

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. 25

SUNDAY, JUNE 21, 1925

PRICE THREEPENCE

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page
<i>The Wicked Atheist.—The Editor</i> - - - -	385
<i>A Spiritual Gift.—J. T. Lloyd</i> - - - -	386
<i>"These Yellow Sands."—Mimnermus</i> - - - -	387
<i>W. H. Hudson and War.—H. B. Dodds</i> - - - -	388
<i>The Reverent Agnostic.—Vincent J. Hands</i> - - - -	389
<i>The Apollonic Society.—A. G. B.</i> - - - -	390
<i>Ideals True and False.—A. D. McLaren</i> - - - -	394
<i>"The Temptation of St. Anthony."—E. Egerton Stafford</i>	395
<i>Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.</i>	

Views and Opinions.

The Wicked Atheist.

Mr. Hamilton Fyfe is the editor of the *Daily Herald*, but before holding that post he was, we understand, connected with the *Daily Mail*, and, as is known, the governing ethic of that school of journalism is, if you want a big circulation write for the superficial and the foolish. They are in the majority, and it is the majority that will supply the larger number. The reasoning is simple, and if one is out after numbers only, it is fairly sound. Now the majority of people in this country call themselves Christians, and a much larger number would consider themselves religious. In that state of things a member of the Northcliffe-cum-Beaverbrook school has a plain duty before him. He must strike the religious note as often as possible—not dogmatically religious, since that will offend the more liberal religionist. And not too liberal since that will offend the believer who is not so liberal, but who has a hankering after the familiar orthodoxies. The best plan, the safest plan, is to be vaguely religious and nebulously Christian. In that way both sets will be roped in, and the circulation will probably go up. And if you can get a knock now and then at the wicked Atheist that will please both parties, and help to build up the impression that one has a very strong affection for the deeper truths of religion. At any rate, these appear to be the lines upon which Mr. Hamilton Fyfe works. Presumably the Labour party is satisfied, and the running of the *Herald* is their business, not mine. I am only interested in the stupidly religious articles that Mr. Fyfe writes from time to time, and his playing the game of the churches by creating an atmosphere of sympathy for them. Many labourists may be deceived by these tactics, others may not be, and, perhaps one day Mr. Fyfe may discover that his readers are not all quite so foolish as he appears to think they are.

* * *

Slander as an Aid to Faith.

More than a score of *Freethinker* readers have sent me during the past week a copy of the *Herald* containing an article by Mr. Fyfe, headed "The Atheism of General Haig." As General Haig is a reputed Christian, and as, in any case, public men—including journalists—most often lack the courage to call them-

selves Atheists, even when the term correctly describes them, the title was arresting. But, alas, the Atheism was in the title only. It appears that General Haig, in the course of a recent address, made the observation that in the next war horses would be as useful as they were in the last. On this Mr. Fyfe, with a kind of schoolboyish imitation of the *Daily Mail*, presents his readers with the following packet of clotted nonsense:—

It is frequently announced that Earl Haig has attended public worship. What God does he worship? A God who created horses to be dismayed and stricken with panic by the sights and sounds of war?.....If such a creative power exists...it is no God, but a devil that he worships, a Principle of evil, a Power of Darkness, a Prince of Hell..... This is real Atheism, the real denial of God. The men and women who honestly say, "I cannot see any proof of divine purpose or government," but who know that all life springs from a common origin, and who go through the world doing all the kindness they can to everything that hath life—these are not Atheists. They believe in Love, and Love is God. The Atheist is the man or woman who denies love, who admits no all-embracing kinship with animals, who claim the right to maltreat and maim, to torment and kill, to make them "useful" in Earl Haig's sense, at no matter what cost to them.

There it is; and if any of my readers can supply me with so fine a mixture of bad logic, poor theology, vulgar insolence, and general stupidity, I should very much like to see it. Much as Mr. Fyfe may try in the future I do not think he will ever improve on it. If he is wise he will rest on his laurels, satisfied that when Lord Northcliffe again comes to address London journalists he will refer to him as his most faithful follower.

* * *

Religious Insolence.

Look at the logic! All that Earl Haig said was that in the next war horses would be useful. What indication of "callousness" is there in that? It is a statement of fact so obvious that no one would deny it. One might as well charge one with callousness for saying that in the next war men will be used as they were in the last, and they will be mangled and poisoned as before. Next, the theology. If there is a "Creative Power" he did make the horses, and he made men. But if he does not stop men butchering each other, nay, if he made animals so that to live they have to butcher each other, if he thoughtfully provides even horses with a number of special diseases, why should we assume he does not want horses used in warfare? Finally, the vulgar insolence of it. Conceive a man of Mr. Fyfe's type—who was not, I think, specially vocal against the use of horses in the late war, while the war was on, and whom I do not recall as being an active and disinterested worker in humanitarian movements—imagine Mr. Fyfe with the impudence to tell men such as Bradlaugh, or J. M. Robertson, or G. W. Foote, and many others, that they really do not know what they are, that when they call themselves

Atheists they are mistaken, but are much better than they think—they are on the same lofty level as Mr. Fyfe himself, and fit to be enrolled in the glorious Northcliffe-cum-Beaverbrook association of catch-'em-alive-oh pseudo-religious journalism! Convinced Atheists call themselves Atheists because they are Atheists. That is all there is in it. Of course, it is not a popular name. But the concern of men such as Bradlaugh was for accuracy and honesty, not popularity. And if Mr. Fyfe were just a little better acquainted with the history of the humanitarian movement, he would also know that the great impulse here has sprung from unbelievers. We should dearly like to see the expression on the face of Mr. H. S. Salt—who worked for the humane treatment of animals and men long before Mr. Fyfe was heard of—if he were told that the Atheist believes he is justified in torturing animals merely to advance his own interests. And as a further piece of information we can assure Mr. Fyfe that the case of kindness to animals does not rest upon the common origin of men and animals. Atheists were never so stupid as to assume—as Mr. Fyfe appears to do—that you may be cruel so long as those to whom you are cruel are not your blood relations. The crudity of it is appalling, even in one who is writing to please sucking curates and Socialist parsons. And on that head we might remind Mr. Fyfe that it is the New Testament which scornfully asks, "Doth God care for Oxen?" while Lecky specifically notes the lack of consideration for animals as one of the outstanding characteristics of historic Christianity.

* * *

Fair Play in the "Herald."

Just as we had written the above a letter came to hand from a Chatham correspondent, and it justifies all we have said above concerning Mr. Fyfe. The letter was addressed to the *Herald* and ran as follows:—

Is Mr. Hamilton Fyfe a humorist as well as a Mystic? If not this plan of his of dumping unfeeling and perfectly orthodox Christians into the Atheist fold is mean and an insult to Atheism. Can Mr. Fyfe instance any well-known Atheists who were, or are, inhuman to man or beast? We of the Atheist persuasion resent the slur intensely. Could it be conceived that Charles Bradlaugh, for instance, would have been parading around in khaki recruiting for the late war, as was done by the Bishop of London? No, throwing insults about like this deliberately to belittle Atheism will not do, Mr. Fyfe. Keep these inhuman monsters along with the Torquemadas, on the side that worships a God. Atheism does hold a record for clean behaviour in all things, whether horses or humans. When Christians commence accusing one another of Atheism the real Atheist must smile, though their principles are assailed in this covert fashion. This, at any rate, is the opinion of

AN ATHEIST.

The letter was not inserted, and many others were refused insertion, but here is Mr. Fyfe's reply:—

Many thanks for your amusing letter, which I appreciate very much. I should like to print it, but I am afraid most people would think you were writing seriously, and I should be deluged with letters on the subject.

Faithfully yours,

HAMILTON FYFE,

(Editor).

I have said above that Mr. Fyfe's article was an exhibition of vulgar insolence. A letter such as the above shows him to be cowardly and insulting as well as insolent. The letter is a quite straightforward protest against an unwarrantable attack on a body of men and women of which the writer is one.

There is nothing humorous about it, and if Mr. Fyfe read into it anything but what it is on the surface, he is quite unfit to occupy a position of journalistic responsibility. If we may venture on a little guessing we suspect that Mr. Fyfe has discovered by this time that he has made a bad blunder, and that in his anxiety to please one class he has seriously offended another. And to a disciple of the Northcliffe school, that is a serious mistake. His golden rule should be, "Never offend anyone unless you are quite sure he is powerless to hit back," and so far as the *Herald* is concerned this is not the case with Freethinkers.

* * *

A Moral.

There are many thousands of Freethinkers who are readers of the *Daily Herald*, and if they do not see in this incident the call to a more active advocacy of their Freethought they are less intelligent than I take them to be. From a purely personal point of view it does not matter a brass farthing what journalists of the type of Mr. Hamilton Fyfe say, or write, or think about Atheism. It is a subject beyond their grasp, and requires rather more study than they are inclined to give to any topic that does not promise immediate profit or advancement. But there is the general public to be considered, and so long as Freethinkers permit journalistic slander and abuse to go on unchecked it will continue, as will the calculated religious policy of identifying Atheism with brutality, or meanness, or anything that is generally objectionable. It is true that Coleridge said that not one man in a thousand had either the strength of mind or the goodness of heart to be an Atheist, but Mr. Fyfe, one may assume, does not read Coleridge. Nor have many public men the strength of character of a Bradlaugh, who said that the fact of Atheism being misunderstood was only an additional reason for fighting on behalf of its correct understanding. Lofty character and strong brains are not outstanding characteristics of either contemporary politicians or journalists, and the Freethinker should see to it that his position is kept clearly and unequivocally before the public. I do not think it is possible to make the Christian value truth more than he values religion; but there are enough Freethinkers in this country—if they only will—to make religious publicists realize that they cannot slander those who disagree with them without running the risk of immediate and effective exposure.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

A Spiritual Gift.

IN Corinthians xii., 3, the Apostle Paul says: "Wherefore I give you to understand that no man speaking in the Spirit of God saith, Jesus is Anathema, and no man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit." The Rev. F. Luke Wiseman, B.A., an eminent Wesleyan divine, who entered the ministry in 1881, had the courage the other Sunday morning to preach a sermon founded on that strange Pauline utterance, a report of which appears in the *Christian World Pulpit* of June 11. Wesleyan Methodist ministers are supposed to be firm believers in the verbal inspiration of the Bible. To most of them not only the thoughts and the ideas found in the Book, but the very words in which they are expressed, are of Divine selection and authority. As a matter of simple fact, however, the text is by no means true. Countless multitudes accept Jesus as the God-man without any so-called spiritual guidance whatever, but as part of the orthodox creed, while a greater number of people still reject him and all the claims made for him,

uninfluenced by any animus or venom against him, but merely at the bidding of an intellectual conviction. Speaking of the latter class Mr. Wiseman says :

There are, of course, blatant and foul-mouthed (people) who dare take the word upon them, but nobody supposes they are speaking by the Spirit of God; and to give them credit for it, they themselves know what they say is not in accordance with the Spirit of God. Occasionally it is a sore temptation that afflicts the imaginative, even some who are less imaginative than John Bunyan, who was sorely put upon at times, you remember, to speak some grievous word against God. It may be that even in some Christian households the temptation is presented to young people secretly within the heart as they feel the strain, the decent comely strain of that household, to long for a liberty that would degenerate into hurtful licence and to hear that inward whisper, Curse Jesus.

It seems to us that Mr. Wiseman is speaking of the attitude to religion that prevailed in this country forty or fifty years ago. The young people of to-day are much more forceful in character and expression than those described by the preacher. For better or worse they are enormously more positive in their convictions, more loudly clamant for what they regard as their rights, and far more regardless of consequences in their use of them than their ancestors were. We have in mind chiefly the young men and maidens who are being educated at our public schools and colleges, which institutions many men of God of the stamp of Canon Peter Green, for example, fiercely condemn as breeders of Atheists and Secularists. It is a truth anything but palatable to religious leaders that the better educated a man or woman becomes the less religion is perceptible. This is the main reason why country people have so much more religion than those who live in towns. Towns are centres of human intercourse, and intercourse is a channel along which knowledge flows, while country people seldom meet, and enjoy but few opportunities for an interchange of thoughts and ideas, with the inevitable result that their minds are filled with the traditions of the past, and religion is still a living thing to the majority of them. The sermon under discussion ought to have been preached in some quiet country church rather than in Wesley's Chapel, City Road, London. Fancy a congregation of intelligent young men and women listening to the following rigmarole :—

No man can say Jesus is Lord but in the Holy Ghost. It is the one supreme test. Here is the hall-mark of the Christian. It separates him from all others. This is at once the badge of discipleship and the test of orthodoxy and the bond of union. Nobody has any right to ask anything more than this of any Christian to receive him into the full fellowship of the Church. No matter what his colour, nation, age—there is the test. You see it all the way through the New Testament. It is the great proclamation of Pentecost. Pentecost is the outward presentation of Jesus as Lord. Ascension Day is the manifestation to the disciples, to the Church of Jesus Christ, that Jesus claims Lordship, and the distinctive note of the Christian Church is, Jesus is Lord.

We have heard and read stuff of that kind times unnumbered, and the more acquainted with it we grow the more empty of meaning and the more contemptible in character it becomes. As a dogma of theology the Lordship, or sovereignty, of Christ has been preached with eloquency and power for two thousand years, and myriads of people have been cheered and comforted by their belief in its truth. But is it true? The question is fully and finally answered by the history of the Church. To read that history, as written even by men who were eager to adopt the most favourable interpretations of the Church's deeds,

is to be completely convinced that its throne was at no time occupied by an infinitely Holy Being, who could neither do nor tolerate the doing of any wrong, but by a long list of mere men, most of whom were greater and smaller animals, some of whom gloried in the evils they perpetrated, and feared neither God nor man, and about three of whom stink insufferably in the moral nostrils of the world for all time. The Church is an institution which has never been at peace even with itself, nor with the forces silently at work in the world around it. Certainly, in all its history it has never done a single thing to show that Jesus of Nazareth is its all-conquering Lord.

Mr. Wiseman holds no high opinion of human reason, and though he looks down upon it as an inferior faculty he has the temerity to say: "I have not the slightest shadow of doubt in my mind—you may say it is because of the limitation of my mind—that this great confession of the Christian Church is consistent with the highest reason." Then follows this curious description of reason :—

But it does not follow that human reason at the stage which it has yet attained is able to get there. It may be entirely beyond it, and yet be true. There are lots of things that are true that are quite beyond the grasp of little children, say, of three years of age, but I decline to take the measure of human reason by the capacity of a child of three. I decline, too, to take the last word of the capacity of human reason from the twentieth century. It has to grow yet. It has grown beyond all recognition in certain directions in the last hundred and fifty years. It has developed amazingly in its power of grasping, and I am not going to be so unscientific as to say human reason has come to its full capacity yet.

There is much in that extract which is true and well put; but its aim is to glorify faith which, in the absence of all evidence, is looked upon as the greatest and most valuable faculty of the mind. Mr. Wiseman assures us that he has not the slightest shadow of doubt in his mind that the New Testament conception of the Church as the throne of Jesus the Lord "is consistent with the highest reason"; but will he kindly inform us by the use of what faculty he arrives at that happy conclusion? Probably by the use of none, but as the result of "some movement of the Spirit in the heart." But this wont do at all.

J. T. LLOYD.

(To be Concluded.)

"These Yellow Sands."

Come unto these yellow sands,
And then take hands. —Shakespeare.
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair. —Wordsworth.

DURING the great war English folk were restricted in the search for holiday resorts, but since the peace it has grown to be the unwelcome fashion to decry all home seaside places and to puff up extravagantly all Continental towns, however insanitary. Yet something may still be said in favour of the popular English coast towns, for their history and attractions are entwined with the life of the nation, and the feet of some of the most eminent sons and daughters of Britain trod their streets and promenades.

Brighton, populous and pebbly, for example, was loved by Thackeray, who made the garrulous ghosts of the Regency revisit the glimpses of the moon. Hither went Herbert Spencer, one of the most princely intellects England has produced, and George Jacob Holyoake, the brave soldier of Freedom; whilst scores of famous people have walked its sea-sprayed promenades. Edward Carpenter, the doyen of pre-

sent-day Democrats, used to enjoy himself dreamily on Brighton front, and on the breezy downs behind the town; but he was bored at socials and parties. The popularity of Brighton is indisputable. There are few places where so many well-known people may be seen at any time. From morbid millionaires to merry mummers they all seek "Doctor Brighton" for health and relaxation.

Sunny and shrimpy Margate was loved by Turner, one of the foremost of England's artists. He came to the place as a schoolboy and fell in love with a chum's sister. Thither went John Ruskin many years later to see the glorious reality of Turner's magic skies. It was the old Margate hoy which roused the interest of that inveterate Londoner, Charles Lamb, who, with his sister, Mary, sought a holiday by its golden sands. They visited Hastings, where Lamb found a church so small that he proposed taking it home in his pocket as a souvenir of his visit. On other occasions they visited Worthing, Brighton, and Eastbourne, but Margate always held the first place in their affections. Neighbouring Ramsgate, with its old-world and busy harbour, attracted no less a person than Heinrich Heine, when the poet was depressed and disgusted by the noise of the Metropolis. High up on a balcony on the west cliff he found rest in the joyous music of the waves. The coastline of this favoured part of England, from Dover to Herne Bay, is crowded with associations of Cowper, Dickens, Keats, and Gray. So many tablets on houses record the fact that Dickens once stayed there that his name is as much advertised as a patent medicine. Dante Rossetti is buried in Birchington Churchyard, and art pilgrims visit the little church to see the famous window designed by the great artist.

When old and dying, the great statesman, Gladstone, went to Bournemouth in the hope that the fine air might be a palliative, and that rare genius, Robert Louis Stevenson, resided here for three years. Bournemouth, near Bournemouth, is crowded with relics of Shelley, and the neighbouring Christchurch is famous for its splendid marble memorial of the young poet who devoted his life to the service of Liberty. To St. Leonards austere Thomas Carlyle took his wife when she was suffering in health, and the great writer found the sea and the Sussex lanes full of solace and meaning when nigh all else was but dust and ashes in his mouth.

Superior people often affect to despise Southend, but the broad expanse of the estuary, where two rivers, the Thames and Medway, meet the sea, with its marvellous sunrises and sunsets, has found favour with generations of artists from Turner to Wyllie. Sir Edwin Arnold, the singer of "The Light of Asia," and Robert Buchanan, poet and playwright, delighted in it, both being tenants of the same house, "Hamlet Court," at different periods. Lord Beaconsfield, when Benjamin Disraeli, stayed at an old Tudor mansion, called "Porter's Grange," whose front door was riddled with Cromwellian bullets, and was rapturous in praise of the town. "There is no finer place," he wrote to his favourite sister, Louisa, "when the spring becomes a certainty." Disraeli went there in pre-railway days, and lumbered all the way from London in a stage-coach drawn by four horses.

Thomas Hardy, R. D. Blackmore, and Eden Phillpotts, a glorious trio, have hymned the praises of the West Country, and Clement Scott's rhythmic testimonial of "The Garden of Sleep," as he called it, has made Cromer and her sister towns blossom like the rose in June. The Isle of Wight is redolent of sweet memories of Tennyson, and so one might journey round the coast of England recalling town after town with their famous associations. The plain, blunt truth is, the beaten track has its claim on our

attention, and it is none the worse for being in our own country.

In revisiting the scenes of former glories, it is as well not to lay the praise on "with a trowel." A former Bishop of Exeter lived at a beautiful house near Torquay, and a gushing and enthusiastic lady visitor burst into adjectives, and cried: "How lovely this place is. It is so Swiss." "Yes, ma'am," calmly said old Harry of Exeter, "it is very Swiss; only there is no sea in Switzerland, and there are no mountains here."

MIMNERMUS.

W. H. Hudson and War.

W. H. HUDSON, the naturalist, was not a "great" man until he was dead. Then the commercial instinct of some publisher or other and certain professional literary men prompted them to set about persuading the public that a genius had been in their midst for years without their knowledge or consent, and lo! the thing was done. Hudson arrived, by way of collected editions and appreciations. That huckster of hucksters, the dealer in "rare" books, patronized him and that obtuse product of an acquisitive age, the collector of first editions, went after early copies of his work, preferably uncut; surely one of the daftest hobbies under the sun. Hudson invariably destroyed any of his letters that later came into his hands, but some of his friends survived him and are now busy publishing the letters they received from him.

Letters from W. H. Hudson to Edward Garnett is the title of a volume wherein Hudson discusses all sorts of things, many of them the trivial things of everyday life and not worth the paper they are printed on. But throughout the volume he reveals his attitude to war; the attitude common to the majority of Britons, that it is an uplifting agency and necessary when a people have grown accustomed to long living in peace with their neighbours. And it was not alone due to the excitement set up by the war that Hudson called for strife; he was preaching its salutary effects years before the great blood lust descended on the nation. Writing to Garnett in 1913, he says:—

I am about as bad as one can be without being down altogether. Still I hope to stay on to see the flame of war brighten in this peace-rotten land. It will look beautiful to many watchers and have a wonderful purifying effect.

Again, referring to a book written by Mrs. Edith Wharton, who had been describing society as rotten, Hudson says:—

Once more I thank the gods we are going to have a touch of war, the only remedy for the present disease.

One can understand a politician talking in that strain; it is part of the stock-in-trade, but Hudson was by way of being an advocate of a more humane method of living. He could write a scathing denunciation of anybody who sought the "wonderful purifying effect" of bloodshed by way of slaughtering a stray migrant bird and saw clearly enough that, in effect, it meant a weakening of the moral fibre, but the pole-axing of Germans was in a different category. He wavers slightly in his attitude after the war had been on a few months, and his prayer then was "that we may crush the mighty war lord, God's friend and favourite, utterly, before long, and so have a normal life for the world once more." That may have been due to his recognition that "the war would be a deadly thing for literary folk." But he evidently recovered from his spasm of sanity and Garnett was

tempted to protest: "You think it is a cursed war," he answered:—

I think it is a blessed war. And it is quite time we had one for our purification from the degeneration and the rottenness which comes of everlasting peace. It was for this reason that I prayed for war in Ireland, which would have quickly spread to England in those hateful days when the leaders of Liberalism—now clothed and in their right mind—were practically jeering at Ulsterism. But this war is better and the blood that is being shed will purge us of many hateful qualities—of our caste feelings, our gross selfishness and a hundred more. Let us thank the gods or a Wilhelm and a whole nation insane with hatred of England to restore us to health.

Hudson avowed he was no politician, but he had learnt their lesson well enough. Who other than a politician, even before the war, would have asserted that war would purify anything? The veriest tyro knew that but for the virtues engendered in peace it would die of its own inherent rottenness; that it is, above all else, parasitic. "War," said Fielding, "is the sink of all iniquities," and even politicians, in any particular case, see that when they have been removed from it by a century or two.

Garnett had evidently been pushing the case against bloodshed as necessary to man's salvation, and Hudson brought up his supports. He writes in 1916:—

I had Nevinson here to see me a day or two ago. I am glad such a brave and merciless critic of his own country's shortcomings is able to say that never in all history has England been more justified in making war than in this instance. But he agrees with me that a civil war is best.

Hudson underlined "a civil war is best." For him, bayoneting a German had an uplifting effect on the nation; disembowelling an Englishman, apparently, was a hundred per cent. more so. It is a sort of short and easy way of arriving at the superman. Get the civil war under way and by the time three quarters of the combatants are wiped out the survivors will be as gods.

Hudson is now to all intents and purposes, a British classic, and therefore carrying a certain amount of authority for whatever he says. 'Thousands of readers will read him for his naturalistic love—in his particular way of dealing with it he is pretty nearly supreme—and his ornithological eminence will stamp as sound his utterances on war. There will be more grist for the mill of the war-god, more "uplift" for the nation. Man is distinguished from the brutes, so they say, by his power of reasoning. Hudson has been among them so long that he is more akin to them, in this respect, than to his own kind. He responds, like them, to the pugnacious element in his make-up and lets it dominate his action. For the case for war being a cleansing process is not based on reason: it is motivated by the most primitive of human passions.

H. B. DODDS.

Our aim should be to make men students of this world instead of candidates of the next.—Ludwig Feuerbach.

MR. G. WHITEHEAD'S MISSION.

Mr. Whitehead reports seven very successful meetings in Birmingham. All well attended and followed by keen discussions. Our evergreen and enthusiastic veteran, J. G. Dobson, our helpful Mr. Terry and Mr. Melton gave valuable help. Mr. Dobson, in spite of his seventy-five years, attending every evening. From June 20 to July 3 Mr. Whitehead will be in Swansea. Further particulars are given in the Guide Notice.

The Reverent Agnostic.

A STUDY IN RESPECTABILITY.

IF there was one thing more than another which Josiah Tebbs prided himself, it was his eminent respectability. His prim little figure, clothed becomingly in a black frock-coat; his carefully-trimmed side-whiskers, and his metriculously adjusted *pince-nez* left no doubt about it. He exceeded—if it is permissible to employ so vulgar a term in reference to one so far removed from the slightest suggestion of vulgarity—respectability from every pore. In a world given over to Bolshevism and all uncharitableness—where the celibacy of the Pope and even the honesty of Mr. Baldwin are not held to be necessarily axiomatic—the respectability of Josiah Tebbs had hitherto passed unchallenged. We say "hitherto" advisedly, for it is our sad duty to record—in obedience to that hopeless and incurable veracity that is the present biographers' chief claim to the consideration of the public—the almost incredible fact that the respectability of Josiah Tebbs had become suspect. The following letter, which appeared in the columns of the *Puddlesey Advertiser*, will explain the circumstances under which the brightness of the Tebbs' escutcheon was threatened by the corrosive poison of the breath of scandal:—

LIBERAY CLUB,
PUDDLESEY.

Sir,—It is my very painful duty to call attention to certain aspects of the recent bye-election which I unsuccessfully contested on behalf of the Liberal cause. I am too old a campaigner, and too sincere a democrat, to accept the decision of the free and independent electors of Puddlesey in any spirit of captiousness, and—as I said at the time—I tender my hearty congratulations to Major Die-hard on his success. Nevertheless, it has been brought to my notice that during the electioneering campaign I was the victim of a dastardly and sinister misrepresentation which not only reacted considerably on my chances in the election, but which also affects me as a citizen and as a man—I refer to the tales that were circulated in the constituency to the effect that I am an Atheist.

Now, sir, as a public man I cannot permit myself, without protest, to be labelled by an odious epithet of this description; and I therefore crave your permission to state briefly my position—a position I have held consistently for the past twenty years—on the question of religion in general, and Christianity in particular.

My attitude towards the great problems, the ultimate problems, of religious thought is that of a reverent Agnosticism. I do not know: I have no more knowledge on these matters than has the illiterate, untutored savage or the eminent divine—and in the face of this ignorance of the Unknowable I prefer to remain silent, where to dogmatize would be, perchance, an insult to the great, inscrutable mystery at the heart of what—for want of a better term—we call Nature. I would remind my traducers of the words of a Christian poet:—

There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

Agnosticism is a philosophy with an illustrious following, including scientists like Huxley and Spencer, and great thinkers such as Viscount Morley and John Stuart Mill; I am therefore in a distinguished company, and to insinuate that I subscribe to a vulgar and blatant Atheism is to do violence, not only to my personal feelings, but to the memory of many great and good men.

Finally, my attitude towards all that is good and noble in Christianity—true Christianity—I have repeatedly made clear from the public platform. For the great teacher, Jesus, I have always had the greatest admiration, and I am not insensible to the

widespread and beneficent influence that Christianity has, in many respects, exercised. Respecting the supernatural aspect of Christianity I can only say:—

.....where I mark your path, how pure and fair,
How based on love, on passion for man's weal,
My mind, half enjoying what it cannot share,
Revers the reverence which it cannot feel.

Yours truly,
JOSIAH TEBBS.

The above letter elicited from Major Die-Hard a disclaimer of any responsibility for the circulation of the tales referred to, and a regret that some of the electors of Puddlesey had not apparently appreciated the extreme delicacy of Mr. Tebbs' theological position.

In religion it is unfortunately true that a man's foes are often those of his own household. This applied with particular force to Josiah Tebbs. His wife was an extremely narrow Evangelical Church-woman; his son was an enthusiastic Communist, who regarded all religion as so much dope to blind the masses to the fact that their salvation lay in the dictatorship of the proletariat. It can therefore be imagined that in this great crisis Mr. Tebbs derived little consolation from the family circle. In fact—painful as it is to have to relate it—both wife and son took advantage of the situation to indulge in sundry diatribes in which "I told you so" appeared with monotonous frequency. Between the upper-stone of evangelical piety and the nether-stone of proletarian pugnacity Josiah had the very deuce of a time. Mrs. Tebbs—who, of course, "knew all along" that something of the kind would happen—taunted the unhappy man unmercifully, and said she never could understand that a man of his respectability wanted to dabble in such ideas for—"you're harmless enough, Lord knows," she added, "but I knew no good would come of it." Josiah junior, on the other hand, who, it appears, had also had premonitions concerning his father's downfall, advised him (Josiah senior) to pluck his courage up, and not be so d—d respectable, but avow his convictions and tell 'em to go to blazes! There is a point, however, at which the most reverent agnostic will kick over the traces, and this point having been reached, Mr. Tebbs revolted: he called his spouse an ignorant old fool, ordered his son out of the house, and smashed a plaster of paris bust of John Stuart Mill into a thousand fragments. Bridget who was listening in the hall, avers that he swore, but I am loth to believe it. It is certain, however, that for a Rationalist he behaved in a most irrational manner. I suppose even Agnostics are human.

It is an old saying and a true one that a prophet is not without honour save in his own country. Josiah Tebbs despised and rejected by the members of his own household, quickly found consolation in other directions. The vicar of Puddlesey expressed his delight that Mr. Tebbs had so quickly and effectively repudiated the imputation of Atheism; and—whilst, of course, dissenting from Mr. Tebbs' views—thought the spirit of reverence shown by them put many professing Christians to shame. The local Brotherhood arranged for Mr. Tebbs to address them on "*The relativity of human knowledge*"; the *Puddlesey Advertiser* reporting the address at length, and commending in a leading article, that portion of Mr. Tebbs' address in which he dealt with the limitations of science. Thus did Josiah Tebbs regain the affection and esteem of all the right-thinking people in *Puddlesey*; which, considering they do not share his views on such an important subject as the Atonement, is a magnificent tribute to the toler-

ance of Christianity. I need hardly add that Josiah Tebbs is more respectable; more reverent than ever. His ignorance of the Unknowable deepens with the passage of the years—it is profound. He has recently affirmed his adherence to the "religion of the open mind." A circumstance not unconnected with the fact that there are rumours of an approaching election.

VINCENT J. HANDS.

The Apollonic Society.

WITH others I have been greatly interested in the articles on the John Street Institute by Mr. Clarke, and am pleased to read that more may be expected.

Some ten years ago there came into my possession the *Journal of the Proceedings of the Apollonic Society*. This is a quarto volume of one hundred and forty-two pages of manuscript, by James B. Tiffin, the hon. sec., giving an account of its twenty-one years of existence from 1842 to its dissolution in 1863. The Literary and Scientific Institution of John Street appears to have been the headquarters of the Free-thought party during that period, with a strong Owenite following. The Apollonic Society was the musical section. Mr. Tiffin must have been at great pains in compiling its history. A copy of each of its leaflets, its announcements, its programmes, books of words, lecture bills, dance cards, tickets of admission, press notices were neatly pasted down, until they became too numerous and many were loosely inserted in the volume. Among the lecturers we find Thomas Cooper, Robert Cooper, "Iconoclast," Holyoake. There was also a Secular school, conducted by Mr. Jenkins, who was also the able conductor of the Apollonic Society. The music provided was of a very high order, and the choir was a large one. At a concert on February 12, 1854, "the snow being thick on the ground, and the weather generally very cold and miserable, the audience was very small, only 387 persons attended." The choir consisted on that occasion of "22 Soprani, 4 alti, 14 tenori, 16 Bassi, 56 in all." On Christmas Day, 1861, there was a choir numbering 52, with 17 instrumentalists and an audience of 783. The Apollonic Society very generously gave its services in cases of need. It gave a concert in aid of the National Hall. It attended the soirée of the Co-operative Festival at the Farringdon Hall, and, in addition to its musical programme, subscribed ten shillings to the movement. It "went to the Eastern Institution, Commercial Road, and, after considerable difficulty in consequence of the immense numbers present, succeeded in reaching the platform, sang the Marseillaise Hymn at the opening and conclusion of the meeting, the audience joining in the chorus." The lending department of the Marylebone Free Library received its assistance in the form of a concert. The engineers on strike in 1852 were assisted to the amount of £8 realized by a concert given on their behalf. The Society invariably gave selections from such composers as Rossini, Balfe, Weber, Bishop, Bellini, Mendelssohn, and justly became famous. One of the cards in the Journal rather staggered me. The Apollonic Society evidently received a "command" to appear at Windsor Castle. The card bears the date of Thursday, February 10, 1859. It is a card to admit Mr. Tiffin and instructs him that "Every performer is expected to be in the Orchestra at a Quarter before Nine o'clock at the latest." "To be admitted by the entrance to the State Apartments." Perhaps Mr. Clarke can enlighten us further on this matter.

A. G. B.

Woman is the root of all evil.—*St. Jerome.*

Acid Drops.

We do not see the *Daily Herald* regularly, and it is only as we are going to press that we receive a cutting from that paper, in which the editor defends his article on Earl Haig. We have dealt with the article itself in our "Views and Opinions." Mr. Fyfe defends himself by saying that in his view God is love, and love is God, and as most Atheists are of kindly behaviour, they believe in God, and are not, therefore, Atheists, while Earl Haig in advocating the brutal treatment of horses is an Atheist. We can only say that this is repeating the original stupidity and slander. Earl Haig did not advocate the brutal treatment of horses; he merely said that horses would be used in the next war, and a schoolboy should be able to expose the fallacy in Mr. Fyfe's statement. To say that God is Love, and therefore a man who believes in kindness cannot be an Atheist is shockingly crude. "God" means nothing of the kind, and never has meant what Mr. Fyfe says it means. We wonder what Mr. Fyfe would say if we followed a parallel course of argument and said that as some believe all Socialism is robbery, therefore every Socialist is a thief. Yet it would be quite on the same lines as his own article and its defence. A little moral courage would have saved Mr. Fyfe so much hopeless and infantile floundering. We have reasons for saying that the large number of Freethinking readers of the *Herald* have by this time let him know that he has made a false move, and we fancy he has learned his lesson, and that others beside sloppy Christian sentimentalists and opportunist parsons are worthy of consideration. He will probably be more careful in the future.

The Rev. John Holden, of Weston-super-Mare, has been unwell—very unwell. In other words, he has been rather nearer his "eternal home" than usual. But instead of rejoicing, the reverend gentleman sets off on a "recuperative voyage" to the Canary Islands, which he evidently hopes will lessen the chance of his arriving in heaven. And he writes home that it is a great pleasure to be able to inform his congregation that he is better than when he left; in other words, that he is farther away from his eternal home than he was when he set out on the voyage. Now perhaps someone will tell us in what different way could Mr. Holden have acted had he been a convinced Atheist instead of a professional parson? The only difference that we can see is that if he had been either a Freethought lecturer or the editor of the *Freethinker*—or both—he would have had to stick to his post and trust to getting better the best way he could—with or without the help of the Lord.

Canon Barnes has been interviewed by a representative of the *Daily Chronicle*, and it is not surprising to find him saying that genuine Christianity is all right. He is encouraged to find that the English people are not turning to Mohammedanism, or Buddhism, or to some non-Christian system for their ethics. But why should they turn to anything but the scientific conception of ethics as a branch of sociology which sane science has been teaching for many years. Bishop Barnes must be either artful, or is not nearly so intelligent as his fellow religionists think him. The important thing for him to deal with is the fact that a growing number of educated people realize that ethics has nothing to do with any religious system, and, indeed, the less morality has to do with religion the better it is. That is the real question with which the Bishop ought to deal, and vague generalities about religion and its value only serves to hide the position from superficial observers.

Goodness and truth, says the Bishop, cannot keep the supreme value we instinctively accord them unless they are attributes of God himself. And that is all so much rubbish. Actions are good or bad, truth is valuable, because of their effects on the relations existing between human beings. If getting drunk, or beating one's wife made everybody happier, healthier, and better, we

should consider it a crime to keep sober, and every wife would feel neglected if she didn't get a good thrashing. The value of actions depend upon their consequences; they have no more to do with the personality of God than the gyrations of a cow have to do with the motions of the planets. Of course, the Bishop cannot get away from such doctrine as this, because the only reason that Christianity has ever furnished for being moral is that you will get rewarded in the next life, and the Christian cannot see why one should not be a rascal if there is not a god to look after him. The Christian is a born dividend hunter, and unless he can see a good time coming for the restraint he puts on himself by keeping his behaviour within prescribed limits, he sees no reason why he should not "paint the town red" on the slightest opportunity.

Bishop Barnes, by the way, supplied a good illustration in the art of theological confusion in the course of a sermon in Westminster Abbey on Sunday last. He lamented that the number of candidates for the ministry were getting fewer in number and poorer in quality. That is only what one might expect, but his explanation for it is peculiarly fatuous. Able young men, he says, cannot reconcile the Anglo-Catholic view with "the character of God's government of the world." Now that able young men cannot reconcile religious doctrines with what they know of the nature of the world is to make an intelligible statement. To say that they cannot be reconciled with God's government of the world is sheer verbiage. We do not know there is a God, and we do not know what—if he existed—he intended his government of the world to be. Bishop Barnes strikes us as being in his right place in the pulpit.

A second statement was that in the first centuries of the Christian era the prevailing religions of the Mediterranean were Oriental mystery cults, and "into this welter of faiths came Christianity." That again is nonsense. What the Bishop should have said is, "Out of this welter of Oriental faiths came Christianity." That would have been expressing an easily verifiable historical fact. No one can have reasonable doubts but that Christianity as it meets us as an established fact, is a rehash of numerous religious beliefs that were all well established long before Christianity, as such, was heard of. The puzzling thing about men such as Bishop Barnes is the curious way in which they can see so much and yet so little at the same time. We have heard some of his friends justify him on the ground that he goes as far as he dare in his position. But we have heard of men who have gone the whole way in their championship of truth without regard for their "position." It appears to be getting increasingly difficult for a man in the Christian pulpit to retain a character for both ability and honesty.

Dr. F. W. Norwood, of the City Temple, writing in the *Daily Herald*, is a healthy sign of present-day tendencies. At one time, God and a belief in him through the homes provided for the purpose was the be-all and end-all, but Dr. Norwood, on his own admission, has put aside one nebulous authority for another not quite so vague yet capable of improvement. He writes: "There is only one way to security: it is a double way. It is the way of adhesion to law and of growing trust and confidence which comes from the belief in law." If there was a career in the field of Freethought we have no doubt that the pastor of the City Temple would finally cast his skin of theology and join those who must naturally be ahead of others who are still struggling with the prehistoric ideas that once fermented in the heads of saints:

I do not think we sufficiently estimate the importance of the move being taken in America against scientific teaching in the public schools in America. The movement, which is headed by W. J. Bryant, aims not merely at the elementary, but also at the public schools, although actual legislation has only been effected in one or two of the States, the *New York World* presents its

readers with an account of attempted legislation in about twenty of them. What amount of ultimate success the movement will meet with remains to be seen, but the startling fact is the very large number of people who are prepared to back up by laws and penalties the repression of any kind of teaching that questions the most literal teaching of the Bible. It is a movement that has in it great possibilities, and as its chief supporters appear to be among the farming class, whose votes at election times carry weight, politicians may not be wanting to avail themselves of the fact.

America is, of course, a long way off, and we are inclined to flatter ourselves that we have got beyond anything of that kind in this country. About that we are not quite so sure. There are large tracts in this country where the religious beliefs are as crude as those championed by Bryan, and if a strong lead were given it would gain plenty of support. Whenever there is blasphemy prosecutions there are not wanting plenty who approve of it, and it is notorious that blasphemy prosecutions are usually successful. And those Christians who disapprove, do so mainly on the ground that it does more harm than good, not that it is a thing that should not occur in a civilized society. Moreover, one should not forget that for one Bishop Barnes, who is shrewd enough to see that some admissions must be made, there are a dozen of the clergy who cling to the old style of things. Given the chance, we should not be long before Christians would be rallying to an anti-evolutionary campaign. Ambrose Bierce said that those who objected to having descended from an ape might console themselves with the reflection that they had not descended so far as to preclude the possibility of a return. And we have not yet got far enough away from the savage to preclude the possibility of getting back there again.

One of the essential qualities of Sabbatarianism came out in a protest made by the Sunday Observance League against the playing of "jazz" on Sunday by the Finsbury Park band. The protest is not raised against the playing of ordinary music—probably because it is too well established—but against dance music. And the protest against dance music can only be because the majority of listeners appear to be enjoying it. It is happiness on Sunday to which these people object. They cannot bear to be miserable alone. Of all the ugly things in the world Christian sabbatarianism is about the ugliest.

The following is worth citing from the *Church Times* :

The persecution which called forth Voltaire's greatest burst of indignation was that of a Secular court, and was carried on under a code that in no way differed in theory though it differed enormously in the savagery of its penalties, from our own Blasphemy Law, the sort of persecution to which fashionable Agnostics rarely object.

We hope that those timid and "respectable" Free-thinkers who live in such terrible fear lest Christians should charge them with being associated with a common or vulgar, or militant propaganda will appreciate the sneer contained in the last sentence. It may come as a revelation that most responsible Christians have rather more contempt for them than respect. Naturally they would sooner see unbelievers timid than courageous, apologetic than fearless, but inwardly they will respect the man with courage far more, and they pay him the compliment of their greater dislike. And, as we have often pointed out, the fashionable Agnostic only enjoys his security because there is someone else in the field who is bearing the brunt of the enemy's onslaught. Inevitably he is taking shelter behind the more robust unbeliever.

The device of taking shelter behind the verdict of a secular court in order to shelter the Church will not do. It is quite true that the cases with which Voltaire's name is linked were cases in which the verdicts were pronounced by a Secular court, but these were controlled by legislation which was created by the Christian

Church, and which would never have existed but for the Christian Church. Every man sentenced for blasphemy in this country has been sentenced by a Secular court, every man burned for heresy was sentenced by a Secular court, but no one outside an asylum would dream of denying that in all these cases it was Christianity which created the laws which set the law in motion, and which saw to it that the Secular courts carried out its wishes. The apology is just one more illustration of the almost impossibility of men acting with complete intellectual honesty where Christianity is concerned.

The Lord evidently could not guard his house against thieves. Burglars have broken into St. Thomas Church, Fulham, and have taken all the silver and brass ornaments from the altar. Such cases of celestial negligence are overlooked when it comes to incidents where the policeman is called in to protect him who cannot protect his own houses.

The *Christian Herald* offers to readers a Free Railway Insurance of £1,000 for Death; and for Disablement £250; and Partial Disablement £125; also a Special Insurance of £12 for Railway Employees. If that is not a sufficient inducement, the biblical tap is turned on on the reverse side of the pamphlet with quotations from St. John—entitled A Plain Statement, A Solemn Warning, and the result. It is a pretty conglomeration and would impress no one with anything but its utter stupidity.

After Bradlaugh and Mrs. Annie Besant have had mud thrown at them for tentatively touching the question of birth control, we presume that Dr. E. W. Barnes, Bishop of Birmingham, will be hailed as a gallant and courageous fellow. The laurels, however, will be somewhat faded with those who do not regard eighteenth century deism as advanced thought.

To understand the gospels, we are told that something must be known about the religious life of the people among whom Christ lived one must know something about the Pharisees, Sadducees, Samaritans, Essenes, and Zealots. In other words, one must read oneself stupid in trying to understand a gallinaufry of parables, fancies, stories, and fables. It is quite easy to cast the question in this form, and if the individual man lived for ever, the advice could be followed. To state another matter in another form, what would be said if an eminent professor of mathematics laid it down as an axiom that every woman must understand the science of numbers before she could knit a jumper?

How to Help.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

To Correspondents.

- H. NEWSOME.—Glad you have decided to impose the fine of one extra copy of the *Freethinker* per week until you have found a new subscriber to take it off your hands. You will not have to wait long, if you make up your mind not to. And we would far rather have two readers with one copy each than one reader with two copies.
- J ELLIOTT (Toronto).—Pleased to have the commendations of one more Canadian reader. The Small case does present some very interesting features, and it serves, as you remark, to illustrate the harm done to individuals by a religious training, and the impunity with which criminal acts may be performed under the sanction of religious beliefs.
- E. SMEDLEY.—Shelley's declaration of being without belief in a God was deliberate. The assumption of Pantheism is the result of inference. Alternatively, as the lawyers would say, there is no substantial difference between a genuine Pantheism and Atheism. To say that one believes everything to be God, and to say that one has no belief in a personal and independently existing God, are substantially identical propositions. It is a difference in words only.
- H. SILVERSTEIN.—Thanks for article. See "Acid Drops." We are glad we did not miss the article, but unfortunately so many of our friends imagine that someone else will send and refrain from doing so. We cannot see all the papers, and it is better for us to get several copies of something worth having than not to get any.
- T. GREY.—We should be only too pleased to get hold of some responsible person in every town to act as agent for the *Freethinker* if we could manage it. But it must, obviously, be someone who is personally interested in the work. A merely commercial proposition is unworkable.
- S. L.—Not that we know of. We were only feeling tired after a hard day's work, and, as we had been at it from 10.30 in the morning till the close of the evening meeting, there was some excuse. Conference Sunday always means plenty of work. Still, it was worth it.
- MORAG WALTERS.—Very many letters have been sent to the *Daily Herald* in reply to Mr. Hamilton Fyfe's foolish article on Atheism. None of these, we believe, have appeared, which is what one might expect from the tone of the article itself. We have dealt with it at length, mainly to illustrate a point we have often stressed, namely, that so long as Freethinkers permit themselves to be smothered by the Christians and the opportunists religionists attached to the movements in which they are interested they will continue to be treated as negligible and to be insulted with impunity. When they are more assertive the Hamilton Fyfes of the press will be a little more careful.
- E. NEWTON.—The idea of inflicting a fine on oneself of one extra copy extra per week until a new subscriber is found has tickled the fancy of many. We hope it will lead to new converts for what you call "the ranks of the enlightened."
- A. G. B.—Yours is one of many copies of letters sent. As you will see, we have dealt with the matter, and the protests will no doubt have done Mr. Fyfe good. Had Freethinkers made it a practice to assert themselves as Christians have done, they would not be subjected to insults from those whose desire appears to be to please the section which shouts loudest.
- W. CLARK.—An obvious misprint. It should have read either Bishop Colenso, or Bishop of Natal.
- S. BROWN.—Your letter on the Scottish Sabbath was excellent. We are flattered to know that our work inspires others to try their hand. That is, indeed, one of the chief reasons why we write, and if all who agree would lend a hand, how easy the work would be!
- The "*Freethinker*" is supplied to the trade on sale or return. Any difficulty in securing copies should be at once reported to this office.
- When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, giving as long notice as possible.
- Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, by the first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.
- Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, and not to the Editor.
- All Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to "The Pioneer Press," and crossed "Midland Bank, Ltd., Clerkenwell Branch."

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

A Belfast friend has been good enough to get some posters printed, at his own expense, and is advertising the *Freethinker* in that city. This is a very good plan, and one which, if we could, we would follow all over the country. But this friend is anxious to meet other Freethinkers in Belfast who are willing to co-operate with him in pushing the paper in whatever way is possible or desirable. We have many readers in Belfast, and if any of these who lend a hand, will be good enough to write us, we will see that they are put into touch with each other. We are quite certain there is a large potential public for a journal such as this one, and it ought to be made into an actual one.

With reference to the trouble in China, Professor Giles, the very eminent Professor of Chinese, at Cambridge, and one who knows as much of China as any living Englishman, quotes from a correspondent in China who begs him "don't believe all the tosh which appears in the home papers." Professor Giles, therefore, writes an article in the *Sunday Times*, which throws some light on the cause of the trouble. To begin with, he reminds English people that although a riot is a riot, and must always be accompanied with danger to some, "the Chinese are really a quiet, inoffensive people, greatly influenced by the Buddhist religion of mercy, the commandment of which is, 'Thou shalt not take life.'" Why, then, the present trouble?

Professor Giles' answer is not surprising to those who know the past history of Christian missions in China. The truth here is camouflaged by talking of Chinese hostility to Christianity. That, however, is not true. The Chinese are not an intolerant people. Neither Confucianism nor Buddhism make for intolerance. It is the conduct of the Christian missionaries that is resented. Ever since the treaty of 1858-60 the Chinese have protested against the extra-territorial clause that was then surreptitiously introduced into the treaty made with France, and of which nevertheless other countries have availed themselves, despite its fraudulent character. This clause places Christian missions outside the province of Chinese law, and the missionaries, in order to induce conversions have applied this protection to their converts. Some years ago Mr. Cohen went fully into this matter, in his *Foreign Missions*, and showed how any native who wished to protect himself against the consequences of rascality, had an easy method by going to the Missions and proclaiming himself a convert. And on this the Professor remarks that, "During the last 65 years several 'riots' have occurred. In 1878 the Tientsin Massacre, in 1890 the Ynagsze Riots; these were both purely religious upheavals. The Boxer madness, 1900, was partly political and partly religious."

The following from Professor Giles' article is worthy of note:—

These events, separated by a long interval from the present day, bring us down to the present unrest, in which the sinister figure of Feng Yü-hsiang has so far played a prominent part. This "Christian General" is certainly the biggest blackguard on the Chinese stage in 1925. He has twice—some say three times—betrayed friends and allies who trusted him. He treated the harmless young man who carries the title of Emperor in a shameful and unnecessarily cruel manner, also breaking the financial pledges so generously given by the Republican Government. How the public on this side of Suez can have reverentially swallowed the egregious piffle which heralded the General's advent into the limelight as a Christian it is difficult to ex-

plain. According to reports prevalent not long ago, Feng Yü-hsiang baptised his army by platoons, and his obedient soldiers, yielding as though to love at first sight, marched into Peking to the words and tune of "Hark the Herald Angels Sing."

The truth about Feng Yü-hsiang is that the Chinese have for some time found out his real character, and that his very name stinks in their nostrils. His base acts of treachery, exactly as in the case of a much more able man, Yüan Shih-k'ai, place him outside the pale of his respectable fellow-countrymen; and if only Chang Tso-lin now succeeds in getting rid of him altogether that will mean a step in advance.

The present unrest is, in my opinion, also partly due to the exportation of Chinese boys to America, and in a much smaller number to England, for such they usually are, receive in the States or in England an education on lines similar to those for American or English boys, and are baptised as Christians. As young men they return to China, entirely ignorant of their own language, their own long-drawn-out history and wonderful literature. Instead of being of any use to China, they are, with some brilliant exceptions, a hindrance and a source of trouble. There seems to me to be no evidence that the Soviet Government is at the back of the present troubles. It is, at any rate, a convenient card to play when it may be desirable to keep realities in the background.

It seems that the Chinese also suspect that after it was agreed to return the Boxer indemnity to China, it has been returned, in part, in the shape of grants to missionary societies. At any rate, it is clear that the Chinese resent having the missionary societies thrust upon them, with all their extorted privileges. Unfortunately the truth about the missionaries in various parts of the world is not permitted to appear in the ordinary press, and journals such as the *Freethinker* do not get sufficiently into the hands of those who most need enlightenment.

Mr. T. Querney writes to our shop manager from Pondoland (S.): "Will you please convey to Mr. Chapman Cohen my thanks for his masterly articles and the uphill fight he is maintaining on behalf of the Cause. The paper comes as a decided refresher in this land of Wesleyan parasites and other forms of celestial trading that are used as excuses for meanness. And the 'straight from the shoulder' policy adopted is to my mind the only rational method of tackling the enemy." We are glad to receive appreciations of the paper from different parts of the world, for Mr. Querney's letter is only one of many, and as for a "straight" policy we have never yet seen any lasting good from bothering whether Christians were pleased or otherwise with what was being done. Gaining the goodwill of Christians usually means falling short of one's duty to Freethought. We mostly follow the policy of making pets only of such animals as are harmless.

Mr. George Whitehead commences a lecturing mission at Swansea from Saturday, June 20, till July 4. On each Saturday evening he will lecture on the Sands at 7.30, and every evening during the week at the same time outside Victoria Park gates. On Sunday evenings he will also lecture outside the Park gates at 6.30. Freethought propaganda has not been so active of late as it might have been, and we hope that all the friends in the district will seize the occasion to give the movement a renewed impetus. There are hundreds of Freethinkers in Swansea, and some determined effort should be made to get them attached to the association.

We are glad to learn that the Newcastle Branch is holding some very successful meetings on the Town Moor on Sunday evenings. There is scope for a good active movement on Tyneside, and if a strong attempt were made to enlist the support of local Freethinkers there would soon be splendid results shown. It is too often the case that those doing the work wait for others to come forward, and these others hang back waiting for someone to ask them to come forward. Between the two the work is apt to languish. We note that our friends, Messrs. Chapman and Bartram have been active in the work, which is only what we should expect to be the case.

Ideals True and False.

(A Paper read at the N.S.S. Conference.)

MAN'S ideas of perfection, his judgments and standards of value, like his other ideas, change from age to age. But besides the far-reaching changes which social evolution brings about, the meanings attached to the terms "higher" and "lower," and the ways in which they are applied, vary with personality and character within the same generation. "What sort of philosophy a man chooses," says Fichte, "depends upon what sort of man he is." As essential elements of the foundation on which any true ideals, personal or social, can be rested, I should include the systematic investigation of Nature's processes, a general participation in her resources, and an intense appreciation of this present life.

Under the dominion of the Christian religion the ideal life, such as it was, was long relegated to a future state, all knowledge of which was derived from a Church claiming divine and exclusive authority. For the lower stratum of humanity this ideal found expression in acceptance and submission, and for the higher stratum in the attempt to establish the universal sway of the one true faith. This view of life, enforcing conformity and suppressing all competing views, was inseparably bound up with false notions of the origin of the world, which checked man's research, and with the vicious doctrines of a fallen race, and of atonement which for several centuries generated a morbid other-worldism. The Protestant Reformation tended to give that ideal a somewhat different course, but it did not even purport to repudiate other-worldism or to grant intellectual liberty. It is impossible here to trace the currents of religious thought through subsequent periods of "rationalism" down to the present-day indifference to religion. The Christian world is faced with the problem of adjusting to man's advancing knowledge a ready-made ideal which is the culmination of a theological system, with the inevitable result that the effort is impeded at every step by the survivals which, from its nature, Christianity must transmit from one generation to another. Not only are doctrines rationalized within the system itself, but an attempt is made to force modern cultural values into line with out-worn conventions which are incompatible with them.

Men and women do not become personalities of the highest type by merely discarding their religious beliefs. Personality is made up of many factors and if "fine spirits touched to fine issues" are not superabundant among arch-heretics they are not so numerous as some people think among Christians of unimpeachable orthodoxy. For centuries the main concern of the Christian was to be on the safe side, and this in itself fostered a false attitude to life and dwarfed the mental and moral stature of its victims. "The worst corruption is the corruption of the best." One serious count in our indictment of Christianity is its creation of spurious virtues; but its real virtues never became part and parcel of the fabric of this life for enthusiasts who had a safe passport to citizenship in the only world that counted. Brotherliness is a virtue; but though in theory Christianity declared all men equal before God, the Church from time to time upheld the doctrine of divine right of kings, consistently excommunicated heretics, and for centuries was an organized menace to mental freedom. No other influence in Europe has done more than the Christian religion to stifle intellectual honesty, which implies the courage to test and criticize, and is essential to every true ideal of personality. The reaction upon the community's moral life was equally

disastrous. For it is independent thinking, not the preaching of orthodox doctrine, that begets a sense of responsibility. Denunciation of "sin" is a different thing from remedying evil and a much cheaper thing.

Can a purely natural humanism give full play to the reason and at the same time find room for the most elevated feeling? History answers not only that it can, but that nothing else can. As life gains in dignity feeling becomes purified and Nature is invested with a fuller significance.

What appeal can the Secularist philosophy of life make to the young England that is now eagerly reaching out for a truer social ideal? Our control of Nature is extending every day; it necessitates new adjustments and brings in its train a host of industrial problems which can only be solved by effort based upon sound knowledge and by the growth of a higher type of sociality which will bring with it a new revaluation of interests. Religious systems, imposing orthodoxy, on the one hand feed man's crudest emotions, and on the other create an atmosphere of abstractions and subtleties which infect the community's whole intellectual life. Those new interests will never issue from this morass of obscurantism. Nowadays nearly everybody demands some change of environment to enable the masses to lead normal, healthy lives. The emphasis, however, is too often on a false ideal. An extraneous motive is thrust into the discussion of social questions and an appeal made to a supposed final and unique personality for the justification of this or that attitude. Industrialism did not spring into existence suddenly out of nothing, it met the needs of a developing society, and only a philosophy of life which urges both rulers and ruled to make up their minds as to what they mean by "higher" interests will contribute anything permanent to its reform. For nothing particularly praiseworthy in the way of moral sensitiveness is required to arouse discontent with some of the features of our social life. "Where are your benevolent institutions?" is the question I am most frequently asked by opponents in the public parks—a striking commentary on the sense of values that inspires some Christians. Only this month I read that the British and Foreign Bible Society spent £410,000 in 1924, and yet improvements now being suggested in our education system are meeting with considerable opposition on the ground of expense. Those who declare that social reform along the lines of modern humanism means nothing but applied Christianity, may be asked to glance at the housing conditions, the state of sanitation, and the ignorance and fear which prevailed throughout Europe when the Christian ideal was paramount. Men and women saved their souls and lost their manhood and womanhood.

Again and again we are assured that no social order can break entirely with its past. For this reason then let us guard against passing on to our successors false values which it will be extremely difficult to extirpate even when they are felt to be false. Let us rather bequeath a consciousness of corporate life based, not upon orthodox authority or docility veiled under the name of devotion, but upon clear conceptions of those interests whose influence, to some extent at least, will be strengthened by the slow growth of such movements as ours. True ideals are the harvests of a vast succession of seasons, a "progressive revelation" of the race. They draw sustenance from the moral culture built up from age to age, and at the same time give coherence to it. They are at once a creator and a product of both personal and social values. Above all, if our aspiration has a firm hold on reality, on love of the world and a relish for

life, it will weather many storms of reaction and come through many periods of adversity. Strength comes by struggle, often after a series of failures, and no salvation worth having is ever acquired by proxy. The paradox of an "authoritative" religion and its mission is this—when there is the greatest success there is the greatest failure. Truculently asserting its claim to the possession of "eternal verities" on which depends the future welfare of souls, such a religion does not aspire to the higher levels of human interests, it is forced up to them at an incalculable cost of mental and moral energy by the very free-thought which it has always maligned and frequently persecuted.

A. D. McLAREN.

"The Temptation of St. Anthony."

ST. ANTHONY was reputed to have died in the year 356 of the Christian Era. He appears to have lived during a considerable part of his life in the solitary places of Egypt; amidst the rock-tombs of the plains of Thebes. It is supposed that during his years of praying and fasting he was tempted frequently by demons over whom he ultimately came to exercise great power. So much so, that when he became famous the faithful had but to call upon his name, in the hour of temptation, and the tempter or temptress was instantly vanquished.

To Anthony is given the honour of being the first Christian monk who founded a monastic order.

In the *Temptation of St. Anthony*, published in 1874, after the labour of thirty years, Gustave Flaubert presented the world with a study in the passions and desires of mankind reflected as it were in a mirror of ascetic life. The work closes with daybreak for St. Anthony, and leaves him to make the sign of the cross and resume his devotions, after seeing the face of Christ beam in the disc of the sun, as if after his temptation which, as we shall see, has been sufficiently varied, the peace of Christ had fallen upon him. But the reader who is not swayed by religious feeling and thought will have seen in the panoramic presentation of the passions and desires, with which the monk has been perturbed, the futility of the ascetic life as a means to the attainment of any of the most noble and useful types of manhood.

In St. Anthony we have the struggle to suppress, instead of the attempt to train or educate, the normal desires and passions of man; and the result is failure as revealed by the vision in which the desire for wealth and pleasure, the passions of love and sex, the thirst for knowledge, run riot in the brain that has been sapped and mined by fasting and prayers. Instead of the robust thinker and active worker in the field of life who, with the full passions and desires of manhood upon him, is able to hold himself under self-mastery while attending to the duties of a varied and helpful career, we have a monk scared by a panoramic vision of the very desires and passions which he has striven to subdue by the exercise of religious brutality towards his body, assisted by the mental dope of prayer. Perhaps some compensation for the physical brutality of fasting and scourging was found at intervals in the pleasure of inaction and in the ecstasies of the senses when the visions of St. Anthony's overwrought imagination seemed less fearful and less likely to drag him to perdition.

In the opening chapter of Flaubert's work, St. Anthony is seated cross-legged on the ground in, or near, his hut on the summit of a mountain at the foot of which is the Nile. He is weaving mats, but on seeing the sun set he gives voice to the weariness that has come upon him and exclaims: "Another day! another day gone! Nevertheless formerly I

used not to be so wretched." After a moment or two spent in reflection he walks up and down and is soon thinking of the day when he left home, and of the early days of his solitude when he dwelt in the tomb of a Pharaoh, from the enchantment of which he fled to a ruined citadel on the Red Sea, to find frightful demons shrieking in his ears and flinging him on the ground. He then thinks of the various sects which tried to convert him and is troubled by the thought of being unable to banish their doctrines from his mind.

St. Anthony's meditation on the past and what he might have been had he not taken to a life of solitude continues until he is almost unable to bear his own thoughts. At last he bursts into tears and lies on the ground. Then, going into the hut, he lights his torch and tries to read the Bible. This but seems to direct his thoughts in the ways of evil. He turns over the pages in a very off-handed manner and certain passages cause him to think of killing and eating; of blood and massacre, of banqueting, pride, power and pleasure; then of riches, precious odours and ointments; and, at last, of the wisdom of Solomon. It seems hopeless to strive against the wicked suggestions of the old book.

After a while St. Anthony becomes faint and, leaning against his cabin, desires to eat meat, a bunch of grapes, or curdled milk. Then in his weakness he seems to feel the perfume of a woman's hair coming to him on the gentle breeze, and he looks down the pathway through which women used to come to ask of him how they might escape from the world of pleasure. Gradually a visionary band of travellers appears. St. Anthony calls to them that they are going the wrong way. The wind passing through the rocks mocks him and voices seem to ask whether he desires women, heaps of gold, or a glittering sword. Objects become transformed and in place of an old palm tree there appears to be the torso of a woman who is looking over the edge of the cliff, while her hair waves in the breeze. Then as he turns to his cabin the stool on which is placed a great Bible appears to be a bush and the large black letters are changed into nightingales.

Anthony puts out the light, thinking that to be the cause of the strange transformation, but the vision becomes more realistic in the profound darkness "and suddenly in the air above there appears and disappears successively—first, a stretch of water; then the figure of a prostitute; the corner of a temple, a soldier; a chariot with two horses prancing." In the tumult of St. Anthony's brain the so-called profane and sacred mingle together as if laughing at and mocking him in his profession of sanctity, and the monk falls exhausted upon his mat.

We cannot follow Flaubert's magic panoramic unfolding of St. Anthony's vision from beginning to end, with its episodes in which appear the heresiarchs, the martyrs, the magicians, the ancient gods, the monsters, the spirit of science, the spirit of lust and of death, and the final scene in which nature is transformed. All this can only be had by those who choose to read the book. But in the following incidents from the vision may be seen something, on the one hand, of the struggle of the ascetic against his natural desires and passions, and on the other hand, something of the pleasure to be derived even from those struggles.

At one time, when St. Anthony has lashed himself until the pleasure of punishment thrills him, a great procession of men and women bringing wealth appears to him. "Between the clefts of the mountains appear standards—camels' heads with halters of red silk—mules laden with baggage, and women covered with yellow veils, bestriding piebald horses." When

the panting beasts lie down and the slaves open the bales and packages, wonderful carpets and "precious glimmering things are laid upon the ground"; and, from the back of a magnificently caparisoned white elephant glides the Queen of Sheba. At first the mind of St. Anthony dwells upon the wonderful richness of the queen's dress and adornments; then he hears her make love to him, and in her effort to win him she describes many of the strange things which she possesses. She has winding galleries; palaces for summer which are made of reeds; palaces for winter built in black marble; vast lakes with wonderful islands covered with mother-of-pearl; perfumers who mingle the sap of rare plants and prepare precious cosmetic pastes; painters and goldsmiths and slaves of every description; armies and teams of camels; and a store of wealth that makes the mind of St. Anthony dizzy. But when she asks the monk to go with her he draws back, and the Queen of Sheba asks: "How? neither the rich, nor the coquettish, nor the amorous woman can charm thee: is it so? None but a lascivious woman, with a hoarse voice and lusty person, with fire-coloured hair and super-abundant flesh? Dost thou prefer a body cold as the skin of a serpent, or rather great dark eyes deeper than the mystic caverns?—behold them, my eyes!—look into them!" Anthony gazes into the queen's eyes, and she tells him that she is all the women he has ever seen, or dreamed of, but Anthony disdains her by making the sign of the cross, and the Queen of Sheba departs with all her retinue. The mind of the monk has enjoyed the spectacle of wealth, magnificence, and the beauty of woman and it is time to repent.

In another part of the vision Anthony sees an array of the gods with which mankind has been inflicted. Sometimes he is constrained to laugh and wonder at the stupidity of men in their worship of such things. But at times he feels nothing but horror at the thought that "before these gods men are slaughtered upon altars of stone; others are brayed alive in huge mortars, crushed under chariots, nailed upon trees."

After a while the Buddha appears to St. Anthony and the Christian monk sees himself equalled, if not outdone, in the folly of his monkery. The Buddha relates how he "accomplished wondrous things—eating but one grain of rice each day (and the grains of rice in those times were no larger than at present)—my hair fell off; my body became black; my eyes receding within their sockets, seemed even as stars beheld at the bottom of a well." For six years he was motionless, exposed to flies, lions, serpents, the summer suns, the heavy rains, the lightnings, snows, hails and tempests, without even his lifted hand as a shelter. In fact, we might add, if it is no offence to the Holy Ghost, the beastly filth of the Buddha was equal to that of any devout Christian ascetic in his palmiest days. But the great Buddha has endured more than this. He has been tempted by women—"beautiful with daintily-painted faces, and wearing girdles of gold. Their teeth were whiter than the jasmine flower; their thighs round as the trunk of an elephant. Some extended their arms and yawned, that thy might so display the dimples of their elbows; some winked their eyes; some laughed; some half-opened their garments. There were blushing virgins, matrons replete with dignity, queens who came with great trains of baggage and of slaves."

At which Anthony exclaims, "Ah! he too—" Perhaps because he sees in the Buddha's temptation something like a copy of his own vision of the Queen of Sheba and her serving maids, and thinks that all ascetics indulge in secret enjoyment.

St. Anthony is not even first in the field in the use of the whip and the sacrifice for religious purposes.

He hears Cybele, the great Mother goddess, praised because she loves the sound of tambourines, the echo of dancing feet, the salty tear, and blood. He sees the followers of Cybele scourge themselves and gash their arms with knives that their sins may be remitted. "Blood purifies all—fling its red drops abroad like blossoms! She, the Great Mother, demands the blood of another creature—of a pure being."

The sacrifice and the sorrow of Atys, the woes of Isis and of Persephone; the weeping and wailing of their followers are revealed to St. Anthony, and over against it all, as if to mock him, there is the languorous beauty of Venus, with her blonde hair, slender waist; hips that curve like the form of a lyre; her rounded thighs, her dimpled knees, and delicate feet. And the monk realised that "the splendour of her body makes a nacreous-tinted halo of bright light about her; while all the rest of Olympus is bathed in a pink dawn, rising gradually to the heights of the blue sky."

In the chimera, the sphinx, and the spirit of science the great problems of life present themselves with their attempted solutions; and the figures of Lust and Death present their various modes of consolation for those who seek happiness but find disconsolation in the ways of life. St. Anthony refuses all, and after a delirious spell which follows a vision of nature transformed he returns to his devotions, while the sun-god smiles at him with the face of Jesus Christ.

E. EGERTON STAFFORD.

Correspondence.

PATRIOTISM AND POETRY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In the *Freethinker* of May 31 Eliana Twyman takes your brilliant contributor, "Mimnermus," severely to task for an apparently "bourgeois" conception of Patriotism. I am sure that all readers of the *Freethinker* enjoy his beautiful articles, and certainly in no less a measure his appreciation of the soldier poet. I hope "Mimnermus" will not consider me presumptuous for endeavouring to break a lance in his defence. Your correspondent, Eliana Twyman, seems to imagine that Patriotism has no real basis, that it is purely a sham just because it is, and has been, abused. It does not require great depth of thought to see that Patriotism is no sham. A man who is true to himself in a real sense of the word cannot be untrue to his fellow men. In the same way a good patriot cannot be a nuisance or a danger to other nationals. One who loves his mother and his kin and is loyal to his friends and to his country need not hate the rest of the world. I may mention the great Hungarian soldier-poet of the revolution of 1848, Alexander Petöf, who was a Rationalist, or Atheist, who hated all shams, but who fired the imagination of his countrymen by his famous poem, "Arise Magyars," which electrified his compatriots into action, and they revolted against their oppressors, the Hapsburgs. This poet joined the revolution and he was killed in action. He was under thirty when he died. He not only loved his kind, but he fought for the liberty of all other nationals. He hated no one except shams and tyranny based on shams.

"JOHN'S GRANDPA."

SIR,—Towards the end of the Great War, after the mists had rolled away and people were seeking for the causes of the conflagration, it is reported that the Crown Prince asked the Kaiser who was really the responsible party? "To tell you the truth," he said, "it was Teddy Roosevelt. You remember when he came to Germany, how we feted him and held a grand military review in his honour. And after it was over, he said to me: "William, with an army like that you could beat the world; and like a damned fool I believed him." I have already collected some one hundred and fifty reasons

that have been assigned as the cause of the Great War, and now it appears I can add another, that of Patriotism. In the *Freethinker* of May 31 Eliana Twyman says it is one of the causes of all wars. "Patriotism," we are told, "has caused more death, destruction, devastation, and desolation than tongue or pen can tell." This wild assertion is not supported by any evidence. The Church set itself to suppress the human desire for amusement and recreation and got hopelessly beaten in the conflict. And now we have a new creed which seeks to destroy another of the strongest sentiments of human nature, and one may safely prophesy that it, too, will be worsted in the combat. Patriotism is a fact of human nature, but the other thing, the vision of the lion lying down with the lamb, and dressed in various ambiguous phrases is the dream of a diseased imagination. Will Eliana Twyman favour us with the name of one single war and show that Patriotism has been its cause. Until she can, I, for one, will continue to honour the young verse-writer who lies in a soldier's grave, "having left behind a sickly sort of sonnet about his island home."

JOSEPH BRUCE.

CHRIST AND MIRACLES.

SIR,—Mr. J. G. Burdon says: "The Freethinker is not so foolish as to attempt to explain evolution on any basis, he can at most understand it." The negative side of my whole argument is that you can understand nothing without a postulated basis beyond the observed facts which is not antagonistic to those facts. I base my positive statements upon the Kantian and Platonic schools of thought. To put it briefly, the universe is not a multiverse because it is based upon certain unalterable laws, and our sanity is not irrational because it is based upon certain perfect principles. To claim that the basis of our thought is not perfect is to claim our own insanity. To claim that the ideal laws from which we draw our logic are not realizable in active sentient existence is to admit the futility of all endeavour.

Bernard Shaw has said: "The open mind never acts." Huxley was nearly bold enough to admit that the open mind can never even observe anything. "Those who refuse to go beyond facts," he once wrote, rarely get as far as fact." Until a man grasps the perfect teaching he is the slave of a scepticism which is as superstitious as the grossest credulity. There is no superstition so gross as nihilism.

This is the reason why I believe it necessary for Freethinkers to disrobe Christ of ecclesiastical regalia and come to grips with the practical issues of his teaching. That this is indeed a very urgent necessity is accentuated by Mr. Burdon himself, who cannot resist hinting that I am a missionary! Some Freethinkers simply are not free enough in their minds to disentangle the man Jesus and what he taught from superstitious Christianity. A good beginning might be to read Mr. Shaw's preface to *Androcles and the Lion*.

HUBERT C. KNAPP-FISHER.

SIR,—I regret that Mr. Knapp-Fisher has entirely failed to answer my question as to what he believes happened before the miracles were distorted and exaggerated, and the evidence on which he bases his beliefs.

He asks: Why should it be thought incredible that one man should heal another of disease by the power of mind? Why indeed? Doctors and mental specialists do it every day. Hickson does as much in a small—very small—way. But if it could be proved that Jesus did nothing more, his acts were miracles. I am afraid that I still question your correspondent's method of thinking. He says: "A man who catches a ball arrests the law of nature!" I beg to differ—he arrests the ball and obeys the law of nature. If the ball could pass through his hands, through the earth and trip someone up in Australia, that would be arresting the law of nature.

And what sort of evidence for the truth of a story is it to say one is "convinced that no story teller could invent it?" Mr. Knapp-Fisher says: "You cannot always tell a wonder story by the incredible actions of the people concerned, and in the miracles of Jesus you have a thousand natural acts, thoughts, and words re-

corded of the people concerned. I might as well say "the other day as I was lighting my pipe a hungry man bit my arm off and started to eat it. On my expressing annoyance, he stuck my arm on again and I continued to light my pipe." Does the naturalness of one act prove the truth of the other?

In the absence of contrary evidence, I should say that by greatly over-estimating the significance of the Jesus story and its value as a moral guide, Mr. Knapp-Fisher displays some of the warping effects of early religious training.
HAROLD C. WOODS.

ATHEISM AND KINDNESS TO ANIMALS.

SIR,—In the *Times* of June 10 last, the Rev. Mr. Buckle advertises "to let," during September, his charming parsonage, 14 rooms; garage; tennis; *private river fishing*, 500 acres, *rough shooting*, all situate at Eye, Hertfordshire," and all very nice. Ample opportunities for Christ to watch the "sparrows fall" during the shoot; ample opportunities to soliloquise over the manner by which clerics distort the Creation story in order to crib rivers and the fish therein, for *their private property!* It is not often that Christ "looks so well after his own." Earthquakes in Japan, eh!

F. W. EDWARDS.

MORE ABOUT MIND.

SIR,—I have read Mr. Hand's article in your issue of the 7th inst with considerable interest, and at the risk of being "crossed off the visiting list" I venture to suggest that his "beanstalk" is somewhat weak, in spite of his "candid friends."

Mr. Hands rightly denounces the adherence to old classifications, but, strange to say, he does not sufficiently analyse certain phrases. For instance, he states, "The error.....lies in assuming that 'consciousness of change' and 'change of consciousness' are two distinct things." Here he is making a statement about that which he has not, apparently, analysed. To say these two are aspects of the same fundamental energy is to make matters worse, and would, I suggest, find it somewhat difficult to explain.

A close examination will show them to be absolutely "distinct," in that there is no such condition as a "change of consciousness." To change a thing necessitates alteration of a given condition of that thing. We may change gold into its constituent elements, but we cannot change a consciousness of "light" into "darkness." We receive an impression of "darkness," but this has not *changed* the consciousness of light; it is merely an example of continuity and repetition. "Light and darkness" are not changes of these two, but are distinct in the sense that they follow one another. If consciousness of a thing was *changed*, I suggest there would be no such condition as memory. Hence I say it is nonsensical to speak of a "change of consciousness," and having got rid of this stumbling block, or might I say, a piece of metaphysical subtlety, the road is clear and wide. There remains "consciousness of change, an entirely different and sensible proposition. This expresses the two aspects referred to above.

I am *conscious* of a *change* of gold into its elements. "I," subjective, and gold (a lump of external matter), objective. Both are aspects of the one fundamental energy, "I" and "gold" being the result of the action and interaction of internal and external energy (gravitant and radiant). Now let us go a little further, though not so far, for it is beyond my intellectual capacity to understand how there can be a "space time" "between" one subjective condition. But if we say there is a space time between the thing changed and the consciousness of that change, how does that affect continuity?—if the time interval was a month it would prove or disprove nothing, and Goditis would still stink for want of burial. Even if the one subjective condition (*consciousness* of change) was split, the same argument applies. If fuller understanding of some phrases played a more important part in controversy, encounters and argument about mere "words" would be avoided. Do not play with them, smash them if possible.

One might retort to those who assert without evidence something similar to the stock argument which

the theist put to the Atheist: "You do not believe in God because you have not found him or understood anything about him, and yet you believe in the existence of 'ether' which you have been equally unsuccessful in discovering." Atheists have been caught napping on this, so it is well to be aware in other spheres of thought.
A. S. E. PANTON.

Obituary.

On the 11th inst, after a severe operation, there passed away Sarah, the beloved wife of George Travis, aged fifty-one years. Mrs. Travis was before marriage a school-teacher. For the last nineteen years she was a devoted wife and friend, and her passing has left a gap in a wide circle of friends, her cheery disposition endearing her to all with whom she came in contact. A Secular service was conducted by E. Clifford Williams, of Birmingham, representing the N.S.S. The large audience was much moved by the impressive service.—C. W.

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, Mr. J. J. Murphy, "Problems of India."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11, Right Hon. J. M. Robertson, "The Life and Death of George Whale."

OUTDOOR.

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

FINSBURY PARK BRANCH N.S.S. (Finsbury Park): 11.15, a Lecture.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Hyde Park): Every evening at 8; every Sunday at 3. Speakers: Mrs. Tring, Messrs. Brayton, Ryan, Burns, Keeling, Vickers, and Baker.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Regent's Park, near the Fountain): 6, Mrs. Hypatia Rosetti, a Lecture.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 3.30 and 6.30, Mr. E. Burke will lecture.

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

COUNTRY—OUTDOOR.

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S.—Ramble to Cathkin Loch; meet at 12 noon at Burnside Car Terminus.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S. (Town Moor, near North Road entrance): 7, Mr. R. Atkinson, a Lecture.

SWANSEA BRANCH N.S.S.—Mr. G. Whitehead's Mission.—Saturday, June 20, at 7.30, The Sands; Sunday, June 21, at 6.30, Victoria Park Gates; Monday, June 22, to Friday, June 26, at 7.30, Victoria Park Gates; Saturday, June 27, at 7.30, The Sands.

ACCOUNTANTS' CLERK, experienced, disengaged three days weekly. Trade Books opened, written up and balanced. Annual accounts and Balance Sheets prepared, and any kind of office work taken.—Send p.c., AYZED, c/o *Freethinker* office, 61 Farringdon Street, E.C.4.

"**THE EVERLASTING GEMS**" is not only a satire on the poetic conceptions of Masfield, Bridges, Noyes, Chesterton, Belloc, and others, but it is a slashing attack on their religious crudities. You will feel jollier after reading this book. 2s. 6d., post free, from THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 Farringdon Street, E.C.4.

UNWANTED CHILDREN

In a Civilized Community there should be no UNWANTED Children.

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

(Established nearly Forty Years.)

BOOK BARGAINS.

Catholic Socialism, by F. S. Nitti (published 10s. 6d.), 3s. 9d.; *Memoirs of a Positivist*, by Malcolm Quin (published 10s. 6d.), 4s.; *Short History of the Renaissance in Italy*, by J. A. Symonds, 5s.; *Motherhood and the Relation of the Sexes*, by C. Gasquoine Hartley, 3s. 6d.; *The Philosophy of Long Life*, by Jean Finot, 3s. 6d.; *War and the Future*, by H. G. Wells, 2s. 6d.; *Great Japan*, by Alfred Stead, 2s. 9d.; *Village Life in China*, by A. Smith, a study in Sociology, 2s. 9d.; *Russian Characteristics*, by E. B. Lanin, 3s. 6d.; *The English Woman, studies in her psychic evolution*, by D. Staars, 4s.; *Brown Men and Women, The South Sea Islands*, by E. Reeves, plates, 3s. 6d.; *The History of English Patriotism*, by E. Wingfield-Stratford, 2 vols. (published 25s.), 7s. 6d.; *McCabe's Popes and their Church*, 2s.; *Feuerbach's Essence of Christianity*, scarce, 5s.; *The Rise of Christianity*, by A. Kalthoff, 2s.; *The School of Plato*, by F. W. Russell, 3s. 6d.; *The Positive Evolution of Religion*, by Frederick Harrison, 3s. 6d.; *The Basis of Social Relations*, by D. G. Brinton, 3s. 6d.; *The Life of Bishop Colenso*, by Sir G. W. Cox, 2 vols. (published 30s.), 5s.; *The First Principles of Evolution*, by S. Herbert, plates (published 10s. 6d.), 4s.; *Man Considered in relation to God and a Church*, by W. C. Hazlitt (published 10s. 6d.), 4s.; *Herbert Spencer's Autobiography*, 2 vols. (published 30s.), 6s. 6d.; *Introduction to the New Testament*, by S. Davidson, 5s.; *The Folk-Lore of Fairy Tales*, by Macleod Yearsley, 4s.; 6d.; *Outlines of Applied Sociology*, by H. P. Fairchild, 4s. 6d.; *The Bible in Europe*, by Joseph McCabe, 2s. 6d.; *Churches, Religion, and Progress*, by G. M. Irvine, 2s. 6d. All post free.—**BIBLIA**, c/o *Freethinker* office, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

“**THE HYDE PARK FORUM.**”—A Satire. Post free, 6d., direct from J. MARLOW, 145 Walworth Road, S.E.1.

THE PRUDENT MAN may direct a state; but it is the enthusiast who regenerates it. True, and our enthusiasts will revel in regenerating your sartorial state if you will prudently ask us now to send any of the following:—*Gents' A to H Book, suits from 56s.*; *Gents' I to N Book, suits from 99s.*; or *Ladies' Fashion and Pattern Book, costumes from 60s., frocks from 41s.* Providers to the prudent and the provident.—**MACCONNELL & MABE**, New Street, Bakerswell, Derbyshire.

PIONEER PRESS PUBLICATIONS

ESSAYS IN FREETHINKING.

By **CHAPMAN COHEN.**

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

Cloth Gilt, 2s. 6d., postage 2½d.

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 OTHER SIDE OF DEATH.

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

By **CHAPMAN COHEN.**

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

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

REALISTIC APHORISMS AND PURPLE PATCHES.

Collected by **ARTHUR FALLOWS, M.A.**

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

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

THEISM OR ATHEISM?

By **CHAPMAN COHEN.**

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

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

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

A Book that Made History.

THE RUINS:

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

By **C. F. VOLNEY.**

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

Price 5s., postage 3d.

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

DETERMINISM OR FREE-WILL?

By **CHAPMAN COHEN.**

NEW EDITION, REVISED AND ENLARGED.

Contents: Chapter I.—The Question Stated. Chapter II.—“Freedom” and “Will.” Chapter III.—Consciousness, Deliberation, and Choice. Chapter IV.—Some Alleged Consequences of Determinism.” Chapter V.—Professor James on the “Dilemma of Determinism.” Chapter VI.—The Nature and Implications of Responsibility. Chapter VII.—Determinism and Character. Chapter VIII.—A Problem in Determinism. Chapter IX.—Environment.

Price: Paper, 1s. 9d., by post 1s. 11d.; or strongly bound in Half-Cloth 2s. 6d., by post 2s. 9d.

COMMUNISM AND CHRISTIANISM.

By **BISHOP W. MONTGOMERY BROWN, D.D.**

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

Price 1s., post free.

Special terms for quantities.

RELIGION AND SEX.

Studies in the Pathology of Religious Development.

By **CHAPMAN COHEN.**

Price 6s., postage 6d.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

President:
CHAPMAN COHEN.

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

Principles and Objects.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Membership.

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

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

Name

Address

Occupation

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

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

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

Four Great Freethinkers.

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

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

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

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

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

A BOOK FOR ALL SEXUAL HEALTH AND BIRTH CONTROL

BY
ETTIE A. ROUT

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

With Foreword by Sir Bryan Donkin, M.D.

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

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.

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

PUBLICATIONS

ISSUED BY

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, Ltd.

A GRAMMAR OF FREETHOUGHT. By **CHAPMAN COHEN**. A Statement of the Case for Freethought, including a Criticism of Fundamental Religious Doctrines. Cloth bound, 5s., postage 3½d.

DEITY AND DESIGN. By **CHAPMAN COHEN**. An Examination of the Famous Argument of Design in Nature. 1d., postage ½d.

HISTORY OF THE CONFLICT BETWEEN RELIGION AND SCIENCE. By **JOHN WILLIAM DRAPER**. 3s. 6d., postage 4½d.

THE BIBLE HANDBOOK. By **G. W. FOOTE** and **W. P. BALL**. For Freethinkers and Inquiring Christians. Fifth Edition. 2s. 6d., postage 2½d.

BIBLE ROMANCES. By **G. W. FOOTE**. 2s. 6d., postage 3d.

MISTAKES OF MOSES. By **COL. R. G. INGERSOLL**. 2d., postage ½d.

WHAT IS IT WORTH? By **COL. R. G. INGERSOLL**. A Study of the Bible. 1d., postage ½d.

GOD-EATING. By **J. T. LLOYD**. A Study in Christianity and Cannibalism. 3d., postage ½d.

MODERN MATERIALISM. By **W. MANN**. A Candid Examination. Paper, 1s. 6d., postage 2d.; Cloth, 2s. 6d., postage 3d.

A FIGHT FOR RIGHT. A Verbatim Report of the Decision in the House of Lords *in re Bowman and Others v. The Secular Society, Limited*. With Introduction by Chapman Cohen. 6d., postage 1d.

Can be ordered through

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

The "FREETHINKER" for 1924.

Strongly bound in Cloth, Gilt Lettered, with Title-page. Price 17s. 6d., postage 1s.

Only a very limited number of copies are to be had, and orders should be placed at once.

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

Printed and Published by THE PIONEER PRESS (G. W. FOOTE AND CO., LTD.), 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.