

# 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. 38.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 1924

PRICE THREEPENCE

## PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page
<i>Curiosities of Faith.—The Editor</i> - - - - -	593
<i>What About the Church?—J. T. Lloyd</i> - - - - -	594
<i>The Laughing Doctor.—Mimnermus</i> - - - - -	595
<i>Room for the Vicar.—Andrew Millar</i> - - - - -	596
<i>Idealism.—Vincent J. Hands</i> - - - - -	597
<i>Kant.—Arthur Lynch</i> - - - - -	602
<i>Before the Last Round.—William Repton</i> - - - - -	603
<i>Lord Leverhulme on Religion.—F. H. Key</i> - - - - -	604
<i>Mr. G. Whitehead's Mission</i> - - - - -	606

*Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums,  
Letters to the Editor, etc.*

## Views and Opinions.

### Curiosities of Faith.

I can imagine a lecturer on Christian Evidence, one who was both competent and intellectually honest—a combination, I admit, not easily conceivable—addressing his students as follows:—"Gentlemen, there are two golden rules to be observed in presenting Christianity to the public. In the first place, while it is true that Christianity rests upon certain specific doctrines such as the divinity of Jesus, the resurrection, etc., it is not wise to attempt to prove any of these doctrines to be true. On the field of logic you will most probably, if you make the attempt be hopelessly worsted. The origin of all these beliefs is so well known, it is folly to hope that anything which can be said about these doctrines will carry conviction to one who does not already believe, or who is not ignorant of the facts. So the first rule is to avoid all temptations to prove that Christianity is true. The second rule, and one that must govern all your work, is to insinuate that Christianity must be true because it is useful. And here we are materially helped by the fact that the average man's desire for truth is so weak, his concern for intellectual veracity so slight, that he will regard the alleged usefulness of Christianity as the equivalent of the proof that it is true. Further, in proving that Christianity is useful one policy must be followed. Whatever the world regards, if only for a moment, as bad must be called un-Christian or anti-Christian. Whatever it regards as true or useful or good must be called Christian. If it happens that the thing to be advocated is something that every organized Church has hitherto opposed, speak generally of the true Christian spirit animating reform, or of the spirit of the founder of Christianity which inspires all true reformers. In this way you will secure in the public mind an identification of Christianity with what is desirable, and of anti-Christianity with what is undesirable. It is true that the shrewder minds may see the weakness of the position, but these may be regarded as being already out of our reach, and in any case we are not vitally concerned with such. We are concerned with the average mind, and with the influence which a sufficient number of these may exert upon the keener intellects who may see the truth of the position, but lack the courage to express it."

### Truth and Utility.

Now that is certainly not a caricature of the actual policy of the overwhelming majority of Christian apologists and defenders. There was a time when Christians did actually rest their faith upon the alleged truth of Christian teachings. They did not argue that Christianity must be true because it is useful; they said that Christianity must be useful because it is true. The said hell is real, heaven is real, God is real, and therefore unless we believe the truth about these things it is going to be very bad for us in the next world. The Scriptures assured them that it was a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God, and every Christian had to put himself right in this direction before aught else. When people are firmly convinced that a thing is true, when they feel that they can prove its truth to others, they are not vitally concerned with proving its utility, and in any case that argument assumes a subordinate position. And if the value of truth, as such, had been prominent in Christian teaching the perception of truth would never have lost its value. But the whole spirit of Christianity was against that. It was a cowardly teaching from the outset. It appealed to man's fear of the hereafter, of the necessity for doing certain things here in order to be repaid a hundred-fold hereafter, and of the emptiness of life unless there existed a hereafter in order to get a rattling good dividend on whatever was done here. The consequence was that the road to the dominance of the lower conception of life was well prepared. And when advancing thought robbed Christianity of the possibility of a successful appeal to truth, a Christian public was well prepared for the argument, "Let us pretend to believe it is true because we find it to be useful—at least, it is not profitable to oppose it."

\* \* \*

### Miracles and Common Sense.

Reference was made in these columns recently to a discussion that took place at the Modern Churchmen's Conference on the subject of miracles. In the main it was typical of most modern discussions on the question. It began by assuming that belief in miracles was a question of evidence. But it never was that and it never could be that. If the belief in miracles ever rested on evidence then the argument against believing in them loses the larger part of its force. The argument against them does not rest on the absence of evidence, but upon the scientific impossibility of them ever having occurred. There is no need to argue against the miracle at the marriage feast of Cana as though there is insufficient evidence of it. Our actual knowledge of nature is enough to convince us that such a thing never did, and could not, occur. If miracles do occur then the whole of our knowledge of natural processes is a sham. To get out of the difficulty some of the speakers argued—a very favourite way with modern apologists—that Jesus was one with a profound knowledge of natural forces, that in virtue of this he was able to do some wonderful things, and to the more ignorant people of his time what he did appeared to



be miraculous. A miracle is, thus, no more than a wonderful occurrence. But the absurdity of assuming that a character who was evidently profoundly ignorant of some of the most elementary truths concerning natural forces, who believed that disease was due to demons, and that hordes of angels and devils surrounded mankind, could yet possess a knowledge of nature so profound that our most accomplished of modern scientists have not yet fathomed the learning he possessed, the absurdity of this should be apparent to anyone but a born theologian, or to men more interested in buttressing a discredited supernaturalism than in getting at the truth. Beside, the essential fact here is not what people may have mistaken for a miracle, but what genuinely religious people have always taken a miracle to mean. And what they understood by a miracle was the direct operation of a supernatural power to help a believer or to secure belief. If an alleged miracle is not that it fails altogether whatever it may turn out to be. If these men were really honest and competent, instead of trying by tricks of speech and argument to keep the belief in miracles alive, they would say outright that a miracle in the sense of a direct interposition of a supernatural power never did occur, and so far as science can guide us, never could occur. What they actually do is to give up all that a miracle really means, and then fool the unthinking by telling them that they may believe in a miracle all the same. It is typical of Christianity that its alleged founder made his public entrance into Jerusalem mounted on the back of a jackass. It has owed much to the type ever since.

\* \* \*

#### The Cult of the Credulous.

A miracle, says Mr. George Bernard Shaw, is an event which produces faith. That is quite wrong. It is bad psychology and worse history. The correct statement is that faith is a state of mind which produces a miracle. And provided the statement is one which fits in with a prevailing state of mind almost anything can gain credence. No evidence of any kind is required. For instance, the papers have lately contained an account of the failure at Wembley to perform what is known as the Indian rope trick. In this a man throws a rope into the air, then a boy climbs the rope, the rope is then pulled down, and presently the boy's body falls into a basket in many pieces, only to be reunited and the boy produced uninjured. Now many people have said that they saw this performed. Lady Dufferin says she saw it; but the producer of the trick at Wembley declares that he has never been able to find a single person who has seen it. It is a mere legend written by a Hindoo traveller some three hundred years ago, and visitors have since said they have seen it. Again, also hailing from India, who has not heard of the car of Juggernaut? In this tale the car of the God is supposed to be driven through the crowded streets and his worshippers prove their devotion to him by allowing the car to be driven over their bodies. This was a tale which quite suited the missionaries in their appeals for funds at home, and so the British public were treated to stories of hundreds of mangled and dead bodies which marked the progress of the God's car. But it is a pure myth. The worshippers do not throw themselves down to be driven over, and hundreds are not killed. Here and there in the dense crowds someone may have been injured by the car, as a man or woman may be injured by the horse of a London policeman during the progress of the Lord Mayor's show. But if these stories can gain currency in these days, what need is there for wonder that stories of miracles should have gained acceptance concerning a reputed saviour a couple of thousand years ago? If anyone wishes to understand the manner in which the Christian legend took shape, and the ease

with which it gained currency, it is idle to talk as though it commenced with cultured men weighing evidence and finally submitting to overwhelming proof. The atmosphere in which Christianity was born and developed was the same atmosphere as that in which to-day credence is given to stories of old women being witches, or men are lynched for having the evil eye, and in which people can swallow the silly marvels of theosophy, and the mystical imaginings of a Mrs. Eddy. There is really nothing difficult in understanding the origins and the development of religion. But what is necessary is for people to realize that the same causes and conditions which make for the flourishing of the most ignorant of superstitions to-day are identical with those that made the growth of Christianity possible two thousand years ago.

\* \* \*

We shall return to the subject next week.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

---

## What About the Church?

---

THE Christian Church has been in existence for nineteen hundred years, and its history has been written down by innumerable distinguished men from Eusebius to Milman and Schaff. With this history before us, let us face the question, has the Church ever made good, or is it making good to-day? This question was discussed, and answered in the affirmative in the City Temple a few Sundays ago by the Rev. G. W. Shelton, D.D., minister of the Second Presbyterian Church, Pittsburg, U.S.A., and the sermon appears in the *Christian World Pulpit* of August 28. Dr. Shelton is an exceedingly popular preacher, for the City Temple was crowded during his month's occupation of the pulpit. At the commencement of his discourse he says:—

I was in a large company of business and professional men recently, at the busiest part of the day, when men are supposed to think only of making dollars, and still more dollars. They were gathered to hear a rather brilliant magazine editor, recently turned prophet and theologian, who lashed the Church with rather fine phrasing for not doing the things it has been doing quite well for a score of years. He regarded the Church as a failure, out of date, and said if Christ should return he would not know his Church.

Dr. Shelton omits to tell us what effect that address seemed to have upon the business and professional men who listened to it, but hastens to assure us that the magazine editor was radically mistaken. Having read his sermon very carefully, we are convinced that the reverend gentleman is more mistaken still. Whilst admitting that the Church is constructed of fallible men and women, and that as such it has made mistakes in the past and is making mistakes now, he claims that "we are forced to recognize that a Divine builder wrought here." "None other," he says, "could have done so well." Now, what has the Church ever done which a merely human institution could not have accomplished quite as well? Dr. Shelton declares that "we must face facts without fear or favour," and we fully agree with him; but does he observe the rule he thus lays down? Let us see.

He tells us that the Church was designed to do several things. In the first place it was designed to bring people to God. The Gospel Jesus is reported to have prophesied that if he were crucified he would draw all men unto himself. Dr. Shelton puts it thus:

"Go into the world, preach my Gospel to every creature." The Church is to evangelize the world; the Church is to make God known and the need of



him felt, and then his presence realized. It is to proclaim God's love which leads him to give himself in Christ for the redemption of our sinning souls. The one business of the Church is to preach the Gospel—to tell the good news is soul-service and not social service is first. The Church must keep in mind that it is the only organization called exclusively to preach the Gospel.

That is an accurate statement of the mission of the Church as delineated in the Gospels. Jesus cherished a false estimate of his own drawing-power as the outcome of his crucifixion. Even in Christendom his name has only drawn a minority of the population. After two thousand years his Gospel is still a very long way from being preached to every creature under the sun. Dr. Shelton can only assert "that the Church has never more widely or efficiently preached the Gospel than to-day." The truth is that in this country, at any rate, multitudes are being successfully drawn, not to, but away, from Christ; and we are convinced that the reverend gentleman gives a far too glowing account of the success of the Church in his country. If Church membership in America has increased five times as fast as the population, the mystery is that there is any non-Christian population left. Pittsburg has a population of about five hundred and forty thousand; can the reverend gentleman honestly assure us that one in three is a Church member?

Be that as it may, two things are, in our opinion, absolutely undeniable, the first being that the New Testament predictions have been falsified in history, and the second, that whatever success the Church has achieved can be satisfactorily and completely accounted for without any reference whatever to supernatural aid. As a purely human institution the Church has been marvellously successful in the doing of both good and evil; but as a Divine organization designed for the redemption of the world, it has ever been, and is now, a gigantic failure.

Preaching the Gospel does not exhaust the mission of the Church. Dr. Shelton says:—

The work of the Church is to make men like Christ, to build Christian character in those whom it has brought to Christ. If the noblest character is found in the Church, the Church is making good; if the finest, truest character is found outside the Church, then the Church is a failure. If men outside are better husbands, better fathers, better citizens; if they are the most humble, pure, unselfish, and highest in ideals, the Church is not making good. It is to be judged like anything else, by its products.

The standard of judgment adopted by the preacher is not fair and sound. There are good and bad people in the Church just as there are in the world; but it is a most delicate task to determine in which the noblest and truest characters are to be found. Certainly Dr. Shelton is not an impartial judge, for he holds an official brief for the Church. A better, nobler-minded, tenderer-hearted man never lived than Charles Darwin; but he died an Atheist, as we learn from his *Life* by his son. The same thing is true of Charles Bradlaugh, whose supreme delight it always was to help the weak, comfort the sorrowing, sympathize with the suffering, and feed the hungry; and yet he spent his life as a vigorous opponent of the Church and its Gospel. There are thousands of people of the world living to-day of whom a similar testimony could be borne. It is also well known that some of the most illustrious saints of whom the Church boasts lacked nobility and grandeur of moral character. St. Bernard, for example, was a merciless persecutor of all who differed from him in theological opinion. Even to-day many excellent Christians are profoundly selfish. They have been heard again and again exclaiming that if there were no future state it would not be worth while

to live a good life. Tennyson suffered from this form of selfishness, as several of his poems clearly show.

Dr. Shelton maintains that "religion is the only dynamic big enough to support morality"; but curiously enough religion itself has often been guilty of immorality. The Church has committed innumerable murders with the utmost cruelty; and of its darkest crimes it has never repented, and in all probability it never will repent. If Dr. Shelton does not see this he is blind, for the Church's black deeds are recorded in every great ecclesiastical history. The reverend gentleman paints a picture of an ideal Church, which has never yet existed and treats it as if it were real. It is doubtless exceedingly pleasant for members of the Church to listen to such a description of its unsurpassable glory and might, and its ideal perfection; but the moment the facts of its history are brought to light, as they faithfully are by Milman and others, all thoughtful and serious-minded people must look upon the brilliant picture with contempt. Surely Dr. Shelton cannot be ignorant of the Church's history, and yet he completely ignores it. What he does, in this sermon, is to create an imaginary Church and attribute to it imaginary achievements, in the full expectation that his hearers will believe that it actually exists and is all powerful. Therefore, to his question, "Is the Church making good to-day?" we unhesitatingly and emphatically return the answer, No, nor has it ever made good in any period of its history. For the last two or three hundred years it has been gradually losing ground. Secular knowledge is slowly forcing its way into its holy of holies, and despoiling it of its most fondly cherished treasures, and the day will arrive when both it and its Gospel shall be among the exploded superstitions of the past.

J. T. LLOYD.

## The Laughing Doctor.

I class Rabelais with the great creative minds of the world.—*Coleridge*.

I should have liked to send Calvin for a long holiday with Rabelais.—*Sir Michael Sadler*.

Laughter is the prerogative of humanity.—*Rabelais*.

FRENCH literature has one predominant quality which marks it out from all the literatures of the world. It is one blaze of splendid scepticism from Abelard to Anatole France. In this famous bead-roll the name of François Rabelais is one of the greatest. Popular views are almost invariably shortsighted, and the vulgar idea of Rabelais depicts the great writer as a glutton laughing in his easy chair. He is pictured as one who laughs and mocks at all things; a hog for appetite; a monkey for tricks. His genius had many facets, and he has been described as a great ethical teacher, a grossly obscene writer, a reckless buffoon, a Roman Catholic, a Protestant, and a Freethinker. To paint him as a moralist alone is to ignore the innate drollery of his character. To set him up as a mere mountebank is to forget the stern reality which underlies his writing.

To treat Rabelais as destitute of all serious purpose in art or life is a great mistake. Whatever he may have been, he was not a trifler. He had seen ecclesiastical life from the inside, and he hated priests with every drop of his blood. He studied Greek when it was a forbidden language, and was an enthusiastic disciple of learning when scholars carried their lives in their hands. His zeal for intellectual freedom, untrammelled by priestcraft, entitles him to rank with Erasmus and Von Hutten as an apostle of humanism.

Of middle-class parentage, François Rabelais was born in the fifteenth century near the lovely little city of Chinon, on the Vienne. Always he regarded Touraine, its cities, rivers, and vineyards with affec-



tionate admiration. "Noble, ancient, the first in the world," so he called it in the fullness of his heart. His father, an innkeeper, wished to make him a priest. Accordingly, little François was sent at nine years of age to the Benedictine monks of Scully, so young that the white vestment was put over the child's frock. Later he was removed to the Franciscan Monastery of Fontenoy le Comte. The Franciscan vows included ignorance as well as celibacy and poverty. For fifteen years he remained there, taking priest's orders at the age of twenty-eight.

It is to this long period spent among the bigoted, narrow, intolerant sons of the most powerful Christian Church that we owe his undying hatred of priestcraft, which rankles still on the printed page centuries after the author's death. It is for all the world to see. It is on nearly every page of his writings, here passionately, there sorrowfully, with a cry of rage, a sob of pain, or a mocking laugh of "sanglante derision." He hated the "monk-birds" more bitterly than even Erasmus, for his nature was stronger.

At the age of forty he came into the world a free man, at liberty at last to follow his studies. He threw aside the monastic habit, and soon afterwards went to the University of Montpellier with the object of getting a medical degree. Think of it! When he attended the lectures he was within eight of his fiftieth year, and he sat by the side of men young enough to be his own sons. Two years later he went to Lyons, where he held an appointment as physician to the hospital. His friend, Étienne Dolet, the Freethinker, was already established as a printer in the place.

Rabelais's connection with the Protestant reformers of France is certain; the extent difficult to determine. He had no desire for being butchered to make a Roman holiday. He never contemplated following Berguin to the burning stake, or Calvin into exile. As he humorously explained, he was "too thirsty to like fire." His sympathies, too, were antagonistic to all dogmas. To him an infallible book was almost as obnoxious as an infallible church. "Presbyter," to him, "was but priest writ large." Luther and Calvin were almost as mistaken as the priests. The society of Des Perriers, Étienne Dolet, and the Lyonnais Freethinkers was more congenial to his habits of thought. Above all, he knew the power of the Catholic Church, and of the malignity of her hired assassins.

Heretics were then handed over to the secular arm to be burnt for the good of their souls, and the greater glory of God. Often, torture preceded death. Rabelais did not intend, if he could help it, to be murdered. When he was denounced as a heretic, he challenged his enemies to produce a single heretical proposition from his writings. They were unequal to the task, but the heresy was there. Rabelais's caution was necessary if he wished to live. Dolet was tortured and burnt to death, Des Perriers was driven to suicide, Marot was a half-starved wanderer in Piedmont.

Rabelais's writings, which have kept his memory green through the ages, are a series of satires, in a vein of riotous mirth, on priests, pedants, and all the solecisms of his time. With all their licentiousness and freedom of expression, they reveal the man's love of liberty and desire for the triumph of truth and justice.

It has been said with truth that Rabelais despised women. He did not write till an age when the passion of youth had consumed itself to ashes. Love was killed in Rabelais by that hateful system of monkery which has filled Christendom with unspeakable horrors. Poor Rabelais! Half of humanity was seen by him in a false perspective. Love appeared in the accursed monastic system in which he was trained as corruption and depravity. The damnable discipline surrounded Rabelais from the time he wore a child's frock till he

was a man of forty. The result was that he had no more respect for women than a eunuch in an Eastern harem. Poor Rabelais! The priests cheated him of half his life, and spoiled the other half. Originally, his nature must have been different, witness those exquisite chapters in which he describes the monks of Thelema, whose motto was "Liberty."

Tradition has it that Rabelais died saying: "I go to seek the great perhaps." It was like him to depart with a smile on his face, and a jest on his tongue. It was lucky that he died in his bed, and not at the stake. The Great Lying Church never forgives, and never forgets. Had his life been prolonged to extreme age, he might have become garrulous.

Rabelais went further than contempt for the trappings of the Christian religion, and he rejected it altogether. He hoped to cure the evil of religion by spreading knowledge, by bringing priestcraft into contempt, by widening the boundaries of thought. Rabelais knew as much as any man of his time, but he carried his weight of learning with a smile. Liberty was Rabelais's sovereign specific for the ills of his time. Finding his contemporaries bound with chains of their own making, it was his proud life-purpose to break the fetters and to set them free.

MIMNERMUS.

---

## Room for the Vicar.

---

THE editor of this journal has often in the late past and once again quite recently dealt with the case of Canon Barnes, in his own invincible common-sense manner, but "Felix keeps on talking" in the same lamentably illogical way. If he sees or hears of the criticism he never replies—a way that great men, other than churchmen, have. Not what is said, but how and where it is said, is the criterion, the very stupid one, of these eminent gentlemen—stupid, if they are sincere in the search for truth; intelligent, if, as is more likely, they are merely concerned with the cultivation, or perpetuation, of an attitude of mind favourable to fine jobs and fat salaries. Alike anti-Christian and anti-scientific, this last is a double apostacy, and a betrayal of all that is most precious in the progress of the race. But even if they are sincere—which is so hard for a vulgar and wicked Freethinker to believe—even that sincerity is not so incredible when one reflects that all the past history of religion, from its first savage conception, has conspired to produce the quality of mind, of ignorant and learned alike, that makes religious and other incredibilities and stupidities so easy of acceptance by so-called civilized peoples. The path of truth is a plain and safe path, but most people still prefer the perplexing maze. Canon Barnes has said: "Men of science had created a new world; it was their duty to co-operate with philosophers and theologians and *to show the place which religious faith must have in the new order.*" (My italics.) This is the same advice that was given—only more forcibly—to Galileo of old; and the new scholar, like the old, outwardly conforms—mostly for the sake of his place and prospects in the "close corporations" of religion and so-called learning—but still the world moves. Science cannot go back. Religion cannot be recreated, because it is founded in error. Science, so far as it has gone, is final because founded on fact; and inevitably displaces religion all along the line; which may be a good or a bad thing, but is the most certain of implications. There may be a need for a "place which religious faith," whatever that may be, "must have in the new order." A modest demand; how are the mighty fallen! But we do not jubilate; we leave that to the "Hallelujah" shouters; we conceive there might be



a place for religion in the new order, but only as an illusion, a veil between humanity and reality. At best it will be a gospel for timid souls. We can understand, even sympathize with the dear old parson who said he "would rather waken up in hell itself than accept the refrigerating conclusions of unbelief." Those who need a religion will have it. Those who need whisky will have it too, even in the U.S.A. But this is a very different proposition from saying, or implying, that the need for religion, or whisky, or any other illusion, is inescapable. Strong drink is raging; but religion is a mocker to many brave and honest souls. Let the churches cultivate their exotics if they must; but "Lo, strength is of the plain root virtues born"; and human character, conduct, will ever refine the creed, not the creed the character; so that all the care and clamour of the clergy, important where their particular ornamental æsthetics (anæsthetics), their personal interests and emoluments may be critically concerned, their solitude and their cure for the ills of the world at large are negligible things.

But room for a mere vicar: In a report, in the *Manchester Guardian* of September 1, of the Conference of Modern Churchmen at Oxford, the Rev. E. V. J. C. Hardwick, vicar of Partington, Cheshire, has his say in between the weighty words of the Rev. C. F. Russel, headmaster of King Edward VI. School, Southampton, and Canon Barnes, Bishop-Designate of Birmingham. The vicar discoursed on "Miracles"; and what is remarkable—or maybe it isn't—took up the same attitude regarding them as, say, Mr. Chapman Cohen. Miracles, he observed,

might seem very wonderful to those who witnessed them, and very simple to those who performed them. That did not matter; if they affirmed or created faith they were true miracles. Miracles continued as long as the mentality which produced them prevailed. (Surely we have read that last sentence in the *Freethinker*, not once but many times!) The orthodox view of miracles was based on a rigid dualism unfamiliar to the New Testament writers and repugnant not only to the men of science but also to the philosophers of to-day. He was of opinion that the dualism between the natural and the supernatural which we owed to St. Thomas ought now to be abandoned as being unscriptural or unhistorical, and as being unscientific. He would substitute for the dualism of St. Thomas what might seem to be pluralism of our own. The natural had swallowed up the supernatural, so that everything of value seemed to be of natural origin.

The belief in miracles in the orthodox sense had much declined in the past two generations, and it would probably continue to decline. There was an inertia in the world of ideas as in the world of material objects. People asked why the Divine Being who turned water into wine did not interfere on more important occasions. From the traditionalist point of view it was very difficult to find a satisfactory answer to that question.

The vicar admits, as we agree, it is difficult to find answers to these questions. He seems merely to look his difficulties, very bravely, in the face—and pass on! I for one fail to see the difference between the old "dualism" and the new "pluralism." Perhaps the reporter did not do the vicar justice. If I thought, in a wild imagining, he was likely to see this article I would ask him to explain.

The sympathetic person, which, pre-eminently, I happen to be, can "sense" the atmosphere and mental attitude of this Conference of Modern Churchmen, where the ordinary process of religious thought is reversed, i.e., thinking forward instead of backward. For speaker and hearer alike the atmosphere would be tense—the speaker straining as far as he dare, short of tumbling out, of the fold; the hearer expectant, and approving of the most dare-devil conclusions.

"English Modernists," concluded Birmingham's Bishop Designate, "were wrongly accused of disparaging the Bible; on the contrary, they affirmed the unparalleled spiritual excellence of the revelation it contained and they sought to combine that revelation with modern knowledge, to give a reformulation of the Christian faith adequate to the mental, moral and spiritual needs of our own day.....He could not doubt that the future was with them in the long run. Truth must prevail. A century hence the majority of Christians would accept the general standpoint taken at that conference and be surprised that at the beginning of the twentieth century it aroused so much disquiet."

Well, now, in the most charitable and dispassionate estimate, such a conclusion is merely words, words, words. To what complexion will "Christian faith" have come a century hence? Will it be Christian faith in anything more than name? as in the mind of the Modernist it is only a name now. And what if "Truth must prevail?" How does the Canon reconcile the Bible's revelation with his all but wholesale repudiation of it? As for the Christian world of a century hence being surprised at the disquiet aroused by modernist opinion of the early twentieth century, it is a more interesting speculation, and a shrewder forecast, if the good people of a century hence, far gone in inevitable secularization, are not still more surprised, and pained, to reflect on the treatment meted out to the real Modernists, the Freethinkers, of a past century, just as even Modern Churchmen look back with shame on the conduct of their predecessors.

ANDREW MILLAR.

## Idealism.

The whole of the prevalent metaphysics of the present century is one tissue of suborned evidence in favour of religion.....It is time to consider.....whether all this straining to prop up beliefs which require so great an expense of intellectual toil and ingenuity to keep them standing, yields any sufficient return in human well-being.—*John Stuart Mill.*

It is not sufficiently recognized that there are two forms of error: philosophical error and common error. The former can be refuted by argument, the latter—being held by those who pay no attention to refutations—dies out gradually with the passing of the conditions that produced it. Hence it is that the doctrine of evolution held throughout the entire educated world, is either a closed book or a disputed question with the masses. The wide-spread belief in the supernatural is thus explained, but the strangle-hold it has upon philosophy is due to causes not sufficiently understood even by philosophers themselves. To anyone who brings to the study of philosophy an open mind, it is clear that the chief reason why supernaturalism obtains to-day in the educated world is because of the support afforded it by the pseudo-philosophy of Idealism.

Briefly stated, Idealism says that since we know by ideas, ideas are all we can know, and whilst not specifically denying the existence of the external world, asserts that there is no proof of its existence apart from the ideas we ourselves have of it. It will be seen at once that such a view of life so far from being a philosophy, would put an end to all philosophy, if accepted in its entirety; it is therefore of more practical interest to ask ourselves what is the significance of it, and why is it so widespread. The answer lies in one word—Christianity.

Since the rise of Christianity it is a fact, quite easy of verification, that all systems of metaphysics have been subsidiary to it. The object has always been to give Christianity an intellectual sanction. With the



mass of people no intellectual sanction is needed, they are content with the emotional appeal; but in order to retain its hold upon the thinking minority a metaphysics is introduced as an auxiliary to theology. That metaphysics to-day is Idealism, and this explains its popularity and its power. Idealism to-day might almost be said to be a vested interest. Any professor in our great conservative colleges and universities who openly dissociated himself from it would be discriminated against. The reasons for this are manifest, for once Idealism does not threaten any vested interest, there is nothing in it that is calculated to alarm in the slightest the upholders of the present order of things.

The object of the Christian Church—indeed, of all churches—has always been to shroud all things in mystery; to discountenance—by force in one age, and the power of social ostracism in another—all attempts at formulating a rational view of the universe, or anything likely to rob the church of its self-appointed function of interpreting the unknown in terms of supernaturalism. Idealism, therefore, is admirably adapted to the needs of a church existing in an age when the spirit of enquiry is abroad, and the growth of knowledge is threatening its age-old dominion. Let it not be thought that the church has any particular affection for Idealism; true to its historic function it would suppress all enquiry if it had the power, but this being no longer possible, it sees in Idealism a useful means of maintaining its hold upon philosophy, and on the educated world. Says Mr. Jackson Boyd:—

The reason Idealism is taught in every college and university of the world is because Christianity is based on the supernatural, and because Idealism, as a philosophy, makes it impossible for the human mind to solve ultimate problems, thereby giving Christianity as sure a foundation as science itself, both being expressions of the Unknowable.

Christianity is perfectly willing to acknowledge that the human mind cannot know the supernatural as Idealism contends, if it also says that it cannot know the natural; for this philosophy blinds the world to the value of truth, so that the grossest fiction is of equal weight with the most palpable of facts. If Idealism cannot be refuted in philosophy as it is in actual practice, then no matter how far humanity advances in moral, social, and artistic progress and material prosperity, the world has reached the acme of intellectual achievement and Faith is the only philosophy with which to solve ultimate problems.

In the space of an article it is clearly impossible to attempt a refutation of Idealism in detail, nor is this necessary if what has been said be borne in mind (we are speaking now from the point of view of the ordinary man); for just as a knowledge of the origin and evolution of the God-idea renders superfluous an acquaintance with all the metaphysical arguments used to bolster up the belief so does a knowledge of the meaning and significance of Idealism render an exhaustive examination of its multitudinous apologies unnecessary. Idealism will disappear with the conditions that produced it, since we cannot hope for it to be refuted by orthodox philosophers whose livelihood depends on maintaining it, any more than we can hope for the clergy to preach the non-existence of the supernatural. It may be that in the coming struggles for industrial emancipation the church will again become openly reactionary, and in that case we may expect to see the pliant tool of Idealism abandoned; for it is the custom of tyrants everywhere to forsake their pawns and informers and leave them to the fury of the mob, who, disillusioned at last, and no longer to be silenced and intimidated, surge without—demanding that which they have been denied so long.

It is related of a very old and very wise professor that a crowd of youths, wishing to play a hoax upon him, brought to him a weird looking insect which they

had contrived to make by securing different portions of the anatomies of different insects and building them up into a new type. On being asked what manner of insect it was, the old professor eyed it quizzically and asked, "Does it hum?" The youths informed him that it did. "Ah!" said the professor, "then it's a humbug!"

Idealism as a philosophy is a humbug. Across its portals should be inscribed in flaming letters the words: *Abandon hope all ye who enter here.*

VINCENT J. HANDS.

## Acid Drops.

We are a bit late, but not too late, and our apology must be that we did not come across the newspaper cutting until after our last issue had gone to press. The matter concerns the recently executed murderer, Patrick Mahon. Anything concerning him is good copy for a Christian public, and newspapers are prepared to pay well for tit-bits concerning him. It will be remembered that previous to his execution he was visited by a clergyman. This gentleman now turns out to have been the Rev. A. J. Waldron, late Vicar of Brixton, and a one-time infidel slayer. Mr. Waldron appears to have been as much impressed by Mahon's bearing—it was a touchingly religious one, apparently, that he reminds us of the case we dealt with recently where another murderer was described as dying like a Christian saint. And Mr. Waldron's article in the *People* comes as quite an endorsement of what we have often said, namely, that if one wants to make sure of dying a Christian death, by far the surest way is to kill someone, and get caught. The State sees to it that plenty of religion is at hand, and there is time to make one's peace with God, and in Mahon's case there was the advantage of the attendance of so fine a type of spiritual character as the Rev. A. J. Waldron.

When Mahon was sentenced some Christians got to work with the story that his downfall was due to his reading infidel publications, and his giving up religion. Mr. Waldron will have none of that. He says, "The stories of his Atheism are untrue. He did not rebel against religion. On the contrary, I have met few men who so readily and intelligently responded to the ministrations of a clergyman.....He saw vividly the God of Light." That seems authoritative, but, on the whole, we are not glad to read it. We had some hopes that there was at least in this affair the unusual feature of the murderer being an Atheist. But Christianity seems to have established almost a monopoly of criminals—particularly of murderers—and when we do see a chance of getting a look in along comes Mr. Waldron to claim even this one for Christianity. So we must give him up. But we suggest to Mr. Waldron, perhaps his love of justice will lead him to do something in the matter, that we Atheists are not getting value for what we pay towards the upkeep of prisons. We provide the entertainment and Christians take every advantage of it. We suggest to Mr. Waldron that he might use his influence with the Home Office to see that Atheists are relieved of paying for the upkeep of prisons until such time as there are more of them in prison.

According to a Japanese newspaper, geishas are adopting European clothes and dressing their hair in Western fashion. "Angels and ministers of grace defend us!" If the second coming of Our Lord should happen shortly, we shall all be shocked to see Jesus in a bowler hat and tweeds, or, even more dreadful, a frock-coat and a stove-pipe hat.

"Angels do not make revolutions," says the *Daily Sketch*. Nor do they make anything else, not even mistakes.

A Surrey bookseller displayed in his shop-window a



placard: "Fairy Tales for Kiddies." By some delightful mischance, a Bible was under the notice.

An excellent opportunity occurs for any responsible leader of Christianity to follow, at a distance, the one who worked miracles with the loaves and fishes. During July, in Glasgow, to mention only one item, 11,197 lbs. of fish were held over as there was no sale. Glasgow is not exactly a colony of aristocrats, and some gallant knight of the army of the lowly carpenter might have made it his business to have this food given away to the poor. That would have been challenging authority, but probably the fiction mongers called priests were too busy at bun fights and christenings to attend to what we think was an excellent opportunity of working a miracle.

For some time past the *Daily Herald* has been canvassing the opinions of its readers on the subject of civilization. Several scientists also have been induced to state what they consider to be the essentials of civilization. Now the Rev. Alfred E. Garvie, president of the National Free Church Council, and principal of the Hackney and New College (Divinity School, University of London), has also been invited to give his views. Dr. Garvie writes:—

A society can be called in the fullest sense civilized only if (1) by command of natural resources, adequate provision is made for the physical necessities of its members and for the means of culture within reach of all. (2) By an education giving equal opportunities to all, each human personality is enabled to become the best possible, and is assigned a function in the society which will be no degradation, but consistent with its worth. (3) By adjustment of all social relations each man is enabled, in partnership with others, to contribute the best service he can render to the whole community. (4) By the diffusion of the corporate consciousness, inward moral constraint replaces outward legal compulsion in the fulfilment of social obligations.

Not a reference to religion! Really these ecclesiastics are most confusing. We always understood that truly pious people knew that religion was the very life force of civilization, and that Christianity in particular was the urge that had brought us out of barbarism and degradation, had abolished slavery, and given us liberty and knowledge, and all the amenities of modern life. Maybe the theologians are wise in their generation. Vast numbers of people to-day are seeing that along with the undoubted benefits that civilization has given to mankind, there go terrible disadvantages—scientific warfare, economic insecurity, many nervous diseases, and so forth—and it may therefore be that the more far-seeing of our clerics are beginning to realize that it is bad business to include all these strangely assorted blessings and ills under one term, and then say that that term is but another name for Christianity. They prefer to distinguish between the hospital and the social conditions that produce the inmates; between science applied to industry, and science applied to war; between our wonderful capacity to produce wealth, and our inability to distribute it sanely. All the blessings are products of the Christian spirit working in mankind; all the other things are the result of human nature. Human nature is what Belfort Bax would call a blessed word. It provides the Christian apologist and every disgruntled social reformer with a scapegoat. It is, however, a healthy sign when a theologian can define civilization in terms of things purely secular.

In Spain, where the oranges and onions come from, we learn that Seville is to have a new arena built with room to hold 25,000 people, who may watch a bull being infuriated, maddened, and slaughtered. The Pope should be proud of his dear children in sunny Spain—that had no use for Ferrer.

Mr. Edward Carpenter, to whom we send our hearty congratulations on his 80th birthday, is one of the pioneers of an age that may be the Age of Common Sense. In that age the salary list of some 50,000 individuals will be scrutinized, and the returns from expenditure will

come up for judgment, and it will be decided that one day a week to teach horrible fairy tales will be one day too many, considering that none of them have information as definite as that contained in the twice times table.

A member of the White Coons at Clacton-on-Sea had better be careful now that Lord Danesfort has returned from York Races. This White Coon tells a story about a little girl who was struck by the brevity of her nurse's prayers. According to this informer, as soon as her nurse had put on her nightie she said, "Good Lord, it ain't half cold," and jumped into bed. Such impiety deserves an Act of Parliament to itself.

Occupants of an omnibus at Camberwell Green recently witnessed a striking example of how genuine Christianity so distorts the imagination that its victims are unable any longer to observe the common civilities of life. Four Gospel preachers, who were on their way to an open-air service, entered the vehicle and, unfolding a banner, sang several hymns. Even if they lacked the courtesy which makes a decent man refrain from forcing his peculiar views and likes upon strangers, regard for the conductor might have induced them to travel peacefully. Conceivably by making a nuisance of themselves in the bus, they involved the conductor in the risk of being reported to the London General Omnibus Company by other passengers for failing to eject the noisy passengers. But of course when the welfare of one's immortal soul is to be advanced by some uncouth performance, the mere livelihood of some other person is of no consequence. This is, after all, but a small and rather ridiculous example of that unthinking intolerance which has always characterized the sincere Christian. That other people have any right to hold different opinions to him, or that his queer views may be disgusting to more thoughtful persons, never occurs to him. We do not doubt that there are plenty more Christians in the neighbourhood of Camberwell who would emulate the example of the four hilarious ones if they had the moral courage to risk making themselves look absurd. And such folk, we do not doubt, would gladly burn all and sundry who rejected their stuffy little creeds, or would practise some other of those good old Christian forms of moral suasion for the eternal well-being of the non-Christian, but that the common-sense of the majority of English men and women, backed up when need be by physical force, compels them to behave as more or less decent citizens.

The Press report does not inform us how the serenade was greeted, nor what steps the bus conductor took to deal with the Gospel preachers. In the case of men intoxicated with over-indulgence in alcohol he would, we presume, have called in the aid of the police. Mr. Way-of-the-World in the *Daily Herald* suggests that he might (1) have marked the time with his bell punch, (2) offered to take up the collection, (3) given a short address on "How to go right in London." In treating the episode thus flippantly he is probably right. Such foolishness is more easily laughed than reasoned out of existence.

It is interesting to watch the temporal arm of Roman Catholicism at work in Italy. We notice that two organs reflecting Papal views, the *Osservatore Romano* and *Unita Catholica*, have departed from their usual practice of neutrality and attacked the anti-Fascist coalition as "Bolshevik." The care for the spiritual welfare of people is a lovely sight when one looks at it without any religious axe to grind.

There were no queues, no early doors, no scramble for seats by the clergy in the signing of the letter to the Nobel Committee recommending Mr. Morel for the Nobel Peace Prize. Thirty-three out of an army of 50,000 put their signatures to this document, and if peace is not quickly made the first plank in the platform for the United States of Europe, that New Zealander mentioned by Macaulay will be surveying a wondrous scene from London Bridge—or the Pont Neuf on the Seine.



Hiding beneath the Communion table at St. Mark's Church, St. Helens, detectives saw the verger, James Ellison, of Oxford Street, unlock the offertory box after the service, and take out some coins which had been marked. He was arrested as he was locking up the church. There is no truth, we understand, in the rumour that the vicar, in a gust of Christian feeling, has presented him the offertory box as well.

The Charity Organization Society wants £10,000. The Society in a leaflet declares that "even under ideal social conditions there must always remain cases of genuine distress and poverty." Social reformers who coquette with the churches might ponder this bland admission that in Christian civilization poverty is inevitable. "For the poor always ye have with you." Those whose moral sense has not been blunted by large doses of religion are not likely to take such a melancholy, unmanly, view of this particular social problem.

Bishop Bury, in an address in London, mentioned a burglar who "found Jesus," enlisted during the War, rose to the rank of sergeant, and won the Victoria Cross. This is very touching, only Jesus condemned the taking of life, and resistance to oppression. So the path of glory leads but to Hades after all.

In the obituary notices of the late Rev. Dr. MacCormick, the newspaper reporters referred to him as "the cheery dean," and "a smiling ecclesiastic." Apparently, too many priests emulate "the Man of Sorrows."

Police investigations have brought to light a remarkable story of a bogus curate who officiated at Pudsey and Queensbury in the diocese of Bradford. During his tenure of office at Queensbury he conducted two marriage services and two burial services. According to Dr. Perowne, the Bishop of Bradford, the man, W. A. Barbour, began as locum tenens whilst he was away from home, and his credentials were not examined. On his return the Bishop wrote to him, and he replied that he had been ordained at Worcester. On communicating with the police there, and finding that this was not true, Dr. Perowne informed the police. This will, we suppose, create a considerable stir in clerical circles, and cause well-intentioned, unthinking Christians to lift hands in pious horror. Yet what else can they expect if they allow the teaching of a crude mixture of ethics and mythology to provide men with livelihoods? If Christian preachers followed their Lord's example, and traipsed about the country, living on charity, and sleeping in the places used by other tramps, there would be none of these pious frauds. The whole Christian teaching inculcates selfishness, although it stresses selfishness not for a few years on earth, but for all eternity. And all those who become tainted with this vicious teaching are bound to become progressively callous and selfish—about the affairs of this life, quite as much as those of the other one to which they are looking forward.

The story of Lot's wife, if viewed in the right light as a story of regressions will give us a touchstone for the novel entitled *Anissia: The Life Story of a Russian Peasant*. Whether Tolstoy touched it up or not does not concern us, but when we remember the opposition by the clergy to the use of chloroform in obstetric cases, we seem to be looking backwards into a murky age. A female Job's comforter by way of consolation to Anissia who is about to give birth to a baby, cheers her up as follows:—

There, Anissia, ask forgiveness. Perhaps, if God is making you suffer, if He is not delivering you, it is because you haven't repented of your sins.

This is not the best sample of Russian "literature," but it does contain a useful lesson to those who can read it aright.

"Mrs. Warren's Profession" has at last been staged, when, we are told, Mr. George Bernard Shaw is living in the odour of sanctity. In brief, the play is that Mrs.

Warren preferred her "profession" to washing beer glasses at Waterloo Station. The play is no revelation to anyone who has read Shelley's *Queen Mab*—or, if not, simply sees the connection between cause and effect in a Christian civilization where people starve in the midst of plenty, and our overfed rich take the waters annually to get rid of their fat. We wonder if Mars has reached that state yet!

Lady Eden appears to have taken hold of a half-truth in her address at the Centenary of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. She claimed that men of science think that birds and beasts possessed souls which is, of course, in the fictitious region of theology, but she stumbled on a white truth when she said that:—

We must get away from the idea that the entire animal creation is our own property which we can use in any way we choose.

Ostensibly we are a Christian country, but the existence of the above-named Society is a proof that the State is not getting value for money expended through the great black army.

The Very Rev. Father Vincent, at the 700th anniversary of the coming to England of Grey Friars, stated that:—

The Franciscan spirit was a Liberal spirit, and even a Socialist spirit, and, in the right sense, a Communist spirit, while it was a very conservative spirit in loyalty to authority.

The Acid Drop, to comment on this thoroughly, would require breaking with a coal hammer, but we think that a spirit that is everything must be nothing. And we also think that more attention is paid to casuistry in a Franciscan's training than would be healthy for people who rub through life without the atmosphere of the monastery and — sophistry.

No one will doubt the zeal of the Pope for the upholding of the tradition of his office, and his intense interest in the spiritual welfare of his children. Signor Mario Borsa in his book on Sport in Italy, tells us that Charlemagne had to publish an edict forbidding clerics to bring their falcons in church, and in a passage we give as presenting the conditions of bird life in Italy at the present it would appear that in another thousand years, with luck, the Pope's children might learn to live and let live:

In no other country are birds blinded to make decoys; in no other country are there so many snares; in no other country is the destruction of song-birds so large, so systematic, so pitiless, and so insensate. Italy, which is reputed to be the country of flower and song, is really the country whose windows are least adorned with flowers and whose sky is least populated with birds. Our woods are almost silent; in our valleys and our open country you can sometimes go kilometres without hearing the beat of a wing.

## How to Help.

There are thousands of men and women who have left the Churches and who do not know of the existence of this journal. Most of them would become subscribers if only its existence were brought to their notice.

We are unable to reach them through the ordinary channels of commercial advertising, and so must rely upon the willingness of our friends to help. This may be given in many ways:

By taking an extra copy and sending it to a likely acquaintance.

By getting your newsagent to take an extra copy and display it.

By lending your own copy to a friend after you have read it.

By leaving a copy in a train, tram or 'bus.

It is monstrous that after forty years of existence, and in spite of the labour of love given it by those responsible for its existence, the *Freethinker* should not yet be in a sound financial position. It can be done if all will help. The Paper and the Cause are worthy of all that each can do for them.



## The National Secular Society.

THE FUNDS of the National Secular Society are now legally controlled by Trust Deed, and those who wish to benefit the Society by gift or bequest may do so with complete confidence that any money so received will be properly administered and expended.

The following form of bequest is sufficient for anyone who desires to benefit the Society by will:—

I hereby give and bequeath (*Here insert particulars of legacy*), free of all death duties, to the Trustees of the National Secular Society for all or any of the purposes of the Trust Deed of the said Society, and I direct that a receipt signed by two of the trustees of the said Society shall be a good discharge to my executors for the said legacy.

Any information concerning the Trust Deed and its administration may be had on application.

## To Correspondents.

Those subscribers who receive their copy of the "Freethinker" in a GREEN WRAPPER will please take it that the renewal of their subscription is due. They will also oblige, if they do not want us to continue sending the paper, by notifying us to that effect.

H. LONG.—Spreading the *Freethinker* abroad during your travels is an excellent way of introducing the paper to new readers. Many thanks.

SINE CERE.—It is quite interesting to watch the tactics of the Papacy. We fear that Freethinkers who imagine that the Roman Catholic Church is played out may have a rather rude awakening one of these days.

C. H. LAMBERT.—We are sorry to say that no arrangements have been made for lectures in Sheffield in the near future. But if enough Freethinkers in the locality are inclined to lend themselves to the work of making the necessary arrangements lectures could soon be given.

A. B. MOSS.—Thanks for good wishes. We note your fear that we are doing too much, but we do not think that hard work will hurt. It is worry that tells. Work in which one delights serves as a tonic.

W. SMALLRIDGE.—Thanks for cutting. Will serve next week. The "Freethinker" is supplied to the trade on sale or return. Any difficulty in securing copies should be at once reported to this 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.

By education, the most have been misled,  
They so believed, because they so were bred,  
The priest continues what the nurse began,  
And the child misleads the man.

—Dryden.

## Sugar Plums.

A few days ago we had a visit from our old friend, Mr. Mangassarian, who has been "doing Europe," and who was good enough to say that he could not come to England without paying the *Freethinker* office a visit. With the exception of being a little whiter on the top than when we last saw him, we were pleased to find him looking as well and as youthful as ever. We were also glad to learn that his propaganda in Chicago is still attracting good audiences. Our friends will join us in wishing him continued health and success in his work. We should say that America can do with all the Freethought it can get.

"Javali" is very desirous of finding the name of the author and the work from which the following words—or similar words—are taken:—

So here's to you, my brave hussar,  
My exquisite old soldier.

The lines occur in a piece descriptive of a conversation between a priest and a soldier, the priest being an unbeliever in the doctrines of religion, but insisting to the soldier that it is necessary in the interests of their two professions to keep the people in ignorance. Perhaps some of our readers may be able to send us the reference.

Mr. Lew Davis asks us to announce that he is prepared to undertake open-air lecturing for Lancashire and Yorkshire Branches. Mr. Davis is domiciled in Leeds, and we hear that he is a very effective open-air speaker. His address is 22 Glover Street.

The South London Branch has arranged for a visit of members and friends to the South Kensington Natural History Museum on Saturday, September 20. Those joining the party are requested to meet outside the main gates at 2.45. The party will be under competent guidance, and the visit is certain to be both enjoyable and instructive.

Mr. Corrigan is continuing his Tuesday evening meetings on Clapham Common, and we are pleased to learn from the secretary of the South London Branch that the audiences are both large and interested. South London Freethinkers should bear these meetings in mind.

To-day (September 21), the Manchester Branch commences its season's lectures in the Engineer's Hall, Rusholme Road. Mr. Percy Ward, who is paying this country a brief visit, will lecture at 3 on "Freethought and Catholicism in America," and at 6.30 he will speak on "What is the Meaning of Human Life?" Mr. Ward spent a deal of his time in that part of Lancashire before leaving for America, and many Freethinkers will probably take this opportunity of renewing acquaintance with him.

One of the most curious facts in the whole history of the world is that Buddhism and Christianity have both developed, in the course of fifteen hundred years, into sacerdotal and sacramental systems, each with its bells and rosaries and images and holy water; each with its services in dead languages, with choirs and processions and creeds and incense, in which the laity are spectators only; each with its abbots and monks, and nuns, of many grades; each with its worship of virgins, saints, and angels; its reverence to the Virgin and the Child; its confessions, fasts, and purgatory; its idols, relics, symbols, and sacred pictures; its shrines and pilgrimages; each with its huge monasteries and gorgeous cathedrals, its powerful hierarchy and its wealthy cardinals; each, even, ruled over by a Pope, with a triple tiara on his head and the sceptre of temporal power in his hand, the representative on earth of an eternal Spirit in the heavens!

—F. W. Rhys Davids.



## Kant.

"KANT," to quote Tim Healy in reference to another famous character, "is more of an institution than a man." His influence is great in the orthodox universities of the world, and especially in this country; but it is not the persuasion of the thinker that counts, it is the subtler but more powerful sway of the Official Authority, the Fetish set on high, the invisible something, linked vaguely with all our greatness, with Shakespeare, and Queen Victoria, and the God who has appointed us so wonderfully to rule the peoples of the world.

Imagine the condition of mind of the undergraduate with his small Latin and less Greek jostling with his interest in the scores of Jack Hobbs, dreadfully suspicious, moreover, of ideas and "things of that sort," like Mr. Brookes in Middlemarch, but yet uncannily attracted to the Alpine summits of high speculation, who hears a famous professor, reputed the wisest in the world—look at his degrees! look at his O.B.E. !—who in *ex cathedra* utterance lets fall the appellation of Immanuel Kant. Most of the students, it is true, recover rapidly, for there is something "un-English" in these regions of abstract thought, but those who are destined to become professors receive the full impression, and they know that henceforth when they hear that sacrosanct name it is etiquette to think no more.

Into these sentiments I enter with the more lively sympathy in that for a time I stood in a semi-religious awe of Kant. That was in the days of my youth before I knew him; but when I got the *Critique of Pure Reason* in my possession one night I could not sleep for eagerness to read, and I rose early next morning and sat in a cold and draughty room to devour this immortal meal. Like a bride to her lover I had gone to the Kritik. "Here will I get," I cried to myself, "the something superior and true and illuminating that I have searched for, the delicate touch and the steel-like strength of all that is high and great in thought."

In reality I got the influenza, but my spiritual plight was worse. Never did I read a book in such a bewildering sense of growing disappointment. In place of a work resting firm on an ascertained base, and proceeding step by step in the serried order of regular, consecutive arguments to a great conclusion, I found tentative methods, unwarrantable assumptions, a style as clumsy as obscure, and in the end, amid the welter and the fumes of the old theological wrangles, a widely flung, but ill-concealed *petitio principii*.

At length I threw the book away in impatience, but not without thanks; I was even grateful for the experience, for I felt that I had touched the limit in my questioning of the authorities, and that henceforward I would sail *per mares nunca de antes navigados*.

In my treatment of Kant in this brief paper, therefore, I will depart far from the usual style of comment, whether of approval or dissent, and endeavour to find the deeper sources whence flowed the product of this renowned thinker, and to indicate the "germinal idea" of his work. Kant was born in Koenigsberg in 1724, but his father, a saddler, who spelled his name Cant, was the son of a Scotsman. Kant's mother was a pious German frau, and the atmosphere of the home was that of a straight-laced religiosity, less of the old Covenanting aggressive type than of a timid quietism which fitted in well with every sham of the prevailing social order.

Immanuel was a bright, intelligent boy, but a frail pigmy in physique. At his best he was barely five feet in height, with thin body, narrow shoulders and hollow chest, and a defective articulation of the right shoulder. He early took up teaching as his regular life's

work, and he was at first attracted to mathematics, for Newton's work, with its developments, was at that time making a great stir in the world. Kant's range of culture was fairly wide, but his outlook on the whole domain of science was tentative and limited, and it is certainly not from such studies that his mind received direction or his work illumination.

He grew up in a life singularly devoid of external incident, never out of Koenigsberg; he completed his career and died there. He was a sexual invalid, and in this respect he was a fitting type of a great line of English thinkers who to that have owed something of the high-strung hysteria which has been so esteemed as the spirituality of their writings—from Newton himself to Adam Smith, to Ruskin, to Carlyle, to Watts the painter, and taking within the ambit in this respect also men of different intellectual outlook, John Stuart Mill, Bain, and Spencer. Our glory in this respect is—unique; I had almost written another word.

Now it may be possible to study mathematics to advantage in a life screened from ordinary human emotions, but it must be recollected that all the men here cited wrote on ethical subjects, and that indeed was the pith of the work of Kant. Now ethics is the subject to which should converge all studies in the physical and biological spheres as well as those of the domain of psychology, and as the emotions and passions and the great driving motives that determine the lives of men are the objects of ethical concern, it might be expected that the great ethical teacher would have some acquaintance with such matters.

Not at all! In the whole range of history it would be difficult to find a writer of note so meagrely equipped in this regard as Kant, whose daily walks were even always on the same lines, and whose chief excitement was that of the question of the heat of his coffee after the mid-day meal. In the physical world the nearest approach to the complexity of ethics is the science, still so tentative, of meteorology to which a score of important lines of study converge. If, however, a meteorologist who knew nothing of heat or cold, or wind or rain, or earthquakes or tides, or radiation or geography; if such a one, devoid even of curiosity in these subjects, were to write of the weather, not after a study of the records of barometers or wind-gauges but on steadfast contemplation of his navel, he would, of course, write nonsense.

That is precisely what Kant did in ethics. His *Critique of Practical Reason* is not a scientific exposition, gaining its sanctions from a study of the Cosmos; it is the work of a weak, timid soul, inefficiently back-boarded by Stoic principles, who had been alarmed by the mutterings of the French Revolution. He sought to reconcile a certain audacity of conceptions with a flat servility to the Hohenzollern regime. His famous *Categorical Imperative* comes not from his vaunted God, but from the Prussian drill-sergeant. His *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft* is addressed obsequiously to the Minister of State at the time, and when subsequently the minister sent him a letter ordering him to cease writing on such questions of religion as might be dangerous to that same Hollenzollern regime, the great Stoic philosopher crumpled up and gave way to the pietistic sycophant. He has been much eulogised for this, by the way, in Oxford; for the *Categorical Imperative*—the inexorable decree of God—becomes feasible, "quite sound, you know," when translated into obeisance to the gilt and purple of fantoché little dispensers of power and pay.

This doctrine, which at bed-rock means obedience to the Throne, not of God, by the way, but of the Kaiser, unless indeed they be one, was reinforced by one still more obscure in doctrine and more servile in practice—Hegel; and the teachings have proved to be of great practical value not only to generations of professors but to a whole category of contemporary politicians.



And yet withal, in the queer medley of values that human life presents, I have felt inclined to forgive all to Kant and to redress the balance in his favour, for one rare stroke of intellect. He saw clearly, the first since Aristotle, that the only truly scientific manner in which to found a system of psychology was to discover the ultimate or elementary forms of thoughts—what I have since called the Fundamental Processes of the Mind—by the combinations of which the whole psychic world can be built.

The study, the analysis, the persistent searching for these processes occupied my own mind during twenty years, but I was at length enabled to obtain, as I claim, clear determinations and rigorous demonstrations. Kant, on his part, proceeded in a tentative fashion, and finally contented himself with the "categories," as he called them, derived from that formal logic which the Schoolmen had brought to as high a degree of technical perfection as was possible with their artificial contrivances.

Kant therefore elected to work within the scope of their product, and his method was unscientific in conception and barren in result. I cannot make this evident in a short article, but those who are interested will find the complete exposition in my *Psychology*, and it will there be seen clearly what Kant aimed at, and why he failed. He had no principle of division to guide him or to assure him that his categories were exhaustive and yet not redundant; as a matter of fact, they are redundant and not exhaustive.

Further, in a scientific exposition, he should not only have correctly formulated his categories, or Fundamental Processes, but from that basis he should have proceeded in regular progression by cogent arguments. That is the method of Galileo, and as his principles are the soul of the science of mechanics, so the Fundamental Processes of Mind are, or should be, the informing spirit throughout the whole range of Psychology. Kant, however, has no true scientific method; he does not develop his arguments from his categories. He had been egged on to think out and to write his *Critique of Pure Reason* by the fact that the remorseless style of Hume, deriving from Locke and pushing his conclusions further, had disturbed his content with certain of his own received doctrines, and particularly that of the freedom of will. He did not, therefore, start out to find his way from the ground up in the Cosmos; he began by determining, like a mental athlete, to throw the British champion, Hume, and especially to defend this Freedom of the Will. Even had he succeeded his book would, on these terms, have been but a haphazard and partial exposition of philosophy, but he failed, and his failure was only masked by the extraordinarily involved and obscure style of his writing, and by the influence of those conceptions which we are taught by Oxford to accept as of a high spirituality that transcends reason.

Kant's *Practical Reason*—that fiery Pegasus taught to curvet so smoothly to the Hohenzollerns—and the *Pure Reason* are really branches of the same idea. Reason should lead to perfect action, but as apparently it does not, Kant found the root of the evil in the influence of the senses and passions; he therefore conceived a transcendental world from which these influences were excluded and in which Pure Reason undefiled could move and conduct the processes from which the *Categorical Imperative* finally issued.

The Thousand Years of Night hangs over all his work. It is as if a naturalist wished to write on lions, but instead of going to see a lion shrank with horror from his nasty roar, his bristling mane, his glaring eye, from the veld or forest in which he lived, the water which he drank, or the game on which he preyed, and yet wrote fervidly on all that was left of the lion.

But lest I should seem too critical I give a repre-

sentative passage from a chapter of the *Critique, the Transcendental Analytic*, as translated by Prof. Max Müller: "The synthesis of the manifold in imagination is called transcendental, if, without reference to intuitions, it effects only the conjunction of the manifold *a priori*; and the unity of that synthesis is called transcendental if, with reference to the original unity of apperception, it is represented as *a priori* necessary. As the possibility of all knowledge depends on the unity of that apperception, it follows that the transcendental unity of the synthesis of imagination is the pure form of all possible knowledge through which all objects of possible experience must be represented *a priori*."

"This unity of apperception with reference to the synthesis of imagination is the *understanding*, and the same unity with reference to the transcendental synthesis of the imagination, the *pure understanding*. It must be admitted therefore that there exist in the understanding pure forms of knowledge *a priori*, which contain the necessary unity of the pure synthesis of the imagination in reference to all possible phenomena. These are the Categories, that is, the pure concepts of the understanding."

Max Muller, himself a devoted follower of Kant, calls his style "careless and involved." I say that it is involved and incapable; the man who wrote the passage quoted above had no clear vision of the mechanism which he essayed to describe.....

There is an equestrian statue of Frederic the Great in Berlin, and Kant figures as an ornament on the pedestal. A true thinker should be greater than all the kings and kaisers in Christendom or beyond it; but Kant's little soul would have frittered in delight at the honour there paid to him. It is in appropriate setting that he finds himself there, and at Oxford; while to me, alas, the spectacle of the professors falsifying the values of thought seems not only incongruous but the most immoral of all the influences that stand in the way of a great reconstruction of our social world.

ARTHUR LYNCH.

---

## Before the Last Round.

---

We are fed up with war.—General Sir Ian Hamilton.

It may be asked, if the direct purpose of freethought consists of delivering blows straight from the shoulder at superstition, why trouble about books on the War? To get a little deeper, why trouble about Freethought, and, resolving this general question into the particular, why are *you* a Freethinker? You have frequently seen, my readers, the sweetly sentimental picture of a little girl nursing a baby almost as big as herself, or, you may have seen two tiny mites walking along hand in hand—you may have seen a thousand and one actions, leading up to the apotheosis of unselfishness—when one man gives his life for another. What is at the back of it all? Our own answer to our own question is—the aristocracy of the human race over all other forms of life. The Freethinker's loyalty to his own species is not the least positive side of liberal thinking and nothing but doubtful eyes have been cast on the use of force.

It is somewhat strange that from one of the most war-like nations of Europe, a book should have come which is to war what Freethought is to organized superstition. Jean de Pierrefeu, in *Plutarch Lied*,<sup>1</sup> has done for war what Mark Twain threatened to do for the human race—"blown the gaff" on it. The author was attached to the French Headquarters during the War,

<sup>1</sup> *Plutarch Lied*, by Jean de Pierrefeu. Translated by Jeffery B. Jeffery. Grant Richards. Price 7s. 6d. net.



and, not like some of our own pugnacious civilians, spitting out venom from Fleet Street. His book is an indictment of the superstition of military genius, and we read with pleasure that in France 750,000 copies have been sold. He states that "circumstances put me in a good position to carry out my project, because for a period of three years it was my task to edit the official *communiqué* issued by French G.H.Q.

In his chapter on a "Bergsonian General Staff" M. Pierrefeu shows that he is not unacquainted with the chameleon forms of authority, splendidly disguised in our own country, and in whatever country it appears, it all leads to one end—the making of man into a pattern and robbing him of his individuality.

"The army itself detests the critical mind. A subordinate who discusses the opinion of his chief is classed at once as a subversive spirit. To be right or wrong is a matter of rank—evidently because rank confers a certain supernatural power. In that there is an unconscious assimilation of the tradition of the priesthood." Our author's arrow has here gone much deeper than it was intended, and we remember an Indian saying, "What wise man desires power?" Our tyrants who lord it over men where they do not produce a knave or a fool, produce an individual in their own image—they only multiply themselves, which may explain the scarcity of common sense. The Bergsonian Staff cultivated an especial contempt for intelligence, and this appears to have strengthened the prejudice in favour of military infallibility amongst civilians. Intuition, natural to a woman, capable of cultivation in a man is much too poorly developed at present for the conduct of national affairs, but nevertheless, the General Staff stood by this method, and, as the author states, "Joffre identified himself with this theory, fit only for the somnambulist and the medium." Whatever this method cost France or the Allies, the next war will be over before the belligerents can make up their minds to try Couéism, or any of the other freak philosophies that are in vogue to tickle the jaded palates of society.

"Disregard of the 'humanities' held sway at the *École de Guerre* as well as in the Sorbonne. Since all that mattered was to put oneself in a state of intuition—I mean to have the offensive will-to-victory—why grow pale in poring over text-books?" We did not know that Bergson could be buried under bouquets from this source; memo, ideas do resolve themselves into actions, whether the ideas are good or bad.

A delicate thrust at the romance surrounding Joan of Arc is found by the author when he mentions that even French trust began to wane from the day when she was wounded, for another superstition had it that supernatural beings were invulnerable.

In Chapter IV., entitled "The Continuous Front, or, the Bankruptcy of Military Art," we begin to get at close quarters with War. Twenty thousand men were sacrificed to take a knoll such as Les Éparges; a thousand rounds from a 75-mm. to cut a gap of twenty-five metres in a wire entanglement; eight hundred rounds to destroy a hostile battery, and, within our own knowledge and observation, some hundred or so rounds from the enemy to destroy an inoffensive latrine; with Dick who lit the fire with the wood next morning saying that it had saved him a lot of trouble in chopping the wood.

After carefully reading this book through, we come to the conclusion that war has now come full circle. It is not written with malice or bitterness, and concludes, "It is more important than ever, in democratic times, that the army should be indistinguishable from the nation and that authority should not have a military character.....Let us give the army civil rights so that it ceases to be a 'corps,' and in exchange let us

grant military rights to those citizens who deserve them." What is welcome and refreshing in the book is the absence of all cant about the ethics of Jesus or any other stick to beat the dog of war. Jean de Pierrefeu sees through the game—he sees what many have seen that it was masses and hordes that decided the War, and he is courageous enough to express the wish that if the peoples of the world are to become disgusted with war for good and all, it will be the continuous front which will contribute to that result.

We notice that Col. C. à Court Repington has nearly a column in the *Daily Telegraph* about Territorial Recruiting; we see that Denmark has made a noble gesture among nations armed to the teeth; we also see that the *Daily News* gives an illustration of a man wearing a gas-mask, and tells us that there are more than 1,000 asphyxiating gases known to-day. Well, well, let it be so. We have sounded our note over a year ago. *Plutarch Lied* is a broadside into one superstition that is now at its last gasp, and sharp swords and glittering prizes is nothing but the vocabulary of an armed civilian among peaceful people. And, as usual, the generals in the army of organized religion are now busy trying to discover where man came from; with an instinct infallibly wrong they neglect to trouble about where man is going to, but unless they do, and do so quickly, a belief in the thirty-nine articles will not save their precious bodies from an onslaught by gas, and now is the time to decide whether their God is a God of War or a God of Peace, for the familiar outfit of khaki that was waiting for us will be about as useful as bows and arrows.

The new world lies before us. This planet as a little house is big enough for us all—but not on the high financier's terms. He it is who commands countries to hate each other in the name of patriotism, and some of our finest military men believe him, and, authority being yoked to his desire, turns Europe into a warring anthill. It is not good enough, for, although hospitals can supply wooden legs and wooden arms, they will not be able to supply fresh lungs during the next war, and that will make many war-lords think twice before they pull the bolt for their own destruction—it would be much easier to choke a few financiers with pound notes rather than turn every country into a convalescent home.

WILLIAM REPTON.

---

## Lord Leverhulme on Religion.

---

EXCELLENT and undoubtedly sincere as may have been Lord Leverhulme's lecture on "True Religion and Business," delivered at Liverpool recently under the auspices of the Messel Memorial series, some of the main positions of the address necessarily leave themselves open to criticism. Lord Leverhulme begins—hopefully enough it would seem for some of us—with the following remarkable statement:—

Wrong methods of teaching the lessons of the Bible are responsible for the neglect by mankind of those lessons. The fact that the Bible has been forced on mankind as something that has to be accepted in its entirety has produced a paralysing effect on its true value.

It will be seen that the lecturer discriminates at once, though not quite explicitly, as between the lessons of the Bible and what are not its lessons. And he expressly condemns, for its effect of ethical indigestion or *non plus*, the familiar expedient of ramming that colossal compilation down the straining throat of civilization.

But the distinguished lecturer goes even farther. He praises the civilizing results of science at the veritable



expense of the Church, whom he definitely debars from any such claim.

Men of science (he says), once freed from the thralldom of the Churches, wrong interpretation, and maladministration of the Bible, have made more progress in raising the level of comfort and happiness of mankind in the last two centuries than was achieved by the Church in the preceding centuries of her almost complete control.

Edifying, indeed, for the restless Freethinker; though hardly so for the illustrious hierarchy of pundits whom his lordship thus pillories, and who, it should be added, not only can lay no claim to the achievement of twentieth century civilization, but are also known to have striven mightily to nullify even the spirit of the age-long movement.

His lordship, however, brought up short, as it were, with the shock of so efficient an impact, begins unfortunately to let his philosophy perform some hardly creditable vagaries with itself, as the following extract from the address serves to show:—

In the past we have seen nations brought to the verge of collapse through an excess of religious zeal, just as to-day Russia is on the verge of collapse through ignoring the teachings of religion.

First of all, the *form* of such a statement must be logically invalid. The lecturer presents his audience with two instances of *one* social phenomenon whose causations, however, are distinctly two, the one the diametrical opposite of the other, which he seeks, by means of the phrase "just as," to juggle into the juxtaposition of analogue. Such treatment, moreover, gives rise to a suspicion that his lordship's philosophy of religion begins to be somewhat at sea. Proceeding further, we find the suspicion verified by the lecturer's statement to the effect, that while religion may be said not to have kept pace with science (a conviction scarcely less than true), industrialism, on the other hand, had failed to keep pace with religion! Surely it would have come nearer the mark to say that religion had failed to keep pace with either industrialism or science, since industrialism is a department of science. On our part we are therefore constrained to ask, What does Lord Leverhulme mean by "religion"? Does he allude to the Dogma of Church—as appears likely from the statement that religion had not kept pace with science? Or, secondly, does he allude merely to Biblical ethics, either in whole or in part? or, thirdly, to twentieth century ethics? For he appears promiscuously to mingle all three, supposing that is, that the up-to-date system of ethics can be rightly termed religion, which is doubtful.

But, despite so much well-meant confusion, one is inclined to believe that what the distinguished lecturer really has at heart amounts simply to this: (1) that the Dogma of Church is irreligious in as much as it has served only to paralyse ethical evolution; (2) that the Bible contains only in part anything ethically useful, and must therefore be properly expurgated before it can be of significance to civilization, which, he it said, has thus far evolved itself without Biblical aid; and (3) that true religion(?) should walk hand in hand with science in the effort to uplift humanity—that, briefly, science should knit itself more closely to humanism. While, further to obviate possible error, his lordship ought to have pointed out that church religion and science cannot keep pace with one another, since church religion negates science. The whole of the lecturer's argument, in fact, centres on the bettering of the lot of the more humble of men, a lot in which, necessarily, the business of commercial production looms largely in its character of callous disregard of its fundamental human element. This, surely, is a matter that might be benefitted to a great

extent by a larger infusion of the milk of human kindness.

Lord Leverhulme's code of ethics (religion?) is, however, embodied in the Sermon of the Mount, a mosaic of workable but not up-to-date philosophy.

Manufacturers, says his lordship, can only get the close touch necessary with their man-power through religion. No manufacturer to-day ignores the hard facts of natural or economic laws, but to ignore the ethical laws of the Sermon on the Mount, to give poor working conditions in factories, and keep wages down to their lowest limit, was considered good business, and was regarded as the sign of a clear hard-headed business man.

Is it by this meant that natural or economic law, that is the implacability of the natural law of survival, coincides with such maxims as loving one's destroyer and of returning good for his evil? If so, let his lordship say so at once, that business should strangle itself; its promoters commit suicide, as likewise its employees. Or, if that be too unsatisfactory a view for his lordship, perhaps he would prefer to look at the business of life, the struggle for existence, returning its "good" for "evil" wholesale as well as retail, when eventually, under so beneficial a scheme, there will cease to exist either "good" or "evil," each the determinant of the other, and there will be born the millennium leveling all those differences of power as between men and men that constitute the essence of progress, and the meaning of human life.

That many of the maxims contained in the Sermon are of greater ethical value than beliefs such as that of the Virgin Birth and the Ascension is readily conceded. The one are emanations of philosophy, liberal and sincere approaches to empirical and scientific fact; whereas the dogmas of sacerdotal ritualism are, at face value, survivals of prehistoric magic and folklore, inexcusably flagrant anachronisms.

Finally, why does Lord Leverhulme call ethics "religion"? Is it out of any special reverence he may yet entertain for that Church which, by his own showing, is responsible for the present survival of blank superstition? For it is an undubitably patent fact that the Church alone dispenses true religion, a *binding down*—to what? Let the Europe of the last two thousand years answer, whether the binding down has been to the good of the people, or to some such colossal priest-grown conceit as the god on the Roman hill.

F. H. KEY.

## Correspondence.

### BIRTH CONTROL.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I have no desire to "bargain in" where wise men fear to tread or to tilt at your expert correspondents at war in your columns. We are, however, influenced to a great extent by our own experiences which frequently dominate our thoughts in spite of certain deductions from statistics that might be "used to prove anything."

The four families of which my grandparents were units numbered 44—an average of eleven and none below seven.

My parents were from families of eight and twelve—an average of ten.

All of these progenitors had plenty of nourishment from home-grown food and worked and dwelt in comfort in the country.

The generation to which my parents belonged (on both sides of the Tamar) became almost entirely town dwellers and the average families of those who married is four.

Of my cousins I easily beat them all with six, but the average is two, and many of them have exactly that number.

If I had not exercised control my family would have been at least double what it is. My contraceptive was neither drug nor appliance.



I am satisfied my parents' generation used checks, but of what nature I know not.

My four married children have given me six grandchildren, and they have no more ease or nourishment than I have had.

A great many people, especially if they are religiously minded, will not admit—some deny—that they use contraceptives; but they undoubtedly do so and in various (usually confidential) ways the truth leaks out, if without details. Numbers of people have admitted to me the use of checks—varying from drugs, poisons, and appliances to self-control.

Apart from the rage for pleasure and the avoidance of responsibility, the never-ending cry is "Cannot afford it." The use of the phrase indicates control. The question of "affording it" seems never to have controlled our forebears!

At the same time it is conceivable there are other forces at work—forces unknown at present to statisticians. Town dwelling and the almost entire change from home-grown to imported or concentrated or preserved foods might react in one way; differences of occupation and habit in another; walking, even in the country, is now almost a luxury (and will soon be taxed!) whilst our grandparents had to face it as a necessity. The railroads, gas, electricity, mineral oils, motor and other traffic, etc., with their many uses and some abuses, have all come into general use since our forefathers raised their big families between the latter part of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries. Then every pulpit thundered forth with an object, "Increase and multiply and replenish the earth"! To have done otherwise was regarded as either a misfortune or "flying in the face of God Almighty"—as the old woman said recently of the wireless!

CORNU-DEVONIAN.

SIR,—Mr. Pell puts up a very gallant defence of his thesis. But may I venture to remark there is one other factor he has not referred to, and one which I think Malthusians do not sufficiently allow for. That is mental development and activity is to a large extent at the expense of procreative capacity. Men and women of genius and considerable intellectual capacity are not usually very fertile. It is to be observed that considerable mental development in woman is at the cost of the maternal organs. If it is fact "man is an animal run to brain," then this puts him in a class by himself; the lower the organism the more quickly it multiplies. The reason therefore that poor people have such large families is because they have not developed their brains. Nordau contends that a declining population is an invariable characteristic of all advanced civilizations, having nothing to do with birth control, but is nature's protest against artificial conditions. At the best, birth control would thus be not more than a palliative and not a radical cure for social ills.

M. BARNARD.

#### THE EXODUS FROM HOUNDSDITCH.

SIR,—In his concluding paragraph in last week's *Freethinker* "Mimnermus" writes, "Present-day Labour leaders flirt with Clericalism, but Hyndman was made of sterner stuff. He realized that it was perfectly idle to pretend that intellectual liberty and real progress could be found inside the ring fences of the Christian Churches." If so, and I am not denying it, it is a pity he surrendered to Clericalism when he became a Parliamentary candidate for Marylebone. In his election address, as reactionary a document as one can conceive, he emphatically declared that he was not in favour of the Disestablishment of the Church of England.

A. G. B.

We remember the millions in the darkness of the dungeons, the millions who perished by the sword, the vast multitudes destroyed in the flames; those who were flayed alive, those who were blinded; those whose tongues were cut out, those into whose ears were poured molten lead; those whose eyes were deprived of their lids; those who were tortured and tormented in every way by which pain could be inflicted and human nature overcome.—*Ingersoll*.

#### Mr. G. Whitehead's Mission.

Evidently the Clerk of the Weather was not so anxious for a return visit from Mr. Whitehead as were the members of the newly-formed branch at Hull, for rain somewhat interfered with the size, though not with the enthusiasm of his audiences. In spite of this discourtesy, seven meetings in all were held, one being delivered to the accompaniment of hymn-singing at the top of their voices from local Christian missionaries, who "carried on" the whole time Mr. Whitehead was speaking, what they lacked in harmony being made up for in volume. The lectures were well supported by the local Branch, Messrs. Friend and Wilkinson both making most capable chairmen. As an outcome of these meetings, a visit to Hull from Mr. Cohen during the indoor season is being arranged. Mr. Whitehead is at Swansea this week. For particulars, see Guide Notice.

#### SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

##### LONDON.

###### INDOOR.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY.—The Discussion Circle meets every Thursday, at 8, at the "Lawrie Arms," Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11, S. K. Ratcliffe, "Ethics in the Contemporary Novel."

###### OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 3.30, Mr. R. H. Rosetti, a Lecture.

FINSBURY PARK BRANCH N.S.S. (Highbury Corner, Islington): Every Friday at 8 p.m., Mr. F. P. Corrigan, a Lecture.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY.—Freethought lectures and debates every evening in Hyde Park. Speakers: Messrs. Baker, Beale, Brayton, Hyatt, Harris, Hart, Keeling, Knubley, Saphin, Shallor, Stephens, Dr. Stuart, M.A., Mr. Vincent, B.A., B.Sc., and Mr. Howell Smith.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Regent's Park, near the Fountain): 6, Mr. H. B. Samuels, a Lecture.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 2.30 and 5, Mr. F. P. Corrigan will lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Outside Technical Institute, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7, Mr. E. Burke, a Lecture.

##### COUNTRY.

###### INDOOR.

BOLTON SECULAR SOCIETY (Socialist Club, 16 Wood Street): 2.15, Mr. George Black, "Scientific Phenology."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Engineers' Hall, Rusholme Road, All Saints): Mr. H. Percy Ward, 3, "Freethought and Catholicism in America"; 6.30, "What is the Meaning of Human Life?"

###### OUTDOOR.

LEEDS BRANCH N.S.S. (Penny Hill, Hunslet): Mr. Lew Davis, 11; Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, Victoria Square, 7.15.

MR. G. WHITEHEAD'S MISSION.—Swansea: September 21 to 27, The Sands each evening at 6.30.

A BRAHAM ASSOCIATING with angels may have transpired unawares, but your dealing with us will have for precedent the deliberate choice of all those scores of your fellow Freethinkers who have not regretted giving us a trial. We are neither new to our calling nor fresh to these columns, but if you still count us strangers we are only waiting the chance to put you in touch with those who know us well. Write right away for any of the following and let us tell you everything:—*Gents' AA to H Book, Suits from 54s.*; *Gents' I to N Book, Suits from 99s.*; *Gents' Superb Overcoat Book, prices from 48s. 6d.*; or *Ladies' Absorbing Autumn Book, Costumes from 60s.*, *Coats from 46s.* Same old address—MACCONNELL & MABE, New Street, Bakewell, Derbyshire.

#### YOU WANT ONE



LATEST N.S.S. BADGE.—A single Pansy flower, size as shown; artistic and neat design in enamel and silver. The silent means of introducing many kindred spirits. Brooch Fastening, 9d. post free.—From THE GENERAL SECRETARY, N.S.S., 62 Farringdon Street, E.C.4.



# NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

**President:**  
**CHAPMAN COHEN.**

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

## Principles and Objects.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Membership.

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

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

Name.....

Address.....

Occupation.....

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

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

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

## A Valuable Reprint.

# THE MARTYRDOM OF MAN

By WINWOOD READE

One of the most interesting and suggestive sketches of civilization ever written. Those who have read it will take the present opportunity of renewing their acquaintance with Reade's masterpiece. Those who have not yet made its acquaintance should do so without delay.

Cloth Bound, 450 pp. Price 2s. 6d., postage 3d.

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

## 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**

## The Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws

A Verbatim Report of the Speeches by Mr. Cohen, the Rev. Dr. Walsh, and Mr. Silas Hocking, with the Home Secretary's Reply.

(Issued by the Society for the Abolition of the Blasphemy Laws.)

**PRICE ONE PENNY**, by post three-halfpence.

Should be widely distributed by Freethinkers.

## 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.)

00 pages, Cloth Bound, 3s. 6d., postage 4½d.

## 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.).

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.).

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.).

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



## PIONEER PRESS PUBLICATIONS

*Spiritualism and a Future Life.*

## THE OTHER SIDE OF DEATH.

*A Critical Examination of the Beliefs 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 1½.; Cloth Bound, 3s. 6d., postage 2d.

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

## 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.

## 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 quantitles.*

## THE BIBLE HANDBOOK.

*For Freethinkers and Enquiring 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.

## 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.

*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.

## 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.

## 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.

*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.

## RELIGION AND SEX.

*Studies in the Pathology of Religious Development.*

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

Price 6s., postage 6d.

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

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