

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. 13.

SUNDAY, MARCH 30, 1924

PRICE THREEPENCE

## PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

|   | Page |
|---|------|
| <i>As Others See Us.—The Editor</i> - - - - -                                 | 193  |
| <i>The Life of Olive Schreiner.—J. T. Lloyd</i> - - - - -                     | 194  |
| <i>"Saint Joan."—Mimnermus</i> - - - - -                                      | 195  |
| <i>"The Dance of Life."—W. Mann</i> - - - - -                                 | 196  |
| <i>Consecrated Cash.—H. T. Wilkins</i> - - - - -                              | 197  |
| <i>More Truth Than Poetry.—S. E. Kiser</i> - - - - -                          | 198  |
| <i>The Wolf in Mythology.—W. H. Morris</i> - - - - -                          | 202  |
| <i>The Story of a Famous Old Jewish Firm.—James Thomson (B.V.)</i> - - - - -  | 204  |
| <i>Some Aspects of Hell.—A. Mitchell</i> - - - - -                            | 205  |
| <i>Is Birth Control Necessary?—H. Cutner</i> - - - - -                        | 206  |
| <i>Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letter to the Editor, etc.</i> |      |

## Views and Opinions.

### As Others See Us.

The reprint of one of my "Views and Opinions" in the *New York Literary Digest* brought me quite a batch of letters from America, some of them were flattering, some the reverse. Some wrote for copies of the paper to be sent them, as they fancied they would like to subscribe. Some wrote me lengthy, pious screeds in the hope that I might be led to see the error of my ways. Several came from those who used to subscribe for the paper before they left England years ago, but had lost touch with it of recent years. And some wrote saying they had no idea such a paper as the *Freethinker* existed, but they meant to keep in touch with it now they knew of it. Sweet are the uses of advertisement! The letters convinced me—if conviction were needed—that if only we could bring the paper properly before the public there would be no need to have Sustentation Funds for long. We might soon be paying our way, and more than paying our way; and increase in circulation would make it very much easier to break down the boycott. There was a time, a few years ago, when I fancied we had made a breach in the wall that bigotry had built round us. Soon after the war I took certain steps which caused the general press to take some sort of public notice of the *Freethinker*. It is always read, and not seldom copied from, but nearly always without acknowledgment. But I brought certain papers to the point of actually mentioning the *Freethinker* and what it had to say. That went on for some time, and then the bigots got alarmed. The boycott was set to work, and the old policy of never mentioning the *Freethinker* by name was reverted to; never to let the general public know that there was in this country a paper which stood uncompromisingly for Freethought without apology or qualification. Wholesale agents were got at, and although they still handled the paper—it is taken by every wholesale agent of note in the country—there were certain obstacles placed in the way of any increase in the weekly order. There is a long story to be told about this aspect of the work, but I do not intend to tell it now. The great thing is that the religious boycott applied to the *Freethinker* for more than forty years has not been able to prevent it living and doing its work, and is not likely to succeed in doing so.

### How Christianity Dies.

I have wandered from my point, which I may say, I think, is not a common fault of mine. What I really wanted to note was one or two of the Christian letters received as a result of the *Literary Digest* reprint. One gentleman, a graduate of Harvard, tells me quite authoritatively that I shall never succeed in destroying Christianity. I may ease his anxiety by assuring him I never entertained any such hopes. I have too lively a conception of the tenacity of error, and the power of established beliefs to imagine that I shall ever live to see the end of Christianity, much as I should like to. I shall never live to see the end of credulity, or folly, or tyranny, or a hundred and one other unlovely things. But that ought not to prevent one doing what one can to weaken their influence, and one can see some results as a consequence of one's efforts. And, after all, Christianity has become so chattering a thing that it can be said to be always dying, even though some of its teachings are revived in a modified form. Look at Christianity a hundred years ago and Christianity to-day! Then, hell was still alight and men and women were being imprisoned for selling Paine's *Age of Reason*. To-day, hell flickers feebly and Paine's teachings are being re-echoed in the pulpits. Christian preachers are doubting in the pulpit whether the resurrection is true, whether the virgin birth is true, whether one can believe in a personal god, etc. Compare the Christianity of a hundred years ago with that of a couple of centuries earlier, and the same change may be noticed. And in each age there was some graduate of Harvard, or his equivalent, who assured the critics of Christianity they would never kill that religion. And yet the religion these critics attacked is virtually dead. The flat earth, the belief in witches, the God who was always working miracles, the belief in the inerrancy of the Bible, with a dozen other superstitions that went to the make-up of the Christian are gone. The States of the world are being steadily secularized, the standard of citizenship is being shifted from heaven to earth, and even the God believed in is growing steadily thinner and more transparent. Of course, we still have the Christian Church. And we are likely to have that so long as it possesses enough wealth to purchase advocacy. No, I do not expect to see the end of Christianity. But I have lived long enough to see many of the superstitions of the Christian religion completely discredited, and I am quite content that what we Freethinkers are doing is to bring a little nearer the end of one of the most depressing superstitions that has ever afflicted the human mind.

\* \* \*

### A Real Christian.

The longest letter of all comes from an old Presbyterian minister, Rev. Horace N. Pond, of Topeka, Kansas. He is quite cheerfully insulting, and the amiable ruffianism and pious ignorance of his epistle gave me much amusement. Mr. Pond sees nothing amusingly blackguardly in assuring me that the "greatest body of Freethinkers in the world are the gamblers, thieves, and cut-throats that infest it to-day.

There are no theological shackles for them, and they certainly act as though this life were all, and that there is no God." There are three pages of close typescript of this kind of thing, and it is really the most Christian document I have seen for some time. But unfortunately the facts will not allow me to rob the Christian Churches of their virtual monopoly of criminals and blackguards. Almost every reputable criminologist has noted the religious character of criminals; and gamblers are notoriously superstitious. When the late J. W. Gott was serving his nine months imprisonment for blasphemy, he told me that he was the only Atheist in the prison. A large board in the hall of the prison tabulated the number of inmates belonging to the Churches. All were well represented, but he stood alone as the only Atheist there, and he was not there for any criminal offence. For a time the Atheist stood at the top of the list—probably they arranged them alphabetically—but in the end the prison chaplain claimed pride of place for the Church of England inmates, and the Atheist was removed to the bottom. The trouble is, to use Mr. Pond's phrase, the theological shackles. The Christian is brought up to believe that behaving decently is being shackled—missing something that is really worth having—and he demands in return for submitting to these shackles some compensation in the next world. When a Freethinker comes along and points out the highly doubtful nature of the next world and the almighty policeman, he thinks, as does Mr. Pond, that if that is the case then there is no reason left for decent behaviour. Poor Mr. Pond! We are all the creatures of our education, and that of Mr. Pond's has been a very poor one. But one thinks of the congregations that have "sat" under him. Let us hope they were better than their teacher.

\* \* \*

#### Getting Rid of God.

Mr. Pond's greatest problem is, he says, "Why do you want to get rid of God?" One feels inclined to answer that question with another. Can we get rid of God—if he exists? And why are Christians so fearful lest we Freethinkers should get rid of God, not only for ourselves, but also for others? Why have they no faith in God's ability to take care of himself and to save himself from being got rid of? Really, if there is a God there is no Freethinker in the world who is so absurd as to wish to get rid of him. If God exists we are prepared to face him as we are prepared to face any other natural fact, and so make the best of it. This anxiety lest Freethinkers should get rid of the idea of God, this strong desire to back up God, here with a policeman, there with social boycott, or with some other form of punishment for those who do not believe in him, is hardly flattering to God. It suggests that believers are alive, more or less, to the fact that a God only exists so long as you believe in him; he is created by man's imagination, and exists only so long as the imagination gives him sustenance. But when you cease to believe in him he troubles one no more than do ghosts or witches when one has given up believing in them. What the Freethinker is trying to do is to get people to see that as a mere hypothesis "God" solves no problem, explains no difficulty. As a natural fact he appears to do nothing, and as an institution he has worked incalculable evil. There is not a society in the world, from the least to the most civilized, where some god or another cannot be seen as the cause of much of the evils that exists. "God" was behind all the murders for witchcraft that have occurred. "God" stood by the side of the professional torturer when men and women were tormented for the offence of heresy. "God" sanctioned the intolerance which has disfigured European history and has left its evil impress on our civil life. "God"

stood by at the birth of every scientific idea and cursed the discoverer for his knowledge. And "God" is at the back of Mr. Pond's deliciously impudent stupidity which causes him to conceive Freethinkers as gamblers and criminals because they have not the fear of God before them. Mr. Pond might have been a better man without God than he appears to be with him. The ultimate reason for getting rid of the idea of God is that it does nothing that is good, and is responsible for a deal of evil in a world that would have quite enough to deal with in its absence. All the same, I am glad I got Mr. Pond's letter. It is well for us to realize what real Christianity is like. We have so much of the sophisticated article around us, that a little of the genuine thing is quite refreshing.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

### The Life of Olive Schreiner.<sup>1</sup>

At last I hold the above work in my hands, and have read it with supreme interest. Olive Schreiner was a universally recognized genius, whose fame was due to a comparatively small book, entitled *The Story of an African Farm*, published as far back as 1883; and, speaking of the author, Sir Charles Dilke characterized her as "the only person of genius that any of the colonies has produced," and as having written a greater work than the *Pilgrim's Progress*. Reviewing it in the *Spectator*, Canon MacColl described it as "an Agnostic Novel." With this name attached to her story, Olive Schreiner was so well pleased that, in a letter to Mrs. Brown, she said that "it takes the book fairly on the ground on which it must be praised or condemned." Canon MacColl went to see her, and wanted her to meet Mr. Gladstone, "who had been much struck with the power and force of *An African Farm*."

As a matter of fact, as early as 1885 the distinguished statesman had talked of the book, and said that he "was struck with the power of it more than he had been with any book for a long time." Ultimately, on June 2, 1889, she did meet the G.O.M. at a private lunch arranged by Canon MacColl; Bret Harte was also present. Next day she addressed a postcard to Mr. Havelock Ellis, on which was written:—

The lunch yesterday was lovely. I was quite unprepared to find Gladstone such a wonderful child of genius—nothing else. He's all genius.....Bret Harte is lovable; just what one would have him.

Rushing from the lunch to see Dr. and Mrs. John Brown, she arrived an hour late, "bubbling over with brightness and vivacity, a flush of excitement on her cheeks, a light of battle in her eyes." In answer to their enquiries: "Oh, it was fine," she said, "the others left long ago, but Mr. Gladstone and I got into a deep talk, and he would not let me go. It was fine."

Thus was the South African governess, who hitherto had known but few people, suddenly shot into the giddy heights of popularity, and become the most-sought-after personality at the metropolis of the world. Curiously enough, however, *The Story of an African Farm* was never followed by any other novel exhibiting anything like equal merits. Naturally, some admiring reviewers conclude that Olive Schreiner's fame was gradually dying; one even saying that now he rarely hears *The Story of An African Farm* mentioned, and her other books never. My experience has been the very opposite of that. I have never been in any circle in which the *African Farm* was not well known and easily procurable. *Dreams*, first published in 1890, was an eminently successful book, for the Fisher

<sup>1</sup> By S. C. Cronwright-Schreiner. Illustrated. Published by T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd., London (Adelphi Terrace).

Unwin's record now before me is as follows: "Reprinted 1891 (twice), 1892, 1893, 1894, 1897, 1900, 1903, 1905, 1907, 1908, 1912 (twice), 1913, 1914, 1915, 1917 and 1919." The book has been in my possession since 1921. The same thing has been true of other works of hers, particularly of that exquisitely beautiful gem, *Dream Life and Real Life*. It is not true, therefore that her husband has issued her Biography as an attempt to revive her fame. Mr. Cronwright-Schreiner's object has rather been to make known and, as far as possible, explain to the world one of the most remarkably interesting and perhaps, on the whole, the greatest woman it has ever produced—a task in the execution of which the author has been amazingly successful.

Olive Schreiner was the daughter of South African missionaries; the father, Gottlob Schreiner, being of German nationality, and her mother, Rebecca Schreiner (*née* Lyndall), being of English or Scotch. This mixture of nationalities was due to the fact that Mr. Gottlob Schreiner, being the gift of the Basel Missionary Society to the Church Missionary Society at London, arrived in London a single young man, and as the London Missionary Society insisted upon its missionaries being all married men, young Gottlob was obliged to look out for a wife, whom he soon found in the person of Rebecca Lyndall, daughter of the Rev. Samuel Lyndall, a Congregational minister. Duly married, they went out to South Africa, where eventually they settled down at Wittebergen, not far from Basutoland. This was in March, 1854, and it was with diligence that Gottlob Schreiner discharged his duties of his profession. He loved God with all his heart, and in this love were embraced his wife and the coloured people, for whose welfare he laboured so assiduously. It was here that their daughter Olive was born, on March 25, 1855, being the ninth in the list of their twelve children. At this point it is well to bear in mind that Mrs. Schreiner did not share her husband's missionary zeal. On one occasion she gave a woman friend an amusing account of how she became a missionary: "As a young, unmarried woman she attended a revival meeting in London. One of the hymns asked, 'Who will go and join the throng?' The young girl sang, among the others, 'I will go and join the throng.'" She thus became infected with the missionary spirit. She concluded: "It was all clap-trap and nonsense, my dear." (*Life*, p. 7.)

From earliest childhood Olive was generally regarded as different from other children. Of her wonderful precocity, the following story is related. When she was only six years old, a Mr. Robinson paid the family a visit, and when he was saying good-bye, as the *Life* puts it: "Olive, whom he describes as 'ethereal, quick, and quaint,' addressed him suddenly, without any preliminary words: 'But you can't go away.' 'Why can't I go away?' 'You haven't got your hat, and you can't go without a hat.' 'But I can get it.' 'But you can't get it.' 'Why can't I get it?' 'Because I've hidden it.' 'Well, I can find it.' 'But you don't know where it is.' 'I can get the others to find it for me.' 'But they don't know where it is, and if I forget my personal identity I shan't know where it is, and shan't be able to tell them, and you won't be able to find your hat.'"

Olive was a born rebel. Even in her fifth year she had certain perceptions which were out of harmony with what was being taught, with the result that she disbelieved most Christian teaching, and remained courageously loyal to what she knew to be true. When she was nine her favourite sister Ellie died at the tender age of two years. With deathless passion she loved this tiny baby. "She slept beside the little cold body all night after its death, not at all afraid, and hardly left it until it was buried, and she used to spend much of

her time sitting at the grave and talking to the child." In later years, as for example in her first letter to me in 1892, she used to declare "that Ellie's death made her at once and for ever a Freethinker."

The immediate result of its becoming known that she did not believe in the Christian religion, was that members of her own family began to persecute her. The two chiefly responsible for this abominable treatment of her were her brother Theo and her sister Ettie, the former eleven years and the latter five years her seniors. Alas, the persecution, so early begun, never ended so long as any opportunity for it arose. Curiously enough, they both loved her with a consuming passion, and it was their love for her that led them to torment her with such awful cruelty. Writing to her in 1870 Ettie confessed her sin, saying: "I can't tell you how bitterly the past weighs on me, I seem to live in remorse..... Words and thoughts never noticed at the time now stand before me hideous and horrible, but I thank God I know you do love me." But this repentance was but short lived, and the persecution was resumed later on with greater fury than before.

Meanwhile, Olive Schreiner was eagerly preparing for her life's work. Between her ninth and seventeenth years she managed to get hold of the great scientific works of that period, such as those of Herbert Spencer, John Stuart Mill, and later, those of Darwin and Huxley, and by the help of these she formulated her conception of the universe, which happily harmonized with the perceptions which had been hers for so long.

J. T. LLOYD.

(To be Concluded.)

## "Saint Joan."

In religion,

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

—Shakespeare.

You do not believe, you only believe that you believe.

—S. T. Coleridge.

THE story of Joan of Arc is one of the most remarkable in the pages of history. A pious French peasant-girl, she imagined that she heard "voices" ordering her to drive the English out of her country. Joining the army, she won notable victories, and was instrumental in restoring the country to the French king. As a result of shameful intrigues between French and English, she was actually burned at the stake as a witch.

We know from the old chronicles how the world wagged in those far-off days of faith. Its dirt, its grime, its sordidness, and also the fair flowers of human nobility, mark out the France in which Joan lived and exerted so potent an influence. With an imbecile king—supposed to be ruling by divine right—a profligate Court, and a corrupt priesthood, France was in a condition of chaos. Long years of domestic warfare had reduced the French people almost to the condition of brutes. The wildest and most fantastic legends found ready believers. One French knight was said to have sold his hand to the Devil. A great baron, a marshal of France, one of Joan's companions-in-arms, is said to have decoyed children to his castle and offered their bodies as sacrifices to Satan. In this atmosphere of ignorance and credulity Joan of Arc appeared like a lily in the mouth of Tartarus, and, despite her unselfish and devoted services to her country, was burned as a heretic.

Undoubtedly Joan was heretical, however pious and saintly. She put her own inspiration above that of all the ecclesiastics of the Roman Catholic Church; and she aggravated her offence in the eyes of her pious murderers by the complete independence of her replies.

Her execution by burning at the stake produced an enormous impression everywhere, an impression which Roman Catholics have sought to minimize of late years. During the world war, Notre Dame Cathedral, the most famous church in Paris, was actually the scene of a pilgrimage of Roman Catholic faithful, inaugurated by the French Patriotic League, to supplicate Joan of Arc to implore the intercession of the Virgin for victory against the hated Germans. Is it not an object lesson in religious psychology? Burned as a heretic, Joan is now claimed by the Great Lying Church as a saint, and exploited by a Catholic political association in order to help the very Church which murdered her. This child-like obedience to priests is passing wonderful in grown men and women. To study it is to essay an enquiry into the psychology of a crowd, and an ignorant one at that. Let there be no mistake on this point. Roman Catholics are mainly ignorant folk. They are not allowed to read any books or publications criticizing their religion. They are threatened that by doing so they are in danger of eternal damnation. Even colporteurs of Protestant Bible Societies are ill-treated in Roman Catholic countries; for a zealous Papist will no more read a Protestant version of the Bible than he would read the works of Voltaire. No Roman Catholic may even become a Freemason, because priests object to all secret societies other than their own. If a Catholic young man attends a Freethought lecture he sins more grievously than if he stole his employer's money, or ran away with his neighbour's wife. Even Catholic priests themselves are badly educated. They may be able to repeat their ritual with the faithfulness of gramophones, but science and literature are to many of them closed books. For many thousands of men are ordained to the Christian ministry and yet have never been converted to civilization. It is this disquieting fact that should serve to remind the Labour Party that Clericalism is the real enemy. In time, it is to be hoped, Socialists will yet discover, like Red Riding Hood, that the Church of Christ is not a grandmother, but a wolf with sharp teeth and keen eyes.

MIMNERMUS.

## "The Dance of Life."

### III.

(Concluded from page 181.)

UNDER the stress of these unsatisfied cravings of the religious impulse, so carefully planted during childhood, Havelock Ellis says that he well remembers—at the age of seventeen—the painful feelings with which he read D. F. Strauss's *The Old Faith and the New*. He tells us:—

I had the feeling that the universe was represented as a sort of factory filled by an inextricable web of wheels and looms and flying shuttles, in a deafening din. That, it seemed, was the world as the most scientific authorities declared it to be made.<sup>1</sup>

We must confess that out of all the writings of Havelock Ellis we have read, this is the first statement—coming from such a source—we do not understand. Firstly, because we do not know of any "competent scientific authority" who teaches such a view of Nature. Secondly, because our own experience was so different.

It is true that one hears similar statements from the pulpit, and from fossilized theologians; but then these people will say *anything* when arguing against Atheism, and are the very last people that any sane man would expect to hear the truth from upon such a

subject. Nobody pays any regard to their statements to-day, they are regarded merely as a *façon de parler*, a part of their professional duties, like baptizing and administering the sacrament, all in the day's work.

Our own experience was very different. Like Havelock Ellis, the present writer was strictly brought up in the Christian belief, and passed, at the age of thirteen, through the mystical state known as conversion, which, like measles and influenza, nobody can understand the feeling of, except those who have been through it. This state of conversion is now known as a common phenomenon attending the vague yearnings which accompany the period of adolescence, and as such I now recognize it. This phase, however, only lasted a few months, passing away with its cause, but still leaving my faith intact. I knew nothing of Atheism; and believed, as I was told, that Atheists were bad men who did not wish to believe in God, because they wanted to live in wickedness and sin; and, naturally, always died raving at the idea of shortly having to meet this angry and implacable Being. No freethought or sceptical literature had come my way. None came until I left home at the age of eighteen, and the first I ever read was the prosecuted number of this journal, soon after it was started. Havelock Ellis tells us that his religious ideas gradually dissolved away, as a block of salt might in a stream. Mine, on the contrary, blew up, and the *Freethinker* was the spark that touched it off. Two emotions governed me at the time—joy at release from such a superstition, and anger at being brought up to believe such a mass of error and falsehood, although, of course, it was done with the best intentions. I can honestly say that I never experienced any of the unsatisfied cravings for the discarded religion, spoken of by Havelock Ellis. I have often speculated as to what would have happened if my discovery had occurred at the time of my "conversion." It reminds one of the old conundrum: "What would happen if an irresistible force met an immovable obstacle?"

Strauss's *The Old Faith and the New* was one of the earliest freethought works I read, and the impression I received was very different from that given by Havelock Ellis. It struck me as one of the clearest, the best, the most interesting, the most delightfully written of all freethought works. Even to-day, after the lapse of forty years, I can re-read it with pleasure; and the books that I can read a second time are exceedingly few.

In the year 1835, when he was only twenty-seven, Strauss published his famous *Life of Jesus*, which once for all demolished the historical character of the four Gospels. It was a ponderous work, composed with German thoroughness, and created a revolution in the theological world. And now, thirty-seven years later, in his old age—only two years before his death—Strauss sits down to write what he calls his "Confession of Faith," under the title of *The Old Faith and the New*, in which he expounds the effect of the new ideas of evolutionary science upon the Bible and Christian belief. He abandons the dry and formal manner of his previous great work, and writes in a delightfully easy style; more French than German. You feel you are in the presence of a pleasant and gracious old man who admits you into the intimacy of his inmost thoughts, and those thoughts are inspired by the breath of freedom. Of any representation of the Universe as a sort of factory full of wheels and shuttles creating a deafening din, there is no trace whatever. As for the further remark of Havelock Ellis: "I knew nothing of the way that Nietzsche, about that time, had demolished Strauss." Nietzsche never did anything of the kind; it is true he nagged and scolded him; but to demolish *The Old Faith and the New*, it would be necessary to demolish the whole

<sup>1</sup> *The Dance of Life*, p. 199.

theory of Evolution. If Strauss had remained among the orthodox professors at Tübingen and written in defence of the Bible and the creeds, he could not have been worse treated. We are sorry to have to say this of two great men for whom we have the highest admiration. In fact, the whole thing is a mystery to us. One of those things, as Lord Dundreary would say: "No fellah can understand."

However, Havelock Ellis accepted the mechanistic explanation, as indeed he still does, for he remarks in a footnote further on:—

It must be remembered that for science the mechanistic assumption always remains; it is, as Vaihinger would say, a necessary fiction. To abandon it is to abandon science. (p. 200.)

At the age of nineteen, three years after all vestige of religious faith had disappeared, but while he was still interested in religious and philosophic questions, he chanced to read the *Life of Nature*, of James Hinton; he had read the work six months before, without being greatly impressed with it, but now the effect was very different. "Evidently," he observes, "by this time my mind had reached a stage of saturated solution which needed but the shock of the right contact to re-crystallize in forms that were a revelation to me. Here, evidently, the right contact was applied." Now Hinton was a scientific biologist, who, as Ellis remarks, "carried the mechanistic explanation of life even further than was then usual." But he was of a highly emotional and passionate type of intellect, and, as he viewed the cosmic mechanism, "it was vital, with all the glow and warmth and beauty of life; it was, therefore, something which not only the intellect might accept, but the heart might cling to." This new view acted with the swiftness of an electric contact. Says Havelock Ellis: "The two opposing psychic tendencies were fused in delicious harmony, and my whole attitude towards the universe was changed. It was no longer an attitude of hostility and dread, but of confidence and love." But it was quite a secular process, for he says he was not troubled about the origin or destiny of the soul, or "about the existence of any superior being or beings." Thus, he says, it might seem to many that "nothing whatever had happened; I had not gained one single definite belief that could be expressed in a scientific formula or hardened into a religious creed." As he points out, a conversion need not necessarily consist of a turning to religious belief; the essence of it consists of a process of psychic readjustment enabling the mental machinery to work together harmoniously. He illustrates the point on the physical plane by the case of a person who has suffered dislocation of the jaw or arm, he is out of harmony with himself and with the universe. All his efforts, or those of his friends, cannot reduce the dislocation; "but a surgeon comes along, and with a slight pressure of his two thumbs, applied at the right spot, downwards and backwards, the jaw springs into place, the man is restored to harmony—and the universe is transformed." And if the person is ignorant enough, he observes, "he will be ready to fall on his knees before his deliverer as a divine being." Thus it may seem a curious fact to some—

That I never for a moment thought of accepting as a gospel the book which had brought me a stimulus of such inestimable value. The person in whom "conversion" takes place is too often told that the process is connected in some magical manner with a supernatural influence of some kind—a book, a creed, a church, or what not. I had read this book before, and it had left me unmoved; I knew that the book was merely the surgeon's touch; that the change had its source in me and not in the book. I never looked into the book again; I cannot tell where or how my copy of it disappeared; for all that I know, having

accomplished its mission, it was drawn up again to Heaven in a sheet. (p. 204.)

In a footnote he pertinently remarks that: "The man who waits to lead a decent life until he has 'saved his soul,' is not likely to possess a soul worth saving."

Havelock Ellis has thus, from his personal experience, thrown some fresh light upon the mysterious state known as religious conversion. W. MANN.

## Consecrated Cash.

It all arose out of a very trifling incident—as common and conventional as gaiters and elastic side-wings to hat-bands are in archidiaconal circles. The Canon of St. Agnes's with St. Stephens had refused to allow a Gaelic brother-in-the-spirit, one the Rt. Rev. Archie MacDougall-Shellback, ex-Presbyter of the Synod of St. Andrews, N.B., and now the muckle meenister of Tyburnia Street Chapel, W., to baptize in St. Stephens crypt a female infant, who had been delicately conveyed by a most respectable, golden spoon-billed stork to the Tyburnian mansion of Mr. Macdonald Baird, formerly His Majesty's Minister to the Board of Green Cloth, and bell-wether to the flock of the Tyburnian Chapel.

The Rt. Rev. Archie roundly said the Canon was a descendant of them that persecuted that gentlest of men, John Knox, whereupon the adversary retorted, "you're another"; to which he added certain cryptic remarks about "consecration as by law established," and "it is not meet that others should baptize in places whereto they have not been given the apostolic key." Moved by his ghostly passions, the Rt. Rev. Archie opened wide a certain cavernous, bodily part, beetled o'er by a pink and craggy nose, and roared:—

Consecrated hoodle, mon, is hwat ye mean! Hwat have ye done weeth the baptismal fees ye have yearly received for chreestening high-born bairns in your crypt of St. Stephens? Do I not remember yeer-r-r-e ch-r-r-eestening of the child of the Labour-Socialist trade union leader in that crypt, hwen Sir Thomas Toe-Thomas was sponsor, an' deed ye not tell yeere friends that ye were preparing against the evil day when Labour-r-r became the Government.....?

The Rt. Rev. A. became more and more excited, trilling his "r's," and digressing into other fields of biography and topography, as is the manner of neighbourly ladies in Tenement Row when they meet on Saturday evenings in the bar of "The Old House at Home." He waved his umbrella wildly to the admiration of a crowd which, at first no larger, metaphorically, than a man's hand, had left off its daily occupation of gazing at the mudlarks over the parapets of Westminster Bridge, and attracted by the prospect of a little cheap entertainment, had gathered in such hundreds that a portly policeman seemed in danger of a greatly reduced waist by his vain endeavours to clear a way for tramcars and omnibuses. To the accompaniment of loud shouts of "mind your backs there," and "look h'up 'ere's the maounted cawps," our hapless Canon desperately ducked under the arm of a policeman, and fled for St. Agnes's peaceful close, leaving his cockaded, silk hat in the hands of a wondering bargee, to whom, as blown from Heaven, it came over Westminster Bridge.

Our Canon's reflections were not of a complacent nature that night, for though a pillar of the Church of High Society, he had just been passed over in the selection for the very comfortable deanery of Scantlebury. Then Mr. Macdonald Baird was raising the mischief of a dust next day by a question directed to His Majesty's Minister to the Office of Quirks:—

To ask the right hon. gent. whether the Canon has an option on the exclusive performance of all rites

of fee-d baptism, marriage, and burials in the crypt of St. Stephen's; and, arising out of that question, to ask the right hon. gent. if he is aware that the Canon is paid £5 for gabbling each three-minutes' prayer in this Honourable House?

Yea, it seemed as though our Canon was being delivered into the hands of his enemies. There was that infamous Shuttlecock, street-corner orator of the local Labour Party, on the confines of St. Agnes's, who had sworn to move Heaven—or, any way, Earth—until he (the Canon), to use a vulgar phrase, "is hoofed out of his too-numerous cures of souls."

Had not he, our Canon, done everything to conciliate the man, even to the extent of offering him a free stand on the belfry of St. Agnes's on the occasions of royal processions, which munificent offer he (the said Shuttlecock) had scornfully rejected?

Our Canon's features grew ashy pale as he recalled a threatening letter received that morning from one Comrade Bogey, M.P., ex-mayor of a dockland borough, who spoke somewhat bluntly of our Canon's non-recognition of Mrs. Bogey at a quiet and fairly select little function somewhere in Mayfair two nights ago.

There were rumours, too, of a seditious movement among the St. Agnes parishioners of the baser sort, headed by Mr. Fogey, of the Old Boys' Association, and organized for the purpose of dumping on the Bar of the House a monster petition calling on certain honourable gentlemen to remove the Canon out of St. Stephens, or, alternatively, reduce his salary by 99 per cent., either of which measures the petitioners felt would be effective.

Now what can our Canon do? Perhaps the best answer one could give is implied in the tactful remarks recently made by a labouring gentleman to a lady-visitor from the church of the adjacent St. Jack's parish. He, so it was told the Canon, had complained that—

There 'ere owld gels was a-perpetially leavin' tracks on his owld woman, and always a-givin' 'er the gow-by when it was the time for 'arf quids an' tea or blankets.

So he (the labouring gentleman) had told the lady-visitor at his house one day at noon to "git aht of it!"

H. T. WILKINS.

### More Truth Than Poetry.

"I'm afraid," said Deacon Hinkley, "that the end of things is near;  
People seem to grow more wicked, and more reckless every year;  
Even preachers are deserting the old ways our father's trod;  
Every day mankind is getting farther out of touch with God.

Look at all the bare-legged dancing; you can see it anywhere;  
Women show themselves in public with their arms and shoulders bare;  
Wickedness is spreading daily; it's in everything you read;  
Everybody's out for pleasure, and religion's gone to seed.

Decency is disregarded, people merely wink at vice;  
Men appear to be determined to have fun at any price,  
And divorce has grown so common it's no longer a disgrace;  
Everywhere I go I'm meeting some grass-widow face-to-face.

I believe the end is coming; there are signs for all to see;  
Floods and earthquakes and volcanoes show God's wrath, its seems to me;  
People seem to have forgotten that the sinners have to pay,  
And the world is sinking deeper into darkness, day by day."

Suddenly the deacon left me; I had wished to give him cheer,  
For, in fact, I thought he hadn't any reason for his fear,  
But the good old soul remembered an engagement he had made  
With another, whom he cheated very badly in a trade.

*Detroit Times.*

S. E. KISER.

### Acid Drops.

Parsons are queer folk—and they are not lacking in impudence. We believe we have made both remarks before, but we are always getting illustrations of the truth of the observations. Thus, a Miss Hallam has been lecturing on "Psychology"—of a kind—to a Sheffield audience. She has been using the Hippodrome on a Sunday, and at the close of her lecture the other evening Canon Elliott mounted the platform and complained that (1) the lady made high charges for her lectures, (2) she encroached on the Lord's day by having the lectures on Sunday, and (3) she had attracted some of the Canon's own congregation there. The Canon explained that he had gone there "in search of some absentee members of my own congregation." Now these are very serious offences on the part of Miss Hallam, although Miss Hallam disclaims any antagonism to religion; indeed, the Canon says she has used religion as a bait to get people there. But to get money from lecturing on the Lord's day! What clergyman would be guilty of that? To desecrate the Sabbath—in Godly Sheffield—by lecturing on what the lecturer was pleased to call psychology! And then to take the Canon's own congregation there, when they ought to be listening to him! No wonder the Canon went there after them. All the same, we should not be surprised if some wicked ones remarked that (1) the Canon was envious of the large amounts Miss Hallam asked for lectures, (2) he was annoyed at people preferring her sermons to his, and (3) he had confounded impudence to go there at all.

The Rev. Dr. Orchard is what some people call a liberal religious thinker. That being so, it is interesting to get the following, as reported in the *Yorkshire Observer*, from an address delivered to the Eastbrook Mission:—

If there is no life beyond the grave, if this life is all there is, then there is only one thing to struggle for—as much immediate comfort as we can get, and since there is not enough to go equally all round, the principle will be "let me get what I can, and keep the other man out of it."

That is quite a Christian doctrine, the only reason for behaving decently in this world is that there is another one before us. If the Christian undergoes the "restraint" of not picking his neighbour's pocket, he must be rewarded for it in the next world. The social value of honesty, quite apart from God and another life, never appeals to him at all. There is no wonder, in the face of teaching such as this, that Christian civilization is the sorry thing it is. A better teaching might by this time have developed a people with a healthier social sense, and a better moral nature. All we can hope is that if there is a future life Christians will have a territory ruled off to themselves.

The charming idea that any god is better than none is a favourite with religious folk, but a writer in the *Daily Herald* puts the matter very bluntly. Referring to a lady musician, he says: "She prays to God with a hammer

in her hand; and you feel that she is prepared to treat him as a savage treats his idol if the prayers are not properly and promptly answered."

What Secularists these Christians are! In order to attract young people to places of worship they organize American teas, pleasant Sunday afternoons, string bands, solo singers, and nearly everything which their predecessors regarded as being of the world—worldly. And, after all these blandishments, the rising generation are so indifferent to religion as to prefer the cinemas.

Mr. Arbuthnot Maunsell, writing in the *Yorkshire Observer*, says that Mr. Rainsay MacDonald should prove that he is in earnest in his longing for a quiet Sabbath by restraining the Socialist Party from holding so many meetings on Sunday, and suggests that he might take this as a text for an address before an I.L.P. Conference. We have already said that the Prime Minister was guilty of shocking bad tactics when telling a Free Church gathering that he longed for the old Scotch Sabbath. We question whether many of those present, or many who were not, would take the statement without rather a large amount of salt.

The Very Rev. Dr. Henry Wace, Dean of Canterbury, leaves behind him the sum of £22,329. This is not so bad for a follower of one born in a manger, a vagrant, and whose net property was divided between soldiers. In some respects Christianity is "good business"; in this instance the Freethinker may see that the Cross of Jesus is a better paying proposition than the Gospel of common sense—yet, is it not possible that the cargo left behind by Christians is that most concrete of abstractions—hypocrisy? As Byron relieved himself we echo his sentiments:—

Oh for a forty-parson-power to chant  
Thy praise, Hypocrisy! Oh for a hymn  
Loud as the virtues thou dost loudly vaunt,  
Not practise!

The relations between King Ferdinand of Roumania and the Vatican have been somewhat strained ever since he allowed his son and heir to be christened according to the Orthodox instead of the Roman Catholic rites. Here the broad grin of comedy, concealing itself no longer, bursts into a chaotic fit of laughter when brought to the very fountain of mystery and high ceremony. The Vatican sulks in its porticos, forums, rostrums, and labyrinthine twists and turnings; a scowling, high chattering, a tapping of forefingers on the seat of holy wisdom above the horn-rimmed gig-lamps; echo it in heaven, mutter it in the other place; *the Vatican has lost a customer.*

In Westminster Abbey on July 13 there is to be a service for the home and foreign members of the International Advertising Convention. Further to this there is to be an "inspirational" gathering at the Central Hall, Westminster, and the Bishop of London, it is hoped, will preach a special sermon at St. Paul's in the evening. Slowly but surely this great imposture of organized religion is coming down to the level of soap and purgatives; a little lower, and the densest of the community will see that the impregnable rock of holy scripture is losing its bearings when advertisement agents have to be called in.

Things are not what they were and never have been, in these rapid days when it is possible to be run over by a funeral. Mr. Justice Avory is compelled to complain about a matter which was becoming more frequent in the courts. Speaking on a case before him, the learned judge said:—

It is impossible to come to a decision in this case without coming to the conclusion that there has been wilful perjury on one side or the other. Whether it is that people are ceasing to regard the oath with the same sanctity as it used to be regarded, or what may be the reason, I don't know.

In offering solutions of the distinguished judge's problems, they may be summarized as follows: (1) German or Bolshevik gold, (2) the dry weather we have been having lately, (3) the Labour Government. If these are not helpful, we suggest that all ecclesiastical incomes be cut down forthwith by 50 per cent. for not delivering the goods.

We are pleased to see the *Church Times* championing the opening of the Wembley Exhibition on Sundays. And not only the Exhibition, but also the spending of Sunday in games and sports, just as the fancy of people leads them. Of course, it accompanies this with the proviso that people should enjoy themselves in this way after they have been to church, but we are pleased to acknowledge this amount of liberality from so orthodox a source. As usual, it is the narrower forms of faith that are championed by the Nonconformist conscience.

Mr. Hugh Fergusson, M.P., must be a terrible fellow. According to an M.P. who writes in *London Opinion*, the member for Motherwell "hits Socialists, Atheists, and the Roman Catholic Church with the kick of a mule." This sounds rather Irish, but apparently it must be good Protestant argument; however, the mule is an animal that cannot reproduce its kind, and, as we are often indebted to *London Opinion* for good, sound humour without the class distinction of that found in *Punch*, we hope our contemporary will have the above statement either soled and heeled or spring cleaned.

The Rev. C. L. Drawbridge, secretary of the Christian Evidence Society, says that in the whole of his experience he has only met one real Atheist. Unless Mr. Drawbridge has some fanciful definition of his own as to what constitutes an Atheist, we know better. We know very many that he has met. But perhaps it suits his book better not to admit it. The pretence that there are no such beings as Atheists is one that was very popular many years ago, and we suppose that no one expects the Christian Evidence Society to be within a century of present-day thought.

Mr. Drawbridge also advises all Church people to read the best books on apologetics, so that they may be ready to meet the arguments of the unbelievers. But what is the value of a man's advocacy who only reads up all that can be said in defence of his own position. It is far better to advise them to read all that can be said against. But it is not the Christian Evidence methods to find out what can be said against Christianity. That would be very likely to make people give it up altogether.

The Attorney-General informed the House of Commons that the opening of the Exhibition on Sunday would be illegal. It is barred under the old Act of Charles II. We assume that he must have meant Act 21, George III, but none of the members seemed well enough informed to correct him. The Charles Act would cover trading only. But after the Prime Minister's affected longing for a return of the old Scotch Sabbath, we do not suppose the Government would consider legislation to annul the Act. It would offend the Nonconformist voter. But, as a matter of fact, the Act is set on one side in thousands of cases all over the country. The charging for admission to a picture theatre is also illegal. In this instance a number of magistrates give, what is not within their power to give, permission to cinema proprietors to break the law. And the Lord Chancellor says nothing, and the Attorney-General says nothing. If the Act can be set on one side in the case of cinema shows, why not in the case of the Exhibition?

The Act of George III prohibits charging for admission to any place of entertainment or where discussion takes place, such places are deemed disorderly houses, and there are various fines on those concerned up to £200 each. That

law was passed to prevent the discussion of political and religious subjects by associations poor enough to depend upon the "gate-money" to pay expenses. That law is still unrepealed, but the National Secular Society has always broken it whenever and wherever it has had the chance. The police have taken proceedings against other organizations for breaking this law, but they have always left the N.S.S. alone. They probably know there would be a stiff fight in front of them if they tried it on. There are aspects of that Act that have never been fought out in a law court, and those responsible for these prosecutions are probably shrewd enough to be aware of them. Anyway, here is a chance for the Labour Government to prove its courage and devotion to principle by repealing the George III Act, and also that of Charles II. Both are out of touch with the spirit of the times.

Mr. Rutland Boughton, besides being a musical composer, has other accomplishments. When he writes seriously about religion, he is funny without being vulgar, as the Philistine said of a performance of *Hamlet*. Writing of Dr. Ethel Smyth, he states: "She prays to God with a hammer in her hand; and you feel that she is prepared to treat him as a savage treats his idol if the prayers are not properly and promptly answered." The lady has evidently been using the big drum and triangle in the Salvation Army style; the lack of sense must be made up by sound, and all religious noises of this kind are the simple index to the savage origin of that which is banged into inoffensive ears by the blood and fire warriors; who have lately been denying themselves at the expense of the public.

One wonders if it is worth the space to publish the views of a Bishop—as a Bishop and not as a man—on the inmodest dress of women. Bishop Filippello, at Rome, in a Lenten speech, drew attention to this matter. The ladies might retort that the fact of them leaving so much off in the way of clothes is their practical way of going short of something during the sorrowful season. For some mysterious reason, which escapes us, the above news is copyright in the U.S.A. (British United Press).

Three-quarters of a column in the *Daily News* is devoted to the British Pilgrims in Jerusalem. There is the usual brand of pious gush, and the article concludes: "Nothing in the world, surely, can be more soul-stirring or impressive than the Way of the Cross made in the streets of Jerusalem itself." Unless, one might add, the picture of Christians getting ready to wipe out civilization. It was rather a clever thought to fix in the middle of the article a testimonial from a *Daily News* reader who had insured with the paper.

The *Church Times* has some acid comments to make upon Dean Inge, in connection with a lecture on Eugenics which he delivered to the Charity Organization Society. "It would seem," the paper remarks, "that his ideal is a world mainly inhabited by Robots." Doubtless very true—but how these Christians love one another!

The theologically befuddled gentlemen who adopt novel modern methods of proclaiming the virtues of religion—witness the Salvation Army posters and illuminated signs that wink and flash in three or four colours at the unregenerate—might copy old Père Berruyer, a theologian of the Grand Monarque period. In a *Histoire du Peuple de Dieu*, he re-wrote the Bible as a fashionable novel. His histories of Joseph and King David are tasty morsels, which were doubtless devoured with the avidity with which certain of the "problem" novels of to-day are. Here is a specimen of his style: "Joseph combined, with a regularity of features and a brilliant complexion, an air of the noblest dignity, all which contributed to render him one of the most amiable men in Egypt." Later in the fascinating narrative: "She [Potiphar's wife] declared her passion, and pressed him to answer her. It never

entered her mind that the advances of a woman of her rank could ever be rejected. Joseph at first only replied to all her wishes by his cold embarrassments. She would not yet give him up. In vain he flies her; she was too passionate to waste even the moments of his astonishment." The worthy père also does ample justice to the gallantry of the Patriarch Jacob, when he offers to serve Laban seven years for Rachel. "Nothing is too much," the old rascal exclaims, "when one really loves." Judith is represented as a Parisian coquette: Moses is a pedant; the love passages might be dialogues from French love stories.

The *Church Times* bemoans the fact that there is a shortage of 3,500 priests in the Church of England. There are fewer and fewer candidates for ordination from the public schools, it points out: "On the other hand, there are in the classes who do not send their sons to public schools hundreds of young men with vocations who might become admirable and successful priests if they had the opportunity of training. In this world of new conditions the priest who comes from the ranks of the workers and who knows something of their troubles and sorrows is the man whom the Church most needs." The old, old policy of sifting out the more energetic members of a restless class and offering them comfortable positions if they will help maintain the tyranny under which they chafe. It has often happened in political and economic struggles; and now the Church is apparently getting in such a bad way that it is compelled also to "buy off" its most dangerous enemies.

Macclesfield Town Council decided to open its proceedings with prayer. The extent to which it was wanted was evidenced on the first occasion on which prayers were said—of 48 members, only 18 attended. But there was quite a crowd waiting outside till the prayers were finished. Then they went in to perform their proper functions. It is a pity that the majority did not have the courage to vote against the proposal when it was first brought forward. In this respect the movers of such a resolution have a distinct advantage. However much members may be against this silly mixing of religion with civic functions, few have the courage to speak and vote against it for fear of losing favour with the outside public. And that is where we come in. We must go on creating a better state of public opinion which will enable public men to be honest to themselves and to others.

"Industrial Sunday" is to be observed in Westminster Abbey during April. We presume that on that day the clergy will deliver the message of Christianity to the workers. They will be told that it is foolish to take thought for the morrow, that they should obey their masters, whether the masters be good or bad, and there is more glory in obeying a bad one than there is obeying a good one. They will be assured that the meek will inherit the earth, that faith will cure disease, and that woman's place is to learn at home in silence and subjection. On the other hand, it is just possible that there will be some modification of this Christian message.

The clergy are not yet happy with regard to the wireless. First of all they thought it would be good business if they got in some sort of a sermon on the Sunday evening. So they made arrangements with the wireless people to do this, and as the latter counted the number who said they liked it, it was always easy to claim that the sermon met a long-felt want. Then the clergy advanced to a full church service on the Sunday evening. Now they are complaining that many are taking this wireless service as an excuse for staying away from Church—and, besides, there is no collection made over the wireless. So the plea is now that the wireless service must not be taken as a substitute for the gathering in Church. Presumably people must go to Church first and rush home to listen to another service at home. But there are limits.



## 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.

J. LATHAM.—We hope the new venture will be successful. It is a trying time for many just now, and there does not seem any immediate prospect of improvement. We have the same feature here as you note in Africa—a hard struggle, with many complaints on all hands of bad trade, and yet money being spent as lavishly as though we were still in the "boom years." Thanks for good wishes to us all, which all reciprocate.

A. I. BERTRAM.—Thanks for cuttings. Part of the training of a parson appears to consist in instruction in the art of keeping oneself in the limelight.

J. HAMILTON.—We have several of Ingersoll's pamphlets, as you will see from our advertising columns.

H. FRANCIS.—Copies are being sent. They should have been sent before.

D. MACCONNELL.—Pleased to know that you appreciate our point of view. We quite agree with you as to the importance of discussing the matter from that special point of view, and an opportunity may arise to do so without there being an unpleasant personal application.

H. YOUNG.—"The Bible: Is it the Word of God," was written by Judge Strange. It was a very useful piece of work, but would need bringing up to date if it were re-issued. It has been out of print for many years. You might be able to procure a copy second hand.

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.

Mr. Cohen lectures to-day (March 30) in the Pendleton Town Hall: In the afternoon at 3 on "The Making of Man"; and at 6.30, "Why Not Secularize the State?" We assume 6.30 to be the time of the evening meeting, but we have not had the usual lecture notice. Pendleton Town Hall can easily be reached from all parts of Manchester; and as there is no strike on there, we expect to see a goodly muster of the "saints." The last meetings—which were also the first—in the Town Hall were a great success, we hope to see that success repeated.

Mr. Cohen's meeting on Sunday last in the Birmingham Town Hall was hardly up to the usual in point of numbers, but there was no mistaking the interest in the lecture shown by those present. Mr. Clifford Williams occupied the chair, and made a strong appeal for local support of the local Branch. One good feature of the

meeting was that the supply of the *Freethinker* was completely sold out before the lecture commenced. We hope that all who failed to get a copy will see to it that it is secured at a newsagent.

With reference to the paragraph we printed last week concerning the good Christian who said that his sister was called to the bedside of the late G. W. Foote and witnessed his conversion to Christianity. We have received a letter from Mrs. Foote informing us that only herself and the nurse was by his side, and that the story is simply a religious lie. Of course, we were well aware of the facts of the case, but this kind of story is so contemptible that we cannot bring ourselves to treat it seriously. And our contempt for Christianity is only intensified when we find this class of Christian inventing such stories about the death-beds of prominent Freethinkers.

Of course, the better class of present-day Christians will join with us in expressing disgust for this type of believer. But, all the same, we venture to remind these better class Christians that the death-bed tale about Freethinkers was once upon a time the regular stock-in-trade of Christian apologists of the very highest standing. And it was thought quite the proper thing to say. Nowadays, the development of Freethought and common decency have served to make large numbers of Christians ashamed of these ghoulish tactics. But we must remind them that they have to thank Freethinkers that this amount of decency has been imported into the frame of mind developed by belief in "Christ and him crucified."

Really we cannot bring ourselves to get highly indignant with the hawkers of these death-bed tales. And that because we are more concerned with how men live than how they die. And for our part the Christian Church would be welcome to everybody when they were dying—if only Freethought could claim their allegiance while they were strong and healthy. The world is affected by how we live, not by how we die; and, as someone has said, it is far better to live sensibly and die silly than it is to live silly and die sensibly. And a creed that is driven for support to the supposed wanderings of men when their bodies are worn by disease and their minds exhausted or worn out by pain, is—one wants something at this stage to take the taste out of one's mouth.

There are still echoes of Mr. Cohen's recent meetings at Weston-super-Mare in the local press. The correspondence produces some of the usual religious gems. Thus one correspondent writes that "deep down in their hearts the most bigoted and case-hardened Atheists have to acknowledge the existence of some external Creative Force, which operates outside and over and above the laws of Nature." We do not know what this means, but we are quite taken with the picture of these "case-hardened" Atheists who really do believe in a God, but who go round trying to persuade people that they do not. What puzzles us is what they gain, or expect to gain by it? Perhaps some enlightened Westonian will explain.

The Glasgow Branch holds its annual meeting to-day (March 30) in the Shop Assistants' Hall, Argyle Street, at 6 o'clock. There is important business to transact, and it is requested that all members make as effort to be present. The Branch has had a very successful season, but like others it has felt the effects of the bad trade spell so far as its finances are concerned. The Branch Committee has for long aimed at getting premises of its own in which to meet, and that is one project which it is hopes to advance in the near future. Glasgow must hold a very large number of Freethinkers, and if closer organization could be effected there would be a very rapid development of the work on Clydeside.

We congratulate the Rationalist Press on its issue of that fine work of Winwood Reade's, *The Martyrdom of*

*Man*, in a pocket edition at the extremely low price of 2s. 6d. Originally published in 1872, the work has run through nearly twenty editions, and established itself as something of a classic. It gives a connected sketch of human evolution under the headings of "War," "Religion," "Liberty," and "Intellect." Admirably written, with a wealth of picturesque descriptive phraseology, it is a work that nearly two generations have read with pleasure and profit; and, we think, will go on reading it. Those who do not know the work should get it without delay. Those who do, will probably read it again in the handy pocket form in which it is now issued. The work can be supplied by the Pioneer Press, post free, for 2s. 6d.

Although Reade had surrendered the belief in a personal God, and, of course, the belief in Christianity, he never outgrew a vague kind of theism, and at this date it is amusing to look back and think of the anger of the orthodox world at the mild heresies the *Martyrdom of Man* contains. That it should have roused so much resentment, will help those who now read it for the first time to realize how far we have travelled since 1872. And for that liberative work the much-abused Freethinker is to be thanked. Freethought propaganda has made it possible for Christian preachers to now say from the pulpit what Reade and others were denounced for saying only fifty years ago. The world stonies its benefactors, and then adopts their teachings and the fruits of their labours.

Reade was an African explorer of distinction, and there was a very handsome compliment paid him by Darwin for his work. But the orthodox world had its revenge. It boycotted the man and his work, and one consequence of this is seen in the fact that in the vast majority of histories of African exploration Reade's name is not even mentioned. There is nothing surprising in this. How many histories of the growth of English liberties during the nineteenth century pay anything like due attention to the work of heretics like Richard Carlile, Hetherington, Southwell, Bradlaugh, and other Freethinkers? In most works they are completely ignored. History is so written that it is the defenders of superstition and social abuses that are glorified; those who attacked these wrongs and stupidities are ignored and gradually forgotten by the mass of the people. Defeated orthodoxy may have to swallow the teachings of the despised heretics, but it takes its mean revenge by blotting out, so far as is possible, their memories.

The West Ham Branch is holding another Social Evening on Saturday, March 29. The function will take place in the Earlham Hall, Earlham Grove, Forest Gate, E., at 7 o'clock. There will be the usual programme, musical and otherwise; and all Freethinkers and their friends are welcome.

We promised to report whenever the week's supply at the office was exhausted. This occurred last week, so there may be some who did not get their copy to time. But we shall be able to supply all the wholesale orders from the returns. We have increased the printing order this week.

The hope of Truth grows stronger, day by day;  
I hear the soul of man around me waking,  
Like a great sea its frozen fetters breaking,  
And flinging up to heaven its sunlit spray,  
Tossing huge continents in scornful play,  
And crushing them, with din of grinding thunder,  
That makes old emptiness stare in wonder;  
The memory of a glory passed away  
Lingers in every heart, as, in the shell,  
Resounds the bygone freedom of the sea,  
And, every hour new signs of promise tell  
That the great soul shall once again be free,  
For high, and yet more high, the murmurs swell  
Of inward strife for truth and liberty.

—Lowell.

## The Wolf in Mythology.

OWING presumably to its cunning and ferocity, which makes it one of the most dreaded of primitive man's enemies, the wolf occupies a prominent place in most religious systems, and in the darker superstitions of mankind. Thus the Roman festival of the Lupercalia was held on the third day after the Ides of February, at the Lupercal, where Romulus and Remus were alleged to have been suckled by a she-wolf. Tradition also maintained that Latona, the mother of Apollo was in the shape of this animal when she gave birth to Lycigenes; and it was in the same form that the Egyptian god Osiris succoured his son Horus. The wolf was also sacred to Mars, the god of war. Autolycus, son of Hermes and Chione, the father of Anticleia, the mother of the famous Odysseus, is in plain English the wolf himself. He was a master-thief, possessed of the convenient power of making those things he stole invisible, or of giving them new forms.

The wolf also figures largely in Scandinavian mythology. Fenris, a water-demon in the form of a gigantic wolf, is a source of perpetual annoyance to his fellow-deities. They seek to bind him with mighty links of iron, but these he snaps asunder with the greatest ease. At last, by the advice of a cunning dwarf, the gods manufacture a rope out of the following strange assortment of materials: roots of mountains, beards of women, nerves of bears, breath of fishes, spittle of birds, and the noise made by cats' feet. Fenris, however, is suspicious of this strangely wrought fetter, and realizing the futility of employing force, the deities have recourse to artifice. Such a cord will never bind the mighty water-demon, they declare, it is merely an interesting experiment they wish to make. But still the gigantic wolf eyes the cord askance, and is only finally persuaded to submit to be bound with it on condition that Tyre (godfather of our Tuesday), places his right hand in the monster's mouth as a pledge of the gods' innocent intentions. Once bound he cannot break the cord asunder, and so the Scandinavian gods purchase a respite from his malign attentions, although it is fated that one day the demon shall break loose and be revenged upon them.

Odin, the supreme deity in Norse mythology, also possessed two famous wolves who ranked as demi-gods.

The belief in lycanthropy has been a widespread one. It still obtains credence in Asia and Africa; and in Europe it is as old, at least, as Homer. Poems and legends of the middle ages teem with horrible instances of this strange superstition. Lycaon, who for his impiety was transformed into a wolf by the Roman Jupiter, is one of the earliest examples we have of the werewolf. Pliny, the famous Roman scientist, was sufficiently far in advance of his age to say emphatically: "That men may be transformed into wolves and restored again to their former shape, we must confidently believe to be a lewd lie."

The wisest fool in Christendom, James, I, of England, also had wit enough to refuse to place credence in tales of lycanthropy. In his *Demonology* he suggests that the superstition may have arisen from the manifestations of some mental malady, closely allied to hypochondria.

.....If any such thing hath been, I take it to proceed of a naturall superabundance of melancholy, which we reade that it hath made some think themselves pitchers, and some horses; so suppose I that it hath so vitiate the imagination of some, and so highly occupied them, that they have thought themselves very wolves indeed, and so have counterfeited their actions in going on their hands and feet; pressing to devour women and barnes, fighting and scratching with the towne dogges, and using such-like other brutish actions,

Some of the old medical treatises which took the same view suggested extraordinary remedies; in particular, Cirano advocated dealing the sufferer a shrewd blow with a pitchfork betwixt the eyes!

Whenever man's attention has been keenly interested in the theology, belief in lycanthropy has been very prevalent. Thus, in the middle ages, the Emperor Sigismond actually invited the learned men of the day to debate the subject before him. After a debate which lasted three days it was unanimously decided that werewolves did exist. The same problem was argued before Pope Leo. X. with all due solemnity, and an exactly contrary conclusion arrived at. During these debates the most amazing arguments, based upon biblical authority, were used. The stories of Lot's wife, Balaam's ass, Nebuchadnezzar's madness, and a host of texts that seem to have no possible bearing on the subject were gravely adduced, refuted, and twisted to suit various viewpoints. Thomas Aquinas was the leading authority for those who maintained the reality of lycanthropy; St. Augustine was the authority for those who denied it. In truth, sentences can be found in the writings of both these fathers to justify either belief.

At a later date Alphonso A. Castro discovered that the twenty-fifth canon of the Council of Ancyra, held in 314, proclaimed that all who believed in werewolves were worse than heretics or pagans. Fortified by this authoritative statement, he declared in his bigoted book, *The Just Punishment of Heretics*, that all who believed in lycanthropy should be burned alive. At the same time the French judges, every bit as staunch Romanists, were condemning great numbers of poor wretches to the stake on the charge of being werewolves. Out of the vast numbers of persons accused of lycanthropy before the French tribunals only one, a boy of thirteen, escaped death by burning. The trials, cruel torturing, and horrible deaths of hosts of unhappy wretches during this epidemic of werewolf hunting, is almost as black a page in the history of the Christian Church as is the long and terrible persecution of men and women charged with witchcraft. As in the case of the miserable old women tortured and murdered on charges of witchcraft, the victims of the mania for destroying werewolves were chiefly poor and mentally afflicted men and women, whose eccentric ways had aroused the suspicions of their superstitious neighbours. Sometimes, to be sure, private feuds were settled by an appeal to these unholy beliefs; family quarrels and the settlement of disputed wills were occasionally ended by the judicial murder of one of the disputants on a charge of sorcery or lycanthropy. Boguet, for example, tells of a case which happened in his own neighbourhood. He was himself the judge who tried and condemned the culprit. A sportsman was attacked by a fierce wolf, which he succeeded with great difficulty in putting to flight, after cutting off one of the creature's fore-paws. Returning to his friend's chateau, where he was spending a holiday, he produced the paw, as he related his adventure. To his amazement he found that it had changed into a human hand, which the master of the chateau recognized, by the rings on the fingers, to belong to his wife. They sought her out, and found that she was indeed minus a hand. Straightway her husband sent her to prison, where she was tortured, confessed her crime, and was burned at the stake. One cannot help but suspect that this tale conceals some grim story of conjugal discord.

There are other and less painful aspects of the belief in lycanthropy. Thus Olaus Magnus, a famous sixteenth century archbishop of Upsal, in his *Historiae De Gentibus Septentrionalibus*, gravely informs us that werewolves abound largely in northern countries, and can always be distinguished from the natural animals

from their habit of entering beer-cellars, drinking many barrels of beer, and piling the empty barrels one on top of the other in the centre of the cellar. Other authorities inform us that the werewolf is invariably destitute of a tail, since although Satan can transform members of the body into new shapes, it is the attribute of the Deity alone to create new members.

Quaint are some of the Church legends relating to the encounters which the saints had with wolves. Thus Rudolphus Glaber, an old French historian, informs us that in the year 888 when the bishop of the diocese and a number of ecclesiastics were in the cathedral church of Orleans, a wolf entered the place and, taking the bell-rope in his mouth, rang the bell for a considerable time, then made a leisurely departure. The following year the church was burned down; whereupon it became obvious that it had been the beast's intention to warn them of the approaching catastrophe. How the wolf became possessed of this prevision, and why such a remarkable creature could not use more explicit means of giving his warning, we are not informed.

Another naïve tale relates to St. Kentigern, of Scotland. It appears that a dreadful famine had swept that kingdom, killing off most of the beasts of draught. Seed-time was approaching and there were not sufficient cattle left to till the soil. In this emergency St. Kentigern hit upon the novel idea of summoning herds of deer from the wilderness, and commanding them to allow themselves to be yoked to the ploughs, to perform the labours that normally fall to the lot of the ox and horse. Perforce they submitted to the saint's miraculous powers, and meekly tilled the soil. Presently, however, a hungry wolf prowling about a farm, was so struck by the astounding sight of deer drawing a plough, that he waited till nightfall, then visited the farmstead, intending it appears to make a closer inspection of the novel farming-stock. Unfortunately he permitted his nature to triumph over his caution, and killed and devoured one of the deer. Next morning, perceiving what had happened, the holy man stretched forth his hands and called upon the wolf to appear and take the place of the deer he had killed. The beast had no choice but to obey, and for some time worked well. Then, when the ploughing was done, he was permitted to return to his native woods; doubtless a wiser if not better creature for his lengthy sojourn among Christians.

A somewhat similar legend relates how a wolf who killed an ox employed in dragging stones to a place called Sichart, in Glendochuhy (when a church was in process of being built), was constrained to take its place. In this instance a remarkable reformation of character (comparable with some of those conversions claimed by the Salvation Army and kindred bodies) was effected. The wolf not only worked hard, but attended the morning and evening prayers which were offered up daily during the building of the church.

W. H. MORRIS.

---

For the production of a great work there are needed three things—inspiration, labour, and time. The inspiration and the labour, the artist, the thinker, supplies; while the perspiration of the masses provides the time.—*D. P. Stickells*.

---

It is a sign that real religion is in a state of decay when passages in compliment of it are applauded at the theatre.—*William Hazlitt*.

---

When Art was born Religion took possession of it. Religion did not create Art.—*Camille Saint-Saëns*.

## The Story of a Famous Old Jewish Firm.

### III.

(Concluded from page 187.)

BEHOLD a few of the questions which this study of the first documents has raised: The Father, whom no one has seen, is there indeed such a personage? The Son, whom certainly no one has seen for eighteen hundred years, did he really come to life again after being brutally murdered? The junior partner, whom no one has ever seen, the Comforter, is he a comforter made of the wool of a sheep that never was fleeced? The business, as we see it, merely uses the names, and would be precisely the same business if these names covered no personages. Do the managers and sub-managers really carry it on for their own profit, using these high names to give dignity to their rascality, and to make poor people believe that they have unbounded capital at their back? One is punished for defamation of character if he denies the existence of the partners, yet not the very chief of all the managers pretends to have seen any of the three!

And the vaunted Bread of Life, wherein does it differ from the old corn-of-Ceres bread, from the baking of the wheat of Mother Hertha? Chiefly in this, that it creates much more wind on the stomach. It is not more wholesome, nor more nourishing, and certainly not more cheap: and it does us little good to be told that it would be if the accredited agents were honest, and supplied it pure, when we are told, at the same time, that we must get it through these agents. It is indeed affirmed that, in an utterly unknown region beyond the Black Sea, the genuine wheat may be seen growing by any one who discovers the place; but, as no one who ever crossed the sea on a voyage of discovery ever returned, the assertion rests on the bare word of people who have never seen the cornland any more than they have seen the partners of the firm; and their word is bare indeed, for it has been stripped to shame in a thousand affairs wherein it could be brought to the test. They tell us also that we shall all in time cross the Black Sea, and if we have been good customers shall dwell evermore in that delightful land, with unlimited supplies of the bread gratis: this may be true, but how do they know? It may be true that in the sea we shall all get drowned for ever.

These and similar doubts which, in many minds, have hardened into positive disbelief, are beginning to affect seriously the trade of the firm. But its interests are now so inextricably bound up with the interests of thousands and millions of well-to-do and respectable people, and on its solvency, or apparent solvency, depends that of so large a number of esteemed merchants, that we may expect the most desperate struggles to postpone its final bankruptcy. In the great Roman establishment the manager has been supported for many years by charitable contributions from every one whom he could persuade to give or lend, and now he wants to borrow much more. The superintendent of the shops in London is in these days begging for ten hundred thousand pounds to assist the poor firm in its difficulties. It seems a good sum of money; but, bless you, it is but a drop in the sea compared with what the business has already absorbed, and is still absorbing. Scattered shops in the most distant countries have only been sustained for many years by alms from customers here; the barbarians won't eat the bread, but the bakers sent out must have their salaries. A million of pounds being begged here; and people (who would prosecute a mendicant of half-pence) will give it no doubt! Yet, O worthy manager of the London Shops, one proved loaf of the real Bread

would be infinitely more valuable, and would infinitely more benefit your firm! The villainy of the agents was monstrous generation after generation, the cost of that which was promised without money and without price was ruinous for centuries; but not all the villainy and extortion multiplied a hundredfold could drive away the poor hungry customers while they had faith in the genuineness of the bread. It was the emptiness and the wind on the stomach after much eating, which raised the fatal doubts as to the *bona fides* of the whole concern. The great English managers had better ponder this; for at present they grope in the dark delusion that more and better bakers salaried with alms, and new shops opened with eleemosynary funds will bring customers to buy their bran cakes as wheaten loaves. A very dark delusion, indeed! If the pure promised bread cannot be supplied, no amount of money will keep the business going very long. Consider what millions on millions of pounds have been subscribed already, what royal revenues are pouring in still; all meant for investment in wholesome and nourishing food, but nearly all realized in hunger and emptiness, heart-burn and flatulence. The old Roman shrewdly calculated that the House of Olympus would prove miserably insolvent if its affairs were wound up, if it tried honestly to pay back all the deposits of its customers. As for this more modern firm, one suspects that, in like case, it would prove so insolvent that it could not pay a farthing in the pound. For Olympus was a house that dealt largely in common worldly goods, and of these things really did give a considerable quantity to its clients for their money; but the new firm professed to sell things infinitely more valuable, and of these it cannot prove the delivery of a single parcel during the eighteen hundred years it has been receiving purchase money unlimited.

The humble compiler of this rapid and imperfect summary ought, perhaps, to give his own opinion of the firm and the partners, although he suffers under the disadvantage of caring very little for the business, and thinks that far too much time is wasted by both the friends and the enemies of the House in investigation of every line and figure in its books. He believes that Jah, the grand Jewish dealer, was a succession of several distinct personages; and will probably continue to believe thus until he learns that there was but one Pharaoh King of Egypt, but one Bourbon King of France, and that the House of Rothschild has always been one and the same man. He believes that the Son was by no means the child of the Father, that he was a much better character than the father, that he was really and truly murdered, that his prospectus and business plans were very much more wise and honest and good than the prospectus as we have it now, and the system as it has actually been worked. He believes that the Comforter has really had a share in this as in every other business not wholly bad in the world, that he has never identified his interests with those of any firm, that specially he never committed himself to a partnership of unlimited liability with the Hebrew Jah, that he undoubtedly had extensive dealings with the Son, and placed implicit confidence in him while a living man, that he will continue to deal profitably and bountifully with men long after the firm has become bankrupt and extinct. He believes that the corn of the true bread of life is sown and grown, reaped, ground, kneaded, baked, and eaten on this side of the Black Sea. He believes that no firm or company whatever, with limited or unlimited liability, has the monopoly for the purveyance of this bread, that no charters can confer such monopoly, that the bread is only to be got pure by each individual for himself, and that no two individuals of judgment really like it prepared in exactly the same fashion, but

that unfortunately (as his experience compels him to believe) the bulk of mankind will always in the future no less than in the past persist in endeavouring to procure it through great chartered companies. Finally, he believes that the worthy chief baker in London with his million of money is extremely like the worthy Mrs. Partington with her mop against the Atlantic.

JAMES THOMSON (B.V.).

Author of *City of Dreadful Night*, etc.

## Some Aspects of Hell.

### III.

(Continued from page 173.)

WHEN we come to such a man as J. H. Newman believing in hell, who, intellectually, had very few superiors during his age; who was a master of refined prose; a poet of ability, and a writer of beautiful hymns, we are faced with a psychological problem that is not easy to solve. A man who could write that beautiful hymn, "Abide with me, etc.," and give the excellent definition of a gentleman to be found in his essay on a University Education, and at the same time say, in depicting the Judgment:—

Oh, terrible moment for the soul, when it suddenly finds itself at the judgment-seat of Christ; when the judge speaks and consigns it to the jailers till it shall pay the endless debt which lies against it!..... While thus ye speak his soul is in the beginning of those torments in which his body shall soon have part, and which will never die, etc.

So distinguished a divine as Bishop Wilberforce, says:—

Oh, awful sight of unequalled horror, when he, who, created by the loving will of goodness infinite.....sees in perfect retrospect that this his doom of endless misery was self-chosen, self-inflicted, self-formed in his own spirit.

However, some advanced clerical opinions maintain that hell is merely a vague condition, undefined, yet real. If good souls pass into heaven, then bad souls must pass somewhere. This somewhere is an indefinite hell; it must be a hell of some kind, because if it is not, then one of the fundamentals of the cult becomes void. If there is not a hell, then there are substantial reasons for supposing that there may not be a heaven; for hell and heaven are mutually dependant. The truth is that advanced thought is having its effect upon theologians, whether they like it or not; and the retention of the idea of an indefinite hell is merely the incipient stages of its ultimate rejection. Modern scientific knowledge makes the existence of the Christian and Judiac hells impossible, and pressure from this knowledge is having its effect in the world of theology, and is producing in consequence the changes in the conceptions that we see are taking place. We are told that the hereafter is spiritual; and yet clerics when dealing with the topic hell always discuss it in a very material sense. If the intense heat and horrible stenches that are so prevalent in hell are not manifestations of material energy, what are they? The ostensible position is quite plain. The clerics are compelled by force of circumstance to discuss their spiritual things in terms of matter, because they are incapable of doing otherwise: the nature of their intelligence and experience will not allow them to use any other method. The material sense in which they discuss hell demonstrates the insecurity and absurdity of their position, as well as the nature of their ignorance in regard to hell. For if they had such abundant proof, as some of them claim, in regard to the existence of hell, why is it so necessary to illustrate and depict

hell as being of a worldly and material nature? No, in the endeavour to substantiate a long cherished and well-nursed historical distortion and clerical terrifier, theologians have adopted the rather ridiculous position of a spiritual-material hell—a position that is indefensible on spiritual grounds, rational grounds, or common-sense grounds.

The Catholic Church has never ceased to dwell upon the reality of hell, and issues pictures depicting its horrifying nature. These can be seen and bought by interested persons. They are frequently seen in the houses of Roman Catholics, and are on sale at the missions held at Roman Catholic churches, when the stereotyped rituals of hell and damnation are duly flourished before terrified and submissive congregations. No doubt exists as to the effect of these pictures on uninformed minds. Their continual presence in the home produces a depressing effect on families. But the priestly effect is salutary. The presence of these pictures has the psychological effect that clerics wish, and is a continual source of irritation, and a reminder of the consequences of the disobedience of clerical injunctions. In such an atmosphere the individuality of each person in the household is destroyed; his manhood is sapped; and he becomes a prey to priestly machinations

Needless to say, care has been taken to provide a very effective terrifier for children. This is done in a series of fourteen books for children. They are issued at the price of one penny a copy, and may be bought if so desired in the ordinary way. They are issued under the authority of the Catholic Church, and may be regarded as propaganda leaflets issued to children for the purpose of terrifying them into the fold of Rome. Father Furniss (his name rather implies a future condition with which he appears to have much sympathy, judging from the matter in his literary pot-pourri for the children whom he seems to love so well) is the author of this series of books, and they deal with the following matters for little children: *The Sight of Hell*; *The Terrible Judgment*; *The Bad Child*; *Almighty God*; *God Loves His Children*; *The Great Evil*; and so on—very unsuitable subjects from a humane point of view, but most effective for the purpose of priestcraft. Father Furniss is a very skilful terrorist and creator of horrors. He possesses both qualities in a remarkable degree, and received various complimentary tributes for his skill from his clerical colleagues. So skilfully and impressively does he portray the horrors of hell, that he can make adults' flesh creep, quite apart from his chief intention of terrifying children. In the very unedifying book entitled *The Great Evil*, the author depicts with horribly harassing details the awful consequences of sin. The subject is the decomposition of a corpse; and every minute detail is set forth in the most sickening manner. He tells his children, whom he loves so well, that the dead body is "disfigured inside and out with every disease in the world"; and enlarges with sickening exactitude on the process of decomposition in the grave. But, "O sinner, your soul is ten million times worse." The soul of a sinful child is thrown into a den of devils, all of whom are worse than lions, tigers, serpents, adders, scorpions, toads, in fact anything that will terrify a child's mind. (If it should have the good fortune to have any left after Father Furniss is finished with it.) In this very unedifying book the Devil is a boa-constrictor, who winds himself around the unfortunate sinner and squeezes him to pieces. Then having done this he eats up all the crushed flesh, and shoots out his tongue, which is made of fire, and bites and stings the sinner's soul. This is the *Sting of Death*. What charming matter for children!

A. MITCHELL.

(To be Concluded.)

## Is Birth Control Necessary?

THE debate at the St. Pancras Reform Club last Sunday between Mr. R. B. Kerr and Mr. Charles E. Pell proved highly successful. The position taken up by Mr. Pell in his book, *The Law of Births and Deaths*, and in this debate, is simply that the falling birth rate is not due to the use of contraceptives, but to natural law. As man evolves into what may be called a higher being, his fertility naturally decreases. Plenty of food, good education, and a general all-round prosperity help to limit the size of his family. Mr. Kerr, on the contrary, claims that the falling birth rate is due to voluntary limitation; the wholesale use of contraceptives being the responsible factor, while the "law" as understood by Mr. Pell simply does not exist. To prove their case both disputants brought up a formidable array of statistics and opinions of specialists, and their comments thereon proved extremely stimulating to the audience. If Mr. Pell is right, then the work of all birth controllers is absolutely unnecessary, as he tried to prove from the result of enquiries made by well known authorities that the families of those who used preventives and those who did not were much the same in numbers. He seemed to me, however, to ignore the obvious retort that those who practised birth control were obliged to do so after the birth of say two or more children. Moreover, both statistics and enquiries of this kind are very unsatisfactory. It is notorious that statistics can be made to do duty for both sides, while people are very loth to say much about their intimate life on a public questionnaire. The truth can be more readily arrived at privately among one's own friends; and few married men with small families could deny that "prevention" played a great part in regulating the number of their children. However, Mr. Pell put up a great fight, and it is always good to hear different views. Mr. Kerr's knowledge of Malthusianism seems unlimited, and both speakers thoroughly held their audience. An interesting discussion followed. Dr. Binnie Dunlop, as usual, proved an ideal chairman.

H. CUTNER.

## Correspondence.

### THE LIMITATIONS OF THE SENSES.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Without wishing to enter into a discussion, perhaps the Editor will allow me to deal with one or two points in "Keridon's" letter of last week. I quite agree that an increase in the number of our senses is a vain speculation, but if it did come about without injuring our nervous systems I believe we should solve some of Nature's mysteries.

The reason that I am a Freethinker is mainly due to the thought that Nature is all sufficient, and that such problems as life, mind, and consciousness will one day be solved without going to the supernatural.

"Keridon" intimates that the sense-organs do not act in the pursuit of knowledge. I cannot agree; for when I was a lad I was near-sighted, but when I took to spectacles, at the age of 18 or 20, it was a revelation of lost possibilities, for one can learn a lot through the eye.

ANDREW CLARKE.

## PIONEER LEAFLETS.

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

- No. 1. WHAT WILL YOU PUT IN ITS PLACE?
- No. 2. WHAT IS THE USE OF THE CLERGY?
- No. 3. DYING FREETHINKERS.
- No. 4. THE BELIEFS OF UNBELIEVERS.
- No. 5. ARE CHRISTIANS INFERIOR TO FREETHINKERS?

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

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGTON 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.

### COUNTRY.—INDOOR.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (160 Great Portland Street, W.): 8, a Lecture. The Discussion Circle meets every Thursday, at 8, at the "Lawrie Arms," Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W.): 7.30, Mr. John Murphy, "The Rise of Christianity."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W.9): 7, Mr. E. C. Ratcliffe, "Love."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7, Mr. F. J. Gould, "At the Back of the Drink Question."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., "Why Not Commit Suicide?"

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Upton Labour Party Hall, 84 Plashet Road, Upton Park, E.13): 7, Mr. R. H. Rosetti, "Nature, Man, and God."

### OUTDOOR.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Marble Arch): 3, a Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Regent's Park, near the Fountain): 11.15 and 3.15, Mr. W. E. Hart will lecture.

### LONDON.—INDOOR.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Shop Assistants' Hall, 297 Argyle Street): 6.30, Annual General Meeting. Large Turn-out requested.

LEEDS BRANCH N.S.S. (Youngman's Restaurant, Lowerhead Row): 7, Dr. Carl Woodcock, "Tuberculosis."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. A. J. Essex, "The Starry Universe." (Lantern Illustrations.)

PENDLETON (Town Hall): Mr. Chapman Cohen, 3, "The Making of Man"; 6.30, "Why Not Secularize the State?"

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

HAVE you read the humorous description of the meeting of the poetasters at a Cheshire Cheese supper, followed by a true description of Heaven, and what may happen therein? You will get it in *THE EVERLASTING GEMS*, which THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGTON STREET, E.C.4, will send you, post free, for 3s. 6d.

YOU ARE MISSING, just as surely as any lost one ever searched for, if you persist in ignoring these persistent advertisements. You are missing the finest tailoring service yet offered to the Freethought Movement, and the chance of saving pounds on your clothes. There can be no better time for trying us than now, when our organization is perfect and all our cloths are new. You will be found amongst the wisest readers of this journal if you will send a postcard to-day for any of the following: *Gents'. A.A. to H. Book, suits from 48/-; Gents'. I. to N. Book, suits from 93/-; or our Ladies' Costume and Fashion Book, costumes from 49/6.* The address for it is—MACCONNELL & MAIR, Tailors and Costumiers, New Street, Bakewell, Derbyshire.

## GENERAL INFORMATION FOR FREETHINKERS.

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

Price Twopence, post free.

## A FIGHT FOR RIGHT.

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

With Introduction by CHAPMAN COHEN.

(Issued by the Secular Society, Limited.)

Price 6d., postage 1d.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGTON 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.

### 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.

## 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.

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

PIONEER PRESS PUBLICATIONS

## PECULIAR CHRISTIANS

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

A new four-page leaflet dealing with the case of H. N. Purkiss, at present undergoing six months' imprisonment for trusting to God to cure his child of diphtheria.

A tract to be scattered broadcast among Christians.

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

*Spiritualism and a Future Life.*

### THE OTHER SIDE OF DEATH.

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

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

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

Paper Covers, 2s., postage 1½d.; Cloth Bound, 3s. 6d., postage 2d.

### ESSAYS IN FREETHINKING.

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

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

Cloth Gilt, 2s. 6d., postage 2½d.

### THEISM OR ATHEISM?

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

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

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

Bound in full Cloth, Gilt Lettered. Price 5s., postage 2½d.

### 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.

## PIONEER PRESS PUBLICATIONS.—Continued.

## MODERN MATERIALISM.

*A Candid Examination.*

By WALTER MANN.

*(Issued by the Secular Society, Limited.)*

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

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

176 pages. Price 1s. 6d. in neat Paper Cover, postage 2d.; or strongly bound in Cloth 2s. 6d., postage 3d.

*The Egyptian Origin of Christianity.*

## THE HISTORICAL JESUS AND MYTHICAL CHRIST.

By GERALD MASSEY.

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

Price 6d., postage 1d.

## THE BIBLE HANDBOOK.

*For Freethinkers and Inquiring Christians.*

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

NEW EDITION.

*(Issued by the Secular Society, Limited.)*

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

Cloth Bound. Price 2s. 6d., postage 2½d.

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

## COMMUNISM AND CHRISTIANISM.

By BISHOP W. MONTGOMERY BROWN, D.D.

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

Price 1s., post free.

*Special terms for quantities.*

## LIFE AND EVOLUTION.

By F. W. HEADLEY.

An Outline of the theory of evolution, with discussions of the later theories of Mendel, De Vries, etc., etc.

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

## DETERMINISM OR FREEWILL?

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

NEW EDITION REVISED AND ENLARGED.

*Contents:* Chapter I.—The Question Stated. Chapter II.—"Freedom" and "Will." Chapter III.—Consciousness, Deliberation, and Choice. Chapter IV.—Professor James on the "Dilemma of Determinism." Chapter VI.—The Nature and Implications of Responsibility. Chapter VII.—Determinism and Character. Chapter VIII.—A problem in Determinism. Chapter IX.—Environment.

Price: Paper, 1s. 9d., postage 1½d.; or strongly bound in Half-Cloth 2s. 6d., postage 2½d.

*A Book that Made History.*

## 'THE RUINS:

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

By C. F. VOLNEY.

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

Price 5s., postage 3d.

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

*A Book with a Bite.*

## BIBLE ROMANCES

(FOURTH EDITION.)

By G. W. FOOTE.

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

In Cloth, 224 pp. Price 2s. 6d., postage 3d.

*A New Propagandist Pamphlet.*

## CHRISTIANITY AND CIVILIZATION.

A Chapter from

*The History of the Intellectual Development of Europe.*

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

Price 2d., postage ½d.

## 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 FARRINGTON STREET, E.C.4.

## THE "FREETHINKER."

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

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

Three Months, 3s. 9d.

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

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