

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. 18

SUNDAY, MAY 3, 1925

PRICE THREEPENCE

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page
<i>Science and Religion.—The Editor</i> - - - - -	273
<i>An Anglo-Catholic on the Resurrection of Jesus.—J. T. Lloyd</i> - - - - -	274
<i>Swinburne the Sempiternal.—Mimmermus</i> - - - - -	276
<i>Atheism: Its Scope and Its Method.—E. Egerton Stafford</i> - - - - -	277
<i>The Window Pane.—G. E. Fussell</i> - - - - -	278
<i>Ethics.—Joseph Bryce</i> - - - - -	282
<i>The Gospel of Despair.—Arthur B. Moss</i> - - - - -	283
<i>The Way of the World</i> - - - - -	285
<i>Books and Life.—William Repton</i> - - - - -	285
<i>Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.</i>	

Views and Opinions.

Science and Religion.

I confess to a not very clear knowledge of the Victoria Institute, but my impression of it is that it is one of those peculiarly Christian institutions dating from the late nineteenth century, in which a number of men who had some kind of a standing in the scientific world, but who had not outgrown the theology of their childhood, met to propound fearful and wonderful plans for reconciling religion and science. I am quite certain that their influence on the scientific world was just nothing at all, but their lectures must have been very comforting to those who knew nothing about science, and even very little of the real nature of religion. What certain kinds of believers wish to hear is not the truth about anything at all. What they desire is to get the good old things preached in as near as possible the good old language, and to be allowed the comfortable feeling that nothing can ever disturb their belief. And in this country, at least, there are always a number of men, with a reputation for knowing a certain number of things about the structure and workings of the world, who will repeat the religious jargon with pretty much the gusto of an evangelical preacher. Of course, in any genuine sense of the word these men are not scientists at all. Anyone of very moderate ability can "swat" up the particular facts that form the subject-matter of biology, or astronomy, and then make others gape at the number or size of the stars, or the curious structures that fly, or crawl, or walk around us. But that is not science, it is knowledge that does very little for anyone, for one may be as great a fool with it as without it; and it is far removed from the ability to *think* in a genuinely scientific manner. It is this last thing that is of first-rate importance, and it is one of the rarest of endowments. Almost anyone could have been as good a naturalist as Darwin, so far as a knowledge of varieties and species was concerned. But there were very few men in the country in 1859, or even to-day, who could bring the same scientific capacity to bear upon what was before them.

* * *

Evolution and the Bible.

Now I see from a brief report in the *Times* that a certain Mr. George McCready Price, Professor of

Geology, in Union College, Nebraska, U.S.A.—where W. J. Bryan comes from—read a paper at the Victoria Institute on "Can the Theory of Evolution be harmonized with the Teachings of the Bible?" The Professor—one would assume he is a follower of Mr. Bryan—does not appear from the report to believe that this can be done. But that does not trouble him in the least. As a good Christian he stands by the Bible. If evolution be true, he is prepared, somehow or the other, to make the Bible agree with it. But it would be better still if people could be induced to believe that evolution is not true, since, in that case, there is nothing to stand in the way of accepting the Bible and all for which it stands. At present the Professor is quite confident that "in 1925 sufficient scientific facts are available to settle this long debated problem in a way entirely satisfactory to the believer in Genesis." How this reconciliation is to be effected appears to be on the lines of:—

The young lady of Riga
Who went for a ride on a tiger.
They returned from that ride
With the lady inside,
And a smile on the face of the tiger.

In this case the young lady is represented by the benighted evolutionist. For it is time "for those who thought for themselves to dismiss once and for all the idea that man might possibly have arisen by a long drawn out process of development from preceding animal ancestors." The Professor has evidently been doing some thinking for himself—with the Bible as his guide, and the result is before us. Genesis is literally correct, the story of the making of man is literally correct, while the celebrated experiment in bone-turning which produced woman is unquestionable, and the rest of the scientific world which has taken it as the most certain of scientific facts that man had animal ancestors, must be dismissed as so many idle dreamers. This is quite the kind of thing the Christian Evidence Society used to serve up some thirty years ago, but I thought they had outgrown it. Evidently it still thrives at the Victoria Institute, even though it has to go to some obscure "college" in Nebraska to enlighten the darkness of the scientific world.

* * *

A Genuine Believer.

But in spite of all that may be said I cannot divest myself of a certain respect for Professor McCready. Whatever opinion we may form of either his learning or his ability there is no questioning the genuineness of his Christianity. It is far more genuine than is the Christianity of a man like Canon Barnes, who, finding certain scientific teachings can no longer be denied, straightway sets himself to work to see how he can read them into the Christian religion. Professor McCready pursues a more orthodox plan. First of all he finds out what the Bible says, and having found that out, he denies the truth of anything that opposes it. That is the historic Christian plan. It was in virtue of this principle that Galileo was imprisoned and Bruno burned. It was because earlier genera-

tions of Christians did as Professor McCready now does that one scientific generalization after another was denounced and their advocates punished. And it was not until the more acute minds in the Church began to recognize the costliness of this policy, began to see that it was lining up the more intelligent portion of the people against the Church, that the policy of proclaiming the harmony of Christianity with anything that science might prove true was adopted. Nor is it the least curious aspect of a curious situation that to-day we can give to ignorance and small mental capacity allied with religion the respect we cannot give to greater knowledge and greater ability when it stands forth as a champion of Christianity. We have reached a stage when to say that a man believes—genuinely believes in genuine Christianity—is to impeach either his intelligence or his sincerity.

Why Bother?

Whose interest is it to reconcile science and religion? So far as the layman is concerned all that he is concerned with is to know the truth about the world in which he is living, and whichever, or whoever, will give him this suffices. The reconciliation of science and religion is to the interest of the professional only. It is the parson who is interested in seeing that this is done, and the layman only professes an interest so far as he permits himself to become a catspaw of the priest. Nor is there any doubt as to the direction from which whatever truth we have about the world has come. Whatever measure of truth we have about man or the universe has come to us from the labours of scientific men. From religion has come nothing but misfortune and delusion. The physics, the geology, the astronomy, the biology, which the Christian Church gave us, and in defence of which they lied and persecuted, has been shown to be wrong at every possible point. And would anyone but priests, fools, or dupes reason that though we have to look to science to tell whatever can be known of the nature of the forces around us, it is nevertheless necessary to spend millions every year on the maintenance of Churches that at best can only echo what science has told us independently of them, and at worst act as an obstruction to the spread of that teaching among the people? Will some defender of religion be good enough to give us a plain answer to these two plain questions—What truth is there concerning the universe that has been given us by religion independently of science? What useful purpose is served by keeping an army of 85,000 men and spending millions of money annually, in order to get in a distorted and watered down form what has already been told us by scientific teachers?

God and Evolution.

I agree with Professor McCready that you cannot harmonize Christianity and Evolution. More, you cannot logically harmonize the existence of a God with an evolutionary process. I am not bothering about the kind of God who is assumed to be a part of the evolutionary process for the simple reason that that is not God at all, it is a mere subterfuge to retain the old name, and get the benefit of the association therewith. To a Christian, God is also a creator, not a mere manipulator of intractable materials. To a Christian, God made the material, he designed the "plan," and is, if we grant him ordinary intelligence, responsible for all that takes place. But what are we to make of a deity who goes stumbling round amid his own materials trying to make the best of a bad job, and then excusing himself on the ground that it is the best he can do under the conditions? There is no need for the working out of a plan if God be a fact. "Let there be—", is

the divine fiat, and it should be as he desired it. But a process implies a result, and what need is there of a process if the result can be attained at once? At present craftsmen are hard at work trying to design an airship that can be made absolutely secure. And although they have not achieved that, they have made considerable progress in that direction. But what should we think of a man who with the full ability to produce the perfect article at once went through all the intermediate stages, only to get at the end what he might as easily have had at the beginning? Such stupidity is almost inconceivable. Yet it is exactly the kind of plan Christian theists attribute to their deity. Evolution shows us a continuous battle of forces out of which some kind of equilibrium is attained. But no sooner is this equilibrium reached than it undergoes a disturbance, and a new equilibrium is set up. And so far as science can tell us this setting up and pulling down is eternal—unless the whole universe reaches a stage of absolute deadness and quiescence, in which case there is an end to man and his gods. God in a non-evolutionary universe is absurd. God in an evolutionary one is a frightful mixture of stupidity and horror. A God who first of all creates and then stumbles from blunder to blunder, trying to correct at one stage the mistakes he has made at a preceding one, is a sample of reconciliation worthy of a creed that has always encouraged knaves to fatten upon the folly of fools.

CLAPMAN COHEN.

An Anglo-Catholic on the Resurrection of Jesus.

In the *Church Times* of April 17 there appeared a sermon, entitled "Lord of the World," preached on Easter Day in the Church of SS. Mary and John, Oxford, by the Rev. Francis Underhill, Vicar, who is an enthusiastic Anglo-Catholic. Mr. Underhill is evidently an able man. In the first place he quotes the following words from Paul's Epistle to the Romans: "Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him." Then he has the courage to put side by side with that glowing utterance of a great Apostle exquisitely beautiful lines written by a nineteenth century poet, Matthew Arnold, which also refers to Jesus Christ:—

While we believed, on earth he went,
And open stood his grave.
Men called from chamber, church, and tent;
And Christ was by to save.
Now he is dead! Far hence he lies
In the lorn Syrian town;
And on his grave, with shining eyes,
The Syrian stars look down.

The preacher pertinently asks, "Which is true? The triumph song in which St. Paul expresses the ultimate belief of his much enduring wave-tossed life, or the exquisite wail of Matthew Arnold?" The question is pertinent enough, to be sure; but it is more than probable that it does an injustice to Arnold's famous lines by calling them a "wail." "Wail," the dictionaries tell us, means "loud weeping," "violent lamentation." Now, we are in a position to prove conclusively that whilst the lines may be looked upon as a cry of disillusionment, they cannot justly be called a cry of despair. It should be borne in mind that in 1873 Matthew Arnold published a book entitled *Literature and Dogma*, which caused to burst over him a terrific and long-continued storm of persecution. Chapter V. in that book is a vehement attack upon the orthodox claim that the truth of Christianity is demonstrated by miracles. In a sense peculiar to himself Arnold was a Christian, but his Christianity was a purely natural religion, founded on the alleged

teaching of Jesus. To him nothing was more patent than "the growing discredit befalling miracles and the supernatural," and nothing more foolish and futile than to deny or ignore the obvious fact that "by the sanction of miracles Christianity can no longer stand." "Our point is," he says, "that the objections to miracles do, and more and more will, without insistence, without attack, without controversy, make their own force felt; and that the sanction of Christianity, if Christianity is not to be lost along with its miracles, must be found elsewhere." Now, touching the Gospel story of the Resurrection he says:—

The more the miraculousness of the story deepens, as after the death of Jesus, the more does the texture of the incidents become loose and floating, the more the very air and aspect of things seem to tell us we are in wonderland. Jesus after his resurrection not known to Mary Magdalene, taken by her for the gardener; appearing in another form, and not known by the two disciples going with him to Emmaus and at supper with him there; not known by his most intimate apostles on the borders of the Sea of Galilee; and presently, out of these vague beginnings, the recognitions getting asserted, then the ocular demonstrations, the final commissions, the ascension; one hardly knows which of the two to call the most evident here, the perfect simplicity and good faith of the narrators or the plainness with which they themselves really say to us: *Behold a legend growing under your eyes (Literature and Dogma, p. 188).*

To Matthew Arnold, therefore, the resurrection of Jesus was not a fact, but a legend, from which it inevitably follows that the words, "Now he is dead" are not a wail, however exquisite, but a lyrical statement of what the poet verily believed to be a solid fact. Let us now return to Mr. Underhill's question, Which is true, naturalism or supernaturalism? Although the reverend gentleman pronounces this to be "the greatest of all questions for us, because on our answer to it depends not merely the view we take, fundamentally, of our own life here and hereafter, but also our view of the destinies of the world in which we live," yet his treatment of the subject tends, on the whole, to show that it does not matter very much which of the two views we take. The following extract, for example, is most remarkable:—

I am afraid we must say, when we look at the main stream of human life to-day as it flows in politics, in commerce, in the chief secular activities of mankind, that the view of Matthew Arnold in regard to the resurrection of our Lord is at least tacitly accepted. I do not think it is unjust or unduly pessimistic to say that if the belief of St. Paul about the continued life of our Lord, with its necessary implications, were held by the nations of the world at this time, the present relations between France and Germany, Britain and Russia, America and Europe, would undergo a fundamental change. Nor do I think it is untrue to say that if business were conducted on the understanding that he who was dead is alive for ever more and has the keys of Hell and Death, the relations between firm and firm, man and man in commerce, would be exceedingly different from what they too generally are now. These are only instances.

Yes, the instances given are but two, but they suffice to prove our contention that there is no fundamental and necessary connection between a man's religious beliefs and experience and his moral and social conduct in the world. It is well known that, on the Stock Exchange, for example, professing Christians are not as a rule regarded as paragons of honesty and virtue. People of the world often say of them that in business transactions they are not always to be trusted, and that even in friendship they are sometimes guilty of betrayal. They are citizens of two worlds at the same time, but between the two citizen-

ships there is seldom any communication whatever. Mr. Underhill informs us that "a new Christian consciousness is coming to birth in our day, in unconquerable revolt against the Pagan pessimism of the world." We were not aware that such a strange birth was about to occur, and even now we see no sign whatever of its near approach. As a matter of fact, we deny that the world is in the clutches of pessimism, and most certainly Paganism was never a form of pessimism. The Christian Church has always been stupendously unjust both in its view and treatment of Paganism, and now that the true facts about the moral and social conditions of life in the Roman Empire when Christianity came to power there, have been discovered by modern scholarship the clergy of all denominations unblushingly continue to repeat the old falsehoods; but they deliberately shut their eyes to the shameful fact that soon after its advent to the imperial throne Christianity began systematically to demolish the Pagan temples and steal the treasures found therein.

Mr. Underhill, as we have seen, makes wonderful and logically disastrous admissions, but he also indulges in more marvellous dogmatic assertions. Here is one: "That catch in your breath when you heard the first Alleluia of Easter comes from the heart of Christianity." Read another: "The indescribable romance and splendour of the Mass are founded on the certainty that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more." No doubt such utterances, in the estimation of some who heard them, were brilliant gems. In reality they are but samples of the sheer dogmatism which holds sway in the pulpit, all of them being utterly incapable of practical verification. Some of these wild assertions, however, are palpably untrue. Take this one: "Under all the grievous controversies which divide us, we have the Resurrection of Christ in common." Does the reverend gentleman seriously claim that all Anglican clergymen believe in number iv. of the Articles of Religion, which is as follows:—

Christ did truly rise again from death, and took again his body, with flesh, bones, and all things appertaining to the perfection of Man's nature, wherewith he ascended into Heaven, and there sitteth, until he return to judge all Men at the last day?

Is it not a fact that comparatively few Modernists can honestly repeat that article as an expression of their own belief? The truth is that several dignitaries of the Anglican Church have contributed articles on the Resurrection to the *Hibbert Journal*, in which they frankly confessed their inability to accept the doctrine of the physical rising of Jesus from the dead. Mr. Underhill does not tell us that even he believes in the physical resurrection. The Modernists still retain the term and openly use it, though not a few of them have denuded it of all real meaning. Some call it a spiritual resurrection, but who can tell us what that means?

From our study of the history of the Church, from the examination of all documents dealing with the subject known to us, and from the existence of an endless conflict of opinions entertained by Christian divines, we are forced to the conclusion that of the actuality or historicity of the resurrection of Jesus, not a single trace of any evidence is perceptible anywhere. As for us Freethinkers, if Jesus ever lived, we are in complete agreement with Matthew Arnold as he sweetly sings, and surely no excuse is needed for repeating his unforgettable words:—

Now he is dead! Far hence he lies
In the lorn Syrian town;
And on his grave, with shining eyes,
The Syrian stars look down.

J. T. LLOYD.

Swinburne the Sempiternal.

Master who crowned our immelodious days
With flowers of perfect speech. —Watson.

Swinburne was the greatest of our lyrical poets.—
George Meredith.

FOR fifty years Algernon Swinburne voiced Free-thought in his poems, and his constancy is proved from the publication of *Atalanta in Calydon* in the "sixties" of the last century to the august utterances of his later years, written when the twentieth century was young. No one can doubt Swinburne's passionate sincerity, which is expressed in golden language in his *Mater Triumphalis*, one of the noblest and most profound poems in the English language.

From the first Swinburne's vogue was extraordinary. Some idea of the poet's influence may be gathered from the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, where young men shouted the poems, sang them, flung them about to the skies and winds. Not only University men were affected by the melodies of the great singer, for George Foote has told us how the poet's beautiful lyrics roused him like a trumpet-blast. One memorable day the future Freethought leader, then a young man, recited Swinburne's poetry on the hills outside Edinburgh, while his life-long friend, Joseph Wheeler, lay on the grass at his feet and applauded. Nor is this to be wondered at, for Swinburne has surpassed all other poets in the ardour of his devotion to Liberty and Freethought.

From the first Swinburne's genius was unmistakable. In *Atalanta* the strain of clear, soaring song proclaimed the advent of a real poet. *Poems and Ballads* was a masterpiece among masterpieces. There are pieces in the volume which, for distinction of melody, even their author, never afterwards surpassed. Later came *Songs Before Sunrise*, which roused men like the sound of martial music. Indeed, no poet since Shelley has sung more loftily, or with more fiery passion, or with finer thought, than Swinburne. His most heretical poems are in this outspoken book. Swinburne never apologised for his Atheism. He was frank, even triumphant, as in this telling passage:—

Because man's soul is man's god still,
What wind soever waft his will
Save his own soul's light overhead,
None leads him, and none ever led.

In another passage he treats the priests with fearful derision. He represents them calling on their deity to prove his might because the people blaspheme, and he concludes with the biting lines:—

Thou art smitten, thou God; thou art smitten; thy death
is upon thee, O Lord;
And the love-song of Earth as thou diest resounds through
the wind of her wings—
Glory to man in the highest, for man is the master of things.

In his lines apostrophising Christ on the Cross, he sings with Voltairean cynicism:—

Thy blood the priests make poison of,
And in gold shekels coin thy love.

Swinburne regarded prayer as folly, and he vents his scorn in unforgettable music:—

Behold there is no grief like this;
The barren blossom of thy prayer.
Thou shalt find out how sweet it is
O fools and blind, what seek ye there,
High up in the air.

Ye must have gods, the friends of men,
Merciful gods, compassionate,
And these shall answer ye again,
Will ye beat always at the gate,
Ye fools of fate.

In *Song In Time of Order*, he chants with passionate intensity:—

We have done with the kisses that sting,
The thief's mouth red from the feast,
The blood on the hands of the king,
And the lie at the lips of the priest.

Note the scorn in the *Hymn to Proserpine*:—

O ghastly glories of saints, dead limbs of gibbeted gods!
Though all men abase them before you in spirit, and all
knees bend;
I kneel not, neither adore you, but standing, look to the end.

As a singer, Swinburne deserves the fine tribute of George Meredith that he was the greatest of our lyrical poets. Swinburne was a finer poet than either Byron or Shelley, simply because he had a far wider command of instruments. He could charm with a lyric, such as "The Ballad of Dreamland"; and he could thrill and inspire with the great war-song in "Erectheus." He could sing of the beauty of a baby's feet, and also chant an anthem of the terrors of the trumpets of the night. Above all English poets he is the singer of the sea. In addition, he was a rare critic, and an accomplished scholar. Observe his masterly essays on Shakespeare and the great Elizabethans, and his beautiful renderings of Baudelaire, Hugo, and Villon. Swinburne could write a lovely Northern song, with the perfume of the leather clinging to it, and he could arraign a tyrant without loss of the omnipresent beauty of his incomparable style. Indeed, he blew all things to melody through the golden trumpet of his genius.

One quality of Swinburne's writing leaps to the eye. It is his enthusiasm for right causes. The warmth of his praise is a deathless delight. Such tributes as he has paid to the great apostles and champions of Freedom have a generosity and enthusiasm unequalled even in poetry. How he has sung the praises of Cromwell and Milton, of Landor and Shelley, of Whitman and Hugo, is known well. More enduring than the marble of the Genoese monument are the lovely lyrics of which Mazzini and Italian Liberty were the inspiration. The love of Freedom has been for centuries a common possession of our greatest poets. Swinburne has surpassed them all in the ardour of his devotion, and in the rapture of his praise:—

The very thought in us how much we love thee
Makes the throat sob with love, and blinds the eyes.

It comes to this in the end. The greatest poet of the last generation was an avowed Freethinker and an unabashed Republican. It is not strange, for poets have long since ceased to gain inspiration from Christianity. Thomas Hardy and Bernard Shaw, the most distinguished of living writers, are both Freethinkers. Christianity no longer attracts men of genius, and therein lies its doom. The genius of modern times is enkindled at the altar of Humanity, which was standing before any other was built, and will endure when every other has crumbled into dust and nothingness.

MIMNERMUS.

For ages man has bred animals for physical points. The Church for century on century has bred mental points, viz., for a mental conformity to her beliefs and teachings. When the slightest variation showed itself to the forced belief, that variation was weeded out by the rack or the stake. This process has evolved a mental condition in the race which, by intellectual impressions transmitted from age to age, renders most men unable to think otherwise than with the mass.—J. W. Wood.

He who endeavours to control the mind by force is a tyrant, and he who submits is a slave.—Ingersoll.

Atheism: Its Scope and Its Method.

ATHEISM stands for an attitude of mind which is directly opposed to that of the Theist. The Atheist is content to know no more than humanity is able to derive from acquaintance with universal phenomena by the strict application of reason to all the facts which appear for examination.

The attitude of the Atheist to the problem of the universe is the sceptical or doubting attitude, which leaves the mind open for the results of new investigations, and for repeated revisions of our knowledge. As David Hume said, in his *Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*: "In general there is a degree of doubt and caution and modesty which, in all kinds of scrutiny and decision, ought for ever to accompany a just reason." (Chapter on Academical or Sceptical Philosophy.)

But the doubt and caution of the Atheist do not constitute an end in themselves; they are but means to the formation of a philosophy which shall be the Atheist's interpretation of universal phenomena.

Not in the sense of a complete explanation of the universe; but in the sense of a correlation and unification of the numerous impressions which the mind of the Atheist has experienced in his contact with the various aspects of the universe as they have presented themselves during his endeavour to acquire knowledge.

Atheism is not claimed to be a complete pocket edition of *The Full and Final Explanation: or All There is to Know About Everything*, as many Christians fondly imagine; but, without a philosophy the Atheist would be a failure in the world of culture. To a great extent he would be lacking in mental development, and his Atheism would be a mere statement of a mental attitude. Hence, in order that he might attain the highest degree of mental development, of which he is capable, it is necessary for every Atheist to work out a philosophy of his own, to the best of his ability; taking care to check his thoughts by the thoughts of others, while retaining a sceptical attitude toward each problem until he has been able to subject it to a careful examination.

The habit of each individual thinking out his own view of life will result in many variations of belief among Atheists, but on the main principles of philosophy there will be general agreement; and, in the long run, as knowledge becomes more and more scientific, agreement as to the interpretation of details will doubtless become much more widespread.

No thinker who has rejected so-called supernatural authority need be afraid of the fact that variations of belief occur among those who profess to be agreed as to the fundamentals of a natural and rational philosophy, but claim the right to work out their own details of exposition and mode of expression. Variations are due to the different stages of mental evolution arrived at by different individuals as the result of difference in brain capacity, and environments which are not in every respect alike. Widespread variations in matters of thought need only be feared by those who feel the necessity for an external authority on matters of opinion.

The application of reason to all problems of life is essential to the Atheistic method. Nothing must be permitted to usurp the authority of reason, or that particular functioning of the brain which we call the reasoning process. A process by which we are able to acquire the soundest knowledge of which the human mind is capable. As John Scotus Erigena, a ninth century heretic, has said: "Authority is derived from reason, not reason from authority. All

authority not based on reason is worthless, but reason supported by its own intrinsic force needs no confirmation from authority." (From *Europe in the Middle Ages*. Cabinet Cyclo. Vol. 2, p. 266.)

In order to make the best of reason, it is very important that careful attention should be paid to all the facts, and often to many theories, which are available in connection with the subject with which we have to deal.

Conclusions must not be drawn hastily if a reliable and workable philosophy is to be arrived at. It must be kept in mind that most philosophical opinions do not work in actual life; they are simply mental ornaments to those who profess them. Again, it must be remembered that much of the philosophy which most of us profess has been accepted without much examination so that we can carry on with the business of life. And, for this very reason we should be prepared to examine and revise our theories in the light of new experiences as opportunity presents itself. In addition to this we should at all times be ready to check our most carefully worked out solutions, of the problems of life, as new discoveries reveal new facts in relation to those problems. This is the method of the scientific investigator who works with concrete facts; it is also the method of the Atheist who desires to formulate a philosophy that will stand the test of life. Atheism aims at establishing a scientific system of thought which shall be as free as possible from all external authority, such as tradition, sacred books, holy convocations, and secular bodies of men who seek unjustly to enforce their opinions upon those whom they govern.

It is a matter of history that external authority too frequently lies like a dead weight upon the intellect of those who acknowledge it. The authority of the Church, as in the case of Catholicism; and the authority of the Bible, as in the case of Protestantism, have formed an obstruction in the way of progress for hundreds of years. Such authority is detrimental to self-reliance, and the full use of our faculties; while the exercise of reason on all the questions of life with which we are confronted keeps the mental powers in vigorous condition, and helps to make possible the highest development of our own individuality.

It may be a slow process by which reason weaves our thoughts into a systematic whole, but it is worth while to have patience in order to secure a good result.

To quote once more from David Hume's *Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*: "To advance by timorous and sure steps, to review frequently our conclusions and examine accurately all their consequences, though by these means we shall make both a slow and short progress in our systems, are the only methods by which we can ever hope to reach truth and attain proper stability and certainty in our determinations." (Of Academical or Sceptical Philosophy.)

The scope of Atheism includes every field of thought. Atheism is not, as some may think, restricted to attacks upon subjects usually treated as belonging to religion. There is no reason why the Atheist should not carry his attitude of mind and method of study into every sphere of human activity and thought. And, we may add, that there is no justification for the belief that Atheism must be inimical to the development of good living. The denial of the existence of a god of any and every supernaturalistic type, and the rejection of the theory of immortality, should force us to realize that this life being the only one for us we should strive all the more to make it brighter and better than it is. As Huxley said, in his lecture on the "Physical Basis

of Life": "We live in a world which is full of misery and ignorance, and the plain duty of each and all of us is to try to make the little corner he can influence somewhat less miserable and somewhat less ignorant than it was before he entered it."

There is no reason why Atheism should cause us to lose our sense of the sublime and the beautiful, and bring about the decay of art and the neglect of poetry. The masterpieces of painting and sculpture do not depend upon the gods, fairies, angels, christs, and other fantastic beings, whose existence we deny, for their greatness and their appeal to human nature. And, even when a great painting takes for its subject matter one or a group of the insubstantial beings, as mentioned above, the lover of art can often find joy in contemplating the masterly execution of what is, after all, a beautiful record of old beliefs and fancies. If the masterly work of a great painter's portrayal of the Virgin and Christ does not reconcile us to the ugliness of their faces, we can find joy in the contemplation of the grace and charm of Venus and Apollo. In fact, the less joy we derive from anything claimed to be supernatural, the more should we try to satisfy our deepest emotions by the cultivation of an acquaintance with what is most beautiful in nature, in art, and in literature. Not having a god, we have often the green fields, the beautiful flowers, the warm sunshine, the majesty of the mountains, the wonders of the sea, and the song of the birds, and of these we can endeavour to take full advantage, whenever a time of respite comes to us during a life which brings to us so much stress, care, and sorrow.

E. EGERTON STAFFORD.

(To be Concluded.)

The Window Pane.

THE blue-bottle buzzing furiously against the glass with its eyes fixed on the beautiful sunlight without, could not conceive the nature of the obstacle which prevented its passage to the outside world. It could fly in the room through transparent air, it could see the desirable leaves of the trees fluttering in the wind, but it could not achieve them, and the angry tone of its buzz indicated its confusion at something it could not understand. Again and again it flew valiantly against the glass—there was nothing there, and yet there was something. Reason did not come to its aid, and the other attainment of its desire was the futile one of thought.

Man, a little more developed in intellect than the blue-bottle, knows that it is possible to open the window, and he can depart readily from a room into the open air. That is the microscopic scale of his achievement. The even more intangible obstacle of sense forbids his passage from his material environment, which he has dubbed the "real," into those entrancing realms of delight, which he has conceived so splendidly and perceives so clearly, and which he knows as the "ideal."

Always and for ever his conceptions are in advance of his achievement. Continually he butts against the limitations of sense in an endeavour to attain these forbidden ideals. Strive as he may towards the desired goal, man is constantly overpowered by the limitations of his own situation. He is in precisely the same position as the blue-bottle. He can see the leaves of the trees of his desire, but the road to them is barred by the intangible, nevertheless solid, boundaries of his faculties.

Throughout the generations he has striven, thrown himself against these boundaries in an endeavour to break them down, and at the expense of many indi-

vidual lives, they have gradually been expanded. But wide as the boundaries have become, still in the distance the mirage-like leaves of desire flutter in the wind.

Paradoxically this impossibility is the only thing that makes life of any value to man. He ought to become a pessimist on the realization. A desire which cannot be fulfilled should be a source of unhappiness, particularly when it is known that there is no real possibility of fulfilment. But man is by nature a confirmed optimist. Like the blue-bottle, he is content to spend his little span of life in an apparently fruitless endeavour. He cannot realize that these things are impossible, and he finds joy in striving for them. So hopelessly he expends all his forces in the attempt to achieve the impossible, gradually making it become more possible. G. E. FUSSELL.

Acid Drops.

Are there any limits to the absurdities of which religious folk are capable? A few weeks ago we published an account of an American religious leader who cured all sorts of diseases by sending out "blessed handkerchiefs," and who subsequently published testimonials from all sorts of people who had been cured as a result. We have not had to wait long to see the same game started here. Mrs. R. J. Fox is the head of "The Panacea Movement," and she claims to have cured cases of asthma, blood-poisoning, bronchitis, epilepsy, rheumatism, tuberculosis, nerves, depression, cancer, deafness, indigestion, blindness, hip disease, neuritis, bad temper, falling hair, financial difficulties, and other ill-humours of humanity. The procedure is simple. You write a letter stating your particular complaint—even though it be only insufficient wages—and in return Mrs. Fox sends you a postcard. The postcard received is then placed in water and the solution either drunk or used as a lotion. A *Daily Chronicle* man interviewed Mrs. Fox and enquired where the money came from to finance the movement, but was not told. The curative power of the postcards come from their contact with the New Testament. After all, though, we do not believe that Mrs. Fox is any worse than a travelling healer like Hickson, and others. Mrs. Fox also published letters testifying to the cures received. And all the people who write have votes.

In London also, in the Walworth Road, the Brothers Jeffreys are running a healing campaign, and are, so says the advertisement, making the blind see, the dumb talk, the lame walk, the deaf hear, in short doing everything except making silly people sensible. Even if they could perform that miracle the Brothers Jeffreys know too much to do it. That is the one thing that Christian saints and others have never claimed, or even pretended to do. And in the *Sunday Express* of April 26 there is an account of a new sect in America, headed by a woman, which believes in conducting its worship in a state of nudity. There is nothing new in any of these things. Queer sexual manifestations have been constant throughout the history of Christianity, as readers of Mr. Cohen's *Religion and Sex* know well, and the faith healing dodge is part and parcel of genuine Christianity. They were both prominent in Christianity in its early years, before men of intelligence—for various reasons—took up with it, and they are getting very common to-day, when the better intelligence of the country is leaving it. And once more we remark—all these people have votes. And a vote in the hands of a fool is of exactly the same value as one in the hands of a philosopher. And every crafty politician knows it.

The Secretary of the Y.M.C.A. has retired after forty years' service, and at a luncheon given in his honour, Sir Joseph Cook said he had devoted his life to his king, his country, and his God. The order may have been suggested by their supposed importance, although it might savour of heresy to put the deity last. On the

other hand we see that the Lord Mayor of London declined to attend a Roman Catholic Association's dinner on learning that the toast of the Pope was to come before that of the King. But to a Roman Catholic the Pope is the representative of God, and while we admit that the transcendent wisdom displayed by our monarchs warrant their holding first place in our minds, still one can hardly expect a really religious person to place the king before the deity. But the Lord Mayor is evidently of a different opinion. The King is to have precedence. The deity must come in where he may.

"I would much rather people were at work than at play on Good Friday, if they are going to do anything," said Canon J. F. Howson, in an interview which he recently gave to a representative of the *Leeds Mercury*. Canon Howson is Rector of Guiseley. In that district the closing of mills on Good Friday has only been introduced since the war, and some are still kept working on that day. The canon's very frank admission sheds a curious light upon Christian psychology. It is a tribute to the liberalizing influence of Freethought that most Christian apologists to-day endeavour to represent religion as having a practical value to mankind, as offering an infallible guide in ethical and social problems. In short, the implication is that religion is made for man. That, of course, is a complete inversion of the old attitude, which regarded man as made for religion. The canon is merely reverting to the older Christian attitude when he objects to men and women finding happiness outside of religion. Intellectually he is on a level with the early anchorites and "saints" who mortified the flesh and eschewed all comfort and happiness for the sake of a mythical Kingdom of Heaven.

In *G. K.'s Weekly*, Emile Cammaerts contributes a few clouds of fuzz in his article on "The 'Jeune D'Arc' of Charles Péguy." In the twentieth century, consider this, from the pen of a leading light in literature, "We need not wonder how a little shepherdess of thirteen is able to discuss problems which have not yet ceased to torment the consciences of learned philosophers and theologians. Saints are invariably precocious." God help literature! At the end of a long quotation from Péguy's play, the little shepherdess is made to say, "Thou oughtest to send us a saint who would succeed." This, if we may say so, is advice to omnipotence. M. Cammaerts mentions a striking poem by Péguy in which he sang the happiness of those who die in a righteous war. All who died in war were happy because cooked history tells us that all wars were righteous. In the same manner Anatole France has pointed out that "all armies are the finest in the world. The second finest army, if one could exist, would be in a notoriously inferior position; it would be certain to be beaten. Therefore all armies are the finest in the world."

Judge Rutherford is at it again with his "Millions now living will never die." Nature will not reverse her process as a result of an address at the Albert Hall, and, if the strong meat of irony can be accepted by the public stomach, this information is in the nature of light comedy what time the scientific chemist has armed Europe with enough poison gases to suffocate the whole of the inhabitants of the world. Mr. Rutherford will show that 1914, when the world-war broke out, was foreshown in the Bible. There is nothing wonderful in this; we can show a prophetic pronouncement regarding Charlie Chaplin in the Bible, and we can also show the origin of that music-hall song, "We all came into the world with nothing on," in the Book of Job. Try again, Mr. Rutherford; if the spreading of the gospel of two thousand years has produced our present dispensation we might for a change try the inspirations of that famous book, *Alice in Wonderland*, and we venture to say, the results would be better.

The *Sunday Herald* quotes from a time table taken from an elementary school to the effect that the time taken in religious instruction was ninety minutes, the time taken in hygienic instruction was thirty minutes.

A little less about God and a little more about hygiene would certainly make for the betterment of the scholars.

A number of Church schools have been placed upon a "Black List" by the Board of Education on account of their structurally unsatisfactory character. Some of these are of a very bad nature indeed, but there is plenty of religion in them even if there is little sanitation. But the Archbishop of Wales says that they are determined to maintain these schools as strongholds of religious instruction and also to get definite religious instruction established in the elementary schools. The same old game. So long as these manufactories of customers for the churches are maintained nothing else matters.

The British Broadcasting people must be either very simple or imagine that others are. We have just seen another letter from them, sent in reply to a letter protesting against the use of their machinery for the broadcasting of sermons, and suggesting that if religious opinions are permitted, others should also be allowed. The reply is that as this is a Christian country the sermons are restricted to those who represent the "normally accepted Christian faith," and that controversial topics are avoided. This reply is both insolent and stupid. There is the Christian insolence that Christians must be first of all considered, even in the matter of the wireless, and while they must have what they desire, nothing must be given to which Christians can object. And so far as we know, nothing has been given over the wireless to which any ordinary Christian parson could object. And to say that a religious discourse is not controversial is too stupid for serious argument. Anyway, the fact of the B.B.C. getting these letters from all over the country ought to help them to realize that in this Christian country there are others besides those who hold the faith of Thorne and the "Bungalow murderer."

The Rev. A. Tuson, speaking at a vestry meeting in Northumberland recently, let the cat out of the bag. In most churches in Newcastle the thing which went against the grain with him was the bribery which took place in all directions, he said. Children were bribed to go to Sunday-school by receiving expensive prizes, and people were bribed to their Easter, Whitsuntide, and Christmas Communion by receiving a wonderful picture and a hearty invitation to Communion. We can assure Mr. Tuson that these practices are not confined to Newcastle; they are practised wherever Christianity is to be found, both at home here, and in the missionary fields, where free medical treatment, education, and various more material inducements are held out to the natives as inducements to them to take the Lord Jesus as their Saviour. But what we cannot understand is why the Rev. Tuson objects to such things. After all, Christianity is based upon a system of bribery. Lead a decent life, abstain from murder, adultery, robbery, and all other sins, not because it is the decent, manly thing to do so, but because such abstinence will be rewarded with a heavenly crown in the hereafter. Evangelic Christians when they dole out prizes to Sunday-school children, outings to mothers' meetings, and European clothing and medicine to pagans are merely applying this fundamental principle of their religion to the mundane sphere. And it is, of course, owing to this spirit that Christianity has rarely failed to induce moral and mental deterioration in its proselytes.

An article in the *Times Educational Supplement* for April 25 on "The Religious Difficulty" shows the complete inability of professional Christians considering the question of education from any but the sectarian point of view. The article admits that the voluntary schools are in a disgraceful state of inefficiency. Lord Eustace Percy said recently that many of the schools would be condemned by factory inspectors if they were factories, and even where the outer structures are concerned, the writer admits that many of the rooms are in a filthy condition. But the schools are maintained, not in the interest of education, but in order to see that the helpless children

are dosed with the proper kind of Christian doctrine. It is also admitted that parents are not particularly concerned with the religious question, which is what we have always said. It is a parson's question, pure and simple. The parents only come in as tools in the hands of the parsons. They are the only ones interested in seeing that the right kind of Christian "dope" is administered to the young.

What the article proposes is the giving up of all the Church schools to the State, and for elementary schools to teach "the Christian religion," by teachers who volunteer for the work, with use of the school buildings on Sunday and week nights for church purposes. It is a pretty scheme which gives the Church full State support financially, and makes certain of using the teachers as so many helps to the parson. It is said that under the suggested plan the time spent on religious instruction would not be less than is at present given in Church schools, and might even be more. It appears fairly certain that some kind of plan will be tried before the present Government leaves office, and there is only one way by which that attempt may be brought to naught, which is by keeping the real aims of the clergy properly before the people. It is a parson's question, and the parson is aiming, as usual, at his own aggrandisement. Everything else is a mere subterfuge.

The Bishop of Oxford is convinced that a sound system of education in this country must be Christian. And he explains that by Christian he means a system with which no Churchman, Nonconformist, or devout Agnostic could quarrel. We like the grouping, and we hope that Agnostics will feel flattered at finding themselves lumped in with Nonconformists and Churchmen. What with devout Agnostics, and reverent Agnostics, and Agnostics who believe in a kind-of-a-sort-of-a-something, the term is quite a delightful one. It means anything or everything, and above all appears to serve the purpose of convincing Christians that they are respectable and tractable.

A new Chaplain-General to the Forces has been appointed, and he is naturally very much impressed with the importance of his post. Religion in the army, he says, is of the utmost importance. "The recruit on coming into the army is brought immediately under spiritual influence, and among other things he is compelled to go to Church." If the Chaplain-General would only get the quite frank opinion of soldiers as to the value of this spiritual influence he might learn something. But we note his admiration of the fact that the soldier is compelled to go to Church. It never seems to strike him that in forcing Church attendance on the soldier he is denying him one of the primary rights possessed by civilians. And it has always puzzled us why those who profess so much admiration for the soldier are foremost in treating him as being on a lower level than the civilian, and strongly resent his possessing the same freedom that every man and woman out of the army enjoys. But probably the Chaplain-General regrets that he cannot compel everyone to go to Church, whether in the army or not.

Another tribute to the high ethical value of the Christian faith comes from Durham Jail, where as Henry Graham, of Sunderland, went to execution for murder, the Salvation Army band played "Nearer my God to Thee," outside the prison. This was done at the express wish of the murderer, who seemingly died in the full sanctity of his faith. It is a pleasing thought that the murderer, having repented him his sins, shall enjoy Paradise for all eternity, whilst untold millions of non-Christians, who have never committed murder, will suffer in Hell. One can understand why such a faith as this has unbalanced men's minds and produced the orgies, say, of the anchorite period, or has driven whole communities half crazy, resulting in the dreadful religious wars and persecutions that make up so much of the history of Christianity. It has been said of Spiritualism that it either finds a man mad or leaves him mad. The dictum might be applied with equal truth to Christianity.

In Canada there are some really genuine, first-century Christians. They are the kind of people to whom the Apostle Paul would probably have addressed a laudatory epistle. They are known as Doukhobors, and are members of a Russian sect. Fines of a hundred dollars apiece have been imposed on thirty-five of them, because they have refused to allow their children to attend school. With a splendid Christian disregard for mere secular authority these Christians have refused to pay the fines. Also they threaten a repetition of the nude parade which they performed before they emigrated from Saskatchewan, and altogether the authorities are anticipating serious trouble. Well, at least, the Doukhobors are more consistent than the other Christians who are attempting to make them behave as rational people. What does the education of a child matter, when it has an immortal soul destined to live for ever in another world? And what do the proprieties of this life matter, when one is engaged in the serious business of qualifying for eternal bliss? The Doukhobors with their lofty contempt for what normal people think is decent behaviour, are nearer to the spirit of Christianity than those who take their religion in small doses once every Sunday, with a little extra dose each holiday. We should like some of our would-be social reformers, who prate of the need for applied Christianity, to consider this effect of Christian ideas being earnestly applied to mundane affairs. We might hear less then of the sentimental nonsense about Christianity being a solution of our social problems.

According to an official at Billingsgate Fish Market, fasting in Lent is a thing of the past. He suggested, with an open mind apparently, that the "Eat More Fruit" campaign might be responsible for the low consumption of fish, or else that it was mere paganism asserting itself. In either case, when one considers the evils that emerged from the first simple eating of an apple, it is a tendency to be deplored by a Christian community such as ours. But Marcus Aurelius, Socrates, Plato, and the other old pagans would probably be mildly startled, to say the least, if they knew that their teachings of two and three thousand years ago are to-day responsible for small sales of cod-fish.

An appeal to the Press to suppress nauseous details of legal cases and incidents of crimes, as being against real education, was a feature of the presidential address of Mr. W. H. Young, to the National Association of Schoolmasters, at Nottingham. With his appeal we are in hearty sympathy. The sordid details of crime that disgrace the pages of our Sunday newspapers, may be of scientific interest to the criminologist and the psychologist; but certainly they can have no healthy interest for the average normal person, especially a child who may happen to read the paper. That the Press continues to publish such stuff, together with special articles contributed by famous criminals detailing the beastliness of their lives, is a terrible testimony to the morbid mental state which characterizes so many of our public. And in the creation of this vicious frame of mind, which regards crime and the criminal as something to be studied with avid interest, instead of regarding them as presenting problems to the psychologist and sociologist, Christianity has played a terrible part. Always it has insisted that human beings have free will to choose either good or evil; never has it taken the slightest cognizance of the influences, social and pathological, that make the criminal. Crime has never presented any problem to it. It has been the joint product of the devil and a naturally corrupt human race, and the solution for it is the blood of Christ. Is it any wonder, then, that with such ridiculous notions dominating their minds, men and women take a morbid delight in reading the sordid details of crime? If it were clearly understood that the criminal, whatever his crime, is as much a pathological case to be studied scientifically, as is, say, the consumptive, there would probably be little more general interest in his doings than there is in the gruesome details of some sufferer from physical disease. Look where one will, one finds always the distorting, depraving influence of Christianity.

The National Secular Society.

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

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

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

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

To Correspondents.

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

JOSHUA PITT.—You advise us to send our literature to some asylum. But why? There are plenty of Christians in other places. And we are more concerned with keeping people from entering asylums than with sending them literature after they are there.

W. C. HARRISON.—Thanks for letter. We are not surprised at its contents. It is as hard for a number to separate themselves from the rest of their fellows as it is for an individual. The better plan is to recognize the fact that we are all bound together for good or ill, and to make the best of it.

H. T. WILKINS.—Thanks. Shall appear. Glad to have the news in your letter. Congratulations.

H. PARTINGTON.—Sorry we have been unable to insert your letter owing to its length. Correspondents must be good enough to remember that the space at our disposal is strictly limited.

M. BARNARD.—Pleased to have your appreciation of the *Freethinker*. Have sent on the letters to Mr. Mann.

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.

The multitude which does not reduce itself to unity is confusion; the unity which does not depend upon the multitude is tyranny.—Pascal.

Sugar Plums.

The summer season is now beginning—we must call it that because of the date—and London Branches are getting busy with their open-air propaganda. In East London the Bethnal Green Branch commences its meetings to-day (May 3) in Victoria Park, at 6.15, and further East, the West Ham Branch opens its campaign with a meeting outside the Technical Institute, Romford Road, at 7. East London Freethinkers should see to it that both meetings are well supported.

In South London the Branch begins work at Brockwell Park at 3 o'clock this afternoon (May 3) and holds a second meeting at 6. Brockwell Park was always a good and pleasant place for a meeting, and if the weather is gracious, all should be well. At least, the Branch has our good wishes, and advice to other Freethinkers to give all the support possible.

In his book, *Letters from England*, Karel Capek looking at England with his own eyes, noticed one of our particular afflictions—the "English Sunday." He writes, "I do not know for what unutterable guilt the Lord has condemned England to the weekly punishment of Sunday," and his experience in Exeter on the Sabbath moves him to an appreciation of the cathedral city as follows:—

At Exeter I was beset by an English Sunday coupled with rain. An Exeter Sunday is so thorough and holy that the very churches are closed, and as regards creature comforts the wayfarer who dispises cold potatoes must go to bed on an empty stomach. I do not know what particular joy this causes to the Exeter God.

Phenomena such as this shows how far our professional holy men have their teeth in the flesh of people who saw nothing wrong in using Sunday during the war for the making of ammunition.

Mrs. Rosita Forbes, the traveller, who lately arrived home after an adventurous caravan journey in Abyssinia, told a press representative that some of the natives of that country thought the cinema which she had with her was a new form of religion. "One day," said Mrs. Forbes, "the camera man was taking a film of the harvesters. They all downed tools and bowed their heads to the ground. Others took the camera for a maximum, and threw stones and spears at us." After all, the natives displayed considerable acumen in being distrustful of what they took to be a new religion. The Maxim-gun has never been far behind the missionary; and religion and war have always been closely associated.

We hear much of martyrs—of those who were slain by the sword or consumed in the fire; but we know little of that still larger number who by the mere threat of persecution have been driven into an outward abandonment of their real opinions, and who thus forced into an apostasy the heart abhors, have passed the remainder of their life in the practice of a constant and humiliating hypocrisy.—Thomas Henry Buckle.

Mankind marches forward, perfecting its strength. Everything that is unattainable for us now will one day be near and clear; but we must work; we must help with all our force those who seek for truth.—Tchekhov.

The Church of Man! Over-arching all like the universal sky, encompassing and inspiring all like the universal air, vitalizing and informing all like the universal electric force, binding and drawing all like universal attraction and gravitation. The church universal—stretching beyond all barriers of sects, the hospitable city of all who wish freely to believe, to live, to love, to serve, and to realize the ideal of man!—Samuel Longfellow.

Ethics.

A DISCOURSE FOR NURSES AND CHILDREN—Continued.

XII.

It has been said, nurse, that the text, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," was responsible for the cruel deaths of some millions of innocent old women, who were mistakenly believed to be witches. And now the very belief in witches has passed away and these deaths have come to be regarded as signs of the ignorance and superstition of the times which sanctioned them. In like manner, the text, "What God hath joined together let no man put asunder," has been the cause of untold human misery, and a long catalogue of domestic tragedies and crimes. Someone has compared the sanctity of the marriage tie to the sanctity of two Kilkenny cats tied by the tail and hung over a clothes-line. And the domestic records repeatedly disclosed in the newspaper press make this a very apt illustration of the folly of founding marriages upon texts instead of utility and compatibility. Fielding Hall relates an incident, the moral of which in this connection is rather significant. He says:—

In the first Burmese war in 1825, there was a man, an Englishman, taken prisoner at Ava and put in prison, and there he found certain Europeans and Americans. After a time, for fear of attempts to escape, these prisoners were chained together two and two. And this Englishman has told how terrible this was, and of the hate and repulsion that arose in your heart to your co-bondsman. Before they were chained together they lived in close neighbourhood in peace and amity; but when the chains came it was far otherwise, though they were no nearer than they were before. *They got to hate each other.*

And if you substitute matrimonial chains for prison chains, you will find in this moral the reason of most of the domestic discord that exists in our midst. It may be true, as S. Laing says, that "though the ideal of a perfect union may seldom be attained to, the great majority of married couples manage to jog on together, and bring up families in comparative comfort and respect"; but while such a partnership may have the blessing of a Christian Bishop, it can scarcely be said to be productive of anything but—large families. "To "jog on together" is an existence hardly worthy of the name of marriage; and the lack of restraint which results in the production of large families, is often due to the absence of that very love and affection which constitutes an ideal union.

You will not understand me, nurse, as saying anything against an ideal marriage. There is no greater happiness possible to a man than the sweet companionship of an affectionate and sympathetic woman. Where a man is blessed with such a partner his cup of life's happiness is full to overflowing. But it is just because a binding union for life prevents so many people in retrieving the innocent mistakes of their early days, and cuts off all legitimate opportunity of realizing their ideal, that the monogamic marriage bond has become irksome and hateful. I remember a case that came before the courts some time ago. Two married couples, who found that they could never be happy together, agreed quite amicably to part. And it so happened that each of the men became attached to the other's wife, and these two couples lived quite happily for many years, within a short distance of each other. I forget the circumstances which brought the case to court, but I never forget the remarks of the judge. He said: "While in the interests of the law these couples had been brought before the court, he thought that in the interests of humanity they

might have been left safely alone." That was a sensible judge, nurse, and it is a great pity there are not more like him. The interests of humanity ought to take precedence in all the regulations that govern marriage, and those of law and religion be relegated to the background. Fielding Hall says that Burmese civilization is a thousand years behind our own; but in the liberty and equality enjoyed by its women it is probably a thousand years in front. Who will deny that the world is richer to-day in thought and imagination for the conjugal fellowship of G. H. Lewes and Marian Evans? If it were for *Adam Bede* alone, the relationship would be fully justified and consecrated; and yet it was a union without a legal sanction, or a bishop's blessing. Of the future of marriage, Letourneau says:—

The antique morals which still hold woman as a servile property belonging to her husband still live in many minds. They will be extinguished by degrees. The matrimonial contract will end by being the same kind of contract as any other, freely accepted, freely maintained, and freely dissolved.

In 1171, at Canterbury, so we are told on the authority of Lea's *Sacerdotal Celibacy*, an investigation proved that the abbot-elect of St. Augustine had no less than seventy children in a single village. When I was in the country, nurse, I used to hear the people speak of the parish bull, and probably the phrase originated in reference to this saintly abbot-elect of Canterbury. I am dealing now, you will understand, with Christian marriage. I think I told you that rigid monogamic marriage was not established in this country until about the twelfth century. From the time of Constantine, the first Christian Emperor, until that period, the sexual morals of England and the rest of Europe were of a most loose and licentious character. The claim that the Roman world had sunk into a moral abyss, and that Christianity introduced a superior morality which was especially shown in the elevation and improved position of woman, is one that is not supported by the facts. Under some of the pagan Emperors who preceded Constantine, Roman society compared very favourably with any that has existed since under Christian civilization. And instead of Christianity improving the morals of society they became gradually worse. Mr. Lecky says that "the two centuries after Constantine are uniformly represented by the fathers as a period of general and scandalous vice." And the reason of this moral set-back was the unhealthy and diseased view of sex that Christianity emphasized, and which led to most appalling consequences, and which is still a force to be reckoned with by reformers. In a former talk, nurse, I tried to show you the evil results that followed from the enforced suppression of a natural instinct, and this is especially true in relation to the sex impulse.

The ascetism of Christianity affords an illustration of this truth. Mr. Cohen, in his *Religion and Sex*, puts this matter in such a lucid way that I will quote you what he says:—

From the beginning Christianity strove to suppress the power of sex feeling. It was an enemy against whom one had to be always on guard, one that had to be crushed, or at least kept in subjection in the interests of spiritual development. And yet the very intensity of the efforts at suppression defeated the object aimed at. With some of the leaders of early Christianity sex became an obsession.....Instead of sex taking its place as one of the facts of life, which like most other facts might be good or bad as circumstances determined, it was so much dwelt upon as to dwarf everything else. Asceticism is, after all, mainly a reversed sensualism, or at least confesses the existence of a sensualism that must not be allowed expression lest its mani-

festation becomes overpowering. Mortification expresses the supremacy of sex as surely as gratification.

According to an authority quoted by Mr. Cohen, asceticism did not establish itself within the Church until the fourth century; and from that time onward, up to the twelfth century, says another writer, "ecclesiastical annals are one mass of decrees for the suppression of fornication and incest among the clergy, the monks, and the nuns." St. Ambrose and St. Augustine descant upon the drinking and dancing that went on all night at the Christians' love-feast, and the immorality that abounded. Pilgrimages were found a convenient escape from neighbours, and Palestine, according to another saintly writer, became "a hotbed of debauchery." We read of a vessel containing three hundred prostitutes being sent out to the French soldiers who are rescuing the Holy Sepulchre from the defilement of the Saracen; of English women who had set out for Jerusalem, being found living lives of prostitution and adultery in almost every town between London and Palestine. Of the debauchery of the monks there is ample evidence; and in 836, we find a council at Aix-la-Chapelle saying that many convents were mere brothels. In fact, in France a brothel came to be spoken of familiarly as the "abbey." I have already spoken of the seigniorial rights over young girls claimed by Christian bishops and ecclesiastics; and probably the seventy children of the abbot-elect of Canterbury were only the result of the exercise of his seigniorial rights. Religion has conveniently accommodated itself to whatever conditions of morals happened to be prevalent in any period; and not only was polygamy sanctioned by the Catholic Church for ages, but even the Protestant reformers, as Mrs. Gage tells us, decided in council "that as the Bible nowhere condemns polygamy, and as it has been invariably practised by the highest dignitaries of the church," such marriage was legitimate. Mormonism itself is a Christian cult with a more authoritative Bible sanction for its practices than can be claimed for monogamy. If modern Christianity has claimed monogamy as a divine institution, it has not done so because of any biblical sanction it possesses, but because it came to be the popular form of marriage. And it found the text, "What God hath joined together let no man put asunder," a useful text upon which to found its claim. But like the texts which the teetotalers discovered in the late centuries to have reference to abstinence, so this was not discovered to have any reference to marriage until woman began to assert her rights to liberty and equality.

The form of marriage which came to be generally accepted in the later days of Rome was that known by the name of "Usus," which differed from the other two forms, one civil and the other religious, in the freedom women enjoyed under it. Under this form of marriage a woman did not become the slave or property of her husband, and retained full possession of her own property. It effected an entire change for the better in the moral sentiments of the Roman Empire: human life become more sacred, and women were endowed with a greater sense of personal security. But a religion like Christianity, which taught the inferiority and subjection of woman as a cardinal doctrine of its creed, was hardly likely to view with favour a form of marriage like "Usus." While it could, and did, adopt many pagan customs and institutions, and graft upon them ceremonies of its own, the independence and freedom of woman met with strong condemnation as being contrary to the will of God. And during the centuries of Christian polygamy that followed, and the centuries of monogamy that succeeded, woman never regained the posi-

tion she had held in pagan Rome, nor the rights and privileges she had enjoyed under the ancient Matriarchate. Summing up the results of the Christian monogamic union, lasting till the death of husband or wife, Letourneau asks: "Has moral purity gained thereby?" and answers, "Assuredly not. Moreover, there is in consequence a whole population of illegitimate children, too often abandoned by their fathers, and suffering from their birth a legal indignity of the most iniquitous kind. Hence arise a thousand unmerited sufferings, which legislation must some day or other remedy.....Doubtless the ideal is a fine thing, but it is folly to sacrifice the real to it, and to legislate without taking into account the requirements of human nature."

We will leave the marriage-question at that, nurse; but no satisfactory solution of the sex problem is possible until woman is accorded the dignity and freedom which is her natural right.

JOSEPH BRYCE.

The Gospel of Despair.

WE have frequently heard the Gospel of Jesus described as the "Glad tidings of great joy," the "hope of the world," and so on; but historically the doctrine of salvation by faith in the redeeming blood of Jesus Christ has been, and is, the very opposite of this—in other words, it is a doctrine of hopeless despair for the majority of mankind. In my long and varied experience in the world, among all sorts and conditions of men, I have known a large number of sincere believers in Christianity, and almost without exception they have been about the most melancholy and miserable kind of people, in the whole circle of my acquaintance. And when we reflect upon the historical teachings of the various churches of Christendom during their long existence, who can wonder that such gloomy teachings have had their effect upon the lives and characters of Christians even down to the present day? Two years ago I wrote an account of my visit to the "Old Vic" to see the old morality play of the fifteenth century called "Everyman," and a week or two ago I paid another visit to see the same play performed by a different set of actors.

This play is performed every year at the "Old Vic." during what is called "Holy Week," and Christians of various denominations have come to regard it as *no sin to attend such a worldly institution as a theatre* to witness a sacred drama like the above, during one of the days of the religious fast called *Lent*. As on previous occasions, introductory addresses have been given before each performance, and among the speakers have been The Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Southwark, Rev. Father Scyzinger, C.R., Miss Cicely Hamilton, Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of St. Albans, Mrs. Spears (Mary Borden), Dr. Percy Dearmer, Rev. Father Andrew, S.D.C., Miss Clement Dane, Miss Sheila Kay Smith, Viscountess Rhondda, and Mr. G. K. Chesterton.

Personally I should have preferred to have gone on the occasion when either Miss Cicely Hamilton or Miss Clement Dane delivered the introductory address, because both of these ladies have written plays that have been performed at the West End, and know something about dramatic construction. Unfortunately, on these occasions, I was otherwise engaged; consequently I had to choose a Saturday afternoon, and on this occasion the speaker was the fat humorist and journalist, Mr. G. K. Chesterton.

And first of all, it must be acknowledged that Mr. Chesterton is not an attractive speaker, at least he has not cultivated the art of elocution to any purpose;

he talks in a quiet conversational tone; but now and again his remarks are lit up by a witty or humorous expression, that greatly relieves the general monotony of his speech. For instance, he said that he did not quite know what his position was at such a function, whether he was there to do penance for making his appearance on the last day of Lent—on Easter Eve; or whether he was to be regarded as a sort of skeleton at the feast (loud laughter). Of course, when the audience contemplated his massive appearance, they saw the point of the joke, and laughed consumedly. When, however, he came to the play itself he said it was the best example of the morality or mystery plays of the Middle Ages—and the great teaching it inculcated was that good deeds were the best passport for the next world—a doctrine which both Agnostics and Atheists appeared to him to accept in common with Christians—assuming that there was a life hereafter; which I thought was a very generous admission on Mr. Chesterton's part.

But what of this play? "Everyman," in its original form, was performed about the streets and in the religious houses of England and Europe during the Middle Ages, and was acknowledged to be the work of one Peter Dorland, a monk of Diest, Belgium. The plot is simple enough. A messenger appears as a kind of prologue, and after he has made a short announcement, the voice of the Lord is heard—(He does not put in an appearance so that his children may see what he is like)—declaring that as men are so drowned in sin they have neglected to worship or quite forgotten him. Consequently he (God) has decided to have a reckoning with man, each individually, and judge him accordingly. He calls forth his mighty messenger, "Death," and bids him to tell *Everyman* to prepare for his last pilgrimage. *Everyman* is bent on pleasure when Death confronts him. On hearing this unwelcome message, he naturally offers some objections, and asks when he will be able to return. Death however tells him that *there will be no return*. *Everyman* is startled by this information. But the messenger says that he may take any companion with him who will consent to go. "Fellowship" is the first to enter and says he is willing to do anything he can for his friend; but when he learns that there is no return from this pilgrimage he flatly refuses to go. "Kindred and cousin" are the next to be approached, but they also decline. Then comes "Goods" (Property), but he simply ridicules the proposal, and mocks at *Everyman's* distress. At last, in despair, *Everyman* seeks his long neglected friend, "Good deeds," who, though lying weak and cold on the ground, so bound by his sins that she cannot stir, readily consents to stand by him in his trouble. She introduces *Everyman* to her sister, "Knowledge," who offers to be his guide. She brings him before "Confession," from whom he receives the jewel "penance."

Everyman then makes ardent supplications, followed by self-inflicted "penance" which frees "Good Deeds" and strengthens her to continue the journey. Having received the Sacrament *Everyman* sets forth clad in the garment "Contrition," and accompanied by "Beauty," "Strength," and "Discretion" and the "Five Wits." But Beauty is the first to falter. She refuses to go down into the open grave through which his path leads. Strength also deserts him, "Discretion" and the "Five Wits" follow suit. In despair, *Everyman* cries, "O Jesu help; all have forsaken me." But "Good Deeds" remains true, and "Knowledge" explains that though she cannot accompany him it is from no fear of danger.

With the words *in manus tuas commendo spiritum meum* *Everyman* sinks into the grave. "Knowledge"

announces that what he has suffered we all shall endure; and an angel declares that his penance will count before God, and the Doctor brings the play to a close by pointing its moral.

Can this be regarded in any other light than a *Gospel of Despair*? It is true that in this play "Good Deeds" counts for something in the end. But "Good Deeds" are not everything in the sight of the Christian God. The good Christian has got to have faith in the power of Jesus to save, he has got to do penance; to walk through a narrow and difficult path to the open grave, before he reaches his Heavenly abode. But the play is more humane than even the teachings of the Gospels themselves. The play does not damn all unbelievers to everlasting torment (Mark xvi.). Moreover a man is not saved by faith alone, for (Phil. ii.) says: "It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do his good pleasure; or again, "By grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God (Eph. ii., 8). But in any case, there is the inference that the unsaved will merit condemnation and if the punishment takes the form of everlasting woe in the next world—whether the punishment is physical or intellectual—the Christian who really believes it cannot have a moment of pleasure in this life, but must be for ever tormented with thoughts of the punishment to come, when he "has shuffled off this mortal coil," if not for himself, surely for those who are near and dear to him. And thus Christianity should become to every thoughtful and sincere Christian who gives the subject a moment's thought, nothing more nor less than "a Gospel of Despair."

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

Society News.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.

We brought our indoor season to a close last Sunday, with one of Mr. Van Biene's enjoyable and stimulating lectures. A lecture from Mr. Van Biene always makes us regret that we cannot hear him more often. A good discussion followed. The Chairman, Mr. Ratcliffe, remarked on the excellence of the programme that had just been concluded, and the hope was expressed generally that an equally good syllabus would be arranged for next October. The secretary expressed the members' appreciation of Mr. Ratcliffe's able chairmanship during the session. We hope he will be able to preside again next winter.—K.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.

On Sunday, May 3, the South London Branch N.S.S. commences its summer campaign in Brockwell Park, and it is hoped that friends in South London will support the local Branch by rallying to these meetings on every possible occasion. Freethinkers are very prone to decry the apathy of the masses on matters pertaining to Free-thought, yet it is unfortunately a fact that numbers of Freethinkers themselves suffer from this anti-social failing to a remarkable extent. No other reason can adequately explain the lack of support extended towards the Branch in its fight against organized superstition.

A strong programme has been arranged for the Park during the open-air season there, and we appeal to all sympathisers for their support in our efforts to keep the flag flying. In addition to the Brockwell Park meetings, local friends are asked to note that Mr. G. Whitehead will deliver a series of lectures at Rushcroft Road, Brixton, from May 18 to May 22 inclusive. The lectures here will commence at 8 o'clock each evening. "Don't leave it to the other fellow, come and help!"—A. HEATH, Hon. Sec.

Let us see everything through our own eyes; these are our tripods, our oracles, our gods.—Voltaire.

The Way of the World.

HE KNEW.

When Brex (Twells Brex) was in the last stage of the disease which proved fatal, Northcliffe asked Mrs. Brex if he could do anything more for him, and was told that they had a difficulty, owing to the rationing system, in getting butter.

Northcliffe got into his car and searched high and low for butter, but failed to find any. Later, at the *Times* office, he expressed his surprise that butter was unobtainable, and he was told:—

"The scarcity is reported in all the papers."

"Why!" said Northcliffe, "Who but a fool believes what he sees in the papers?"—*E. Bowen-Rowlands, "In Court and Out of Court."*

RELIGION AND MORALS.

The extraordinary thing about these men of the Renaissance is that many of them appeared to combine a deep religious fervour with a life of appalling wickedness. They were "so constituted that to turn from vice and cruelty and crime, from the deliberate corruption and enslavement of a people, by licentious pleasures, from the persecution of an enemy in secret, with a fervid and impassioned movement of the soul to God, was no-wise impossible. Their temper admitted of this anomaly, as we may plainly see from Cellini's autobiography."—*The Most Rev. Arnold H. Mathew, "The Life and Times of Rodrigo Borgia," Pope Alexander VI.*

COBBETT AND METHODISM.

Cobbett, in fact, had far more sympathy for thorough-going Rationalists than for Dissenters.....The Methodists, in particular, he accused of fixing men's thoughts on the other world, so as to divert their minds from the evils of this world. He disliked, moreover, Puritanism and what he regarded as cant.—*G. D. H. Cole, "Life of Cobbett."*

A FOREIGNER'S TRIBUTE TO SWINBURNE.

The great matchless and stately song, "Dolores," so rich in a wild and sorrowful defiance. It seems scarcely believable to me that more essential and more metrical verse than this could be produced. That it is as perfect in its colouring as it is overpowering in its melody is the merest praise than can be given it; since its emotional and intellectual wealth ranks with its musical excellence.....What a symphony this poem "Dolores!"

Those who were youthful contemporaries of Swinburne's felt their hearts beat in harmony with his, not so much when the erotic nature of his character is given expression, as when scope is given to his enthusiasm for nature and freedom, when text and music become one.

The authorities did not see fit to give the infidel a burial place in Westminster Abbey.—*G. Brandes, "Creative Spirits of the Nineteenth Century."*

THE GREATNESS OF ROME.

For 160 years, from the accession of Augustus to the death of Aurelius, commerce and trade enjoyed a measure of uninterrupted security and prosperity throughout the whole known world which was not equalled till the middle of the nineteenth century. The population and its average wealth per head were greater in the countries bordering upon the Mediterranean than they are to-day. Communication was quicker between points as far distant from each other as Cologne and Balkh than it was in the eighteenth century, and, most striking of all, maps were in existence which remained in constant use till the discovery of America, and which for accuracy and detail were not surpassed by those of the Renaissance scholars. Yet, this is an aspect of Roman rule that has been hitherto unaccountably neglected.—*The Times Literary Supplement.*

SOME CONFESSION!!!

Hawkins' company "on Circuit" was never sought by his brother judges, and he generally travelled with a junior judge, who had to take what his seniors had left.

His reputation was so peculiar that it was stated as a fact, and generally believed in the Temple, that after his first confession (he entered the Catholic Church very late in life) his confessor was found dead in his box!—*E. Bowen-Rowlands, "In Court and Out of Court."*

Books and Life.

Scott and Dickens are modern examples of the romantic and classic spirit in literature. Just as Shakespeare clothed the bare bones of Hollinshead's *Chronicles* with his historical plays so did Scott give the touch of strangeness to history in his stories. *Kenilworth*, *The Talisman*, *Ivanhoe*, have a glitter that attracts our youthful imaginations, but it is doubtful whether this is maintained for long. Fighting, war, intrigues, a procession of Kings and Queens, and Princes—apart from sociology teaching us that this is not history, the mind and heart is not chained to this form, and frequently, Scott is looked on in the same way as we look at *Paradise Lost*—as something to be read once and never again. With Dickens, however, there is a subtle something that will make us take up again and again the stories of *Great Expectations*, *Bleak House*, or *David Copperfield*; it is a something that appears to be part of the feelings, and Dickens, who had grasped the particular could see the general implication in the evolution of man. With one sentence he strides into the illustrious circle of Swedenborg, Emerson, Coleridge, and Browning. Here is his passport to the Republic of Letters:—

I am not a churlish old man. Friendless I can never be for all mankind are of my kindred, and I am on ill terms with no one member of my great family.

Mankind as one man was well known in the Puranas; its significance has yet to be fully grasped. Europe can do nothing, good or bad, without it having an effect on the other side of the world. And Christianity with its salvation in sections is a denial of the unity of mankind whose ancestors' bones may be found in the Oceanic continents before cosmic forces began to play tricks with this pudding called the earth.

We are unable to discourse on music with the insight and facility of Mr. Ernest Newman, but we remember a fascinating chord in our youth; it is called the Diminished Seventh. After putting your fingers on C, E, G, and C, and noting the assurance and majesty of the sound, strike the notes again leaving out the top C and substituting B flat and you get—suspended judgment—or Pater's *Gaston de Latour*. You will get that fine flow of lyrical sweetness given out by Browning in his "Bishop Blougram's Apology":—

Just when we are safest, there's a sunset-touch,
A fancy from a flower-bell, someone's death,
A chorus-ending from Euripides—
And that's enough for fifty hopes and fears
As old and new at once as nature's self,
To rap and knock and enter in our soul,
Take hands and dance there, a fantastic ring,
Round the ancient idol, on his base again,
The grand Perhaps!

And this was where Browning added the B flat to his chord; he puts it in himself and began to ask questions about it regardless of the fact that the world is chock full of questions. Goethe was not blind to this. "I have guesses enough of my own; if a man writes a book," (or a poem, he might have added) "let him set down only what he knows."

The chord of the Diminished Seventh finds another exponent in a poem that Mr. Eden Phillpotts has inserted in his last novel, *The Treasures of Typhon*. When Typhon is nearly despairing of finding the magic herb,

he brings out a few lines of Menander entitled "The Star":—

A point in the uncharted sky
Unseen, unknown in golden rout,
With tiny orbit clear marked out,
And a life to live and a death to die,
Threading her own dim bead of light
Through deep and vast of starry space,
Holding her punctual time and place,
Till crumbled back on formless night.
"Was it worth while?" asks her broken clay,
Turning to cosmic dust again—
"The long-drawn glimmer worth the pain?
I will not say 'yea'; I dare not say 'nay.'"

This is neither Schopenhauer's denial of the will to live nor Nietzsche's "yea" to life; it has the autumnal mellowness of Horace—a gentle touching of a golden gift from the Gods that tells us we can grasp and hold nothing for eternity. Vincent Van Gogh, with this chord in another form compares life to a cage, but, he says, "Do you know what takes away the cage? Every profound relationship, brotherhood, friendship, love. They open the cage like a magic key. If you lose the key, existence becomes a living death. He who creates sympathy creates life." And Dostoevsky, with the strength of weakness, with faith in his own kind on earth, rather than trust in an invisible being in the skies, gives us a little amulet to touch in our daily lives: "It is not a vain dream that man shall come to find his joys only in acts of enlightenment and mercy." This is nothing mysterious, nor couched in the gibberish of theology, but plain and simple, only requiring the will of the people to "do it."

WILLIAM REPTON.

Correspondence.

MR. PHILIP THOMAS AND MR. G. W. FOOTE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—With reference to your remarks concerning the Paine centenary meeting and Mr. Thomas, to the best of my recollection, Mr. Foote complained in the *Freethinker* that Mr. Thomas had omitted something, I forget what, in an address at a Shelley Society. In the next issue Mr. Thomas explained that this was incorrect, but that, as far as I can remember, it had been omitted from the report of the address, and Mr. Foote said that he would take Mr. Thomas's word for this. I afterwards showed the two papers to Mr. Thomas, who said: "As if I should have omitted such a thing," and proceeded to speak most contemptuously of Mr. Foote, the *Freethinker*, and the National Secular Society.

A. H. THOMAS.

EVOLUTION.

SIR,—Mr. Bryce in answering my letter disclaims the use of the phrase "maternal impressions," in discussing the incident of the ring-straked cattle in the Book of Genesis. It so happens that Jacob's experiment is generally given in works on Heredity as the classical example of "maternal impressions," and this phrase has always a definite technical meaning. The term is used so that the influence of the father may be totally excluded.

Therefore, all Mr. Bryce's examples from horsebreeding, etc., have no bearing on the question.

The mother and her offspring are alone considered. No fathers need apply. Jacob's experiment reduced to its lowest common terms consists of a ring-straked rod and a mother sheep containing a living embryo. The result is a ring-straked lamb. I call this a miracle, and as miracles do not happen, therefore the biology of the Bible is wrong. How could the lamb become ring-straked when there is absolutely no nervous connection between the mother and the embryo, and not a drop of mother's blood circulates in the foetus or *vice versa*. A further difficulty is that we are asked to believe that a mental picture in the mother's brain can produce a physical reproduction on the body of the offspring. This is harder to believe than spirit photography. I do hope Mr. Bryce will give up the idea that the Bible teaches Evolution or any other scientific doctrine.

HENRY SPENCE.

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.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7, T. C. Archer, "The Geneva Protocol Explained."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Lit., "Nationality *versus* Civilization."

OUTDOOR.

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

PINSBURY PARK.—11, Mr. G. Whitehead, a Lecture.

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

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

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 3 and 6, Mr. E. C. Saphin will lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Outside Technical Institute, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7, Demonstration. Speakers: Mrs. H. Rosetti, Mrs. E. Venton, Messrs. F. C. Warner, F. G. Warner, A. C. High, H. White, and R. H. Rosetti.

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S. (Town Moor, near North Road entrance): 7, Mr. R. Atkinson, a Lecture. Members and friends please attend and support the meetings.

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.)

Four Great Freethinkers.

GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE, by JOSEPH McCABE. The Life and Work of one of the Pioneers of the Secular and Co-operative movements in Great Britain. With four plates. In Paper Covers, 2s. (postage 2d.). Cloth Bound, 3s. 6d. (postage 2½d.).

CHARLES BRADLAUGH, by THE RIGHT HON. J. M. ROBERTSON. An Authoritative Life of one of the greatest Reformers of the Nineteenth Century, and the only one now obtainable. With four portraits. Cloth Bound, 3s. 6d. (postage 2½d.).

VOLTAIRE, by THE RIGHT HON. J. M. ROBERTSON. In Paper Covers, 2s. (postage 2d.). Cloth Bound, 3s. 6d. (postage 2½d.).

ROBERT G. INGERSOLL, by C. T. GORHAM. A Biographical Sketch of America's greatest Freethought Advocate. With four plates. In Paper Covers, 2s. (postage 2d.) Cloth Bound, 3s. 6d. (postage 2½d.).

PIONEER LEAFLETS.

WHAT WILL YOU PUT IN ITS PLACE? By CHAPMAN COHEN.

WHAT IS THE USE OF THE CLERGY? By CHAPMAN COHEN.

THE BELIEFS OF UNBELIEVERS. By CHAPMAN COHEN.

PECULIAR CHRISTIANS. By CHAPMAN COHEN.

RELIGION AND SCIENCE. By A. D. McLAREN.

DOES GOD CARE? By W. MANN.

DO YOU WANT THE TRUTH?

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

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

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, Ltd.

Company Limited by Guarantee.

Registered Office : 62 Farringdon St., London, E.C.4.
Secretary : Miss E. M. VANCE.

THIS Society was formed in 1898 to afford legal security to the acquisition and application of funds for Secular purposes.

The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are :—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of inquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularization of the State, etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

Members pay an entrance fee of ten shillings, and a subsequent yearly subscription of five shillings.

The liability of members is limited to £1, in case the Society should ever be wound up.

All who join the Society participate in the control of its business and the trusteeship of its resources. It is expressly provided in the Articles of Association that no member, as such, shall derive any sort of profit from the Society, either by way of dividend, bonus, or interest.

The Society's affairs are managed by an elected Board of Directors, one-third of whom retire (by ballot), each year, but are eligible for re-election.

Friends desiring to benefit the Society are invited to make donations, or to insert a bequest in the Society's favour in their wills. The now historic decision of the House of Lords *in re Bowman and Others v. the Secular Society, Limited*, in 1917, a verbatim report of which may be obtained from its publishers, the Pioneer Press, or from the Secretary, makes it quite impossible to set aside such bequests.

A Form of Bequest.—The following is a sufficient form of bequest for insertion in the wills of testators :—

I give and bequeath to the Secular Society, Limited, the sum of £— free from Legacy Duty, and I direct that a receipt signed by two members of the Board of the said Society and the Secretary thereof shall be a good discharge to my Executors for the said Legacy.

It is advisable, but not necessary, that the Secretary should be formally notified of such bequests, as wills sometimes get lost or mislaid. A form of membership, with full particulars, will be sent on application to the Secretary, Miss E. M. VANCE, 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Realistic Aphorisms and Purple Patches

Collected by ARTHUR FALLOWS, M.A.

Those who enjoy brief pithy sayings, conveying in a few lines what so often takes pages to tell, will appreciate the issue of a book of this character. It gives the essence of what virile thinkers of many ages have to say on life, while avoiding sugary commonplaces and stale platitudes. There is material for an essay on every page, and a thought-provoker in every paragraph. Those who are on the look out for a suitable gift-book that is a little out of the ordinary will find here what they are seeking.

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

WHAT IS IT WORTH? A Study of the Bible

By Colonel R. G. INGERSOLL

(Issued by the Secular Society, Limited.)

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

Special Terms for Quantities.

Orders of 24 copies and upwards sent post free.

PRICE ONE PENNY

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

WATTS & CO'S PUBLICATIONS

PAGAN CHRISTS. By the Right Hon. JOHN M. ROBERTSON. New, revised and expanded, edition. Cloth, 5s. net, by post 5s. 9d.

THE CHILDREN'S BOOK OF MORAL LESSONS. By F. J. GOULD. First Series: "Self-Control" and "Truthfulness." Second Series: "Kindness" and "Work and Duty." Third Series: "The Family," "People of Other Lands," "History of Industry, Art, and Science." Fourth Series: "Justice," "The Common Weal," "Our Country," "Social Responsibilities," "Political and Industrial Progress," etc. Each cloth, 3s. 6d. net, by post 3s. 10d.; or the Four Series 15s. post paid.

THE WORKS OF PAINE. By THOMAS PAINE. Bound in imitation half calf, gilt top, 5s. net, by post 5s. 9d.

THE CHURCH AND THE PEOPLE. By JOSEPH McCABE. Cloth, 1s. 6d. net, by post 1s. 9d.; paper cover, 9d. net, by post 11d.

SHAKEN CREEDS: THE RESURRECTION DOCTRINES. By JOCELYN RHYS. Cloth, 7s. 6d. net, by post 8s.

A PLAIN MAN'S PLEA FOR RATIONALISM. By CHARLES T. GORHAM. Cloth, 2s. net, by post 2s. 3d.; paper cover, 1s. net, by post 1s. 2d.

THE EVOLUTION OF MIND. By JOSEPH McCABE. Cloth 10s. 6d. net, by post 11s.

A SHORT HISTORY OF MORALS. By the Right Hon. JOHN M. ROBERTSON. Cloth, 12s. 6d. net, by post 13s. 3d.

LIFE-STORY OF A HUMANIST. (The Author's Autobiography.) By F. J. GOULD. With Portrait of the Author and three Plates; cloth, 4s. 6d. net, by post 4s. 11d.

LIFE OF THOMAS PAINE. By MONCURE D. CONWAY. Cloth, gilt top, 5s. net, by post 5s. 6d.; paper cover, 3s. net, by post 3s. 6d.

SELECTED PROSE WORKS OF SHELLEY. Cloth, 2s. 6d. net, by post 2s. 9d.; paper cover, 1s. net, by post 1s. 2d.

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE BIBLE AND CHRISTIANITY. By CHARLES T. GORHAM. 2d., by post, 2½d.

A SHORT HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY. By The Right Hon. JOHN M. ROBERTSON. Cloth, 5s. net, by post 5s. 9d.; paper cover, 3s. 6d. net, by post 4s.

THE MARTYRDOM OF MAN. By WINWOOD READE. Cloth bound, 2s. 6d. net, by post 2s. 9d.

A CONCISE HISTORY OF RELIGION. By F. J. GOULD. Vol. I, 3s. 6d. net, by post 3s. 11d. Vol. III, 4s. 6d. net, by post 5s. (Vol. II is out of print. Each volume is complete in itself.)

SPEECHES BY C. BRADLAUGH. Second edition. Annotated by the Right Hon. John M. Robertson. 6s. net, by post 6s. 6d.

A PICTURE BOOK OF EVOLUTION. By DENNIS HIRD. New and revised edition, fully illustrated; 10s. 6d. net, by post 11s. 3d.

WHAT IS CHRISTIAN SCIENCE? By M. M. MANGASARIAN. Paper cover, 1s. net, by post 1s. 2d. (A scathing indictment.)

THOUGHTS, IN PROSE AND VERSE. By EDEN PHILLPOTTS. Cloth, 5s. net, by post 5s. 6d.

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD. By JOSEPH McCABE. Cloth, 1s. 6d. net, by post 1s. 9d.; paper cover, 9d. net, by post 11d.

THE RISE AND INFLUENCE OF THE SPIRIT OF RATIONALISM IN EUROPE. By W. E. H. LECKY. Cloth, 3s. 6d. net, by post 4s.

Can be ordered through

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

JUST PUBLISHED

A BOOK FOR ALL

Sexual Health & 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.

MEDICAL AND PRESS OPINIONS

"I feel I cannot exaggerate my appreciation of the magnificent work you have done, and are doing....."—
SIR W. ARBUTHNOT LANE, Consulting Surgeon, Guy's Hospital.

"The publication and dissemination of such pamphlets.....is a crying need; a necessity in the immediate future."—C. LANE ROBERTS, Obstetric Surgeon to Out-patients, Queen Charlotte's Hospital.

"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."—DR. C. V. DRYSDALE to the author.

"This book should be placarded all over the country. Its contents are a thousand times more important to public health and welfare than the contents of any book that is likely to be published this year. Its arguments seem to me absolutely incontrovertible."—E. P. HAYNES, late Scholar of Balliol College.

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

PIONEER PRESS PUBLICATIONS

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.

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.

CHRISTIANITY AND CIVILIZATION.

A Chapter from

The History of the Intellectual Development of Europe.

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

Price 2d., postage ½d.

The Egyptian Origin of Christianity.


THE HISTORICAL JESUS AND MYTHICAL CHRIST.

By GERALD MASSEY.

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

Price 6d., postage 1d.

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



**Dressed by a
Fellow - Freethinker.**

Only Freethinkers will support and advance our Cause, and for that reason alone we believe every Freethinker would be pleased and proud to wear a suit made by a fellow-Freethinker.

There are, of course, other considerations. You want a suit that will fit you at least equally as well as those you are now wearing; you want material suited to your needs and tastes; and you want fair value for the price you pay. So far as material and value are concerned, you can satisfy yourself in a few moments once you have received our patterns and price list. And as for fit, we give you our personal guarantee, backed up by solid *proofs* of our ability to make you a perfect suit by post, in the form of the straightforward *bona fide* testimony of delighted customers.

Write to-day for any of the following:
Gents. 'AA to H Book, suits from 56/-; Gents. 'I to N Book, suits from 99/-; Ladies' New Spring Book. Costumes from 60/-; frocks from 41/-.. Genuine Harris Tweeds, 7/9 per yard, or in garments for most moderate charges.

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.

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