

The

FREETHINKER

FOUNDED · 1881

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

Registered at the General Post Office as a Newspaper

Vol. XLV.—No. 10

SUNDAY, MARCH 8, 1925

PRICE THREEPENCE

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page
<i>A Nebulous Religion.—The Editor</i> - - - -	145
<i>The Fall.—J. T. Lloyd</i> - - - -	146
<i>Wonderful Mr. Wells.—Mimnermus</i> - - - -	147
<i>"Children Seldom Cry for Theology."—F. J. Gould</i> - - - -	149
<i>Books and Life.—William Repton</i> - - - -	150
<i>Ethics.—Joseph Bryce</i> - - - -	154
<i>Mrs. Bridges Adams Replies to Her Critics.—Mary Bridges Adams</i> - - - -	155
<i>The Way of the World</i> - - - -	158
<i>Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.</i>	

Views and Opinions.

A Nebulous Religion.

Most people are acquainted with Spencer's description of evolution as a change from the indefinite and incoherent to the definite and coherent. And readers of his works will remember the wealth of detail with which this generalization is illustrated and enforced, and also the accompanying description of the reverse process—dissolution—in which the evolved structure breaks down and relapses into a less definite and less coherent form. The very early history of religion may illustrate the first stage, the present state of religion, particularly the Christian religion is illustrating the last one. In the earlier stages of religion when men said they believed in God one knew with tolerable definiteness what they meant. To-day when we are told a man believes in God, no one is a penny the wiser. It may mean a God of the old type, man-like and absurd, or it may mean a God of the current type which is a nickname for vacuity. So, also, when in the early stages of Christian history people called themselves Christians one could have known what they meant by it. There was a definite body of beliefs included under that term, and to call oneself a Christian involved their acceptance. There was, of course, even then differences of opinion concerning the exact meaning of certain Christian teachings, but there was a well-marked minimum below which a man could not fall and still call himself a Christian—even to himself. To-day there is no such minimum. When a man says he is a Christian, a follower of Christ, or wishes his fellows to act like Christians, no one knows what on earth he means, or if he means anything at all. All that one can be certain of is that the term will be used to cover the speaker's prejudices and prepossessions, or that he is using a word to which he knows numbers of the public will react with the unintelligence of a chemical substance.

* * *

Christian Socialism.

If anyone wishes for an illustration of this he need only turn to an article by Mr. Philip Snowden in a recent issue of *John Bull*. Mr. Snowden asks, "Is Britain Christian?" and he pursues his subject with all the vagueness of the opportunist preacher, and the catchword phraseology of the politician out to catch

votes at any cost. He goes for the Churches as having failed, but quite safely inasmuch as he does not single out any particular Church. To say that the Church of England, or of Rome, the Baptist, or the Methodist Church, has been injurious to the progress of society would be dangerous; it would rouse a special hostility. But to say that all the Churches have failed is safe because that has become a popular form of expression in all the churches by which they cover up their individual shortcomings, and so evade criticism. It is analogous to the way in which all Christians will confess themselves as sinners, or "worms," or lumps of evil collectively. But if one wishes to provide material for a case of assault and battery one need only go round describing Christians particularly and individually to be what they have just declared themselves to be in the mass. The law properly holds than no one is hurt by my writing that all men are rogues. But if I say that John Smith is a rogue, that is a very different matter. Mr. Snowden is quite safe; he will not lose a single Christian supporter in denouncing the Churches as all being failures. They will all support him in saying that—and go on supporting the Churches at the same time. Mr. Snowden says that our existing evils are due to indifference, ignorance, and the stupidity of custom. I agree with him in this. But I venture to suggest that a good start on the road of reform might be made by avoiding the use of phrases which appeal to ignorance, fail to remove indifference, and owe whatever strength they have to the most unreasoning of customs.

* * *

Phrases and Facts.

We can, says Mr. Snowden, build a new Jerusalem here on earth, but we need two things, "and Christ taught them—the will to do and the knowledge of what to do.....Christian teaching provides the knowledge.....(in the) law of sacrifice and service for the common good, and the law of co-operation for social life.....Christ was not a politician, but he was a social reformer. He laid down principles and set forth ideals." One would dearly like to put Mr. Snowden through a public examination as to what precisely he means by these expressions, and where he finds warranty for them, but that not being likely one must just go ahead and see what can be made of this farrago of phrases. What is meant by Christ teaching the "Will to do" I haven't the slightest idea. It is a phrase that has become popular, and so it serves. The knowledge of what to do is a more definite expression, and one can get to closer quarters with it. So one enquires as to what is the knowledge that Christ taught in the direction of building up a new economic and social state? Mr. Snowden, it must be remembered, is a Socialist and believes that poverty and misery and injustice can only be abolished by a complete reorganization of our social and economic system. Will he please tell us precisely where Jesus Christ had anything to say about either economics or sociology that would lead in this direction? Can he find anywhere in the whole of the New

Testament teaching any kind of "social co-operation" for the reorganization of social life? One cannot assume that Mr. Snowden has not read the New Testament, it would be sheer impertinence to assume that he does not understand what he reads, so one is left wondering by what strange mental process he arrives at this conclusion concerning the New Testament Jesus? Social co-operation for social ends is something that does not appear in any part of the recorded life of Christ. A working conception of the State does not appear. There is no hint that the Jesus of the New Testament ever imagined that so long as human society endured on earth there would be any radical alteration of the existing state. There would always be rich and poor, there would always be the master and the slave, and there was always to be charity in order to make the lot of the poor a little less wretched than it might otherwise be. Instead of proposing the conscious organization of society with a view to human happiness here the advice is to take no thought for the morrow, that God who looks after the birds of the air and the lilies of the field will look after mankind if they will only trust him. What is the audience Mr. Snowden has in mind when he writes as he does? What a dependence he has upon the use of familiar phrases and upon the capacity of people for responding to them without troubling as to what is meant by them! I do not know what amount of faith Mr. Snowden has in God, but he evidently has plenty of it in other directions.

* * *

Why Not State the Facts?

Mr. Snowden writes of "the out-of-date idea of a heaven beyond this life, where the saved would be free from care and sin.....and poverty, struggle, and suffering would have passed away." Quite a ridiculous idea, I agree, but it is a thoroughly Christian one, and one that can safely appeal to the New Testament for support. What is the meaning of the Christian teaching of rewards and punishments in the future life but an endorsement of this? What sort of sacrifice does the alleged death of Jesus teach? It does not teach the virtue of sacrifice to remove social injustice, of martyrdom of the social reformer who will enlighten the people at all costs. It is the sacrifice of a man to his god to purchase happiness in the next world. It is theology, not sociology that is embodied here. Mr. Snowden also says during his lifetime he has observed a wonderful change in the attitude of men and women towards "practical religion and social responsibilities." We can let "practical religion go" as just one of those empty cant phrases of no value to anyone, but a growth of a sense of social responsibility is a fact. And had the desire to be just and enlightening been strong with Mr. Snowden he would have pointed out that this has been coincident with a decline in the strength of the belief in all forms of religion. And it might not have been out of place if he had dropped just a word of recognition of those Freethinkers from Robert Owen and Paine onward who have turned the attention of men and women from the next world to this, and from trust in God to faith in human endeavour. It would not have pleased the chapels; it might have lost votes, but I would have made for genuine enlightenment, and so left the people less liable to become the slaves of phrases which mislead and enslave in the very act of pleasing.

* * *

Religion as "Dope."

Mr. Snowden would probably admit that Christianity and the name of Christ has been used as a form of "dope" for the people. But dope is dope all the time, and it is not the less dope because it is used

to get something with which you agree. It is as much dope when it is used in the interests of Socialism as when it is used on behalf of Conservatism. There is no difference in principle between Lord Hugh Cecil handing out the dope on one side and Mr. Snowden serving it out on the other. Both embody the same appeal to unintelligence, and both ultimately react in the same manner. I wonder whether Mr. Snowden in his profound reflections upon sociology has ever had it borne in on him that the real enlightenment of the people is the only certain protection against their exploitation by State, by Church, or by politician? Has it never occurred to him that if it is possible to reorganize Society for the better by the aid of human intelligence and good will, and if that better society is sufficient in itself, both as regards incentive and end, there is not the least need to drag in the figure of a mythical Jewish peasant, whose hold on the people is due to their having been doped by the Churches for so many generations? Might it not be as well to bend to the task of a genuine education of the people, of teaching them to stand erect; to depend upon their own strength and upon the knowledge that human society must be continually modified in the light of contemporary needs and knowledge? Why not drop Jesus altogether and preach a genuine and helpful humanitarianism? I admit that this policy might lose votes, but in the long run it would pay! For the people that are swallowing your dope to-day may as readily swallow the dope of someone else to-morrow. It is the dope they like, and the particular person who administers it is of minor consequence. It is a far better policy to get them to do without dope altogether. Of course, it may lose votes, but we suggest to Mr. Snowden that the advice is worth considering.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Fall.

In the *Church Times* for February 20 there appeared a discourse by the Rev. Leighton Pullan, D.D., Fellow of St. John's College, Oxford, the object of which is to present the Anglo-Catholic version of the orthodox doctrine of the fall of mankind in the person of the first man, Adam. It is well known that many Anglo-Catholic divines accept the theory of evolution, with which they endeavour to harmonize Christian doctrines. The Fall cannot be rejected altogether by any Christian minister, because without it Christianity would be meaningless. So in some form or another, the doctrine of the Fall must be retained. We are all familiar with the account of it as given in Genesis. Adam and Eve were forbidden to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Satan was evidently on terms of friendship with Eve, and on her telling him about the forbidden fruit he said: "Ye shall not surely die, for God doth know that on the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil." The woman realized how beautifully sensible that saying was, with the result that seeing "that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and she gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened." According to the story, what the Serpent told the woman was perfectly true, and his prophecy would have been fulfilled had it not been for the jealousy of the Gods. The following is their own admission:—

And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil; and now,

lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever, therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man, and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden the Cherubim, and the flame of a sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life. (Genesis iii., 22-24.)

Now, the text of Dr. Pullan's sermon is the last sentence, verse 24, in that passage, of which the preacher says: "That is a sublime allegory. The Church is right in believing that these words are filled with moral significance."

It is by no means a pleasant and enjoyable story. The characters in it are nominally but four—God, Satan, the man and the woman. God is represented as forming man of the dust of ground, and breathing into his nostrils the breath of life, with the result that the man became a living soul. As an afterthought, God, while the man was asleep, took out one of his ribs, which under his magic touch soon became a living woman, whom the man heartily welcomed as a much needed companion. God's treatment of the man was at once rigid and selfish. To forbid a thing is to give rise to a desire for it. Twenty-five years ago we heard Mark Twain say, in a lecture: "We are much too severe on poor Adam. I have been nearly round the world, but I have not found a single place where that apple would have been safe." This garden of Eden prohibition was rooted in the selfishness of the prohibitor, its object being to prevent the man from growing and developing, and from acquiring knowledge. And the man himself, though divinely formed and made a living soul, was not an object of whom either his maker or his wife could have felt proud. After partaking of the forbidden fruit both he and his wife sought to hide themselves among the trees of the garden, but God found them and then the man revealed himself as a contemptible coward:—

The Lord God called unto the man and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

No, it is not a pretty story, and our only comfort lies in the fact that people generally are getting to regard it as nothing but a fairy tale, all the characters in which are purely fictitious, but which the Church in all ages has done its utmost to foist upon the world as veritable history. To-day, however, the Church is being steadily dethroned. It has completely lost touch with the masses, who care not one bit what it believes and teaches. Even Dr. Pullan utterly fails to make the story seem real to any thoughtful person. It is amazingly easy to employ the following language concerning a man who has pursued a specific course of life:—

He has lost the innocence which was his real strength, and, little as he knew it, his greatest means of exercising influence, his greatest attraction. He finds all around him unexpected thorns and thistles, which he never saw and never imagined. He is reminded that he is dust and that to dust he will return. And when he longs to eat of the tree of life, he is met by the flaming sword. It burns his brain and it cuts his heart. It makes him angry with his own folly and miserable over his own selfish conduct. Myriads of men have met the flaming sword.

But how on earth do such sentimental statements have the least bearing on the story of the Fall? Such a man as the reverend gentleman describes so elo-

quently it has never been our misfortune to meet; and it is certainly a gross exaggeration to declare that there are myriads just like him. During the last fifty years we have come into contact with all sorts of people in different parts of the world; but we never met one person anywhere to whom Dr. Pullan's characterization could honestly be applied. There are countless multitudes of men and women among us to-day who have not made the most and best of themselves, who have not encouraged and developed the highest and noblest potentialities within them, and who in consequence wrong both themselves and others; but they are not what they are as the effect of anything that is said to have happened in the garden of Eden several millenniums ago. It is quite true that the present is largely the child of the past. This is a fact that has been scientifically established and cannot reasonably be denied or doubted. The law of heredity is constantly in operation, transmitting elements and qualities from parents to offspring, though in numerous instances the effects are greatly modified by the action of environment. What we positively deny is that the human race is in a fallen condition because the first man disobeyed a non-moral command imposed upon him by his so-called Creator. Such a doctrine is not mentioned in the Old Testament, except at the beginning of the Book of Genesis, nor in the New Testament by any other writer than Paul. The Gospel Jesus makes no reference whatever to it. It was Paul who first treated the story of the Fall as true, and used it as the foundation on which to build his conception of the Christian evangel. It is impossible to misunderstand his teaching as thus expressed:—

So then as through one trespass the judgment came unto all to condemnation; even so through one act of righteousness the free gift came unto all men to justification of life. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous. (Romans v., 18, 19.)

That is Christianity, and we know no other. How the Bishop of Birmingham could throw the doctrine of the Fall overboard and still remain a Christian minister is to us wholly inexplicable. We are sorry to confess that we, too, did the same thing, but only for a little while. Consistency demands that both the First and Second Man should be dismissed, for without the First there is no need whatever for the Second.

J. T. LLOYD.

Wonderful Mr. Wells.

Call you this backing of your friends?—*Shakespeare*.
Thou art a worthy man, notwithstanding that there be some do call thee the Ratter.—*The Chronicles of Arlemas*.

CLOTHED in motley, and banging a bladder, Mr. H. G. Wells has for many years lounged around the camp-fires of the Army of Human Liberation. A licensed jester, his quips and cranks often amused the hard-working soldiers of progress. Latterly, however, his jibes have taken a bitter tone, especially since he has "found God"; or, perhaps, "God" has discovered him. Maybe, they have recognized each other, like ships that pass in the night. And the mutual recognition of two such distinguished personalities has been made an event of journalistic importance, and the hired penmen of Fleet Street have made "copy" of the circumstances.

For, like so many worthy folk in similar condition, Mr. Wells has proceeded to make himself a public nuisance. One of his pastimes, since his conversion, has been the hurling of insults at his former asso-

ciates; and, curiously, his jibes have taken the familiar form of the stock arguments of those peerless pat-terers, the lecturers of the Christian Evidence Society. Presumably, Mr. Wells' conversion has depressed his levity, for the process reminds us of how Edward Gibbon, the historian, learnt Greek "at the cost of many tears and not a little blood."

As a popular novelist, Mr. Wells has a numerous following, not so large as that of Miss Ethel Dell, or Mr. Charles Garvice, but still respectable in point of numbers. Therefore it would be unwise to ignore him altogether. What needs comment in his rehashing of the stale objections which have done so much service on so many Christian pulpits and platforms, particularly when he says, in *God the Invisible King*, that "without God the service of man is no better than a hobby or a sentimentalism in the undisciplined prison of the mortal life." Since this fatuous utterance, Mr. Wells has gone out of his way to taunt Freethinkers with their lack of philanthropic work, and with having no charitable and educational institutions in connection with their movement. He adds, further, that the "professed Atheists and Agnostics" he has known have been careful and comfortable people—and just a little self-righteous." Which looks uncommonly as if Mr. Wells' Christian associates were reckless folks like Mr. Wilkins Micawber.

Such remarks show that Mr. Wells knows very little of the movement with which he was for a few months associated. Freethought is a poor, struggling cause; its members are comparatively few and scattered; and it has no wealthy endowments to lessen the current cost of a national propaganda. Still the Freethought Party does manage to relieve its necessitous members; and the Freethinkers' Benevolent Fund is well supported, and is probably the only fund which is administered without a single farthing of expense. Until a short time ago it was not possible to bequeath money for Freethought purposes with any real prospect of the trust being carried into effect, as it was in the power of the next-of-kin to invalidate the legacy on the ground that it was illegal. The famous Bowman case trial altered this, but Freethought was robbed of thousands of pounds before this memorable legal victory.

During Mr. Wells' literary career two Presidents of the National Secular Society have died from the overwork and anxiety inseparable from such an onerous office. And, let us remind Mr. Wells, that the objects of the National Secular Society are to dispel superstition; to spread education; to rationalise morality; to promote peace, to dignify labour; to extend material well-being; and to realize the self-government of the people. This is a lengthy and ambitious programme for any single organization, even if supported by large resources, which the National Secular Society does not possess. Still, the Society has kept the flag flying bravely for over half a century.

The social activity of Christians is not always entirely benevolent. Let Mr. Wells consider the case of Stephen Girard, the American Freethinker. At his death, this large-minded and big-hearted man left substantial bequests to charities, the chief being a munificent endowment of an orphanage. By express provision in his will, no priest, no minister of religion, was to hold any connection with the college, nor even to be admitted as visitors, but the staff of the institution was required to instruct the pupils in secular morality. This will has been most shamefully perverted, for the officials are all Christians, and, in order to keep within the letter of the law, only laymen are so employed. To-day the Girard Orphanage is pointed out as a proof of Christian philanthropy.

Does Mr. Wells know that Florence Nightingale, "the lady with the lamp," who ministered to the

suffering soldiers in the Crimea, was a heretic? Has he never heard of Walt Whitman, who spent four years of his life in attending war-hospitals, and who wrecked his superb constitution by his devotion to his fellows? And what of Robert Owen, who not only built the first infant schools, and improved the dwellings of his workpeople, but sought to construct the ideal society of the future? Mr. Wells ought to have heard of University College School, which was founded by Freethinkers to further the principles of Secular Education. The Sunday League, too, founded by Freethinkers, had for its sole object the brightening of the lives of working people. Even the activities of the Humanitarian League, which did such magnificent work for a quarter of a century should be a sufficient answer to Mr. Wells' cheap sneers.

Other names leap to the memory. Thomas Paine pleaded for the slaves, and advocated old-age pensions for the poor. He besought the French Republic not to imitate the bad example of Monarchy, and not to stain itself with blood. Was it "sentimentalism" or "hypocrisy" that caused Paine to nearly lose his own life by pleading for humanity? Shelley, the Freethought poet, was a thorough humanitarian. He visited the sick in their homes, and kept a list of poor people whom he assisted. Is this a further example of Freethought "hypocrisy," or is it possible that the omniscient Mr. Wells is mistaken?

Mr. Wells is guilty of the worst form of cant. As a Socialist, he ought to know that whilst charity is a palliative, what the world wants is justice. If the world were run on fair and reasonable lines there would be no occasion for charity to exist. If, however, belief in God is necessary to make a man a humanitarian, how comes it that the votes of the Bench of Bishops in the House of Lords is a shameful record? Scores of measures for the bettering of the conditions of the working classes have been opposed by these God-believing ecclesiastics. Nothing but self-interest excites action on the part of these lawn-sleeved legislators. None even voted for the abolition of the flogging of women in prison, or for the abolition of the whip in the Army and Navy. Since Mr. Wells himself has "found God" his own manners have worsened. Perhaps he remembers the legal advice, "No case, abuse the plaintiff's attorney." By attempting to discredit Freethought, he shields, in a measure, his newly-found "god" from the searchlights of criticism.

Christian charity is largely a bribe to the working classes to keep them in order, and to attract them into churches and chapels. In India, and elsewhere, the missionaries bribe the natives with medical dispensaries, and at home the clergy use the lure of coals and blankets, soup kitchens, children's nurseries, Sunday-school "treats," pleasant Sunday afternoons, and other attractions. Even the Young Men's Christian Association, founded by pious drapers, did but supplement the starvation wages paid in that sorry trade, the last stronghold of slavery in England. The cash-box and the cassock have always been on the same side, and will be till the end of the chapter. So long as profiteers have surplus thousands derived from underpaid labour wherewith to endow churches and chapels, so long will "religion" be necessary to keep people quiet. And Mr. Wells, as a Socialist, ought not to wait till his hair is grey before he sees this. MIMNERMUS.

Excessive knowledge is better than excessive praying and the support of religion is abstinence. It is better to touch knowledge one hour in the night than to pray the whole night.—*Mohamet in Koran.*

"Children Seldom Cry for Theology."

THE thirteenth child of a New England farmer was born on March 7, 1849, in a substantial red-brick house, over which elms cast a pleasant shade. This thirteenth child's mother died in 1909, in her ninety-seventh year. I trust the thirteenth child himself, who is not a Protestant, though he bears the name of Luther, will reach his ninety-seventh year, amid the joyous orange groves and blazing poppies of California. One day, in 1922, he paused in the midst of his gardening (he is the greatest gardener on earth), thought of me, and sent me a booklet, in which these words make music:—

I love sunshine, the blue sky, trees, flowers, mountains, green meadows, sunny nooks, the ocean when its waves softly ripple along the sandy beach, or when pounding the rocky cliffs with its thunder and roar, the birds of the field, waterfalls, the rainbow, the dawn, the noonday, and the evening sunset—but CHILDREN above them all.

Now any man or woman who feels like that deserves to live to ninety-seven at least.

Luther Burbank (for it is time to give his full name) developed, at an early age, two passions, such as I incline to call cosmic passions—the passion for discovering the orderly significance (or science, if you will) of plants and animals, such as he roamed amongst in the woods and valleys of Massachusetts; and the passion for ideas that expressed this order in the latest modern tongue. The latest modern tongue was Darwinism, echoes of which reached his eager ears in the conversation of studious visitors to his father's house, and, later, in the arrival of a book, Darwin's *Animals and Plants under Domestication*. Five years afterwards, (1875), the young man migrated to Santa Rosa, California, and there he yet dwells. He had already experimented, and had produced a fresh variety of potato. Gardening, carpentering, and striving, he at length, in 1882, had sufficient money to open a research ground; and this has since evolved into a scientific centre, to which pilgrim biologists come from many lands, and which shines as a "bright, particular star" in the world of horticulture. Luther Burbank has, by careful and long-continued cross-fertilization and patient culture, produced new varieties of cherries, walnuts, plums, strawberries, raspberries, peaches, apples, apricots, (the "plumcot" is a rosy cross of plum and apricot), prunes, blackberries (some of his are white!), lilies, irises, daisies. Perhaps the most astonishing of his creations is the spineless cactus. The cactus, bristling with spines, has for ages fended off mules and other animals that would gladly have eaten its fleshy substance. Burbank has grown the plant without the thorns, and expanses of soil may now be covered with new food for animals.

So remarkable have Burbank's labours been that the prophet has actually gained honour in his own home! and the State of California, in 1909, declared March 7, his birthday, as a school festival; and, on that date, children and teachers sally out into the open air, and plant trees, vines and flowers, and celebrate, in songs and recitations, the glories of nature as touched by the magic of human wit and invention. School-children are familiar with their famous neighbour's splendid saying, "I shall be content if because of me there shall be better fruits and fairer flowers." I have often quoted, and would like to quote again, Burbank's amusing catalogue of things which all children (*all children, please to observe!*) ought to know at joyful first hand:—

Every child should have mud-pies, grasshoppers, water-beetles, tadpoles, frogs, mud turtles, elder-

berries, wild strawberries, acorns, chestnuts, trees to climb, brooks to wade, water lilies, woodchucks, bats, bees, butterflies, various animals to pet, hay-fields, pine-cones, rocks to roll, sand, snakes, huckleberries and hornets; and any child who has been deprived of these has been deprived of the best part of his education.

I commend Burbank's code to the attention of the political parties—Conservative, Liberal, and Labour. Though I keep a spy-glass, and a constant look-out from my philosophic tower, I have not yet noticed any of these parties moving in Burbank's direction.

A week or two ago, Mr. Burbank and another Californian friend sent me some newspaper cuttings, the gist of which I believe will interest the reader. The first tells of a big meeting in a San Francisco auditorium, addressed by the biologist, W. E. Ritter, the University chancellor, David Starr Jordan, and Luther Burbank, of Santa Rosa. These speakers opened a campaign (November 14, 1924) on behalf of the "Science League of America," against the singular persons who are trying to prevent lessons on Evolution being given in schools and colleges.

On Sunday, 21 December, 1924, Burbank attended Church at Santa Rosa. The report calls the place a "Federated Church," and I suppose the term implies a centre for combined work of the more liberal-minded types of religious denominations. A trio of San Francisco musicians very properly charmed the congregation, for Burbank, like the lady of Banbury Cross, ought to have "music wherever he goes." And then the famous gardener repeated to his Santa Rosa neighbours the address which he had delivered to 1,600 listeners at San Francisco; and I may here furnish a few brief notes on it.

Burbank summed up the main forces of evolution in animal and plant life, and the human urge away from pain and towards happiness, and the incessant repetitions, selections and modifications that are associated with the movement; and he observed:—

Life is heredity plus environment. At birth of a plant, animal, or man, heredity has always been fixed. Environment may now call into action only those tendencies which have been experienced in the age-long past, yet may recombine and intensify them in a most surprising way, but is limited generally to the individual, but by slow increments generation after generation, these by repetition continued in the lives of the individuals at last become fixed and available in the species.

Then he devoted the central part of his discourse to religion, which, to Burbank, is the service of man, aided by science, and to be rigidly separated from theology. "Religion rejoices in the happiness of others, and helps to make them happy"; and "it takes good care of this wonderful body and mind, and rejoices in all the beauties of nature, and, unlike theology, never leads to insanity." Such sentiments, applauded by the Californian listeners, constitute what I am in the habit of calling the "Religion of Humanity." On the other hand, Burbank remarked, with a twinkle in his eye, that "children seldom cry for theology!"—and, as an affirmation of nature against the non-natural, the sentence deserves to rank as a proverb.

Towards the close of his address, Burbank alluded to the unhappy citizens whose opposition to the Evolution-doctrine had its seat (oh, dreadful suggestion!) in the small-sized, primitive brain encased in a Neanderthal type of skull! And then, to the amusement of the congregation, Burbank thus referred to his friend Bryan, evangelical politician, anti-Evolutionist apostle, and once-candidate for the U.S.A. Presidency:—

Mr. Bryan is an honoured personal friend of mine, yet this need not prevent the observation that the skull with which nature endowed him visibly,

approaches the Neanderthal type. Feelings and the use of gesticulations and words are more according to the nature of this type than investigation and reflection.

My hand has trembled as I copied out this awful portraiture of the venerable Bryan.

We have some—I think a rapidly decreasing number of—people in England who express their sad unbelief in *Évolution*, biological and historical. Shall we weep over them, brethren? Yes; “if you have tears, prepare to shed them now.” But can we look at their skulls, and dare to whisper the word *Nean*.....

No, no! I cannot write the word. Luther Burbank may use such language; but I suspect he does it with a smile of that wonderful broad humour at which Santa Rosa and America laugh more readily than England and her saintly Protestants! And Bryan, who, of course, forgives his enemies, no doubt forgives his friend.

F. J. GOULD.

Books and Life.

THE fundamental parts of Christianity are very simple to anyone who is unwilling to add the word mystery as make-weight. They comprise the Virgin Birth, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. To put the matter in another manner we would suggest that soup, blankets, charity, and all the side issues of a faith that has had a long innings, is something like a theme with variations. As that old song entitled “Queen of the Earth” is only the tune of “Who Killed Cock Robin?” with trimmings, so are the plain and fancy varieties of religion the embroidery on a matter about which doctors, historians, and scientists are frankly sceptical. What energy and effort, what a Niagara of words, what tragedy, what comedy has there not been over this subtle myth that has still left in many the inherited poison of original sin! The “Daylight Saving Bill,” that gets people up an hour earlier by Act of Parliament does at least put the clock on. Theology has put the clock back by centuries, and it is a pleasant speculation as to what our children’s children will be who will be born unfainted with the black magic of the “no-sayers.” Richard Jefferies, who was not a religious man, nor yet actively anti-religious, could not get any further in his beliefs that sun-worship would ultimately prevail. As a writer, he is like a native guide in the country, who will walk by your side up a country lane. You will notice the clear rippling water running by the roadside; if it is spring, he will talk to you of the young violet shoots, the cuckoo-pint, the various grasses and ferns, the mosses—and suddenly he will say, “Come and look over this gate!” A lovely view is disclosed to you. Jefferies has this style as the following extract will show, and a careful reading of him will prove that he aimed at what our present crucified world is groaning for—simplicity:—

The morning airs, which breathe so sweetly, come less and less frequently as the heat increases. Vanishing from the sky, the last fragments of cloud have left an untarnished azure. Many times the bees have returned to their hives, and thus the index of the day advances. It is nothing to the greenfinches; all their thoughts are in their song-talk. The sunny moment is to them all in all.

Come and look over this gate.

There is no clock for feeling, for joy, for love.

Pascal, the Cardinal Newman of France, had a pronounced dislike of Voltaire. The two were a pair of opposites. Pascal held to original sin and in consequence was afflicted with a deep sense of the world’s misery. But, the witty writer Arouet stated positively that for every miserable man that Pascal could find, the enemy of priests and humbugs would find a happy one. And our common experience tells us that this is true. Passing through the streets of London both are

to be found, and, if you, my readers, have made a compact with your heart and head you will find that, if there is much about which you may despair, there is much that will make you rejoice. Dante wrote his *De Monarchia* on the hypothesis that human nature was good. Psychologists, whose theories have still to cool into shape, are agreed that human nature is good, but at present only sick and miserable. Be that as it may, you would have seen, if you had been with us, one of those little incidents in life about which the pen of Sterne would have lovingly lingered. An old man, very poor, with a grey beard, and a face that Time had been knocking about, stopped in front of a tray of violets held by a street vendor. He bought a bunch and handed them to an old lady, shabbily dressed and wearing an old-fashioned poke-bonnet. She pressed them to her face, and, who knows what miracle the magic of perfume and colour performed. There, at least, for that time were two happy human beings. Only two! Nay, a third—which was made into five. Ellen said: “How romantic!” Joan said: “How sweet!” but both their expressions, however inadequate, did not conceal the fact that a pebble of happiness cannot fall into the world’s pool without its effect being felt at the edge.

There is a tidal river that winds round Brightlingsea up to a valley near St. Osyth. As we walked down a lane garlanded on either side with red popples and campions six feet high we came to a bridge. There was a rowing boat partly submerged near to it and on the prow for a second we saw a kingfisher. With a jewel flash in the air he was gone after giving us a thrill of pleasure. A kingfisher at that time was the very last thing we were thinking about. As a matter of fact we were wishing that the sun would shine to enable us to obtain a clear view of the quaint line of old-fashioned houses that run from the Priory down to the river nearer to the sea. The best way not to see a kingfisher is to set out with the fixed intention of finding one. And the best way to find happiness is not to seek it; to welcome it with both hands when it appears but not to drive it away by a plan to find it as one would set out to find a lost sheep. To-day, dark clouds were racing across the sky as we set our faces to the west for exercise and fresh air and any good thought that can be had by walking. To count up, on our return, all the choice gifts that came our way unsought would make a long list. There was the song of the lark, a clump of celandines opening their yellowy green petals to the sun, there were the almond trees in bloom, and the mosses in flower, lamb’s tails swinging in the moist breeze, and a ratification of the lines from Keat’s “*Endymion*”:—

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever.

Spring is on the way, and,

Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth
Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,
Of all the unhealthy and o’er darkened ways
Made for our searching; yes, in spite of all,
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
From our dark spirits.

And, read on, my readers, and find that simplicity that we must get if we are ever to escape alive from this our Age of Iron.

WILLIAM REPTON.

If I were a God like you and you were a man like me,
And in the dark you prayed and wept and I could hear
and see—

The sorrow of your broken heart would darken all my
day,

And never peace or price were till it was away,—

I’d clear my heaven above your head till all was bright
and blue,

If you were a man like me, and I were a God like you.

—Robert Buchanan.

“Know thyself,” counsels Socrates, “for you must count on yourself alone for arriving at material and moral well-being.”

Acid Drops.

The *Daily Herald* says that if Wembley is to pay the prices must be reduced in order to attract the "workers." We do not fancy that the difference of threepence or sixpence will materially affect the number of working men who will attend. May we venture to point out to the *Herald* that the "worker's" day of leisure is Sunday, and if it can get over its fear of the chapels and advocate that the Exhibition shall be open on Sunday, it will be making a far more useful, and a more educational, suggestion. It is strange that the one paper which proclaims itself the champion of the working class should be so silent on this point.

The easy way in which pious writers on Jesus allow their imagination to run away with them, is shown in a recently published book, *What Jesus Read*. We are calmly informed that Jesus was "a well-read working man of his time, whose own message was in no small measure due to the fact he first enriched his mind with a careful perusal of the work of all types of sincere seekers after the truth of God." Now that does really "take the biscuit." For there is not the slightest indication in the New Testament that Jesus ever read anything. That he had read the writings of all sincere seekers is grotesque. There is no indication whatever that he was acquainted with anything that had been written by anyone outside of Judea, and his whole repertoire was a collection of sayings and foolish beliefs that were quite common among the religionists around him.

At the present time the world is suffering from abnormal unrest and unemployment, a housing shortage, and a general suspicion among the nations that may be preparing the way for another world-war. As a contribution towards the solution of such problems, the Church of England proposes to see if it cannot find a means of making saints, after the fashion of that other divinely inspired organization, the Catholic Church. At the House of Clergy of the Church Assembly, held recently at Church House, Westminster, it was decided, after lengthy discussion of the subject, to ask the Archbishop of Canterbury and York to appoint a Commission to investigate the subject of adding names to the calendar, and the ground for their inclusion, and to prepare a report with recommendations for the English Church. This archaic proposal goaded the Rev. A. D. B. Atkinson into saying, "Canonization and beatification of saints at this time of day, with modern opinion as it is, is altogether a mistake. It all seems to me very sad stuff." We agree for once with a parson. It is "sad stuff," but then what else can one expect from an organization which mentally is a thousand or more years behind the rest of the country, and which, generally speaking, looks back regretfully to the ages of ignorance and superstition?

We see that among the names put forward for addition to the calendar were John Wesley, Florence Nightingale, King Charles "the Martyr," Henry VI., Archbishop Laud, "Jude, the brother of Jesus," Thomas Cranmer, and Lord Shaftesbury. This choice indicates pretty clearly what a highly democratic and progressive body the Church of England is. Charles I., who made an attempt to establish an absolute monarchy in this country on the lines of some of the European monarchies, and finally, by his illegal practices, goaded his subjects into revolt, and so precipitated a bloody civil war; Henry VI., who was pious enough, but suffered from periodic fits of insanity, which were the part cause of the Wars of the Roses; and Archbishop Laud, who is chiefly famous in history for having stirred up religious strife in Scotland by his attempt to force a version of the English Prayer Book in which all the changes were in the High Church direction, upon the Scots. A pretty trio of saints, but probably quite fitted to take their place along with the "saints" already in the calendar. For the most part they seem to consist either of imbe-

ciles, depraved wretches who, having run the gamut of immorality, buried themselves in the desert, there to live a wretched life of self-marceration; or zealous Christians of the "compel them to come in" type.

Newcastle-under-Lyme appears to be a most devout place. At any rate the Town Council has recently carried a motion by fifteen votes to six against letting public buildings on Sundays for political meetings. A certain Councillor Poole, who moved the motion, viewed "with very great alarm" the encroachments on the sanctity of the Sabbath. (This confusing of Sunday and the Sabbath is probably only symptomatic of the gentleman's muddled reasoning where religion is concerned.) Furthermore, he went on, there had been "more shops open on Sunday, more places of amusement open, and more games of all sorts being indulged in all over the country." A truly shocking state of affairs, when people imagine that they have a right to be jolly on the one day in seven when they are free from the need for working. The inhabitants of Newcastle-under-Lyme should be profoundly grateful to an all-wise providence that has given them Mr. Poole as a watch-dog over their morals. Whilst England continues to breed such men, we are in no danger of getting too cheerful.

Mr. Poole added that "there were six days in the week for people to wrangle over politics." Also, "it would be agreed that politics was one of the subjects which divided men more bitterly than anything else." The almost unworthy suspicion occurs to one that this moral legislator may be unacquainted with history. Or perhaps he does not consider that the innumerable religious wars and massacres that go to make up the greater part of the history of Christianity are indicative of bitterness. Perhaps religious persecution, and the murdering of members of one sect by those of another are this pious gentleman's conception of a really jolly way of spending one's time. Of course, from the point of view of the truly religious person, it is certainly better to fight and murder in theological disputes than to engage in controversy about practical mundane things.

Sir Harcourt Butler, the Chief Administrator of Burma, has just concluded the most adventurous journey undertaken by him since the province came under British rule. He penetrated into the Naga territory on horseback, with the object of taking active steps towards the abolition of the practice of human sacrifice among the Nagas of unadministered territory. The Nagas were polite, but firm, on the subject, protesting that pestilence would visit them if they gave up the practices. Sir Harcourt was equally firm, and told the Nagas that under no consideration would the Government tolerate the abominable practices.

No doubt the majority of Christians in this country read the report with a genuine shudder that such superstition should still flourish, and such terrible atrocities be committed on account of it. But we wonder whether it made many of them reconsider their own religious superstitions? After all, the Nagas and the Christians are akin in ideas, the gross, primitive superstitions of the latter being merely overlaid with a certain veneer of culture. But fundamentally their beliefs are the same—a personal being, or beings, who control natural events, and whose good-will must accordingly be secured in some way. The Nagas, perhaps, are a little less sophisticated than we are, and a little more logical in the application of their beliefs. But certainly the Christian who can pray to a deity to set aside the laws of nature, and sever a chain of cause and effect, is intellectually on the level of the Naga who offers his human sacrifice to ward off pestilence.

But such incidents at least help one to realize how nonsensical is the vapid talk about the "religious sense," the assumption that every human being has an instinctive yearning for God. To the Christian born and reared in an environment saturated with the supersti-

tions of his peculiar faith, there seems nothing particularly grotesque about his ideas. Indeed, he may even persuade himself that had he not grown up to be a Christian reason would have led him to that belief on arriving at maturity. It is only when he is able to view some other variety of his superstition without the bias that this early training inculcates that he perceives the extraordinary character of religion. He can marvel at the savage beliefs of the Nagas or the Seventh-Day Adventists his own fantastic ideas would be equally repellent in his eyes were they not hallowed by association with home, and relatives, and friends. Here, as always, indeed, it is social forces and not some strange supernatural influence that keeps a man religious.

The Church Assembly has decided that it will not make the exclusion from the Prayer Book of the imprecatory psalms official. But ministers will be permitted to exclude them when they think fit. That means, we suppose, that when the minister is in a "cussing" humour, say, when he has had a row with the "missus," or his breakfast has disagreed with him, or the rate bill has just been delivered, the congregation will be asked to go in for a good all-round cussing. If otherwise the air will be redolent of goodwill and brotherhood.

In a letter to the Chinese Association for the Promotion of Education, Professor H. A. Giles, one of the most distinguished of British authorities on China, indulges in some plain writing, that will probably rouse the ire of our evangelical Christians. He writes:—

As I understand, "educational purposes" for China, a knowledge of the Chinese language, history, philosophy, etc., should take the first place, followed by instruction in the various departments of science and of modern languages. Teachers and the teachings of Christianity, under any form, should be rigidly excluded.

The letter is written in reference to the proposed use of the Boxer Indemnity Fund for railway development in China. We are heartily glad that the professor has had the courage to make this frank attack upon Christian missions. Too many of our public men, knowing the evil which they produce, are yet content to remain silent for fear of offending a certain section of their public. All the evidence goes to show that not only are these missions a costly item, which must be paid for by the Western nations, but also that their effects are either ridiculously out of proportion to their cost in the case of highly cultured people like the Chinese, or else productive of a vast amount of evil in the case of more primitive peoples. Indeed, it is probably not too much to say that Christian missionaries, unintentionally perhaps, play a considerable part in undermining and destroying the social systems suitable to aboriginal races in various parts of the world, by destroying the ideas upon which those systems are based. And quite plainly a primitive race, several thousands of years behind us in mental development, cannot assimilate our ethical ideas, especially when they are mixed in a bewildering fashion with mythological ideas of the ancient Western civilizations. The result is that the Christian missionaries help to destroy, without being able to replace the ideas which they bring into desuetude. And that inevitably means the collapse of the primitive civilization suitable to the race in question, without the possibility of another and higher form taking its place. The last stage is usually a native race dispossessed of its land, and reduced virtually to the status of slaves to a small white population. With it, too, goes as a necessary concomitant, moral and physical degradation tending to the swift extinction of the aborigines as a distinct race. Throughout the whole of Polynesia the aboriginal races are speedily dying out, as the *Times* recently pointed out. And our Christian missionaries bear no small part of the blame for this.

The Rev. H. N. Gibson is producing at St. Peter's, near Broadstairs, a pantomime entitled "Red Riding

Hood of Reading Street." Mr. Gibson is the priest-in-charge of St. Andrew's Mission Church, Reading Street, and his company will be the villagers, who make up the St. Andrew's Dramatic Society. The priest need not have gone to the old pagan mythology for his *motif*. Christian mythology would have provided him with a host of subjects for burlesque, as it did the guilds which produced the medieval miracle plays. The adventures of Noah, with Mrs. Noah as a termagant, and the Devil as a kind of knock-about comedian—popular characters in the miracle plays—would provide ample scope for the writers of pantomimes. But perhaps, after all, Christians take their religion rather more seriously nowadays than they did in the pious days of old, and would be offended by a representation of one of the patriarchs as a bothered, hen-pecked husband.

According to "Gadfly" in the *Daily Herald*, General Sir Arthur Holland, M.P., has nicely dovetailed Christianity with war. This military gentleman evidently has a theory that when war comes along and peoples are stirred up to fight, they are acting as their creator has arranged. This conclusion is above and beyond criticism, and Nietzsche was shooting at the heart of Christianity when he wrote that it was no longer our reason but our taste that decided against it.

That raw material, the Five Towns, so ably used by Mr. Arnold Bennett in his novels, can boast of a Sir William Goodwin, who is greatly concerned about the passing of the Puritan Sunday. He is afraid that it will lead up to a seven-day working week. We presume this knight never reads a paper on Monday. His argument shows a retreat to the second line of defence—that of thinking of the poor workers, now that the Bible bashers cannot have the matter all their own way. Any inhabitant of the Potteries would be justified in asking for two Continental Sundays per week, and the reply to Sir William Goodwin should be that after generations of affliction from the noise of the Salvation Army and competitive church and chapel bells—the heroes of the Potteries will take the risk of a Continental Sunday, with or without the permission of Sir William.

"The clergy are being treated as naughty children who do not know what is good for them, and ought to be spanked," declared Prebendary E. H. Hay (Cullompton, Devon), at a meeting of the Church Assembly at Westminster recently in a debate on the question of pensions for clergy. A scheme which was before the Assembly fixed the pension age at seventy, except in the case of those who retired before through permanent disability to perform their duties. Prebendary Hay said it was the deliberate verdict of the clergy that they would not have the scheme at any cost. The whole scheme seems to us to smack of infidelity. Perhaps some wicked Atheists have been "getting at" the Church Assembly. Surely the Christian thing to do is not to bother about superannuation at all. The Lord will provide for his ministers, if only they will have a little faith. This complete ignoring of him, and the placing of the priesthood on the same mundane basis as tax-collectors, or civil servants, must be exceedingly obnoxious to him. But it certainly indicates that the clergy have rather more commonsense than some trustful souls credit them with.

The Rev. J. C. Carlile says that the definition of religion he gives is "Pure religion and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit the widow and the fatherless in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." Now does Mr. Carlile mean that one is religious without believing in either a god, or a soul, or a future life? Of course he does not. So that this parade of a definition leaves out what is the essence of religion, even Mr. Carlile's own belief, and offers to the public something that is not religion at all. What a pity it is that the pulpit does not do something to develop the quality of intellectual sincerity.

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.

C. T. SALTAUBA (Hong Kong).—It is only in the embryological process that an organ is fully formed before use. The organ, as such, represents developments each of which has taken place under working conditions, so to speak. The Paleyan presentation of the argument from design would not now be used by anyone with a moderate knowledge of biology. The whole question is fully discussed in the 6th, 7th, and 8th chapters of Mr. Cohen's *Atheism or Theism*.

W. PRICE (Chicago).—Pleased to have your appreciation of the *Freethinker*. We have many readers in America, but there is room for ten times as many.

D. P. STICHELLS.—Thanks. The cuttings you send are fairly representative of the kind of stuff served up in newspapers. The policy appears to be that laid down by the late Lord Northcliffe—if you want a big circulation you must cater for the least intelligent portion of the population. The worst of it is that the kind of food given seems to handicap them in getting a little more intelligence. So we get superficiality and stupidity stereotyped and perpetuated. See "Sugar Plums."

E. BOTT.—Thanks. Will be quite useful.

F. CROCKETT.—If people only had a keener sense of humour there would be less religion in the world. Will use 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 "Midland Bank, Ltd., Clerkenwell Branch."

Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Friends who send us newspapers would enhance the favour by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office at the following rates (Home and Abroad):—
One year, 15s.; half year, 7s. 6d.; three months, 3s. 9d.

Sugar Plums.

To-day (March 8) Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester, at 6.30. There will no doubt be the usual good attendance. The Secular Hall is a very fine building, and its members are making a gallant attempt to pay off the debt of £2,500 which still stands against them. This cannot represent more than a fourth of the value of the building, and we hope they will succeed. The Society works hard and works well, and it deserves all the help that can be given it.

Mr. Cohen had two good meetings at Weston-super-Mare on Sunday last. The interest and appreciation of the audiences grow with each visit, and Freethought is now being accepted as a matter of course by the Westonians. One feature of the afternoon was a few minutes' opposition offered by one of the leading clergy-

men of the town. As he professed to think that the propaganda of Freethought in Weston had advanced the cause of true Christianity, Mr. Cohen suggested that he should lend his church for a series of lectures by himself and other Freethought lecturers. We are afraid that this method of advancing true Christianity is not likely to be adopted.

Many of our readers will be interested in the following letter from Dr. Drysdale, sent to Miss Ettie Rout, on the appearance of her book on *Sexual Health and Birth Control*. The elder Freethinkers will remember the furore over the publication of the *Elements* and the abuse showered on Bradlaugh because he merely recommended it as a book to be read. Such a bother would have been impossible but for the unhealthy and unclean state of mind developed by Christian influence and teaching, and which made the free discussion of sex a matter of great difficulty, and in some cases an impossibility:—

Very many thanks for the copy of your book, *Sexual Health and Birth Control*, which I have read with very great interest and pleasure. It deals with these two vitally important questions in a truly rational humanitarian spirit, and all those who are prepared to approach them in that spirit and are not blinded by conventional or sacerdotal prejudice will be convinced of the soundness of your views, and be thankful that the time has arrived when such a book can be published and be generally read. Seventy years have elapsed since the appearance of my uncle's *Elements of Social Science* heralded the advent of scientific religion, and your book shows that this religion, founded in human needs and in the desire to promote human happiness has already made great strides towards acceptance. Science has achieved miracles in every department of human activity where it has had free play, but it is only just entering into the greatest of all its conquests—the conquest of poverty, disease, and suffering through a religion or morality based on a recognition of the steady evolution or ascent of man from the lower animals instead of the debasing idea of his fall from grace and his redemption through blind faith. *Sexual Health and Birth Control* are two of the greatest needs of the human race, and all true humanitarians will be grateful to you for your book and for the great help you have given to these two great causes.

Yours sincerely,

C. V. DRYSDALE.

One of our readers, Mr. D. P. Stichells, writes:—

One seldom sees any plea for any other kind of education than that of the memorising kind, which consists in absorbing a number of facts and reproducing them at will.... Never do we get a hint that the young citizen's most valuable attitude to carry into the larger world is that of challenging before accepting. Our present schools are perfectly equipped for manufacturing the vast public that "large circulations" require, while the churches put the final polish on their public.

We quite agree with what our correspondent says, and will only add that another abuse of our schools is contained in the view that it is their business to turn out boys and girls ready equipped to take their place in workshop or office. It all serves to keep youth ready to follow without questioning in the footsteps of their elders.

Mrs. Joseph Conrad, widow of the novelist, writes in the *Daily Express* that she is a materialist and has brought up her children as materialists. She is quite convinced that some very simple cause can be found for all the queer things that happen in this world. We expect that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle will tell her that her "psychic" nature is undeveloped.

Mr. R. H. Rosetti visits Manchester to-day (March 8) and will lecture in the Engineers' Hall, Rusholme Road, at 3, on "Freethought and Christianity," and in the evening at 6.30 on "Before Darwin and after Darwin." Mr. Rosetti's lectures are always very acceptable to Manchester audiences and we hope to hear of really good attendances on this occasion.

Ethics.

A DISCOURSE FOR NURSES AND CHILDREN—Continued.

VI.

WE come now, nurse, to deal with the question of habitation. And curiously enough, while looking at the evening paper just now, my eye was arrested by the following bold headlines:—

Urgency of Housing Question.

Disastrous effects upon social well-being.

What! You didn't think ethics had anything to do with bricks and mortar! Well, these headlines are quotations from the King's speech in reply to a deputation, in which he expresses great concern at the serious social and moral results that have followed from the inability of his subjects to find adequate housing accommodation. So if the King says that bricks and mortar have an intimate bearing upon morals, it is not for a humble subject like me to dispute it. And when you come to think of nine persons of both sexes being obliged to pig it in a single room, where the decencies of life are almost impossible, is it any wonder that the result is a disastrous one upon the moral and social well-being of the community?

As the Apostle Paul said: "We have food, clothing, habitation, these three; and the greatest of these is—habitation." At least, judging from the present widespread agitation for the erection of houses to meet this fundamental need, if it is not the greatest, it is certainly the most pressing problem of the hour. Food we have in plenty—at a price; clothing we also have in abundance—at a price; but houses to meet the existing demand are unobtainable at any price. The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but hundreds of thousands of the sons of men, citizens of the richest and greatest Empire the world has ever seen, have not a dwelling-place where they can lay their heads. And this shortage of bricks and mortar is having a serious ethical effect upon our individual and social life. And as I have previously pointed out, the needs of man must be satisfied before we can attain to anything like a full moral stature.

But this material aspect of the question is only the foundation, so to speak, of a very much larger issue, which we represent by the word "home": an institution which plays an important rôle in our mental and moral relations to life generally, and which has an abiding and far-reaching influence which is not always recognized. It has been remarked that two of the sweetest words in the English language are "home" and "mother"; and just as love and affection have their roots in the sex instinct, so around this idea of home has arisen some of those beautiful human sentiments which help to sweeten and ennoble all life's relationships. Have you ever taken notice, nurse, of the number of lone wanderers there are abroad, who are always yearning to be carried back to old Tennessee, to Dixie land, or to old Missouri. You can scarcely go to an entertainment but they are there, singing at you that their home is down in Maryland, or Alabama, or Ohio. Sambo will be there, shuffling along, anxious to reach the parental roof before his shoes wear out, and certain of a mighty welcome from the old folks at home. Whenever you see a nigger, you may be sure that the sound of the banjo is ringing in his ears, and the sight of the old cabin door vividly before his mind's eye. Even in the old slavery days, an unattached nigger, who belonged to no estate, was looked down upon by his brethren in bondage as an outcast. A home, even under slavery, raised their self-esteem, besides giving them the blessings of a

settled habitation. The strains of "Home, Sweet Home" everywhere finds a ready and touching response to their appeal; while loftier sentiments like "The world is my country" fail to touch any similar vibrating chord. And perhaps the worst feature of the present house shortage will be found in the tendency to destroy those home sentiments which have always been a valuable asset in our national life. Such lines as:—

I remember, I remember, the house where I was born,
will cease to have any meaning to a child who is born
in furnished apartments, and has only hazy recollections
of flitting from one lodging to another.

This attachment to home and locality is also a very strong instinct among the animal creation. If you take a pigeon hundreds of miles from its haunts, and release it, it will fly straight back to its little ducket-home. Many a carrier's horse has safely found his way home in the dark, with the carrier himself lying dead drunk in the body of the waggou. And I read recently of a donkey that was sold by a family who no longer needed him; but next morning Neddie was standing at his late owner's door, having travelled some twenty miles during the night. Thrice was he taken back to his purchaser, but each time managed to break away and return home. A dog, too, will jealously guard his master's home with the same savage ferocity with which in the wild state he defended his pups in their lair. And to interfere with the home it calls its own, of either animal or fowl, is often a dangerous proceeding, which many persons have found to their cost. If an Englishman's home is his castle, the abode of an animal, which houses his mate and his young, is to him the dearest spot on earth.

The sentiment of patriotism I take to be an extension of those feelings associated with the idea of home to the particular soil or country where one's home is situated. Indeed, the word home itself is sometimes used in this larger sense, as in the following lines:—

Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land!
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burned
As home his footsteps he hath turned,
From wandering on a foreign strand!

Patriotism, like love of home, is a virtuous sentiment, and ethically justifiable from every point of view. The brotherhood of man, the solidarity of the human race, "the world is my country," may all represent lofty ideals, but patriotism and love of home are hard facts. And the holding of such ideals can never absolve us from the duties and obligations which the latter entail. It is just here where "conscientious objectors" make a serious blunder. When one of the principal advocates of the doctrine of non-resistance (which only exists because it has a religious sanction) was asked what he would do if he was awakened in the middle of the night and found a burglar pointing a revolver at his wife's head, replied that he did not know, and would have to wait until such a moment arrived in order to decide. But the purpose of ethics is to teach us how to act under all circumstances, otherwise we are left to the mercy of impulse, which, in nine cases out of ten, will lead us wrong. The international situation has clearly shown that we can only hold our homes, as we do our liberties, at the price of eternal vigilance. And I cannot but think that the reason why the wild men of Communism are floundering about in a tempestuous, unchartered sea, a danger to themselves and everyone they come into contact with, is because they have cut away the sheet-anchor of patriotism; to drift heavens knows where. Keir Hardie was so sure a European war could not take place. The Ger-

man workmen, his fellow pals in the labour world, who had been fed on solidarity and a' that, would simply refuse to make the ammunition necessary for the prosecution of the war! Instead of which—well, Keir Hardie is said to have died of a broken heart owing to bitter disillusionment. And if visionaries like Karl Marx think they can over-ride some of the strongest sentiments of human nature, and destroy those endearing ties that bind us to home and country, they must be as mad as Jesus Christ, who wished men to leave home, and father and mother, and sisters and brothers, for the sake of some theoretical kingdom of God, which, after two thousand years, even his followers can neither define nor explain. And with all due deference to Bishop Montgomery Brown, I would suggest that Karl Marx was the madder of the two.

It is not a little instructive that Christianity and Communism, which began with such high ideals, should both have developed a policy of persecution about as diabolical as the world has ever known. For between the persistent persecutions of Christianity for religious opinion, and the tyranny of Soviet Russia in matters of political opinion, there is only the difference between tweedle-dum and tweedle-dee.

The strictures of Emma Goldman and Ben Turner exhibit a Marxian tyranny almost unparalleled in the world's history. The doctrine of "my country, right or wrong," may not be ethically sound; but the man who has ceased to take a pride in the country of his birth, or a pleasure in his home, has simply kicked away some of the principal supports to a stable, social life. I like to think of the beautiful patriotism of those ancient, captive Jews, of whom the Psalmist wrote:—

By the rivers of Babylon there we sat down.

Yea, we wept when we remembered Zion.

We hanged our harps on the willows in the midst thereof;

For how should we sing the Lord's song in a strange land.

It is this strong human sentiment that more than anything else has welded the British Empire together; it is the link that binds the Colonies to the mother country.

A squaw, a wigwam, and a piecaninny—these are the things that lie nearest the human heart; and the man who is not prepared to defend them against harm is not a man, but a skunk and a coward.

There, nurse, that will do for the present.

JOSEPH BRUCE.

Mrs. Bridges Adams Replies to Her Critics.

I READ Mr. Cutner's letter in your issue of February 15, criticizing an article by myself in the *Freethinker* of the previous week, with much interest—with pleasure also, that at last my articles bearing on the present serious condition of the denominational schools had drawn forth some opposition.

Like Mr. Drage, I consider much, if not all, of the criticism wholly irrelevant, but whether this is due to political bias, I am unable to say.

That many people, who as children have passed through schools not under clerical control, show a lack of a sound elementary education, I readily acknowledge; and I am not surprised to learn that, when at the war, Mr. Cutner found many soldiers who wrote a shocking hand, and who seemed incapable of expressing themselves. One meets with such defects sometimes even among those who have, at considerable cost to their parents, passed through schools other than elementary. Among working-class friends, I have sometimes found such defects coupled with great natural ability, which had it been

given a chance at the age of thirteen or fourteen—a period when children can best be taught to express their thoughts, instead of being hampered by the poverty which compels children even while at school to take part in the struggle for existence, might have risen to no mean standard. Far be it from me to blame the clergy for either the poverty which so hampers the possible development of many of our working-class children, or for their varying capabilities.

But I would remind Mr. Cutner that official reports from Education authorities contained in Mr. Leslie's paper, state that denominational managers refuse to allow their upper standard children to attend the Council central schools "because the teaching in the latter is not denominational." Thus the children in those denominational schools are in the later precious years of school life compelled in many cases to "mark time," through being taught in classes composed of various standards. Therefore, says the report, "children in the voluntary schools rarely gain scholarships to secondary schools for this reason." This definite example alone shows that clerical domination is an obstacle to educational progress.

Mr. Cutner says we must be fair to the clergy. I agree, and reference to my article will show that in the last paragraph I urge that we should be fair to our opponents.

There are many clergymen who have shown much sympathy with my propaganda on matters educational. The late Rev. Stewart Headlam was one, and during the six years we were colleagues on the late London School Board, we were always entirely at one in fighting the reactionary tendencies of the high Tory clerical party on the School Board. Indeed, he was highly delighted with an article I wrote in the *Freethinker* last July (also in other papers) entitled "Concerning Education Crises." Further, I have known in the Labour movement clergymen, who are as good Socialists as I would like to think I am myself, and who certainly do not deserve to be included amongst those, whom a writer in the *Evening Standard* must have had in mind, when shortly after the advent of the Labour Government to office, he referred to the spiritual descendants of the Vicar of Bray. Indeed, I have, in the course of my public life, met clergymen who have been glad that I have said what, for economic reasons, they could not say.

Mr. Cutner refers to the great progress in education made during the past twenty-five years. True, but how small compared with the might have been had it not been for the Balfour clerical education legislation, which, in the words of Mr. Leslie, has broken down "after twenty years of difficulty, discord, and disaster to the cause of national education, and so long as it continues to be ignored, so long will the same result ensue." And this state of things is (again I quote Mr. Leslie) "wholly attributable to the failure of the religious bodies to carry out their part of the compromise of 1902, upon which they insisted, and the full advantage of which they never fail to take. And Mr. Cutner thinks I am hard on the clerical forces!

The children of to-day have advantages over the children of twenty-five years ago, but small in comparison with the possibilities of twenty-five years hence (even under a Capitalist system), if only at this education crisis, resulting from the breakdown of the Balfour legislation, we take time by the forelock, not waiting for "stunts," and do our best to secure that the crisis shall be settled, not by concordats between caucuses, but by legislation based on a solid body of well-informed public opinion. For this, knowledge is necessary—knowledge of the history of our educational system, and a firm grip of democratic principles in education politics. First

among those principles, I place that for which the Freethinker has always stood, that publicly supported education should be controlled by directly elected representatives of the people.

This principle is diametrically opposed to the highly intensified bureaucracy of the pretentious proposals presented (*but not discussed*) by the high ecclesiastical politicians to the recent Church National Assembly. Those proposals, which emanated from Bishop Temple, should be carefully studied, for they are to come up for ratification at a further meeting of the Assembly in July.

I am glad to find that Mr. Cutner remembers Bradlaugh and Foote, for that is sufficient guarantee that he will be amongst the foremost advocate of the principle enunciated above, the realization of which will take us one big stride nearer to the Secular Education, for which those pioneers fought.

Mr. Cutner puts to me as a final "poser" the question whether I am in favour of University education for all? Let me state that for many, many years, even twenty and more years ago, I have addressed innumerable public meetings organized by working-class effort and at working-class expense on the following demand:—

A national system of education under full public control, free and Secular, from the primary school to the University, with such maintenance scholarships as will bring the highest educational advantages within the reach of all.

Being a practical person, I coupled with this demand another, from the pre-war official education programme of the Trades Union Congress, viz., for the restoration and democratic administration of the wealthy educational endowments, which have been stolen from the poor—a demand which ought not to have been dropped until it was granted.

Mr. Cutner asks me, in italics, whether Mr. Wheatley's attitude on Birth Control is not due to the fact that he is a Roman Catholic.

I do not know Mr. Wheatley; I have never even heard him speak. Mr. H. G. Wells, in articles which were syndicated and appeared in sixty papers all told throughout the world, attributed the attitude of the Labour Party on this question, and also their silence regarding the terrible conditions of the denominational schools, to the strong influence of the Roman Catholics within the party.

I am no hero-worshipper, and I fail to find in my article anything to justify Mr. Cutner's charge that Mr. Wheatley was my hero. He may just as well have charged me with being a Liberal because I expressed the hope that, at this juncture, the new Liberalism would return to the fine traditions in matters educational of the old Liberalism of a generation or more ago. I may here state that, as an educationist, I rejoiced when the recent Liberal Conference in London gave indications that this is not a vain hope. The lead very fittingly coming from Liberals in Birmingham, which at the time of the passing of the Education Act of 1870, was the head centre of the National Education League, as members of which, Joseph Chamberlain, Collings, Kenrick Dawson, and Dixon fought so bravely for the School Board system, as opposed to clerical control of education.

I rejoiced, too, on seeing in the *Daily News* that at the coming Free Church Conference in Leeds, the position in education would be that of twenty years ago, for at that time, the Free Churches opposed the Balfour Education legislation.

While Mr. Cutner appreciates my "vigorous advocacy for Secular education," Mr. Drage asks me if I am in favour of it, and I must not ignore his question.

I hold that the education in publicly-supported schools should be Secular, and that the religious denominations should be free to impart, at their own cost, in their own way, *but out of school hours*, such religious teaching as parents may desire for their children. This statement of policy is taken from a circular issued by the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress for the L.C.C. election in 1904, at the time when, under the Balfour Education Act, the L.C.C. became the education authority for London. The circular can be read in full in the official Congress reports for 1904.

This solution of the "religious difficulty" I have advocated on numerous platforms. It was much to the fore on Labour platforms at the General Election of 1906, and Labour candidates did not then appear to suffer at the polls from its advocacy. It is a position held by a large number of Nonconformists, including Dr. John Massie, who moved, at the recent Liberal Conference, the amendment which showed that the rank-and-file of the Liberal Party see the necessity of returning to bed-rock principles in matters pertaining to publicly-supported education.

It is significant that the amendment was carried by an overwhelming majority, in face of the opposition of three leading "educational" Liberals—Mr. Fisher, who was Education Minister of the Coalition Government, Miss Violet Markham, and Sir Robert Blair, and I am informed by one who was present that there was no mistaking the feeling of the Conference on the question.

MARY BRIDGES ADAMS.

Correspondence.

A MATERIALIST CONCEPTION OF MIND.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Mr. Vincent Hands asks for "some definite reason for my pronouncement that mere displacement or motion of matter can never give rise to consciousness, either as feeling or sense-impression."

No "reason" can be given for it, save that accorded to verbal and mathematical axioms—viz. that it is a self-evident truth. It is not a statement that can be subsumed under a wider class and get its "truth" substantiated by *inclusion* after that process of ratiocination called syllogistic.

Physical energy is in a state of eternal oscillation between momentum and strain. And momentum is momentum, strain is strain, and nothing more, be the spin of the mass, or the dance of molecules, atoms or electrons, be executed at the speed of light. It will never give rise to hunger, thirst, toothache, or any other painful or agreeable *feeling*, leave alone sense-impressions, together with Nature's crowning miracle—a perceptibility capable of being consciously *aware* of them.

Nothing can better illustrate the general confusion between mental and physical ideas than the terms "light, heat, sound," as used by Mr. Hands in his note. Owing to the woeful shortcomings of language, the terms have a double meaning, which are seldom discriminated. In the text-books, the words "light and heat" denote radiant energy (ether waves) or molecular vibrations and nothing more.

Fundamentally, however, the word heat implies a *feeling*, the subjective state described as "hot." Similarly, the term "light" denotes vision—the opposite of darkness. And by "sound" we mean the sensation of noise or of music. In Mr. Hand's case it may not be confusion, but identification; and apparently it is that. If so, I can only regretfully say that Mr. Hands and myself have no "common denominator" to render possible a comparison of our opinions. A discussion would therefore be worse than useless: it would probably generate "heat"; but would emit no "light."

It seems that Mr. Hands makes living matter a thing *sui generis*—an embodiment of vitalism once more. If

I had any reason to believe that organic matter is not absolutely identical with the inorganic and that the animal body, as a living engine, was not subject to the law of the conservation of energy, I would at once abandon my postulate of an ultimate substance that is both physical and psychic, and to have some consistency, "vital force" or Bergson's "*elan vitale*" would become an article of my creed. But *never* could I regard mind as the mere registration of external "dies." The analogy of the tuning fork is wholly irrelevant. Both forks belong to the same realm—the physical; and there is no obscurity even in the process. But in passing from the vibrations of the fork to its sound or note, you cross the border into a realm where none of the laws of physical energy obtain. And the comparison has no justification whatsoever.

KERIDON.

THE GOULCEBY MARRIAGE TANGLE.

NEED FOR COMPULSORY CIVIL MARRIAGE.

SIR,—The case of the Goulceby Church marriages is by no means the only case of the kind in recent years; periodically there crops up the fact that certain churches have not been legally licensed for the solemnization of marriages, and though in this case the number of people who find themselves not strictly legally married may be small, the discomfort, and perhaps worse of such a situation as the parties find themselves in, points to the need for the establishment of compulsory civil marriage.

As marriage is a civil contract, giving rise to what lawyers call a *status*, the concern of the State must be to see that when making the contract the parties to it are sure of its legality. There is a growing feeling in the country that dignified civil marriage would ensure this, and it could be followed as in other countries by the religious ceremony if desired.

It is only the "hole and corner" place which is the usual Register Office which still makes civil marriage unpopular.

M. L. SEATON TIEDEMAN.

A JOURNALISTIC SCHISM IN THE LABOUR PARTY.

SIR,—Ordinarily the *Freethinker* is not interested in the domestic affairs of parties and societies. In the political world there is usually a sort of independence in the journalistic support of a party which has often worked for good. For a very long period there have been some able newspaper editors who have given a general support to their party leaders, but have never surrendered their right to criticism. Sometimes this criticism has been destructive; at times it has been fatal to the attacked leadership.

In the case of the two older political parties there is the complicated position of the proprietor. We need not at this stage surmise what will happen when the Rothermere group learn that potentially there is as much money to be made out of a Labour paper as there is of any other type of paper. One can be doing Lord Rothermere no injustice in supposing that he cannot have any other than a mercenary motive in publishing most of the rubbish which teems by the million from his various presses.

Somehow the Labour press up to now has apparently steered clear of the grosser forms of exploitation. To be perfectly candid there has never been in the English Labour Party sufficient rank-and-file support for its own newspapers to tempt a capitalist to exploit it. Other countries have overcome this inertia; nearly every industrial country except England has workmen who make a Labour press self-supporting.

We must leave to English Socialists the explanation of their own difficulties. We have seen with some misgiving that the *Daily Herald* and the *New Leader* have surrendered their independence and have become mere mouthpiece of the Labour caucus.

It does not surprise us that the erstwhile editor of the *Herald* has blossomed out as the editor of *Lansbury's Labour Weekly*. Lansbury is not the type of man to sit down calmly under the direction of a committee. He has his faults but he is a man of principle. His principles are most often antagonistic to our own but he is consistent; he lives up to his convictions. He is in effect exactly what committees and caucuses are not.

Democracy no doubt demands that its will shall prevail, that laws shall be passed according to majority votes. In a practical world this is a rough-and-ready method of government. On the whole, if a democracy is real and not a mere autocracy wearing the outer garments of democracy, sensible people will support its rule and do their best to limit its operations to the necessary and the useful. Interference with human liberty is as intolerable from a democracy as from an aristocracy.

Mr. Lansbury's teachings are extraordinarily vague, his philosophy almost non-existent, he aims at the nebulous—but he is not a mere vote-catcher. He does not trim his rather too pious sails to every passing wind. He is not the ideal candidate, always ready to modify his views if a strong deputation of voters desires it.

Good luck to Lansbury as a schismatic. May he one day learn to reject Jesus even if Jesus did say a few plebian phrases. Lansbury's creed is a poor stock-in-trade for a twentieth century statesman. It may annoy a few silly sentimentalists to say so, but it is literally true they "*didn't* know everything down in Judea." Lansbury still thinks they did.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

PAPINI'S CHRIST.

SIR,—There are several instances of muddle-headedness and at least one historic error in the second part of the recent article in your column entitled "Papini's Christ." Your contributor asserts that Christ predicted the end of the world as about to occur in the first century of our era. Papini himself, in his *Life of Christ*, points out that two prophecies of Jesus have been confused by the Gospel writers or by later copyists. Christ foretold the fall of Jerusalem in that generation; which, as everyone knows, took place. He also proclaimed that there should be "Wars and rumours of war"; that "nation shall rise against nation....But the end is not yet." This appears to be the serious utterance of a rational man and no one would be so absurd as to suppose that Jesus imagined all these things would occur within forty or fifty years. That these are two distinct statements is now recognised generally by theologians, and the fact of them occurring in one chapter closely following on one another is sufficient explanation of misunderstanding.

Your contributor also departs from rational thinking when he dogmatically declares that the rise of Christianity to power destroyed the peace and prosperity of the old Roman Empire. It was never a peaceful empire, and its treatment of the Christians is sufficient to indicate its brutality. It would be just as irrational to declare that when the throne of the empire became Christian the martial and brutal spirit of the pagan world corrupted the intense idealism of the early Christians and prevented a far greater governmental experiment than that of the Caesarean system, which, after all, has been tried again and again, from the time of Alexander to the empire of Jenghis Khan or our own British Empire, and which has never stabilised peace because of an apparently inherent inability to progress once a standard of prosperity was reached.

Finally, when your contributor quotes the saying of Christ: "My kingdom is not of this world," should he not, in the interests of Freethought, set beside it the complementary utterance in the prayer of Jesus: "Thy kingdom come.....on earth, as it is in heaven"?

HUBERT C. KNAPP-FISHER.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.

The debate on Vivisection last Sunday night raised a good discussion, both opponents putting their case fairly and moderately. Some members of the medical profession were present and strongly supported Mr. Palmer. To-night Mr. Rex Roberts and Mr. Eagar debate whether we should be guided by consideration of expediency rather than principle. This should open a brisk discussion and we hope for a good audience.—K.

The Way of the World.

WHEN KILLING HERETICS WAS A PLEASURE.

Persecution for its own sake no longer holds out to ordinary people the attractions that it once did, though this piece of optimism may the next moment be rudely shattered by the thought of how civilized the world was getting under the influence of the Renaissance, but how all this good was immediately undone by the barbarism that came in with the Reformation. It really appears that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries killing people who differed from one another on theology had ceased to be a duty, and become a pleasure..... The story of the Wars of Religion makes the reader turn with renewed gladness to the eighteenth century and the aphorism of the wise Lord Halifax: "Man is saved in this world by absence of faith." Or, if this cynicism be too brutal for tender consciences, we may fall back on the tortured wail of Cromwell: "In the bowels of Christ consider that ye may be mistaken."—*Nation*.

IMPORTANCE OF THE DEVIL.

The Devil is a personage of great import in the Christian system. Indeed, the system is founded upon the idea of such a being, the constant enemy of man, working night and day for his destruction. If it be asked *why* God did not kill the Devil long ago, or, at least, keep him in hell amongst his own infernal crew, and so prevent him from tormenting and tempting weak mortals; if this be asked, I ask Mr. Fordham in return, why God suffers poor mortals to have the gout or the toothache? Mr. Fordham may jeer at me as long as he pleases; but he will not prevail on me to give up the Devil, who, as I said before, is the very sheet anchor of the Christian system.—*Cobbett, "Political Register."*

It is often, as in this passage, difficult to tell how far Cobbett is serious in his defence of established doctrines. He has his tongue all the time half in his cheek; and the suspicion that he was not quite serious was what made his dissenting critics most angry.—*G. D. H. Cole, "Life of William Cobbett."*

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON FEBRUARY 26, 1925.

The President, Mr. C. Cohen, in the chair. Also present, Messrs. Moss, Neate, Rosetti, and Samuels, Mrs. Quinton, Miss Kough, and the Secretary.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

The monthly financial statement was presented and adopted.

New members were received for the Birmingham Branch and the Parent Society.

Various items of correspondence were dealt with, and Mr. Whitehead's engagement from May to September was ratified.

Attention was called to a prosecution at present taking place in regard to the conduct of a public meeting in Hyde Park, and although the Society had received no official information or request for assistance, it was decided that a verbatim report should be taken of the adjourned proceedings.

It was also reported that the Social gathering would be held on March 16, at the Bijou Theatre, Bedford Street, Strand. Further particulars to be announced in the *Freethinker*. The meeting then adjourned.

E. M. VANCE,

General Secretary.

N.B.—Branches and provincial friends desiring a visit from Mr. Whitehead from June to September are requested to communicate with me at once.

It is difficult to free fools from the chains they revere.—*Voltaire*.

Obituary.

It is with great regret that we report the death of Mr. Walter Willis, of Liverpool. Mr. Willis was converted to Secularism in 1922 by Mr. Chapman Cohen. He died of pneumonia (at the age of forty-one) after a very short illness, leaving a wife and three children, to whom we extend our sincere sympathy. At his own request the funeral was a Secular one, the ceremony being performed by the undersigned at Liverpool Cemetery on February 27, 1925.—G. WHITEHEAD.

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 postcard.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

ETHICS BASED ON THE LAWS OF NATURE.—(Emerson Club, 14 Great George Street, Westminster): 3.30, Lecture in French by M. Althouse on "Imagination." All invited.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (160 Great Portland Street, W.): 8, Rev. F. J. P. Goldsack, "Origin of Christianity" (Lantern Lecture). The Discussion Circle meets every Thursday at 8 at "The Castle," Shouldham Street, Edgware Road, W.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W.): 7, Debate—"That we should be guided by Considerations of Expediency rather than of Principle." Affirmative, Mr. Rex Roberts; Negative, Mr. A. Eagar.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (New Morris Hall, 79 Bedford Road, Clapham Road): 7, Social—Instrumental and Vocal Music, Recitals, etc.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7, Mr. G. F. Holland, "The Present State of the Drama."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Lit., "Falling in Love."

OUTDOOR.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Hyde Park): Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays. Speakers: Messrs. Baker, Constable, Hanson, Hart, and Keeling.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Brassworkers' Hall, 70 Lionel Street): 7, Mr. F. P. Corrigan, "The Sermon on the Mount and Life in the Valley."

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S. (No. 2 Room, City Hall, "A" Door, Albion Street): 6.30, Mr. Ezra Hale, "Eclipses." Questions and Discussion. (Silver Collection.) On Saturday, March 21, at 7, in the "D" and "F" Café, High Street, a Social Evening. There will be a Whist Drive with Prizes. Tickets, 2s. 6d.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. Chapman Cohen, "The Moral Failure of Christianity."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Engineers' Hall, 120 Rusholme Road, All Saints', Manchester): Mr. R. H. Rosetti; 3, *Freethought v. Christianity—Which is Winning?* 6.30, "Before Darwin and after Darwin."

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.

UNWANTED CHILDREN

In a Civilized Community there should be no UNWANTED Children.

For List of Birth-Control Requisites send 1½d. stamp to J. R. HOLMES, East Hanney, Wantage, Berkshire.

(Established nearly Forty Years)

Leicester Secular Society

"PANSY" BAZAAR

ON

Saturday, Sunday, and Monday,
March 14, 15, and 16, 1925

AT THE

SECULAR HALL, HUMBERSTONE GATE
LEICESTER

The Members and Friends of the Leicester Secular Society have organized this Bazaar to try to pay off the debt of £2,500 which they have on their Hall.

When this is paid, the Hall will belong to the Rationalist, or Secular, or Freethought (whichever label you prefer) Movement. It is a Hall worthy of Freethinkers, and we confidently appeal for assistance in our effort.

Goods for the Bazaar, or subscriptions to the Bazaar Funds, will be gratefully received by the Secretary, Mr. Herbert E. Anderson, or the President, Mr. Sydney A. Gimson.

PIONEER PRESS PUBLICATIONS

A GRAMMAR OF FREETHOUGHT.

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

(Issued by the Secular Society, Limited.)

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

Cloth Bound, with tasteful Cover Design. Price 5s., postage 3½d.

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.

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.

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.)

Price 3s. 6d., postage 4½d.

The Egyptian Origin of Christianity.

THE HISTORICAL JESUS AND MYTHICAL CHRIST.

By GERALD MASSEY.

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

Price 6d., postage 1d.

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.

COMMUNISM AND CHRISTIANISM.

By BISHOP W. MONTGOMERY BROWN, D.D.

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

Price 1s., post free.

Special terms for quantities.

JUST PUBLISHED

A BOOK FOR ALL

SEXUAL HEALTH AND BIRTH CONTROL

BY

ETTIE A. ROUT

Author of "Safe Marriage," "Sex and Exercise" (A Study of the Physiological Value of Native Dances), "Two Years in Paris," etc.

With Foreword by Sir Bryan Donkin, M.D.

Price ONE SHILLING. By post 1s. 1d.

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

National Secular Society

A

SOCIAL GATHERING

WILL BE HELD AT THE

BIJOU THEATRE

3, Bedford Street, Strand

(Adjoining "The Bodega")

ON

MONDAY, MARCH 16, 1925

From 7.30 to 10.30

Short Address by

The President, Mr. **CHAPMAN COHEN**

DANCING MUSIC

M.C. - - - Mr. **C. E. RATCLIFFE**

Tickets (including Light Refreshments)
TWO SHILLINGS

E. M. VANCE, General Secretary,
62, FARRINGDON STREET, E.C.4.



DIE-HARD DOGMAS

There are many of them—concerned with the *little* things as well as the big things of life—and some die harder than others. You, as a Freethinker, have discarded some. There are others which you have perhaps never stopped to consider, but we invite you to do so now.

Take, for instance, the dogma of the "impossibility" of measuring yourself for a suit. A dogma that with many dies very hard indeed! Yet you have only to try once, by the method we shall show you, to realize that here is another belief as irrational as those religious dogmas you have already discarded. You may be as sceptical as you like, but for your own satisfaction it will be worth your while to investigate our claims. Among our many well-satisfied customers we number several who were perhaps more sceptical at first than you are now. Send a postcard and ask for any of the following:—

Gents.' A to H Book, suits from 56/-; Gents.' I to N Book, suits from 99/-; Gents.' Superb Overcoat Book, prices from 48/6; or Ladies' New Spring Book and latest revised Price List.

All Pattern Sets accompanied by Price List, Measurement Form, Measuring Tape, Style Book, and stamped addresses for their return.

Samples cannot be sent abroad except upon promise to faithfully return same.

MACCONNELL & MABE
(DAVID MACCONNELL, PROPRIETOR)
TAILORS AND COSTUMIERS
NEW ST BAKEWELL
DERBYSHIRE