the thing which was not, but their crowning glory of ignorance was their alleged knowledge of natural history. Their mathematics would disgrace fourth-form schoolboys; their history was almost entirely imaginary; but their excursions into zoology were almost too funny for words.

"Wild beasts used to roam through the whole of England, but now very wild beasts are only found in theological gardens," wrote a juvenile essayist. And "very wild beasts" are to be found in the Bible. In natural history proper, not the veriest tyro, the most myopic bungler, would confound the hare with the ruminants. Yet pious folk would have us believe that the creator of Linnæus blundered concerning the hare chewing the cud, and fondly imagine that the maker of Cuvier wrote delirious nonsense about clean beasts and dirty beasts. As a matter of fact, it was actually reserved for mere worms of the dust like Buffon, Lamarck, and Darwin to clear out the Augean stable of the divine ignorance, and to create the science of natural history.

The natural history museum of the Bible is a chamber of horrors. Where else can you find a talking snake, a lodging-house whale, or a pigeon co-responder? Where else are the fiery serpents, the dragons, the cockatrice, and the worm that never dies? Where, other than in the sacred zoological collection, are the bedevilled pigs, the four-legged fowls, the unicorn, the cherubim, the ventriloquial donkey of Balaam, and the menagerie of the Apocalypse? Even the human beings introduced in the Bible act most strangely. Adam and Eve dispense with childhood, and start life at full age. The lives of the Old Testament patriarchs run into centuries, and some fortunate individuals had two funerals apiece. Some men were so magnificently developed that ordinary folk were said to be like grasshoppers beside them. The Bible menagerie boasts of horses of fire which carried Elijah to heaven. There is also Aaron's rod that turns into a serpent and swallows other snakes. The leviathan, mentioned in the Book of Job, is a wonderful creature, with its comely proportions, the firework neesings, and organs of vision like the eyelids of the morning. And what is to be said of the kind-hearted raven who brought refreshments to the prophet Elijah? The Biblical menagerie is unique; there is nothing quite like it on earth.

These nonsensical ideas emanate from the Bible, which is still a fetish book in a civilized country. Of all the strange, frantic, and incomprehensible books which have issued from the brains of theologians, this volume is one of the most remarkable. The work which Freethinkers have set themselves is that of freeing their fellows from the absurdities of pre-scientific times, which are perpetuated by this sacred book. To class the Bible as a book of ordered knowledge is the last word in absurdity. It is a Salmagundi of riotous, exuberant, Oriental imagination. If people would only read the volume instead of worshipping it, veneration would be impossible. The first stage in the religious road to ruin is to regard such a comedy of errors as the truth, and nothing but the truth, without reading the volume. It is blind belief combined with blind ignorance which produces the self-opiniated Christian, a figure at which educated people raise their eyebrows, politely smile, and pass on.

MIMNERMUS.

The true philosophy is to retire within oneself, and listen to the voice of reason, amid the stillness of the passions.—Rousseau.

Christianity and the Masses.

II.

(Continued from page 294.)

The infallible Church publicly broke down at the time of the Reformation, but the desire for an absolute authority remained as strong as ever, and the Protestant shifted the burden off the Church and placed it on the Bible.....The scientific discoveries of the nineteenth century made this idolatry of the Bible impossible for thinking Christians.....but for the ordinary man the truth of Christianity is still largely bound up with old theories of Bible inspiration. All ideas of a progressive revelation of God to man are still foreign to his mind. He still mixes up the six days' creation with salvation through Christ, and fails to hear the pleading of the Christ because Jonah drowns it from the belly of the whale, and Balaam's ass shouts louder. He is naturally a little puzzled by the parson who airily laughs away the six days' creation on Monday and solemnly from the altar gives as a reason for keeping Sunday the fact that God having completed the creation in six days rested on the seventh, and hallowed it. He cannot reconcile the two, the extreme solemnity of the affirmation of the Truth and the extreme levity of the denial, and it is odd, isn't it? Truth to tell, we have not been quite honest about the Bible. We most of us hold one theory and assent by our silence to our people holding another.—Rev. G. A. Studdert Kennedy, "The Church in the Furnace," pp. 402-3

The main purpose of the committee appointed by the Churches was not to enquire into the officers' opinions upon religion, which were pretty well known, but into those held by the men in the ranks; hence, there is very little said of the officers' opinions in the digest of the committee's labours published under the title of *The Army and Religion*.

One chapter of the book deals with the men's ideas of God as affected by the war. A chaplain of large hospital experience says that many who believe that God orders everything that happens in this world, "taking for granted that He sent the war, they are profoundly puzzled."

A Wesleyan chaplain of a Midland regiment reports that the men feel: "After all, He seems so distant and so heedless! Besides, what can God Himself do—passing through a German barrage?" He adds: "This affects us all, whether religious or no. Some are inclined to bitter and cynical views of God accordingly. They complain as to why God 'permits' or 'allows' this, that, and the other" (*The Army and Religion*, p. 23).

A chaplain with a Scottish regiment thinks:—

They are conscious of being in the hands of a power, which controls the world; they are conscious of their impotence and littleness. But they are not prepared to believe that this power is or can be called "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." They believe that they see no evidence of a loving control of this appalling world, though they may believe in some control by One who has created and who governs the world. I think a number of them would agree with Thomas Carlyle's saying as to how "God seems to do nothing"—nothing, *i.e.*, which one might expect from One whom one believes to be the Father of men.

But then, as he points out, "the same question has been directly raised for men who are not in the Army at all. It is raised for thoughtful men in the nation" (p. 24).

A staff chaplain, G.H.Q., considers the attitude of the Army towards religion is "the normal attitude of the British people as a whole towards religion," and thinks—

There is much in the whole situation that is profoundly disquieting.....To a very large proportion of the men God himself means little or nothing, or means something that is very unchristian.....there is grave danger that in many quarters there will come a

reaction marked by doubt and pessimism, and a bitter resentment towards this heartless, unhelpful tyrant of heaven whom they call God. "Almighty men say God is. But it does not look like it, for He does nothing to help matters on—does not even care enough for us down here to relieve human suffering" (p. 25).

An officer from a West Country regiment reports:—

As a result of the war there arise doubts as to the existence of God, and, if He exists, doubts as to His power to interfere with the world-order as He apparently does not do so now, when such sufferings and bloodshed would stir the heart of a God.

An officer with experience of Lancashire factory hands says of the soldier:—

He felt himself the sport of the Gods.....of definite religious training there was none.....the facts as he found them did not suggest a universe benevolently disposed, and being without religious foundations, he found talk of a loving God so remote from experience as to be incredible (p. 27).

An officer with a South of England regiment declares:

Burdened man has lost touch of God as omnipotent in all the horror of the war.....Man seems to have lost faith in God as merciful Love. I have heard the question put to me often, on account of the slaughter and devilry shown to-day in war.

It should be remarked that this doubt and scepticism is not confined to men coming from one particular district, it is characteristic of men from all parts. From Scotland to the South of England, from the West to the Midlands.

A chapter is devoted to the soldiers' attitude to Jesus Christ. To ease the shock to the pious, the remark is dropped: "The general result may be startling to many of our readers" (p. 32). In reply to the question in the questionnaire circulated by the committee, "What do they think about Jesus Christ?" the reply was almost invariably, "They do not think about Him at all." This reply occurs again and again. An evangelist working with the Y.M.C.A. tells us: "The Christ of the Bible has no hold upon them. His life, death and resurrection form a story that has a remoteness, bankrupt of present appeal" (p. 34). Another says: "Jesus Christ is to them a good man who lived a long time ago, and did wonderful things, and died on the Cross to save sinners, but why and how they have no idea" (p. 35). From a gunner: "Men look on Christ as an historical figure, not as a living present redeemer."

An officer in a Dominion regiment says: "In my opinion the Christian religion means nothing to them. They seem to think that the name of Jesus is a good one to swear with." Another testifies: "As to their opinion of Jesus Christ it is very difficult to say. His name is only used as an oath." And adds: "Well-known religious phrases, such as 'for Christ's sake,' beautiful as they are, must be scrapped owing to their having only a comic import to the average Tommy" (p. 55). "Who was He anyway?" said one soldier, in bitterness of spirit. "I bet I've suffered more than ever He did" (p. 289).

A private in the R.A.M.C. sums up the soldiers' ideas upon the subject as follows:—

Few know God or realize that He is our Father, Brother, Sanctifier, Saviour. He is not, in the least, a personal Being to many. Most, I think, unconsciously regard Him as a First Cause, a great Atoner, sitting among the stars; He is believed by Christians and theologians to have come down to earth for a number of years—was born in a wonderful way, angels sang in the air, wise men came from an indefinite somewhere known as "the East." He worked some wonderful miracles, at any rate the Bible says so, but many scientists and clever Atheists

say the Bible is based on mere legends, and is full of "tall yarns"; then He died to save me from my sins—which is quite beyond me; how could He save me from my sins?—rose again, went to heaven and has never been seen since. A Holy Ghost came at Whit-Sunday, and since then we have seen nothing in that line—and those things happened so long ago, and there is so little about them in history books other than the Bible, and we have heard of other stories of that kind, other people working miracles, etc., that it is quite doubtful whether it is true or not.¹

Here again we have direct evidence of that Atheistic and anti-religious teaching which the committee declares is now non-existent. This witness explicitly states that the criticism was derived from "clever Atheists."

Here is a different view of the soldiers' idea of Christ, taken from another work. It is by the Army Chaplain, the Rev. Studdert Kennedy, better known as "Woodbine Willie," who tells us:—

There is no one for whom the soldier has such supreme contempt as a bad staff officer who wears red tabs and spurs and never sees the trenches. And to him that is how God appears. Christ was splendid while He was on earth, but He has gone into Heaven. He has retired to the security of Corps Headquarters well behind the line, and from there He directs operations. All the glory with which we invest the glorified Christ, the throne, the host of waiting angels, the triumphal entry into Heaven, all this means just "Red tabs and spurs," and they do not evoke worship or even respect.²

The attitude of the great majority of the men in the Army towards religion is one of utter indifference. The proportion of earnest believers is variously stated by different correspondents, mostly at five or ten per cent.; one gives twenty, and the highest between thirty and forty. Probably the last figures would only apply to Irish Roman Catholic regiments; it would certainly be a gross over-statement for the average English regiments.

W. MANN.

(To be Concluded.)

An Eighteenth Century Freethinker.

JOHN TOLAND, 1670—1722.

TOLAND was born in the peninsula of Innishowen near Londonderry on November 30, 1670, and christened absurdly Junius Janus. It was reported that he was the illegitimate son of an Irish priest. As he tells us himself, he was brought up in the grossest superstition and idolatry, but fortunately was early led to make use of his reason, and abjured the Catholic faith for Protestant heresy at the age of sixteen. His new friends seem to have looked after his education, for after his early schooling at Redcastle, where the master changed his preposterous names for the simple one of John, he was sent to a college at Glasgow, and afterwards graduated M.A. at Edinburgh, proceeding thence to Leyden and finishing at Oxford. He had thus acquired as a young man a large and varied store of knowledge, which he invariably used with brilliance and sound judgment, winning thereby the respect of European scholars like Spanheim, Le Clerc and others. His one fault appears to have been an inordinate conceit of his own opinion, a common enough failing with men of an original turn of mind.

Before he left Oxford in 1695 he had finished his first book, *Christianity Not Mysterious*, which was

¹ *The Army and Religion*, 1919; p. 52.

² *The Church in the Furnace*, p. 390.

published without the author's name in 1696. The second edition in the same year had John Toland on the title page. The interest of the book is nowadays merely historical. It opened the long campaign of Deism against the orthodox position, and it must have put the case cogently, for one inquirer has noted fifty-four replies down to 1761. What Toland did was merely to develop the thesis of Locke as to the reasonableness of Christianity. This may not appear to us alarmingly indicative of Freethought, but the believer of that day could see that any attempt to rationalize the Christian scheme would, if successful, explain it out of existence. He was not deceived by Toland's profession of regard for religion, and the Blasphemy law of 1697 warranted a certain amount of evasion. The book was presented by the Grand Jury of Middlesex and of Dublin, and later the Lower House of Convocation voted that it should be burnt by the common hangman and the author arrested and prosecuted.

It would appear that Toland was not molested in England, which was more tolerant of heretical ideas than Roman Catholic Ireland. He was employed by the booksellers to edit Milton's prose works, and in his life of the poet he took occasion to discuss the popular belief that Charles I was the author of *Eikon Basilike*, remarking that this attribution "made intelligible the admission in early times of so many supposititious pieces under the names of Christ and the apostles." He expected, of course, to be attacked, and replied effectively by his *Amyntor* (1699) an inquiry into the Christian canon.

One of the most original and entertaining of his books is his *Letters to Serena* (1704). Letters he was permitted to address to the intelligent Queen of Prussia, Sophia Charlotte. They handle such subjects as the origin and force of prejudice, the history of the doctrine of immortality, and the origin of idolatry. In the same volume there are two additional letters addressed to a noble friend, one a confutation of Spinoza on the ground of his not accepting the doctrine that "motion is but matter under a certain consideration," a particularly forcible piece of criticism, and the other an exposition at length of the same doctrine, which at that time had the novelty of a paradox. The philosophical reader will appreciate Lange's praise of Toland, although he may find that it is just a little strained by partisanship. Obviously, Toland did not accept all the implication of his Materialism, or his Deism would have gone by the board. Later, in his *Pantheisticon* (1720), English translation (1751), he describes a society of pantheists who worship the universe as God, and whose prayers are passages from Cicero and Seneca. He may, in the end, have come to accept the religion of Spinoza, but before he died on March 11, 1722, he composed his own epitaph, in which, if there is no evidence of militant Atheism, there is nothing of Christian confidence in eternal felicity. It ends thus:—

Ipse vero aeternum est resurrecturus,
At idem futurus Tolandus nunquam.

(But he is about to rise again in eternity, yet *never to be the same Toland more.*) It was Mark Pattison, I believe, who once said to a friend that he wanted to live after death only on the condition that he had his books. He could not think of an existence apart from the beloved companions. And we can see that poor Toland, the Grub Street pamphleteer and hack, as a modern historian of thought uncharitably describes him, was not pleased with the prospect of an eternity in which he should not be the same argumentative and paradoxical spirit. Perhaps he was at heart more of a Materialist than his work and epitaph indicate.

GEORGE UNDERWOOD.

Acid Drops.

Freethinkers have cause to remember the present Home Secretary, Mr. Shortt, in connection with his cowardly attitude on the Blasphemy laws. And we should imagine that a recent speech of his is likely to make any thoughtful man or woman feel they have had enough of this particular official. He drew a picture of England honey-combed with secret revolutionary societies, and only saved from disaster by a strong and well organized secret service movement—in other words, by an army of well-paid government spies. If that is the position England is in, we are in a bad way indeed. And as government spies usually thrive upon manufactured plots, and general official dishonesty, it would mean that we are rapidly travelling the road of the old Czarist Russia. But we do not believe it to be true. The Home Secretary was just letting his imagination run riot. The way to kill secret plots is to encourage freedom of expression. Given that, public opinion is generally healthy enough to look after the rest.

Lord Sheffield, writing in the *Manchester Guardian* (April 27) on "Religion in Welsh Schools," pointedly directs attention to the results likely to attend the effort to give compulsory religious instruction in all the elementary schools of Wales.

What is the attitude of the average Welsh supporter of Church or Chapel towards such Scripture narratives as the Creation, Fall of Adam, the Flood, the Exodus? Traditional Christian theology is built up on the assumption of the historical truth of these narratives, and they are now found to be a hindrance, not a help, to the spiritual life.

Lord Sheffield further declares that the proposed establishment of two external ecclesiastical committees, controlling the appointment of teachers, will weaken the authority of the Education Committee and take away from the teaching of the Bible the guarantee of sincerity. This is precisely what advocates of secular education insist upon. The Anglican Church wants to train the child as a recruit for its own ecclesiastical organization. The Nonconformists demand "simple Bible teaching" as unsectarian, though their sects derive all their distinguishing doctrines from varying interpretations of the Bible.

Both *Light* and *The Two Worlds*, the two Spiritualist organs, contain reviews of Mr. Cohen's *Other Side of Death*. Naturally, they concentrate on the section dealing with Spiritualism, and, as may be expected, they do not agree with what the author has to say. On that matter we must let readers of the book form their own opinions. We do know that it has served to throw much light on the subject for many readers, and if it leads to further enquiries along the lines suggested we feel quite certain that it will teach many in which way to look for an explanation of what they may see or hear, as well as warn others against a proffered explanation on quite unscientific lines.

The Two Worlds admits that with the aid of "lapsed memory, psycho-pathology, and the 'dirt' of psycho-analysis" a fairly strong case is made out. The phrasing seems to indicate that the writer has not quite the familiarity with the subjects named that his readers might conclude, and we are quite puzzled as to the reason for the "dirt" of psycho-analysis. Evidently, there lies at the root of the expression the belief that psycho-analysis is wholly or mainly concerned with unclean things, and if that is the case the use of the term is quite illuminating to one who has some acquaintance with psycho-analytic technique. The writer also tells us that among Spiritualists the theories named by Mr. Cohen are the subject of daily discussion. Well, any of our friends can easily put the matter to the test by noting how many of their Spiritualistic colleagues are, in fact, acquainted with these theories, or even consider that they may furnish a possible explanation of trance states and spirit messages.

The writer in *Light*, Mr. Stanley De Brath, chiefly calls

for comment, which shows that he has not yet thrown off the old clothes of Christian theology. Mr. De Brath says the book abounds in *obiter dicta*, of which he offers the following example: "There is only one way in which it could be shown that belief in immortality is of vital consequence to human society. This would be by proving that in its absence human nature stagnates or deteriorates." This strikes us as the plainest of common-sense, and if we have not forgotten our old studies in logic, is a plain application of the method of elimination and difference. The only way we know of to find out whether a given element in a compound is essential or not is to eliminate it, and then see what happens. But when we take people without the belief in immortality it is quite impossible for anyone to show that they are worse than those with it. So we remain quite impenitent on that score, and if Mr. de Brath can show us a better way of arriving at a conclusion we shall be pleased to learn what it is.

What Mr. De Brath does is to offer us a genuine *obiter dictum*, thus:—

History, even very recent history, is proof enough. (That human nature does so deteriorate.) Haeckel, taking the same line, declared that man has no more moral responsibility than the bacilli; it followed that unmitigated competition and endless conflict is the law of human nature. This reasoning pervaded Germany, producing results that are obvious enough to most people.

We might be content to leave this as an example of Mr. De Brath's ability to follow a scientific argument. It is obvious that he is unaware that his reading of evolution is one that is open to the most serious objection, and he may feel surprised to learn that among evolutionists it is very generally recognized that side by side with conflict there goes on co-operation and mutual helpfulness, by aid of which human evolution is largely carried on. A reading of Mr. Cohen's *Grammar of Freethought* might enlighten him on this point. And it seems necessary to remind him that the war is over, and the stories that did yeoman service in war time will not pass nowadays. It then served to picture the German people as a nation of Atheists, demoralized by a devotion to the most brutalized form of the "struggle for existence." But instead of this reasoning pervading Germany, the fact is that the Germans were a most religious people for the greater part, with much more religion in their schools than we have in ours. Had they been less religious they would have been less docile in the hands of the military party in Germany. And Haeckel's real fault was that he acted on the principle which seemed so glorious to most Englishmen—when acted upon by Englishmen and in relation to England—"My country, right or wrong." Had Haeckel been less of what is called a "patriot," he would have acted differently in relation to his country. But we are still unable to relate his action to the belief in the struggle for existence. And we have an impression that we have heard of very bad conduct by other nations where the belief in immortality is held very strongly. With so unscientific a sociology our critic is unable to appreciate a scientific study of Spiritualism.

A commentary on what has been said above as to the alleged deterioration of life if the belief in immortality is absent is furnished by American papers just to hand. A New Jersey lady of indifferent health, a Mrs. Fancher, became a convert to Spiritualism. She was very deeply in love with her husband, and was convinced that death was no more than a "passing over" to another state from which she could guide and communicate with those she had left. As an earnest of her faith she killed her infant child and herself and left a letter for her husband, touching in its devotion and simplicity. Some part of her letter is as follows:—

"I will guide you from this day on," she wrote, "and my love will always be right with you. Don't let yourself get nervous. Just wait and see if I don't guide you right. You will be better off, dear. My health is no good and never will be. Don't think of sending our bodies home, as you know the body, after the breath is gone, doesn't amount to anything.

"I have tried to endure my troubles, but it is too much. I hate so to destroy baby's life. But you know then he

will live and have no trouble or suffering as we have. You have been so patient through it all.

"Now, remember that baby and I are going to guide you and also talk to you. Baby can't talk much, but he knows everything, so I believe he will talk from over there to you. I want you to start in again just as if you had never been married.

"Forget your troubles. I want a chance to talk to you, so don't think you are left alone. I have marked every page of these letters, so goodbye for ever, here, I will talk to you at any time.

"I love you, sweetheart."

"MAUD."

In another letter she wrote that he should not let her death bother him. "We are both perfect wrecks," she wrote.

Now this is a direct consequence of a belief in a future life acting upon a nervous temperament. We have pointed out, as a conclusive proof that people do not desire a future life, that normal people shrink from entering it, and hail their threatened departure as a catastrophe. But if anyone is convinced that life is better there than here, and that they will be able to remain in touch with those they love, and, as this poor woman thought, guide them from the other world in the light of their greater knowledge, then the desire to get there should be so strong as to be overpowering. A disregarding of the value of life here is a normal consequence of a strong impression of the value and importance of a life hereafter.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, who is at present in America, was interviewed on the subject, and obligingly explained that if Mrs. Fancher had understood Spiritualism better she would have known that suicides were separated from those they love in this world and cannot get into communication with them. That is sheer piffle! It is Sir Arthur's queer attempt to create legislation in the next world that will suit opinion in this one. The next world is not governed—from all that we can learn—by a parliament and a law court, and actions there will only bring their natural and normal consequences. But the law against suicide is not a "natural" one, but the result of legislation—quite good legislation, but still legislation. As a matter of fact, in some countries suicide, under given conditions, is not deemed wrong at all, but a social and personal duty. If Sir Arthur had belonged to one of these people he would have arranged the laws of the next world to suit. Belonging to this country he fixes them up in accordance with the British constitution. And in this case we would point out to Sir Arthur that the woman committed suicide from no selfish motive, but from sheer devotion to her husband. From that point of view she will be punished in the next world, not because she is worse than many who enter the "summerland," but because she is above them. Her sin is that she has infringed the law of Great Britain. We are a great people!

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle says there is no contradiction between Spiritualism and the Bible. We quite agree with him in this. But, then, neither is there any contradiction between the Bible and Spiritualism and the beliefs of most of the tribes of savages that our missionaries go out to convert.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, on receiving the petition of the English Church Union concerning the speeches at the Modern Churchmen's Conference, deprecated "exaggerated apprehensions." From some of the protests, he declared, one might suppose that there was need "to rally the Church in defence of the Christian faith." It is interesting in these days to have an archbishop's opinion of what constitutes an "exaggeration." The Secretary of the E.C.U. (*Record*, April 27) says that the "apprehensions" were based upon unorthodox statements in regard to the Nature and Being of God, the Divinity of Christ, the Incarnation, and the Trinity. Evidently, what is "fundamental" to one is not so to another within the fold. Perhaps the Archbishop sympathizes with high adventure, at any rate where the faith is concerned. But what is the attitude to these modernists of those Nonconformists who are considering reunion with the Establishment?

For several weeks there has been considerable correspondence in the *Birmingham Post* on "The Decay of Bible Reading." Mr. W. F. Pelton contributes a typically Protestant letter. He asks why those ordinary readers who value the Bible should "have their peace of mind disturbed with the conclusions" of the Higher Critics. Questions of date and authorship, he thinks, should not be "forced upon the attention of anyone, young or old, before he has learned to value the spiritual revelation of the Bible so highly as to possess a faith unassailable by any side issues." This is the only effectual way of arresting sceptical tendencies. It is the argument from authority in its most bare-faced form, and confirms the view, often expressed by students of Protestant Christianity, that an infallible book may be as great an obstacle to mental freedom as an infallible Church.

A correspondent of a London evening paper says that in St. Margaret's Church, Westminster, is a window showing several top-hatted men in a railway train. It should be a change from the customary "apostles" in various coloured blankets.

Sir Owen Philipps, chairman of the Finance Committee of the Welsh Church, says that the annual income of that body "invested in suitable securities" would shortly amount to £375,000, and also that a draft for £2,275,000 had been received on account of commutation. Not so bad for a religion "without money and without price."

Some members of St. Mary's Church, Ilford, declare that they have seen angels standing by the altar. We do not at all doubt the vision. Angels, and all sorts of other things, are seen by all sorts of people, but they do not usually publish the news. Their relatives, if they are wise, take them to see a doctor.

A leading article in the *Buddhist* (March 4), published in Colombo, Ceylon, reviews the last Annual Report of the local Bible Society, and criticizes trenchantly the Christian missionary propaganda in the island. Christian missions identify all opponents with "agitators" and "seditionists." At their last annual meeting several members of the Bible Society "did their best to discredit the Buddhist Scriptures."

But let a Buddhist venture to question the truth of some Christian doctrine, which, though it may be regarded as obsolete and rejected by Christians themselves in England, the missionaries seek to propagate here at the expense of Buddhism, he is at once stigmatized as an agitator, a sort of disreputable person who like his political counterpart, goes about trying to overthrow the divinely arranged, beautiful scheme of things of which the Christian missionary and the British bureaucrat form the essential parts.

Our contemporary adds that Christians have erected memorial tablets in honour of men who have "exposed the errors of Buddhism." At a time when our own defenders of the faith are revising their sacred books, prosecuting "Peculiar People" for believing too literally in the Bible and others for bringing it into contempt, we think some memorial tablets would be appreciated here. How can any sceptic say that Christians are not endowed with a rich vein of humour?

The late Rev. C. E. Panter, of Purbrook, Hants, left £5,874; the Rev. W. R. Williams, of Southampton, left £1,330; the Rev. M. Johnson, of Hexham, Northumberland, £4,358; the Rev. W. O. F. Campbell, of York, £2,062; the Rev. W. R. Hurd, Tasburgh, £1,268. "Blessed be ye poor!"

"France is no longer the home of revolution"; but "the fanatic is a permanent type in England," declares a reviewer in the *Times* (London). Dear! dear! Who would have thought Park Lane was more revolutionary than Paris?

Conversions do not always work out in fact as they do on paper. Thus an anti-popery preacher named Hugh Sampson, alias Harry Adamson, was charged at Ayr the other day with deserting his wife and children. In the course of his work of converting Roman Catholics a young Roman Catholic girl had captured the preacher. He became the father of a child of hers, and had then left his wife and family and had attempted to get to Canada. He had been sent back as an undesirable, and is now serving three months' imprisonment with hard labour. The only thing he has to congratulate himself on is that the charge was not blasphemy. Had it been the punishment would have been heavier.

Newspapers report the death of a Matadore, killed by a bull during the course of a Spanish bull fight. Our sympathy is wholly with the bull, and the prevalence of this "sport" is a striking commentary on the moralizing effects of Christianity.

Another thing worthy of more than a passing word is the present war in China. The Chinese, it appears, are rapidly adopting Western, that is, Christian methods of warfare. China, it will be remembered, is one of the most peaceful nations on earth. The teaching of peace and the essential barbarity of war has been current for many centuries. Result, plunder and outrage by the piratical Christians of the Western world. It is now arming, driven to become militarized by the cupidity and rascality of the European nations. These have been talking, as an excuse for their own militarism, of the "Yellow Peril." And they have done more than anyone to make it a reality. A China armed will not submit to plunder, and we doubt whether the Christian nations are sufficiently civilized to cease plundering.

The world is confronted with important decisions, the making of which will determine the future of civilization. So we are told on every hand, and there is much to justify the telling. But we also observe that a very solemn Court functionary, the Lord Chamberlain, has just issued a decree that at Court functions ladies are to wear trains two yards in length, and they must not extend more than eighteen inches from the heels of the wearers. This follows an order from the same gentleman as to the wearing of trousers at a Royal wedding. It is an interesting illustration of the amount of barbarism that is still current, and also of our great need of a sense of humour. Otherwise, the sight of an official determining by decree the length of a woman's train and the shape of a man's trousers would send the world into convulsions of merriment.

In the *Times* of recent date we read a description of the "sacred" fire ceremony at Jerusalem at (the Greek?) Easter. It appeared to be very like what might be witnessed among a tribe of cannibals in the Congo Forest, and the comments of the correspondent were only a little above that level. Do they really claim that this fire, by which their tapers are lighted, is of miraculous origin? I wonder who supplies the "sacred" lighting materials.

"A C.M.S. missionary," in a recent letter to the *Record*, says that after welcoming every book that gave any hope of reconciling the Bible and science, he found himself compelled to reject the historical character of the early chapters of Genesis. Yet he loves to serve the Society, and hopes that adherence to the Mosaic record will not be insisted upon. This missionary, we are sadly afraid, is another of those venturesome spirits who sail very near the danger posts of speculation and heresy. If he continues along the same lines he should some day accomplish miracles of research in regard to the inspired word.

An American film has been banned by the Bromley (Kent) Town Council film censors. The censors consist of three councillors, a local butcher, a clerk, and a gentleman of no occupation. The Yankee producers will regard England as the land of the setting sun.

N. S. S. Conference.

THE Annual Conference of the National Secular Society will be held this year on Whit-Sunday, June 4, at Nottingham. There will be the usual business meetings at 10.30 and 2.30, and in the evening a public demonstration will be held which will be addressed by a number of speakers, the President in the chair. This year the afternoon will be devoted to a general discussion of the position of Freethought and Religious Equality in the Home. Brief papers will be read by members and they will be followed by discussion. It is hoped that there will be a good rally of members and friends from all over the country. Those intending to visit the Conference and desiring arrangements to be made for their stay in Nottingham, should write the General Secretary without delay, stating their exact requirements. The question of an excursion for the Monday following the Conference is under consideration.

To Correspondents.

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

W. MERCHANT.—Thanks for sketch, but the matter is too local for English readers. It would require some little outline of the local situation for English readers to appreciate it properly.

G. S.—Any work that ignores anthropology in the study of religion is bound to be unsatisfactory, and so far incomplete. To those who really understand the question there is no longer any room for discussion as to whether religious beliefs are true or not, but only for the question of how it came about that people believed them to be true. In that direction lies the explanation of religion. And to explain religion is to explode it.

T. G. HOLMES.—The *Birmingham Daily Mail* along with about a thousand other papers received a copy of Mr. Cohen's pamphlet on the Blasphemy question. We do not know if it noticed it or not. We believe it did not. It is amusing, as you suggest, that some of these papers should complain of being boycotted seeing how rigorously they carry out the boycott of outspoken Freethought. But the British Press is nothing if it is not hypocritical.

G. BRENNAN.—We have not heard of any published reply to our *Theism or Atheism?* One or two clergymen did inform correspondents that they intended replying to it, but that appears to have been as far as they got. We should welcome any real exposure of its "fallacies."

THEOS.—The greatest indictment of the wisdom of God has always appeared to us to be the character of most of those he "saves."

SOCIALIST FREETHINKER.—We must leave Socialists to settle their differences with Mr. Blatchford. These do not concern us here, although much of what you say has a bearing in judging a man's intellectual stability. Perhaps it is also well to allow for the effects of weekly journalism in a popular paper. This begets quite a pontifical and self-satisfied frame of mind—unless one has sufficient strength of character to withstand its influence.

A. ROYLE.—Dr. Luell Rader, we should say, is open to suspicions of insanity—that is, unless the whole thing is a newspaper hoax.

J. CROFTON.—One who takes up with the propaganda of Freethought must expect hardships, and must not expect to convert the world in a day. We are fighting a very entrenched enemy, and the progress of a movement which appeals to the intelligence of men is of necessity slow. But we do advance, and that is everything.

ATHOS ZENO.—Thanks for MSS., but we had already some notes on the case in type when yours came to hand. Always interested in literature.

ALPHA BETA.—The pamphlet you enclose defies criticism from its sheer imbecility. The writer who can speak of Paine and Bradlaugh and Voltaire "licking the dust and bowing the knee" before God Almighty appears to be qualifying for an idiot asylum. The simile is one that lays bear the mind of the writer, and it is of that mean and contemptible kind that appears to have a natural affinity for the Christian faith.

F. J. SNAITH.—We saw the notice of *The Other Side of Death*. The work is selling well, and evidently supplies a need. We are sending on a copy of the paper.

G. G.—The Whiteway Modern School, Whiteway, Gloucestershire, will probably give you what you desire.

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 made payable to "The Pioneer Press" and crossed "London, City and Midland Bank, Clerkenwell Branch."

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

One of our contributors, E. Upasaka, the name of a gentleman well-known in the Far East, writes us with reference to an "Acid Drop" in last week's issue:—

Last week it was stated that there are more Freethinkers in this country than there are Catholics, namely, more than three millions. It is unquestionably true that the great majority of people in this country do not care two straws for the Christian or any other religion and they never enter a place of worship. But are there even one million of these who are what we can describe as thinking Freethinkers? I doubt it. My experience of the average "fool in the street" is that he is quite unable to think coherently on any subject whatever for five consecutive minutes, whether he be a "believer" or an indifferentist. If there are one million intelligent Freethinkers in this country, then let each one deny himself a glass of beer or half a packet of cigarettes weekly (if he cannot afford it otherwise) and buy a copy of the *Freethinker* to hand on to someone else. In this case our paper would command such a respect in the commercial world as an advertising medium that the most pious of merchants and manufacturers would support it. If the Devil ran the *Times of Hell* with a guaranteed circulation of a million, the Christian capitalists would fall over one another to get into its advertisement columns. Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven. There are certainly enough intelligently conscious Freethinkers to put up a much stiffer fight against the force of superstition if only they will organize themselves. It is just because the indifference of the masses is unintelligent and uninformed that there is always a danger of a recrudescence of supernaturalism. Its forces are organized, ours are not.

We need hardly say that we quite endorse all that is here said. Unfortunately, we can only reach through these columns those who already read the *Freethinker*. What we want is some means of reaching those who at

present are outside that circle. To achieve this end is something that we are always impressing on our friends. Perhaps we make ourselves a bit of a nuisance by our insistence, but it is their cause as well as ours.

We are asked to again call attention to the Charabanc excursion which the South London Branch of the N. S. S. is arranging for Sunday, May 28. Charabancs will leave the Trades Union Hall, 32 Brixton Road (Kennington Oval end), at 9.30. There will be one hour spent at Brookwood, which will include a visit to Bradlaugh's grave. A start will be made for Hindhead, passing through some lovely country, and there will be a pause for refreshments in the Pinewoods about 1.30. Members will bring their own eatables. Tea will be served by the Committee at Hindhead at 4.50, and the return will be at 7, reaching Kennington Oval about 10 o'clock. The price per seat will be 10s., including tea, and children who do not occupy seats will travel free. The total journey will be one of about seventy miles. Those wishing to join the party should write without delay to Mr. L. Brandes, 89 Union Grove, S. W. 8. Given fine weather the trip should be a most enjoyable one.

Mr. R. H. Rosetti visits the Secular School, Failsforth, to-day (May 14) and will deliver two lectures. In the afternoon at 2.45 he will lecture on "Christianity before Christ," and in the evening at 6.30 "Christianity and Science—Anthropology." We have no doubt but that many of the Manchester friends will make it a point of being present at the meetings. In addition to the lectures there will be a musical programme carried out by the choir.

We are glad to learn that the West Ham Branch made a very successful start with its open-air work on Sunday last. Mr. Whitehead was the speaker, and the lecture was followed by a number of questions. Mr. Corrigan will be the lecturer this evening (May 14). Particulars will be found in the lecture notices.

We have received from Messrs. Watts and Co. a new work by Mr. Joseph McCabe, *Ice Ages; The Story of the Earth's Revolutions*. Mr. McCabe provides a summary of the various glacial periods with a sketch of the various theories to account for their recurrence. The book is written in a popular style, and appears to be the substance of the lectures he has been delivering on the subject. The book is illustrated, cloth bound, and published at 3s., postage 3d.

Another work, also published by Messrs. Watts and Co., is *A Brief History of Education*, by H. M. Beatty, late Senior Inspector of Schools in Ireland. The work commences with a sketch of education among the Greeks and Romans, and passes thence through the mediæval period to modern times. So far as we have tested the work here and there, it appears to be quite reliable, although we should have liked to have seen greater justice done to some of the lesser known reformers, and one misses the mention of Robert Owen, who was the financial backer of some of the earliest attempts at popular education. In this respect we suspect the author has suffered from his own scholastic training, which is apt to keep the survey within a circumscribed area. Or it may be that within the limits of about 180 pages the author had no space for excursions in this direction. The price of the book is 4s. 6d.

Mr. George Whitehead publishes this week through the Pioneer Press a new work, *The Case Against Theism*. It offers in a popular form a brief summary of the arguments against the belief in God such as will be found useful to many of our readers. Mr. Whitehead argues that the God of the past was born of man's ignorance and fears, dismissing summarily the modern excuses brought forward to justify belief in his existence. The God of the present and future, if man must have a God, he believes will be the summation of man's ideals pro-

gressively modified and enlarged by his knowledge and developing social nature. The work is published in paper covers at 1s. 3d., postage 2d., cloth 2s. 6d., postage 2½d. It should prove a very useful propagandist effort, and we wish it a very large sale.

We were pleased to see in the *Times* of a recent date a letter from Mr. Eden Phillpotts drawing attention to the fact that it was the religious question in Ireland which furnished the groundwork of the trouble. Mr. Phillpotts says, rightly enough, that the offence of the people who are murdered consists in their being of a different religion from those who murder them. But from the remark that "the Protestant clergy lack authority or weight to stem this wickedness" we gather that Mr. Phillpotts thinks the blame is wholly with the Catholics. We do not believe this to be the case. So far as we can see the Protestant clergy in the North of Ireland make little or no attempt to check the religious bitterness, but do much to encourage it. The real way to improvement would be for the Irish people to forget their religion altogether. What Ireland needs is a good strong dose of Freethought.

"Religio-Charity Fakers."

SEVERAL missions for homeless men in this city are conducted on a profit-making basis and maintain small stock companies of picturesque loafers to keep the subscribing public interested in their work, according to Roy P. Gates, superintendent of the Joint Application Bureau, which represents the Charity Organization Society and other large charitable organizations.

A request is to be made to Welfare Commissioner Bird S. Coler or Chief City Magistrate McAdoo for an investigation of missions which are run as private enterprises for profit.

A few individuals who never render any accountings make large incomes from such missions, usually without the knowledge of persons of excellent standing who are placed on boards and committees nominally connected with the institutions, he said. Private charities which render no accounting collect \$100,000,000 a year in this State and absorb most of it in "graft," according to Dr. Charles R. Johnson, of Albany, secretary of the State Board of Charities.

Mr. Gates asserted that one mission in an interesting district of New York had an arrangement whereby it paid regular fees to the crews of sight-seeing buses for putting off their passengers at the mission, where a series of men "testify" throughout the day and night to their former wickedness and present reformation.

Several of the missions, he said, have developed staffs of "testifiers." An able-bodied loafer of quavering voice, vivid imagination and ready tears grows into a star and is likely to be an object of rivalry and bidding among institutions which need practical talent.

"Testifying" has fairly developed into a profession in recent years; no man can be a successful "bum" without training himself to cry and deliver sensational reminiscences in an ornate style. The professional "testifier" and professional loafer and beggar have so occupied the field in some varieties of relief work as to make it difficult for a man temporarily down and out to get help and a chance to work.

The private enterprises have been furnished with an unusually large supply of oratorical and theatrical beggars, Mr. Gates said, because of the fact that 103 bona-fide relief agencies which account for every penny spent banded together last Fall and formed the Co-operative Relief Bureau, with headquarters at 100 Gold Street. The organizations belonging to this bureau are pledged to provide adequately for needy

persons. They have discovered, however, that scores of beggars have been exploiting several organizations at the same time, getting themselves outfitted and helped by one society after another. On detection they are now sent back to the first organization for food and shelter, which they cannot now get elsewhere. This process has created such great dissatisfaction among beggars of this type that they have gone over to the missions in a body.

"There are properly conducted missions, of course," said Mr. Gates,—

but the other kinds are very numerous. Some of them are run purely to graft on the public. Others maintain a considerable population of loafers in idleness and have a tendency to cause men who are in straits to become professional beggars and loafers.

The managers of institutions of this kind pray for hard times, because during a prosperous season they can rake together only a few alcoholics and drug addicts, with a sprinkling of able-bodied professional idlers who are obviously unemployed by choice. They cannot interest the public and get donations.

But in a year like this they make their big clean-up. They can show large crowds made up of a few men unemployed and sincerely looking for work and a large crowd of professionals who take to this line in periods of unemployment when they can exploit public sympathy: They send out invitations, get people to attend their services, hear the "testifiers" and subscribe.

Easy money on the New York streets and the demand of the New York missions for men bring great crowds of professionals from other cities, according to Mr. Gates.

(*The Truthseeker*, New York.)

The Limits of Social Liberty.

No word in the English language seems to have been more misunderstood and misused than the word "Liberty." The terms "full liberty," "complete liberty" are often used with approval, implying that liberty is regarded as something that should not be restricted in any way—should not be assigned any limits. Hence, the title of this article may appear, from this point of view, a contradiction in terms.

This misconception is probably due to the old philosophical notion that liberties or rights are things inherently belonging to every human being—a notion for which Rousseau, with his now exploded theory of "natural rights," was chiefly responsible. Thus it was that the French Revolutionists, when they invented their famous and most excellent motto, "Liberty, equality, fraternity," did not stop to define liberty or to place any limits on it. They held that as liberty is a good thing, the more liberty a man can have the better, so all individuals in the community must have all the liberty they want. It was not realized that liberty is not a commodity which can be possessed and used by an individual for his private and exclusive benefit, like a box of cigars or a pair of boots. It was not realized that liberty is a function or mode of social life, the exercise of which inevitably affects the community as a whole.

It was from this point of view, too, that Mill wrote his famous *Essay on Liberty*, regarding rights as something that can be possessed by the individual, and measuring out these rights, after the manner of the old Utilitarians, as one might measure out bushels of potatoes. And it was from the same individualistic standpoint that Herbert Spencer laid down that maxim which he called the "Law of Equal Freedom"—"Every man is free to do that which he wills, provided he infringes not the equal freedom of any other man." On this principle a pick-pocket would be free to practise his "profession" to any extent, provided

he admitted the equal freedom of other people to pick pockets if they wished to—a freedom which an expert pick-pocket would doubtless be quite willing to concede. It is true that Spencer himself took care to guard against this interpretation of the maxim, but such an interpretation logically follows from the individualistic form in which it is expressed.

The truth of the matter is that liberty has to be regarded, not from the individualistic, but from the socialistic standpoint. By this I do not mean the Socialism of the average Labour leader, but rather the opposite, for the one-sided, selfish Socialism of "Labour" is really individualistic in spirit. By the Socialist point of view I mean that view which regards the interests of the community as supreme over the interests of any of its members; which considers that social rights are not the inherent possession of every individual, but that each individual must deserve them and prove his title to them; which maintains that social duties are as important as social rights, and that no social right can be claimed apart from the recognition of social duty as its justification and warrant. To put the matter concisely, the individualist is one who says, "I shall only recognize my duties if I am given my rights." The Socialist says, "You do not deserve the rights unless you recognize the duties."

All modern civilized legislation shows a tendency toward the Socialist and away from the individualist theory. Even in ordinary civil legislation the most "sacred rights" of person and property are constantly over-ridden. The rights of a man's home life are interfered with when he is prosecuted for ill-treating his children or for failing to have them educated. His rights of property are infringed when he is fined for omitting to build drains and keep his premises in a sanitary condition. His most private and personal rights are ignored when he is punished for indulging in the use of opium or cocaine. And when he is tired of life, and tries unsuccessfully to put an end to it, the magistrate very plainly shows him that he cannot call his soul entirely his own.

And when we come to times of danger and stress the interference with the "liberty of the subject" is still greater, and there is no right of person or property that may not be ruthlessly spurned aside under "martial law." But whether law be civil or military, the principle of its action is the same. Individual right must give way because the welfare of the community is the supreme social consideration, and the welfare of individuals is to be considered only so far as compatible with it. But it must always be remembered that these exceptional restrictions of liberty, like all others, derive their sole justification from considerations of the social welfare, and should be instantly removed when such considerations cease to demand them.

The same principle holds with political "rights." The right to a political vote cannot logically be regarded as inherently belonging to every adult member even of a democracy, and universal suffrage without any kind of criterion of good citizenship is a fallacy. The right to vote should be deserved, like all other rights, and under a rational political system the franchise would depend, not on a "manhood" or a "property" qualification, but on an intellectual and moral qualification.

Can this principle be extended from the relationships between the individuals of a community to the relationships between communities themselves? Granting that it holds in the former case, does it necessarily hold in the latter? Are the terms "self-governing," "independent," etc., applied to civilized communities, subject to the same qualifications, as such terms are when applied to the individuals within a community? In the case of the ancient

civilizations these questions would perhaps have been answered in the negative, for these civilizations were very slightly inter-related. For instance, the internal policy of the ancient Chinese Empire did not much affect the welfare of the Babylonians. When Alexander the Great invaded the Persian Empire he did not do so because his ambassador at Persepolis sent his Foreign Office unfavourable accounts of the treatment of Greek subjects resident in Persia. When the Queen of Sheba visited Solomon in all his glory, it was probably not with the object of discussing Custom Tariffs or Immigration Laws between their respective dominions.

But in the modern world things are very different. All civilized communities have become closely inter-related and inter-dependent. The actions of one nation may react on all the others. The closing of a trade route, the opening of a railway, the building of a canal, the enactment of an economic law by one country may have momentous consequences on other countries. When every country contains thousands of persons belonging to other nations, when vast stores of the wealth of one country are invested in another, and when international commerce has spread over the entire globe, any flagrant misgovernment or anarchy in one State is a matter of supreme concern to all. No community can, therefore, now regard itself as absolutely independent of and irresponsible to the rest. Isolation is no longer possible. The recognition of the principles of international arbitration and international law, vague and ill-defined though they still are, indicate a growing perception of the fact that there exists a higher authority than the will of any individual nation, namely, the collective will of all nations. The welfare of civilization as determinable by the whole consensus of civilized opinion, is becoming an increasingly important factor in world politics, and must eventually be the supreme law for all communities.

On this principle the rights of peoples in their mutual inter-relations are subject to the same limitations as the rights of individuals in their relation to the community. As a private household's right to self-government depends on its ability and willingness to act in conformity with the welfare of the community, so a nation's right to self-government depends on its ability and willingness to order its affairs in a manner compatible with the welfare and progress of civilization. And we thus reach the conclusion that the rights of communities are not absolute, but are dependent on their relationship to humanity at large, just as those of individuals are dependent on their relationship to the social group; and that liberty, whether social or inter-social, can only be justly conceded to those who recognize and respect its limits.

A. E. MADDOCK.

RELIGION AND ART.

Next followed in Europe the great Christian faith..... Its great doctrine is the remission of sins; for which cause it happens, too often, in certain phases of Christianity, that sin and sickness themselves are partly glorified, as if the more you had to be healed of the more divine was the healing. The practical result of this doctrine, in art, is a continual contemplation of sin and disease, and of imaginary states of purification from them; thus we have an architecture conceived in a mingled sentiment of melancholy and aspiration, partly severe, partly luxuriant, which will bend itself to every one of our needs, and every one of our fancies, and be strong or weak with us, as we are strong or weak ourselves. It is of all architecture the basest, when base people build it—of all, the noblest when built by the noble.

John Ruskin, "The Crown of Wild Olive."

A Mother of Freethinkers.

THE impression has been maturing since last Autumn, and seasons more removed, and now seems mellowed in an Autumn all its own. It has not rushed into print, and anyway, space in the one and only was too often too limited to receive it, however fine and far come. I trust I have never pretended to be learned, even to myself, nor envied, but judiciously admired those who were. Learning, in various metaphor, is but the polishing of the gem, the sharpening of the sword, the maturing of the wine of life—the wine that at first intoxicates, then sobers and civilizes man. Real scholars are the pioneers and lead the way, and with the poets are the as yet unacknowledged legislators of the world. But given normal and natural capacity, even illiterate men must, in the crucible of experience, in the evolution of thought, arrive at a culture that is admirable enough; men who cherish and tend that—

Ae spark o' nature's fire

that gave to Scotland and the world Robert Burns. How it blazes up at times, crudely burning, now smouldering and dull, now raging and devastating, consuming all selfish, rational considerations in its fervent heat:—

For the fire of our minds is like the fire which the Persians burn on the mountains, it flames night and day and is immortal and not to be quenched; on something it must act and feed; on the pure spirit of knowledge, or on the foul dregs of polluting passions (Sydney Smith).

Or to quote that poet of science, Ernst Mach:—

What an immense portion of the life of other men is reflected in ourselves; their joys, their affections, their happiness and misery.....and although they only gently touch the chords of our emotions, like the memory of youth softly breathing upon the spirit of an aged man, we have nevertheless lived them over again in part.....We feel that the real pearls of life lie in the ever changing contents of consciousness, and that the person is merely an indifferent symbolical thread on which they are strung.

And which, one might add, is the real justification for a rational, proud and dignified egotism in man—in man, the heir of all the ages.....The day had been suddenly wintry, and at twilight the long row of trees on the crest of an eminence were caught in the yellow glow of the sunset—a long low bar of slowly fading light quietly gleaming amid the still and solemn trees.....The road was very smooth and good on that lovely Autumn day when we entered the valley of Loudoun and the Irvine and wheeled through the pretty townships of Galston, Newmilns and Darvel—further this fine road leads past the humpy hill of Loudoun, the Strathaven moors, the Avon and the Clyde to Glasgow. Embosomed in the woods the noble turrets of Loudoun Castle rose on our left with green lawns in front; on the other side of the river the estate of Llanfine, with its long roll of green and sylvan eminence, and serried crest of bush and tree, refined in the distance, seeming like a delicate comb in a lady's hair. To the rare beauty of the actual scene was added the mind's emotion, stirred by the loving pride of old associations, of memory and imagination, of place names, like household words once so familiar, so dear and sacred, on the lips of that Mother of Freethinkers.

A noble mother must have bred
So brave a son!

All too gently nurtured those infant Freethought minds of the Christian mother's children; too easily coarsened by contact with a savage world; abrupt and crude at first the spiritual conviction and expression; painful the mental progress, the awakening from generations of traditional piety. But the natural

miracle had happened, the strange new thing was evolved, that henceforth would inhabit and help to form an entirely different and ultimately better world. Other incrustations would not perish with religion, but the chains were loosed, the minds were freed, and with clarified vision they could survey the promised land.

The more immediate prospect may have sufficed my fellow pilgrim, who is boastful still of Loudoun's bonnie woods and braes, or he, too, may have had his reminiscences. We came to a halt at the ancient weaver town of Darvel. An alien and a stranger, a level headed, practical Hollander, my friend was also a sensible gourmet, and loved well the good things of this life, troubling little about the next. We ordered dinner at the one hotel, which soon appeared, a famous good one. But when we asked for a little spirits, a black-browed gypsy looking woman, with rings in her ears like La Belle Sauvage, asked us in the ugly manner of a female turnkey how much we had had on the way, and refused to supply the two soberest strangers that ever entered that Sunday keeping town. I was for temporizing, but my friend, who had sojourned in less barbarous countries, and whose pride was touched to a noble scorn, said no; don't apologise; she is not worth it. But the dinner was excellent, and we soon forgot, by the rippling river's brim, the insolence of this truculent Jezebel. A pretty lane led down to a quaint grey bridge, bearing the historic date, 1793, and carrying the farm track over a tributary of the Irvine river called the Chang—which name recalled a farmer's feud, of which my grandfather wrote:—

A queer wee bodie kened as Chang,
Wad like gey weel to use his stang,
But through the hide it winna gang,
So scart ma e——!

Surely a rude rustic's rude rejoinder; but this rustic moralist had a gentle broad and tolerant cast of mind, especially in religion. Unacquainted, perhaps, with Voltaire and Paine, and running his godly race before the advent of the Bradlaughs, Footes, and Cohens, yet the owner of some "gran' wee books"; and, who knows, however quiet and bucolic, how deep and daring were his speculations, how near he came to stumbling on the full blaze of reason's light! Instead, he ran to the end that godly race of his, more faithful than rational, but unconsciously, inevitably sowing the seed of future flowers of Freethought, and destined to be a Father of Freethinkers. His grandfather, the covenanting "Captain Browning of Bankhouse," has mouldered, these many years, in the old kirkyard of Galston. An extension of the kirk he fought for has been built over his resting place and his memorial stone built into the wall. So much history, so much religion, to make a Freethinker! Surely the logical summit of Theism is Atheism, and ultimately the gods must go. If not, they must hasten to declare themselves, for the world gets tired of foolish prophets and arrogant apostles.

Refreshed, but still a little tired, we reclined gratefully on the tawny wooded banks of the little stream with their shaggy brows of wild grasses and bramble patches and crinkling autumn leaves. The white walled homestead near by nestled under a brown wood. Here a mother of Freethinkers first saw the light almost a century ago. Here, no doubt, she "paidled in the burn," heard the liquid echoes of the grey old arch, and gathered brambles in this Arcadian wild! The afternoon was lovely, the thought was very sweet; here was rest for the body, and the true elixir of the soul!

Some hint of a pathway under the fallen leaves invited a walk in the brown tangle of the sacred grove, and in a hidden, rooted, ambered, smiling pool a pious baptismal rite was gratefully performed—the last and holiest and divinest dip of the season. The well

dressed natives, male and female, thereafter stole upon the sanctuary, but by which time the Pagan bather was again "clothed and in his right mind." Returning via the ancestral homestead, absorbed in present detail and past reflection, the track led us high above the river and the town, downward to the sylvan banks again, thence swiftly and safely free-wheeling two miles or so with the natural fall of the river, meeting on the all-to brief journey youth and beauty in their Sunday best; childhood and age, friends, lovers, relations, all the simple but sufficing essentials of happy human life.

And there we see them wander still
Between the river and the hill;
Sweet moulded forms, soft maiden eyes
To grace an earthly paradise.

In the mellow evening, in the fading sunset glow, we regained the main road, a smooth and ample one, an avenue overhung with autumn-tinted trees; such native glory, such a noble natural scene as retards the reluctant wheel and paints enduring pictures on the mental screen, to mingle with forever and redeem the unlovelier scenes and moods of changeful mortal life.

A young London lady, we learned, had visited this Arcadia in the summer past, and stayed with perhaps a relative of our own, but in the long arm of coincidence and circling sphere of chance, more vitally related as the only daughter of an eminent London Freethinker; she all unconscious how sacred and significant was this holiday shrine; even those white walls of Greenbank Farm, under the dusky wood, where some ninety years ago was born that mother of Freethinkers, as beautiful as sweet and good, if more untutored than this modern daughter of Freethinkers from London's vast unknown. ANDREW MILLAR.

Correspondence.

WHAT IS THE USE OF RELIGION? TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The question is discussed in the *Freethinker* for April 30, and answered in the negative. It is in no way surprising that there should be such a wide-spread spirit of revolt against RELIGION in the West. The reason is not far to seek. The Western mind has identified RELIGION with Christianity, and inasmuch as the latter is avowedly at variance with the dictates of reason, RELIGION, as such, has been dubbed *irrational, superstition, useless*, and what not. True as the verdict is in the case of the Church religion, how, it may be asked in the name of the same reason of which the Freethinker critic is rightly proud, is it warranted to jump from particular premisses to a general conclusion? Are not Brahminism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Zoroasterianism, Judaism and Islam included within the denotation of the word religion? If so, has the critic taken the pains to weigh them on their own merits? If not, he cannot, consistently with his rationalistic attitude, assert that there is no use of RELIGION.

Another common mistake responsible for a wholesale condemnation of religion is the confusion between the truth embodied in a particular form of religion and as lived up to by the advocates thereof. Profession is one thing and practice another. If the latter should fail to come up to the former, in A or B, is there any logic in laying the blame at the door of the religion? Quinine is supposed to be an effective preventive against malaria, but should a patient content himself with speaking well of its efficacy without himself taking it or taking quite a different thing instead, will it make an argument against its deterrent property? On the other hand, there may be another, who may have no faith in the drug, but should he unknowingly make use of it, he will have the benefit of it. What is true of any physical law is equally true of a spiritual law, call it religion if you do not mind; for this is what religion means in Islam—a code of laws for the moral and spiritual evolution of man. Consequently, if "Epicurus lived a full and useful life, immense in

passion, pulse and power, yet attacking religion," as the critic puts it, he was undoubtedly right in condemning religion as he knew of—Christianity—but was at the same time following, though unconsciously, some laws or others of the true religion. Thus his attacks were not directed at RELIGION, as such, but at religion as known to him. Again, the critic observes: "But is not London already a cesspool under Christianity? We read that it is not safe for parents to send their children unattended to the parks and we are bound to lock and bar our doors and windows through fear of burglars, and all this after fourteen centuries of Christian teaching and influence."

But here again I for one would differ from the Free-thinking critic. With all her blemishes and drawbacks, with all her antagonism to reason, I yet see no cause why one should hold the *Christian religion* responsible for the wrong doings of the *Christians*. Did Jesus ever teach or practise what is laid at his door? I really fail to appreciate the psychology of our friend, the critic. With him, reason is, as indeed it ought to be, the final court of appeal, but in his attempts to discredit religion he does not seem to have paid much regard to it. If the materialistic Churchman of to-day is self-centred to the extent of greediness, is it reasonable to find fault with the teaching of Jesus on the point, which imperatively says: "Love thy neighbour as thyself."

Now to answer the question from the Islamic point of view I would say: the use of religion (which is another name for the laws which regulate human conduct) is the same as that of any other law of nature. Is there no good in the thousands of laws governing natural phenomena? Should a plant get no water, for instance, will it grow, develop and bear fruit? If not, there are fixed immutable laws on the moral and spiritual planes which must be obeyed just the same or the consequence would be moral decay. The laws of nature when discovered make up physical science, while laws of morality and spirituality when formulated by man himself constitute ethics; when revealed by God they are known as religion. It is erroneous to suppose that revelation comes to over-rule reason. Nay, on the other hand, it comes to supplement it, just as a naked eye is aided by a microscope. The Qur-an does not make a statement but at the same time appeals to human reason to realize it. Again I say, Divine Revelation which, in fact, forms the sole differentia between ethics and religion, is the one means that reduces the universe to a well-organized Cosmos. Revelation alone can offer the absolutely positive solution of the riddle of life. The highest flight of reason takes us to the stage that there ought to be One Supreme Principle governing the universe. Revelation comes and takes us out of the quagmire of doubt, possibility and probability, telling us that there actually is a Creator of the universe. And forthwith the whole thing is reduced to a system. A right attitude on life is afforded. Not to enter into a full discussion of what true religion has done and is capable of doing for mankind in a newspaper article, I would simply ask: Is not this much by itself enough to justify the existence of religion?

M. Y. KHAN.

[We print the above rather lengthy letter because we believe that most of our readers will be interested in getting the views of one of our many Mohammedan readers.—Editor.]

ONE MORE INCARNATION OF GOD.

SIR,—I am sending herewith a cutting from the *Englishman* of April 17, an Anglo-Indian daily paper published from Calcutta.

You will see from it that Mr. Gandhi is now considered as an incarnation of deity. Mr. Gandhi himself has more than once declared in public and has written in newspapers that he has no divine powers of any kind, and that he is not a "Mahatma," but still his followers have deified him, and many people literally worship him.

When such a thing is done in this twentieth century with a living man (Mr. Gandhi is now in jail undergoing six years' simple imprisonment), it proves clearly that in the first century of the Christian Era, when the vast majority of people were ignorant and illiterate, the Christians have deified a Jewish peasant.

To the student of comparative religions this gives a clue as to how the various ideas of gods and incarnations came into existence.

K. SAMUEL.

Allahabad, India.

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 (241 Marylebone Road, W., near Edgware Road): 7.30, Debate, "Is there a Life after Death?" Mr. C. E. Ratcliffe v. Rev. Father Vincent McNabb, O.P. Discussion Circle of above meets every Wednesday at "Coronet" Hotel, Soho Street, W. (Tottenham Court Road Tube, two minutes) at 7.30. Strangers welcome.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C. 2): 11, Joseph McCabe, "Mr. Chesterton on the Modern Spirit."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 6.15, Mr. E. Burke, A Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Regent's Park): 6.30, Mr. George Whitehead, A Lecture.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): Mr. A. D. McLaren, 3.15, "Christian Mythology"; 6, "Belief in God."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Corner Technical Institute, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7, Mr. Corrigan, A Lecture.

COUNTRY. INDOOR.

SWANSEA AND DISTRICT BRANCH N. S. S. (60 Alexandra Road, Swansea): 6.30, Branch Meeting.

BEAUTIFUL ART KNITTING SILK, 4s. 11d.
per $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. hank; sold elsewhere at 5s. 6d. All shades in stock. Colours matched, if desired, as near as possible. Post free.—F. P. WALTER, 69 Valkyrie Road, Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex.

BOOK BARGAINS.—*The Bible in Europe*, by J. McCabe, 2s. 6d.; *The Anatomy of Knowledge*, by C. Hooper, 2s. 6d.; *The Religion of the Open Mind*, by A. G. Whyte, 2s.; *Intolerance Among Christians, and Political Progress and Christianity*, by A. Canning, 2 vols., 3s.; *Scott's English Life of Jesus*, 2s. 6d.; *The Moral Philosophy of Freethought*, by T. C. Morgan, 2s. 6d.; *Morals, the Psychological Basis of Ethics*, by G. L. Duprat, 2s. 6d.; *History of the Taxes on Knowledge*, by C. D. Collet, 2 vols., 4s.; *The Origins of Christianity*, by T. Whittaker, 2s. 6d.; *King David of Israel*, by C. Gallaway, 2s.; *The Faith of An Agnostic*, by Sir G. Greenwood, 3s. 6d.; *Morality Without Obligation of Sanction*, by J. J. Guyau, 2s. 6d.; the *Agnostic Journal*, from 1889 to 1907, 19 vols., cloth bound, £5; *Freethinker* for 1906, 1907, 1908, bound, 35s.; *Our Corner*, edited by Annie Besant, vols. 1 to 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, together 7 vols., cloth, 21s.; the *University Magazine and Free Review*, edited by Democritus, vols. 11 and 12, cloth, 5s.; *Darwin on Trial at the Old Bailey*, by Democritus, 2s. 6d.; *A Free Press Anthology*, by Theodore Schroeder, 3s. Carriage extra in all cases.—BIBLIA, c/o Freethinker office, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

WANTED.—Capable Woman, over 26, as servant; treated as family; man does odd jobs; one who desires a comfortable, permanent home; country house; no children.—Wood, Rozel, Chard, Somerset.

Bargains in Books.

A CANDID EXAMINATION OF THIRISM.
By PHYSICUS (G. J. Romanes).

Price 4s., postage 4d.

THE ETHIC OF FREETHOUGHT.

By KARL PEARSON.

Essays in Freethought History and Sociology.
Published 10s. 6d. Price 5s. 6d., postage 7d.

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

Works by Sir WALTER STRICKLAND, B.A.

SLAYONIC FAIRY TALES. A Collection of Folk-stories, translated by SIR WALTER STRICKLAND, with Preface, Explanatory Essays, etc. Pp. 500, Cloth Bound. Reduced price 4s. 6d.

EPICUREAN STUDIES. Thirty Studies in Prose and Verse. Satire, Science and Philosophy. Cloth, 2s.

SACRIFICE. A Play, set in an early Polar civilization, exhibiting the cruelty of Sacrificial Religion. Price 1s.

SEVEN POEMS. Satirical Verse. Price 9d.

THE SMUGGLER'S DOG. Splendid Animal Study, and a pathetic story of life on the Italo-Swiss Frontier. Price 6d.

DRAMATIC PIECES. Orpheus and Eurydice, Dido and Æneas, The Glorified Thief, Aphrodite, etc. Pp. 380. Reduced price, 3s. 6d.

THE BLACK SPOT IN THE EAST. A scathing criticism on British methods in India. Originally written in reply to Lady Arthur Somerset. Pp. 100. Price 1s.

SEGIUS IRRITANT. Eight Primitive Folk-lore stories, with two Supplementary Essays. Cloth. Reduced price, 2s.

VITESLAY HALEK'S STORIES. Translated by SIR WALTER STRICKLAND. Under the Hollow Tree—Our Grandfather—Poldik the Scavenger. The set of three, 1s. 6d., post free.

From the Publishers, by post only,

19 Richmond Gardens, London, W.12.

Life, Mind, and Knowledge ;

Or, The Circuit of Sentient Existence.

By J. C. THOMAS, B.Sc.

(KERIDON)

The object of this little work is to stress the fact that a sentient organism (animal or human) maintains its unity and integrity as a separate physical existence by its own internal activities, and that "mind" is as contributory to this end as any organ or gland of the body. Further, it is urged that no item of mind has a shred or shadow of meaning save in the light of this physical purpose.

Cloth, 3s. 6d. net, by post 3s. 9d.

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

A Bomb for Believers.

THE HISTORICAL JESUS and MYTHICAL CHRIST

By GERALD MASSEY

(Author of the "Book of the Beginnings"; "The Natural Genesis"; "Ancient Egypt," etc.)

A Demonstration of the Egyptian Origin of the Christian Myth. Should be in the hands of every Freethinker.

With Introduction by CHAPMAN COHEN.

Price **SIXPENCE.** Postage 1½d.

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

Modern Materialism

A Candid Examination

By WALTER MANN

(Issued by the Secular Society, Limited)

CONTENTS :

Chapter I.—Modern Materialism. Chapter II.—Darwinian Evolution. Chapter III.—Auguste Comte and Positivism. Chapter IV.—Herbert Spencer and the Synthetic Philosophy. Chapter V.—The Contribution of Kant. Chapter VI.—Huxley, Tyndall, and Clifford open the Campaign. Chapter VII.—Buechner's "Force and Matter." Chapter VIII.—Atoms and the Ether. Chapter IX.—The Origin of Life. Chapter X.—Atheism and Agnosticism. Chapter XI.—The French Revolution and the Great War. Chapter XII.—The Advance of Materialism.

A careful and exhaustive examination of the meaning of Materialism and its present standing, together with its bearing on various aspects of life. A much needed work.

176 pages. Price **2s.** in neat Paper Cover, or strongly bound in Cloth **3s. 6d.** (postage 2d.).

Every reader of the *Freethinker* should send for a copy, or it can be ordered through any newsagent in the country.

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

RELIGION AND SEX

Studies in the Pathology of Religious Development

By CHAPMAN COHEN

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

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

Price **Six Shillings.** Postage 9d.

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

The Parson and the Atheist

A Friendly Discussion on

RELIGION AND LIFE

BETWEEN

Rev. the Hon. EDWARD LYTTTELTON, D.D.

(Late Headmaster of Eton College)

AND

CHAPMAN COHEN

(President of the N. S. S.)

With Preface by Chapman Cohen and Appendix by Dr. Lyttelton.

The Discussion ranges over a number of different topics—Historical, Ethical, and Religious—and should prove both interesting and useful to Christians and Freethinkers alike.

Well printed on good paper, with Coloured Wrapper, 144 pages.

Price **1s. 6d.**, postage 2d.

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

Three Great Freethinkers.**GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE**

BY
JOSEPH McCABE

The Life and Work of one of the Pioneers of the Secular and Co-operative movements in Great Britain. With four plates.

ROBERT G. INGERSOLL

BY
C. T. GORHAM

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

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 2d.). Cloth Bound, **3s. 6d.** (postage 2½d.) each Volume.

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

Determinism or Free-Will?

By **CHAPMAN COHEN**

NEW EDITION Revised and Enlarged.

CONTENTS:

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

Well printed on good paper.

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

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

JESUS CHRIST: Man, God, or Myth?

With a Chapter on “Was Jesus a Socialist?”

By **GEORGE WHITEHEAD**

Author of “The Psychology of the Woman Question,” etc.

A careful Examination of the Character and Teaching of the New Testament Jesus.

Well Printed on Good Paper. In Paper Covers, **2s.**, postage 2d.; Printed on Superior Paper and bound in Cloth, **3s. 6d.**, postage 3d.

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

JUST PUBLISHED.**The Case Against Theism**

By **GEORGE WHITEHEAD**

Paper Covers, **1s. 3d.** (postage 2d.); Cloth, **2s. 6d.** (postage 2½d.).

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

FOR THE FREETHINKER'S BOOKSHELF

PAGAN CHRISTS, by JOHN M. ROBERTSON. Price 5s., postage 1s.

A SHORT HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY, by JOHN M. ROBERTSON. Price 3s. 6d., postage 6d.

CHRISTIANITY AND MYTHOLOGY, by JOHN M. ROBERTSON. Price 5s., postage 1s.

THE CHRISTIAN HELL, From the First to the Twentieth Century, by HYPATIA BRADLAUGH BONNER. Price 1s., postage 4d. In Paper Covers, 6d., postage 2d.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE CHURCH ON MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE, by JOSEPH McCABE. Price 3s. 6d., postage 6d.

SAVAGE SURVIVALS, by J. HOWARD MOORE. Price 2s. 6d., postage 6d.

SHELLEY P. B. Selected Prose Works. (Contains *The Necessity of Atheism* and *The Refutation of Deism*.) Price 3s. 6d., postage 3d. In Paper Covers, 1s. 6d., postage 3d.

DOUBTS IN DIALOGUE, by CHARLES BRADLAUGH. Price 2s., postage 4d.

A PLEA FOR ATHEISM, by CHARLES BRADLAUGH. Price 6d., postage 1d.

LECTURES AND ESSAYS, by COLONEL INGERSOLL. First, second, and third series. Each series price 1s., postage 2½d., or the three series in Cloth, 5s., postage 9d.

THE AGE OF REASON, by THOMAS PAINE. Price 1s., postage 2½d.

THE A. B. C. OF EVOLUTION, by JOSEPH McCABE. Price 3s., postage 5d.

THE RIGHTS OF MAN, by THOMAS PAINE. Price 1s., postage 3d.

THE EVOLUTION OF STATES: An Introduction to English Politics, by JOHN M. ROBERTSON. Price 5s., postage 1s. In Paper Covers, 3s. 6d., postage 9d.

THE MEDIÆVAL INQUISITION, by C. T. GORHAM. Price 2s. 6d., postage 3d.

THE RIDDLE OF THE UNIVERSE, by ERNST HÆCKEL. Price 2s. 6d., postage 4d. In Paper Covers, 1s. 6d., postage 3d.

THE JESUS PROBLEM. A Restatement of the Myth Problem, by JOHN M. ROBERTSON. Price 3s. 6d., postage 6d. In Paper Covers, 2s. 6d., postage 6d.

THE OLD TESTAMENT, by CHILPERIC EDWARDS. Price 1s. 3d., postage 3d.

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

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