

The

FREETHINKER

FOUNDED • 1881

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

Registered at the General Post Office as a Newspaper

VOL. XLIV.—No. 1.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 6, 1924.

PRICE THREEPENCE

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page
1924—The Editor - - - - -	1
Did the Gospel Jesus ever Live?—J. T. Lloyd - - - - -	3
A Man Who Shook the World—Mimnermus - - - - -	4
The Myth of Resurrection—E. Egerton Stafford - - - - -	4
South African Jottings—Searchlight - - - - -	6
National Secular Society—Chapman Cohen - - - - -	9
Christian Principles in Business—A. W. Malcolmson - - - - -	10
Chats with Children—George Bedborough - - - - -	11
George Underwood—William Repton - - - - -	12
Egg First or Chick?—J. W. W. - - - - -	14
Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.	

Views and Opinions.

1924.

A happy New Year to Freethinkers everywhere, and a prosperous one for the Cause in which we are all interested. The latter is, perhaps, the most unselfish of all wishes; at least, it involves the largest number of men and women, for if Freethought is what we believe it to be, its growth will be to the benefit of all, believer and unbeliever alike. The Christian will benefit in having got rid of his superstition, and the Freethinker will be the happier for seeing that superstition is wiped out of the human mind. Not that any of us are likely to live long enough to witness that consummation. Religious systems do not spring up in a day nor do they perish in a generation. There is not a religious belief in existence which has not its roots in frames of mind which had their beginnings in the life lived by our ancestors thousands of generations ago; they have bitten deeply into our forms of speech, and into our social institutions, and the ordinary man and woman with their usual lack of reflection have come to take them for granted and as irremovable. It is no light task to war against so solidly entrenched a position, and it is something if we can see unmistakable signs of the enemy's weakening. But while the believer is comforted by the longevity of religious beliefs the unbeliever is strengthened by considering their mortality. For the most tenacious of religious beliefs and religious institutions weaken before the gradual development of humanity. That is a force none of the gods can withstand. They can survive oppression, but they succumb to the advance of knowledge and the growth of the race.

* * *

How We Stand.

It is not easy to point to any marked advance of Freethought in any special direction during the past year. The Blasphemy Laws remain unrepealed, there has been no direct move in the direction of removing the Bible from the schools, and so leaving the child mind free from theological pressure. The iniquity of the State subsidizing all the religious sects by remitting all rates and taxes on their buildings, remains, and there has been no help given to Freethinkers in the way of clearing religious ceremonies from our civic

life. Bigots still continue active against anything in the shape of direct Freethought—although they save their faces somewhat by offering a little patronage to a form of "liberal" thinking which is never likely to do them much harm, and which may even help them by diverting attention from the real issue. And the newspaper boycott on Freethought news continues with unabated strength. All this is on the losing side of the account. On the other hand, there is no mistaking the fact that so far as the general public is concerned, religious beliefs are fast losing their authority. Religion is commended to the people, not on account of its doctrinal truth, so much as because of its fancied utility. What are facetiously called advanced preachers are content to recommend religion on much the same grounds that a politician advises the making of a new road or a new system of sanitation. Freethinking ideas, the direct challenge to the whole circle of religious beliefs, have become so common that they no longer excite surprised comment, save in the less developed parts of the country. All these are important items on the profit side of the ledger, and they form the basis on which our plans for the future must rest.

* * *

The Dangers of Compromise.

But it is quite easy to overestimate the importance of a diffused liberalism on matters of religion. A couple of generations ago when the Churches felt themselves strong enough to oppose scientific teachings in the name of religion, and when the open intolerance and confessed narrowness of believers of themselves created a reaction among the more independent spirits, there was far more to be said on behalf of a policy of quiet permeation than is to be said at present. The Churches themselves then advertised the nature of the enemy by the character of their denunciations. They were foremost in emphasizing the fact that Atheism was the logical outcome of the new teaching, with the result that the issue between the Christian and the Freethinker was clear and understood. But as the Churches became more accommodating in their attitude the issue was blurred. Heresies that were once fiercely denounced were preached by the advanced clergy as part and parcel of "true Christianity," heresy of a very mild type became more or less respectable, and in this way Christian opposition to the only kind of Freethought that was of real social value could be manifested without incurring the opposition it deserved. We have seen this operate in the case of the Blasphemy Laws where many have excused themselves taking part in the defence of one threatened with imprisonment for the ridiculous offence of blasphemy on the ground that, provided the heresy was expressed in respectable language, the law would not operate to suppress it. We have seen it in the case of the weakening of many in their advocacy of secular education because the kind of Christianity taught in the schools was of a mild and harmless character—as though the placing of the Bible in the schools in a privileged position, with children being taught the fundamental Christian beliefs, could ever be harmless! It has also

been seen in the readiness of some to escape social odium by an advocacy of deliberate Freethought on the ground that Christianity was no longer so oppressive as it once was. The truth of the situation being that religion is never so dangerous as when it is accommodating, and the more it becomes so, the greater the need to keep its true nature before the public mind. After all, it is not a liberalizing of Christianity we are aiming at, but its destruction. No other end than that is worth bothering about, because to pursue the end of rationalizing Christianity is only to pave the way for its restoration.

* * *

Reunion with Rome.

An illustration of the truth of what has been said appears in the daily papers of a recent date. It is there disclosed that for several years there has been going on "conversations" between the head of the English Church and representatives of the Roman Catholic Church as to the possibility of a "reunion" between the two bodies. A hundred years ago such a reunion would have been declared an impossibility. Fifty years since it would have been described in almost the same terms. To-day we find it discussed as a probable fact, with such men as Dr. Gore and the Archbishop of Canterbury as the persons who declare they are carrying out the behests of a Church Conference. It looks as though those Freethinkers who declared that the final struggle would be between Atheism and the Roman Church were not so wide of the mark after all. It is useless talking of the decline of the Roman Church because a few priests here and there have left its ranks. The plain fact is that in this country the Roman Church has for years been getting more and more aggressive. It conducts a very widely-spread propaganda of both literature and preaching. It has come out into the open air and carries on its propaganda in thousands of open spaces. And as an invaluable aid it is able to appeal to the immense mass of superstition which is current in this country in every social rank, from the Court downward. That English Churchmen should be able to talk openly and officially of a possible reunion with Rome should give everyone "furiously to think." All over the Continent—all over the world, in fact—the Roman Church is still a power. It is still the largest and the best organised Church in Christendom. It has millions of obedient servants who place its interests before all others. *And it knows how to wait.* That is its most powerful and its most deadly quality. The Roman Catholic Church has watched the death or the decline of more than one civilization, and has joyfully hastened their decay. And although the conditions to-day may not make it so easy to destroy a civilization, it may still do much to retard its development or lower its character. Nor must it ever be forgotten that what the Roman Church is the other Churches are to the exact limits of their opportunity.

* * *

Half-way Houses.

The rationalizing of religion is one of the gravest dangers to genuine Freethought. That is a sentence which all Freethinkers would do well to take for a New Year's motto. There is no real gain to progress if a man or a Church gives up the plainly anthropomorphic god of the Bible and rests content with a god who is only a watered down edition of the old one. There is no real gain to give up belief in the demons and angels of the New Testament and to console oneself with other angels and demons of a little less objectionable character. We do not speak of a man as a genuinely reformed character if he gives up burglary and takes to picking pockets. What gain is it for men and women to disown the literal inspiration of the

Bible if they continue to impress upon the nation the importance of keeping the Bible in front of all as a book socially valuable to the English people and demand for it a privileged position in schools and colleges? These things are only making religion more tolerable, holding off the Freethinking attacker until such time as the defenders have regained their strength. It is not the precise form in which certain ideas are cast that we are fighting but the ideas themselves. We are not fighting the orthodox Christian conception of God only, but the idea of God. It is the idea of a future life as dominating this one against which we war, not the precise form of the idea as set forth by this or that Church. And the more the Churches, by their concessions to Freethought disguise the real nature of their teaching and of their aims, the more important it is that we should make their real aims and their real teaching plain to the people.

* * *

From the Housetops.

The old year has closed and the new one lies before us. The dividing line is a conventional one, but it serves as a point at which we may pause and look at what we have done and decide what we have yet to do. And I suggest to every reader of this paper that there is no more important work in which they can engage than the propaganda of Freethought. Every now and again one comes across those who say that the fight is over, the victory is won. I wish it were true. In a material sense fighting for Freethought brings nothing in the shape of either ease or profit. But it is not true that the fight is over. The number of clergymen who make even a profession of liberal opinions is a mere handful compared to the thousands who are as ignorant and as bigoted as ever. There are millions of people in this country who to all practical intent are still living in the mental environment of two or three centuries ago. Somehow or the other we have to get hold of these. We shall not do this quickly or easily, but it can be done. Our spoken propaganda should be increased at least tenfold, the distribution of our literature should be intensified fifty-fold. The Churches see to it that their message is carried everywhere. Cannot we do something to see that our message is spread abroad to the same extent. Let us be more aggressive. The world is apt to take one at one's own valuation, and a Freethought that comes before the public proud of itself and of its traditions, fearless in its message and uncompromising with every kind of superstition, would go a long way towards commanding success. I would, if I had the power, convert every Freethinker into a propagandist. For I believe with Kingdon Clifford that if religion is a lie, it should not be whispered in secret, but shouted from the housetops. Freethought is not something for the old and the educated alone. It is for all; it is preached for the benefit of all, and it should be the pride of all who can to take a hand in its dissemination.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

MR. H. A. JONES ON "G.B.S." AND "H.G.W."

Not that I mind being called a baffle-headed Juggins by a person on Mr. Shaw's level of discernment, any more than I mind being called "three pennyworth of cat's-meat" by a person on Mr. Wells' level of refinement. I treasure all these trinkets and felicities of expression.

I have already settled the question of his absurdity with Mr. Wells—amicably, I hope. Since coming to an agreement with him on the matter, he has generously continued to furnish me with lavish additional proofs. But I am already fully informed and convinced, and he may now desist.—Henry Arthur Jones, "The English Review."

Did the Gospel Jesus ever Live?

I.

THE DOCUMENTS.

It is a most significant fact that no biography of Jesus Christ was ever written. This is frankly admitted by many eminent theologians. The present Dean of St. Paul's goes so far as to assert that "of Paul's Divine Master no biography can ever be written." The Four Gospels are treated by the orthodox Church as truly historical documents, written under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost; but when examined in the light of literary criticism they are seen to be nothing of the sort. In his famous article on the *Gospels* in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, Professor Schmiedel declares that "they are all of them written by worshippers of Jesus"; but it is far more likely that they were composed by early creators of the Church's Christ. This is clearly demonstrated by a comparison of the first three with the fourth. What we are anxious to emphasize at this stage, however, is that apart from these documents there are no alleged biographical sketches of Jesus in existence, and that these were not written until Jesus had been dead from fifty to a hundred and fifty years. These are tremendously important facts to which due attention is seldom paid.

Let us now critically examine these documents, especially the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, commonly called the Synoptics. Professor Schmiedel devotes one section of his article to a discussion of the "Credibility of the Synoptics," and as he was Professor of New Testament exegesis at Zurich, his views deserve the closest consideration. He declares that the chronological framework of these Gospels must be classed among their most untrustworthy elements. He says:—

Often it is impossible to have any confidence when Matthew so frequently says, "then," "on that day," or the like, or when Mark says, "straightway," that the event really followed on what immediately precedes it in the narrative. Were we to take the evangelists literally, an enormous number of events would have to be compressed within the limits of certain days (e.g., Mat. xii, 15; xiii., 52), and there would be only a very moderate number of days of the public ministry of Jesus with regard to which any events are recorded at all.....The data are often even in direct contradiction to each other. In Mat. viii., 12, especially, matters stand in a quite different chronological connection from that which they have in Mark and Luke.

Many other similar instances might be supplied, but those already given abundantly suffice to show the unreliability of the Gospel records. Dr. Schmiedel finds equal unreliability in the order of the narrative. As a matter of fact, to him most of the narrative is incredible. On the subject of miracles, for example, he writes as follows:—

It would clearly be wrong, in an investigation such as the present, to start from any such postulate or axiom as that miracles are impossible. At the same time, on the other hand, some doubt as to the accuracy of the accounts cannot fail to arise in the mind even of the stoutest believer in miracles when he observes such points as the following: (a) How contradictory they are. In Mark i., 32-34, all the sick were brought to Jesus and He healed some; in Matthew viii., 16, they brought many and He healed all; in Luke iv., 40, they brought all and He healed all, as also in Matthew iv., 24. In Mark iii., 7 and 10, a great multitude followed Him and He healed all. According to this the view of the evangelist must have been that He was followed exclusively by sick persons.

After citing a large number of contradictory accounts of the same miracles, the Professor remarks

that they "show only too clearly with what lack of concern for historical precision the evangelists write," and that "the conclusion is inevitable that even the one evangelist whose story in any particular case involves less of the supernatural than that of the others, is still very far from being entitled on that account to claim implicit acceptance of his narrative."

It is a well-known fact that to-day not a few otherwise orthodox and prominent divines acknowledge that the Gospel story of the resurrection of Jesus cannot be accepted as true, and that they could not believe in the Resurrection if there were no other evidence of its reality. On the face of it the Gospel accounts of it are so contradictory as to be absolutely incredible. According to Matthew and Mark, the disciples, "the eleven disciples went into Galilee, unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them," and that "when they saw Him they worshipped Him, but some doubted." Luke, however, informs us that the disciples were still at Jerusalem where Jesus appeared to them. More than once He is represented as entering the room where they were assembled without opening door or window, and standing in the midst, saying, "Peace be unto you." He appeared and disappeared at will. He sat down with two disciples, joining them at their evening meal, and then suddenly vanished. He partakes of bread and fish like a living man of flesh and blood, yet locked doors offer him no barriers whatever. After forty days of these appearances and disappearances he finally disappeared, and has never been seen since.

There are still a few who regard the Gospels as Divinely inspired and inerrant documents. They are totally blind to the mistakes and contradictions which they contain, and when they are pointed out to them they characterise them as merely nominal, and capable of being completely harmonized. Dr. Lewis Edwards, the greatest theologian Wales has ever had, writing about seventy or eighty years ago, maintains that "nothing is more certain than that all the Gospels had been written and disseminated in the Christian Church within, at latest, about fifty years after Christ's death." Then he adds: "Since the history was written in the age in which Jesus Christ lived and died, it follows of necessity that the story is true." But Dr. Edwards was wholly mistaken, for it is now an established fact that not one of the Gospels was written and widely spread so early as that, and also that the discrepancies found in the Gospels cannot really be harmonized at all. The age of the harmonists has past and can never return. No one can honestly repeat to-day the statement made by Quenstedt, a pastor of Wittenberg, some three centuries ago:—

Scripture is a fountain of infallible truth and exempt from all error; every word of it is absolutely true, whether expressive of dogma, of morality, or of history.

As is well known, criticism began its work on the Old Testament, and for a long time orthodox people comforted themselves with the declaration that it would never dare to attack the New Testament. To-day, however, even many Liberal Christians have dared to lay their critical hands upon the New Testament, especially upon the Four Gospels and the Book of the Acts, challenging the accuracy of their history. Professor Bacon, of Yale University, tells us in his valuable little book, *The Making of the New Testament*, that "the Christology of the Synoptic literature is an Apotheosis doctrine, falling back on the historical Jesus," around Whom, he admits, a great deal of legendary material has wound itself. Schmiedel goes further still and pronounces most of the Gospel narratives entirely incredible, and his sceptical article appeared in a work, the chief editor of which was a Canon in the Anglican Church. The Divine inspira-

tion of the Gospels is an exploded theory, and their narrative is now critically examined just the same way as any other ancient literature.

J. T. LLOYD.

A Man Who Shook the World

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

Care I for the limb, the thews, the stature, bulk, and big assemblage of a man? Give me the spirit, Master Shallow.
—Shakespeare.

CHRISTIAN Evidence writers used to be very fond of exploiting Napoleon on behalf of their creed. They told us pretty little anecdotes in which the great soldier was represented as pointing to the sky, and talking like a curate fresh from a theological college. They told us that Napoleon compared the fame of Alexander and Cæsar with that of Jesus Christ, and that he thought the hero of the Gospels had the advantage over the military men.

The real Napoleon talked in a very different fashion, and was not always respectful to Orthodoxy. He preferred Mohammedanism to Christianity. He objected to the Christian religion because it damned Plato and Socrates, and he questioned the justice of eternal punishment for finite offences. He also agreed with the Mohammedans that Christians who worshipped three deities must necessarily be polytheists. "As for me," Napoleon broke out on one occasion, "my opinion is formed that Christ never existed." Further, he proclaimed himself a Materialist. In all this he was a true son of the great Revolution, which has changed, and is changing, the face of the world.

In practice Napoleon was handicapped by his ambitions and by his attempts at statesmanship. He saw that other statesmen were cynical in using religion and priests to further their schemes, and in this matter he followed the line of least resistance. So cynical was he that the austere Emerson regarded Napoleon as the supreme type of the man-of-the-world. The type is still with us, but the Rothermeres of our day are not so honest as Napoleon. He frankly admitted the impeachment. Listen to his own words:—

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

This patronage of superstition was understandable, if not defensible. In the Ages of Faith bigotry was a very ugly thing and had to be reckoned with. Throughout history rulers have "played to the gallery." The Roman Emperors did it systematically. Henry of Navarre retracted his Protestant views, saying that "Paris was well worth a mass." In our own days the "Holy Carpet" of the Mohammedans has been saluted by British warships, and received with military honours at the hands of Christian officers and soldiers. Napoleon's Catholicism was merely assumed to please the French people, the majority of whom were then Roman Catholics. Yet his treatment of the Pope, the head of the Catholic Church, was sufficient to turn that aged prelate's hair white, and curl it afterwards. In forcing the Pontiff to attend his coronation, he had no other object except that of impressing the people. His tolerance of the Roman Catholic Church was not for any higher reason than that of consolidating his rule, for he was sufficiently sagacious to know that priests would be better harnessed than as open enemies. Napoleon always used religion to further his ambitions. He was himself as irreligious as Voltaire, but he had none of that passion for humanity which distinguished the philosopher of

Fernay. His life was a bitter example of vaulting ambition which overleapt itself. When Napoleon died he was a sorely disappointed man. After all his glories and victories he died like a poisoned rat in a hole.

Napoleon's character has baffled so many men, and his amazing personality impressed everybody. Even his own brother was mesmerised, for after Napoleon's death, he marvelled at the impression his dead brother had produced on men. "He was not so much a great, as a good man," he said with touching and child-like simplicity. He was not the only man deceived by this Colossus, who bestrode Europe for a generation, and whose greatness endures in the pages of history. Even after his death this characteristic told in some inexplicable way upon those who came in contact with him. Ensign Duncan, a young English officer, who was on duty at Longwood at the time of Napoleon's death, and who visited the death-chamber, has recorded his impression. Writing home to his mother, he said that to see a man who had caused the world so much trouble lying dead in a small room was an awesome sight. "It struck me so," he added, "I could have gazed on him for hours, have taken his hand and kissed it, but I could scarce breathe."

Critics who are wise after the event say that Napoleon's conquests were splendid rather than useful; but they cannot deny that the ardour of his magnetic personality set France afire. It inflamed every soldier who dragged the heavy cannon over the weary sands of Egypt, and every warrior who carried his rifle amid the terrible snows of Russia. Napoleon also imparted to his marshals something of his own impetuous and adventurous career. Few men so impressed themselves upon their generation. When he died, it was as though the firmament had lost some mighty star, in whose vanishing the world was left to the blackness of night. When Napoleon went flashing and glowing down the troubled skies, trailing clouds of glory, his sudden quenching afflicted men as with the sense of some elemental phenomenon. Truly, a most amazing personality!
MIMNERMUS.

The Myth of Resurrection.

WHETHER a particular god or goddess is, or is not, conceived of as exclusively a vegetation deity, or as solar deity, or as a combination of both, has little or nothing to do with the present series of essays. What is of importance is the underlying idea of death and resurrection.

If at times I should stress one aspect of a god or goddess, by treating a particular deity as being solar when others would be inclined to class the deity as belonging to the vegetation type, the reader need only substitute his own conception of the deity, and still follow the idea of death and resurrection which underlies the myth under discussion.

Osiris dies and is born again, whether he is sun-god or corn-god. In fact as corn-god he may be looked upon as but the incarnation of the fructifying and re-vivifying powers of the sun.

It must be remembered that mythology is labyrinthine. Numerous interpretations are to be found for almost any myth told of important god and goddess; and in many cases various myths are related of one and the same god or goddess. A deity may be solar, vegetational, phallic, or simply semi-human according to the myths related of him. Is not Osiris the sun, the corn-god, the tree-spirit, the phallic principle, and the mythic king of Egypt all in one?

It would be strange, indeed, if the religious ideas of primitive and ancient man were clear and precise when there is so much lack of clarity and definiteness in the

religious ideas of educated people to-day. When modern Christians cannot agree as to the exact nature of Jesus, claimed to be recorded in a literature written under divine guidance, it is not to be expected that primitive and ancient Egyptians, Babylonians, Greeks, and various savages, etc., should never have varied in their religious mythology.

That early man's desire to live should have found expression in the belief that life is continued beyond the grave is not surprising, when we remember that the fact of death would not easily be appreciated by the primitive mind. To the majority, if not to all, of the savage peoples of whom we have record, what is now called another life after death, was but a continuation of this life. Death being but an incident, just as sleep or a non-fatal accident was an incident in the life of primitive man. Consequently, the savage was in the habit of supplying the dead with such articles as he was wont to use in his everyday life, so that he might carry on as usual in the mysterious and unseen region to which he had made his departure.

With all its mystery, the idea of life continued beyond the grave was quite natural to the savage. No doubt the thought that his near kinsman or friend was making a prolonged stay in some strange place, and the further thought that he would probably not return, would puzzle the savage mind. But, all ideas concerning the continued life would at first be entirely in terms of the normal life to which the savage was accustomed. There would be no fantastic ideas about spiritual resurrection and immortality such as we meet with in later religious conceptions, and at the present day.

But it is from primitive man's idea of life continued beyond the grave that later and modern ideas of resurrection and immortality have developed.

The continuity between the primitive and the modern ideas of what happens after death, as far as religious people are concerned, is strongly marked by the fact that the most spiritualized ideas of resurrection and immortality are determined and conditioned by the facts of this life, as experienced and understood by the religionists who profess to aspire above the material aspect of nature. This is especially so with regard to economic and social status. Intellectual status does not seem to count so much.

Just as the savage believed he would live beyond the grave much in the same way as he had lived on this side of the grave with, perhaps, more ease and a greater supply of the things he most desires, so others have believed likewise but, in some cases, the fundamental belief has been obscured by theological mystifications.

The wealthy and comfortably established religionist of the present day believes that life beyond the grave will be to him a celestial glorification of all the wealth, comfort, pomp, and grandeur which he has enjoyed during his terrestrial life. While those who suffer and toil hold beliefs concerning a future life in which their present conditions are but improved or reversed. Doubtless, many a man who has to use a spade, or push a wheel-barrow, looks forward to playing a harp or blowing a trumpet when translated to the realms of bliss; while, no doubt, many a washer-woman has visions of being train-bearer to the Virgin Mary.

As the conditions of life have played so great a part in determining man's belief in a life after death, it is not surprising that the economic factor should be one of the outstanding features of myth and doctrine concerning resurrection. Sun and vegetation deities are as much economic deities as they are symbolic of the principles of life and reproduction, even when they are almost lost as it were in the mists of priestly theory concerning immortality. Demeter and Persephone,

Osiris and Isis, Christ and Mithra, are of as much importance, to the generality of mankind, in their aspect of economic deities who revivify nature in spring-time and thus supply foodstuffs, as they are in the rôle of spiritual acrobats giving a spectacular display of resurrection from the dead.

Persephone resurrected in the form of waving corn-fields; Osiris returned to life and causing the land of Egypt to bring forth everything in plenty; Christ in the form of the Easter lamb, or egg, foretaste of the abundant harvest to come, give practical satisfaction even to the most spiritually minded of devotees.

It is significant that bread and wine are in widespread use at the "Sacrament of the Lord's Supper" held in Christian Churches, as an oft-repeated small edition of the Easter celebration of the death and resurrection of the Sun-god, Christ. The food and drink supplying powers of a solar or vegetation deity could not be more materially and substantially represented on a small scale. Perhaps there is nothing better than a good Christian stomach for bringing spiritual matters down to earth.

In view of the importance of the revival of vegetation and the return to power of the sun at the vernal equinox, it is not surprising that the idea of resurrection should have centred very largely in the worship of solar and vegetation deities. The triumph of the sun over the powers of darkness and death, and the reviving of nature with the promise of abundant harvests, giving a plentiful supply of corn, vegetables and fruits, along with a luxuriant growth of the vine, were events likely to inspire the primitive mind with thoughts of man's own resurrection, especially if he could, by mystic ceremonies, become identified with or closely related to the deity whom he worshipped.

Without suggesting that the idea of man's individual resurrection has exclusively developed from ideas concerning the annual, or even daily, resurrection of the sun, and the annual revival of vegetation, there seems to be little room for doubt that these events were important factors in the evolution of a doctrine which has too often been considered essentially Christian.

It is not until our ideas of the doctrine of resurrection become de-Christianized that we are able to view it in proper perspective, and to see that it, along with the doctrine of immortality, belongs to an early form of human thought. As in the case of other doctrines, there is nothing unique about the Christian promise of a life to come, unless it be the Christian's inordinate desire to turn myth and legend into historical fact. And perhaps he is not unique even in that, especially where *religious* myth and legend are concerned.

As J. M. Robertson says:—

The idea of resurrection, developed as a doctrine of individual immortality from the primary conception of the annual revival of vegetation, had become part of the mystery rituals of Osiris and Dionysos, and of the Elusinia, long before the Christian era (*Pagan Christs*, p. 144).

Far from being introduced-into the world by Christianity, the belief in resurrection was one of the most attractive beliefs to the Pagan mind, and the dramatic representations of the death, burial, and resurrection of the beloved gods, must have formed the most fascinating part of the mystery rituals so common to the ancient world.

The mourning and searching-for the lost Persephone, the lost Attis and Adonis, and then the rejoicing which followed when the much lamented god or goddess had been ceremonially found to have risen from the dead was doubtless an emotional experience as profound to the Pagan believer as was any Christian's experience when, later on, he came to celebrate the sorrow and the joy of Eastertide. In reality, the Christian continued the same emotionalism, and ex-

pressed himself concerning it under cover of a different phraseology.

The crucified Jesus was as mythical as the slain Osiris, Tammuz, Adonis, or any other dead sun-god, and his resurrection was real only in the sense in which their resurrection was real; as the sun risen to power and glory at the vernal equinox. Or, if the god were conceived of in terms of vegetation, when all nature was seen to revive and give promise of renewed life to man, whose own activity and happiness so much depends upon mother earth's fruitfulness.

When the Christian believes that the god Jesus rose from the dead, after being buried in a rock-tomb, his belief is on a par with that of many thousands of religionists in ancient Persia and in the Roman Empire who believed that the resurrection of Mithra took place from a rock-tomb.

Even if the historicity of a man Jesus could be proved, down to his death and burial in a rock-tomb, the idea of his resurrection as an incarnation of a deity would still remain mythical, as resurrection from the dead is unknown in the experience of man; and the assumption of divinity in the case of Jesus is a mere begging of the question, and no more capable of verification than is the divinity of Mithra, or any other supposed incarnation of deity. The ideas of divinity and resurrection are the outcome of the same mode of thought in the one case as in the others.

E. EGERTON STAFFORD.

(To be Continued.)

South African Jottings.

RELIGIOUS controversy is once more to the fore in the Bloemfontein *Friend*. It seems that the members of the "Church of Good Society" in that pre-eminently respectable city have been backsliding of late. Their attendance at the Cannibal feast had fallen off, and they were fast degenerating into a mob of mere slackers in the matter of church attendance. The old dope seemed to have lost its bite, and something more stimulating was needed. Hence the local bishop invited his brother of Pretoria to come and take a hand in the game; and a first-class narcotizing stunt was organized in the shape of a ten days' mission. That Dr. Neville Talbot's efforts were stimulating is unquestionable, for now all the Fundamentalists in the city are wildly clamouring for his scalp, with all the fierce gusto of Red Indians. These funny little champions of verbal inspiration and literal interpretation are inexpressibly shocked to find that the Bishop treats the Book of Genesis, and indeed the whole of the Old Testament, with as scant respect as would any ordinary Atheists, while the fact, that he holds the evolutionary doctrine of man's descent with the ape from a common ancestor, has driven them to the verge of frenzied despair. Says the Bishop in effect, Genesis is all bunkum; just a lot of Semitic lore scraped together by Jewish writers, late in history to serve as inspiration or religious dope. He professes extreme anxiety for the liberation of the young from such soul destroying dogmas as that of the Creation, as well as *Old Testament conceptions of God, some of them crudely primitive and immoral*. The evolutionary view of the world, he says, is established by evidences so overwhelming in their totality that it cannot be denied. Man and the ape originated from a common ancestor, and not from the Mesopotamian dust of Eden's flower beds; and instead of the world having been created by the Trinity in 4004 B.C., as Bible margins show, it was certain from the researches of archæologists that civilizations were flourishing in 6000 B.C.

All this is very instructive and edifying, except, of course, to the bibliolaters, whose outraged piety finds expression in the columns of the *Friend*. The editor of the *Friend*, as becomes a cautious journalist, supports the Bishop in a somewhat weak leader. With wonderful magnanimity and liberality the Bishop says, "There is nothing to shy at in science so long as science keeps to its

job of the discovery of facts and leaves their interpretation to others. Very nice indeed! And who are these others we may enquire? Presumably the successors of the old ecclesiastical gang whose main work has been not only the suppression of the facts, but the blotting out of their discoverers. We hardly fancy science is likely to give the Bishop, and those of his cloth, a monopoly in interpretation. Has the Bishop so soon forgotten Huxley and Tyndall, Schafer, and Sherrington, and many more? The Bishop will have no tampering with what he calls "the main truths of the Gospel," but does not specify what he means by this phrase. But one question will occur to the "ornary cuss," and that is if dope derived from the Old Testament is bad for young minds, how about the dope in the New? Does not the New Testament contain dogmas and teachings every whit as absurd and "crudely immoral" as those in the Old? Are they not interdependent with the same foster mother? Did not the same authority that stamped the one endorse the other? What, for example, could be more "crudely immoral" than the doctrine of the Incarnation, which rests on Matt. I, 18, 20, 23, and Luke I, 34, 35? Here you have the Holy Ghost descending upon a virgin bride, like Jupiter upon Danac in a golden cloud, and the visit of the handsome male angel Gabriel! No wonder poor Joseph had visions of the divorce court. Now how would the Bishop explain human parthenogenesis in terms of evolutionary law? If human parthenogenesis is not in accordance with the laws of biology why not treat the Incarnation with as little ceremony as the Creation? You cannot run with the hare and hunt with the hounds. If Bishop Talbot rejects the Creation yarn because it is intrinsically absurd and demonstrably false he is logically bound to reject the Incarnation, Resurrection, Ascension, and all the rest of the bag of tricks. Reject the dogma of the Creation, and the Fall goes with it, as some of the Bishop's opponents pointed out. Reject the Incarnation, and the figure of a Divine Saviour tumbles in the dust, while the supernatural basis of Christianity vanishes in smoke. There is only one way of escape from this embarrassing dilemma, and we should advise Dr. Talbot to follow the lead of a brother bishop, Dr. Montgomery Brown, and taking his courage in both hands cast to the four winds the last shred of lying superstition, and like Bishop Brown, face the world as an honest Atheist.

Harrismith, O.F.S.

SEARCHLIGHT.

ORTHODOXY.

Nought loves another as itself,
Nor venerates another so,
Nor is it possible to thought
A greater than itself to know.

And, Father, how can I love you
Or any of my brothers more?
I love you like the little bird
That picks up crumbs around the door.

The priest sat by, and heard the child;
In trembling zeal he seized his hair;
He led him by his little coat,
And all admired the priestly care.

And standing on the altar high
"Lo! What a friend is here," said he,
"One who sets reason up for judge
Of our most holy mystery."

The weeping child could not be heard,
The weeping parents wept in vain,
They stript him of his little shirt,
And bound him in an iron chain.

And burned him in a holy place
Where many had been burned before!
The weeping parents wept in vain;
Are such things done on Albion's shore?

—William Blake (1759-1827).

Acid Drops.

Mr. Shortt, who was Home Secretary at the time when J. W. Gott was imprisoned for blasphemy, and who refused to take any steps to mitigate the savage sentence inflicted by Justice Avory, has just explained why he reprieved Ronald True. At the annual dinner of the Medico-Legal Society, he said that the reprieve had no relation to what took place at the trial, but was because True "was not in a position to make his peace with God." So that True owes his life to the fact that he could not make it up with God. If he could have made his peace with God, Mr. Shortt would have hanged him out of hand.

This is really a very curious thing. It is quite true that nearly all the murderers we have read about who have been hanged have been on quite good terms with God when they were executed, and as Christ and preachers tell us that this is the proper end and aim of man, they were, *ipso facto*, in a position that every Christian should envy. Their crime might have led to their being hanged; but, on the other hand, it put them right with God, and that is the great thing. Now, if J. W. Gott could have put himself right with God, what would have happened? If he had been let out he might have got wrong again, so it would have been to his immortal interest to have been kept in prison. So, we imagine, Mr. Shortt would have reasoned. All the same, it is very curious. One man cannot be hanged because he has not put himself right with God. Another is imprisoned because he does not believe there is a God to get right with. And Mr. Shortt and his medical advisers are the ones who decide, first, that there is a God to get right with, and next, whether a man is in a state to get right with Him.

After considerable discussion the Bath Education Committee has decided to omit from one of the school hymns a verse which runs:—

The rich man in his castle,
The poor man at his gate,
God made them high or lowly,
And ordered their estate.

Religiously there seems nothing wrong with the verse. God made all things, and rich and poor are among them all. Besides it has always been one of the teachings of historic Christianity that things were ordered as the hymn says. And if Christians have come to a different conclusion, it is because the advance of intelligence has made it impossible for people to believe the old teachings.

The *Daily Express*, commenting on the omission, thinks it folly to object to such verses merely because they represent a Victorian point of view. For other reasons we also object to this bowdlerising of religious hymns, and we do not at all agree with those who regard such revisions as an advance. While they are there they keep before the people the true nature of Christianity. When they are omitted this is forgotten and Christianity gains credit for a humanitarianism it does not possess. For the significant thing is that for many centuries the whole of the Christian Church taught that the poor were created to fill their place in the social structure, and it was blasphemy to attempt to create an order that should have it otherwise. "The poor ye have always with you," said the Jesus of the New Testament, and the Church has seen to it that that saying was well illustrated in actual life. A handful of rich bestowing a little charity on the multitude of poor was the Christian's ideal social state, and the result has been entrenched wrong, grasping privilege, servility on the one side, and intolerance on the other, with, in modern times, an army of men and women who live by tinkering with the poverty and misery that their religion has helped to perpetuate.

A new mystery play is to be produced in Leeds on January 7 in St. Edward's Church, Holbeck. It is to be played with the approval of the Bishops of Ripon and

Whitby, and one of the characters is to be God Almighty as "a majestic, golden-gowned, purple-cloaked woman, flaunting high, proud, green feathers." This seems a return to an early form in a religious play in which God was depicted as an old man with a long beard. Of course, that was before the days of woman's rights, and, no doubt, the Bishops of Ripon and Whitby consider themselves as quite up to date in introducing a member of the opposite sex. We do not suppose that the play will emulate the old mysteries in which the God was represented fumbling in the dark while he created the sun and moon, and Adam and Eve were shown in a state of complete nudity. It is said by one of the old writers that the fixing of the fig-leaf always created great interest among the audience. Readers who are curious in these matters may find some very interesting information in the collection of miracle plays published about a hundred years ago by William Hone.

Another nail has been driven in the coffin of Christianity by Mr. George Bernard Shaw in his acute reasoning over the sentence passed on Mr. Henry Norman Purkess, who believes the Bible to be the word of God. It would appear to be the time when Christians should take a duster and wipe off the blackboard of history all the chalk marks about things they don't know, and start afresh with things that are known. To quote Joseph Conrad: "Those who read me know my convictions that the world, the temporal world, rests on a very few simple ideas; so simple that they must be as old as the hills." Any reader who includes the Athanasian Creed or religious quiddities and oddities in this statement will be severely punished.

In the words of the writer of the article, "Nature and Men," in the *Times Literary Supplement*, "we crave for an anchor and a buoy." And, usually, that advice which is supplied by our nautical be-gathered Bishops is all at sea. They make their shipmates sick with a dose of Original Sin and profess to cure it with a triangle.

There are many reasons for preserving Christmas, but great masses of food and bottles of drink succeed in locating the exact position of the Englishman's God at this time of the year. Freethinkers will be the last to trouble about mankind worshipping in that direction.

During the war, while it was thought essential that the Government should get every man into the army that it was possible to get, the authorities promised that when the war was over the question of compulsory attendance at Church service should be considered, and some half promise was given that in the army men might be permitted either to go to Church or to stay away. Since the war the Government has treated this promise as it has treated others, as a mere scrap of paper, and soldiers are marched to Church like so many schoolboys and punished if they stay away. As they are washed, fed, clothed, shaved, put to bed and get up to order, the authorities evidently think that they should also pray to order, and the army officials will see that they do it. Probably there is an element of danger in treating soldiers as thinking and responsible beings.

We are reminded of this broken promise by the case of a Roman Catholic soldier who refused to fall in to parade with a Church of England party. The officer told him that he must parade with the rest, although he need not enter Church. It looks like the Church of England God was to note that all the men were on parade and that they all set off to Church, but it was hoped that he would not notice if one or two slipped quietly away from the service. In the end the soldier was tried by court martial, and sentence for this horrible offence is to be pronounced later. But why cannot the army leave a man to either take his religion or go without it? Perhaps they are afraid that very few would take it. And why do not those parsons who profess to believe in freedom in reli-

gious matters, agitate to get the compulsory worship of the army abolished? The reason, we take it, is that they do not believe in freedom in religion at all. And when the chance offers itself, they compel all who can be compelled to have the religion of which they approve. The utmost they will then do is to share the plunder in the shape of permitting equal privileges to such other religious sects as they are not strong enough to dominate.

This business of getting on the right side of God is a very serious affair. Two or three weeks ago, when it was thought the cattle plague in this country was decreasing, the Churches of Cheshire offered up prayers that God would remove the disease which was afflicting the cattle. But the disease went on, and on Friday last in Chester Cathedral the following prayer was offered:

O Lord, who didst not despise the companionship of the ox and the ass, have pity on our cattle in Cheshire and turn away the plague that has fallen upon them.

Comfort the farmers, and fill again with herds and prosperity the lonely fields and empty shippens, so that we may rejoice in Thy goodness.

We do not know what this prayer is supposed to effect, but the fact that the Government subsidy is nearing exhaustion has probably something to do with the petition. And we wonder whether there is a gentle sarcasm in the hint that the Lord has always been kindly disposed towards asses? They have certainly not been wanting in praise of his goodness, even when others have quite failed to perceive it. But the whole policy is wrong. There is not the least use in *begging* the Lord to do things without at the same time setting a time limit and imposing penalties in case of failure to comply with the demands made. Why not try another plan? Let them inform our Lord that unless the plague stops within seven days all the churches and chapels in Cheshire will be closed, no more prayers will be said and no more worship offered. Then we should see what would happen. But we are quite sure that the plan of begging the Lord to do something and then going on praising him as before, whether he does it or not, is quite a mistake. All it does is to illustrate the sentence which says that he did not despise the companionship of asses. They have returned the compliment by being among his most persistent worshippers.

A number of thefts from Churches have taken place in West Surrey, the latest being the stealing of six rugs and other articles from the Parish Church at Chertsey. What has become of the guardian angels? Are they on strike?

Bound up in our Christian civilization is a statement made by Dr. Norwood, Pastor of the City Temple. Quoting from the *Daily News*, it was made from the pulpit, to the effect that gas masks were being made for every man, woman, and child in the British Isles. Our pious contemporary, with the sublime wisdom of an ass, turns this and the War Office and Woolwich Arsenal denial into a question of statistics and, with figures, proves that we shall be involved in war in 900 years' time. We have one or two comments to make on this, as we regard mankind of more importance than the journalism of the *Daily News*. If Dr. Norwood is wrong or right, it is a logical conclusion to arrive at, in face of evidence that can be taken from the air. It is too much to expect horse sense from the *Daily News*, and European affairs have gone too far for secrecy or conspiracy or anything but straight dealing to save us, and we wish all warmongers joy of the next war, when they will be at the front wherever they are, and tin hats and gas-masks will be necessary, for Flag-Days.

Sir James Cantle is a well-known surgeon, and when he is talking on his own ground it would be foolish for a layman to contradict him. But the most eminent man opens himself to correction when he speaks on a subject on which he is obviously ill-informed. Sir James is reported as saying the other day, "Everything that Moses

uttered was founded on physiological and hygienic fact. He was the real founder of all our laws of medicine. He never made a mistake in diagnosis or treatment." If Sir James is correctly reported that is obvious nonsense. Perhaps when he next indulges in such comments—at a semi-religious gathering, he would never venture to talk in that way before a critical audience—he will tell us the exact scientific value of the mosaic cure for leprosy, and what the blood of a bird placed on the tip of the thumb and on the tip of the big toe of the right foot, etc., has to do with it. The biblical teaching with regard to disease is that the Lord sent it, and the corollary to that is the Peculiar People.

The regulations about food, to which Sir James referred, have nothing whatever to do with hygiene. The regulation to which Sir James specifically refers—that of not drinking milk after eating meat—was not in the interest of the human, but was intended to preserve the animal from harm that might occur through some magical process. And that regulation is not peculiar to Moses. It is a common one among savages who have never heard of Moses, and is carried out for the same ridiculous reason. So, again, with the prohibition against eating pork. In this instance we are dealing with the taboo placed on a tribal totem. Among the Semitic tribes the pig, along with certain other animals, were objects of religious veneration, and such animals are either never eaten, or, if they are, it is done ceremoniously. In this respect we are in the region of religious taboo. And Sir James Cantle would do well to read a reliable book on this subject before he again ventures on fields that are obviously strange to him.

Naturally, among the innumerable customs formed by savages there are some that are good and a lot that are bad. And in the course of time it follows that the dangerous ones will be gradually dropped, and the better ones, hit on quite accidentally, will be preserved. There is nothing to be wondered at in this. Life itself is a series of experiments, and in the long run we manage to keep those which are least harmful, and it would be indeed strange if we never hit upon a beneficial custom. In that case the race would long since have died out.

Finally, the alleged superior health of the Jew—a belief based largely upon a little average longer life—is, so far as it is placed to the credit of Jewish food customs, nonsense. So far as it is true it is an outcome of the sociological history of the Jew, not because of his religion. If Jews are comparatively immune from certain diseases, they are more immune to others—notably those which have a basis in nervous strain or derangement. Diabetes is a complaint to which they, in common with other city dwellers, are prone, and insanity is also fairly high, and greater vitality appears to be largely the outcome of better care given to children. And here the issue is a purely sociological one. Thanks to the savagery of Christians, the Jew was for centuries compelled to find within the four walls of the home the companionship and social life which Christians found outside. This naturally led to a strengthening of home life, and in this the children benefited. To the Jew home became his club and the centre of his social circle. If it were not his own house, it was the house of a brother Jew, and on balance the result was the same. For this the Jew has to thank the Christian, with his religious hatred and persecution. And it may interest Sir James to know that in proportion as Jews are permitted to share in the life of Christians they are beginning to resemble these in their peculiar vices, while losing the strength of some of their enforced virtues.

A catalogue announces for sale a book which contains on the cover a picture of King David dressed in the costume of the time of King Charles I. It is well that he was not depicted in the costume which he wore when he danced before the Lord. That would indeed have shocked Mrs. Grundy. It would have been too much for even the chaste susceptibilities of the Bishop of London.

National Secular Society.

THE rules of the National Secular Society give to each member an opportunity of commencing the New Year well by arranging that all subscriptions fall due on January 1. It is at the request of the Executive I am issuing this public notice, and it is earnestly hoped that it will be duly regarded by all. But while all members are subscribers, all subscribers—for reasons best known to themselves—are not members, and it is highly desirable that these also should remember to signalize the opening of the new year by a contribution to the Society's funds.

On this point there are several things that should be said. For several years the costs of propaganda have been very high, and there is no indication of their getting lower. This has thrown upon every Branch of the Society a very heavy strain, and in consequence headquarters has been compelled to assist to a much greater extent than it has ever before done during the whole of its history. In addition, the Executive has undertaken the responsibility for open-air propaganda all over the country during the summer months, which has been very successful from the point of view of propaganda, the message of Freethought having been delivered to many thousands who would not otherwise have heard it, but, as is to be expected, the financial returns have been practically nil.

The Executive is very anxious to keep this form of work going during the coming summer, and it is the general desire that it should be maintained, but it is expensive; there are railway fares, with lecturers' board and fees to be paid, and in undertaking the responsibility for a continuation of the work the Executive is naturally desirous of seeing some prospect of income meeting the expected expenditure. If the work is to be maintained and extended, the funds must be found, and we must rely upon members and subscribers providing the sinews of war. Further, it must be borne in mind that the subscription to the N.S.S. headquarters is quite nominal, and it is expected that members will subscribe to the extent of their opportunity. There is no limit on the upward line. An official receipt will be sent to all subscribers, who should address their contribution to the general secretary, National Secular Society's Offices, 62, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. I shall hope to hear from her that she has been inundated with letters and cheques.

Personally I should like to see the work of Freethought propaganda carried much farther afield than it has yet been carried, with several more lecturers continuously engaged. There is plenty of room for the work, and great need of it. To use an orthodox phrase, the fields are white to the harvest, but if it is to be reaped we need tools. At the moment the tool needed is funds, and I look with confidence to those who love the Cause to supply it.

CHAPMAN COHEN (President, N.S.S.).

Mixed Pickles.

As is sanity to delusion so is science to religion.

Ignorance and credulity are rails on which glide the engines of prejudice and superstition.

Freethought is the cathartic of supernaturalism.

The footsteps of the primitive past yet echo through the halls of democracy.

D. P. STICKELLS.

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.

A. MILLAR.—Glad you understand the position. Afraid the publication of such a volume would mean a loss, not a profit, and so would not serve the end aimed at. We are looking after the matter in another way.

H. BLACK.—We are looking after the matter referred to in your letter, and think we shall be able to arrange it satisfactorily. We hope with you that the new year will see an increase in the number of *Freethinker* readers. It is desirable from every point of view. We know that you always do your share of work to bring it about. If all did the same we should be quite easy on that score.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—J. W. Snowdon (N.Z.), per P. O'Dea, 10s.; J. Mackerron, 10s.; C. Baker (South Africa), 5s.

W. A. ELVIDGE.—Regret we have no use for the books named. A second-hand bookseller might purchase, but we are afraid they are of a small commercial value.

A. W. COLEMAN.—The title was voluntarily relinquished some time ago. We have no time for extended relaxation as things are.

A. B. MOSS, AND OTHERS.—We are pleased to learn that the notes on the Peculiar People case have given so much satisfaction. But, after all, what was said was very obvious. It seemed the only thing to say. If we were living in a world where common sense had greater influence it would not have needed saying at all.

H. WOODWARD.—We cannot reply to your question in this column. It would need a lengthy article to give an intelligent answer. But you will find an examination of what are called the evidences for spiritualism from the standpoint of a scientific psychology in Mr. Cohen's book, *The Other Side of Death*.

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.

Sugar Plums.

Thanks to the many readers who have sent us their good wishes for the new year. We should like to reply to them all personally, but they will understand that this is not practicable. Will they please take this note as an acknowledgment, and also as a hearty reciprocation of the kindly sentiments expressed. We hope the new year will be a prosperous one for us all, and a year of good steady work for the Cause.

The first letter that met our eyes on reaching the office on January 1 was a good omen for 1924. Mr. J. Crosoer sends us along five yearly subscriptions for a correspond-

ing number of new readers he is sending the paper to, as a means of making them regular readers for the future. We have no doubt but that after a year's reading of the paper they will not willingly let it go. We thank Mr. Crosoer for his very practical interest, also for the information that Freethought is spreading rapidly in South Africa.

This is the last opportunity we shall have of calling attention to the National Secular Society's annual dinner at the Midland Grand Hotel, on Tuesday evening, January 8. There will be the usual accompaniment of speeches, good musical programme, etc. But all applications for tickets, price 8s. each, must be made by January 5. These can be obtained from either the *Freethinker* offices or from the N.S.S. office, at 62, Farringdon Street, E.C.4. This is essential if arrangements are to be made for the comfort of visitors. Those who turn up at the last moment, even if they find themselves accommodated at all, have only themselves to blame for any discomfort they may experience. We are expecting a number of provincial friends to be present, in addition to those living in or near London. Those who care to avail themselves of the telephone may ring up City 41, and give their instructions.

On Sunday next (January 13) Mr. Cohen will lecture twice in Plymouth. The Plymouth friends, we understand, are working hard to make these meetings widely known, and we hope their efforts will be crowned with success.

The Birmingham Branch is holding its annual tea to-day (January 6) at Derricourt's Restaurant, 45, High Street. Tickets are 2s. each, and may be obtained from Mr. J. Collier, 181, Frederick Road, Aston. Members should notify Mr. Collier of their intention to be present. There will be a musical programme arranged by Mr. W. Simpson. On the following Sunday (January 13) the Branch will recommence its meetings with a lecture from Mr. V. J. Hands, at the Brassworker's Hall, 70, Lionel Street.

North London Branch reopened its Debating Circle at the St. Pancras Reform Club on January 6 (to-day). Mr. Van Biene will speak on "Einstein's Theories." The subject is one of intense interest to Freethinkers, and we hope for a good attendance. We understand Mr. Van Biene is an adept in the art of making an abstruse scientific subject understandable to the most elementary student of science. Further particulars are given in the Guide Notice.

Two Years in Paris is a booklet written by a woman of obvious courage and intelligence—the two qualities do not always run together. It is a record of a woman's fight during the war period to do something to check among the soldiers of the allied armies the ravages of venereal disease. How great is the prevalence of this loathsome disease among soldiers is—thanks to official stupidity—not generally realized by the public, or there would be a much louder outcry about it than there is. Miss Rout's pamphlet is designed to open the eyes of the public to the facts, as during the war she strove, week in and week out, to open the eyes of the soldiers themselves to the dangers they were running and the means of avoiding the more serious personal risks. She writes as one in authority, as she was in constant touch with high army officials, much of her work being done with the assistance of those officers who were intelligent enough to avail themselves of it.

The pamphlet is a record of self-sacrifice and struggle in the face of vast prejudice and misrepresentation. And it is not surprising to learn that the chief offenders in the way of teaching the soldiers to keep clean—the constant note of Miss Rout's work—were the Young Men's Christian Associations, and other religious organizations. They were thoroughly British in their resolve to fight an evil by shutting their eyes to its presence and to the

sensible way of checking the harm it did. The pious talk of the chaplains had about as much effect as sermons to the Pyramids would have in checking the decay of the stones. As Miss Rout says:—

What was the use of pretending that war could be run on the lines of *In His Steps* and *What Would Jesus Do?* War was a reversion to jungle life—and jungle morals. Let the Church dodder and prattle as it might about the "spiritualizing" of the nation through war. The common soldiers knew that the nation and every individual—including ourselves—were being brutalized by it. Enough of this piffle about the "Baptism of Blood"! Daily, men were being broken in body and character. It was only to be expected. It could not be helped. It was part of the price of war.

It required some courage to say this kind of thing to the pious British public, but if more of it had been said, instead of the religious lies told by the Bishop of London about the "spiritual uplift" the war had given the nation and the army, the world would be better off to-day than it is. The booklet is published by the authoress, at 28, Queensborough Terrace, London, W.2. Price 2s. 6d.

Christian Principles in Business.

UNDER the above heading a paragraph appeared in a recent issue of the *Yorkshire Telegraph and Star* stating that the Rev. A. E. Garvie, Principal of New College, London, in an address at York the previous evening, "urged the abolition of class and racial distinctions, adding that it was only the greed and selfishness of man that came between God's bounty and certain classes of people. It was not practical to have Capital and Labour divided against each other. Business men would first have to find out what Christian principles were, and then decide how they could best be applied in their commercial relations."

Just fancy! Here we are, in the twentieth century of the Christian era, and business men have yet to find out what Christian principles are! Surely there must be something very imperfect in the methods of the propagation of the Gospel? Perhaps the Rev. A. E. Garvie can put them wise in these matters, so that they can decide how to apply Christian principles to commerce. It is, however, extremely doubtful if Christian principles, as embodied in the Sermon on the Mount, could be applied to commercial matters without having disastrous effects upon the latter. A business man who forgave all his debtors, or gave away his stock-in-trade to the poor and needy, would soon become a bankrupt.

If the reverend gentleman could have a few personal experiences of business matters, if, for instance, he owed his landlord rent, or owed rent for storage of his goods and chattels, and was unable to pay up, he would, I think, be a sadder and a wiser man, and would find that he had either to pay up or be sold up. This has been my own experience, and I was told that Christian principles do not apply to business matters.

"Business is business," and Christianity is a cloak to put on on Sunday to go to church or chapel in, and to be put off on Monday when going to the office, warehouse, or shop. It is like the old story of the pious and respectable grocer, who, after the shop was closed, said to his assistant, "Have you sanded the sugar?" "Yes, sir." "And mixed the pea-flour with the pepper?" "Yes, sir." "And the chicory with the coffee?" "Yes, sir." "And watered the tobacco?" "Yes, sir." "Then come in to prayers."

Jesus Christ was not a business man, nor does he appear to have had any liking for business men, for when he found them trading within the precincts of the temple, he made a scourge of rope and drove them out. Was that a sample of the Christian spirit?

Not only was Christ not a business man, but his alleged ghostly heavenly father was not a business-like deity, otherwise we should not have business men in

this twentieth century of the Christian era still ignorant as to what Christian principles are; they have yet, according to the Rev. A. E. Garvie, to find this out before deciding how or whether they can be applied to business and commerce.

What could be more unbusinesslike than the way Christ's heavenly father "revealed" to mankind his bloodthirsty scheme of "salvation" through the murder of his only son? One would think that instead of making the "glad tidings" known only to his earthly-born son and a few shepherds, and waiting until that son grew to manhood before revealing it to a dozen poor fishermen in one little hole and corner of the world, leaving its further propagation to fate or chance, he would, being omniscient and omnipotent, and having all the forces and powers of Nature at his command, have published and advertised his scheme all over the world simultaneously; he would have issued a prospectus of his company for securing everlasting life, and offered a share in it to everyone, irrespective of race, colour, nationality, or habitation. He would not have delayed these "glad tidings of great joy" until A.D. 1, but would have made them known to all mankind thousands of years B.C. Being omniscient, he of course knew all about wireless telegraphy, wireless telephony, sky-writing by aeroplane, and electric flash-light advertising. Had he used these means to make known his scheme, what an impression they would have made upon primitive man, and upon mediæval man!

As it was, he allowed thousands of years to roll by, and many great human civilizations to rise and fall, unsaved in ignorance of his scheme. Could anything more unbusinesslike be conceived? It is like the story of the poor old lady who, through reduced circumstances, had to go out and sell muffins in the streets, and called out in a weak and tremulous voice, "Muffins! muffins!" adding to herself, "Oh dear! I hope nobody will hear me!"

If an enterprising business man had a wonderful skin-healing soap or ointment, or a life-and-health-giving pill to offer to all mankind, and had unlimited wealth at his command, would he merely whisper the fact to a child and leave the news to spread slowly and anyhow for a couple of thousand years? Would he not rather use his unlimited power to advertise and make known these precious boons to suffering humanity which he had to offer? Would he not have circulars printed in every language on earth and distributed by the quickest possible means to every individual in the whole world? Would he not broadcast his advertisements by wireless, by smoke from aeroplanes by day, and illuminated electric signs by night? Of course he would, if he really wanted people to know about his wonderful soap and ointment and pills, and not let them go on suffering for thousands of years in ignorance of his Great Remedy.

Without discussing the merits or demerits of the Christian scheme of salvation by blood and murder, revolting and ungodly in itself, it is sufficient to say that the method of making it known was the most unbusinesslike, unfair, puerile, feeble and half-hearted that could be imagined, and not at all in accordance with such attributes as benevolence, omniscience, and omnipotence.

No wonder Christianity has been a failure.

A. W. MALCOLMSON.

MORE TROUBLE.

The differential birthrate is, indeed, a terrifying phenomenon. I see in *Whitaker's Almanac* that the general labourers have nearly three times as many children as policemen—and how can we hope to maintain civilization if the supply of policemen is not maintained?—A. E. R., "The New Age."

Chats with Children.

ABOUT FAIRY TALES AND LIFE.

A FRIEND of mine who believes in the old Bible stories asked me the other day a question about fairy tales. I often read fairy tales to a little party of my nephews and nieces. I remember my own childhood when Hans Christian Andersen and the brothers Grimm made me positively cry tears of happiness and sympathy. My friend now asks me why I do not love the Bible stories just as I love fairy tales.

In a sense I *do* love many of these old stories. I know I should love some of them very much more if the Pope and all the priests of the world believed that they were nothing but fairy tales. In that case, however, there would be no Pope and no priests, because no fairy tale needs either one or the other.

Long ago, before the days of history, men began to think. They thought long before they knew enough to make their thoughts of any value. But if they had waited, and had never thought at all until they knew enough, then they would never have known anything.

We may compare these early thinkers with very young children to-day. When we were very young everything we saw was strange to us. Our thoughts began by our trying to explain to ourselves the sights we saw. We felt pain and pleasure, and we tried to think why we felt it.

Nowadays there are lots of "explanations" which we learn at a very early age. We find our stockings filled with Christmas presents; somebody tells us Santa Claus filled them. The sandman is said to come and close our eyes at night. The stork, we learn, brings babies to our house.

These ready-made "explanations" are not true, and they have nothing to do with our own thinking, except perhaps to stop us from thinking.

Just as early man would never have thought at all if he had waited to know, it is better for us to think for ourselves even if at first our own explanation is quite as wrong as the one we are given by our grown-up friends. It is better to think wrongly than not to think. Repeating what we are told is not thinking.

Even tiny children can and do think. Even the youngest of us "explains" things to himself. I thought my father was very ill indeed because he shut himself up in his study for many hours every day. The only time I had ever spent a day in one room was when the doctor said I was "ill."

Our ancestors did not know much more than a young child knows to-day. The early guesses of primitive man have been forgotten in the same way that we forget our own childish fancies.

The mistakes of early man which have not been forgotten may be divided into two groups. One group is called folk-lore (or fairy tales, more or less). The other group is called religion.

Some thoughts of our ancestors gradually and slowly became checked (like you prove a sum in arithmetic), corrected, improved, added to bit by bit as more thought led to more knowledge. These thoughts which to-day are undisputed because they have stood all tests, are called science.

What is very often forgotten is that a thought should not be like a mountain which cannot be moved. A thought is more like one of your building-bricks. Better still, it is like the tool which the carpenter uses for making your bricks. The better you can *handle* a thought, the more useful is the thought. Some tools are useless, but often it happens that the skill used in making an imperfect tool helps the mechanic to make a better tool.

"Puffing Billy," the first locomotive, is a very different engine from those in use to-day.

Many of the earliest thoughts of man were really useful; they helped to carve out the way to science; and science is the secret of happiness and progress.

To come back to our tiny childhood. We see the gas lighted or the electric light switched on, and we think that the sun which shines in at the window must have been turned on by the lamplighter. This is the beginning both of fairy tales and of religion. Later on we grow up and can see and understand the difference between the lights which we can control and the natural light which we call sunlight and moonlight. To know this is science. If when we are grown up into men and women we still believe in the Lamplighter (this time spelling the word with a capital L), we call this "religion."

There is, however, a third kind of thinker. He is grown up. He understands. He knows, as we know, that the universe is too big for us to have any belief in lamplighters at work there. He knows that the orbs of day and night are worlds, not lamps. He knows that day and night are only words by which we describe certain sights of ours. He knows that the sun and moon are as much "lamps" to the earth, as a tramcar is a mere hammer to flatten the pin which a boy places on the line. And yet this thinker writes fairy tales.

To read a fairy tale you might think the author was still a child. He is what is called a poet. His words are easy to read. He tells us things which we know are not literally (or "to the letter") true. But somehow he does not deceive us.

He tells us about strange lands where good and beautiful princesses live in enchanted palaces. He lures us into picturesque castles reached by porticulated drawbridges across romantic moats. We enter gilded chambers, and while we listen to tales of fay and gnome, we see through magic casements

The light that never was, on sea or land,
The consecration, and the Poet's dream.

Heroes slay weird monsters and rescue sweet maidens from evil giants. Yet all this time we dream without sleeping; give reins to our fancy while we do not part with our senses; and enjoy unreal things knowing all the time they are unreal.

How can this be?

Only because the teller of fairy tales must, in the truest sense of the words, "play the game." He must "make-believe" and pretend, but he must not mislead. He must be willing to let us close the book of faery at tea-time. He must allow us to leave elfdom before the home-made muffins have all been eaten.

We want to be quite clear as to the difference between the fascinating foods which attract our glance in Castle Golden, and the more sustaining unromantic meals of common earth.

We like to enjoy the Imp's Fields where we chase the jaberwock, but we must not dream while we dodge the motorbus, in crossing unromantic real streets.

Peer Gynt found the Troll king very amusing. Peer had no objection to dressing-up, even wearing a tail like the Trolls, but when it came to having his right eye put out, Peer says at once: "This is madman's talk." He knew he could leave off his funny fancy-dress, tail and all, when he left the Troll Palace. But one must always retain one's eyesight.

The girl who stays too long in fairyland loses more than her glass slipper.

The boy who aims stones at giants, or runs a sword through an ogre must only do this when he wears the seven-leagued boots and the coat of invisibility; at other times the police are very hard to convince that a broken window is a fairy's fault.

Wise people keep fairyland and earth on different maps. We enjoy fairy tales and we enjoy life, if we fully understand that they are in different hemis-

pheres. Fairyland is fancy without limit. The real world is bounded north, south, east and west with real limits.

If you see the stage of a theatre from the front, where most of us see it, it looks as if within three walls existed a different world from ours. We hear the actors who speak, not to us but to each other. Their lives and acts and scenes seem to be a world of its own. The greatest actors are those who make this "illusion," as it is called, most complete.

All of us grown-up folk, as well as many children, are completely "carried out of ourselves" when an actor who is an artist makes us forget the stage, and live where he lives in a land of dream: our dream and his.

Let us continue to enjoy this fairy existence while we sit in cosy seats in a theatre specially built to help us into this frame of mind.

But the actor remembers that the floor of the stage is real still. He does not lean too hard against the painted scenery. He avoids pitfalls at the "wings." He does not walk into the footlights. He is an artist, but he does not mistake art for reality.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

George Underwood.

IN MEMORIAM.

The news that my friend had passed away came as a shock to one who had left him apparently in good health only a few weeks ago. With his boyish laugh still ringing in my ears as we parted at a late hour in the night in the Strand it is difficult to think that we shall see him no more. Slight in build, with a voice always soft and sweet, he had many gifts that were never flaunted, and we could always depend on his deadly criticism of any of the modern ideas that surged to the top of human affairs. From our three years' acquaintance with him his literary loves proved that he had judiciously selected the best from the library of the world. The giants of the Elizabethan Age, the great French poets, Villon, Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Ronsard, and the novelist Anatole France, all these, with many more, were always at his elbow in our talk that will ever be remembered with gratitude by one who had many occasions to consult his mature judgment. He was a citizen of the world, and he will be missed in the pages of the *Freethinker*. May his ashes rest in peace and his memory ever be cherished as a fighter in the greatest of causes—that can never bring any wealth to those who dedicate their lives to it—to the best and greatest cause that gives life a value—to the cause of Liberty for Mankind to grow.

WILLIAM REPTON.

Correspondence.

THE DRAMA AND HERO WORSHIP.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I trust Mr. Repton will forgive me for not replying to his letter at once. He may, of course, flatter himself that the delay is due to my difficulty in finding a reply, but that is not so.

I know that my opinion was different from his and felt sure that he would attack me. Very pertinently he says that you find what you expect in a play, a picture or a poem, and it seems to me that Mr. Repton is very greatly influenced by the book he has last read. The story of Pantagruel has evidently made a big impression upon him. The name makes its appearance in his writing very frequently just now.

Drama certainly depicts the activities of man, but it is quite impossible to depict without preaching. The activities of man, or other men, are educational because a knowledge of them extends the experience of the indi-

vidual. No story can be other than a preaching in that sense.

Satire attacks the futile and that is what the Capeks have done. They point out in both plays that the fundamental of life is procreation in spite of the minor activities, which, after all, are only directed to getting the best results. The *Insect Play* ends on this note. The children must be protected from the sight of the dead tramp and R.U.R. ends on the same note—a new Adam and Eve.

I agree with them. Mr. Repton does not. He believes in the "great man." I do not. Whether the great man was called Pantagruel, Napoleon, or Northcliffe, his influence is not for the common good. I desire the elevation of all of us. There is no reason why we should not secure the best results of procreation. The next generation *must* be dowered with the experience we have gone through. Mankind progresses slowly but infinitely surely, and the Capeks are doing their work when they point out, with so much emphasis, the fundamental and reasonable purpose of life.

G. E. FUSSELL.

RE "MEDICAL SCIENCE IN SINHALESE HISTORY."

SIR,—Mr. Maddock in his reply to my criticism of his letter evidently admits that the claim about the possession of modern scientific knowledge by the Orientals is made sometimes only, thus consciously or unconsciously corroborating my contention that educated Orientals on the whole are not addicted to the habit. My personal experience, extending over a number of years, during which period I had the opportunity of a contact with educated Hindus of different shades of opinion, also confirms what I said on the subject in my previous letter. Moreover, one must not forget that the most absurd statements are quite often made in the West, by eminent historians and scientists, and highly educated men of the Christian Churches, and nobody knows this fact better than the Freethinkers of this country.

Mr. Maddock complains that the Oriental lacks "critical judgment and a rational estimate of values." Let him look back on European history from the time of Constantine down to the year when Darwin gave out his famous theory of Evolution to the world and realize what opposition—very often fanatically extreme—the educated Occidentals offered to every rational reform movement and scientific discoveries, during those centuries, not forgetting the horrible persecution, for holding certain opinions. The power of a comprehensively critical and rational judgment is wanting in the majority of mankind, whether Oriental or Occidental, and I believe that psycho-analysis of, even the highly-educated, will show that the majority of them live in logic-tight compartments. Are not we told every Sunday from thousands of Christian pulpits that three is equal to one and one equal to three? I am referring to the Trinity.

Mr. Maddock introduces another stock phrase—the "inherent mysticism" of the Oriental. By a Mystic one means a person who seeks communion or "union with the Deity," or "one who believes in the spiritual apprehension of truths, beyond the understanding." If that be a correct definition of mysticism, I leave it to the reader's judgment to find out whether the Orientals alone specialize in this commodity. It is not so rare in the West as Mr. Maddock would have me believe.

"The principles of ancient civilization," we are told, "were not compatible with true human progress." This is only true if we take a narrow view of what civilization is and also if by "true progress of mankind" we imply progress of whole humanity for an indefinite period of time. It is not quite clear, but Mr. Maddock seems to possess the belief that principles of modern civilization are compatible with true human progress. Modern Western civilization is hardly 130 years old. Its pre-war doings, in connection with the process of civilizing the "uncivilized" and Christianizing the benighted heathens in Africa, India, China, the Southern States, and other parts of the earth and the disgusting spectacle it has presented even to the superficial mind, since 1914, in Europe as well as in other countries, would make any critical mind suspicious about the basic principles of this civilization. Judging by results, no state of society

has yet been based on true principles, and the modern one is no exception. Their decay, however, does not justify the conclusion that they made no contributions to human welfare. Those contributions may have been very moderate, but relative to their age and circumstances, they were as great and indispensable as the technical advances of the modern civilization.

The politico-economic relations between individuals, nations, and races have a marked influence on their respective psychology and that is what makes the closing remark—political reference—in my last letter highly relevant. The politico-economic changes that have taken place in Europe since 1921 have shifted the cry of hanging from the Kaiser to M. Poincaré, and threatens open disruption between the war-time allies. The maintenance of "social order" in India and Ceylon and the "welfare of humanity" are ideological illusions, created by the imperialist governing class, who do not hesitate to make cannon-fodder of the common people when some international question of profit-sharing or some territorial concession cannot be decided peacefully. I should like to narrate a few episodes from the recent history of India, Russia, Ireland, and Central Europe to prove the hollowness of this "order" of human welfare conception of Imperialism, but the limit and scope of a letter in the *Freethinker*, which is not, after all, a political paper, prevent my doing so. In the end I want to express the opinion that in both a successful and a subject-race psychology hinders comparative anthropological research, and that is where the political conditions distort and obscure the historical and sociological truth. Absolute scientific detachment is not possible, though very essential, under such conditions.

J. R. BHATIA.

THE SLADE CASE.

SIR,—My attention has been called to the letter of "Javali" in your issue of Dec. 23, in which reference is made to "a spirit message which cost Slade three months' imprisonment."

When "Javali" is criticizing others he might at least be sure of his facts. The Slade case was dismissed owing to a legal technicality, and there was no imprisonment at all: Slade went directly to Germany from London for investigation by Zollner, Weber, Fechner and others. Slade always claimed that Ray Lancaster's hasty and hostile act was the result of faulty observation on the part of hostile critics, who were totally unacquainted with the subject, and he wrote Ray Lancaster and Dr. Donkin that he was willing to come to England and place himself in their hands for a series of seances, and if they were dissatisfied after such a lengthy investigation he offered to stand any prosecution they might bring against him.

In the original prosecution we had the evidence of Slade against that of his two hostile critics, and the chief witness was Mr. Maskelyne, who was not present at the seances.

Many hundreds who followed the case were satisfied that the prosecution was purely the result of that scientific conservatism which resents anything new.

It is but due to Freethinkers that both sides of the case should be presented.

ERNEST W. OATEN,

Editor of *The Two Worlds*.

HUMAN SYSTEMS.

SIR,—In your issue of December 30, W. W. Strickland desires "a clear and plain exposition" of the New Economics. This is no easy matter. The Editor of the *New Age* stated a short while ago that "to present 'Douglas without tears' is no more possible than to describe the working of the system now in operation."

But amongst the attempts which have so far been made to present the Social Credit principles to the man in the street (economically speaking), by far the best, in my opinion, is a book by C. Marshall Hattersley, M.A., I.L.B., entitled *The Community's Credit*, and published by the *Credit Power Press*, of 70, High Holborn, W.C.1., at about five shillings.

Any of your readers interested in this most vital question will obtain no little illumination from two sixpenny pamphlets, issued from the same house, entitled, *It's Like This*, by Dudley N. Short; *Dividends for All*, by Allen W. Young.

A. W. COLEMAN.

Egg First or Chick?

THE QUESTION.

An egg produced our globe's first bird,
 But what produced the bird's first egg?
 Oh, do not think the bard's absurd,
 He wants to know, and he would beg
 An answer to a simple word;
 What first produced the sitting hen?
 Without the egg, whence came the bird?
 'Twill puzzle scientific men
 To prove effect without a cause;
 And hatching without eggs reverses Nature's laws.
 —*Psychoris, "Modern Philosophers."*

THE ANSWER.

Obtuse the mind, such things perplex,
 For *Simple* must precede *Complex*;
 In Nature's womb life was begun,
 Plasmic matter fructified by sun;
 For warm young earth, saw eggs first hatched
 'Ere chicks its virgin surface scratched—
 And later, reptiles—some had wings—
 Then feathered and less scaly things;
 So life evolving ever higher
 Produced in time the barn-yard flyer.

J. W. W.

Obituary.

The ranks of Freethought generally, and especially in Maesteg, South Wales, have suffered a great loss by the death of Mr. Edmund T. Butler, Nantyllyllon, at the age of 69. For 50 years he has been a most virile and cutting enemy to priestcraft and superstition, and never missed an opportunity of piercing the Freethought sword into the enemy when a discussion took place in the local press, and played no mean part in denouncing the bigots of the local Council for refusing the public hall for the Secular Society's lectures. He was a regular reader of the *Freethinker* for 40 years, and in its early days contributed many interesting articles, and was continually sending cuttings from newspapers for Mr. Cohen's comment. Although suffering for many years from rheumatism he managed to visit several parts of South Wales to hear Mr. Cohen and Mr. Lloyd lecture, and also attended the National Secular Society's Conference at Swansea in 1921. His very many friends in South Wales express much sympathy with his widow for having lost such a good fighter in the greatest of causes.—T. W.

Four Great Freethinkers.

- GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE, by JOSEPH McCABE. The Life and Work of one of the Pioneers of the Secular and Co-operative movements in Great Britain. With four plates. In Paper Covers, 2s. (postage 2d.). Cloth Bound, 3s. 6d. (postage 2½d.).
- ROBERT G. INGERSOLL, by C. T. GORHAM. A Biographical Sketch of America's greatest Freethought Advocate. With four plates. In Paper Covers, 2s. (postage 2d.). Cloth Bound, 3s. 6d. (postage 2½d.).
- CHARLES BRADLAUGH, by THE RIGHT HON. J. M. ROBERTSON. An Authoritative Life of one of the greatest Reformers of the Nineteenth Century, and the only one now obtainable. With four portraits. Cloth Bound, 3s. 6d. (postage 2½d.).
- VOLTAIRE, by THE RIGHT HON. J. M. ROBERTSON. In Paper Covers, 2s. (postage 2d.). Cloth Bound, 3s. 6d. (postage 2½d.).

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

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.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15, Victoria Road, N.W.): 7.30, Mr. J. H. Van Biene, "Einstein's Theories. What I Don't know about Them."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W.9): A Social—Instrumental and Vocal Music—Recitals.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7, Mr. Joseph McCabe, "The Legend of a Golden Age."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11, Right Hon. John M. Robertson, "Earl Balfour's Theism."

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Upton Labour Party Hall, 84 Plashet Road, Upton Park, E.13): 7, Mr. A. B. Moss, "The Philosophy of Shakespeare," with Illustrations and Dramatic Recitals.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Derricourt's Restaurant, 45, High Street): Annual Tea at 5 p.m., followed by a Concert kindly arranged by Mr. William Simpson, Jun. Admission 2s. each. Will all desirous of attending please notify Mr. J. Collier, 181, Frederick Road, Aston.

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S. (Shop Assistants' Hall, 297 Argyle Street): 6.30, For particulars see Saturday's *News and Citizen*.

LEEDS BRANCH N.S.S. (Youngman's Restaurant, Lowerhead Row, Leeds): a Lecture.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. J. T. Hardy, "Dramatic and Humorous Recital" (including a "Dickens" selection).

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S.—Discussion Circle meets every Friday at 7.30 at the Labour Club, 6, Richmond Street.

SWANSEA AND DISTRICT BRANCH N.S.S. (Dockers' Hall): 6.30, A Meeting.

FREETHINKER, age 27, experienced commercial traveller, would be glad to hear of any vacancy occurring in similar capacity.—V. J. HANDS, 59, Exeter Road, Nottingham.

FREETHINKERS who consider themselves intellectuals should not fail to read *THE EVERLASTING GEMS*. It is an intellectual treat. There is not a dull page in the book. Ask THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 Farringdon Street, E.C.4., to send you a copy. 3s. 6d. post free.

NOTHING BEATS A TRIAL—except a bad judgment. The judgment of Freethinkers is good enough for us, and we ask their verdict. We stand accused of doing high class tailoring—tailoring good enough for the best in the land—for prices no higher than often charged for only third rate work. We not only plead guilty but are eager to give proofs of our culpability, as the misdemeanour is committed in your interests. Undeniable proofs will be given to you if you will write at once for any of the following: *Gents' A to G Book, suits from 54s.*; *Gents' H to N Book, suits from 92s.*; *Gents' Overcoat Book, prices from 46s.*; or our *Ladies' Costume and Coat Book, costumes from 52s.*; *coats from 44s.* The law's delays are proverbial. Don't be too legally minded—try us now.—MACCONNELL & MABE, New Street, Bakewell, Derbyshire.

New and Enlarged Edition.

LIFE, MIND, AND KNOWLEDGE

By "KERIDON" (J. C. THOMAS, B.Sc.).

The New Edition is enlarged by an important Prologue of some 40 pages, explanatory of the argument in its original form.

Price 3s. 6d. net, by post 3s. 10d.

THE PROLOGUE (separately)

Price 1s., by post 1s. 1d.

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

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

President:

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Secretary:

Miss E. M. VANCE, 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Principles and Objects.

Secularism teaches that conduct should be based on reason and knowledge. It knows nothing of divine guidance or interference; it excludes supernatural hopes and fears; it regards happiness as man's proper aim, and utility as his moral guide.

Secularism affirms that Progress is only possible through Liberty, which is at once a right and a duty; and therefore seeks to remove every barrier to the fullest equal freedom of thought, action, and speech.

Secularism declares that theology is condemned by reason as superstitious, and by experience as mischievous, and assails it as the historic enemy of Progress.

Secularism accordingly seeks to dispel superstition; to spread education; to disestablish religion; to rationalize morality; to promote peace; to dignify labour; to extend material well-being; and to realize the self-government of the people.

The Funds of the National Secular Society are legally secured by Trust Deed. The trustees are the President, Treasurer and Secretary of the Society, with two others appointed by the Executive. There is thus the fullest possible guarantee for the proper expenditure of whatever funds the Society has at its disposal.

The following is a quite sufficient form for anyone who desires to benefit the Society by legacy:—

I hereby give and bequeath (*Here insert particulars of legacy*), free of all death duties, to the Trustees of the National Secular Society for all or any of the purposes of the Trust Deed of the said Society.

Membership.

Any person is eligible as a member on signing the following declaration:—

I desire to join the National Secular Society, and I pledge myself, if admitted as a member, to co-operate in promoting its objects.

Name.....

Address.....

Occupation.....

Dated this.....day of.....19.....

This declaration should be transmitted to the Secretary with a subscription.

P.S.—Beyond a minimum of Two Shillings per year, every member is left to fix his own subscription according to his means and interest in the cause.

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 3½d.

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

Pamphlets.

By G. W. FOOTE.

CHRISTIANITY AND PROGRESS. Price 2d., postage ¼d.
THE PHILOSOPHY OF SECULARISM. Price 2d., postage ¼d.

WHO WAS THE FATHER OF JESUS? Price 1d., postage ¼d.

THE JEWISH LIFE OF CHRIST. Being the Sepher Toldoth Jeshu, or Book of the Generation of Jesus. With an Historical Preface and Voluminous Notes. By G. W. FOOTE and J. M. WHEELER. Price 6d., postage ¼d.

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

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

DEITY AND DESIGN. Price 1d., postage ¼d.

WAR AND CIVILIZATION. Price 1d., postage ¼d.

RELIGION AND THE CHILD. Price 1d., postage ¼d.

GOD AND MAN: An Essay in Common Sense and Natural Morality. Price 2d., postage ¼d.

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

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

SOCIALISM AND THE CHURCHES. Price 3d., postage ¼d.

CREED AND CHARACTER. The Influence of Religion on Racial Life. Price 6d., postage 1d.

THE PARSON AND THE ATHEIST. A Friendly Discussion on Religion and Life between Rev. the Hon. Edward Lyttelton, D.D., and Chapman Cohen. Price 1s., postage 1½d.

DOES MAN SURVIVE DEATH? Is the Belief Reasonable? Verbatim Report of a Discussion between Horace Leaf and Chapman Cohen. Price 6d., postage ¼d.

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

By J. T. LLOYD.

PRAYER: ITS ORIGIN, HISTORY, AND FUTILITY. Price 2d., postage ¼d.

GOD-EATING: A Study in Christianity and Cannibalism. Price 3d., postage ¼d.

By A. D. McLAREN.

THE CHRISTIAN'S SUNDAY: Its History and its Fruits. Price 2d., postage ¼d.

By MIMNERMUS.

FREETHOUGHT AND LITERATURE. Price 1d., postage ¼d.

By M. M. MANGASARIAN.

THE MARTYRDOM OF HYPATIA. Price 1d., postage ¼d.

By WALTER MANN.

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

PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN MORALITY. Price 2d., postage ¼d.

By GEORGE WHITEHEAD.

JESUS CHRIST: Man, God, or Myth? With a Chapter on "Was Jesus a Socialist?" Paper Covers, 1s. 6d., postage 1½d.; Cloth, 3s., postage 2½d.

THE CASE AGAINST THEISM. Paper Covers, 1s. 3d., postage 1½d.; Cloth, 2s. 6d., postage 2½d.

THE SUPERMAN: Essays in Social Idealism. Price 2d., postage ¼d.

MAN AND HIS GODS. Price 2d., postage ¼d.

By A. MILLAR.

THE ROBES OF PAN. Price 6d., postage 1d.

By ARTHUR F. THORN.

THE LIFE-WORSHIP OF RICHARD JEFFERIES. With Fine Portrait of Jefferies. Price 6d., postage 1d.

By ROBERT ARCH.

SOCIETY AND SUPERSTITION. Price 4d., postage ¼d.

By H. G. FARMER.

HERESY IN ART. The Religious Opinions of Famous Artists and Musicians. Price 2d., postage ¼d.

By COLONEL INGERSOLL.

IS SUICIDE A SIN? AND LAST WORDS ON SUICIDE. Price 2d., postage ¼d.

WHAT IS RELIGION? Price 1d., postage ¼d.

THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH. Price 1d., postage ¼d.

MISTAKES OF MOSES. Price 2d., postage ¼d.

By D. HUME.

ESSAY ON SUICIDE. Price 1d., postage ¼d.

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

London Freethinkers' Twenty-Seventh Annual Dinner

(Under the auspices of the National Secular Society)

AT

THE MIDLAND GRAND HOTEL, N.W.

ON

TUESDAY, JANUARY 8, 1924

Chairman - - - - - Mr. CHAPMAN COMEN

Tickets 8s.

Dinner at 7 p.m. prompt.

EVENING DRESS OPTIONAL.

E. M. VANCE, Secretary, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C.4.

A New Ingersoll Pamphlet.

WHAT IS IT WORTH? A Study of the Bible
By Colonel R. G. INGERSOLL

(Issued by the Secular Society, Limited.)

This essay has never before appeared in pamphlet form, and is likely to rank with the world-famous *Mistakes of Moses*. It is a Bible handbook in miniature, and should be circulated by the tens of thousands.

Special Terms for Quantities.

Orders of 24 copies and upwards sent post free.

PRICE ONE PENNY

RICHARD CARLILE: His Life and Times

By GUY A. ALDRED

192 pages, with Portraits of Richard Carlile and Robert Taylor.

Cloth Bound, 2s. 6d., postage 3d.; Paper Covers, 1s. 6d., postage 2½d.

For Presentation.

Realistic Aphorisms and Purple Patches

Collected by ARTHUR 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 pages, Cloth Gilt, 5s., by post 5s. 3d.; Paper Covers, 3s. 6d., by post 3s. 10½d.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 Farringdon Street, E.C.4.

A Freethought Classic at less than Half Price.

History of the Conflict between
Religion and Science

By J. W. DRAPER, M.D., LL.D.

(Author of "History of the Intellectual Development of Europe," etc.)

This is an exact reprint of Dr. Draper's world famous work. It is not a remainder, but an exact reprint of the work which is at present being sold by the publishers as one of the well known International Scientific Series at 7s. 6d. By special arrangements with the holders of the copyright the Secular Society, Limited, is able to offer the work at 3s. 6d., just under half the usual price. The book is printed in bold type, on good paper, and neatly bound in cloth. No other publisher in London would issue a work of this size and quality at the price.

There is no need to-day to praise the *History of the Conflict Between Religion and Science*. It is known all over the world, it has been translated in many languages, and its authority is unquestioned. It has had a wonderful influence on the development of liberal opinion since the day of its publication, and is emphatically a work that no Freethinker should be without and which all should read. We should like to see a copy in the hands of every reader of this paper, and of every young man or woman who is beginning to take an interest in the history of intellectual development.

(Issued by the Secular Society, Limited)

400 pages, Cloth Bound, 3s. 6d., postage 4½d.
SEND FOR YOUR COPY AT ONCE.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 Farringdon 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.