

# FREETHINKER

FOUNDED · 1881

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

Registered at the General Post Office as a Newspaper

VOL. XLIII.—No. 11

SUNDAY, MARCH 18, 1923

PRICE THREEPENCE

## PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page
<i>The Confessions of a Priest.—The Editor</i> - - -	161
<i>"God's Methods"—A Rejoinder.—J. T. Lloyd</i> - - -	162
<i>The Bible and the Schools.—Mimmermus</i> - - -	164
<i>The Protestant Reformation.—W. Mann</i> - - -	165
<i>Failure.—Nora Bomford</i> - - -	166
<i>A Veteran Reformer.—Arthur B. Moss</i> - - -	170
<i>Fetichism and Idolatry.—J. M. Wheeler</i> - - -	171
<i>Nietzsche and Freehought.—William Repton</i> - - -	172
<i>The International Movement of Freehought.—George Underwood</i> - - -	173
<i>What Will You Put in Its Place?—Howell S. England</i> - - -	174
<i>Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, etc.</i>	

## Views and Opinions.

### The Confessions of a Priest.

Some time ago we called attention to the fact that yet another American clergyman—in addition to Bishop Brown, whose confession of faith (*Communism and Christianity*) has been sold to the tune of over 100,000—had publicly disowned Christianity. This was the Rev. S. D. McConnell, D.D., LL.D., D.C.L. Since writing the paragraph mentioned we have received from Bishop Brown a copy of Mr. McConnell's book which he calls the *Confessions of an Old Priest*. From a brief autobiographical sketch we learn that Mr. McConnell had been for fifty years of his life a minister in the Christian Church, and has been "honourably retired." He appears to be still eager to do some service within the Church on the lines of his present convictions, and in putting his confessions before the world he does so with the grimly pathetic hope that the Church may still find it suitable for him to serve within its borders, "that I and such as I have to place in her ministry." We call that grimly pathetic because it implies a belief that the Churches are made up of a body of men who are interested in getting at the truth of things no matter where the truth may lead—and that is not and has never been the case. Every Church starts with a two-sided conviction that is fatal to such a belief. It commences with the conviction that it has the truth; that it is its duty to defend its established teaching by every means in its power, even to the extent of suppressing any teaching to which it is opposed, and that is only another way of saying that the Christian Church has no interest in the truth as such. It has an interest only in keeping a given body of doctrines in a position of authority. If these teachings are true so much the better for the Church; every other truth will then confirm them. If they are not true, so much the worse for the truth. It must be kept under and away from the world in the interests of true religion.

\* \* \*

### What the Churches Have Missed.

One of the first reflections on reading Mr. McConnell's *Confessions* is the different worlds in which Freethinkers and Christians live. The book is written to advise Christians as to the position of their faith in relation to present day knowledge on the ques-

tion of Christian doctrines. The writer properly calls attention to the antiquity of these doctrines, to the obviously mythical nature of their supposed historic data, to the impossibility of a modern mind accepting its stories of miracles, etc., etc. He thus pictures the modern educated man as he faces the Churches, and puts to them his position in the following words:—

We do not believe that all mankind descended from Adam; that this man sinned; that all his posterity are sinners by inheritance of his nature or transmission of his guilt; that the man Jesus was the incarnation of God; that he was a divine victim sacrificed to redeem humanity; that salvation is contingent upon accepting this way of salvation.....Atonement, Redemption, Propitiation, all these conceptions we believe belong to a low and savage state of religion. We hope and believe that our moral sense is too far developed to allow us to traffic with them.

Now that does unquestionably represent the attitude of very large numbers of educated men and women. It has been said over and over again in this journal during its forty years of existence, and before that it was said by Freethinkers any time during the past hundred years. They are such commonplaces to us that there is a feeling of satiety and depression in having to repeat them. But they obviously come with the freshness of a revelation to those within the Christian Churches, and this compels us to congratulate the Churches on their success in their efforts to keep their congregations in ignorance of what has for so long been common knowledge to those conversant with the truth about religion.

\* \* \*

### The Organization of Deceit.

The cold truth—when we divest the situation of all sentiment and false delicacy—is that the clergy of all the Churches stand as a corporation virtually committed to keep the truth about religion away from the people. This conclusion is not in the least affected by the fact that there may be many honourable men among the clergy, and it is certainly emphasized by the many who leave the ranks of the clergy because they find, as Mr. McConnell found, the position intolerable. But one can hardly doubt the truth of what has been said when one reviews the attitude of the clergy as a whole towards any new scientific truth that may be enunciated. The first thought is "What will be its influence on religious beliefs?" Then there is the familiar routine of bitter oppression and denunciation, followed by a silence concerning it, ending with an attempt to read the new teachings into the old doctrine. But men who were really convinced of the truth of their teachings—in the sense that one may be convinced of the truth of a scientific doctrine—would not act thus. They would fight for the old so long as they believed the old to be true, they would embrace the new when they found the evidence in its favour. But this has never been the attitude of the clergy. Their position has been, "We must fight the new teaching because it is opposed to our doctrines," and they have never hesitated to suppress the new by force when they have had the chance. Again Mr.

McConnell says nothing but the truth when he remarks:—

The truth is, the Church is widely believed to be dishonest. The clergy are gravely suspected of preaching dogmas which they do not believe, or believe in an artificial and disingenuous way. When they are unquestionably honest they are regarded as rather foolish. Matthew Arnold said their besetting fault was want of seriousness, by which he meant, partly their habit of using words and phrases without seriously weighing their meanings, and partly their habit of spending their time upon things and questions which seem paltry to sensible men.

In this way people have ceased to apply to the clergy the same standard of intellectual rectitude that they apply to men in other positions of responsibility. It is recognized in practice that it is their business to believe certain things and to say certain things, much as we expect a rather clever child to repeat a well learned lesson, but without any responsibility as to its truth or fitness to the occasion.

\* \* \*

#### The Morality of Truth.

The fact that there is this unconscious co-operation in preventing people recognizing the truth about religion is unconsciously shown by Mr. McConnell himself. He was brought up in the Scottish Presbyterian Church—which seems a horrible start in life for anyone—and after entering the ministry preached its doctrines for many years. Then doubts began to gather, and like many other clergymen in the same position he satisfied his conscience by emphasizing the moral teachings and ideals associated with Christianity. There are hundreds, probably thousands, of clergymen in this position and who act in exactly the same way. They are in the Church to preach the religion of Christianity; they have serious doubts of the truth of that religion, and to avoid preaching what they fear may be a lie, they continue their position by preaching a morality which is called Christian, but which has no organic connection with it. They justify themselves to themselves by the plea that people are not ready for the truth, and by remaining in the pulpit they may exert a moralizing influence on their congregations—and that is simply not the case. In the first place they are misleading their congregations. These people imagine that their clergymen actually believe in the doctrines of the Church even if they do not. If they were aware that their clergy were in the same state of doubt that they are themselves there might be much plainer speech on the subject than there is. There is going on all the time between the more intelligent members of the clergy and the more intelligent sections of their congregations a game of mutual, if unconscious, humbug. The man in the pew regards the clergyman as a simple kind of fellow and does not like to say anything that will shock his simple belief. The parson takes exactly the same view of the man in the pew. Each is humbugging the other. If they could only come together for a five minutes' straight talk on the matter of religion there might be more honesty on both sides.

#### The Price of Faith.

Mr. McConnell in the pulpit was doing what thousands of other clergymen are doing—forming part of this gigantic combination whose aim is to prevent the people learning the truth about religion. So long as these men remain in the pulpit they cannot avoid misleading people and acting as a check on the spread of truth, instead of serving as agents in its dissemination. They will not face their people with the plain truth that religion, as such, has no greater right to command the allegiance of men and women than has the latest theory about the constitution of ether, and that

just as we have rejected or advanced beyond the primitive view of life in other things, so must we advance in matters of religion. But their remaining in the pulpit leads to a demoralizing of both themselves and of those who look to them for guidance. On the one side the constant paltering with the truth leads to a deadening of the moral sense; on the other non-encouragement of people to use their minds fully and freely on the matter of religion leads to something approaching intellectual atrophy. Look at the popular pulpit theory by which it is hoped to counter what is known of the origin of religious beliefs. So long as it was possible it was held that there was only one "true" religion, and that was given to man once and for all. Then, when it was no longer possible to altogether deny the significance of the study of comparative religions apologetics hit upon the theory that there was a progressive revelation, a gradual unfolding of God to man—God being pictured as a sort of Adelpi hero who goes through several acts disguised, to be completely disclosed in the last scene. Instead of allowing their congregations to see the full significance of a study of primitive beliefs, that all our religious beliefs to-day have descended from these, and that these were man's early attempts to explain certain subjective and objective experiences, they encourage people to hold the utterly false belief that there is something generically different between religious and other knowledge. And no man can persist in this teaching, and no body of men and women submit to it without paying a price both intellectually and morally. Fortunately, many see this before it is too late. The smaller number of men of ability that enter the Church is largely due to their perception that in the pulpit mental freedom is non-existent, and intellectual self-respect a diminishing quantity. The men who decline the pulpit make no stir, their names are mostly unknown, but their abstention is a silent testimony to the truth of what has been said. Mr. McConnell is one of the many for whom the position became so intolerable that he was compelled to speak out at last. But there remain within the Churches large numbers who believe as he believes. One can only hope that one day they will speak out also.

\* \* \*

There are other aspects of Mr. McConnell's book with which I will deal next week.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

### "God's Methods"—A Rejoinder.

THE Rev. B. N. Switzer, M.A., replying last week to my first rejoinder, makes several most astounding statements, which could only be indulged in by a theologian of his peculiar school. To me, of course, the Bible is not a revelation of God's Truth, because both God and his Truth are mere theological creations or inventions. To me the Bible is the product of religious visionaries, who imagined that there existed a Supreme Being who communicated with or through them. My question, "How can God's Truth as expressed in the Bible be inerrant if the language is fallible?" was addressed to Mr. Switzer who believes that the Bible does express God's infallible Truth; but instead of answering it the reverend gentleman flies for refuge to metaphysics, stating that "truth exists independently of all words, languages, or books." That is a wholly irrelevant statement. The only point at issue is how God's infallible Truth can be expressed in or through fallible language. I readily admit that the facts of the universe and of history exist whether we know them or not; but I deny the very existence of truth as a "thing." There is no such thing. By truth I understand conformity to fact

in relation to anything, or "the conformity of our knowledge with the things known." Neither does the human mind exist as a thing, or an entity existing or capable of existing independently of the body. As Hugh Elliot so well puts it, "mind is neural activity"; therefore it is quite impossible "for truth to reach and enter the mind or 'inner life' of man and be grasped and understood by it without and apart from the intervention of either words, languages, or books." Can Mr. Switzer think without or apart from words? Knowledge of the truth acquired without the instrumentality of words, he tells us, "is sometimes called 'inspiration'"; but a little further on, after quoting the phrase, "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," he observes that "moved" means the same thing as "inspired." Even the holy men of God could not speak except by means of words, even when inspired or moved by the Holy Ghost. If God exists he can, of course, make himself known to mankind in any way he pleases. What I deny is the actuality of the revelation, either in Nature or in the Bible.

Mr. Switzer declares that "God's Truth" exists independently of the Bible, but how does he know that, and how does he know there is much more of it than the Bible is alleged to contain? As a matter of simple fact he does not and cannot know it. No doubt he believes it in all sincerity, but his great fault is that, like most theologians, he treats his supernatural beliefs as if they were so many items of actual knowledge. He has not the humility to say with Tennyson:—

We have but faith; we cannot know;  
For knowledge is of things we see.

Mr. Switzer's believing capacity has no limitation whatever. He believes in Devilish as well as Divine revelations, and that both God and the Devil are really existing and active personalities. The Devil "can foul human language and turn 'the truth into a lie,' as he did when he tempted Christ by means of biblical language."

I am fully aware that the author of *The Mystery of the Ages* differs fundamentally from me on almost every subject, but I defy him to take what he calls the revelation of God's Truth into his house and leave the words outside. It cannot be done, in spite of his assertion that it can. It is sheer presumption on his part to aver that "the inspired 'Holy men of God' had the revelation *before* they gave it expression in language, whether verbally or in the written language which we call the Bible." Here again our author allows his faith to outrun his knowledge. No one has ever had the power to think or to acquire knowledge except through the ministration of words. Mr. Switzer says:—

On the Devil's side also similar revelations of sin and error are made to men of evil will, who also use vilely manipulated language for their expression.

In his book (page 127) he represents the Devil as inviting the world to worship himself, which the world consents to do:—

"And they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the Beast? Who is able to make war with him?" Here we have the Satanic father and son, and the third person of this Devil's trinity appears in that other beast of Rev. xiii, 11-18. We find from this passage that his work is to *glorify* the Antichrist, by exercising all his power before him, by causing men to worship him, and by giving life to an image of the first beast.

The reverend gentleman says that I charge him with "throwing enormous discredit upon the Creator." He is of opinion that in thus charging him I stultify myself because I do not believe a Creator exists, and because—"given that he does exist—Christ taught the existence of the Devil and his crew as a fact, and he would not discredit his Heavenly Father." It is

perfectly true that I do not believe a Creator exists; but Mr. Switzer does, and there's the rub. It is Mr. Switzer, who believes in him, that throws discredit upon the Creator, not I, who do not. The Bible gives him no authority to believe in "a degenerate prehistoric race of sentient beings, who fell from a high estate," but he does believe in it. He believes also that the human race is degenerate and powerless to redeem itself. Soon after it came from the Creator's hands it fell into a bottomless pit of corruption, and out of the beautiful garden in which it was first placed it was cruelly hurled into the wilderness to fight with briars, thistles, and thorns. Then came in succession the three dispensations, the Patriarchal, the Mosaic, and the Christian, and the three have been colossal failures. The history of the human race may be told in the one word—*degeneration*. Are such creations and such history creditable to a God of infinite power, goodness and love, in whom our author so earnestly believes? Why does such a God permit the Devil to exist and work such incalculable havoc in his world?

That the Gospel Jesus taught the existence and power of the Devil and his crew proves nothing, for he also believed in a loving Heavenly Father whose will would be done on earth in spite of the Devil and his foul designs. Now, Mr. Switzer knows as well as I do that the Gospel Jesus was hopelessly mistaken on many points. He is represented as saying: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself." It is nineteen hundred years since those words are believed to have been spoken, but they still remain unfulfilled, and there is at present no indication that they are likely ever to be fulfilled. Assuming the historicity of the Gospel Jesus, it must be recognized by all that his mission as Saviour of the World has borne none of the anticipated fruit. Mr. Switzer regretfully acknowledges the failure of the dispensations, but lays the blame on ourselves. In the Christian Church he finds people who profess to be what they are not, whom the Head of the Church called "foolish virgins," and "tares in the wheat-field." Then he adds:—

They weaken the hands of the true members of the Church by introducing unworthy and worldly practices where they should not appear. And so it comes to pass that from manifold causes, the work which God gave the Church to do is but half performed, and failure again mars the benevolent plans of the Almighty. But the failure is *always* because of man's inability to co-operate with the Divine will.

We must not overlook one especial hindrance to the Church's work, which did not appear to anything like the same extent in former dispensations. That is, the active and angry hostility of human beings in general to the aggressive work of preaching the Gospel and teaching the doctrines of the Word of God (*The Mystery of the Ages*, pp. 49, 50.)

There is no doubt a great deal of truth in those extracts, but surely it is a truth that reflects great dishonour upon the Creator and the Saviour believed in by the author. The creation of man turned out such a woeful disappointment that of the Creator it was before long confidently declared:—

And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and creeping thing, and the fowl of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them (*Genesis*, vi, 6, 7).

The bitterness of the repentance is all the greater when looked at in the light of the words attributed to the Lord at the close of the sixth creative day: "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good" (*Gen. i, 31*). Well, surely believers in God ought to represent him as being grievously disappointed at the non-success of his gracious dispen-

sations, especially the Gospel dispensation. Why have they so signally failed? The true explanation is that God's enemies have been too strong for him. The Devil has been triumphant all through the ages. This is frankly admitted by Mr. Switzer, an admission, I repeat, which throws enormous discredit upon the God he preaches. He is too weak to overthrow his enemies. He cannot redeem the world from its evils and wrongs, which, to my mind, proves his non-existence.

I have no doubt but that personally Mr. Switzer is a thoroughly charming man who sincerely aims at serving his fellow-men, but I am convinced that the form of pessimism to which he seems to be a slave is a philosophy which can do nothing but harm to those who come under its spell. There is no comfort whatever in the thought that a thousand years hence the world will be set right. We need new, sane, and wholesome conditions of life now, and if we go to work on right lines we shall have them. And in spite of numerous discouragements the world is slowly improving. The dawn wind is at work, and the sun of righteousness and truth is being called out; and already, as Kipling puts it, "You feel that the night is done."

So when the world is asleep, and there seems no hope of her waking,

Out of the long, bad dream that makes her mutter and moan,

Suddenly, all men arise to the noise of fetters breaking,  
And everyone smiles at his neighbour and tells him that his soul is his own.

J. T. LLOYD.

## The Bible and the Schools.

Hebrew mythology contains things which are both insulting and injurious.

—J. A. Froude.

The Zolaism of the Bible is far more pernicious than the Zolaism of fiction.

—G. W. Foote.

SOME time ago the clerical members of the Conference of Headmasters issued a warning to the parents of schoolboys, in which they called attention to the dangers of books, magazines, and dramatic performances which verged upon indecency. "We venture to do so," said the headmasters, "because we have special opportunities of observing the actual effect upon boys and young men of suggestions so conveyed to which we feel bound to bear witness." And they added, "too little care is exercised to exclude them from the lives of the young."

To read such snuffling allusions to the books, magazines, and plays of the day, as if many of them were a noisome danger to society is not pleasant. When such insults come from priests and their satellites, who thrust the open Bible into the hands of innocent childhood, one's sense of justice is outraged. For there are things in the sacred volume which are calculated to bring the blush of modesty on any face except that of a priest. Raw, naked filth, which cannot be read aloud to a mixed congregation, is forced compulsorily into the hands of every child; but masters of literature, who would present their puppets as sentient beings, must emasculate and etherialise them until they are the merest shadows of men and women, swayed by motives and temptations that would be held blameless by the Rev. Mr. Stiggins, and gain the bland approval of Mr. Pecksniff himself. Clergymen attach such loose meanings to the words they fling about so recklessly, but how such men can read the account of the prophet Ezekiel's banquet, or the story of Onan, and the adventures of Lot and his daughters, and point the finger of scorn at modern novelists and playwrights is inexplicable, except on the hypothesis that they are insincere.

If the novels, plays, and magazines of the day are likely to corrupt the morals of the rising generation, what, in the name of common-sense is the Old Testament calculated to do? There may be found plain, unvarnished accounts of rape, adultery, and unnatural vice, written with all the nasty particularity and love of detail which is the peculiar birthright of all Eastern writers. The florid, heated rhetoric of "The Song of Solomon," for example, leaves nothing to the imagination, and the least educated reader can appreciate the glowing periods. In fact, Oriental nastiness begins where Occidental pornography leaves off.

The overt action of the clerical headmasters is a mere trick to attempt to establish an Index Expurgatorius. If they had any real reason for safeguarding the interests of the young, they would see at once, that, if an ordinary novel or a play will corrupt a young boy, the Bible will corrupt a regiment. No novelist, no playwright, no writer for the magazines, would dare to fill his pages with detailed accounts of incest, rape, and unmentionable crimes. He would be imprisoned and his work destroyed, yet the clergy force the Bible, which contains all these things, and more, into the hands of every child.

Whilst we are on this subject we may remind the clerical headmasters that the Bible is quite unsuitable as a school-book on other grounds than morality. Biblical mathematics would disgrace fourth-form schoolboys; Biblical history is largely a work of pure fiction; and Biblical science is sufficiently humorous to make a bronze statue burst into smiles. In the sacred pages you find a talking snake, a lodging-house whale, a pigeon co-respondent. Where else are the fiery serpents, the dragons, the cockatrice, and the worm that never dies? Where, other than in the sacred volume, are the bedevilled pigs, the four-legged fowls, the unicorn, the chertbim, the ventriloquial donkey of Balaam, and the menagerie of the Apocalypse? Even the so-called human beings in the Bible act most strangely. "Adam" and "Eve" start life at full age. The lives of the patriarchs run into many centuries, and some fortunate persons had two funerals apiece. Among such a collection of freaks the ordinary school-child must feel like Alice in Wonderland. The Bible menagerie is unique, there is nothing like it on earth.

These extraordinary ideas emanate from the Bible, and of all the strange, frantic, and incomprehensible books which have issued from the brains of priests, this volume is one of the most remarkable. The Bible must be cleared out of the schools. The work of Freethinkers is that of freeing their fellows from the absurdities of uncivilized times which are perpetuated by this fetish book. The Bible has its own proper place beside the other sacred books of the East. It is not suitable as a school-book in a country pretending to civilization.

MIMNERMUS.

## Lines on the Preferential Treatment of Hebrew Miracles.

BORN Enoch and Elijah were  
Caught up to heaven, thro' azure air,  
In a celestial coach and pair—

A funny go!  
At least the clergy used to swear  
That this was so.

At death the Roman Cæsars, too,  
Could never rot like me and you,  
But straightway sped, beyond the blue,  
To Paradise—

But the clergy deem such tales untrue  
And Pagan lies.

D. R. ROSS.

## The Protestant Reformation.

### VII.

(Concluded from page 149.)

The Elector (Frederick), who knew the ecclesiastical ways of handling such matters, made it a condition of his subject (Luther) appearing, that he should have a safe conduct, under the Emperor's hand.....When the interests of the Church were concerned, safe conducts, it was well known, were poor security. Pope Clement the Seventh, a little after, when reproached for breaking a promise, replied with a smile, "The Pope has power to bind and to loose." From the moment that Luther left the Emperor's presence a free man, the spell of Absolutism was broken, and the victory of the Reformation secured. The ban of the Pope had fallen; the secular arm had been called to interfere; the machinery of authority strained as far as it would bear. The Emperor (Charles V) himself was an unconscious convert to the higher creed. The Pope had urged him to break his word. The Pope had told him that honour was nothing, and morality nothing, where the interests of orthodoxy were compromised. The Emperor had refused to be tempted into perjury, and, in refusing, had admitted that there was a spiritual power upon earth, above the Pope, and above him.—*J. A. Froude, "Short Studies on Great Subjects,"* pp. 87-91.

UPON Luther's appearance before him at Augsburg, Cardinal Cajetan declares that he does not wish to enter into any discussion with Luther, but demands a recantation of his errors, and a promise that he will not repeat them. Luther asks what the errors are that he is required to recant. To sum up the matter briefly, the Cardinal relies upon the rules of the Church as laid down by Saints, Popes, and Councils, and Luther takes his stand upon the Bible; if his teaching can be proved to be in conflict with Holy Scripture, he will recant. The Cardinal replies that the authority of the Pope is above that of the Scriptures. The discussion becomes warm:—

The closing scene of this conference was one of excitement. Not a single passage of Scripture was produced against Luther's statements, but, instead, the one word that he heard was the monotone "recant, recant." Ten times Luther tried to speak, but was fairly shouted down, until he adopted the Cardinal's method, and also let his voice be heard.<sup>1</sup>

The discussion was abandoned without reaching any settlement, Cajetan immediately laying a complaint against Luther with the Elector Frederick, demanding that he either send him to Rome or banish him from his dominions. The Elector replied, declining to take either course until Luther had been convicted of heresy.

Rome was not at all satisfied with the results of Cajetan's mission. A special effort to win over the Elector Frederick was the next move. The Pope announced his intention of conferring upon the Elector the high honour of the presentation of the Golden Rose. Tetzel had been repudiated as one whose extravagant statements and lack of judgment had occasioned all the trouble—although he had made precisely similar statements during previous sales of Indulgences entrusted to him without fault being found—and now Cajetan was replaced by a Saxon nobleman, Carl von Miltitz, who had for a number of years represented the Elector Frederick at Rome, and was now chosen to transmit the Golden Rose to his Sovereign. He was also to report upon the actual state of affairs in Germany and use every effort to bring about a reconciliation.

The contrast between Cardinal Cajetan and Miltitz was very great. Cajetan was an Italian, unacquainted with the German people, unable to understand them or adopt himself to their peculiarities. A haughty ecclesiastic, he sought to gain his ends by authority

and threats. Miltitz, on the contrary, was a diplomatist, a man of the world, full of graceful compliments and geniality, a delightful companion at the table, ready to use all the dominant influences of the hour to gain his ends.

Miltitz soon found, upon arrival in Germany early in 1519, that the Pope had no conception of the magnitude of the conflict before him. It was not now the problem of suppressing a single individual, but of meeting the thoroughly aroused indignation of a large part of the nation. Mingling freely with the most influential circles in his progress through Germany, he learnt more of the true dimensions of the movement. He confessed to Luther afterwards that of every five men he met scarcely two or three were on the side of the Pope, and declared that he would not venture with 25,000 men to carry Luther across the Alps. However, Luther was not imposed upon by the Papal Nuncio's confidences, and described the tears he shed, when he dwelt upon his peril, as "crocodile's tears," and the kiss with which after dining together they parted, as "the kiss of Judas."

At this time occurred the death of Maximilian, the Emperor of Germany (January 12, 1519). A ruler of versatile accomplishments, his great ambition had been to be crowned by the Pope with the title "Holy Roman Emperor," an ambition never to be gratified. Made "Protector of the Church" in Germany by his oath of office, the Pope for whose favour he was aspiring, called upon him to take vigorous action against Luther. But this was just what the Emperor was unable to do. His heart was set upon the succession of his grandson, Charles, to the imperial throne, and the prince from whom he had most to fear and whose favour was most important for this end, was the Elector Frederick of Saxony, Luther's sovereign and protector. If the Elector had been against Luther, nothing would have saved him from sharing the fate of his predecessors in the path of reform, Huss, Jerome, and Savonarola, namely death at the stake.

Pending the election of a new emperor, the Elector became Regent of Northern Germany, and might himself have been elected Emperor, but declined the honour. He was considered the most influential ruler in the country. Eventually, after an interregnum of five months, Charles of Spain was elected to the vacant throne in June, 1519.

At the meeting between Miltitz and Luther, it was agreed that Luther should maintain silence upon the disputed points if his opponents would do the same, but in March, 1519, the silence was broken by John Eck, a professor of Ingoldstadt and one of the most famous controversialists of his day, who was longing to meet Luther in public discussion. He had already written a reply to Luther's ninety-five theses, and now challenged him to a public debate. The famous Disputation took place at Leipzig on June 27, 1519. Eck's aim was to force Luther to commit himself to some statement that would convict him of heresy, not a difficult task for those acquainted with his early sermons and writings, for we have seen how he began to diverge from the orthodox teaching of the Church long before he attacked its abuses:—

The most important result of the discussion was that it caused Luther to realize his own position and to see that he disagreed with the Church in some of its fundamental teachings.<sup>2</sup>

This led him to examine more closely the authority for the doctrine of the Pope's absolute supremacy, when he found to his amazement that the Decretals, on which the claim was made, were full of frauds, and a study of the heretical teachings of Huss revealed that he had long been a Hussite without knowing it.

<sup>1</sup> Jacobs, *Martin Luther*, p. 116.

<sup>2</sup> E. M. Tanner, *The Renaissance and the Reformation*, p. 135.

In the following year (1520), between August and October, Luther published three writings, the first, *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*, the second, *The Liberty of a Christian Man*, the third, *On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church*. In the last named Luther denied the authority of the Pope and his claim to be the sole interpreter of the teaching of Scripture.

Meanwhile the Pope had already (June, 1520) issued a Bull of Excommunication against Luther, and in the autumn this was brought into Germany by John Eck. The Elector Frederick, however, refused to allow it to be published in his dominions, and on December 10, 1520, Luther publicly burned the Pope's Bull in an open space outside the city walls of Wittenberg in the presence of a crowd of citizens, students, and professors, thus definitely cutting himself off from the Church.

Whether the movement should now become a national one, or be extinguished, depended upon the action of the new emperor, Charles V.

The first Diet (legislative assembly, or parliament, of all the States composing the Empire) met at Worms and was opened by Charles V in January, 1521. The subject of Luther was brought forward for discussion. Alexander, the Pope's Legate, demanded Luther's condemnation. Charles, like his predecessor, was in a difficult position; he himself was strongly opposed to Luther, and his position as head of the Holy Roman Empire demanded his defence of the Church. Yet, at the same time, he saw the necessity for reform in the Church. Moreover, he thought Luther might be useful to him in a diplomatic game he was playing with the Pope. So he decided not to act hastily.

The members of the Diet resolved that Luther should be heard and that a safe conduct should be sent him, with a summons to appear before the Diet. On April 2, 1521, Luther set out for Worms. Being warned to beware of foul play, he declared: "I will go there if there are as many devils in Worms as there are tiles upon the roofs of the houses." The roofs of Worms, however, were not crowded with devils but with the inhabitants to see the famous heretic. On the afternoon of April 17, 1521, Luther appeared before the brilliant assembly, including the Emperor, the electors, the princes of the empire, nobles, knights, and delegates from the free cities. Asked whether he would recant, he declared he would recant nothing unless it could be proved contrary to Scripture. A proposal to rescind the safe conduct and proceed against Luther, as was done with Huss, was rejected with indignation, and on April 27, Luther left Worms with a safe conduct lasting for twenty days. On the journey home he was carried off secretly to the Wartburg, a castle of the Elector Frederick, there to remain hidden till the danger was past. The Pope had shot his last bolt and failed.

In future articles we shall consider the question of how far Luther can be considered the apostle and founder of modern Freethought, toleration, and culture and progress generally. A claim Protestants are never tired of making for him.

W. MANN.

With all its pretences of patriotism, the Catholic Church is the greatest curse of Ireland. The priest allows his flock the liberty to curse the sanguinary Saxon, but that is all the freedom he permits. The people are trained up as spiritual slaves, and this is the real secret of their political dependence. So far from being rebels, the Irish are the most easily governed, ay, and the most easily coerced, of European nations. Had the power of the priest been broken, had the Irish been mentally free, they would long ago have asserted and secured their civil liberties.—*Freethinker*, January 4, 1891.

## Failure.

God, others tell me I am in your debt  
For my existence here. Perhaps? and yet,  
In mixing me you made a great mistake.  
You did not pour enough  
Of any single stuff  
Into the whole a driving power to make.  
From many separate crucibles you poured,  
But not enough from each. So careful, Lord,  
With every part, you stultified the whole;  
And so, instead of what  
Might have achieved a lot,  
You manufactured mine a futile soul,  
A soul that by the neutralizing action  
Of each component factor's co-attraction,  
None strong enough to stand and make a start,  
Is, if the truth be faced,  
Inexorable waste  
Of good material upon your part.

From music—drops distilled where mysteries merge—  
You gave enough to bring me to the verge  
Of understanding: there to stop, unnerved,  
Without the power to catch  
The strength of sound, or snatch  
The secret by my senses half-observed.  
And Art—clusive glory, crystal-wise  
Reflecting from its thousand facet eyes  
More brilliantly when backed by stress and murk—  
You opened—then you stopped  
Before enough had dropped  
To gift my vision, let alone my work.  
And Poetry—the subtlest potion, wrought  
From magic and reality, from thought  
And dream—the phial in your hand—  
So easy, God to pour  
A little, little more,  
So I could give, as well as understand.

The same with all things. Reasoning I know  
You gave, with careful moderation so  
It breaks but cannot build. What else destroyed—  
Effectually indeed!—  
Belief in every creed,  
Yet could not form a faith to fill the void?  
And so I stand and face the coming after,  
Part flame, part dust, part intellect—part laughter.  
Unpurposed, incomplete, devoid of aim:  
A failure so acute,  
A farce so absolute,  
I needs invent a God to take the blame.

—*Poems of a Pantheist*, NORA BOMFORD.

Voltaire was at all times the unflinching opponent of persecution. No matter how powerful was the persecutor, no matter how insignificant was the victim, the same scathing eloquence was launched against the crime, and the indignation of Europe was soon concentrated upon the oppressor. The fearful storm of sarcasm and invective that avenged the murder of Calas, the magnificent dream in the *Philosophical Dictionary* reviewing the history of persecution from the slaughtered Canaanites to the latest victims who had perished at the stake, the indelible stigma branded upon the persecutors of every age and of every creed, all attested the intense and passionate earnestness with which Voltaire addressed himself to his task. On other subjects a jest or a caprice could often turn him aside. When attacking intolerance, he employed, indeed, every weapon, but he employed them all with the concentrated energy of a profound conviction. His success was equal to his zeal. The spirit of intolerance sank blasted beneath his genius. Wherever his influence passed, the arm of the Inquisitor was palsied, the chain of the captive riven, the prison door flung open. Beneath his withering irony persecution appeared not only criminal but loathsome, and since his time it has ever shrunk from observation, and masked its features under other names. He died, leaving a reputation that is indeed far from spotless, but having done more to destroy the greatest of human curses than any other of the sons of men.—*W. E. H. Lecky*.

## Acid Drops.

Mr. Lloyd George said the other day that he felt quite refreshed coming from politics into the "clean, religious air of Wales." We wonder what Mr. Caradoc Evans—author of *My People* and *Capel Zion* thinks of the "clean, religious air"? We have no great regard for politics, but that air is certainly cleaner than the Welsh religious atmosphere as depicted by Mr. Evans, and we understand that the scenes in his books are drawn from life.

From the *Freethinker* of March 12, 1898:—

The Secular idea of marriage is that it should be a free civil contract, resulting from pure and reciprocal affection. We would discard all religious ceremony at the nuptials.....It may be asked, what is to be done where the husband and wife find that they are ill-mated and cannot live happily together? Must their lives be forever embittered through the mistake they have made in becoming "as one"? Certainly not, for that would be the reverse of carrying out the Secular idea of happiness. Hence we advocate a radical improvement in our laws of divorce, so that husbands and wives, who cannot live as such in an amicable manner, should be permitted to legally separate, making proper arrangements for the care and training of the children, if there are any. The National Secular Society, in its "Immediate and Practical Objects," states as two features of its work: "A Reform of the Marriage Laws, especially to secure equal justice for husband and wife, and a reasonable liberty and facility of divorce. The equalization of the legal status of men and women, so that all rights may be independent of sexual distinctions."

The new statue of "Saint David" in Cardiff City Hall is said to bear a striking resemblance to the Rev. Dr. Clifford, the famous Nonconformist minister. We sympathize with Dr. Clifford. It is almost as bad as being placed in Madame Tussaud's Exhibition.

The Town Council of Kingston, Surrey, has decided to erect a new clock and carillon in the parish church at a cost of £610. The vicar should be more delighted than the ratepayers.

Humanitarianism is not conspicuous in Roman Catholic countries. In Italy, for example, criminals are sentenced to imprisonment for twenty, thirty, and even fifty years. When these trifling sentences have been served, and the prisoners die, they are said to go to the infernal regions for a rest-cure.

The *Church Times* remarks that "We must restore the Christian Home," and we are left wondering what is the Christian home? The figurehead of the Christian religion, Jesus Christ, had no home, and was not married. The other great figure in the Christian religion, Paul, was also without home and was unmarried. The first said that in heaven there was neither marrying nor giving in marriage. The second that it was better not to marry, but if a man must then he must, but marriage was only a concession to the weakness of the flesh. The Christian Church for centuries taught the superiority of the celibate ideal, and withdrew—as it still does—large numbers of men and women from family life to lead an unhealthy existence in convent or monastery. For many centuries Christian literature ignores or depreciates family life, and in the New Testament there is not the slightest recognition of its value to either society or the individual. So we are still left wondering as to what is the Christian home. Have the homes that make it necessary to have a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children anything to do with it?

The flat-chested soldiers of the Salvation Army have been rattling their collection-boxes outside railway stations and in public places on behalf of what is termed the Salvation Army Self-Denial Fund. As the money is cadged from the general public, it can scarcely be the Salvationists' self-denial. Their sacrifice consists in hold-

ing the collection-boxes and counting the contents afterwards.

The No More War Movement has formed a sub-committee "to bring before the Churches the urgent need of the abolition of all war." What a reflection on the Churches! Surely the sane and humane idea of the abolition of war should have emanated from the Churches in the first place if the Churches were any good at all. But they never were. They have always had to be coaxed or coerced to adopt anything in the shape of human reform and the progress of humanity. They have preached war, practised war, and upheld war. The N.M.W.M. had better get on with its own good work and leave the Churches alone to work out their own salvation—if they can.

We are in this world first and foremost to be trained for the next. That is the message given by the Rev. Dr. Lyttelton and we should be the last to question its Christian character. Only, if we look at the matter from the Christian point of view one wonders where is the sense in the whole arrangement. God, who might have made man as he wished him to be makes him so that he has to be placed somewhere and then at the end he is only what he might have been at the beginning. Moreover, there is a further puzzle as to how man can in this world prepare for another world so different from this as the next world is assumed to be. To live on the earth in order to be fitted for conditions that are quite unlike the earthly ones is the kind of nonsensical arrangement that fits in well with the general run of theological theories. The man whose mind is not obsessed with theology is apt to reason that if doing one's best in this world will not get him ready for any other, the next world does not matter. And if it does, then he need never bother about another life at all. Either way, this bother about another world is just a relic of a philosophy that has its parentage in the wild visions of mediæval theologians with a base in the ignorance of the primitive savage.

A mass meeting is to be held in Aldershot. The cause of it arises out of the liberation of a prisoner who was sentenced to seven days' imprisonment for assaulting a girl aged fourteen years. The man had been in custody for some time, and in view of this fact was released on the rising of the court. There are many conclusions to be drawn from this case, but the only one of immediate interest to our readers is this: that evidence of Christian charity will be forthcoming when Trafalgar Square is full of repentant Christians for the savage sentence with fatal consequences on the late J. W. Gott who had the courage to assault a dead and ridiculous creed.

The dead hand again. Ex-Chief Inspector John George Littlechild of the C.I.D., New Scotland Yard, left £9,712, with the instructions that only those embracing the Protestant faith should benefit under his will. This is a subject *pour rire*, and the nib of our fountain-pen has broken.

The London University was founded by a few Free-thinkers with the object of providing one in which there should be no theological tests, and which should leave theology severely alone. In spite of that the clergy have managed to get a foothold, which is an example of the truth that the only sure way of getting rid of the "Black Army" is to go on making strong Freethinkers. The Professor of New Testament Exegesis in the London University is the Rev. H. T. Andrews, and we note an article by him in the *Daily News* on Ernest Renan. In the course of that article he remarks that "It has always been a misfortune of France that it never had a Puritan movement that came to its own. France succeeded in stamping out the Huguenots, and it left the work of emancipation to men of the type of Voltaire, Rousseau, and Renan, and that is the real reason why its armies are in the Ruhr to-day." The conclusion is worthy of a comic essay, and if it is a sample of the theological influence at work in London University the students who

are unfortunate enough to be subjected to it have our deepest sympathy.

We fancy that most French people will contemplate with the greatest equanimity there never having been a successful Puritan movement in their country; and we have not the least doubt but that this country would have been all the better had it not been successful here. It is quite certain that it has left some very unlovely marks on the character of the English people, and is as responsible as anything else for that mixture of humbug and moral cowardice which is so striking to foreign observers. And if one puts Voltaire at the side of the typical Puritan we do not think that admirers of the former need fear. The main interest of the Puritan was religion, and religion meant to him the salvation of his own soul by making the world as miserable a place as was possible. Voltaire's interest was not religious but human. His passion for truth and justice flamed out beyond the borders of race or country or religion. One cannot conceive a Puritan carrying on year after year simply for the redress of an injustice as did Voltaire. They might have carried on the war in order to "purify" religion of the use of some ridiculous ornament or doctrine—and for the purpose of establishing another as absurd as the one they were fighting against. And when the influence of a man like Voltaire is to be measured, there is the fact that it was wholly to the good. No one can say of him that he fought for things that ages after were found to be injurious. Of Puritanism we can say that it gave the English the character of religious cant and humbug; it gave us Sabbatarianism with all its demoralizing consequences, and the good it did was only incidental and not intentional.

Unfortunately a political accident has blinded many to the real nature and influence of Puritanism. In its fight for its own view of religion it was compelled to fight political conservatism, and was thus forced to help on a certain measure of political liberty for the people. It thus happened that liberal politics developed more on the side of those who were in the ranks of the disestablished Churches than with those who were members of the Church established by law. More recent generations of dissenters have taken full advantage of this, and have claimed as following from their principles what was really a consequence of a political accident. The cardinal aim of Puritanism was to rule the country by the Bible. And any greater disaster than that could not happen to any people, civilized or uncivilized.

The Rev. J. H. Shakespeare, at the Free Church Council meeting at Bristol, moved a resolution asking that schoolrooms and halls should be thrown open so as to provide shelter for the unemployed. We wonder why not churches and chapels? To crowd the schools with unemployed would certainly interfere with their proper use during the day, but the churches and chapels are there quite empty, and we are quite sure that most people, if it were necessary, would mortify themselves to the extent of staying away from church or chapel until they were no longer needed for the use of the unemployed. As one who has to contribute towards the upkeep of these religious places of business we vote in favour of the proposal.

We are indebted to the *Leicester Daily Mercury* for the statement that Canon Sturdee held his audience spell-bound at Rothely Church by his address on "What is Religion For?" We have only a newspaper summary on which to go, but such as it is it certainly made us open our eyes and wonder what kind of people make up the congregation at Rothely Church. The Canon, for instance, showed his congregation the effects of Atheism during the French Revolution, and selected Robespierre as an example. Unfortunately for the Canon, Robespierre was a very ardent Deist. More wonderful still was the information that he and others set out to "decrease the population." Well, that was a charge which could not

be honestly brought against the Christian clergy of that day. But we wonder what connection there is between the establishment of Atheism and a decrease of population? How would Atheism be advanced by a decrease of population? Evidently the Canon knew his audience.

With great candour the Canon (who the deuce is Canon Sturdee?) admitted that blood had been shed by religion, but he said that was because political powers had used religion as a cloak. Again we congratulate the Canon on his faith in the ignorance of his congregation, otherwise he might have imagined some of them would have known enough history to be aware of the fact that the restraining influence on the persecuting proclivities and bloodthirstiness of the Christian Church has always been the secular powers. It was not the political government that instituted the death penalty for heresy, but the Church. Neither was it the Church which suggested its abolition. It was the secular power which forced the Church to surrender some of its monstrous claims. In Spain and France the secular power for long stood out against the claims of the Church for the expulsion and suppression of heretics, and we can see in our own time from which side the persecuting influence comes. We do not know who Canon Sturdee is, but he is a fine sample of the kind of intellect that gets to positions of eminence in the Church of to-day.

A deputation consisting of representatives of the local Presbyteries of the Church of Scotland and the United Free Churches waited on the Glasgow magistrates the other day. They asked the magistrates to forbid all meetings on Sunday of a Labour, political, or trades union character. So much for cheek. On the whole we are glad to see the request, if for no other reason than that it may serve as a reminder to those Labourites and others who, on the strength of a handful of parsons, with an eye to the flow of events, profess great concern for social movements, and play and pander to the Churches as a whole. If the clergy only felt strong enough we should have all meetings prohibited on Sunday, and carefully regulated during the week; and they would prove themselves as hostile or as indifferent to social reforms as they were in the days of the Factory Acts or the Chartist agitation.

We are not sure about Scottish law, but if it is the same as it is in England with regard to Sunday, then we must again point out that magistrates assume powers over Sunday meetings and entertainments they do not possess. Any meeting on Sunday to which admission is by money or by ticket sold for money, is illegal, and no certificate of a magistrate can make it legal. On the other hand a public meeting to which there is no charge for admission—or a public entertainment—is quite legal, and no magistrate can make it illegal. The magistrates have no power in the matter one way or the other. The conditions are regulated by statute, and no magistrate can get behind it. The proper course is for people to hold the meeting and to tell the magistrate if he interferes to go to the devil. That has always been the policy of the National Secular Society whenever it has had control of a hall, and if other propagandist bodies would act in a similar manner we should hear less of interference with the rights of public meeting. But somehow or other there is not the same keenness shown for principle among reformers that used to be the case, and for this they will pay a heavy price one of these days.

If one be asked to specify the defects in New Testament morality, the difficulty of reply is caused by the too great abundance of material. The defects are not partial, but total. They pervade the entire moral system, and are the greater in each part, the greater its importance. Fully to enumerate the defects, would be equivalent to writing a complete moral treatise.—Francis William Newman.



## 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.

SEAGULL (Dublin).—We are aware that Roman Catholicism claims to be making headway in England, and in relation to the rest of the Churches that may be so. But in relation to the growth of population it is, like the other Churches, sinking into the rear. Against Freethought the Roman Church is quite powerless, and to do it justice, it is the only enemy it really fears. It can beat the rest of the Churches on their own ground.

R. A. PHIPSON.—We must again remind you that you are quite in error with regard to the kind of teaching given in elementary schools. The teachers we are acquainted with do not expect servility from their pupils, nor is moral influence and teaching disregarded. To publish letters which we know to be false to the facts would only mislead readers who were not sufficiently on their guard.

A. HACKNEY.—We have no knowledge of the Psychological Research Co. of Chicago, and so cannot give you any information as to their publications.

A. LING.—Thanks for cuttings.

W. STURGESS.—Sorry we are unable to use the article sent. We are obliged by your sending it nevertheless.

J. FOTHERGILL.—As your letter bears the date March 3 we take it that the announcements were for March 11. But it did not reach us till after the issue for that date had gone to press. We are pleased to learn that the South Shields Branch intends doing what can be done to advance the propaganda during the summer, and trust it will meet with success. As you say a good way of measuring the advance made is by the amount of religious liberty secured. Our influence does not stop with our own movement.

J. HAMILTON.—Have passed on your request. Hope you will soon be better.

M. BEESLEY.—There is no work more important than the one you are engaged in. Shall hope to see you again one day in Nottingham—perhaps next season.

J. BARNETT.—Your experience is not very uncommon. The business of a chaplain in these public institutions is usually carried on by men of indifferent intelligence and who aim at getting their work done as quickly and as easily as possible. A visitor who would spend an hour in reading a good book to the patients, or talking to them on some interesting subject, would do far more good than a parson mumbling through his set lessons.

T. A. BATTEN.—Our regards to yourself and Mr. Courlander whom we hope to see again in England one of these days.

H. GREEN.—We are delighted to learn that the *Freethinker* has been of such use to you. We feel very proud of the staunch band of supporters the paper gathers round it. We should like all to follow your example of withdrawing their children from religious instruction. As you say, it gives the child a chance. More than that, it gives civilization a chance.

C. RICHARDS.—If beliefs which some people find comforting were never interfered with we should be still practising religious cannibalism, or burning men and women at the stake in the interests of Christian brotherhood. The education of the world largely consists in getting men and women to find comfort in the right kind of things and in doing the right kind of actions. If Christianity were not such a cowardly creed there would hardly be this continuous whining about finding "comfort."

A. A.—It does not sound as though you are right as to the authorship of "There is no darkness but ignorance," but we cannot place it. Perhaps one of our readers can oblige.

H. WRIGHT AND W. H. DAVEY.—The Bill for the Abolition of the Blasphemy Laws is before the House of Commons, but it being a private member's Bill, and the House being a democratic assembly, it is possible for any member to prevent the question being discussed by the simple process of "blocking." However, all that can be done is being done. If the measure is introduced into the House of Lords there will be—that not being a democratic assembly—a much better chance of a public discussion.

F. A. HORN BROOK.—We have no recollection of the cuttings, but we see so many papers and so many cuttings in the course of a week that it is impossible—after three weeks—to answer your question with any certainty.

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

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 the 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 Executive of the N.S.S. had hoped to have arranged a course of lectures in the Town Hall, Stratford, during March, but it was found impossible to secure the hall for consecutive Sundays. However, the hall has been engaged for a special lecture by Mr. Cohen on March 25, who will take for his subject, "What the World owes to Unbelief." The meeting is being advertised in the usual manner, but we hope that our East London friends will make a special effort to make the meeting known as widely as possible. There will, in addition to posters, be a number of advertising slips, and those who can assist in distributing these should write Miss Vance, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C., who will at once send a supply. There are also a few posters available for display in shop windows, etc. Those who can show them, or get them shown, will oblige by writing to the local Secretary, Mrs. R. H. Rosetti, 17 Garbut Road, Upminster. If our friends work as they might the hall should be crowded to the doors.

A course of special Sunday afternoon lectures has been arranged by the Executive for South Place Institute during March. Fuller information will be given later.

To-day (March 18) Mr. J. T. Lloyd visits Glasgow and will lecture in the City Hall Saloon at 11.30 and 6.30. In the morning his subject will be "The Fear of Death," and in the evening, "The Love of Life." There are often, but not always, two sides of the same thing, and in Mr. Lloyd's hands the lectures are certain to be interesting. We have no doubt but that his many friends in Glasgow and district will see to it that the hall is well filled on both occasions.

The Moncure Conway Memorial lecture will be delivered at South Place Institute on March 21 by Mr. John Drinkwater. His subject will be "The Poet and Communication." The chair will be taken by Professor William Rothenstein at 7 o'clock. Admission is free.

Now that the question of Birth Control is getting sufficiently respectable for all sorts of people to take part in its advocacy it is well to remember, once more, that it was the fighting section of the Freethought party that made it possible for all these "respectables" to deal with the matter. Freethinkers have not, of course, lost their interest in the question, and those in the neighbourhood of the meeting place of the North London Branch, St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., may find it convenient to attend a lecture by Mr. B. Kerr on "The Need for Birth Control." The lecture is for to-day (March 18) and will commence at 7.30.

## A Veteran Reformer.

*Recollections of a Labour Pioneer*, by F. W. Soutter—Fisher Unwin, 10s. 6d.

ONLY a few weeks ago I commenced reading a book of absorbing interest to me and, I venture to think, will be of great interest to the readers of this journal, entitled *Recollections of a Labour Pioneer*, by Francis William Soutter. It is, indeed, a most remarkable production, and gives a very vivid and detailed account of the work of a man who devoted all his leisure time—if it can be said that he ever had any leisure time—to social, political, and religious reform, and the obstacles he had to encounter on the way. I came in contact with Mr. Soutter early in the 'eighties, and already he had made his influence felt in the Borough of Southwark. Mr. T. P. O'Connor, M.P., who writes a most admirable preface to the volume, came to know Mr. Soutter about the same time, indeed, as soon as he arrived in London fresh from Ireland, and this is how he describes him:—

A short, thick-set, man with no superfluous flesh, though there is the appearance of plenty of muscle, Frank Soutter is just one of those dynamos that are really made of steel under a disguise of flesh and blood. Energy radiates from him as electricity from radium, the ceaseless energy is masked under great repose. The speech is short, sharp, a little like the report of gunshot and, like a gunshot in skilful hands, goes straight to the point. To anybody who didn't understand the English character and manner, he might appear frigid and brusque, but to those like myself who can look below the surface, the volcanic fires that burn with constant light and heat underneath are very apparent.

This is a splendid description of Soutter as I knew him over forty years ago.

In these columns it is not customary to refer to the political career of a reformer however powerful, except perhaps to show its bearing on the great movement with which this journal is identified. Mr. Soutter claims, however, that he was the first man to put forward a Labour candidate for Parliament, viz., Mr. Geo. Odger for Southwark in 1869. Mr. Bradlaugh's name was also mentioned in reference to this election, but he withdrew in favour of the Labour candidate.

Francis Soutter was also a pioneer in the movement for women's rights, and was on the side of Miss Helen Taylor, step-daughter of John Stuart Mill, when she was a candidate for the "London School Board," and the majority of male voters were hostile to female suffrage. As a youth young Soutter was an ordinary orthodox Christian, and came under the influence of the Rev. G. M. Murphy who was pastor of a small chapel in the Borough Road, and delivered temperance lectures at the old Lambeth Baths. But as the years rolled on young Soutter's intellectual horizon broadened and he became a regular attendant at South Place Chapel. Dr. Perfitt then occupied the pulpit. He was a Deist and an advanced politician, and young Soutter much admired his discourses, which dealt with political, social, and religious subjects. Writing of Dr. Perfitt, Soutter says:—

The learned doctor besides being a very eloquent speaker—he had been one of the most successful on the staff of the Reform League—was a thinker of the most catholic type. He was free from insular prejudice or national aspirations for aggrandisement; consequently, in his eyes, the world was greater than Britain. Upon all such questions as the rights of small nationalities or of subject races he was a world-wide humanitarian of the broadest type, and his speeches were the bedrock upon which were laid the foundations of my political creed.

Later, when Dr. Moncreu D. Conway came to South Place, Soutter "remained for the full period of that

remarkable man's ministry." It is therefore quite clear that Soutter had by this time become not only an advanced politician but a pronounced Freethinker. From this point we may turn again to his efforts for human emancipation and reform. Nothing could be more interesting and amusing than to read Chapter III of his book, wherein he describes the fight in which he engaged and which led to the abolition of two church-rates—one for the Parish of St. Mary Overy, Southwark, and the other St. Mary Magdalen, Bermondsey; unless it be the account given in Chapter VII of his trial with three others—Messrs. Quelch, Glanville, and Clarke—"for taking part in a tumultuous assembly calculated to terrify peaceably disposed persons, for creating a riot and forcibly entering the Town Hall." I remember every one of these incidents, and the impression they made on the people of Bermondsey and Southwark at the time.

The Counsel against Soutter and his co-defendants was Mr. Horace Avory, or "'Aughty 'Orace," as he was called, the same gentleman who, when he became a judge, sentenced poor J. W. Gott to twelve months' imprisonment with hard labour for alleged blasphemy. On the occasion of the trial of Soutter and the others for riotous assembly, they ran the risk of getting five years' penal servitude; but through the powerful advocacy of Soutter, the Judge (Sir Peter Edlin) ruled out all the serious indictments, and the jury were discharged without giving a verdict. A second trial, however, took place shortly after, when Soutter and Quelch were found guilty, but they were merely bound over to be of good behaviour for twelve months, while Messrs. Glanville and Clarke were acquitted.

On the first trial Mr. Soutter's cross-examination of the Rector of Bermondsey, the Rev. C. D. Laurence, was, to say the least, novel and amusing:—

"Do you often take the Sunday services at the Parish Church?" Soutter asked. The question was met with a reluctant "Y-e-e-s" and a stony glare. In the same manner he agreed that he might have performed such an office on the day preceding the disturbance.

"You were aware at the time that the Town Hall was to be barricaded?"—"Such thoughts did not trouble me."

"Many members of the deputation were your parishioners?"—"None were members of my congregation."

"As Rector do you claim no responsibility for other of your parishioners?"—"Oh, yes, in the broad general sense."

"If you conducted the services on that Sunday you would have led the responses to the Lord's Prayer?"

The look of profound amazement produced on the Rector's face by this enquiry promised to be of such a lasting character that Soutter observed: "I had to remind him that the Court awaited his reply."

"I may have done so," he said.

"Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil," I quoted, and went on to ask: "When you ordered the hall to be barricaded without warning to the deputation, did it not occur to you that you were leading us into very serious temptation and possibly delivering us over to an evil result?"

Not a word from the figure in the box!

I went on to quote the Lords' Prayer: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those that trespass against us."

"May we take your appearance at this trial as evidence of the extent of your forgiveness of the trespass you imagine we committed on that Monday evening?"—"The two things have no analogy. I never mix Church matters with matters pertaining to the vestry."

"Then we may take it that you treat the Lord's Prayer as a mere appendage to your surplice—something to be used only in the pulpit; that you do not allow the practice of Christian principles to interfere with your dealings with the world."

No wonder after that kind of cross-examination the serious clauses of the indictment broke down. All his life Soutter has been fighting questions involving human liberty. When, a few weeks ago, I visited this brave old warrior, he showed me the staff that Charles Bradlaugh presented to him to help to preserve order or to defend himself at the peace meeting held in Hyde Park 1878, when a number of medical students came armed with bludgeons to prevent Bradlaugh from holding his meeting.

In the course of his career Mr. Soutter came into close touch with such men as Bradlaugh, Labouchere, Joseph Arch, George Shipton, John Bright, Dr. Pankhurst, G. J. Holyoake, Hyndman, and many other famous men.

The old warrior is now close on eighty years of age, and it is gratifying to know that in all his struggles he had the sympathy and support of his devoted wife.

In 1917 the devoted couple celebrated their golden wedding, but shortly after, Mrs. Soutter died, and to add to Soutter's great misfortune his youngest son, Frank, fell a victim to the war and left his broken-hearted father to mourn his loss. However, this old soldier of progress does not despair; notwithstanding his age he is still mapping out further literary work to accomplish before he "shuffles off this mortal coil" and enters upon the long rest of the grave.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

## Fetishism and Idolatry.

### IV.

(Concluded from page 155.)

WHEN learning was in the hands of the few, to the many all writing seemed magical. So in still earlier days appeared songs, snatches of rhyme, spells, incantations, mantras, prayers intoned in an unknown tongue, and the utterance of the holy name. Poggio Bracciolini, apostolical secretary to the popes, who was probably concerned in many literary fabrications, delighted in telling the story of the countryman who, being sent with a letter and four rabbits, ate one on the road, and was dumbfounded when the person to whom he delivered the missive told him he had eaten one, and that the writing proved it.

Respect for writing is universal in Africa. One of many reasons for doubting the story of Omar having destroyed the Alexandrian Library is that the Moslems show superstitious veneration for all literature, and will not destroy even a chance scrap of writing, lest it contain the sacred name. Fetish worshippers regard writing as connected with fetish. Gri-gris, or charms, are in common use among natives of Africa. Where the kin are leopards, lions, crocodiles or snakes, letters of recommendation to these animals to take care of their brother command a good price; or the spirit of disease is asked to go away in the name of powerful spirits. Amulets and seals have a like meaning. Medicine-men use such charms and sometimes combine science with superstition, as by writing in croton oil. The patient swallows the written charm and is soon convinced of its potency. In England people have been known to regard the Latin prescription of the physician as a similar charm.

Necklaces, bracelets, nose, ear, and finger rings are early forms of typical gri-gris and amulets. They were at once signs, memorials, and charms. Berries and beads were used in incantations as now in prayers.

Among Africans who have become Mohammedan, or live in contact with them, the gri-gris usually consist of passages from the Koran, written on strips of paper, and sewn up in little leather bags. They are

supposed to have many occult virtues to preserve wearers from misfortune.

In the Bible the use of these written charms is enjoined. Of the words of the Shemang Isroyel (Deut. vi. 8, 9) says:—

Thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes; and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.<sup>1</sup>

In the earlier story in Exodus xiii, it is the Passover redemption of the first born that is thus inscribed as "a token upon thine hand and for frontlets between thine eyes"; while in Deut. xi, it is the promise of rain and grass for the cattle. In the story of the Passover we can see that the dab of blood on the tent post was an offering to the spirit to pass on and spare. In the New Testament we read how scribes and Pharisees "make broad their phylacteries," the phylacteries being these inscriptions on the forehead that serve as talismans.

The Talmud relates that the Emperor Antoninus sent a diamond to the learned Rabbi Judah, the compiler of the Talmud, requesting a token of friendship in return. The rabbi sent him a Mezuzah—i.e., a strip of parchment inscribed with verses from the Pentateuch, usually the Shemang Isroyel, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord," and so arranged as to be placed upon the door-posts of a house in compliance with the scriptural injunction. "My friend," said the emperor, "this gift of thine seems of slight value compared to my costly offering." "There is a difference between my gift and thine," returned the Rabbi. "That which thou gavest to me I must watch and guard lest it be stolen from me; but this will watch and guard over thee, even as it is written, 'when thou walkest it will lead thee, and when thou liest down it will watch over thee.'" The story may be an allegory illustrating how the learning of the Rabbis became a source of wealth when put at the service of emperors and rulers, but originally the charm was actually believed.

A species of Bibliomancy in use among the Jews consisted in appealing to the first words heard from anyone reading the Scriptures, and regarding them as a voice from heaven. The Rabbis detested the apostate Acher, or Elisha ben Abuyah, whom some have tried to identify with Paul. Acher, it is said, was led into thirteen synagogues. In the first was read, "There is no peace unto the wicked"; in the next, "Unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes?" Similar sentences being heard in all the synagogues, it was sagely concluded that Acher was obnoxious to Jahveh.

In the Middle Ages, when the Church was supreme, a use for Bibliomancy was found in the detection of heretics. The open Bible would, it was thought, give an answer for or against the accused. It was an oracle which enabled the judge to interpret much at his own pleasure.<sup>2</sup> Witchcraft was also tested by the Bible. The suspected old woman was taken to the village church, and weighed against the big church Bible. If she weighed more than it, she was declared innocent; but alas for her if the Bible was so heavily bound that it outweighed her. This method, however, was usually too merciful to be popular, and the rough and ready ordeal of sink or swim was in greater favour.

Bibliomancy, in the early Christian Church, was used in the consecration of bishops. The practice was

<sup>1</sup> Possibly the legend of the angel passing over the marked gate-posts may have been derived from this custom.

<sup>2</sup> Peter of Toulouse, being accused of heresy, denied the charge, but was condemned because a monk who stood near took up the gospels on which he had sworn, and, opening them as suddenly, read the first words, "What have I to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth?"

condemned by several councils, but the superstition has remained down to our own time. In the Gallican Church it was long used in the election of bishops, children being employed on behalf of each candidate to draw slips of paper with texts. The text thought most favourable decided the choice. In the Greek Church we find the custom prevailing at the time of the consecration of Athanasius, on whose behalf the presiding prelate, Caracalla, Archbishop of Nicomedia, is said to have opened the gospels on the words "For the Devil and his angels." The Bishop of Nicæa saw them, and adroitly turned over to another verse, which was instantly read aloud: "The birds of the air came and lodged in the branches thereof." This passage seeming irrelevant, the former became gradually known, with the result of much pious strife. On more than one occasion kings have gone to war because they have supposed themselves commanded to do so by reference to the Bible.

In former times, among the peasantry of England and Scotland, the sick were fanned with the leaves of the precious volume. It was put under the heads of women after child-birth, and into the cradle of infants to shield them from evil spirits until baptized. The Bible was consulted on New Year's Day with special formality. Each member of the house, before partaking of food, placed the finger at random on a verse—that verse declaring fortune for the next twelve months. An improvement still survives, or did in my young days, of selecting the day of a girl's birth from one of the thirty-one verses of the last chapter of Proverbs, taking that verse as an indication of her character and fortune. John Bunyan and John Wesley believed in fate being directed by chance Bible texts; the poet Cowper shared the superstition. Early Methodists used Bibliomancy, and the *Encyclopædia Perthesensis* makes the statement that—

Some of their members having been driven to despair by texts occurring to them that threatened the most awful judgments, their late pastor, Mr. Wesley, to prevent such fatal consequences from recurring, improved upon the system of *sacred lottery*, by printing several packs of cards with a variety of texts, containing nothing but the most comfortable promises; and thus his disciples drew with courage and comfort in a lottery where there were various prizes, great and small, and no blanks.

Bible fetishism is not yet dead. In some religious circles we still find the very letters of the book revered, and anyone who dares to question its statements regarded as a person in danger of supernatural vengeance. A Bible text is considered sufficient to establish any antique absurdity, and the authority of Moses outweighs the evidence of Darwin. While this superstition remains it is the duty of Freethinkers to take every opportunity of setting the old Jewish literature in its proper place as a human production, to be judged by the same canons of criticism as all other human productions. Fetishism is so deeply ingrained in human nature because it performed important services in the education of the race. It was a primal means of connecting thoughts and remembering facts, but with the development of the mind it becomes absurd, and the sacred bull-roarer, abacus, sistrum, rattle, amulet and image of the fetish man become the playthings of the child.

On fetishism may be consulted De Brosse's *Du Culte Fetiches*, Dijon, 1760; Dulaure's *Hist. de Differens Cultes*, 1835; F. Schultze's *Der Fetichismus*, Leipzig, 1871; Girard de Rialle's *La Mythologie Comparée*, Paris, 1878; G. J. Forlong's *Rivers of Life*; C. G. Leland's *Gypsy Sorcery and Fortune Telling*, and *Etruscan Roman Remains in Popular Tradition*; and Sir J. Lubbock's *Origin of Civilization*.

J. M. WHEELER.

## Nietzsche and Freethought.

The truly free are the perfect Atheists, those who have not set a frigid abstraction such as Truth or Humanity in the place of those old æsthetic gods Brahma and Jahveh.  
—Giovanni Papini.

At some future date it may be possible to read in one moderate sized book all that is worth preserving of the writings of Nietzsche. This man, described by Mr. A. R. Orage as the greatest European event since Goethe, was a philosophy himself. The subterranean fires of genius burned within him at white heat, and he cannot be dismissed by the cackle of journalists, the boycott of kept professors, nor the mumblings of those who will not give time and study to a comprehension of him. His philosophy was in a state of becoming; it was not for children, but as is the case with all philosophies worthy of the name, the creator of it lacked the technique of conveying it precisely to those who lend their ears to the music of Dionysos. To how many people did he make himself intelligible? A little recognition from Denmark by Georges Brandes, a little from France, and then, the solitude and penalty of all spirits who cannot return because of burnt boats. Nietzsche to us was a symbol of a final pronouncement against the values of Christianity on ethical, moral, and even mythical grounds. As a workable myth, if even for no other reason, Christianity has had its day; it only needs the requisite funeral. As a form of salvation—physical or even spiritual—any man would reject the idea of a scapegoat suffering to save him. It is a delegation of a duty, and there is even no merit in duty; it only becomes a reproach when neglected. The peculiar point about salvation is that we cannot save ourselves unless we try to save others. This is one of those jewel truths that may be found in writings many centuries before the reputed time of Christ. The doctrine of separateness makes straight for discord; the dogma of individual salvation brings nothing but bewilderment and smothers man in the dust of imagination.

It is a pleasure and a duty and a privilege to turn to Mr. Janko Lavrin's book<sup>1</sup> entitled *Nietzsche and Modern Consciousness*. We do not assume that Freethinkers spend all their time in throwing bricks at that which Schopenhauer termed the "metaphysics of the people," but Mr. Lavrin's subtle analysis will enable them to see where Nietzsche dealt his most effective blows at Christianity. It will also enable the reader to see what Nietzsche stands for, and in this respect Mr. Janko Lavrin's book is valuable and even necessary. The author is not a journalist, and has no axe to grind; he is impartial and his disinterested interest in Nietzsche from a psychological point of view, possesses that truth which is finer than the edge of a razor blade.

It is just possible that some Freethinkers may shy at the word "crucifixion." As our Editor has pointed out we are dealing with a tainted vocabulary when we use words of this description. But all human beings born are crucified. The only difference is in one of degree. Pain, sought or unsought, is a reminder of our mortality. When pain is projected on a mental plane—the pain attached to being a creator of values or holding unpopular opinions—it is only crucifixion in another form. As our author states Nietzsche's philosophy was "not a mummified system of 'objective concepts,' but something alive and intimate: the history of a personal Golgotha up to the very moment of self-crucifixion." Some of our archbishops and country parsons look very well on it, but mortality has the last word, and gout and sciatica may remotely

<sup>1</sup> *Nietzsche and Modern Consciousness*, by Janko Lavrin, 6s. net, W. Collins, Sons, & Co., Ltd., 48, Pall Mall, London, S.W.1.

remind these people of their master. Nevertheless, they stand for nothing new and nothing true, and their particular crucifixion is similar to that of the pilgrim to Rome who boiled the peas first before putting them in his shoes.

Nietzsche cannot be silenced now by death or boycott; the philosophy for which he stood can only be superseded by a better one. His philosophy is capable of giving the popular reader homoeopathic doses through his unavowed disciples such as Mr. Bernard Shaw and Mr. H. G. Wells, and whether it was the cause of Mr. Oscar Levy's departure to France we are not in a position to say. At any rate, his works could be studied to advantage by the remnants of our aristocracy and by all people who despise newspaper culture and value life in higher terms than those responsible for placards announcing royal engagements, the price of beer, Plumpton Naps, etc.—all of which may be classed as gallimaufrey and light comedy.

In *We Philologists* Nietzsche states a simple truth that might be appropriated as a motto for Freethinkers. "There are lazy pessimists and resigned ones in this world—and it is to their number that we refuse to belong." In spite of the author's rather deprecatory remark that "so-called Freethinkers welcomed Nietzsche the Atheist, confusing, in their simplicity, Nietzsche's Luciferic defiance with the Atheism of a penny pamphlet," we feel compelled to remark that if Nietzsche had not been born, we should still have had the searching valuation of the war turned on to the values of Christianity, with the result that there is now only one Church left—the Church of Rome.

The *Freethinker* (price twopence) in 1915 was busy defending the ideas other than anti-religious of Nietzsche when Mr. George Sampson, in the *Bookman*, could not make up his mind whether Nietzsche was a hedgehog or only something for Nonconformist copy.

We confidently recommend Mr. Janko Lavrin's book. We are sure that it will stand the test of initiation for a position on a student's bookshelf, and it would be good exercise for every reader after reading it to point out where Nietzsche failed—as he did. But his failure was more magnificent than a triumph.

WILLIAM REPTON.

## The International Movement of Freethought.

JAPAN.

IN the letter (January 29) which I have received from my energetic and intelligent friend Mr. Yoshiro Oyama, and which I give below, he continues his monthly commentary on the trend and the sure, if slow, progress of Freethought in the most interesting of Oriental lands. It is curious to note that the human mind is subjected to pretty much the same influences at all times, and in all places. The free play of thought, speech and action is continually checked by economic inertia, or the wish to remain quietly in the old ways. The ultimate outcome of this interplay of opposing forces is beyond our power of clairvoyant prevision. The end may be a new and better civilization, or a new barbarism worse than anything the world has ever seen. My Japanese friend takes a cheerful view of the world-order in relation to his own country. I am afraid that I am not quite so optimistic, and would just remind him of the English poet's exhortation to those of us who would build on illusions: "Hope thou not much, and fear thou not at all."

Yokohama,

Japan.

DEAR MR. UNDERWOOD,—Japan is not yet a country in which public opinion holds sway. Our ambassador

of Washington has been telling the Americans that a remarkable change in public opinion has taken place in Japan in the last three years. I am afraid that one slip that Mr. Sado Saburi made may have misled his hearers in the Continental Memorial Hall of Washington. Freethought in Japan has certainly grown in the last few years. That the intellectual classes accept a sort of scientific, philosophic and ethical liberalism is true enough—is indeed beyond dispute. But public opinion here has suffered much from the unconstitutional practices of the conservative statesman and the bureaucrats. Bureaucracy carries oppression, hatred and strife wherever it goes. Certainly it is true that our aristocracy, bureaucrats, officials, politicians, journalists, quasi scientists, educationists and religionists did persuade the ignorant to shake hands with religion, ignoring public opinion, and did say that the teaching of religion was the one cure for present evils and discontent. But no good can come of teaching the people to accept the religious standard. This much I can say without hesitation—the times are favourable to Freethought. Slowly but surely religion is losing its hold on the masses, and the masses are losing their confidence in, and reverence for religion.

Ever since Mr. Hyakuzo Kurta published his religious novel, *Shukké To Sono Oéski* ("The Priest and his Disciples"), the public seems to have developed a religious consciousness, or, shall I say, appetite. They are everywhere seeking this new sensation. Foreign religionists will tell you that there is a fierce struggle between Theism and Atheism in Japan, and that the people are anxious to get religion. On the contrary, the fundamental dogmas of religion get very little attention from most young men and women, while the intellectual classes are drifting away from religion. A close observer must see that our men of letters are awaking scientifically and intellectually. From the novels I have looked at recently I find that men of letters are doing really good work for freedom. It is certain that if there were no legal restrictions they would assume a more militant attitude towards ignorance, superstition and faith.

As I mentioned before, our Government intends to send a diplomatic representative to the Vatican, and the Foreign Office has voted Y114,222 in its new budget. Count Uchida, the Foreign Minister, is reported to have said that the Government does not intend to recognize the Vatican as a spiritual power, the exchange of representatives being a matter of diplomacy pure and simple. This policy is opposed by many Buddhists, scholars and journalists. It is suggested that the Vatican move is necessary in view of Japan's relations with Latin America where Roman Catholicism is a force. This argument is opposed by Freethinkers. There are threats of a nation-wide revolt of Buddhists if the proposal to send a representative to the Vatican is carried, and the heads of all the various sects have added their voices to the protest. They say that such a move will open the country to Catholicism. Count Otani, chief abbot of the *Nishi Honganji* Temple in Kyoto, who came to Tokyo last week to lead the attack, declared the Buddhist Abbots would take every measure to defeat the bill in the Diet, and that there would be trouble if the objections were over ridden, and the bill rushed through. Freethinking members of the Diet which opened on January 23, assure me that there will be heated debates when the Vatican question is raised, and they expect the bill to be thrown out. In the opinion of the *Jiji Shimpô*, one of our big papers, the Vatican question will become a political issue, and both of the leading parties will be forced to oppose the bill by their Buddhist constituencies which will make them pay for their temerity later on.

Many of the great men of the past and present were and are believers in Shinto or Buddhist religion. They are fanatics; shutting their eyes to reason and facts. It appears that foreign Christian tourists are assuring them that religion is the secret of European political power. I try to counter this by pointing out in the daily papers that these Christian tourists are

not representative, that there are many Freethinkers in Christian countries, and that they are vastly more influential. In this way I oppose all religions, Christian, Buddhist, and Shinto and their derivations. In fine, I am glad to be able to inform you that, in a series of articles on "The Conflict of Science and Religion" in the *Nichi-Nichi-Shimbun*, one of the Tokyo papers, Prof. Shonen Matsumura, a D.Sc., negated all supernatural religion because it contradicts the evolutionary theory. He showed evident sympathy with the militant anti-Christian theories of Nietzsche. Some Tokyo University professors have also protested against Christian superstition.

Two weeks ago, when I visited the branch reservoir of the Yokohama waterworks, I was shadowed all the time by a police officer in uniform. I could not account for his presence. I suppose I am a dangerous person because I do not believe in any religion and stand up for freedom of thought. Not that I care a brass button what they think of me.

Once more, I am glad to say that in spite of all collective and individual opposition Freethought is gradually coming to the top.

Greeting you this morning in the name of that freedom of thought, speech and action, towards which you and we are slowly, but surely, moving,

I am, Dear Mr. Underwood,

Yours very sincerely,

YOSHIRO OYAMA.

### "What Will You Put in Its Place?"

I WALK into a great cathedral filled with people,  
They are all kneeling and gazing in rapt attention  
At a faded canvas, depicting a fanciful, unnatural scene;  
Search where you will, throughout the universe,  
There is nothing in all nature like that picture.

And yet before that rapt assembly,  
In strange, archaic robes, there stands a priest  
Telling the wondering, believing multitude,  
That those poor daubs of lifeless paint,  
Smeared on the lifeless canvas,  
Are real and living things.  
And not one man, of all those kneeling there,  
Suspects the vulgar lie.

Shocked and astounded by the blind credulity  
Of those poor, worshipping, deluded dupes,  
Brothers of mine and whom I love with all a brother's  
love;  
Brothers of mine, who but for this most false and foolish  
faith,  
Would stand erect as men in this man's world of ours,  
I go up to the canvas, prepared to tear it down.

"Hold," cries the priest, "Before you dare destroy  
This sacred and beloved delusion, tell me Sir, I pray,  
What will you put in its place?"

And I make answer, "It is not my work  
To set up fetishes, or to create other delusions  
To take the place of yours.  
Delusions cannot help a man in his march from ignorance  
to knowledge.

It is my work but to destroy your canvas,  
And demonstrate to the deceived and kneeling fools,  
How dead and artificial is this daub  
That you say, and that they believe, is living truth.

"Only once let them know they have been tricked  
They will no longer kneel;  
They will arise, stand up erect like men,  
Intelligently face life's every fact;  
Fearlessly seek solution of her every problem.

"But you, my boy, they will keep you no longer,  
No longer pay you for your hokus pokus,  
You'll have to go to work!"

HOWELL STROUD ENGLAND.

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on post-card.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (160 Great Portland Street, W.1): 8, Mr. Saphin, Lantern Lecture. Every Thursday night Discussion Circle at 8 at the Laurie Arms Hotel, Crawford Place, W.1.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, Mr. R. B. Kerr, "The Need for Birth Control."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W.9, three minutes from Kennington Oval Tube Station and Kennington Gate): 7, Mr. E. Baker, "What Christians can Believe and the Result."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., "The Arts and Civilization."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY.—Mr. J. T. Lloyd at City Hall (Saloon); 11.30, "The Fear of Death"; in Tobago Street Hall, near Canning Street, Calton, 6.30, "The Love of Life." Questions and Discussion. Silver Collection.

LEEDS BRANCH N.S.S. (2 Central Road, Duncan Street, Shop Assistants' Rooms): 7, A Limelight Lecture by Mr. J. G. Robertshaw, "Secrets of Fleet Street."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Operetta—"The Little Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe." Performed by the Children of the Secular Sunday-school. (Silver collection.)

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S.—Discussion Class meets at Mr. Greenall's, 34 Goulden Street, Pendleton, at 6.30. Mr. Mapp will open on "Principles and Objects of the N.S.S."

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Hall, Frankfort Street): 3 and 7.30, Miss Sylvia Pankhurst lectures.

BOOKS WANTED.—Several copies, prompt cash. *Anacalypsis*, Higgins; *Ancient Egypt*, Massey. All Early Freethought Works. Foote's *Romances* and *Heroes*. Robt. Taylor's, etc.—Write, H. GREEN, Bookseller, 66 Knights Hill, S.E.

CONWAY MEMORIAL LECTURE, 1923.—This Lecture will be delivered at South Place Chapel, Finsbury (near Moorgate Street Station), on Wednesday, March 21, by Mr. JOHN DRINKWATER, his subject being "The Poet and Communication." Chair taken at 7 p.m. by Professor William Rothenstein. Admission free; reserved seats 1s.

## PIONEER LEAFLETS.

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

- No. 1. WHAT WILL YOU PUT IN ITS PLACE?
- No. 2. WHAT IS THE USE OF THE CLERGY?
- 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.

## Bargains in Books.

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.

## Works by Sir WALTER STRICKLAND, B.A.

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

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

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

**SEVEN POEMS.** Satirical Verse. Price 9d.

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

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

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

*From the Publishers, by post only,*

19 Richmond Gardens, London, W.12.

## Pamphlets.

By G. W. FOOTER.

**CHRISTIANITY AND PROGRESS.** Price 2d., postage 1d.

**THE PHILOSOPHY OF SECULARISM.** Price 2d., postage ½d.

**WHO WAS THE FATHER OF JESUS?** Price 1d., postage ½d.

**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. FOOTER and J. M. WHEELER. Price 6d., postage 1d.

**VOLTAIRE'S PHILOSOPHICAL DICTIONARY.** Vol. I., 128 pp., with Fine Cover Portrait, and Preface by CHAPMAN COHEN. Price 1s. 3d., postage 1½d.

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

**DEITY AND DESIGN.** Price 1d., postage ½d.

**WAR AND CIVILIZATION.** Price 1d., postage ½d.

**RELIGION AND THE CHILD.** Price 1d., postage ½d.

**GOD AND MAN: An Essay in Common Sense and Natural Morality.** Price 3d., postage ½d.

**CHRISTIANITY AND SLAVERY:** With a Chapter on Christianity and the Labour Movement. Price 1s., postage 1½d.

**WOMAN AND CHRISTIANITY:** The Subjection and Exploitation of a Sex. Price 1s., postage 1½d.

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

**CREED AND CHARACTER.** The Influence of Religion on Racial Life. Price 7d., postage 1½d.

**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.

**BLASPHEMY: A Plea for Religious Equality.** Price 3d., postage 1d.

**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.

**GOD-EATING: A Study in Christianity and Cannibalism** Price 6d., postage 1½d.

By A. D. McLAREN.

**THE CHRISTIAN'S SUNDAY: Its History and Its Fruits.** Price 2d., postage 1d.

By MIMNERMUS.

**FREETHOUGHT AND LITERATURE.** Price 1d., postage ½d.

## Pamphlets—continued.

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 1½d.

By M. M. MANGASARIAN.

**THE MARTYRDOM OF HYPATIA.** Price 1d., postage ½d.

By GEORGE WHITEHEAD.

**JESUS CHRIST: Man, God, or Myth?** With a Chapter on "Was Jesus a Socialist?" Paper Covers, 2s., postage 2d.

**THE CASE AGAINST THEISM.** Paper Covers, 1s. 3d., postage 2d.; Cloth, 2s. 6d., postage 2½d.

**THE SUPERMAN: Essays in Social Idealism.** Price 2d., postage 1d.

**MAN AND HIS GODS.** Price 2d., postage 1d.

By A. MILLAR.

**THE ROBES OF PAN.** Price 6d., postage 1½d.

**REVERIES IN RHYME.** Price 6d., postage 1½d.

By ARTHUR F. THORN.

**THE LIFE-WORSHIP OF RICHARD JEFFERIES.** With Fine Portrait of Jefferies. Price 1s., postage 1½d.

By ROBERT ARCH.

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

By H. G. FARMER.

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

By G. H. MURPHY.

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

By COLONEL INGERSOLL.

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

**WHAT IS RELIGION?** Price 1d., postage ½d.

**THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH.** Price 1d., postage ½d.

By D. HUME.

**ESSAY ON SUICIDE.** Price 1d., postage ½d.

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

## THEISM OR ATHEISM?

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

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

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

Bound in full Cloth, Gilt Lettered. Price 5s., postage 3d.

## MODERN MATERIALISM.

*A Candid Examination*

By WALTER MANN

*(Issued by the Secular Society, Limited)*

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

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

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

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

# STRATFORD TOWN HALL

## A FREETHOUGHT LECTURE

(Under the auspices of the National Secular Society)

ON

# Sunday March 25, 1923

SPEAKER:

# CHAPMAN COHEN

## "What the World has Gained from Unbelief"

Doors open at 6.30. Chair taken at 7. Admission Free. Collection. Questions and Discussion cordially invited.

*A New Book at Pre-War Price.*  
**ESSAYS IN FREETHINKING**

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

*Contents:* Psychology and Saffron Tea—Christianity and the Survival of the Fittest—A Bible Barbarity—Shakespeare and the Jew—A Case of Libel—Monism and Religion—Spiritual Vision—Our Early Ancestor—Professor Huxley and the Bible—Huxley's Nemesis—Praying for Rain—A Famous Witch Trial—Christmas Trees and Tree Gods—God's Children—The Appeal to God—An Old Story—Religion and Labour—Disease and Religion—Seeing the Past—Is Religion of Use?—On Compromise—Hymns for Infants—Religion and the Young.

Cloth Gilt, 2s. 6d., postage 2½d.

*An Ideal Gift-Book.*

**REALISTIC APHORISMS AND PURPLE PATCHES**

Collected by ARTHUR B. FALLOWS, M.A.

Those who enjoy brief pithy sayings, conveying in a few lines what so often takes pages to tell, will appreciate the issue of a book of this character. It gives the essence of what virile thinkers of many ages have to say on life, while avoiding sugary commonplaces and stale platitudes. There is material for an essay on every page, and a thought-provoker in every paragraph. Those who are on the look-out for a suitable gift book that is a little out of the ordinary will find here what they are seeking.

320 pp., Cloth Gilt, 5s., by post 5s. 5d.; Paper Covers, 3s. 6d., by post 3s. 10½d.

**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 Egyptian Origin of Christianity.*

**THE HISTORICAL JESUS AND MYTHICAL CHRIST.**

By GERALD MASSEY.

A Demonstration of the Egyptian Origin of the Christian Myth. Should be in the hands of every Freethinker. With Introduction by Chapman Cohen.

Price 6d., postage 1½d.

NOW READY.

The "FREETHINKER" for 1922

Strongly bound in Cloth, Gilt Lettered, with Title-page. Price 17s. 6d.; postage 1s.

Only a very limited number of copies are to be had, and orders should be placed at once.

*Spiritualism and a Future Life.*

**THE OTHER SIDE OF DEATH.**

*A Critical Examination of the Belief in a Future Life, with a Study of Spiritualism, from the Standpoint of the New Psychology.*

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

This is an attempt to re-interpret the fact of death with its associated feelings in terms of a scientific sociology and psychology. It studies Spiritualism from the point of view of the latest psychology, and offers a scientific and naturalistic explanation of its fundamental phenomena.

Paper Covers, 2s., postage 2d.; Cloth Bound 3s. 6d., postage 3d.

*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.

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