

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. 39

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 1922

PRICE THREEPENCE

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
<i>Materialism and Its Critics.—The Editor</i> - - - -	609
<i>Lord Byron.—J. T. Lloyd</i> - - - -	610
<i>The Bishops' Move.—Mimnermus</i> - - - -	612
<i>Freethought and Birth Control.—H. Cutner</i> - - - -	612
<i>"The Preservation of Species."—John Cooper</i> - - - -	614
<i>Pagan and Christian Civilization.—W. Mann</i> - - - -	618
<i>Bloodless Ghosts.—Arthur B. Moss</i> - - - -	619
<i>Tell Me the Old, Old Story.—Athos Zeno</i> - - - -	620
<i>Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letter to the Editor, etc.</i>	

Views and Opinions.

Materialism and Its Critics.

Last week I dealt with the speech of the President of the British Association. As was then pointed out, the strong endorsement given to scientific Materialism was quite unmistakable. Professor Sherrington declined to deal with mind from any point of view save that of its being an outcome of the development of the nervous system. Of mind apart from that we know nothing. More than that, of mind apart from its being a function of the nervous system we can think nothing. Mind as an entity is inconceivable. Let anyone—no matter whom—try to think of mind as something existing apart from the nerve-system, and he will find that his mind is a perfect blank. He is not then dealing with a definite conception, but simply blinding himself with words. "Mind" we know as a series of co-ordinated reactions to special stimuli, and apart from that we have no conception of mind at all. Therefore, the statement that mind is something different from a series of co-ordinated reactions is really not a debatable proposition, for the reason that it is not an understandable one. To debate it is like discussing whether one can have motion without change of position. As we mean by motion change of position, when we leave this on one side, whatever else we are dealing with we are clearly not dealing with motion. And we are in exactly the same position with mind. Our only conception of mind is as stated. Do away with this basic fact and we may be left with something else, but it fails to resemble mind in the only circumstance that makes mind recognisable.

* * *

The Asylum of Ignorance.

Being a Materialist I am anxious to emphasize what we know about mental phenomena. If I were a Spiritualist—in the philosophical sense—I should be equally ready to lay stress on what we do not know. For in that circumstance rests whatever appearance of strength the religious position shows. Science depends upon the fact and the increase of human knowledge. Religion rests upon the fact and the persistence of ignorance. I do not mean by this that the religious man is of necessity an ignorant one, but that his beliefs are dependent upon our not having full knowledge of what is going on around us. Whenever the man of science comes along and says here is some-

thing more that we know, the man of God solemnly wags his head and reminds us how ignorant we are of this or that, and finds in that reflection ground for his peculiar beliefs. Thus no sooner was the address of the President of the British Association published than newspapers, with an eye on their religious readers, came out with leading articles, pointing out the advances made by science in its understanding of the human organism, but emphasizing the point that science was utterly unable to touch the region that provided room for man's religious beliefs. The *Times* solemnly reminded us that "the higher physiology has brought investigators no nearer than they were brought by the higher philosophy of the ancient world to a comprehension of ultimate enigma of man." Mr. James Douglas, in the *Daily Express* provided its readers with a column of clotted bosh about the soul, which was full of "What does this?" and "What does that?" with the conclusion that as science cannot answer the meaningless questions put by him, he knows by aid of his "super-sense"—whatever that may happen to be—that there is a soul. That ends the matter for Mr. Douglas, and Professor Sherrington will wisely take a back seat. The *Evening Standard* quite saw that in everything that "relates to the intricate adjustment of the human body.....all works out involuntarily as a pure mechanism," but imagined that the deeper question remains untouched. All play the same tune. So long as the mass of the people can be impressed with the extent of their ignorance there is hope for religion. It is not that the religious writer or speaker knows any more about these alleged deeper things than does anyone else; it is simply that other people's ignorance gives his pseudo-explanation an air of value.

* * *

The Clerical Impudence.

From the papers we turn to the clergy. In connection with the Association the Archbishop of York preached a sermon which, says the *Times* reporter, might be called a challenge to the scientists to associate themselves more closely with religion "in their own lives and in the life of the community." The phrasing is noteworthy since it contains the admission that scientists do not at present bother themselves very much about religion. And one wonders why they should. There is nothing that religion can tell them about their work or about the world in which they work. There was a time when the churches undertook to do this. They professed to be in a position to tell the world the truth about astronomy and geology, about biology, and about man. And in every single instance wherever the teachings of the churches could be brought into direct contact with facts they were shown to be false. And if scientists cannot trust the churches when they are talking about things which may be known, why should they trust them when they attempt to tell them about things which cannot be known at all. Demonstrated ignorance and error is not a good basis on which to ask for confidence. What the Archbishop told those of the scientists who stayed away from excursions and attended church was that there were orders of experience about which the

Churches could teach science as there were things about which science could teach the Churches. And, of course, these things to which the Church held the key were the "higher" things, science held the key to the "lower" ones only. The claim is sheer impudence, the statement downright nonsense. There is nothing in the religious life with which science is unable to deal or is unable to explain. Its visions and prophecies, its miracles and wonders, are not things which science fails to understand. There is a whole library of scientific works, there are thousands of recorded experiments, which fully explain all that the religious world takes as proofs of divine inspiration or divine communication. The student of science to-day has no difficulty in explaining religion from the first primitive beginnings down to the sermon of the Archbishop of York. There is nothing puzzling about it, though there is a deal that is depressing. And the depressing feature is that after so many centuries the world should still be deluded by substantially the same hocus-pocus that deluded our most primitive ancestors. The perpetuation of folly is the outstanding feature in the history of religion.



The Benefits of Science.

On the evening of the day on which the Archbishop of York preached his sermon, Dean Inge also preached. As was to be expected, what he had to say was better worth listening to than what was said by his superior in the Church. Here is one passage, at least, which deserves attention:—

The scientific temper is as great an asset to humanity as scientific discovery. Nowhere else do we find such disinterested devotion to truth, such unquestionable faith in the power and value of disciplined intellectual labour, such bold sweeps of imagination checked by such punctilious accurate experiment. The air breathed by science is like that of the mountain heights, thin, but pure and bracing.

That is a point well worth bearing in mind, and it is also well to remember that this cleansing and moral influence comes from science and not from theology. No one can say with truth that theology breeds a love of truth, regard for accuracy of statement, develops a healthy imagination, or checks it by an appeal to verifiable facts. The tendency of theology is to cultivate a disregard for truth and to paralyse the higher intellectual life. But one always wonders why Dean Inge seeing so much does not see more. For having declared the moral superiority of science over theology, one wonders what to make of the saving statement that the sciences dealt almost entirely with what could be weighed and counted, but when it came to deal with certain "aspects of reality" or with reality as a whole, then the attempt was a failure. I do not quite know what Dean Inge has in his mind when he speaks about "reality," but I am quite certain that if science cannot tell us about it, neither can theology. And it is simply nonsense to say that science can only deal with things that can be weighed or counted. A few hours in an up-to-date psychological laboratory would show him the folly of such statements. But the worst of being in Dean Inge's position is that he must say something in defence of religion, and how can one defend a foolish claim save by voicing folly.



A Pre-Copernican Creed.

Dean Inge voices his own condemnation in a passage in which he brings his brother preachers to book:—

Science has affected theology and morality in many ways, and must affect them still further. After four hundred years the Church has still failed to adapt her cosmology to the discoveries of Galileo. Officially our clergy still have to live in a pre-Copernican

universe, otherwise certain dogmas on which the Church insists would have no meaning. The battle against the dead hand of authority is not yet won, but the issue is certain.

The Dean might have gone further and have said that a little more than fifty years of scientific work has taught us more about the nature of morality than theology has done during the whole of its existence. And for the rest, one would like to know how can a perfectly straightforward clergyman live in a universe that is other than a pre-Copernican one? Are not the doctrines of the Church pre-Copernican? Have any of the doctrines of the Churches a meaning in a modern universe? Dean Inge may repudiate many of these doctrines—while still drawing an income from a Church which retains them in its published confession of faith—but that is a reflection on his remaining in the Church and not really on those who refuse to follow him in his heresies. The belief in God, in a soul, in divine births, etc., does not belong to a world which has witnessed the triumphs of modern science. They were born in a world which was believed to be peopled with ghosts and was saturated with the supernatural. In any other world the doctrines of Christianity would never have seen the light. But that world is dead beyond the possibility of resurrection. The world of Jesus Christ, where angels and demons warred, where faith worked miracles, and man entered into daily intercourse with the gods is as dead as the dodo. And we should dearly like Dean Inge to face and answer squarely the following questions: Assuming *our* world to have always existed, would the fundamental Christian doctrines have seen the light? If Christian beliefs were born of the beliefs which the people of the day of its beginnings had about the world in which they were living, have we any right to retain those beliefs now that the very ground upon which they were built has been shattered? A plain answer to these questions would do something to allow one to feel respect for the post-Copernican clergy. The pre-Copernican clergy are not concerned here. We can believe them to be honest even though we deplore their intelligence. And it is one of the evils which religion in a modern environment brings, that one can respect pious stupidity while being legitimately suspicious of intelligence that claims to be pious.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Lord Byron.

III.

(Concluded from page 596.)

We have seen that from the Christian point of view Byron's poetry is both sceptical and satirical. It generally makes supernatural beliefs look ridiculous. In particular, *The Vision of Judgment, Cain, and Heaven and Earth*, could not have been written by a Christian believer, scarcely even by an orthodox Deist. His attitude to human life as he knew it was that of a disdainful and angry rebel. Towards the social conventions of the day he felt nothing but hatred and contempt. It was with the workers and the poor his sympathies lay. His first speech in the House of Lords was an eloquent attack upon the Nottingham Frame-breaking Bill. He held the view, as he informed Lord Holland in a letter, that "the maintenance and well-doing of the industrious poor is an object of greater consequence to the community than the enrichment of a few monopolists by any improvement in the implements of trade, which deprives the workman of his bread." His motive for opposing the Bill was "founded on its palpable injustice." He said: "I have seen the state of these

miserable men, and it is a disgrace to a civilized country. Their excesses may be condemned, but cannot be subject of wonder." He was an ardent lover of justice and fair-play, on behalf of which he was always prepared to fight. This is a prominent characteristic of many of his poems, as well as of his letters and journals. He admired Confucius much more than the author of the Ten Commandments, and Socrates, than Paul. He was ambitious and desired fame, but only as a servant of the people. In his eighteenth year he composed a poem, "addressed to the Rev. J. T. Becher, on his advising the author to mix more with society," in which he says:—

For the life of a Fox, of a Chatham the death,
What censure, what danger, what woe would I brave!
Their lives did not end when they yielded their breath!
Their glory illumines the gloom of the grave.

Yet why should I mingle in Fashion's full herd?
Why crouch to her leaders, or cringe to her rules?
Why bend to the proud, or applaud the absurd?
Why search for delight in the friendship of fools?

I have tasted the sweets and the bitters of love,
In friendship I early was taught to believe;
My passion the matrons of prudence reprove;
I have found that a friend may profess, yet deceive.

To me what is wealth?—it may pass in an hour
If tyrants prevail, or if fortune should frown.
To me what is title?—the phantom of power;
To me what is fashion?—I seek but renown.

Deceit 'is a stranger as yet to my soul;
I am still unpractised to varnish the truth;
Then why should I live in hateful control?
Why waste upon folly the days of my youth?

Whatever may be said of the poetry, the sentiment expressed in those lines was in the highest degree creditable to a lad of eighteen, and it is a sentiment to which he remained firmly loyal to the end. *To Belshazar* is a contemptuous dismissal of a despicable despot:—

Go! dash the roses from thy brow—
Gray hairs but poorly wreath with them;
Youth's garlands misbecome thee now,
More than thy very diadem,
Where thou hast tarnished every gem;—
Then throw the worthless bauble by,
Which worn by thee ev'n slaves contemn;
And learn like better men to die.

Oh! early in the balance weigh'd
And ever light of word and worth,
Whose soul expired ere youth decay'd,
And left thee but a mass of earth,
To see thee moves the scorner's mirth;
But tears in Hope's averted eye
Lament that even thou had'st birth—
Unfit to govern, live, or die.

It is complained that the music of the overwhelming majority of Byron's verses is unredeemably in the minor key, which is partly, though by no means wholly, true. For this there are several valid reasons, to which the poet's enemies never give their due weight. One was the bad inheritance which he had received from the past. Another was his deformed foot, which caused him great annoyance and resentment. This affliction he describes, no doubt thinking of himself, as follows:—

Deformity is daring.

It is its essence to o'ertake mankind
By heart and soul, and make itself the equal,—
Ay, the superior of the rest. There is
A spur in its movements, to become
All that the others cannot, in such things
As still are free to both, to compensate
For stepdame Nature's avarice at first.

Another, perhaps the chief cause of the depressing gloom which overshadows much of Byron's poetry, is thus described by Goethe in a splendidly enthusiastic appreciation of *Manfred*. The illustrious German's words are these:—

There are, properly speaking, two females whose phantoms for ever haunt him, and which, in this

piece also, perform principal parts—one under the name of Astarte, the other without form or actual presence, and merely a voice. Of the horrid occurrence which took place with the former the following is related: When a bold and enterprising young man, he won the affections of a Florentine young lady. Her husband discovered the amour, and murdered his wife; but the murderer was the same night found dead in the street, and there was no one on whom any suspicion could be attached. Lord Byron removed from Florence, and these spirits haunted him all his life after.

The curious fact is that Goethe regards that story as probably true, because in the famous soliloquy in *Manfred*, beginning, "We are the fools of voice and terror," the poet seems to apply the tragic story of the Spartan king, Pausanias, to himself. Goethe pronounces this as an improvement upon Hamlet's well-known soliloquy. The relevant passage is as follows:—

I have one resource

Still in my science—I can call the dead,
And ask them what it is we dread to be;
The sternest answer can but be the Grave,
And that is nothing. If they answer not—
The buried Prophet answer'd to the Hag
Of Endor; and the Spartan Monarch drew
From the Byzantine maid's unsleeping spirit
An answer, and his destiny—he slew
That which he loved, unknowing what he slew,
And died unpardoned—though he call'd in aid
The Phrygian Jove, and in Phigalia roused
The Arcadian Evocators to compel
The indignant shadow to depose her wrath,
Or fix her term of vengeance—she replied
In words of dubious import, but fulfill'd.
If I had never lived, that which I love
Had still been living; had I never loved,
That which I love would still be beautiful—
Happy and giving happiness. What is she?
What is she now?—a sufferer for my sins—
A thing I dare not think upon—or nothing.

Whether Goethe's interpretation of the soliloquy be true or not, and we are not convinced of its accuracy, the fact is that Manfred is comforted. He is assured that the woman he loves and once so grievously injured has forgiven him, and before he dies he overcomes his superstitious fears. He still suffers from remorse and despair, but is independent of the supernatural. To the Abbot he says:—

Old man! there is no power in holy men,
Nor charm in prayer—nor purifying form
Of penitence—nor outward look—nor fast—
Nor agony—nor, greater than all these,
The innate tortures of that deep despair,
Which is remorse without the fear of hell.

Over the Prince of the Air and his crew, too, ere he dies, he gains a magnificent victory, saying:—

My life is in its last hour;—that I know,
Nor would redeem a moment of that hour;
I do not combat against death, but thee
And thy surrounding angels; my past power
Was purchased by no compact with thy crew,
But by superior science—penance—daring—
And length of watching—strength of mind—and skill
In knowledge of our fathers—when the earth
Saw men and spirits walking side by side,
And gave ye no supremacy; I stand
Upon my strength—I do defy—deny—
Spurn back, and scorn ye!

It is perfectly true that Byron's heroes, as Macaulay observes, "are men who have arrived by different roads at the same goal of despair, who are sick of life, who are at war with society, who are supported in their anguish by an unconquerable pride, resembling that of Prometheus on the rock, or of Satan in the burning marl, who can master their agonies by the force of their will, and who to the last defy the whole power of earth and heaven"; but it is equally true that in the lives of most of them there are brilliant periods when their communion with Nature and one another lifts them out of and above their sufferings

and sorrows and fills their hearts with singing joy, as the poet himself says in the *Island* :—

The other better self, whose joy or woe
Is more than ours; the all absorbing flame
Which kindled by another, grows the same,
Wrapt in one blaze; the pure, yet funeral pile,
Where gentle hearts, like Bramins, sit and smile.
How often we forget all time, when alone,
Admiring Nature's universal throne,
Her woods, her wilds, her waters, the intense
Reply of hers to our intelligence.
Live not the stars and mountains? Are the waves
Without a spirit? Are the dropping caves
Without a feeling in their silent tears?
No, no; they woo and clasp us to their spheres,
Dissolve this clog and clod of clay before,
Its hour, and merge our soul in the great shore.
Strip off this fond and false identity!—
Who thinks of self when gazing on the sky?

J. T. LLOYD.

The Bishops' Move.

The age of conflict between science and religion has passed.
—*The Archbishop of York.*

A LEADING London newspaper has called attention to the silence of the Bench of Bishops concerning the vital attacks on religion by scientists. It instances particularly Sir Charles Sherrington's address to the British Association, in which it was stated that the basis of life is purely physical, and that all the explorations of science have failed to identify any element of life as other than physical, or, as the clergy put it, "spiritual." The Metropolitan editor is astonished that the bishops remain calm under such provocative pin-pricks. Forty-years ago, he reminds us, such an address would have been sensational, and would have roused a big storm of controversy. Present-day bishops, if less militant than their predecessors, have sufficient sagacity to understand the law of self-preservation. They look back at the anti-theological struggles of the last century, they know perfectly well that Darwin, Huxley, Tyndall, and other opponents were not the defeated in those encounters. The bishops do not wish to emulate the soldiers who took part in the charge of the six hundred at Balaclava. It may be magnificent to die in that way, but it is not war as conducted by bishops and their satellites.

What is true of the bishops is as true of the lesser clergy and laymen of the Church. They dissemble their hatred of Freethought, and avoid direct battle. From their cowards' castles the clergy adopt a note of patronage concerning Unbelief. They tell the ladies of their congregations that wicked Freethinkers resemble the unhappy folks who are tone-deaf and colour-blind, and who cannot even enjoy the delights of literature. Their hearts bleed for the poor demented sceptics who are unable to relish a good dinner, so unlike the men-of-God who can do prodigies with a knife and fork.

What they never by any chance tell their congregations is that the senses of beauty and wonder, and, indeed, the love of æsthetics, are not necessarily religious, but are perfectly natural. Freethinkers are as able to relish a good dinner as the most credulous parson "with good capon lined," but they are not so simple as to mistake a menu for a banquet. The Christian menu has no correspondence with the meal that follows, and the price charged is too high. Living by faith is a very easy profession, as the clergy well know. The prophet Elijah is said to have subsisted on sandwiches brought him by inspired ravens, and 50,000 parsons to-day in this country subsist on the offerings of the pious. The starving people of Europe, however, ask "God" to give them their daily bread,

and the answer is that they die by thousands. If there were no other indictment of Christianity, the awful sufferings of the poor of Christian countries would condemn it everlastingly.

Judging by the membership of the Churches, the religious sense is but a common faculty, and Christians have little reason to plume themselves as members of God's own aristocracy. Is it reasonable to gibe at the Freethinker as being a man utterly incapable of relishing *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*, and as one who prefers novelettes to Shakespeare, when one remembers that Keats and Shakespeare were themselves Freethinkers. The whole thing is a gross illusion. Christians have no monopoly of the finer feelings. The average hymn has no more claim to be considered as real literature than the usual music-hall song; and the glaring lithographs of sacred subjects framed in so many Christian homes suggest that colour-blindness is not unknown among the Orthodox.

The riddle of the silence of the bishops is easy to read. Wishing to keep religious matters in mystery, or obscurity, they object to all explanations. They cannot tolerate that people should talk of these things too inquiringly. Even if the critics are right, the subject is taboo. The older theologians were honest; they went out to fight, and lost every battle. Their degenerate descendants hope to tire the dreaded enemy by sheer inertia. Like Brer Rabbit they "lie low and say nothing."

Fortunately, the message of Freethought is not solely in the hands of scientists who use habitually a language which darkens knowledge. Freethought is now organized, and no more to be ignored than the Rock of Gibraltar. The evangel of Liberty is now written so clearly that he who runs may read. Christians are in reality surrounded by the waters of Freethought, and stand a bad chance of drowning. The matter will not be unduly prolonged because the bishops are too cowardly to emulate the courageous Mrs. Partington, who sought to sweep back the Atlantic with a mop.

MIMNERMUS.

Freethought and Birth Control.

II.

(Concluded from page 603.)

BOTH James Mill and his famous son John Stuart Mill were convinced Malthusians, though they did not actually publish as far as I know any detailed instructions on the practical side of the question, and they were followed by a large number of other world famous writers in social and political economy. Among them should be mentioned John M. Robertson, whose brilliant pamphlets *Over Population* and *Socialism and Malthusianism* contain some of the most typical criticisms of that hard hitting and keen controversialist which make one regret that his pen nowadays is not more often at the service of Freethought, and to come to our own time Dr. C. V. and Mrs. Drysdale, Dr. Binnie Dunlop, and many others are "carrying on" the work with tremendous enthusiasm—Freethinkers all.

Through the work then of Freethinkers, the Birth Control movement spread slowly but surely all over the world. The wealthier and middle classes took every advantage of the means at their disposal to limit their families, but they also took every advantage of blocking the way to the spread of knowledge among the poor. In spite of this fact the activities of the Malthusian League (founded in the 'sixties by Bradlaugh) in particular brought the good news to thousands of hard working and poorly paid artisans, whose women folk were slowly realizing they were not exactly machines for producing children, and as

the spread of sexual knowledge began to penetrate the homes of the people it is not a matter of astonishment to find the clergy bestirring themselves a little to find out on which side the wind was blowing. Birth control is becoming quite respectable! In fact there are now some members of the Church who have ceased to talk of "moral restraint" and admit it is quite moral to use artificial preventives. Nay more. An eminent Christian lady, Dr. Marie Stopes (who first came into the movement three years ago), has actually been told by God to tell the Bishops it is their duty to spread the gospel of Birth Control everywhere. Her own works have undoubtedly helped the cause, but so earnest is she that she has felt it her duty in an article in the decennial number of the *Cambridge Magazine*, and repeated in various addresses, to remove some "historical prejudices." The gist of this article is simply that Bradlaugh and Besant (as she likes to call them) had "butted in baldheaded" into the movement quite unnecessarily—in fact they really did harm to the cause of Birth Control which would have been better off without them. This brilliant piece of "history" is supported by the stupendous discovery of a work written in 1866 (ten years before the famous trial) advocating preventive means, Dr. R. T. Trall's *Sexual Physiology*. Dr. Trall being a Christian helps the thesis somewhat, and Dr. Stopes seems very angry that his book should have been allowed to fall into oblivion and Bradlaugh get so much undeserved praise.

Now I want to say here that Dr. Trall's book is quite a good one and that he does give some rather vague notions on the use of preventive measures, but his real attitude on the question can be gauged from this quotation:—

Let it be distinctly understood that *I do not approve any method for preventing pregnancy except that of abstinence* nor any means for producing abortion, on the ground that it is or can be in any sense physiological. It is only the least of two evils. When people will live physiologically, as will be seen in the succeeding chapter, there will be no need of preventive measures, nor will there then be any need for works of this kind. (Page 213, first edition. Italics mine.)

I have quoted the paragraph in full so that there can be no discussion about the "context," and I ask Dr. Stopes if in the face of this, Dr. Trall can be called a convinced Birth Controller and a pioneer before Bradlaugh? And chiefly I want us to be sure of the dates. One has only to glance through her article as published in the *Cambridge Magazine* to see that of the history of the movement, she is—let us be charitable—quite unfamiliar. Fancy talking about the "Remedy for Over-Population" and not mentioning Francis Place, Richard Carlile, Robert Dale Owen, or Dr. George Drysdale! And the reader should note the dates I have given for their works. He should also note that Bradlaugh wrote his famous Malthusian pamphlet on *Jesus, Shelley, and Malthus*, in 1861—five years before Dr. Trall, whose book in any case the English Freethinker was unlikely to have seen. Bradlaugh became a convinced Malthusian very early in life, and it was because he advocated the right of free discussion on this and sex questions that Joseph Barker, who was his co-editor on the *National Reformer*, broke away from Freethought (in 1861) and became a Christian again. In an age when few men dared call themselves Atheists Bradlaugh proclaimed his Atheism everywhere and, as is well known, was bitterly attacked for it. In 1868, at a meeting of the Dialectical Society, he said that "he had been far more severely attacked for holding the views of Malthus and Mill than for being a sceptic in religion," and yet Dr. Stopes, who owes him everything, actually puts Dr. Trall as the great pioneer, though it can be demonstrably proven that the American doctor had

very little to do with the spread of Birth Control, and certainly never suffered a scrap for putting forth his views.

There is another point to which I would like to call attention and that is that in the 'sixties, the 'seventies and the 'eighties of last century a large number of books here in England, in France and in America, dealing with sex questions were published. Dr. Nicholls' *Esoteric Anthropology* (quite as good a book in its way as Dr. Trall's), published in 1853 is in favour of moral restraint but admits the necessity for Birth Control; Dr. E. B. Foote, whose *Plain Home Talk* achieved an enormous circulation all over the world, also believed in the prevention of conception when necessary. Then there were the famous works of Dr. Hollick afterwards united in one volume under the title of *The Origin of Life and the Marriage Guide* (again quite equal and perhaps even better than Trall's book), which was definitely in favour of Birth Control—though owing to the infamous Comstock laws, later editions of these works had to say as little as possible on the matter. I have selected these books as typical of the times, but they are a few out of scores. Nicholls, I think, was a believer and he said some pretty nasty things against the *Elements of Social Science*. Hollick and Foote were both Freethinkers and they were entirely in favour of free and open discussion. Dr. Stopes who had never heard of Trall till three years ago, probably knows nothing about the books I have mentioned, which makes her "history" particularly interesting for the readers of the *Cambridge Magazine*. The funny thing is that she tells us that the "facts" given in her article "make it clear that the Bradlaugh trial was by no means the source of inspiration to the Birth Control and Racial Progress movement"—as if we ever said it was! In another part of her article she says that "these facts are noteworthy in view of the statements and claims made by Bradlaugh and his adherents." Would she tell us (apart from this article) what are the claims and statements she means, with chapter and verse?

That the Christian opposition evidently troubles the dear lady is apparent from her reference to Comstock, who after all is her brother in Christ. One can say with confidence that just as the Deity told Dr. Stopes to tell the Bishops that they ought to be in favour of Birth Control, so he undoubtedly told the renowned Anthony to crush with the utmost severity any reference whatever to the "obscene" doctrines. Thus it was mainly he who managed to "put away" D. M. Bennett, the then editor of the *New York Truth-seeker* for thirteen months for the awful crime of sending through the post Ezra Heywood's pamphlet on the marriage question. Comstock's "burning enthusiasm for prosecutions," says Dr. Stopes, "was undoubtedly fanned by the wide publicity of the Bradlaugh prosecution." In other words had there been no Bradlaugh there would have been no Comstock—which is a marvellous piece of reasoning as well as a striking piece of "history." Bradlaugh has been blamed for many things, but to credit him with Comstock.....!

Dr. Stopes with that indefatigable zeal which marks the original historian came across the passage in Mrs. Besant's autobiography which mentions that the edition of the Knowlton pamphlet sold by Cook (who was first prosecuted for it), had improper pictures added. I have met no one who has seen this edition, so can say nothing positive about it, but what have Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant to do with it? The pictures are not mentioned in the report of the famous trial, but Mrs. Stopes leads us to infer the book would never have been prosecuted if it had not been for the illustrations, and that the "pair flouted authority and forced on themselves a prosecution in an aggravating manner." Just that and nothing more! Elsewhere

the good lady says "there *was* no law against birth control *when given properly*" (italics hers). What she means is, of course, that all the works which have been prosecuted were "obscene," and one can only marvel that the author of *Married Love* can write like that. What Sir Hardinge Giffard, who conducted the prosecution against Bradlaugh, would have said if he had had to read out the passages describing in the clearest manner the "mechanism" of sexual intercourse from her book which is sold openly everywhere, and what he would have added had he had to describe the illustrations given in Dr. Trall's book, I dare not hint at. Instead of the sentence of six months passed on Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant it would have been at least six years, and if the law allowed it might have been sixty years. The question of "obscenity" and "indecent" is a big one, and one would have thought any lady in touch with the latest pronouncements on the subject would have hesitated a little before talking a lot of silly twaddle. The illustrations that Cook added to Knowlton were probably merely anatomical diagrams taken from some medical work, and they certainly could not have been "worse" than those in Trall, while the idea that there is anything harmful or that the information is "not given properly" in such a book as Robert Dale Owen's *Moral Physiology* is obviously due to sheer ignorance. Dr. Stopes's competence in the matter can be judged best by her dragging in Dr. Trall as a great Birth Control pioneer when he expressly declares he does not "approve" of it, and actually advocates "abstention"—the identical position of the movement's bitterest enemies, the Roman Catholics, whom, let it be said to her credit, Mrs. Stopes opposes by every means in her power.

Like so many of the great movements which have benefited humanity, Neo-Malthusianism or, as it is now called, Birth Control, has achieved recognition mainly through the sacrifices and devotion of Freethinkers, and particularly does this apply to Charles Bradlaugh. That Christians can now come forward thirty years after his death to take the credit of his work (or give some other Christians the credit) is in the irony of things. Some of us can only protest and leave it to time for the truth to come out. But I hope I have said enough to shatter the shallow pretensions of Dr. Marie Stopes and those of her followers who share her views in this matter. And for those who wish to study a brilliant example of egomania and are interested in sex and religious psychology, I can recommend her article in the *Cambridge Magazine*. It will prove particularly illuminating for those Freethinkers whose knowledge of the history of Neo-Malthusianism is greater than mine.

And I hope Dr. Marie Stopes or any of her followers will oblige with a reply.

H. CUTNER.

"The Preservation of Species."

Nothing can improve by suffering; all pain and privation must have an adverse effect upon animals or human beings.—Sir Samuel Baker, "*Wild Beasts and Their Ways*" (Chapter on Deer).

THE value of any axiom is to a great extent dependent upon the life and work of the axiom maker and the philosophy of a man of action must of necessity be more valuable to mankind than that of the armchair philosopher. The difference between these two kinds of philosophy is nowhere more marked than in the writings of Seneca (master) and Marcus Aurelius (pupil). The philosophic utterances of the former are apt to cloy even when they convince, but with the latter there is a perennial freshness which invites us to re-read and refresh ourselves; a philosophy of self-reliance, in fact, which could nowise have emanated

from any but a man of action, and action undoubtedly was the first and foremost element in the life and work of the great Roman, emperor, general and philosopher. Coming to our own times we find multitudes of both armchair and active "philosophers," who contribute very largely to literature, professedly as such, but there are also a few individuals who, having led strenuous lives, have given their actual experiences to the world in book form, but who nevertheless make no pretensions to guide mankind by axioms—"for which relief much thanks."

Facts being "chials that winna ding," they as a rule allow the facts which they narrate to speak for themselves and to convey to their readers either a moral or no moral, according to the intelligence of the particular reader. It would, however, be impossible for such an author to write any considerable amount of matter without leaving on record some considered and final opinion on some subject of universal interest, and in this connection I take it that the considered and final opinion of such a man as Sir Samuel Baker on such a vital subject as "The Preservation of the Species" in both the human and animal worlds would be of the first importance to those possessing authority in such matters and to whom the subject is more than merely one of personal interest. The particular utterance to which I refer and which heads this article, is just about as concise as it could be possible for any writer to make it, and is enunciated with a sense of finality which could only be excused in the case of an individual like Sir Samuel Baker, whose experience has been practically world-wide.

Luxury, apart from the question at issue, is of vital importance to both humans and animals and must be dealt with from either a positive or negative standpoint. If from the negative, then much of the pain and privation at present in evidence in this and other countries must be beneficial, and the real sufferers must be those who, luxury apart, are living comfortably. If, however, we come to the conclusion that the utterance of Sir Samuel Baker is reasonable and that he was well qualified to judge, then we might be apt to become pessimistic about the future of the human race, in view of recent events and present conditions.

Before proceeding further, however, I would say that the principal object of this article is not so much to discuss the *pros* and *cons* of the subject as to commend the axiom to the attention of as large a section of the community as possible, so that its merits or demerits may be judged from personal experience and observation. There has always been amongst us a certain section of moralists whose favourite maxim is "crucify the flesh." These people are to be met with in nearly all countries in different guises, such as fakirs, lamas, flagellating monks, etc., and in some cases the evidence of sincerity is incontestable. I refer, of course, to the fanatics in all religions. The same doctrine is very extensively preached by the apostles of Christianity in our own land and is swallowed with avidity by those whose minds are uncritical, and therefore predisposed to the hypnotic influence of pulpit oratory. For such people I should recommend a perusal of the opening sentence of this article, and the immediate adoption of a critical attitude towards all pulpit utterances, particularly with regard to pain and privation, which are frequently recommended by our religious physicians as certain passports to a better world, but which are studiously avoided by them in their own practice. What is good for the preacher is good for the congregation, and whilst we cordially recommend all mankind to live as comfortably as may be having due regard to the comfort of their neighbours, we must protest against the preaching of the doctrine "Crucify the flesh" by those who do not practise it and who lay themselves open to the charge of being licensed hypocrites.

Luxury is a vastly different affair from either living comfortably or in a state of pain and privation, and the average schoolboy knows that the effect of continuous luxurious living has been to cause the downfall of nearly all the great nations of the world.

Let us eschew luxurious living by all means, but on the other hand nothing can be gained by despising or affecting to despise the good things of life, always remembering that what is one man's meat is another man's poison.

In conclusion I would again commend the words of Sir Samuel Baker to the earnest attention of all readers, from the point of view of evolution. JOHN COOPER.

Acid Drops.

We do not ask that the Government shall suppress the trading in superstition that goes on, but we do protest against its officials taking a hand in it. A prospectus officially issued by the Crown Agent for the Colonies offers the following for sale:—

Jordan-water in glass vials made in Hebron; Earth from Mount Moriah, in silk sack; Fragment of Roman Pottery from Ascalon; Pressed Flowers from Judea; Shells from the Lake of Galilee. The price is 5s. in plain wooden boxes, and 7s. in Olive-wood boxes.

An appeal is made to the Anglican clergy to push the sale of these things, and Sir Herbert Samuel authenticates the genuineness of the articles. We think someone ought to enquire since when the British Government set up in this kind of business. The next we shall have will be bits of the true cross authenticated by Lloyd George, or samples of the darkness that overspread Egypt sworn to by Lord Robert Cecil. The old woman who trades in philtres in the East End of London is dragged before a magistrate and fined. What will be done to Sir Herbert Samuel for thus lending a hand to the clergy in exploiting the superstition of the people?

Among the latest evidences of the wisdom with which the world is governed is a pig born with two heads and three eyes. The animal was born at Lower Harde, near Canterbury. Dean Inge believes that God has a sense of humour. Probably he will regard this as a proof.

The Vicar of Maryport is alarmed at the increase in the number of marriages at Registry offices. We can quite believe that. Anything which indicates an increasing sanity of outlook is a threat to the Christian Church.

Here is an interesting calculation which we take from the *Bank Officer*, the organ of the Bank Officers' Guild. For every pound sterling of revenue raised (1921-2) the following is spent: Army and Navy, 4s. 3d.; Education, 10d.; Housing, 4d.; Unemployment, 4½d.; The Aged, 4½d.; Other Peace Services, 1s. 7d. But we got through the war that was to end war, and are busy preparing bombs, poison gas, and fighting aeroplanes for the next peace crusade. No wonder people believe in Christianity! If they had enough commonsense to reject the one they would certainly have more sense than to act as they are acting.

The constant advertising of the *Freethinker* by one of our friends at Weston-super-Mare is beginning to get on the nerves of some of the bigots. Several clergymen have lately protested against advertising posters of the kind used being permitted to appear. One of these posters contains a plain advertisement of the *Freethinker* to which we should have thought no one could have taken exception. The other poster contains the following, which has upset both the clergy and the editor of one of the local papers: "The expansion of knowledge is loosening the very earth clutched by the roots of creeds and churches." This is treated as peculiarly offensive, and those who are speaking and writing against such

advertisements appearing seem to think that it is the "coarse" production of some common Atheist. As a matter of fact—although we do not suppose the bigots are aware of it, the sentence is to be found on p. 1 of the first volume of George Henry Lewes' *Problems of Life and Mind*. If only these bigots went in for a little reading!

Our friend had also projected another poster in which some sentences were to be printed, taken from Winwood Reade's *Martyrdom of Man*. But there is a Censorship Committee of the Billposting Association, and, thanks to the pressure brought to bear upon this committee by the local bigots notice has been given that this poster cannot be exhibited. So much for freedom of publication in this country. It will come as news to many that there exists a censorship committee, which, as it monopolises nearly all the advertising stations in the country, can say what things shall or shall not appear. And for our part we would rather that a censorship, if it is to exist, should be official and open, than be of this hole and corner description. Anyway we are not finished with the bigots of Weston-super-Mare, and more may be heard of the matter before the winter is out. But we commend these incidents to those who, because certain mild comments on Christianity are allowed to appear, therefore think the fight against Christianity is nearly over. There is still much to be done, and we are rather pleased that the bigots pay the *Freethinker* the compliment of hating it as furiously as ever. As we have before said, they know we are not to be bought and cannot be frightened.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt has just died, aged eighty-two. He married a granddaughter of Byron, wrote poetry, and underwent two months' imprisonment, in the 'eighties of the Irish Coercion Acts, for calling a meeting in a proclaimed district. In one of his sonnets he describes gaol as a "convent without God." The deity might take this as a compliment, for he is represented as interfering, not always with happy results, in all sorts of places.

The sermons preached by the Archbishop of York and Dean Inge, on the occasion of the meeting of the British Association at Hull, make instructive reading to the *Freethinker*. It is, perhaps, not for us to say how such sermons affect Christians. The Archbishop declared that the true relation between science and religion was not one of conflict, but comradeship. The ideal relationship between them was "Science stabilizing religion, religion inspiring science." He appealed to men of science to associate themselves more actively with religion. The whole sermon, as reported in the Press, is commonplace and hardly reaches the level of even the time-honoured twaddle of the average clerical utterance on this question. That such men as the preacher should be in the very front rank of the representatives of Anglican Orthodoxy is itself a sufficient comment on the intellectual status of the clergy.

Dean Inge's utterance touched a higher note. We commend its careful perusal to the Archbishop of York. He admitted, and emphasized, that after four centuries the Church had failed to adapt her cosmology to the discoveries of Galileo:—

Officially, our clergy still have to live in a pre-Copernican universe; otherwise certain dogmas on which the Church insists would have no meaning. The battle against the dead hand of authority is not yet won, but the issue is certain.

With his usual acuteness the Dean sees that the educated Christian has "succeeded" in fitting his creed into "the framework of the universe as we know it." Of course he has. In estimating this "success" Dean Inge is not unlike some of his less gifted brothers of the cloth.

The contempt of this world's learning, prominent enough in the New Testament, finds no echo in these sermons. Nor does the idea that human life is only a probation find nearly so much emphasis as it used to do. This means in plain English that Christianity, which

distrusted the free play of the intellectual faculties, cannot compete on its own merits with the activities of modern culture. That the defenders of a moribund religion should still exercise so much influence in the world's affairs is the greatest existing block to progress as well as the most blighting taint on individual character. In the history of human civilization Christian apologetic touches perhaps the lowest depth of intellectual and moral degradation. And we still have in our midst men who line up with the Boyles and Bentleys and Warburtons. The patrons that endowed lectureships, prize essays, and Bridgewater Treatises, and the hirelings that accepted such endowments, are diseased excrescences on the intellectual life of any community.

It is, however, only fair to Dean Inge, with whose name is frequently associated an adjective indicating that he is not the most cheerful of men, to mention that he believes God has a sense of humour. This is essential to the deity's perfect nature. The chief source of God's merriment must surely be the sight of so many supporters more interested in him than he is in himself.

Reading between the lines one can see with little difficulty that the British Association speeches have not given unalloyed satisfaction to the champions of the faith. How much more convenient to have a Kelvin or a Clerk Maxwell blowing the trumpets as they marched round the walls of the infidel Jericho! Mr. C. L. Drawbridge, of Christian Evidence fame—we use the word deliberately, for he is the sort of man to do good by stealth and blush to find it fame—writes to the religious Press declaring that “specialists are absolutely necessary, but no one should expect them to be authorities outside their own departments.” No one does expect it except a C.E. lecturer. He can accept a Kelvin or a Lodge as an authority on the problems of life and heredity; but an Atheist must not, on such issues, accept a Darwin or a Haeckel.

Who is Mr. Randall Cantuar? This cryptic appellation being interpreted means the Archbishop of Canterbury, the plain English—or is it Scotch?—of whose official name is Randall Davidson. Cantuar. is abbreviated Latin to denote that he belongs prelatially to Canterbury. The Patriarch of Constantinople recently addressed the Archbishop as “Lord Randall.” Probably he had gathered from our newspapers that the English people are fond of titles. Some of the Roman Catholic organs usually refer to the Anglican Primate as Dr. Davidson. This is particularly unkind. It puts him on a level with any D.D. from Texas or Kentucky.

But there is often a good deal of latent humour in men's names. The Rev. Mr. Pennyman is the rector of the very aristocratic St. George's Church, Hanover Square. Another reverend gentleman, Mr. Drinkwater, is well known in Nonconformist circles for his strong antagonism to Bung.

The Universal Negro Improvement Association has been holding its annual convention in New York. The Bible Society rose to the occasion and offered every delegate a copy of the Bible. The offer was refused, and the Convention recommended the Society to distribute the copies of the Bible among the whites in the South who were “obsessed with race and religious prejudice.” We congratulate the Convention on refusing the gift, but we cannot understand why the gift should have been advised to the whites in the South. Members of the Convention should have borne in mind the fact that when black slavery was the rule in the South it was the Bible on which the whites chiefly relied for the divine sanction to their slave-owning. And in this respect the slave owners thought far more highly of the New Testament than they did of the Old. The Old Testament inculcated slavery, but it had many stories of revolts and risings. The New Testament took care to impress upon those who read it the cultivation of frames of mind without which the maintenance of slavery would be an impossibility.

A man was summoned at Burton-on-Trent for “posting religious bills without permission.” We do not understand the form of the offence, but perhaps it meant posting bills on private hoardings or on private premises. At any rate the man's defence was that he had been told by God to post the bills. The magistrate fined the man 25s., which seems a very curt manner in which to treat a divine order. After all, there was as much evidence in favour of the truth of the statement as there is in favour of any other alleged divine communication.

Writing in the *British Weekly* recently, Dr. Jowett asks in effect what the Church of Christ has to say in face of the depressing outlook confronting the whole world. He urges the establishment of Councils of Peace in every nation. The *Church Times*, which is both Catholic and Anglican, is not at all enamoured of the proposal. The pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle would apparently exclude Roman Catholics from such Councils, being “doubtful whether Rome, as an organization, is part of the Church of Christ.” No doubt it is high time Rome was getting rid of these little pretensions and trying to rise to the spirit-level of a progressive revelation. But her time is not yet. The *Catholic Herald* (September 16) returns to the subject of the Archbishop of Canterbury and his recent address to the delegates of the League of Nations. He preached, we are told, in a desecrated building. According to report, when an inspector is seeking to promote a favourite policeman, his stock phrase runs, “He will prove an active officer.” Then comes the policeman's turn. Similarly, the red-hot Roman Catholic and the ultra-Protestant must live up to their reputations. The sight of such men shaking the forefinger at a naughty world, or giving it a lead in the matter of Christian brotherhood, must come very near making the Almighty split his sides.

One cannot give credence to everything that appears in the Press, but the news from some quarters during the past week is more significant than libraries of learned dissertations on what religion has done, and is still doing, for the world. The fall of Smyrna is said to have been followed by the massacre of a number of Greeks and Armenians. At Teliupara, and Multan, in India, many people have been killed and injured as the result of rioting on the occasion of the Mohammedan New Year. There has been a rising of Hottentots in S.W. Africa, and numbers are reported to have been massacred. There is a recrudescence of slavery in Abyssinia. The term “Providence” appears to be well chosen to describe the sovereign power in the universe. We should like to know something of his, or its, “religious experiences.”

Professor Percy Gardner, reviewing in the *Times* the proceedings at the Modern Churchmen's Conference, says that there is a party in the English Church which “is steadily drifting towards the theology of the Middle Ages.” The Evangelical Churchmen have just held their conference at Cheltenham, and discussed with much heart-burning the varying schools and parties in the One National Church. “The evangelization of the world is being gravely retarded by dissensions.” The conflict between new and old views of Biblical interpretation threatens to bring about a cleavage on a large scale in the Church Missionary Society. God's in his heaven; but all is not right with the Establishment.

“Me welly Clistian woman. Me baptized five times by many missionaries.” This is a delightful touch of humour emanating from a Chinese nurse in the play *East of Suez*. At home, Christianity is undergoing reconstruction, abroad it sends half a dozen different and conflicting representatives to convert the heathen to the one true faith. It would be interesting to have the real opinions of the better educated, thinking men, of China and India concerning the Christian religion. Perhaps, however, it would be “bad form” to express these opinions too definitely. It might hurt the feelings of European Christians, and even if we can't send Asiatics to gaol for this offence, we can use a good deal of gentle persuasion in other ways.

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.

H. C. WESTON.—Sorry your letter came to hand too late to answer last week. We do not proceed on the assumption that Freethinkers are all Socialists. We know that they are not, and in this paper we are not concerned with them in one way or the other. And we consider that when Lord Edward Cecil speaks of Freethinkers in the way in which he did he deserves reminding that he belongs to one of the families that have lived a more or less parasitic existence for several centuries. We do not regard the epithet "parasitic" as implying Socialism or Communism, but as stating a view of the great land-owning class in which very many liberals and reformers generally share.

R. ALLEN.—There are no funds given direct by the State to the Church of England, but the Church is relieved from the payment of rates and taxes, and huge sums are drawn from rents, ground rents, mining royalties, etc., many of which represent direct grants of national property when originally made. There have also been sums of money granted within the last century or so, as well as levies on certain goods for churchbuilding. The report of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, which should be in your public library, will inform you as to the income from stock, rents, etc.

HUGH McCOLL.—Thanks for trying to get new readers. Shall be pleased to send parcel of papers for distribution when required.

V. J. HANDS.—Your letter is written under a misapprehension. In speaking of "marriage or its equivalent" Mr. Cutner had not in mind marriage and illicit connections as ordinarily understood, but marriage as at present existing or any other form of union between the sexes that might become common.

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.

The Leeds Branch made a good start in its new hall on Sunday last with two lectures from Mr. Cohen. The hall is a very suitable one for regular meetings, but a larger one that admits of effective advertising will be necessary for special meetings. It is the outside public that we must never forget. The local Branch deserves to be congratulated on the way they are pulling together, and we trust they will have the hearty co-operation of Freethinkers in Leeds and district.

Next Sunday (October 1) Mr. Cohen will visit Swansea. He will lecture in the Elysium Hall, High Street, on "Some Delusions about a Future Life." Members and friends may help the success of the meeting by making the lecture as widely known as possible. There will be questions and discussion, and we imagine that will not be the least interesting part of the proceedings.

We congratulate the Glasgow Presbytery on a report recently presented to it by one of its committee. The report dealt with the ridiculous Seditious Teaching Bill at present before Parliament, and which would do justice to Russia in its worst stages of autocracy. The Committee disowns any sympathy with the teachings which the Bill aims at, but they say rightly that it is not a question of the character of certain teachings, but the principle involved. The Bill "led logically to the suppression of individual opinion and freedom of thought." Unfortunately the present Parliament cares little about either, and we say that without reference to any particular party or group. The main idea of each party or group appears to be to use whatever power it possesses to coerce others. No doubt this is one of the evil legacies of the war, but it should be fought nevertheless, particularly when there is every chance at the moment of fresh military adventures being undertaken. We are glad to find the Glasgow Presbytery coming to so sane a conclusion on the subject.

The Stockport Branch of the N.S.S. intends holding weekly meetings during the winter every Thursday at 191 Higher Millgate. The proceedings will commence at 7. Members and friends will please note, and, if possible, make it a point of bringing a Christian friend with them.

We are glad to see in the Stockport Express a brief report of Mr. Whitehead's meeting there, and also a letter from the local Branch advocating the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws. Too much attention cannot be paid to the Press, whenever the said Press is sufficiently free from bigotry or the terrorism of the pious advertiser to permit the mention of Freethought. To-day (September 24) Manchester will be the scene of Mr. Whitehead's operations, where he will lecture during the week. For particulars see our "Lecture Guide."

Mr. McLaren will deliver what will probably his last open-air lecture this summer to-day (September 24) in Victoria Park at 6.15. His subject will be "Charles Bradlaugh." We hope that East London Freethinkers will see that the audience is a record one.

We are pleased to learn that Mr. Corrigan had another good meeting on Peckham Rye on Sunday last, where he appears to be establishing himself with a regular "congregation." In the evening, as he was unable to be present, Mr. A. B. Moss delivered a lecture, which was listened to with appreciation by a large audience, and followed by much questioning and discussion. Mr. Moss appears to be renewing his youth in the Freethought fight, and we compliment him on his courage in tackling an open-air lecture in what must not have been the best of circumstances.

Mr. Moss, we are glad to say, has taken our hint, and will be shortly writing in these columns on the late George R. Sims and his views on religion.

The Manchester Branch of the N.S.S. held its discussion class last week, when there was a good attendance of members. The next meeting will take place on October 1 at Mr. T. F. Greenall's residence, 34, Goulden Street, Pendleton. Mr. Collins will open the discussion, and two more chapters of *The Evolution of the Idea of God* will be read.

Pagan and Christian Civilization.

It seems a duty to protest against the common tendency of Christian moralists to dwell only on the dark side of Pagan society, in order to heighten by contrast the blessing of the Gospel.—Dean Merivale, "*History of the Romans under the Empire*," 1858, Vol. VI., p. 289, note.

If (Roman) society at large had been half as corrupt as it is represented by Juvenal it would have speedily perished from mere rottenness. The Inscriptions, the Letters of the younger Pliny, even the pages of Tacitus himself, reveal to us another world from that of the satirist. On countless tombs we have the record or the ideal of a family life of sober, honest industry, and pure affection.—Sir Samuel Dill, "*Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*," 1911, p. 2.

It is now admitted by Christian scholars that there is not a single moral truth said to have been revealed by Christ that was not well known and taught ages before the Christian era. But, objects the Christian apologist, they may have been taught but they were not practised. The world, just before the advent of Christ, was a moral cesspool; lust and cruelty had reached a depth never before equalled, and never since surpassed. This is the orthodox view held by the vast majority of the people, and it is sedulously cultivated by all the Christian churches. Dean Farrar, the most popular theological writer of the English Church, whose flashy and shallow *Life of Christ*—in which he tried to show the four apostles how the thing should be done—which has attained such an enormous circulation; Dean Farrar commences his work on *The Early Days of Christianity* with these words:—

The epoch which witnessed the early growth of Christianity was an epoch of which the horror and the degradation have rarely been equalled, and perhaps never exceeded, in the annals of mankind.¹

He quotes the following, from Matthew Arnold, as a true picture of Pagan morality at the birth of Christ:—

On that hard Pagan world disgust
And secret loathing fell;
Deep weariness and sated lust
Made human life a hell.
In his cool hall, with haggard eyes,
The Roman noble lay;
He drove abroad in furious guise
Along the Appian Way;
He made a feast, drank fierce and fast,
And crowned his hair with flowers—
No easier nor no quicker passed
The impracticable hours.

Dean Farrar contrasts this state of things with the virtues prevailing among the first Christians as follows:—

When we turn from the annals of the world at this epoch to the annals of the Church, we pass at once from an atmosphere heavy with misery and corruption into the pure and pellucid air" (p. 45).

Thus can history be falsified in the interest of a creed.

The Dean devotes three whole chapters to the life and crimes of the Emperor Nero, in which he rakes up all the tittle-tattle and scandal mongering of the sensational writers and satirists of the day. As if the morality of a nation can be judged by the conduct of its rulers! Any historian who attempted to judge the character of the English people by, say, the characters of King John, Stephen, Henry VIII., or the four Georges, would be overwhelmed with ridicule, yet this is the method adopted by Christian apologists to blacken the character of Pagan Rome, which is judged by the actions of half-a-dozen of its bad and mad rulers, and the lives of the great majority of its really great and noble rulers—far greater and nobler than any Christian rulers who came after them, are absolutely ignored!

Let us see how this method would work if applied to Christian history. In the year 1492 Roderigo Borgia became Pope of Rome under the title of Alexander VI. "Former Pontiffs," says John Addington Symonds "had raised money by the sale of benefices and indulgences," but Alexander improved on this method:—

Having sold the scarlet to the highest bidder, he used to feed his prelate with rich benefices. When he had fattened him sufficiently, he poisoned him, laid hands upon his hoards, and recommenced the game. Paolo Capello, the Venetian Ambassador, wrote in the year 1500: "Every night they find in Rome four or five murdered men, Bishops and Prelates, and so forth"; Panvinius mentions three Cardinals who were known to have been poisoned by the Pope; and to their names may be added those of the Cardinals of Capua and Verona.²

With the extreme of sensual insolence and lust, says the same historian, the Borgia combined the extreme of spiritual insolence:—

To describe him (Alexander VI.) as the Genius of Evil, whose sensualities, as unrestrained as Nero's, were relieved against a background of flame and smoke which Christianity had raised for fleshly sins, is justifiable.....The universal conscience of Christianity is revolted by those unnamable delights, orgies of blood and festivals of lust, which were enjoyed in the plenitude of his green and vigorous old age by this versatile diplomatist and subtle priest, who controlled the councils of kings, and who chaunted the sacramental service for a listening world on Easter Day in Rome (p. 322).

Of the relations between this vile monster and his beautiful daughter, Lucrezia Borgia, the less said the better. "Carnal sensuality was the besetting vice of this pope throughout his life," combined with a "zeal for dogma," says Symonds, which "never flinched in formal orthodoxy" (p. 326).

We should like to hear some Christian sophist explain why God allowed this fiend, who claimed to be God's representative on earth, to reach a "green and vigorous old age." "His sins," says the Italian historian Guicciardini, "meeting with no due punishment in this world, he was to the last of his days most prosperous."³

Symonds says:—

His buoyancy of spirits lasted till the very day of his death. Yet he was stained with crimes foul enough to darken the conscience of any man, at any period of life, and in any position. (Note to p. 330.)

Alexander was bad enough, but his son Cesare Borgia was the very personification of evil, his cruelty and lust were absolutely devilish; he murdered his brother. "Whether," says Symonds:—

out of jealousy of his brother too dreadful to describe, or, as is more probable, because he wished to take the first place in the Borgia family, we do not know exactly (p. 333).

"This young hell-cat," as Symonds calls him:—stabbed Perotto, the Pope's minion, with his own hand, when the youth had taken refuge in Alexander's arms; the blood spirted out upon the priestly mantle, and the young man died there. At another time he employed the same diabolical temper for the delectation of his father. He turned out some prisoners sentenced to death in a courtyard of the palace, arrayed himself in fantastic clothes, and amused the papal party by shooting the unlucky criminals. They ran round and round the court crouching and doubling to avoid his arrows. He showed his skill by hitting each where he thought fit; the Pope and Lucrezia looked on applaudingly. Other scenes, not of bloodshed, but of grovelling sensuality, devised for the entertainment of his

² J. A. Symonds, *The Renaissance in Italy* (1897), p. 324.

³ Symonds, *The Renaissance in Italy*, Appendix III., p.

¹ F. W. Farrar, *The Early Days of Christianity* (1898), p. 1. 472.

father and his sister, though described by the dry pen of Burchard, can scarcely be transferred to these pages (p. 334).

Burchard was the Pope's Master of the Ceremonies ; it is he who relates " with great circumstantiality and with surprising sangfroid " the facts as to Cesare's murder of his brother. It is to Burchard also that we owe a description of the feast given by the Pope, at which, upon a given signal, fifty courtesans who had been invited, threw off every vestige of clothing, and danced naked !

Nor was the morality of the population as a whole much better. Symonds says :—

With references to carnal vice, it cannot be denied that the corruption of Italy was shameful. Putting aside the profligacy of the convents, the City of Rome in 1490 is reported to have held as many as 6,800 public prostitutes, besides those who practised their trade under the cloak of concubinage. These women were accompanied by confederate ruffians, ready to stab, poison, and extort money ; thus violence and lust went hand in hand, and to this profligate lower stratum of society may be ascribed the crimes of lawlessness which rendered Rome under Innocent VIII. almost uninhabitable. Venice, praised for its piety by De Comines, was the resort of all the debauchees of Europe who could afford the time and money to visit this modern Corinth.⁴

And with it all, the people were far more religious than the people are to-day. " However bold a man might be, he dreaded the name of heretic " (p. 356), says the same historian :—

The Venetian Senate offered 10,000 ducats for the seamless coat of Christ (1455). The whole of Italy was agitated by the news that St. Andrew's head had arrived from Patras (1462). The Pope and his Cardinals went forth to meet it near the Milvian bridge (p. 361).

And yet with all this piety, to quote Symonds again, " Against the corruption of Rome one cry of hatred and contempt arises from a crowd of witnesses " (p. 358). While—

On the one side we observe a Pagan dissoluteness which would have scandalized the parasites of Commodus and Nero ; on the other, a seeming zeal for dogma worthy of St. Dominic (p. 292).

But why " pagan dissoluteness " when the historian admits that the parasites of two of the worst of the Pagan emperors would have been scandalized by such dissoluteness ? This combination of sensuality and Christian piety is plainly written upon every page of history, and to see Christian historians hypocritically thanking God that Christians are more holy than Pagans only provokes a smile of contempt from the student of history who is acquainted with the facts of the case. Volumes could be written in illustration of this point, but we will give a single instance. Lieut.-Colonel Haggard, in his life of the French king, Louis XV., entitled *The Real Louis the Fifteenth*, tells us that Cardinal Fleury had—

taken particular pains to have him instructed so as to have the blindest faith in matters of religion ; he had been often, indeed, frightened in his childish years with pictures of the devil, of hell, and of death. These impressions never left him through life ; even in the most libertine moments of his later years he would instruct in religion the poor young girls whom he had debauched, after having torn them from their homes or bought them for his pleasure.

Mr. Lewis Melville, the biographer, and a competent authority, in reviewing this book, observes :—

Licentious, as most of the Bourbons were, it may be doubted if any one of that doomed line of kings ever equalled Louis XV. in his almost fanatical devotion to debauchery.⁵

And yet we are told that men cannot lead a moral life unless they believe in a devil, eternal torment, and a ruling Providence ! Nonsense, multitudes that no man can number have done it, and are doing it now. For every bad Pagan emperor we can bring forward six Christian rulers equally bad. W. MANN.

(To be Continued.)

Bloodless Ghosts.

The Times have been,
That when the brains were out, the man would die
And there an end, but now they rise again.

—*Macbeth, Act III., Scene IV.*

It is a well known fact, but one that very few people reflect upon, that following every movement of the body or brain there is a loss of substance, which has to be replaced in every healthy organization ; and as neither the working of the nervous system, nor the muscles, nor the brain produce anything, the organism, to repair the waste that is continually going on within, requires nourishment from without, and this is only to be obtained by the means of food. No less than one-fifth of the blood in the human body is constantly traversing the brain, and in accordance with the speed with which it flows are the effects which follow. For the brain to continue in a healthy condition it is necessary that the individual should eat good food, well cooked, and that the flow of blood should be perfectly regular.

It has been clearly shown that the primary cause of idiocy is a deficiency either in the size or the quality of the brain, and in all cases examined by eminent physiologists this unfortunate falling off has been completely demonstrated. On the other hand we have found that insanity results, as many eminent specialists have shown, from a derangement of the nervous system. Many men who have given splendid evidence of the possession of great intellectual power and rare talent in a variety of ways, men who have distinguished themselves in the world of literature, science and art, unhappily have become insane ; in such cases there has been a complete derangement of the nervous system. In some cases the effect produced by insanity has been the total perversion of the moral faculties. But let us consider the effect of the blood in its constant flow to the brain. We shall find it supplies the brain with constant nourishment, and enables it to perform its manifold functions. It is sometimes contended that if the brain is the instrument of thought it ought to continue to perform its work when the head is separated from the body. But I have already shown that the brain is kept at work by the regular supply of blood, and when this supply is diminished the operations are interfered with, and if the supply is stopped the operations cease altogether. But Dr. Büchner, over forty years ago, was able to demonstrate that manifestations of the working of the brain may be produced even after death. He says (*Matter and Force*, page 193) :—

On decapitating an animal, say a dog or a rabbit, the severed head gradually loses its excitability ; the eyelids are closed, the eyes rigid, the nostrils immovable. Now if at that moment blood of a bright red and deprived of its fibrous matter be injected into the arteries of the brain, the previously lifeless head is re-animated, the eyelids open, the nostrils expand, warmth and sensibility return, the eyes revive, look at the bystanders and move in their sockets. If the animal is called by its name, the eyes turn in the direction whence the sound came. These signs of returning life last as long as the injection is continued, and vanish and reappear as the operation is suspended or recommenced. These experiments have not yet been tried on human heads severed from their bodies, but we may safely assume that the same re-

⁴ Symonds, *The Renaissance in Italy*, pp. 371-372.

⁵ See review in *Daily Chronicle*, July 21, 1906.

sults would follow. M. Brown Séquard, to whom especially we are indebted for these investigations, made the attempt on the human arm recently cut off, though already cold and insensible. In a few moments warmth, sensibility, contraction of the muscles, in fact, all the normal activities returned, and M. Brown Séquard was enabled to repeat the experiment with the same success until sheer fatigue compelled him to desist.

The result of these experiments have been known to the world of science for close on fifty years and are still undisputed. Now let us see what they mean when these facts are applied to the question of the existence of the soul after death. If the blood and the brain in their working are necessary for the production of the phenomena of mind and the mind is associated with what is called the soul, will the soul in any future existence be able to manifest itself without blood or brain, or indeed without the whole functional activity of the organism in any future existence? It must be remembered, too, that the vast majority of Christians for ages believed in the resurrection of the body and did not think of the soul as a separate entity. It is also true that Christians of the Anglican Church in their Burial Service speak of the Celestial Body as being incorruptible, and the Terrestrial Body as corruptible; but they do not supply us with any evidence how any body can exist in the universe that is not subject to the law of change and decay. Even spiritualists have to give their spirits a material form. Sir Oliver Lodge says he has not only heard his son Raymond speak, but he recognized the voice, and his son told him that he smoked cigars in his heavenly abode. Fancy a spirit having a voice, without a material tongue or throat, and being able to smoke a cigar without lungs and without teeth, and without brain to direct it all!

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle has seen a spiritualistic medium exude enough ectoplasm to build up a spiritual body, and yet not lose an appreciable amount of her own body in the process. There are some people who say that Shakespeare, whoever he was, must have been a spiritualist to have produced so many ghosts and spirits in his plays; but to my mind, all Shakespeare's ghosts and spirits were represented by the great dramatist as purely subjective—as the mere coinage of the poet's brain. They were like the dagger which Macbeth saw as he was about to enter the chamber on his way to murder King Duncan. Addressing the vision he said:—

Art thou not, fatal vision,
Sensible to feeling as to sight?
Or art thou but a dagger of the mind,
A false creation, proceeding from the heat oppressed brain?
—*Macbeth, Act II., Scene I.*

Or again after he had instructed the murderers to assassinate Banquo the ghost of Banquo appears at the banquet table and sits in the vacant chair. Macbeth, turning to Lady Macbeth, who does not see the ghost, says:—

Pry'the see there, behold, look, look, lo! how say you?
Why what care I? If thou canst nod, speak too.
If charnel houses and our graves, must send
Those that we bury back, our monuments
Shall be the maws of kites. —(*Ghost disappears.*)

And a little further on occur the lines that appear at the head of this article; or take the case of Hamlet, he sees the ghost of his dead father; Horatio and Marcellus also see it; but they see the ghost at the dead of night on the platform before the castle at Elsinore, just the place where superstitious people would expect to see ghosts. But the ghost will not speak to the soldiers on duty, but to Hamlet only. Later on, when Hamlet is condemning his mother for marrying his uncle, who was his father's murderer, the ghost appears again and addresses some words of admonition to Young Hamlet for his treatment of his mother.

Hamlet sees the ghost, but his mother sees nothing. Hamlet says:—

How is it with you lady?

Queen: Alas, how is it with you?

That you do bend your eye on vacancy
And with the incorporal air do hold discourse?
Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep;
And as the sleeping soldiers in the alarm,
Your bedded hair, like life in excrements
Starts up and stands on end. O gentle son
Upon the heat and flame of that distemper
Sprinkle cool patience, whereon do you look?

Hamlet: On him, on him, look you how pale he glares.

Queen: To whom do you speak this?

Hamlet: Do you see nothing there?

Queen: Nothing at all, yet all that is I see.

And so on. Thus we see that the great poet meant us to understand that the ghost is purely subjective, as all ghosts are.

If I had space I could demonstrate, if it were necessary, that in all his plays in which he introduces ghosts or spirits such as in *Richard III.*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *The Tempest*, the playwright shows in his dialogue that all these supernatural beings are purely subjective phenomena, that they have no existence outside the human brain. Shakespeare was not only a playwright and a poet; he was also a philosopher. Finally, remember also that it was Shakespeare who taught us that matter and force were indestructible, and therefore eternal. In Hamlet he says:—

Hamlet: To what base uses we may return Horatio!

Why may not imagination trace the noble dust
Of Alexander, till he find it stopping a bung hole?

Horatio: 'Twere to consider too curiously, to consider so.

Hamlet: No faith, not a jot, but to follow him thither with
modesty enough, and likelihood to lead it. As thus:
Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander re-
turneth to dust; the dust is earth; of earth we make
loam; and why of that loam, whereto he was con-
verted, might they not stop a beer barrel?

—(*Act V., Scene I.*)

Imperious Caesar, dead, and turned to clay
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away.
O, that the earth, which kept the world in awe,
Should patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw.

Yes, Shakespeare was a philosopher and, let me add, a Freethinker also. ARTHUR B. MOSS.

Tell Me the Old, Old Story.

That argues but the shame of your offence:
A rotten case abides no handling.

EVERYONE knows, or has known, the words above from that hymn of our childhood's days. Like many other religious words they were once pronounced with fervour and in awe. To-day they are mainly used in a satirical or expletive sense. Indeed, the expletive is explicit. Even the orthodox, or nearly orthodox, say "God knows"—when they mean nobody knows; "God help you"—when nobody can help you; "In God's good time"—when never is implied. In sudden surprise, dismal dismay, or complete confusion, "O! Christ" is as common an ejaculation as fruit was *not*, upon the blasted fig tree. The ordinary phraseology of the ordinary (more or less) orthodox man and woman definitely demonstrates to what depths of decay Christian belief has declined. So it is with that line from the hymn which most of us have sung in our misguided and more ignorant days. This can best be observed where English-speaking men live, work, and play together as in barracks, camp, or ship. Let someone perpetrate an extra fusty chestnut; then, as a great old common custom, they all unite and sing in tones sarcastic, "Tell me the old, old, story." The implicit satire is transferred from the old, old, religious myth (story) to the over-hoary yarn. The one line, in the double sense, speaks volumes.

Many and many a time, when hearing or reading Christian defences, I have felt much inclined to repeat that old refrain. Only uncommon courtesy compelled me to refrain. In trying to defend their creeds it can with truth be said alike of Deist, Christian-Theist, and orthodox Christian, apologetics, "The more it changes, the more it is the same thing." The most cultured (in the orthodox meaning), the most courteous, the most "advanced," do but repeat in varied form the old falsehoods that have been victoriously fought—the old, old, fallacies that have been exposed—the old, old, rhetoric that has been refuted times without number, Amen! "Christian" apologists have much more for which to apologize than have Christian-Theists; their method in this is largely the discard or scrap heap; and, considering the blood-thirsty scraps caused by the Christian religion, it is appropriate that its doctrines should now be deposited upon that heap. ("Uriah" would apply to the heap, as well as to the Hittite.) Christian-Theists have more to defend than have the Deists. These last have least of all; but even they cannot cope with the troubles and difficulties that their belief produces. The "unmarried mother's" apology, that her baby was a very little one, did not get her out of trouble. No more does the Deist's plea that his difficulties are small, compared to those of the Christian. Asked where, when, what, who, is "God," the Deist can but answer with another question—as did the Spanish girl when they demanded who was the father of her child—"Quien sabe?" "Who knows?"

If we let X represent the difficulties of the Deist; X³ may stand for those of the Christian-Theist; and Xⁿ to the nth power might relatively symbolize the troubles of the orthodox Christian—in spite of the discord. Still, just as X is a factor of X³ and of Xⁿ, so there are insoluble problems (prime difficulties, if not prime factors) common to all these three religious beliefs. Think of the ink, paper and parchment that have been wasted, of the pens that have been spoilt, of the minds that have been muddled, of the progress that has been perverted, of the lives that have been lost, in repeating in various fashions the "Design" argument, the "Benevolence" argument, the "a priori" argument, and all the other mildewed old wheezes. They are not saved from exposure by the vapours of verbosity in which their "God" is enveloped. One would almost fancy that they tried to prove the existence of an infinite and eternal "God" by words to that effect—words without end, Amen! Chapman Cohen has well pointed out that the real nature of these (fallacious) arguments is generally disguised by the verbose manner in which they are stated. I have known only one case of surprising conciseness in this respect. It was in "the good old days" in Glasgow when J. M. R., G. W. F., Charles Watts, and others, paid regular lecturing visits which paid. At one of these lectures, a Deist offered opposition. His name (the Deist's, not the Deity's) I forget; but I believe he was a professional phrenologist; and he was quite courteous in his remarks. In his criticism on one point, he contented himself by saying he put forward the "Design" argument plus another that he merely named. That was more than thirty years ago; but I well remember thinking that an immense amount of energy and time could be economized in reiterating and re-writing these arguments if Defenders of the Faith would simply advance their argument as a name, letter, or a number. A classified index of ancient Christian and Theistic arguments, on such lines, would expose still further the weakness of the believer's case; but it might prevent the terrific mental intoxication by verbosity that has been (and is) so common in theologic circles.

Amongst the insurmountable difficulties common to these three religions is the old, old "problem of evil."

To the Atheist or Rationalist the existence of "evil" is no problem at all. To the Deist, Christian-Theist, or orthodox Christian, it is an obstacle that none can (or ever could) remove. It blocks the way to "God" far more effectually even than did the "Poilu" and the "Tommy" block the way to Paris and the Straits. The arguments used to-day by the most cultured, the most courteous, the most capable, defenders of "God" are nothing but the old, old, story of centuries ago—done up in language and with illustration of modern times. The blasphemy against Truth is all the worse where the apologists are "apparently honest." The war supplied (and still supplies) innumerable instances of this. Stripped of wordiness (which is worse than worldliness), simply stated, and logically analysed, all these attempts of the apologists for "God" merely argue that the war, pain, suffering, evil of all descriptions, are "God's" ways of teaching us, punishing us, and providing that "our characters should be trained." Let us thank whatever Gods there may *not* be that "His" ways are *not* our ways—nor "His" thoughts ours either!

As flies to wanton boys, are we to the Gods;
They kill us for their sport.

I have very limited knowledge, and still more limited power; yet, if I taught my child that fire burns by holding her hand in the fire, I should be prosecuted by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (an institution necessary in English-speaking Christian countries, but not required in Burma or Japan). Possibly the child might be taken from my control altogether—and justifiably so. The "Personal God" of the Deist, of the Christian-Theist, and (worst of all) the "Triune Personal God" (!) of the orthodox Christian, which are supposed to be endowed with "omniscience," "omnipotence," and "infinite love," inflict cruelty on a gigantic scale upon "their children" *in just such a way*—if the creeds were true. Outside the relatively small numbers of Freethinkers there is none to say "Him" nay—none to take steps to prosecute "Him"—or to take "His" children from under "His" control. The N.S.S. might be justified in changing its name to S.P.C.G.C.—Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to "God's" Children—for, in prosecuting (not persecuting) the "God" superstition at the Bar of Humanity and Truth, it leads the way in fighting for the elimination of the evils that afflict our life. As soon as people realize that war, famine, plague, pain, and other evils, are *not* imposed upon us by any "God" or "Gods" to teach us, punish us, or "train our characters," just so soon shall we be able to progress towards the prevention of those evils. When men and women understand that there are no "Gods"—there is no "God"—to inflict cruelty upon us in the name of All-Powerful, All-Wise, Love, they can get to work to discover the *natural* causes of these evils. The cause, or causes, known, we can (and we will) effect a cure—without the "Gawdelpu" superstition. While folk in faith believe that "God" permits war, famine, plague, ignorance, and poverty, in order to "train our characters" (to make us gentle, meek, and mild!); these, and other evils, are likely to continue. Let us learn that war, famine, plague, ignorance and poverty, are the natural results of natural causes, in which our own social and individual activities (or inactivities) play a mighty big part indeed. Then, 'ere a few more years shall roll, we will do more towards abolishing these evils than an infinite "God," within a fifteen hundred odd years old Church, has been able to do—with all eternity in which to do it.

"There's Hell, there's darkness, there is the sulphurous pit, burning, scalding, stench, consumption; fie, fie, fie! pah, pah! Give me an ounce of civet, good apothecary, to sweeten my imagination."

ATHOS ZENO.

Correspondence.

"DARWINISM IN THE LIGHT OF TO-DAY."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Mr. Herbert Lord says I am "mistaken in saying that Mr. Bernard Shaw wages war against the evolutionary view." I never said it. What I said was that Mr. Bernard Shaw "opposes all science and scientists on principle," and Mr. Lord admits the charge, for he observes: "Mr. Shaw's opposition to science and scientists is because the so-called scientists have become as dogmatic as the theologians."

The dogmatism of science exists only in the fevered imagination of its opponents. Every hypothesis is open for discussion or revision. Every new speculation is welcomed if it is supported by facts. No one would make such a charge who had even a surface acquaintance with the discussions that take place in scientific societies and journals.

Then the astonishing statement is made that "Mr. Mann calls evolution Darwinism." I have never said, or thought, such a thing. In my *Modern Materialism* I have expressly stated that: "If Darwin had never lived, the theory of Evolution would have been expounded in much the same terms as it is to-day" (p. 15). For Herbert Spencer drew the outline of his great evolutionary system before Darwin published his *Origin of Species*.

The theories of Buffon, Lamarck, and their belated literary henchman Butler, which are championed by Mr. Bernard Shaw, have been discussed to exhaustion by all the practical working scientists of our time, men who have devoted their whole lives to the study, and the overwhelming verdict has gone against them and in favour of Darwinism.

All this gaff about the dogmatism of science is sheer bunkum, and can only impose upon those who are ignorant of the methods and aims of modern science.

Here is a crucial instance of the freedom of scientists from dogmatism. Probably no set of propositions ever received a greater measure of assent among scientists than those propounded by Sir Isaac Newton upon mechanics and gravitation. If scientists were ever inclined to dogmatise they would have dogmatised over the *Principia* of Newton and made it the Bible of their faith; yet after holding possession of the field for two centuries its validity was called in question by a German-born scientist, Professor Einstein, who in 1915, while we were in the throes of the death-grapple with the country of his birth, propounded a different explanation of gravitational attraction and made a remarkable prediction in proof thereof, as to the bending of light rays from stars which passed close to the sun. Did the scientists treat Einstein as Galileo was treated by the Churches? They did not. Transcending the limitations of nationality and the murderous lust of war, the English scientists sent expeditions many thousands of miles away to test Einstein's prediction at the solar eclipse in 1919, with the result that the prediction was verified, and it is to be again proved at the transit of the 21st of this month. After the war Prof. Einstein was invited to England, and delivered an address, in German, at Manchester University and received the degree of Doctor of Science. Could conduct be less dogmatic than that? Compare the recruiting activities of the Christian Churches during the war.

Personally I deeply regret that Mr. Bernard Shaw—in my opinion the most brilliant of living men of letters—should lead this campaign against science, the only providence of man.

WALTER MANN.

P.S.—Since writing the above I see, according to *Nature* (September 16), that the *Revue Philosophique* of Paris for July-August is a special number devoted solely to a consideration of Einstein's theories. It consists of four articles of exceptional ability and importance. All four articles agree "that Einstein's theory is established."

The character of a god is that of the people who have made him. When, therefore, I expose the crimes of Jehovah, I expose the defective morality of Israel.—*Winwood Reade, "Martyrdom of Man."*

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.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.2): 11, John A. Hobson, M.A., "Government by Public Opinion."

THE "LAURIE" DISCUSSION CIRCLE: Every Thursday at the Laurie Arms Hotel, Crawford Place, W. Social reunion at 7.30 p.m. Chair taken at 8 p.m.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 6.15, Mr. A. D. McLaren, "Charles Bradlaugh."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Regent's Park): 6, Mr. Burke, A Lecture.

PECKHAM RYE.—11.15 and 6.30, Mr. A. B. Moss lectures.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 12 noon, Debate, "There is a Personal God." 6, Bradlaugh Sunday, speakers—Messrs. Hyatt, Corrigan, Shaller, and Coles.

THE TRIANGLE, PECKHAM.—Wednesday, September 27, 7.45, Mr. F. P. Corrigan, A Lecture.

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

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

NEW MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S.—Programme of Mr. Whitehead's Lectures: Sunday, September 24, Raby Street, Moss Side, 8 p.m.; Monday, September 25, Corner of Denmark Road and Wilmslow Road, 7.30 p.m.; Tuesday, September 26, Corner of Denmark Road and Wilmslow Road, 7.30 p.m.; Wednesday, September 27, Stevenson Square, 7.30 p.m.; Thursday, September 28, Platt Lane, Rusholme, 7.30 p.m.; Friday, September 29, Platt Lane, 7.30 p.m.; Saturday, September 30, Platt Lane, 3 p.m.

BIRTH.—On September 12, at Thorpe Bay, Essex, the wife of Mr. Cecil Goffe, and daughter of "Mimnermus," of a Daughter.

Bargains in Books.

A CANDID EXAMINATION OF THEISM.

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 FARRINGTON STREET, E.C.4.

PIONEER LEAFLETS.

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

No. 3. DYING FREETHINKERS.

No. 4. THE BELIEFS OF UNBELIEVERS.

No. 5. ARE CHRISTIANS INFERIOR TO FREETHINKERS?

No. 6. DOES MAN DESIRE GOD?

Price 1s. 6d. per 100, Postage 3d.

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

Pamphlets.

By G. W. FOOTE.

CHRISTIANITY AND PROGRESS. Price 2d., postage 1d.
THE PHILOSOPHY OF SECULARISM. Price 2d., postage 1/4d.

THE JEWISH LIFE OF CHRIST. Being the Sepher Toldoth Jeshu, or Book of the Generation of Jesus. With an Historical Preface and Voluminous Notes. By G. W. FOOTE and J. M. WHEELER. Price 6d., postage 1d.

VOLTAIRE'S PHILOSOPHICAL DICTIONARY. Vol. I., 128 pp., with Fine Cover Portrait, and Preface by CHAPMAN COHEN. Price 1s. 3d., postage 1/4d.

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

DEITY AND DESIGN. Price 1d., postage 1/4d.
WAR AND CIVILIZATION. Price 1d., postage 1/4d.
RELIGION AND THE CHILD. Price 1d., postage 1/4d.
GOD AND MAN: An Essay in Common Sense and Natural Morality. Price 3d., postage 1/4d.

CHRISTIANITY AND SLAVERY: With a Chapter on Christianity and the Labour Movement. Price 1s., postage 1/4d.

WOMAN AND CHRISTIANITY: The Subjection and Exploitation of a Sex. Price 1s., postage 1/4d.

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

CREED AND CHARACTER. The Influence of Religion on Racial Life. Price 7d., postage 1/4d.

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

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

By J. T. LLOYD.

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

By MIMNERMUS.

FREETHOUGHT AND LITERATURE. Price 1d., postage 1/4d.

By WALTER MANN.

PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN MORALITY. Price 2d., postage 1d.

SCIENCE AND THE SOUL. With a Chapter on Infidel Death-Beds. Price 7d., postage 1/4d.

By ARTHUR F. THORN.

THE LIFE-WORSHIP OF RICHARD JEFFERIES. With Fine Portrait of Jefferies. Price 1s., postage 1/4d.

By ROBERT ARCH.

SOCIETY AND SUPERSTITION. Price 6d., postage 1d.

By H. G. FARMER.

HERESY IN ART. The Religious Opinions of Famous Artists and Musicians. Price 3d., postage 1d.

By G. H. MURPHY.

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

By COLONEL INCERSOLL.

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

MISTAKES OF MOSES. Price 2d., postage 1d.

By D. HUME.

ESSAY ON SUICIDE. Price 1d., postage 1/4d.

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

By CHAPMAN COHEN

A Grammar of Freethought

(Issued by the Secular Society, Limited)

CONTENTS:

Chapter I.—Outgrowing the Gods. Chapter II.—Life and Mind. Chapter III.—What is Freethought? Chapter IV.—Rebellion and Reform. Chapter V.—The Struggle for the Child. Chapter VI.—The Nature of Religion. Chapter VII.—The Utility of Religion. Chapter VIII.—Freethought and God. Chapter IX.—Freethought and Death. Chapter X.—This World and the Next. Chapter XI.—Evolution. Chapter XII.—Darwinism and Design. Chapter XIII.—Ancient and Modern. Chapter XIV.—Morality without God.—I. Chapter XV.—Morality without God.—II. Chapter XVI.—Christianity and Morality. Chapter XVII.—Religion and Persecution. Chapter XVIII.—What is to follow Religion?

A Work that should be read by Freethinker and Christian alike
Cloth Bound, with tasteful Cover Design.

Price 5s., postage 4d.

Determinism or Free-Will?

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.

THEISM OR ATHEISM?

CONTENTS:

PART I.—AN EXAMINATION OF THEISM

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

PART II.—SUBSTITUTES FOR ATHEISM.

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

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

RELIGION AND SEX

Studies in the Pathology of Religious Development

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.

A BOOK WITH A BITE.

BIBLE ROMANCES

(FOURTH EDITION)

By **G. W. FOOTE**

A Drastic Criticism of the Old and New Testament Narratives, full of Wit, Wisdom, and Learning.
Contains some of the best and wittiest of the work of G. W. Foote.

In Cloth, 224 pp. Price **2s. 6d.**, postage 3½d.

Should sell by the thousand.

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

A BOOK THAT MADE HISTORY

THE RUINS

A Survey of the Revolutions of Empires

TO WHICH IS ADDED

THE LAW OF NATUREBy **C. F. VOLNEY**

A New Edition, being a Revised Translation with Introduction by GEORGE UNDERWOOD, Portrait, Astronomical Charts, and Artistic Cover Design by H. CUTNER.

Price **FIVE SHILLINGS.** Postage 3d.

This is a Work that all Freethinkers should read. Its influence on the history of Freethought has been profound, and at the distance of more than a century its philosophy must command the admiration of all serious students of human history. This is an Unabridged Edition of one of the greatest of Freethought Classics with all the original notes. No better edition has been issued.

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

The Case Against TheismBy **GEORGE WHITEHEAD**

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

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

NEW PROPAGANDIST PAMPHLETS

THE CHRISTIAN'S SUNDAY; Its History and Its Fruits. By A. D. MCLAREN.

Price Twopence, postage 1d.

WHAT IS RELIGION? By Colonel ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

This is Colonel Ingersoll's last public pronouncement on the subject of Religion, and may be taken as his final confession of Faith.

Price One Penny, postage ½d.; 7s. per 100 post free.

THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH. By Colonel ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

A brilliant criticism of Christianity.

Price One Penny, postage ½d.; 7s. per 100 post free.

WHO WAS THE FATHER OF JESUS? By G. W. FOOTE.

Price One Penny, postage ½d.

THE MARTYRDOM OF HYPATIA; The Rise of Christianity on the Ruins of Ancient Civilization. By M. M. MANGASARIAN.

Price One Penny, postage ½d. The two together, post free, 3d.

Both of these pamphlets are well calculated to do excellent service as propagandist literature, and those requiring quantities for that purpose will receive 250 assorted copies for 15s., carriage free.

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

THE BIBLE HANDBOOK

For Freethinkers and Inquiring Christians

By **G. W. FOOTE** and **W. P. BALL**

NEW EDITION

(Issued by the Secular Society, Limited)

CONTENTS:

Part I.—Bible Contradictions. Part II.—Bible Absurdities. Part III.—Bible Atrocities. Part IV.—Bible Immoralities, Indecencies, Obscenities, Broken Promises, and Unfulfilled Prophecies.

Cloth Bound. Price **2s. 6d.** Postage 3d.

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

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