

The

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. 25

SUNDAY, JUNE 24, 1923

PRICE THREEPENCE

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page
<i>Have We Any Doubts?—The Editor</i> - - - -	385
<i>The Worship of the Trinity.—J. T. Lloyd</i> - - - -	386
<i>Feeding the Fires of Hell.—Mimnermus</i> - - - -	387
<i>Luther in the Light of To-day.—W. Mann</i> - - - -	388
<i>Five Thousand Years Ago and More.—E. Anderson</i> - - - -	389
<i>Death of F. W. Walsh.—C. C.</i> - - - -	393
<i>Woman Before and During Christianity.—A. Mitchell</i> - - - -	394
<i>Heresy and the League of Nations.—A. W. Coleman</i> - - - -	396
<i>South African Jottings.—Searchlight</i> - - - -	397
<i>Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letter to the Editor, etc.</i>	

Views and Opinions.

Have We Any Doubts?

I received the other day a lengthy letter from a gentleman who was concerned over what he called my "doubts concerning religion." I appreciate his anxiety, although it is quite uncalled for and unnecessary. I do not happen to be one of those peculiar individuals who are troubled over their inability to believe in Christian doctrines, and who are fond of hinting to the religious that they would really like to believe as others do but, alas! they cannot. I never felt that way, and cannot understand why anyone else should. I never yet envied a man the use of crutches, or an ear-trumpet, or a wooden-leg, and I cannot for the life of me see why I should envy anyone the possession of a religion. Doubtless if ninety per cent of the people used crutches we should find them wondering how on earth the remaining ten per cent managed to maintain their balance without them, and we should probably find societies started to convince these misguided people that to depend upon the "light of Nature" to maintain a balance was to run a grave risk and imperil the moral welfare of the rest of the community. It is all a question of fashion. It is part of the social outfit of the majority of people to have a religion, just as it is to wear a certain kind of dress, and the religious "knot" looks upon the Freethinker with much the same kind of feeling that the dandy does upon the man who walks unconcernedly about in baggy trousers. And fashion, whether in clothes or religion, gives no reasons for its decisions, nor do the devotees of either ask for any.

Where We Stand.

Now I can assure my correspondent that I am not in the least needing his sympathy. I am conceited enough to think that he rather needs mine; but as it always smacks of impertinence to thrust sympathy where it is neither asked for nor wanted, I do not go round proffering my sympathy to religious folk. I am simply hopeful that one day they will see the error of their ways—the more intelligent of them, that is, for there are some who seem doomed by nature to remain religious to the end of the chapter. My particular reason for writing now is to assure all whom it may concern that they are quite in error if they assume that I have any doubts concerning the Christian religion

or about religion in general. On the contrary I feel as certain about that as I do about anything that does not approximate to the region of the axiomatis. I am no more in doubt about Christianity than I am about Old Mother Hubbard or Jack the Giant Killer. Or, to put it in another way, whatever doubts I may have are of the same nature in both cases. I have some doubts as to the precise origin of these tales, and also as to the various migrations they have undergone, but if anyone were to ask me whether I had any doubts as to whether they were historically true I should either think the questioner was a born idiot, or that he believed I was. Doubt means uncertainty, and uncertainty can only exist where one admits the probability of a thing being true. So I am not a doubter with regard to the veracity of these very old folk-tales. Nor is anyone else—if we except children. We know them for what they are, and accept them for what they are. And for what they are they are both instructive and interesting.

* * *

What We Are Sure Of.

The parallel is exact between these tales and the ones that make up the Christian religion. There is no doubt about the biblical stories of creation, of the origin of language, of the flood, or of the many similar stories in the Old Testament. I am not in doubt about the story concerning the miraculous conception of Jesus Christ, or of his alleged miracles, of his resurrection from the dead, or his ascension into heaven. I do not doubt the truth of these tales, I know they are not true. And if they were told in any place other than the Christian Scriptures Christians would agree with me that they are not true. They would have no doubts about them either. Christian beliefs are not such as should give rise to doubts in any well-informed and well-balanced mind. Such must know that they are not true, because they cannot be true. They do not square with what we know to be true of natural workings, and in this matter Nature does not lie. A thing that is impossible to-day was impossible two thousand years ago. Our whole knowledge of Nature verifies this. The whole of modern science rests upon it. Every scientific man in the world works upon the assumption that natural forces were in the past exactly what they are in the present, just as his forecasts as to what will happen are based upon the future resembling the present. The geologist who reads us the story of the earth's transformations, the astronomer who tells us the position of a star five thousand years ago, or foretells the position of a planet in the future, is relying absolutely upon the uniformity of Nature past, present, and in the future. And if that is admitted, there should be no doubt where the Christian legends are concerned. We are certain about them—certain that they are mere legends and of not the slightest possible value as reliable accounts of what has happened.

* * *

Science and Credibility.

What of the more fundamental beliefs—God, the Soul, Heaven and Hell? So long as we bear clearly,

in mind what it is we are talking about, and so long as we insist upon definite meanings being attached to the words we use, there is no more room for doubt here than there is with regard to secondary religious beliefs. For all reasonable purposes the veracity of these beliefs are settled by what we know of their origin. When we learn from a study of primitive peoples how the idea of supernatural beings came into existence, and how the dream world of the savage gave birth to the belief in a "double," which in turn was refined into the religious conception of a soul, to talk of one as merely being doubtful as to these beliefs is to abuse language. It is like being merely doubtful whether fairies, or witches, or wizards exist. People may have been doubtful as to whether women could ride through the air on broomsticks so long as their intelligence moved on a lower level of culture. Once they had risen above that it became an insult to suggest that they were merely in doubt as to whether witches existed or not. And when we know what we do know as to the manner in which the belief in gods, ghosts, devils, heavens and hells originated, it is ridiculous to say that we are in doubt about the truth of these beliefs. We know that they are not true, and that for us is an end of the matter. Credibility, in short, all along follows possibility, and possibility is entirely a question of knowledge. To a child almost anything is possible. Santa Claus may come down a chimney, pigs may fly, birds may really be born inside a conjurer's pocket handkerchief. To the adult intelligence such things are absurd because knowledge has made them impossible. The possible becomes limited just as our knowledge concerning any given aspect of Nature becomes complete.

* * *

The Study of a Delusion.

We pay religionists a "violent compliment," to use an expression of John Wesley's, when we pretend to be in a state of doubt concerning their beliefs. Such an attitude not only misrepresents the state of mind of the educated Freethinker, but it encourages the religionist to believe that, after all, he may be in the right—that the whole question resolves itself into a mere difference of opinion. And that is emphatically not the case. It is not a case in which conflicting evidence makes it difficult to reach a decision and so compels a state of uncertainty. It is wholly a question of realizing the nature of the facts before us and appreciating their bearing on current religious beliefs. And unless all we have learned during the past sixty years or so concerning the workings of the intelligence of primitive man, and unless all we are told concerning the history of religious beliefs are quite wrong, there is not here a case that calls for a judicial examination, with a careful balancing of evidence for and against, but the simple study of the origin and development of a delusion as universal as that of witchcraft—of which it is indeed an integral part. It should be the business of the Freethinker to make the religionist realize this, and for that reason it is a lesson that cannot be read him too frequently. The proper title for any history of religion would be "The Story of a Great Delusion."

* * *

The Uses of Religion.

Once we can get the religionist out of the ridiculous belief illustrated by my correspondent, that the Freethinker is one who is in a state of doubt or perplexity concerning religion, and will welcome the sympathy of his religious neighbour, we shall have cleared the way for a useful and an instructive study of religious beliefs. For there are few things that will so well illustrate the nature of early social stages as will the study of religion. Religion is then so large and

so overpowering a social fact that it helps to determine the form of many social institutions, some of which we still have with us. The position of women in early societies with the prejudices that still stand in the way of complete legal and social equality, the existence of a monarchy with the semi-religious feelings that still gather round a king, these with a number of other things can only be thoroughly understood and explained when we take into consideration the play of primitive religious beliefs and their perpetuation in a more civilized environment. In fact we may say that the great distinction between the Freethinker and the Christian in the handling of religion is that while the latter is interested in it for the sake of himself, because he believes he may get personal salvation hereafter from it, the Freethinker is interested in it because of the light it may throw on the whole question of social development. The one seeks to believe in religion, the other strives to understand it. And as is so often the case, it is the blind devotion of ignorance that prevents the service which might be given by enlightenment.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Worship of the Trinity.

SUCH is the title of a sermon recently preached in the Grosvenor Chapel by the Rev. W. H. Frere, D.D., and published in the *Church Times* of June 1. Dr. Frere is of the Community of the Resurrection, and the discourse was delivered on Trinity Sunday, and the preacher admits that "now we are come to the difficulty of worship." In other words "we are confronted with God as he is in the supreme power of his glory, and our task is to worship." Trinity Sunday we are assured "is the Sunday when we acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity and in the power of the Divine Majesty worship the Trinity." The text is a commandment to "give unto the Lord the honour due unto his Name," to "worship the Lord with holy worship." To worship in this fashion, we are further informed, is "to give to God what belongs to him," and to say to him "Worthy art Thou." The preacher admits frankly that to do this is "a difficult task." We go further and declare that it is an absolutely impossible task. The preacher himself says:—

But here in worship we get to a point where all that is left behind. Face to face with the eternal mystery of God as he is, our reason falls away from us, and all our thinking seems to tend rather to puzzlement than to understanding. And what are we left with? Without all that power of attention and imagination and reflection that has carried us through the rest of the year, what is there left to enable us to dwell on God, to worship God? What is there to help us to do so difficult and so baffling a task as that of worship?

Clearly Dr. Frere does not wish to evade the difficulties by which he is surrounded, but let us see how he meets them. He considers the suggestion that the English, being behind many other nations in this kind of worship, should not attempt to rise to such heights of spiritual excellence but let the French and the Spaniards become distinguished or retain their distinction in the line. But Dr. Frere maintains that as it was an Englishman, Alcuin, who gave us the form of devotion to the Blessed Trinity in our worship, it ought to be easy for us to regain our former proficiency in this spiritual art. It seems to us that in the matter of worship it makes no difference whatever, if worship is at all reasonable or possible, whether there be recognized one, three, or a hundred deities. Greece got on very comfortably with a limited number of Gods, while Egypt and Babylonia had many more. We read of a tribe in Japan whose deities numbered

some eight millions. The number is of no real significance, the only thing that really matters being the extent of the people's belief in them. In France, Germany, Spain, and Italy, the popular belief in God is steadily dying out. With this fact in mind we conclude that Dr. Frere's self-imposed task is beyond his possibility of accomplishing. He holds that in every public service worship is perpetually brought before us. He says:—

Indeed, every time we say, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end," we have on our lips a perfect formula of worship. It is just about God, and nothing else at all.

That may be perfectly true; but to how many of those who repeat those words at public services do they really mean anything at all? To an even smaller number, and the number who say them at all are a diminishing quantity. Men who live in communities do not as a rule know much about the masses, with their economical, political, and social problems, to the solution of which Christianity makes scarcely any communication at all. We understand that there is a number of Communities in this country founded and supported chiefly by the Catholic party in the Anglican Church. Certain Priests retire from the world while acknowledging that religion generally and worship in particular are seriously losing ground everywhere in the land, and that the very life of religion is in great peril. They retire from the world where their services, if such they can render, are mostly needed; but in reality they do so to deepen their own spiritual life, to practise the presence of God, and to earn special happiness in heaven. In reality their conduct is the quintessence of selfishness. Worship is an art of life which must be formally learnt. It never comes naturally to anybody. They are all radically mistaken who describe man as by nature a wholly religious being. The truth is that every man's religion is a thing infused into him from outside, not a thing deduced out of him by artificial means, but a thing poured into him from without, which proves such a foreign substance that in many instances human nature ejects it as a poison. The reason why the clergy so whole-heartedly advocate religious instruction in all government schools is that they know so well how a boy's or a girl's nature has within it a feeling of natural aversion to religious ideas and practices, and that in order to prevent religion from being ousted altogether from young minds all available means must be put in full operation. Every child is born an Atheist, and never becomes a Theist except by compulsion. It is at the schools, sacred and secular, that a certain number of our young people learn religion. But this is expected to be the result:—

When we come to our public worship, we do not come to learn but to show how much we have learnt. Our difficulty, then, is that we have got to learn worship and qualify ourselves for it apart from public worship; and we do not do so.

From all points of view we learn that man is not by nature a religious being, but must be made so by special instruction without which such a result might never be achieved.

J. T. LLOYD.

SECULARISM.

Orthodox believers content themselves with dwelling on the myths of the past and the imaginations of the future, leaving the ever-present comparatively unheeded. We, as Secularists, prefer the more useful course of availing ourselves of the value of *what is* allied with the serviceableness of *what was*, and thus secure a better *what may be*.—*Freethinker*, August 5, 1900.

Feeding the Fires of Hell.

If all religions but one are certainly wrong, what is the chance of one being certainly right. —G. W. Foote.

CHRISTIANS are not all selfish, but they have a very extraordinary passion for monopoly with regard to their religion. To associate with them is like dining with a man who has all the pudding and two spoons. In the late war they had a rare chance. They transformed the battlefields into mission-fields. Bible societies distributed sufficient copies of the Scriptures to build a garden-city. The British and Foreign Bible Society alone boasted of a distribution of fifty million copies. Tracts by the hundred tons were circulated. Hosts of athletic clergymen acted as army chaplains, and drew officer's pay; whilst their clerical colleagues at home, exempted from military service, held the girls' hands while the real men were on active service. Thousands of pious laymen and women handed out tea and tracts at a safe distance from the fighting lines. With the object of luring the troops to religion the clerical pill was well covered with sugar. Cinemas, concert parties, and even charming chorus ladies and red-nosed comedians were used as lures for the religion of the Man of Sorrows.

There was, however, one large fly in the ointment. Despite all these blandishments the troops did not display too great an anxiety for their eternal welfare. They did what was convenient. The fighting men endured the compulsory church parades; they took the bibles and used the pages for cigarette papers. They listened to the concerts and dozed through the addresses of fervent evangelists. Even the Algerian troops saw the joke. A French officer was surprised to find a big black soldier with his breast covered with religious emblems. He asked him if he had become a Christian. The man grinned, and showing his white teeth, explained: "More religion, more coffee." The clerical offensive had failed to penetrate the cheerful stoicism of the troops.

Finding that their propaganda produced such barren results, Christians sought to mend matters a little by boycotting all literature antagonistic to their Faith. In addition, they dropped blandishment in their tracts, and tried the old method of threats. Tons of tracts threatened the fighting men with hell and damnation if they neglected the Gospel message. Away from the fighting lines the clergy exploited the fear of death, and used all their strength in attempting to put back the clock of civilization. Wives, fearful for their husbands' lives, mothers anxious for their sons, even little children, dimly understanding the horrors of a world upheaval, had hell flamed before their eyes by thousands of priests anxious to further their Faith and feather their own nests. "Oh! the sorry trade!"

War-time, and even post-war, sermons and tracts voiced in no uncertain way very different views to those nebulous and invertebrate views put forward by shifty defenders of the Faith in their contests with Freethinkers. In controversy it is the fashion for the champions of orthodoxy to explain with unctuous rectitude that, in attacking the barbaric dogma of hell-fire, the Intellectuals are but flogging a dead horse. That horse, however, has a distressing habit of resurrecting, and that there is plenty of kick left in that ancient animal is demonstrated by the literature issued for the instruction of the unsuspecting young people being prepared for Confirmation, and in Sunday-schools.

Freethinkers who fondly imagine that one of the oldest and most barbarous religious dogmas is losing its hold on the national mind because the clergy appear to be giving the old savage ideas faint support in their public utterances will do well to remember that the

objectionable dogmas are still taught to children *sub rosa*. Roman Catholics everywhere have never damped a solitary spark of their fiery damnation. The Church of England, particularly the High Churchmen, who form seventy per cent of that body, bank on brimstone; and the Salvation Army and the many minor religious bodies, which cater for the least cultured and least educated members of the community, include a literal hell among the great truths of the national religion. It is worthy the followers of a contemptible creed, who, outraging the spirit of the twentieth century, pray for rain and fine weather, and daily supplicate Omnipotence for individual members of the Royal Family, the while they prate of the blessings of poverty for British citizens. MIMNERMUS.

Luther in the Light of To-day.

IX.

(Continued from page 373.)

Nor was charity to each other any more a characteristic of the early reformers than toleration of their opponents; the slightest divergence of view was sufficient to raise infinite hatred and abuse. Luther terms Butzer (Bucer) a "chatter-mouth," and his writings "potwash," while Zwingli, Oecolampadius, and Schwenckfeld are "in and in, through and through, out and out, devil-possessed, blasphemous hearts, and impudent liars.".....Carlstadt, because he differs as to the Sacrament, is termed by his former Wittenberg colleagues, a "murderer, one who wishes only bloodshed and riot."—Prof. Karl Pearson, "The Ethic of Freethought," pp. 212-216.

NOR did the other Protestant teachers who dared to differ from Luther fare any better than Schwenckfeld. "On receiving the announcement that Johannes Campanus, the anti-trinitarian, had suffered death as an heretic at Liège, Luther wrote: 'I learnt this with joy.'"¹

When his friend and colleague Carlstadt differed from Luther over the Sacrament, it soon became clear that there was no longer room for him at Wittenberg near the leader of the Reformation. Carlstadt migrated to Orlemünde; later, on August 22, 1523, they met in the taproom of the Black Bear Inn at Jena and overwhelmed each other with reproaches. Says Grisar:—

The struggle continued after they had gone their ways, both seeking to secure the favour of the Court. Luther, through the agency of Prince Johann Frederick, proposed that Carlstadt should be hounded from his place of refuge and from the whole upper valley of the Saale. Ultimately the disturber of the peace was banished from the electorate. Luther in his work *Widder die Hymelischen Propheten* (Against the Heavenly Prophets), approved of his expulsion, roughly declaring that, so far as lay in him, Carlstadt would never again set foot in the country. The homeless man now betook himself to Strasburg, whither he was pursued by a furious letter of Luther's directed against him and his teaching.²

From Strasburg Carlstadt wandered to Rothenburg-on-the-Tauber, here, being reduced with his wife and child to starvation and in danger of arrest by the authorities, he made his submission to Luther, who bound him over not to defend his opinion on the Sacrament in public again, but "to hold his tongue and support himself by his work." After this he was allowed to return, and settled at Kamberg, where, for three years, he supported himself by tilling the soil and keeping a small grocer's shop. When, upon breaking his promise to Luther to keep silence, Luther informed Carlstadt that doctrines which differed from his own "were not to be defended publicly, else they

would come under the cognisance of the authorities," Carlstadt took the hint and made his escape into Switzerland, where he was free from Luther's persecution. Grisar observes of Luther:—

To preach, a man must be called by God, so he [Luther] lays it down. Had your spirit "been the true one, it would have manifested itself by word and sign; but in reality it is a murderous, secret devil." Luther demands miracles with as much confidence as though he himself could point to them in plenty. Those preachers who ventured to differ from him he invites, at the very least, to point to their ecclesiastical vocation. But what sort of a vocation was this to be, they asked. As Luther recognized no universal Church visible, a call emanating from a congregation of believers had to suffice; Carlstadt, for instance, could appeal to his having been chosen by Orlemünde as its pastor. This Luther would not allow: You must also have the consent of the Elector and of the University of Wittenberg. Carlstadt and those who felt with him were well aware that in the final instance this simply meant Luther's own consent, for at the University he was all-powerful, whilst the sovereign likewise was wont to be guided by him. Why, Carlstadt might also have asked, should not the degree of Doctor of Divinity suffice in my case, seeing that you yourself have solemnly pleaded your degree as a sufficient justification for assailing the common tradition of Christendom? Luther's final answer to such an appeal was as follows: "My Devil, I know you well."³

As to the Romish Church, Luther's fury knew no bounds. A gloomy uncanny passion often glows in his words. His writing, *Against the Roman Papacy Founded by the Devil*, is probably the most terrible piece of invective ever written by a sane man. It was published in March, 1545. The very first words are a foretaste of what is to come. It commences: "The most hellish Father, St. Paulus Tertius" (Pope Paul III). As he proceeds his fury increases until it reaches this pitch:—

The Pope himself, the Cardinals and the whole scoundrelly train of his idolatrous Popish Holiness should be seized, and, as blasphemers, have their tongues torn from their throats and nailed in a row on the gallows-tree, in like manner as they affix their seals in a row to their Bulls; though even this would be but slight punishment for all their blasphemy and idolatry. After this let them hold as many Councils as they please on the gallows, or in hell with all the demons.....The Pope is the head of the accursed Churches of all the worst knaves upon earth, a Vicar of the Devil, a foe of God, an adversary of Christ and a destroyer of His Churches, a teacher of all lies, blasphemy and idolatry, an arch-church-thief and a robber of the Church's keys, a murderer of kings and an inciter to all kinds of bloodshed, a whoremonger above all whoremongers, and the author of every kind of immorality, even of that which may not be mentioned, an antichrist, a man of sin, a child of destruction, a real werewolf. Whoever refuses to believe this, let him fare away with his God, the Pope.

"The whole Roman mob," he continues, "is nothing but a stable full of great, rude, loutish, shameless donkeys, who know nothing of Holy Scripture, or of God, or of Christ." The Pope and Cardinals should have "the skins of their bodies drawn off over their heads; the hides might then be flung into the healing bath [the sea] at Ostia, or into the fire." And again he burst out: "Lo and behold my blood boils, and how I long to see the Papacy punished!"⁴

That Luther had the interests and well-being of the toiling masses at heart is as false as the claim that he was the champion of freedom and toleration in religion. Luther was, as Prof. Karl Pearson puts it,

¹ Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. VI, p. 250.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 386.

³ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 391.

⁴ Grisar, *Luther*, pp. 384-109.

"a prophet of the *bourgeoise*." ⁵ For the common people he displayed the utmost contempt and bitterness. He says: "A donkey must taste the stick and the mob must be ruled by force; of this God was well aware, hence in the hands of the authorities He placed, not a fox's brush, but a sword." ⁶ And when the peasants rose in despair against the intolerable wrongs and oppressions under which they existed, they found Luther their most vehement and implacable enemy.

It is said that the peasants were guilty of great enormities during the uprising. They were, so were the French Revolutionists, and, in our own time the Bolshevists. But the people who make these charges ignore the fact that when people are treated as slaves, ground down, oppressed, deprived of education and culture, and reduced to the level of wild beasts, it is idle to complain that they acted like beasts when they had the chance of avenging the intolerable wrongs they had endured. The evil the peasants did was the direct result of their previous treatment by their lords and masters. "The gentlemen paid no taxes. All the burden was on the farmer, or peasant," says the Rev. Baring-Gould. The feudal system under which they lived was, says the same writer, "a system of cruel oppression. The *bauers* (peasants) were mulcted of their time, their produce, and their money, and were treated little better than slaves. Their wrongs were very real and very grievous." ⁷ Risings were imminent in several parts of the country as early as 1513 and 1514, and then Luther appeared. Luther, the son of a peasant, boldly facing priests and princes, preaching a new gospel, the pure evangel. What wonder that the poor peasants looked upon Luther as a God sent for their liberation. The first outbreak commenced through the Countess of Lupfen ordering the peasants on her estates to spend the Sundays in summer in gathering strawberries for her table, and snail-shells for making ornamental pin-cushions. They refused, and in a few days the peasants were in arms; they came out in swarms, with pitchforks, scythes, and flails, to abolish the feudal system and Catholicism. Although they met with many initial successes, yet they could not be expected to prevail, with such primitive weapons, against the trained troops the princes sent against them. The peasants were slaughtered by the thousand, massacred as they stood nigh helpless with pitchfork and hoe—racked, flayed, burnt, their leaders shown round in iron cages, their flesh torn with red-hot pincers. The cages were then hung to the tower of a church, where they still remained until a few years ago. And all the while Luther was urging the princes on to the slaughter. He says:—

Let all who are able hew them down, slaughter and stab them, openly or in secret, and remember that there is nothing more poisonous, noxious, and utterly devilish than a rebel. You must kill him as you would a mad dog; if you do not fall upon him, he will fall upon you and the whole land." ⁸

In a further writing "He attacks those who 'advocate mercy so beautifully, now that the peasants have been defeated.' 'It is easy to detect you, you ugly black devil.'"⁹

W. MANN.

(To be Concluded.)

Wisdom gives many prizes to her votaries, but they will never tempt fools to worship her. If they could see their value there would be an end to their folly.—*Peter Simple*.

⁵ Pearson, *Ethic of Freethought*, p. 249.

⁶ Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. VI, p. 71.

⁷ Rev. Baring-Gould, *Germany*, pp. 205-206.

⁸ Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. II, pp. 201-202.

⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 208.

Five Thousand Years Ago and More.

II.

(Concluded from page 379.)

It will be seen that the mythology of later Egypt was very complicated. A system to account for all the diverse aspects of Nature was drawn up by the priests in the course of ages. Thus Nu represents the primeval watery waste from which all gods and living things were evolved. Nut was the female principle of Nu, and was sometimes depicted with the head of a cat. Thoth was the divine intelligence which gave the mandates to carry out the creation. Ptah was the "opener"; he executed the mandates of Thoth with the help of Khnemu the "moulder." Tum was the "closer" representing the evening or night sun who created man and stretched out the heavens. Shu typified the light and lifted up the sky from the earth. Seb was originally the god of the earth; he was the son of Shu, husband of Nut and father of Osiris, Isis, Set, and Nephthys. He is depicted in human form with a crown on his head and a sceptre in his right hand. In many places he was supposed to have laid the egg from which the world sprang.

The wife of Thoth was Maat; she assisted Ptah and Khnemu in carrying out rightly the work of creation ordered by Thoth. There were also numerous other gods and goddesses, or rather numerous different names, representing the same or similar principles. The priests of Annu, at a very early period, grouped together nine greatest gods or "company of gods," or as it is written in the pyramid texts "the great company of gods"; there was also a second group of nine or "lesser company of gods"; and a third group of gods is also shown. When all groups are addressed they are depicted by twenty-seven signs like a hatchet or small flag on a stick, in a row.

There are at least two versions of the creation. In one Tum or Atemu or Tnmu (all forms are found) first created the god Shu and the goddess Tefnut. In the other the divine spirit portrayed to himself the form and shape of the world and his word woke the world to life. The first act was the formation of an egg out of the primeval water, from which broke Ra, the immediate cause of all life upon the earth.

The gods of the Egyptians dwelt in a heaven, with various ka and khu, and there they received the dead who had been blessed and made holy by the priest to dwell with them. This heaven was situated in the sky which was conceived as a solid ceiling, square, the same size as the earth, supported upon four pillars, one at each corner. At a very early time the pillars were identified as four gods or khus, children of Horus. In the later periods the Egyptians peopled the other world with fiends and devils and typified them with the tortoise, the crocodile, the hippopotamus, the ass, etc. This became Tuat, wherein the night-sun existed.

The Papyrus of Ani.—The ritual of the burial of Ani is comparatively late in the history of Egypt, say about 3,500 years ago. It starts with a hymn to Ra designed to purify the soul of the deceased and make it fit to enter heaven. This occupies four plates, and on the fifth commences the funeral service. Chapter I on Plate V represents the funeral procession with the mummy in a chest on a boat with runners, drawn by oxen. Ani's wife is kneeling, weeping, by the side of the mummy and the boat is preceded by priests and followed by mourners. Many emblems are shown in this plate as also in Plate VI, where a representation shows the procession up to the tomb or place of burial.

The written words are chanted by the priest, and are said by the priests as deputies of the deceased. They

are as though spoken by the mummy and are a declaration of his claim to enter the hall of Osiris. This is how it starts :—

"Hail to thee, O Bull of Amenta,¹ Thoth² the king of eternity is with me." It goes on to state that the Osiris Ani is now a god equal to all others and ends with a prayer by the priest to "ye who make perfected souls to enter the hall of Osiris" to do that to Ani. Those who pass the souls onward are spirits or intelligencies. In Plates XI and XII their names are given. They are the doorkeeper, the watcher and the herald. The first has the head of a hare, the second the head of a serpent, the third the head of a crocodile. The first holds an ear of corn, and each of the others a knife. It will be seen that this is Nature worship. The gods are the sun, the planets, the moon and stars, and these spirits are the seasons of the earth. The hare may well represent summer, the serpent the change to autumn, and the crocodile winter, when all the product of the year is consumed or destroyed. The sign khu is translated "intelligence," and this is one of the parts of a human which is materialized after death. The persons referred to, then, are khus or spirits of the earth.

The soul of the departed makes its way to where Ra is in heaven, and Ra is entreated to give it a place in the "bark of millions of years," or, as we should say, eternity, wherein he sails over the sky. In this bark or boat the god sat with Khepera and Tmu, his own forms in the morning and evening respectively.

Here are a few extracts from the *Book of Ani* :—

(Words to be spoken when Osiris cometh to the first Arit in Amenta) Ani, triumphant, when he cometh to the first Arit : "I am the mighty one who createth his own light. I have come to thee, O Osiris, and, purified from that which defileth thee, I adore thee. Lead on; name not the name of Re-stau unto me. Homage to thee, O Osiris, in thy might and in thy strength in Re-stau. Rise up and conquer, O Osiris in Abtu. Thou goest round about heaven, thou sailest in the presence of Ra, thou seest all the beings who have knowledge. Hail Ra who circlest in the sky. Verily I say unto thee, O Osiris, I am a god-like ruler. Let me not be driven hence, nor from the wall of burning coals."

The second Arit. (This doorway is guarded like the others by three gods or spirits : a doorkeeper, a watcher, and a herald). Saith Osiris Ani when he cometh unto this Arit : "He sitteth to do his heart's desire, and he weigheth his words as the second of Thoth. The strength of Thoth humbleth the hidden Maata gods who feed upon Maat throughout the years. I make offerings at the moment when he passeth on his way. Grant thou that I may pass through, and that I may gain sight of Ra together with those who make offerings."

The third Arit. Saith Osiris Ani (when he cometh to this Arit) : "I am hidden in the great deep, I am the judge of the Rehui (Horus and Set), I have come and I have done away with the offences of Osiris. I am building up the standing places which cometh forth from his crown. I have done his business in Abtu, I have opened the way in Re-stau, I have eased the pain which was in Osiris, I have made straight his standing place, I have made his path. He shineth in Re-stau."

The fourth Arit. Saith Osiris, the scribe Ani, triumphant (when he cometh to this Arit) : "I am the mighty bull, the son of the ancestress of Osiris. O grant ye that his father, the lord of his god-like companions, may bear witness for him. Here the guilty are weighed in judgment. I have brought unto his nostrils eternal life. I am the son of Osiris, I have made the way, I have passed thereover into Neter-khert."

¹ Amenta : originally the setting sun, then the tomb, lastly hades or the underworld.

² Thoth : the scribe of the gods, the god of right and truth, divine intelligence.

So the ritual proceeds for seven doorways. Then comes the pylons or porches or gateways. In the papyrus of Ani ten pylons are mentioned, but another gives as many as twenty-one. In the appeals to the keepers which guard the pylons they are all addressed or referred to as female goddesses. The tone of the appeals is quite different to that used at the arits. Here it is not triumph but weeping and praise of "the lady of heaven, the mistress of the world," etc. This is where the dead are judged.

In Plate XII the priest brings the dead Ani and his wife into the presence of the gods. He wears a leopard's skin, and has at the side of his head the lock of Horus the child. He saith, "I have come unto you, O mighty and god-like rulers who are in heaven and in earth; and I have brought unto you Osiris Ani. He hath not sinned against any of the gods. Grant that he may be with you for all time." Then there are more protestations and appeals for sustenance, etc., and in the following plate are depicted the gods Tmu, Shu, Tefnut, Osiris, and Thoth. The text is a prayer : "Hail Thoth, who madest Osiris victorious over his enemies in the presence of the great divine beings who are in Tattu, on the night of making the Tat to stand up in Tattu." Following this are a number of vignettes showing many of the gods, and in the text similar prayers are spoken by the priest. The prayers are all addressed to Thoth.

Lastly the papyrus shows the dead passing through various doorways, and adoring various gods, and making confession so that he may live fully equipped in the underworld. His soul is joined with his body, he has become a god and claims to be the Eye of Horus, and the ritual ends with hymns of praise and offerings.

Such is the *Book of the Dead* in summary. Little further comment is needed. It will be seen by the careful reader that the mythology of later times was a gradual growth from a very primitive belief in spirits. At first there were local gods to represent the more striking natural objects, such as the sun, and, as the nation became larger by bringing wider tracts of country under one ruler, the names of the gods of various districts were absorbed into one mythology, and a great number of spirits were worshipped. There is also an indication that some of the beliefs of India were also adopted by the Egyptian priests. Thus in the nineteenth Khanda of the Upanishad we find : "In the beginning this (the sun) was non-existent, it grew, it turned into an egg." From the egg all things evolved. It has been stated that there is no religion without a shrine, and from this fact it has been concluded that belief in ghosts or spirits of the dead was the foundation of all religion. This may be true of the organized systems known as priestcraft, but I would rather put it that awe of Nature was the first feeling which gave rise to worship, an attempt to placate unknown powers, and that the priest was one who professed to control Nature, one who took charge of the dead and over-awed the tribe by uncanny acts. Then in after times slowly grew up forms of incantation to the dead chiefs, and so gradually was built up a ritual which developed by amalgamation with other tribes, and so a great class of priest appeared, culminating in the Egyptian system.

The Old Testament contains many things which have either been taken from the Egyptian ritual or has a common origin with it, and this is not surprising when we read that "Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians" (Acts vii, 22). The New Testament also contains teachings apparently copied from Egyptian writings. These probably were introduced by the Copts, the first Egyptian Christians.

Grant Allen has some very interesting details of the beliefs of the Egyptians in his *Evolution of the Idea*

of God which I should like to quote if space permitted. Chapters IX and X are well worth reading by those who desire further information on the subject.³

The English newspapers during the last few months have given great prominence to a tomb which has been opened at Luxor, believed to be that of Tut-ankh-amen, a pharaoh who lived about 1300 B.C., and Professor Alan Gardiner has left London for Cairo to translate the manuscripts unearthed. It will be a valuable addition to our knowledge of the Egyptians to have this information, and especially we shall know perhaps how the later beliefs developed from those held in the time of Ani.

E. ANDERSON.

Correspondence.

BLASPHEMY LAWS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Upon reading, as the Courts say, the report of the House of Lords discussion on the Blasphemy Bill, I am reminded of the attitude taken up by religious defenders a hundred years ago on the question of education of the people. The present generation can look back with pitying scorn on the advocacy of those days, and now a hundred years later we have amongst us intelligent and educated people who in their hearts are as retrogressive in their attitude towards the common people.

These people, I mean those noble lords, must either fancy themselves to be very superior persons or they are hypocrites. Perhaps both. They are possessed of sufficient intelligence to know that they are playing a game in which they themselves do not believe for their own class or group. They still imagine in their superior attitude that they must legislate for people with less intelligence than themselves, and thus they are intellectually dishonest.

The line of argument taken up is a reminder of the solicitous care of the brewers for the protection of the working man in their great anxiety to secure for him a sufficiency of ale and beer. The distress of the brewers whenever there has been any danger of any shortage from either one cause or another, has always been one of the chief characteristics of the brewing trade.

These noble lords are just as anxious to keep the people doped in superstition as the brewers are to soak them with drink. With all their superior wisdom they do not realize that retribution will follow their action, if not in their day, after they are gone. They have not yet learnt that the day will come when they and their class will be unceremoniously overthrown, and that they will be looked upon as renegades of society.

All their talk of protection is so much cover in what they believe is their own interest. Fancy a law judge professing to believe in the Christian superstition!

It is often said in business circles that you should always be aware of a professing Christian. The same advice is necessary in the case of professing Christians whose duty it is to administer the law. More so, because their duty is to act impartially, and no man can so act where he is prejudiced by superstition. So long as law lords persist in professing to believe what they know to be false will they continue to breed suspicion and mistrust in the minds of litigants, and if they are as loyal to their country as they profess to be they will disillusion themselves.

I hope these views will be brought to their notice as coming from one engaged in the commercial struggle of life, and not living in the House of Lords' balloon.

SINE CERE.

Liberty is never more grievously wounded than by a social organization in which religion absolutely dominates social life.—Renan.

³ Gerald Massey's *Historical Jesus and Mythical Christ* is also a valuable study to follow up the evolution of present-day beliefs.

Acid Drops.

Mr. James Douglas is the editor of the *Sunday Express*, and he appears to possess to perfection the modern journalistic art of first of all writing an article, about which a wise man would say nothing—that is, if we assume a wise man would so far forget himself to write it—and then proceeding to write another article praising the previous one. Thus, in the *Sunday Express* for June 10 he wrote a short article—that much may at least be said in its favour—entitled "Lazarus up to Date." Lazarus was himself, and having been ill he seems to think that the world would be interested in his feelings while unwell—hence the article. As a sample of the stuff that his illness produced the following sentences will serve: "The secret of life is the pulse of the soul, not the beat of the heart." "We have many names for this nameless rhythm. The simplest name is God." Europe is in a bad way—even Mr. Douglas has been unwell, therefore:—

There must be a smashing of idols. There must be a shattering of altars. There must be suffering and sorrow and woe. The rock must be smitten. The thunderbolts of truth must be loosed. The fair lies must be blasted. The proud falsehood must be blighted.

The great thing, you will observe, is sound and alliteration—sense is not called for. Suffering and sorrow, blasted and blighted, thunderbolts of truth, proud falsehoods, etc., etc., all thrown together in a way that a schoolboy would deserve to have his hide tanned for. There is about a column of this kind of thing with not a single idea, or a single original expression in the whole. What are the lies that are to be blasted or the falsehoods that are to be blighted, or what is the difference between a democratic lie and a proud aristocratic falsehood? We have not the ghost of an idea; nor do we think has Mr. Douglas. The great aim seems to be to provide a volume of sound with commonplace expressions, mixed with a religious flavouring so that the reader after his Sunday dinner may be lulled to sleep with the notion that he has been reading something enlightening. And yet it is hard to believe that all the readers of the *Sunday Express* are of the half-witted type that Mr. Douglas's article would lead one to assume they are. That paper must have its usual proportion of reasonable people. Or if they do delight in Mr. Douglas's collection of second-hand phrases, thrown together as they are without any leading idea or sensible conclusion, then it is quite evident that Europe is in a bad way—at least that portion represented by the *Sunday Express* is. It is, at any rate, an interesting study in stupidity.

What drew our attention to Mr. Douglas's article was a puff which he gave it in the *Daily Express* of June 16. In that paper he let himself go in the following manner:—

Atheist Bradlaugh did not believe in miracles, or in the worker of miracles, God. He shocked the Victorians by taking out his watch on a public platform and challenging God to strike him dead in five minutes if He really existed. Bradlaugh denied the story, but, of course, an Atheist is capable of denying anything.

Now we have never felt troubled in the least about this story, and could never quite appreciate the horror with which those who did believe in God heard the tale, nor the indignation with which certain Freethinkers repudiated it. We should never have done it ourselves because it seems a quite silly performance—something like challenging a mountain to get up and jump on one. We do not believe in a God and never wasted time in inviting a non-entity to do anything at all. But Bradlaugh denied ever having done any such thing, and almost anyone who knew Bradlaugh would prefer to take his word against that of a scribbler like Mr. James Douglas. And his "Of course, an Atheist will deny anything," is just the impertinence of an essentially ignorant man. Perhaps the best excuse that can be offered for him is that he has been ill. Evidently he is not yet better.

But for the benefit of anyone who may be interested in the matter we may point out that what Bradlaugh was

said to have done is exactly what religious people are always telling us God does. During the war all the clergy were busy asking God to show his love of righteousness by permitting the Allies to conquer the Germans. And when the war was over the clergy promptly told us that God had vindicated his justice and the moral law by vanquishing the enemy. Religious literature, including the Bible, is full of stories of men who called upon God to do certain things and of illustrations showing how he did them. If Bradlaugh had called on God to prove his existence by striking him dead he would only have been doing what thousands of religious people are always asking God to do in some form or another. The religious liar who first fathered the story on Bradlaugh did so because it was the kind of thing that a religious man would expect God to do when an Atheist was attacking the idea of God. Only a religious man would have thought of the test, and only a Christian liar would have credited Bradlaugh with it. And that this tribe still flourishes is decisive evidence.

The following from the *Freethinker* of July 29, 1900, is not altogether inappropriate to-day :—

Good old Papa Pecci, God Almighty's vice-gerent at the Vatican, has uttered many pathetic things in favour of the working-men and their claim to decent wages and hours of labour. These little outbursts, of course, cost him nothing. When his own pockets are touched his Holiness cries out as loudly as any capitalist. Recently his Swiss Guard petitioned for an increase of pay on account of the increase of work laid upon them during the present Jubilee year; during which year, by the way, the Pope is raking in piles of money from east, west, north and south, and every other point of the compass. Well, what was the result of this petition? The man who got it up was dismissed for "insubordination," and all who signed it were threatened with "expulsion." That is how the Pope believes in good wages—when he has to pay them himself.

The terroristic government of Mussolini in Italy has ordered that a crucifix be placed in every school beside the portrait of the king. It is peculiar that no protest against the suppression of advanced opinions by Mussolini—this Bolshevik of the Right—is calling forth any sort of protest from the Archbishop of Canterbury and others of his kind. And we have not the least doubt that when Mussolini's example has been followed by some other party in the country, and force invoked to establish another order, we shall hear shrieks about the persecution of Christianity. The real lesson of the situation—that force invites force, and genuine freedom is lost in the competition—will be quite overlooked.

Mr. Holford Knight, the well-known barrister, writing on "Magna Charter Day" remarks :—

Significantly enough, chapter one declared that the Church of England should be free and enjoy freedom of election. This was a tribute to the great leadership of the realm against its tyrannous king that the Church supplied, for the bishops of those days set an example of activity in the nation's distresses not always copied in subsequent generations.

We would substitute "never" for "not always," and would point out that the bishops' aid to the barons was actuated by *personal* motives. Historical evidence does not allow us to go further than this. "Of what use are the bishops in the House of Lords?" queried Lord Shaftesbury. We think of their determined opposition to the Factory Acts, Education Acts, Birth Control movement, Blasphemy Amendment Bill, and the many other measures designed to further the progress of the people, and answer "None."

The religious element (prompted by the attendance of the church and chapel choirs and the special church services) predominated at the Runnymede celebrations. The greatest oppressors of liberty commemorating the first and the greatest bid for freedom! Somewhat ironic to our mind.

The Prince of Wales visited the birthplace of Shakespeare during his tour of the Midlands. We believe that this formal visit is the first occasion when the Royal Family has displayed any interest in Shakespeare. Is it because the poet's philosophy scorned religion and poked fun at pomp?

The following advertisement appeared in the Personal Columns of the *Times* :—

Sunday Games in Parks.—Thirty County and Borough Councils have definitely refused to sanction Sunday Games in their Parks. The London County Council will reconsider their sanction in July. The United Council for Sunday Protection appeal to all citizens to write at once to their local member of the L.C.C. protesting against Sunday play in the parks, and asking that the sanction may be withdrawn this year. Forms of petition, and other free literature or advice, may be obtained from Mr. H. Martyn Gooch, M.B.E., 19 Russell-square, W.C.1.

Wake up, Freethinkers!

There are many ways of getting people to subscribe to religious objects, and the meaner the motives to which the appeal is made, the better, as a rule, the response. They are building a new Catholic Church at Mansfield, Notts, and a begging circular states that anyone who subscribes ten shillings will have their name placed *inside* the foundation stone. We have no doubt but that this will tempt many, but why not offer to place the names of subscribers outside the stones of the building in letters the size of which should be proportionate to the amount of the donation? It will be remembered that the late Andrew Carnegie built up quite a reputation as a philanthropist by this kind of advertising. Only he took care to lay down the conditions himself and to see that his advertisement occupied the most prominent position on the building.

This custom of laying and dedicating foundation stones, with the accompanying practice of burying so many current coins is a very old one, and is closely connected with some important phases of the Christian religion. It is in fact one of the many phases of god-making which is illustrated in the crucifixion of Jesus and his deification. The primary practice was to kill someone when a new building was to be erected and to bury him or her under the foundation stones. There are hundreds of stories telling how so soon as a building was erected certain evil spirits pulled it down, and it was only made secure by a human sacrifice. The belief used to be that this victim was offered as a sacrifice. As a matter of fact the killing was the creation of a guardian spirit or God, whose business it was henceforth to guard the building or the bridge from the assault of evil disposed spirits. They were made gods by being killed, just as the man Jesus was in the Christian legend made a god by his death. In later times, as we became a little more civilized, the practice of killing was superseded by sacrificing a certain amount of money, and the practice became "rationalized" to the extent of assuming that it was merely to benefit posterity that samples of the current coinage were preserved.

"Man is only half civilized. In international relations he is still a savage," says Mr. Lloyd George. This is also true in relation to religions.

A little child, Ivy Bowley, of Chiswick, fell into a bath of hot water and died afterwards at the local hospital. Had the child been a sparrow, Providence might have awakened from sleep.

In the first three months of this year 149 people were killed in the streets of London, and a large number more or less injured. Providence seems almost as careless of his children in peace as in war.

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.

V. DEBE.—Thanks for extra subscribers. We are obliged for hints. The key to many of the superstitions you name is found in the fact that all birth is with primitive races more or less magical. It is the attempt to rationalize the primitive beliefs that lead to many absurdities and cover up the nature of their origin. We are afraid that the English mind, so saturated with Christianity, is not morally clean enough to permit free discussion of the topic. We have dealt with some aspects of it in our *Religion and Sex*.

W. P. ADAMSON.—We note your attempt to get Sir Charles Barrie to vote in favour of the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws, whenever the opportunity offers itself. We can only "wait and see." But it is good to make these people alive to the fact that there are Freethinkers in their constituency.

H. IRVING.—We hope your wife survives the ordeal well. We hope to issue another volume before the year is out.

V. J. HANDS.—Next week. Too late for this issue.

R. J. DANIEL.—Sorry we were unable to use article. Not quite up to standard.

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

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

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

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

Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, by 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 at the following rates (Home and Abroad):—One year 15s.; half year, 7s. 6d.; three months, 3s. 9d.

Death of F. W. Walsh.

It sounds selfish to say that we regret the death of Mr. F. W. Walsh, of Birmingham, and yet we plead guilty to feeling sorry that we shall no longer see nor hear from one of the bravest and most sincere characters we have known. His unique case has commanded the sympathy of many hundreds of Freethinkers all over the country who feel with us that they have lost a very dear friend. His case was unique so far as our experience is concerned, and none but the rarest and truest of characters could have borne up against so terrible an affliction and yet maintained so healthy an interest in the world's affairs. His love for Freethought was great and continued to the last, and only two or three weeks before he died we received from him a letter of two pages, written with a pencil held between his teeth.

We shall have more to say on this matter next week. We have time now only for this bare announcement of his death. At his request the body will be cremated at Perry Barr Crematorium at 12 o'clock on Saturday, June 23. The body will leave the house, 30 Colonial Road, Bordesley Green, at 11.

C. C.

Sugar Plums.

We are pleased to hear that our good friend M. Gustave Brocher, of Lausanne, one of the best known figures in the international world of Freethought, is working at a *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers*, which we fancy he is in a position to make admirably representative on both the Latin, the Teutonic, and Slavonic sides. He has J. M. Wheeler's *Dictionary of Freethinkers* and Mr. McCabe's *Biographical Dictionary of Rationalists*, and is naturally desirous of making his dictionary as complete as possible for English Freethought. It may be that some of our readers are in a position to supplement the notices given by Wheeler and Mr. McCabe. If they will be good enough to jot down the names of Freethinkers not included in the two books we have mentioned, adding brief but exact biographical details and list of books, pamphlets, etc., and send along the materials to Mr. George Underwood c/o the Editor of the *Freethinker*, they will then be checked and forwarded to M. Brocher at Lausanne. We need hardly say that we wish him every success in a venture which presupposes an extremely wide knowledge and entails a vast amount of labour.

There are, we believe, a number of our readers that have a fairly good working knowledge of French. If they have also an interest in modern attempts to prove the non-historicity of the Gospel Jesus they will thank us for recommending to them an excellent little book we have just come across. It is written on popular lines, and for that reason is much more valuable from the standpoint of proletarian Freethought. Its title is an interrogative one: *Le Christ a-t-il Existé?* (Did Christ Actually Exist?) the writer being M. Moutier-Rousset, with whose previous work for Freethought we are unfortunately not familiar. Some of the chapters have impressed us so favourably that we have arranged to have them translated at an early date for the benefit of the English reader. M. Moutier-Rousset's book was published at the end of last year, and therefore has the advantage of being one of the latest contributions to the subject. It is a pity, however, that he does not give the reader a bibliography of his subjects. If we can judge by the opening sentence he seems to think that no inquirer into the origins of Christianity and the causes of its success has ever doubted the real existence of the Gospel Jesus. But Jesus was never more than a humanized god for such thinkers as Volney and Dupuis, and although at the present moment there is only a small minority who are satisfied of the non-historicity of the Gospel Jesus, this minority is certainly not negligible as far as intelligence and learning are concerned. Pastor Kalthoff of Bremen, Prof. Drews, Prof. B. W. Smith of Tulane University, New Orleans, Mr. J. M. Robertson, and Mr. Thomas Whittaker, are names of a few inquirers who reject an historical Jesus. Works like Prof. Guignebert's *Le Problème de Jesus*, and Bousset's *Kyrios Christos*, while written with the object of stemming the tide of scepticism, are really more disquieting than comforting to the orthodox mind. M. Moutier-Rousset's popular exposition of the subject is perhaps all the more effective for not being hampered by the minutiae of academic scholarship.

The *Literary Guide* for July is a double summer number, which so far is about the first glimpse of summer we have come across. It is full of good things from the regular contributors to that journal, and they are too well-known to call for much comment. Mr. William Archer replies to Dean Inge, but seems unaccountably anxious to prove that as a Rationalist he is quite impressed with the "mystery" of the universe. We should like to see the word banished from the vocabulary of Freethinkers. It is quite unscientific, it is philosophically useless, and it serves as a very useful term with which theologians may impose their nonsense on the unintelligent. The proper reply to the parson who taunts a Freethinker with not being possessed of a sense of the "mystery" of the universe, is that the universe holds no mysteries, but only problems. Much talk of the underlying mystery of life

or of Nature is appropriate to the pulpit ; it is out of place in a Freethinking magazine.

This, however, is a word in passing, and possibly Mr. Archer is just using the word thoughtlessly. The article is a very able reply to the journalistic Dean, who does not improve with time. There is a full report of the speeches at the Annual Dinner of the Rationalist Press Association, with an article by Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner on the recent House of Lords debate on the Blasphemy Laws. This issue of the *Guide* is extended to thirty-two pages, and is priced at sixpence. We hope it will prove as successful as it deserves.

Mr. A. B. Moss lectured in Victoria Park on Sunday last—the first time for ten years—and had the pleasure of addressing one of the largest audiences of the season. His lecture on "The Bible and Evolution" was greatly appreciated, and he will be sure of a good audience whenever he pays a return visit.

Mr. R. Atkinson has had to give up regular Free-thought lecturing on Tyneside for some little time, but he will be lecturing occasionally until he is able to resume more regular work on the platform. Those friends on Tyneside who wish to avail themselves of his services should write him at 4 Watson Street, High Spenn, Rowlands Gill.

Mr. Whitehead has just concluded a very successful week's "mission" at Stockport. The lecturing was not carried through quite as smoothly as it might have been, thanks to the bigotry of some of the local Christians. In the first place a clergyman begged the police to put a stop to the meetings. Finding this appeal met with no response, a large Catholic contingent was whipped up and an endeavour made to put a stop to the meetings by sheer hooliganism. It is pleasant to learn that this was also ineffective. Mr. Whitehead managed to keep the large audiences in a good humour, with the result that a much greater interest was taken in the meetings than might have been the case had the Christians forgotten their religion for the time being. Mr. Whitehead goes on to Barnsley. Particulars of his meetings there may be obtained from Mr. H. Irving, 48 Sheffield Road, Barnsley.

Woman Before and During Christianity.

Now if we turn to religion we see that from the very beginning the whole tendency here was to stifle difference of opinion, and so establish intolerance as a religious duty. The biblical story of Jonah is a case that well illustrates the point. God was not angry with the rest of the ship's inhabitants, it was Jonah only who had given offence. But to punish Jonah a storm was sent and the whole crew was in danger of shipwreck. In their own defence the sailors were driven to throw Jonah overboard. Jonah's disobedience was not, therefore, his concern alone. All with him were involved; God was ready to punish the whole for the offence of one.—C. Cohen, "*A Grammar of Freethought*."

As with Jonah, so with Eve. Woman in Christendom has been punished for the sin of Eve. In the above extract if we substitute the word "woman" for Jonah and the word "Church" for God, the analogy is complete. But the latter substitution is not required because it is the will of God, according to the Church, that woman should be so punished—punished for a sin that emanated from himself. Of all the silly and mischievous stories that have been foisted upon mankind, the story of Adam and Eve and "The Fall" is probably the most senseless. Judaic and Christian pomology has much to its discredit. Ever since Adam's rib was removed it has been, according to the teaching of the Church, substituted by a thorn. Woman, from the incipience of Christianity, has been nothing else than a thorn in the side of the ascetic,

morbid, and unnatural teaching of a dissatisfied and and celibate clergy, who have had to resort to numerous kinds of clandestine vice for the purposes of superficially maintaining a false and ignoble chastity. Right throughout Judaic history woman is placed in a subordinate position, and throughout Christianity the same holds. The real or mythical founder of the Christian cult is not represented as holding woman in very high estate or esteem. His ideal of woman could hardly be otherwise. An idealistic man framed by the imagination of Jewish historians or fabulists was likely to correspond to the general masculine conception of woman. It cannot be said that there are any instances of vulgarity towards woman reported of the founder, but we might with propriety aver that instances of ill-temper and an exalted air of indifference towards woman are not absent from the life of the founder. He was too pre-occupied with the kingdom of heaven to be very deeply engrossed with the serious issues of earthly life.

In such circumstances it is not surprising that woman held little or no place in his life. It would be expecting too much from the environment in which he was placed for him to have any other conception, because throughout Jewish history woman is regarded in hardly any other way than as a chattel for man for the purposes of satisfying his animal propensities. Whatever exceptions we may take to Jewish history we are compelled to admire its strong and persistent masculinity. Genuine praise of woman is conspicuous by its absence in Old and New Testaments alike. And it is because of this, in part, that the ideal founder of the new cult, and as the off-shoot of Judaism, is a mixture of the practical man represented as delivering maxims, and the man of the kingdom of heaven to whom earthly things have become indifferent. This indifference was exemplified in his morbid asceticism, and has characterized the cult since its formation. It has become ingrained into its constitution, and has manifested itself in the conventual and monastic systems, and the celibate clergy, to whom woman is valueless, physically, morally, or spiritually.

However, the aim we have in view is to review briefly the position of woman during the development of Christianity. But before we do this we will take a cursory glance at the position of woman under Paganism.

The uninformed generally regard the status of woman in Pagan culture as of a low order. This is very far from being correct. Numerous examples of the high status in which woman was held in Paganism are easily enumerated. Of course we have the special case of the cultured and beautiful Hypatia, and the conduct of the Christians at her murder, who, we remember, verily tore the flesh from her bones with the crudest instruments.

If we glance at the position of woman in ancient Egypt what do we find? We find her mistress of her house, entertaining whom she chose, speaking to whom she chose and of all subjects that interested her. She practised medicine, arts, and law, and was allowed to plead in the courts. She acted as priestess in the temples, and enjoyed the privileges in consequence. She was more honoured than she is to-day in many Christian countries and civilized societies. Such was her position in Pagan Egypt 2,000 years and more before the present era. So what must be said in regard to the claims of Christianity exalting woman as she had not been before?

If we pass to Japan we find that woman there was freely honoured until such time as Japan was corrupted by Chinese influence, who had a similar low estimate of woman as had the Hebrews. In Japan women were Mikados and chieftains. In later days we

find Japanese women excelling in literature, and having a much higher degree of culture than existed in Europe.

Turning to Greece we find woman held a very honoured place in social life. Polygamy was in general abandoned at the very time when it existed among the Jews in a rather insulting and degrading form. In the Homeric days her position became still further advanced, although it was much restricted. And if we turn to the days of Plato and Aristotle we find Plato declaring that women were fitted for the higher walks of life whilst Aristotle demands fidelity from husband and wife on exactly equal terms. And yet to-day, in Christian England, one party must prove adultery whether or not it takes place, before they are able to obtain a divorce; and usually by monetary bribery of witnesses.

In passing to Rome we find more definite conditions prevailing. It is quite true that in the early days of Rome women were under the entire control of father or husband, both having the power of life or death over her. But this is not needing to disconcert us because similar conditions prevailed in Southern Italy in the later part of the nineteenth century. Therefore, in this matter, Christians have not any grounds for complaint. In other ways Roman women enjoyed many privileges. A prominent feature of the Roman religion was that the inferiority of women was not one of their doctrines; in this respect they were similar to the Egyptians, and at the same time providing a marked contrast to the inferior position in which women were held among the Hebrews. Some scholars, however, maintain that woman's sexual status in early Rome was one of kindness and great humanity, family concord being encouraged widely. Monogomy was the order in married life and was strictly enforced. It is recorded that divorce was unknown for 520 years after the foundation of Rome. Women were treated with profound respect in public, and a French writer affirms that Christian women were merely the fuller development of Roman matrons. The Vestal Virgins enjoyed an unequalled position in the history of woman, and held a position so honoured that it was equal to, and in some respects even higher, than the Consulate.

Apart from this, however, they possessed much wealth in their own right, had control over slaves and freedmen, and persons in their household, and held municipal posts. And by the time of the advent of Christianity they had gained, practically speaking, complete freedom, and a higher and more honoured position than they have since enjoyed. It is a very great mistake to believe that Christianity emancipated woman. Proof is not wanting to show that it was not Christianity that freed woman from her thralldom and the despotism of the Roman Empire. On the contrary evidence is easily found showing how the obnoxious asceticism that was the concomitant of Christianity restricted and ultimately destroyed the freedom enjoyed by woman under the Roman Empire. Women were finally driven back into the *gynecæum* by the official behaviour of the Church, the leaders finding support for this reaction in the sacred writings. In Maine's *Ancient Law* we find him saying:—

The great juris-consulate (Gaius) himself scouted the popular apology offered for it in the mental inferiority of the female sex, and a considerable part of his volume is taken up with descriptions of numerous expedients, some of them displaying extraordinary ingenuity, which the Roman lawyers devised for enabling women to defeat the ancient rules.

But we reach the culmination of the matter when the same authority states definitely:—

No society which preserves any tincture of Christian institutions is likely to restore to married

women the personal liberty conferred on them by the middle Roman law.

On such evidence further examples are superfluous.

From the evidence given it is superficial sentimentality to endeavour to show that the status of woman was vastly improved by the institution of Christianity. In reading apologetic writers, we are impressed with the opinion that all the finer virtues are the monopoly of their teaching when, in point of fact, abundant evidence exists to prove that women were as highly respected and honoured outside of their Church as they are ever likely to be honoured and respected in it.

Having satisfied ourselves that woman has enjoyed a degree of liberty and honour outside the Church equal to anything that she is likely to attain within its fold, we will now endeavour to show how, under Church influence, her progress was retarded and her status lowered.

Such a man as Lecky held the opinion that the influence of Christianity on women was very potent for her good. He maintained that it softened their natures, added charm and dignity to their characters, and was instrumental in developing some feminine virtues that, had it not been for the influence of the cult, might never have appeared. With all due deference to such an eminent and able historian and charming writer, we are forced to demur, and to draw the conclusion that he did not carry his analysis as far as he ought, nor did he, in his estimate, allow sufficiently for the effects of other cultures with which Christianity was and has been associated, and the extent of their influences. One is rather impressed with the opinion that Lecky, on this particular matter, allowed himself to be carried away with sentimentalism at the expense of his historical acumen and judgment of which he was a consummate master. His rather nervous hesitancy and strained defence compared with his evidence of quite the adverse kind is rather unsatisfactory from a purely historical standpoint.

It is proposed to provide some evidence in what follows showing that woman did not fare so well as is commonly believed.

The legacy that the early Christian woman brought with her from the Hebrews was not much improved during the early stages of the cult. The polygamy and concubinage of the Hebrews placed her in a very inferior position. Even the Hebrew word for female cannot be literally translated into English without shocking one's sense of decency. These conditions and their accompaniments continued in the Church until A.D. 1060 because it was not until that date that polygamy was officially suppressed. But Luther and others permitted it at a still later date. If we attempt to find a solution to the woman problem in any of the sayings of Jesus we fail utterly. He left such problems to find their own solution. It is not surprising, therefore, that his followers did not make any advance on their master's negligence.

Some of the early opinions on marriage, and on woman, vary very much. Woman has the fierceness of the dragon, and the cunning of the asp. Man should not pollute his body by concupiscence; the implication being that woman was something unclean. Woman is abjured to dress in rags as she is advised not to forget Eve. Marriage is not far removed from fornication, and it is the outcome of sin; while second marriage is adultery under guise of decency. And St. Augustine emphatically informs us that we have Eve in every woman. Woman was not made in the image of God like man was. (This is not unreasonable because if woman had been made like God, and man made like God, we can ask ourselves the question what was God like?) Woman was made from a rib of man and did not contain part of man's soul. Such are some

of the estimates of woman by some of the early fathers!

These were the opinions of woman up to the fourth century. By this time the influence of the early fathers had insinuated itself into every country in Europe, and had destroyed almost every vestige of pre-Christian culture and the Pagan status of woman, concomitantly developing woman's inferiority.

In the sixth century we find a bishop affirming that woman had not a soul. In addition women were not permitted to take the sacrament in their hands as men did, because of their impurity! And by the time we arrive at the Middle Ages we find, under feudalism, that conjugal morals are designated as brutal. While the dominance of the Canon Law destroyed all the privileges previously enjoyed by woman. She practically lost all claim to the rights of property, and was faced with two alternative conditions—the nunnery or marriage. In either state, she was thus subordinated by the authority of the men around her. Such was her condition until the French revolutionists established the equal succession of sons and daughters, and incidentally laid the foundation of the claims and rights of woman that has become almost world-wide.

Opinions vary much on the value and use of the conventual system. Some aver that they were beneficial, others say otherwise. Out of the conflict of opinion we are certain that it cannot be denied that such separation from the world had a grave and detrimental social effect. It was in great measure the result of the morbid asceticism so characteristic of the Church, and of the insistence of dwelling upon the inferior and sinful position of woman. When we read of such things as St. Elizabeth of Thuringia sending away her children because they retarded her spiritual development, she feeling satisfied only after losing her love for them, we are prompted to reflect whether or not such persons were sane. When we know that many married women left their husbands and families to get on as best they could, we cannot wax enthusiastic over their abnormal and unnatural choice.

Woman was such a degraded creature that the act of procreation was a venial sin, and was not part of the deity's design. In consequence a woman, after child-birth, had to kneel outside the church to be purified, otherwise she could not participate in worship. This brought about reactions in sexual life, and gave rise to a high increase in prostitution—a condition that was sanctioned by the Church and State—so much so, that the Holy City of Rome, in 1490, is estimated to have contained 6,000 prostitutes. Besides this, nobles in certain districts taxed the clergy for allowing them to keep concubines; and at clerical councils a large concourse of women was usually present. In such circumstances sexual vices increased greatly, and at the same time lowered woman's status. But the depth of degradation was reached upon the establishment of the *Primus Noctes*, which was, as we know, the right of the baron, or the clerical dignitary of the district to reserve for their gratifications, for the first few days after marriage, the use of a newly married woman. Truly an exalted Christian ethic!

However, space will not allow us to explain how witches and others fared under such a system, nor can we outline more recent happenings. Of one thing we are sure, apart from any partisan standpoint, and that is, it is quite impossible to categorically affirm that the advancement of woman has been one of the characteristics of the Church. The utmost straining and searching for proof of this is a failure. From first to last, woman in Christianity is an inferior being, and by the dictum of all dispensations must remain so. If she wishes to emancipate herself she must rely on the rationalizing and freethinking tendencies of modern ideas, and not on the antiquated estimate of her worth from Moses and St. Paul.

A. MITCHELL.

Heresy and the League of Nations.

THE article entitled "What's Wrong With the League of Nations," published in the *Freethinker* of May 27, must have made sad reading for many who recall the high hopes and the great promises of its inception.

The failure of the League to realize the era of peace which it was to have inaugurated has been attributed to numerous causes, but it is doubtful whether the individuals composing the League have at any time perceived even faintly the root causes of the friction and strife that exist between nations.

It has been dubbed "The League of Notions." Well, notions—ideas—are mighty forces in a world where, in spite of appearances to the contrary, the pen is still mightier than the sword, and it would be matter for more than regret were such an august assembly destitute of ideas. But has the League any notion of the forces which, hidden behind Governments, are blocking the road to settlement and peace?

Let us first cast our eye over the economic conditions prevailing throughout industrial countries to-day. The most striking feature is the apparent poverty of the mass of their populations. They cry out that they are poor countries—the war has impoverished them! Yet, with the exception of Russia where the credit-system was deliberately wrecked, most nations to-day have not only more money than they had before the war, but—what is of vastly more importance—a far greater capacity for the production of those goods and services which mean wealth—well-being—to their populations.

There is no lack of raw materials, there is no lack of machinery, there is in fact no lack of the goods themselves. Yet the people cannot enjoy these goods because they lack purchasing-power, and the only condition under which the present economic system will grant them the requisite purchasing-power is that they make more goods! This fact alone would appear to be a formidable indictment of the system, but worse is to follow.

In order to liquidate existing goods, a fresh batch of goods must be produced. Whilst this is in progress a good angel in the guise of applied scientific discovery arrives on the scene with improvements in tools and processes which enable this fresh batch of goods to be produced with less human labour. So, in order to distribute sufficient purchasing-power to buy the first batch at prices including cost plus profit, the second batch of goods must be larger. And for the same reason the third batch must be larger still, until the surfeit of goods leads to the cessation of production, entailing cessation of the distribution of purchasing-power, and bringing in its trail unemployment, poverty and bankruptcies.

Let us for a while leave the New Economists to wrestle with the failure of the system to provide sufficient purchasing-power to buy the product when marketed, while we glance at world financial conditions.

Apart from trifling and negligible hoardings of currency by a few individuals, the world-pool of money—currency, bank-credits, bills, etc.—is in constant circulation through industrial channels, being continually distributed as purchasing-power and recovered again in prices.

Some industries, in some countries, may control increasing portions of this pool at certain times; other industries, in other countries, at other times; but world industry in the aggregate cannot increase this pool. It is not possible to obtain from industry more money than is put into it; the only institutions which at present make money, in the sense of issuing new

money, are banks, and with these institutions every new money issue commences life as a debt.

Practically all business to-day is carried on with borrowed money, and this is principally obtained from banks in the form of overdrafts and loans. These have to be repaid with interest, and banks demand the payment of this interest in money. But industry does not make money—it makes goods and renders services. So that finance, as a whole, calls upon industry, as a whole, to accomplish the impossible, unless finance itself comes to the rescue and issues an amount of new money at least equivalent to the interest charges. And this issue, as stated before, will be a debt.

So, if the New Economists are right—and their arguments have so far proved unassailable—we are faced with the astounding situation that if, at the end of any accounting period, the world of industry as a whole, on balancing profits against bankruptcies, realizes a surplus of money, that surplus becomes a new debt. It may be a profit viewed in retrospect; it is a debt in prospect, and industry cannot proceed without a constant and spontaneous increase of such debt!

This is the crux of the matter. The constant increase of financial indebtedness means a constantly increasing draft upon the future. It is no manner of use to imagine that we shall muddle through somehow; this mortgage on the future is cumulative, and collapse of the system is inevitable. Every nation is striving to obtain profits that are not mortgaged to finance. They can only do so by selling their surplus goods abroad, since the necessary purchasing-power is not available at home. But all nations cannot do this. Some do, and—inevitably—the winners in the game are those who can bring the most formidable armaments to back the diplomacy which acquires “interests” and obtains “concessions.”

Here we come upon the true, and hidden, source of modern war. Orthodox financiers tell us that the “laws” of the system cannot be altered in spite of the international friction which they produce. So our politicians offer us a variety of palliatives, and preach against militarism—as if militarism were an ultimate cause of war, instead of a surface manifestation of deeper underlying causes.

Has the League of Nations any *notion* of a remedy for this malady? So long as it is wedded to orthodox finance it certainly will find none, and its days and its usefulness are undoubtedly numbered.

But if it would deign to consult a small band of heretics known as Social Credit Reformers—if, for example, it would appoint Mr. Arthur Kitson and Major C. H. Douglas as Economic Advisers to the League for one week only—it might learn of a means whereby governments might issue financial credit to the limit of their real credit, and distribute it amongst their peoples not only concurrently with and contingent upon a fall in prices, but free from all stigma of debt at its birth.

Then might we see the struggles of industry in all countries to secure foreign markets by fair means or foul cease, and the international animosities so created die down.

But this little band of heretics—what of them? They are few in number, they are poor in this world's goods, their gospel is to a large extent boycotted in the Press—in short, they are Freethinkers. And readers of this journal will have no difficulty in appreciating their position to the full.

But all great movements for the betterment of mankind originate in the brains of a mere handful of heretics. Will the League of Nations proceed on its orthodox way—to sterility and oblivion—or will it fling orthodoxy to the winds and follow the gleam of the new gospel of social credit-power as the key to peace?

A. W. COLEMAN.

South African Jottings.

ACCORDING to the *Harrismith Chronicle* :—

It appears that the police in Johannesburg have been seriously considering the legality of Sunday games and the question of enforcing the laws upon the subject. The Sunday Observance Laws (Transvaal) of the old Republic are still in force. The Republican senators were not a sporting body, and in fact did not favour sport in any degree, and were absolutely hostile to sport, or any unnecessary exercise upon the Sabbath. They prohibited field or garden work except in cases of necessity, the firing of guns was prohibited, hunting was not permitted except that of vermin which were doing damage, travelling by wagon or loading or unloading of wagons was not allowed, and sundry other prohibitions were enforced.

For a long time past the Dutch Reformed Clergy in Synod assembled have been fulminating against the “Godless Rand Sabbath,” and have even gone the length of invoking State authority in support of their dark and forbidding puritanism. These sour visaged disciples of John Calvin are probably without exception the most ignorant and retrograde of all the sectaries, and such innocent pastimes as dancing and card playing are to them simply anathema at all times and in all places. They rule their congregations with a rod of iron, and are members of the wealthiest and most powerful religious body in South Africa. Their followers equally with themselves are bibliolaters of the grossest description, entirely impervious to modern criticism, and quite unaffected by the advance of scientific knowledge. They are well backed in their aims by the followers of John Wesley, as also the other free Churches, but have failed so far to enlist any active support from the Anglicans and Roman Catholics. But these constant attempts in the interests of ecclesiastical graft and mediæval tyranny to infringe on the liberty of the subject only serve to illustrate a fact well recognized by all Freethinkers that the spirit of ecclesiastical tyranny and persecution is but scotched, and not killed. Therefore, all the more reason why South African Secularists should organize their forces and wage a militant campaign of propaganda. The circulation of leaflets, pamphlets, and books like those of Paine, Ingersoll and Foote, in the Dutch vernacular (Afrikaans) should be undertaken, and priestcraft and bibliolatry attacked in their strongholds. Let us not forget the pioneer days of the Old Guard, and follow in the path pointed out so clearly by Bradlaugh and Foote. Let us follow in their footsteps with all the advantages that accrue from improved weapons and a wider experience.

From recent controversy appearing in the columns of the English Free State daily, the *Friend*, the old fashioned Christianity of the nineteenth century is still very much in evidence, and calumny, personal abuse, and gross misrepresentation usurp the place of reasoned argument and temperate discussion. A case in point is the following extract from a letter in that paper signed “Thos. Mackenzie” :—

In conclusion I will briefly give a case where Almighty God was put on trial by the greatest leader of “Searchlight's” party for the last sixty years. About sixty years ago there appeared in some London periodicals articles written by one who signed himself “Iconoclast” (breaker of images or idols). In these articles he said “there was no God, and that in a few years there would be no Christians.” Now, as an idol cannot exist after it is broken, the few years here mentioned must refer to “Iconoclast's” life-time. “Iconoclast” has been dead for some years now, and there is at least fifty million more Christians now than there was sixty years ago. That is not all. Within ten years of his uttering these words (after being shown in public debate that his position was untenable) he uses the following words in recantation: “No one but a fool would say there is no God.” It was when he made this recantation that his party changed the title of the party from “Atheist” to “Freethinker.” Then about thirty-five years ago he was challenged to a public debate by the parson I have already indicated in an earlier part of this letter, who was specially anxious to meet “Iconoclast” (Bradlaugh) as his supporters in Bristol had been boasting a good deal as to what a terrible verbal thrashing the parson would get. The challenge was accepted by the party in London, but they did not send

down the man specially challenged, but Mr. Foote, editor of the *Freethinker*; they acted wisely in so doing as Mr. Foote was much superior to Bradlaugh in debating religious questions. The debate took place in Bristol in a hall that would hold 500 people, the two parties having an equal number of admission tickets. It was a two-night debate, the subject being "Is there a God?" and although Mr. Foote had spent his whole life in trying to make himself believe there is none, he was practically unable to answer almost any question, his usual reply being, "I don't know." This has become their new name since that debate, but as the English words are not very dignified, they use the Greek word (Agnostic). They were wise in adopting this title and attitude as it stops all chance of debate. So God was specially put on trial by Bradlaugh sixty years ago; the result has been two changes of opinion by his party in fifty years, with no increase in their numbers. The Christian Churches hold the same doctrine to-day that it did 1900 years ago, and millions are being added to their number every year. Who lost in this trial—God or Bradlaugh?

This extract is given as it appears in the *Friend*, so its grammatical errors remain uncorrected. The important point, however, to note is the motive underlying these words, and the fact that they constitute a tissue of falsehoods, and a garbled and distorted version of the events to which they are supposed to refer. Mr. Mackenzie says that sixty years ago Mr. Bradlaugh said "There was no God," and that he retracted this statement about ten years later. This statement is flatly false, and Mr. Bradlaugh's true position is defined in the report of a debate which Mr. Bradlaugh held with Mr. John Bowes at Northampton in March 1859, not sixty, but sixty-four years ago, *i.e.*, four years earlier. In that debate Mr. Bradlaugh said:—

He did not deny that there was a "God," because to deny that which was unknown was as absurd as to affirm it. As an Atheist he denied the God of the Bible, of the Koran, of the Vedas, but he could not deny that of which he had no knowledge.

In February, 1864, Mr. Bradlaugh met Thomas Cooper in debate, in the course of which he told his audience:—

I do not stand here to prove that there is no God..... I do not say there is no God, but I am an Atheist without God. To me the word God conveys no idea, and it is because the word "God" to me never expressed a clear and definite conception.....that I am an Atheist.

I know nothing about the Bristol meeting, and I notice that Mr. Mackenzie, when challenged as to the "questions," maintained a discreet silence. What answer would he give to the question: "Are there any super-dinosaurs on Mars?" Mr. Mackenzie's statement that the party changed its name and attitude from "Atheist" to "Agnostic" is as false as his previous statement. It is as false also as the statement he makes in a subsequent letter when he alludes to the *Fruits of Philosophy* as "disgustingly obscene." And, as I have pointed out in the columns of the *Friend*, the principles laid down in that work are being followed by three-fourths of England to-day, as demonstrated by Mr. J. McCabe in an article in the April issue of the *Literary Guide* headed "Birth Control and Piety."

In his second letter Mr. Mackenzie indulges in mud-slinging and personal abuse after the fashion so dear to the more unscrupulous Christian controversialist, as when he discounts Mr. Upton Sinclair's writings on the ground that he was divorced from his wife, and when he considers that Mr. Bradlaugh and Mr. Foote could not change their mental attitude towards theism because they were "professional atheists," and their living depended on their remaining so.

The motive underlying Mr. Mackenzie's attack is perfectly clear. Finding that he is worsted in fair argument he resorts to the weapons of personal abuse and the imputation of unworthy motives. Having no case himself he abuses the other side. For such opponents we can have nothing but contempt, nor are they likely to command the respect of those who want nothing better than the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

In his first letter Mr. Mackenzie implies that Charles Bradlaugh was a moral coward, and in his second that he was insincere. Anything more grotesque or false it is difficult to imagine, and friend and foe alike unite in testifying to his sterling honesty and undaunted courage.

In the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (Eleventh Edition, Article "Bradlaugh") I read:—

His transparent honesty and courageous contempt for mere popularity gave him increasing respect.....his sincerity was as unquestionable as his combativeness.

As the *Freethinker*, to which Mr. Mackenzie contemptuously alludes in his letters, circulates considerably in the South African Union, while the *Friend's* circulation is confined mainly to the Orange Free State, I shall return to the subject in future "Jottings" as well as examine Mr. Mackenzie's effusions in greater detail.

SEARCHLIGHT.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7, Mr. F. J. Gould, "A Dumb Hero."

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

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 6.15, a Lecture.

FINSBURY PARK.—11.15, Mr. F. P. Corrigan, a Lecture.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Hyde Park): 6-9.30, Mr. Saphin, Mr. Keeling, Mr. Mowbray, Mr. Blady. The Debating Society meets every Thursday at 8 at the "Laurie Arms," Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.1.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Regent's Park, near the Bandstand): 6, Mr. F. P. Corrigan, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Outside Technical Institute, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7, Mr. H. Spence, B.Sc., "Science and Religion."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S. (12a Clayton Street East): 3, Members' Meeting.

SWANSEA AND DISTRICT BRANCH N.S.S. (No. 6 Room, Dockers' Hall): 6, Branch Meeting.

OUTDOOR.

BARNSELY BRANCH N.S.S.—Evening Lectures on June 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, and 30. Mr. Whitehead's Freethought Mission.

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S.—Ramble to Cathkin Loch. Meet at Burnside Terminus at 12 o'clock prompt. Each person will bring their own refreshments.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S.—Mr. Whitehead's Freethought Mission: Thursday, June 21 and Saturday, June 23, 7.30, Raby Street, Moss Side. Sunday, June 24, 7, corner of Wilmslow Road and Grange Street, Rusholme.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S. (Chopwell): 11, Mr. R. Atkinson, "The Coquetting of Religion and Labour"; (Town Moor, near North Road entrance): 7, a Lecture.

FREETHINKER (48) seeks employment; 30 years' experience in the wholesale paper and stationery trade.—JOHN COOPER, c/o *Freethinker* Office, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

A FIGHT FOR RIGHT.

A Verbatim Report of the Decision in the House of Lords in *re Bowman and Others v. The Secular Society, Limited.*

With Introduction by CHAPMAN COHEN.

(Issued by the Secular Society, Limited.)

Price 1s., postage 1d.

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR FREETHINKERS.

Concerning: Withdrawal of children from religious instruction in public schools. The right to affirm. Religion in the Army and Navy. Church attendance in the Navy. Secular funerals. Civil marriages. The naming of infants, etc.

(Issued by the Executive of the National Secular Society.)

Price Twopence, post free.

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

Where to Obtain the "Freethinker."

The following is not a complete list of newsagents who supply the "Freethinker," and we shall be obliged for other addresses for publication. The "Freethinker" may be obtained on order from any newsagent or railway bookstall.

"FREETHINKER" POSTERS will be supplied to all Newsagents on application to the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

LONDON.

- E.—E. T. Pendrill, 26 Bushfield Street, Bishopsgate. M. Papier, 86 Commercial Street. B. Ruderman, 71 Hanbury Street, Spitalfields. J. Knight & Co., 3 Ripple Road, Barking. W. H. Smith & Son, Seven Kings Railway Station Bookstall. W. Holt, 617 Lea Bridge Road, Leyton. H. W. Harris, 22 Chant Street, Stratford.
- E.C.—W. S. Dexter, 6 Byward Street. Rose & Co., 133 Clerkenwell Road. Mr. Siveridge, 88 Fenchurch Street. J. J. Jaques, 191 Old Street.
- N.—C. Walker & Son, 84 Grove Road, Holloway. Mr. Keogh, Seven Sisters Road (near Finsbury Park). Mr. West, New Road, Lower Edmonton. T. Perry, 17 Fore Street, Edmonton. H. Hampton, 80 Holloway Road. M. A. Gremson, 23 Westbury Avenue, Wood Green, N.22.
- N.W.—W. I. Tarbart, 5 Fortess Road, Kentish Town. W. Lloyd, 5 Falkland Road, Kentish Town. C. Webber, 96 Highgate Road, Kentish Town. F. L. Coombes, 8 Kentish Town Road.
- S.E.—J. H. Vullick, 1 Tyler Street, East Greenwich. Mr. Clayton, High Street, Woodside, South Norwood. W. T. Andrews, 35 Meetinghouse Lane, Peckham. W. Law, 19 Avondale Road, Peckham. R. Peirce & Co., 50 High Street, Sydenham, S.E.26.
- S.W.—R. Offer, 58 Kenyon Street, Fulham. A. Toleman, 54 Battersea Rise. A. Green, 29 Felsham Road, Putney. F. Locke, 500 Fulham Road. F. Lucas, 683 Fulham Road.
- W.—Mr. Fox, 154 King Street, Hammersmith. Mr. Harvey, 1 Becklow Road, Shepherds Bush. Mr. Baker, Northfield Avenue, West Ealing. Thomas Dunbar, 82 Seaford Road, West Ealing.
- W.C.—J. Bull, 24 Grays Inn Road.

COUNTRY.

- ABERDEENSHIRE.—J. Grieg, 16 Marischol Street, Peterhead.
- BARROW-IN-FURNESS.—J. Jowett, 56 Forshaw Street. E. L. Jowett, 84 Dalton Road.
- BATH.—C. F. Sutton, 16 Union Passage, and 10 Abbey Churchyard.
- BECCLIS.—C. Chase, Station Road.
- BIRKENHEAD.—Mr. Capper, Boundary Road, Port Sunlight.
- BIRMINGHAM.—J. C. Aston, 39-40 Smallbrook Street. A. G. Beacon & Co., 67 & 68 Worcester Street. F. Holder, 42 Hurst Street. Mr. Benton, High Street, Erdington. Mr. Kimber, Ash Road Post Office, Saltley. Thomas Smith & Sons, 19-21 Corporation Street. Messrs. Stanford & Mann, 72 New Street.
- BOLTON.—E. Basnett, Church Street, Westhoughton. W. Atkinson, 364 Blackburn Road. Mr. Sims, Bradshawgate. George Bennett, Great Moor Street.
- BRADFORD.—H. Beaumont & Son, 37 & 71 Sticker Lane, Laisterdyke.
- BRIGHTON.—W. Hillman, 4 Little Western Street.
- BRISTOL.—W. H. Smith & Son, Victoria Street.
- BROXBURN.—Misses Wallace, Main Street.
- CARDIFF.—W. H. Smith & Son, Penarth Road. A. Clarke, 26 Wood Street.
- CARSHALTON.—Mr. Simmons, 29 North Street.
- CHATHAM.—T. Partis, 277 High Street.
- CHELTENHAM.—S. Norris, Ambrose Street.
- CULLOMPTON.—A. W. Clitsome, The Square.
- DERBYSHIRE.—Mr. Featherstone, Chapel-en-le-Firth. Mr. Poynton, Market Hall, Derby. Harold Goodere, 268 Osmaston Road, Derby.
- DUBLIN.—J. Kearney, Upper Stephen Street.
- DUNDEE.—Mr. Cunningham, St. Andrew's Street. "The Hub," High Street. Mr. Lamb, 121 Overgate.
- EDINBURGH.—Walter P. Cumming, 4 Roseburn Terrace, Muirfield.
- EXETER.—T. Fisher, 37 South Street.
- FALKIRK.—James Wilson, 76 Graham's Road.
- GATESHEAD.—Henderson & Birkett, Half Moon Lane.
- GLASGOW.—W. McGill, 39 Shuttle Street. The Socialist-Labour Bookshop, 46-48 Renfrew Street. James Nelson, 189 Clarkston Road, Cathcart.

Where to Obtain the "Freethinker"—Continued.

- GRAVESEND.—Mrs. Troke, 10 Passock Street. Mr. Love, Gassick Street. Mr. Gould, Milton Road. Mr. Troke, Clarence Place.
- HASTINGS.—King Bros., 2 Queen's Road
- IPSWICH.—A. E. Hiskey, Old Cattle Market. T. Shelbourne, St. Matthew Street. Mr. Fox, Fore Street. Mr. Fox, St. Helen's Street. Mr. Robertson, Back Hamlet. Mr. Joyce, Fore Street.
- JARROW.—L. Prescod, Railway Street.
- KENT.—E. J. Voss, 148 Broadway, Bexley Heath.
- LANCASHIRE.—John Turner, Scourbottom, Waterford. W. Restall, Station Bridge, Urnston.
- LEEDS.—C. H. Pickles, Ltd., 117 Albion Street. J. Bray, 95 Park Lane. J. Sutcliffe, West Street.
- LIVERPOOL.—S. Reeves, 316 Derby Road, Bootle. W. H. Smith & Son, 61 Dale Street.
- MANCHESTER.—Mrs. Tole, Whitelaw Road, Chorlton-cum-Hardy. John Heywood, Ltd., Deansgate. Abel Heywood & Son, 47-61 Lever Street. W. H. Smith & Son, Blackfriars Street. Mr. Bowman, Leicester Road, Higher Broughton. J. Davies, 223 Queen's Road, Miles Plattins.
- MONMOUTH.—Mr. Davies, Pontnewydd. Wm. Morris, Windsor Road, Griffithstown. Wyman & Son, Station Bookstall, Pontypool Road.
- NEATH.—W. G. Maybury, 57 Windsor Road.
- NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—W. H. Smith & Son, 2 Forth Place, Egdell's Quayside Newsagency, 16 Side. Mackay Bremer, late Watnough's, 30 Newgate Street. Mrs. Wild, 150 Newgate Street. Frazer, 111 New Bridge Street. T. Hirst, 6 Raby Street, Byker. M. E. Potter, High Spen.
- NORFOLK.—H. & H. Priest, Norwich Street, Fakenham. E. W. Jordan, 7 St. Benedict Street, Norwich. H. L. Roberts, 76 Barn Road, Norwich.
- NORTHAMPTON.—Mr. Bates, Bridge Street. A. Bryan, Barracks Road.
- NORTHUMBERLAND.—J. H. Spedding, 103 Newbiggin Road, Seaton Hirst, Ashington. Portland Printing Works, Station Road, Hirst, Ashington.
- NOTTINGHAM.—S. Pinder, 49 Bridlesmith Gate. Messrs. Berry & Son, Bentinck Road.
- PAISLEY.—The Progressive Bookstall, 43 New Street.
- PLYMOUTH.—F. J. Wake, 10 Martin Street.
- PRESTON.—Mr. Cottam, Tulkeith Brow.
- ROTHERHAM.—James Stansfield, College Street.
- SOUTHAMPTON.—C. W. Moor, 16 London Road.
- SOUTHEND-ON-SEA.—Harold Elliott, 1 Belle Vue Terrace.
- STOCKTON-ON-TEES.—Mr. Elgie, Bowesfield Lane.
- SWANSEA.—Reformers' Book Shop, Alexandra Road.
- TEDDINGTON.—H. H. Holwill, 105 High Street.
- TORQUAY.—L. Priston, 103 Union Street. A. Priston, 47 Market Street. A. Peters, Old Mill Road, Chelston. Mr. Ronayne Walnut Road. H. Peters, 193 Union Street. W. J. Peters, 37 Union Street. Mr. Hunt, Lucius Street.
- WALSALL.—The Old Book Shop, 59 Green Lane.
- WESTON-SUPER-MARE.—W. H. Smith & Son, Magdala Buildings, Walliscote Road. W. Trapnell, 82 Meadow Street. A. H. Hobbs, 21 Oxford Street. C. W. Maynard, 21 Locking Road.
- WILMSLOW.—J. H. Bayley, Manchester Road.

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, postage 2d.; or strongly bound in Cloth 3s. 6d., postage 2½d.

PIONEER PRESS PUBLICATIONS

A GRAMMAR OF FREETHOUGHT

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

(Issued by the Secular Society, Limited.)

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

Cloth Bound, with tasteful Cover Design. Price 5s., postage 3d.

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 1d.

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 P. W. 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 2½d.

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

A Book that Made History.

THE RUINS:

A SURVEY OF THE REVOLUTIONS OF EMPIRES
To which is added THE LAW OF NATURE.

By C. F. VOLNEY.

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

Price 5s., postage 2½d.

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

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.

LIFE AND EVOLUTION

By F. W. HEADLEY.

Large 8vo., 272 pp., with about 100 illustrations. An Outline of the theory of evolution, with discussions of the later theories of Mendel, De Vries, etc., etc.

Price 4s. 6d., postage 6d.

COMMUNISM AND CHRISTIANISM

By BISHOP W. MONTGOMERY BROWN, D.D.

A book that is quite outspoken in its attack on Christianity and on fundamental religious ideas. It is an unsparing criticism of Christianity from the point of view of Darwinism, and of Sociology from the point of view of Marxism. 204 pp.

Price 1s., post free.

Special terms for quantities.

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 2½d.

A New Propagandist Pamphlet.

CHRISTIANITY AND CIVILIZATION.

A Chapter from
The History of the Intellectual Development of Europe.

By JOHN WILLIAM DRAPER, M.D., LL.D.

Price 2d., postage ½d.

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.

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

THE "FREETHINKER."

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

One Year, 15s.; Six Months, 7s. 6d.;
Three Months, 3s. 9d.

Those who experience any difficulty in obtaining copies of the paper will confer a favour if they will write us, giving full particulars.

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