

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. 32

SUNDAY, AUGUST 9, 1925

PRICE THREEPENCE

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page
<i>Dayton in England.—The Editor</i> - - - -	497
<i>Dean Inge and the Church.—J. T. Lloyd</i> - - - -	498
<i>Theology Without Tears.—Mimnermus</i> - - - -	499
<i>Gods and Gardens.—Vincent J. Hands</i> - - - -	500
<i>Books and Life.—William Repton</i> - - - -	501
<i>The Gospel History a Fabrication.—Abracadabra</i> - - - -	506
<i>Electricity versus Spiritualism.—Electron</i> - - - -	507
<i>A Serious Matter.—L. K. W.</i> - - - -	510

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

Views and Opinions.

Dayton in England.

We have said several times during the course of the Tennessee trial that there was something profoundly hypocritical, although truly Christian, in the way in which the "advanced" Christians of this country were poking fun at the Christians of Dayton. The air of superiority they assumed did not sit well on them. And we said in illustration of what we meant that although we differed in not having a law against the teaching of evolution in public schools, yet there was not a school in the whole of the country in which we believed teachers would be permitted to tell the children quite plainly that the story of creation as told in the Book of Genesis was pure myth, and that it was an accepted scientific teaching that man had descended from the lower animals, from some ape-like stock, and that all the animal life in existence had developed in a similar manner. We said this because we know well that the majority of the Christians in this country do not believe in evolution. They know that grave doubts are cast on the truth of the Genesis story, and they are more or less willing—the more advanced among them—to submit to some interpretation of the Bible that will not insist upon its literal accuracy. But ask them quite plainly if they really believe in the evolutionary account of man's origin, and you will find they do not. Conversation with the so-called educated men that one may meet in trains or elsewhere will soon prove that this is the case. Freethinkers will make a big mistake if they take the statements of a few astute Christians who see the necessity of "trimming" a little as representative of Christians as a body.

* * *

Mr. Scopes in Bootle.

When I wrote as I did, it escaped my memory that there was actually going on an enquiry by a committee which fully demonstrated the truth of what I had said. Dayton is a small out-of-the-way place of some 3,000 inhabitants. Bootle is a place many times the size of Dayton, and may be considered for all practical purposes as part of the great city of Liverpool. It has good tram and train connections with the city, and all the advantages that any city in Great Britain enjoys. And exactly what is going on in Dayton is going on in Bootle. For the Day-

tonites did not say that evolution should not be taught; only that it should not be taught in the schools. Some time ago it was reported to the Bootle Council that a teacher in one of the girls' secondary schools—not, be it noted, in the elementary schools, but in the secondary schools where the ages would range from ten to seventeen—had been teaching evolution to the girls, and had told them that the story of Creation, and of the Creation of Adam and Eve, was not history, but myth, and that the miracles of Moses and the Prophets could not have happened. Then what happened was substantially what occurred in Dayton. The Council, a good Christian Council, was shocked, and a committee was appointed to enquire into the truth of the allegations. That committee has reported, and the Council agreed that there were reasonable grounds for complaint, and for the future the Education Committee is to see to it that it should be a condition of employment that the teacher should undertake "to train scholars in the habits of reverence towards God and religion." And to a newspaper reporter an official of the Council explained that although "until now it has only been regarded as an unwritten law that teachers should teach religion as it was taught to our forefathers" (exactly what the Christians of Dayton want), there will now be printed regulations for the guidance of the teachers which will contain explicit instructions. By these instructions the teachers must abide. They must teach religion as our forefathers had it taught to them. Either that or they will have to get out. Which, again, is all that the Dayton Christians said to Mr. Scopes.

* * *

Our Pious Humbugs.

Now will those humbugs of Christian preachers who have been busy explaining how backward the Christians of Dayton are, please attend to the Bootle Council, and tell them they are out of date? Will the Bishop of Durham tell them that they are sixty years behind the times? Or will he see that teachers in his own diocese of Durham are allowed, nay, advised, to tell their pupils the truth about evolution? Will even our press, which has been airing its own virtues in its usual manner, see to it that the attitude of the Christians of Bootle is made plain to all? Well, everyone knows that the preachers will say nothing, that the press will say nothing, that they will both continue to pity poor backward Dayton while remaining silent concerning the Dayton at their own doorstep. And I would like everyone to realize that what has taken place in Bootle would take place in every town and village in Britain if the teachers were bold enough, and conscientious enough, and educated enough to understand evolution and to decide that they would no longer place before young girls and boys a mass of mythology as sound science and unquestionable history. Anyone who acted in this way would be discharged, the press would probably deny him publicity, he would not get anything like the publicity that Mr. Scopes got in America, and it is almost certain that the powerful Union of Teachers

would remain silent for fear of exposing its members to persecution. The teacher would be left to fight a single-handed battle and would probably be beaten. He would be told he must keep his knowledge to himself. His task is to go on teaching the children religion as our forefathers had it taught to them. We do not mind our children having other things taught from an up-to-date standpoint. But religion must be taught them from the point of view of the cave-man. How otherwise is religion to live?

* * *

Doping the Children.

Now I do not wish to single Bootle out for special condemnation or to hold it up for particular ridicule. Bootle is representative of English schools as a whole. Not merely of elementary schools, but of secondary schools. Nay, I question whether a teacher at Eton or Harrow, or any of the finishing schools devoted to the children of the "upper" classes would have any greater liberty allowed him. He might be permitted to give his pupils some mild doses of advanced Biblical criticism, but a plain teaching of evolution, involving, as it must, the clear reflection that the Bible is pure myth would never be permitted. But I am very certain about the schools that are under the Councils throughout the country, and I think that teachers will endorse what I have said. In all these schools Daytonism is the rule. Outside the schools the quick pupils may pick up some of the truth; inside they must be brought up to believe as our forefathers believed. And so far as the schools are concerned, the regulations of the Councils is the law. If the teacher will not obey, he is punished by dismissal. We have no law against the teaching of evolution. But this is not really necessary so long as the Councils are manned by members of Church and chapel, or by those who for various reasons will not fight Church or chapel on this particular issue. The Christian imposture must be kept up, and how is it to be kept up if children are taught that the Bible starts with pure mythology, and that instead of God making man, man is but a developed descendant of the Ape family? Put it in that way to any number of Christians, and you will then see how far removed in either education or in the possession of scientific knowledge they are from the inhabitants of Dayton.

* * *

Clear Out the Bible.

So long as we have the Bible in the schools we cannot escape this general conspiracy to keep the young mind in ignorance of truths with which every educated boy and girl should be acquainted. We hear much of education as being intended to equip children for their later life. Our Minister of Education is full of this kind of official twaddle. But what kind of preparation is it when they are taught things that their later knowledge is certain to contradict? So far as the religious instruction goes it is not a preparation for dealing with life, but an obstruction to their understanding it. Children must not be told that the Creation story of Genesis is a myth, even though every intelligent person knows it to be so, and numbers of the clergy themselves are driven to saying it is so to adults. But the children must still be lied to, and we must coerce the teachers to telling the lie to them on pain of their being turned out of their profession. Shorn of all the talk about the rights of parents, and the benefits of true religion, that is really what it amounts to. The Christians of this country say with those of Dayton that even though the imposture of Christianity cannot be forced upon adults, it shall still be forced on children. If we cannot tell lies to adults, say these Christians, we will still tell them to children. We cannot, they say,

prevent adults getting the truth, but we will prevent the children hearing it, and maybe when they leave school they will never bother to look for it. Then will the future of the Churches be made more secure than it might be otherwise. The clergy are in a conspiracy to keep the children in ignorance. The Councils, comprised generally of poorly educated men, and with a strong Christian bias themselves, lend their aid to the conspiracy. And those teachers who happen to be educated enough to know the truth dare not teach it, while that powerful Trade Union, the National Union of Teachers, so long as it can secure privileges and raise wages, stands without protest against this exploitation of the ignorance and helplessness of childhood. But while this state of things continues let no one sneer at Dayton. The teachers dare not tell the children of England that the Bible story of creation is a myth. They dare not teach the descent of Man from an ape-like stock. They must assist in keeping the children in ignorance. We are not so far behind Dayton after all.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Dean Inge. and the Church.

THE first sermon in the *Christian World Pulpit* of July 23 is by the Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, and bears the arresting title of "The Apparent Failure of Christianity." Its opening statement is that "the world—that is, human society as it organizes itself for social purposes—is still unconverted," and a truer observation was never made. Of course, not so long ago such a statement would have drawn for Christians the exclamation, "So much the worse for the world," but to-day, as the Dean admits, "instead of the world being on its trial before the saints, as St. Paul imagined, we see Christianity arraigned, tried, and found guilty of the heinous charge of appealing to the minority." Then he adds:—

We are also told sometimes that the majority lose nothing in rejecting Christianity, because in the Middle Ages, when everybody believed, Europe was wickeder than it is now. Writers like the late Cotter Morison had no difficulty in proving that morality in the so-called ages of faith was shockingly bad. But instead of drawing the true conclusion that then, as now, real Christians were in a small minority, and that conformity at a time when heresy sent people to the stake had no necessary connection with real conviction, he argues that Christianity has been proved to have no influence upon conduct.

To Cotter Morison it did not matter in the least whether Christians were many or few, and whether their conformity was real or nominal, his only point being that the Church exerted no moralizing influence upon its members, and Dean Inge cannot honestly contradict such a conclusion. In the estimation of the Church in the Middle Ages orthodox belief was of far greater value than virtuous conduct.

Cotter Morison was an unbeliever, but some ardent Christians are obliged to admit the truth of many of his animadversions on the Church. The Dean calls attention to some recent apologists who try to account for the failure of the Church (to us very real, not merely apparent), "the failure in their eyes being shown not so much by looseness of conduct as by the fact that, while the poorer classes are impatient for a new distribution of the good things of the world, the Church has no sword ready to cut that most intricate of Gordian knots."

Coming now to the real subject of his discourse, the Dean says:—

Strange as it must seem to any reader of the New Testament, many Christians are seriously un-

easy at finding the Church numerically so weak. It seems to them an indication that something must be wrong with our religion. Even our leaders sometimes adopt an apologetic, a deprecating tone which is quite unnecessary and hardly dignified in the holders of a Divine Commission. But worse than discouragement are the attempts made to adulterate our message to suit the popular taste.

We have carefully read the New Testament a great many times, and the impression made upon our mind was that the kingdom of heaven had already come and that it would speedily spread until it covered the whole earth. It started on its conquering mission not last year, but some two thousand years ago; and it is no nearer its day of triumph now than it was in the apostolic times. It is easy enough to quote sayings attributed to Jesus in which certain difficulties and obstacles are described; but there are numerous other words, in which Jesus is made to say, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself"; "the prince of this world hath been judged"; "Now is the judgment; now shall the prince of this world be cast out." On the eve of his departure from the world he loved he is reported to have addressed the eleven disciples thus: "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." The Dean proceeds thus:—

It was in the third century that the Church began to compete with other popular religions for the domination of the world. In that period we find it incorporating elements which were the common property of all the chief cults in the Roman Empire. It is true that Christian worship remained pure and eschewed necromancy and blood sacrifice, but in other respects the State religion of Constantine and his successors was just the most comprehensive of all the rival cults. The respectable Pagan who accepted Christianity was not required to abandon anything that he cared much about except his beautiful statues; the names rather than anything else were changed, and from that time to this there has been no sort of correspondence between Church membership and real Christianity.

The whole of that long extract, though perfectly true, is an expression of a dangerous theological heresy, for which Harnack's *Expansion of Christianity* is largely responsible. Though true enough, it is decidedly anti-Biblical. Jesus assured those who listened to him that if he were lifted up from the earth he would draw all men unto himself. According to Paul he reigns now and must continue to reign till God has put all his enemies under his feet; but Paul was totally mistaken. Whether the Gospel Jesus ever actually lived or not, it is absolutely certain that he never rose from the dead, and still lives on as the Divine Head of the Church. On the assumption that the Gospel Jesus was a wholly legendary character and the Pauline Christology was entirely fictitious, the failure of Christianity is the most self-evident fact in history. To understand Christianity we must regard it as a growth extending over several centuries. The very idea of growth completely excludes the dream of a single Founder. Christianity was still growing when, in the third century, it entered into competition with the great Oriental religions in the Roman Empire. Harnack does not hesitate to call it in its completed form a "Syncretistic Religion"—a religion that became strong and triumphed as the result of a system of wholesale borrowing from older religions. Having already frankly admitted this damaging fact, damaging, that is, to the idea of a single Founder, the Dean speaks of it as if it had all come from Jesus.

Dean Inge treats the Church in an entirely different manner from that followed by the Apostle Paul. The Dean completely ignores its claim to supernatural origin and character. All its performances are carried on on an exclusively naturalistic basis. He asks, "Why is the Christian type of character so rare?" and admits that he cannot answer. He says:—

Racial development is very slow—at least if we take the duration of an individual life as a unit. A biologist or a geologist who is at home in calculations involving millions of years would not consider two thousand years at all a long period of the history of our race; nor would he expect that the revelation of a possible new birth into a diviner life—life on a higher plane of existence—which was made in the fulness of time, that is to say, at the earliest possible moment—by the Incarnation of our Lord, he would not expect, I say, that it should have made any great changes in human nature in about sixty generations. If we can trace some moral and spiritual progress, and surely we can, it is as much as we have a right to expect.

No wonder that not long ago a clergyman of his own Church called the Dean the two-in-one theologian. In the passage just quoted there is no trace whatever of a supernatural influence at work in human nature. All advance in a noble life is said to be very slow. That was the case in Greece and Rome centuries before Christ was ever heard of, and it is very doubtful if the best men and women of to-day are worthy of comparison with the best men and women of Athens in the years 470-445 B.C., a period of which Professor Gilbert Murray gives us such a splendid description in the *Introductory Essay to Euripides*. At any rate, both in Greece and India excellent characters existed in and glorified those countries fully five hundred years before our era began.

According to the Dean of St. Paul's the Church has accomplished very little, if any, good in all its history. On the contrary, the evils it has wrought have been beyond calculation. How many innocent people it has most cruelly tortured to death. Many of its popes were low-bred brutes in human form. Its members for long periods were nothing but long-suffering slaves. And the sooner we get rid of so heartless a tyrant the better it will be for all concerned.

J. T. LLOYD.

Theology Without Tears.

Part of the fear (of knowledge) is due to illiteracy and the misreading of certain ancient poetic documents as if they were infallible divine statements of fact.—*Oliver Lodge.*

It has ever been a source of wonder to Freethinkers how Christians have ever been able to maintain, after a perusal of the Holy Bible, that their particular deity was entitled to the credit of benevolence. The pious opinion really seemed in the nature of an unmerited compliment, unsupported by any evidence. The grim exponents of the religion of the "Man of Sorrows" seldom smiled themselves, the study of "God's Word" having, apparently, a depressing effect upon them. So much was this the case that one could often tell Christians by their facial expression. Nay, more, the tell-tale features sometimes advertised how far the patient was suffering from religious mania. From the slight droop of the mouth which distinguished the Roman Catholic and the High Churchman to the marked resemblance to a tired funeral horse worn by the flat-chested warriors of the Church and Salvation Army, a physiognomist might classify them with some degree of accuracy.

Christians were cankered through with austerity. Generation after generation had been stifled under a religious system which was sunless, joyless, and graceless. The results were to be seen in the dull, dismal, dreary, rectangular frequenters of the churches, chapels, and tin tabernacles. The average professional pulpit-punchers and Bible bangers were, so far, incapable of honest laughter that any undertaker was a Merry Andrew compared with them. In short, the Christian world was in the meshes of darkness and despair. This Gospel that life for the majority of the human race was but the ante-chamber to an eternal torture-chamber, which was in reality an arrangement not merely of the Christian god, but of human nature itself, finally transformed this world of ours, for all Christians, into as dark a hell as the genius of Dante or Swedenborg ever conceived.

All this unmerited suffering might have been avoided if the early converts to Christianity had more humour and less ignorance, and had been able to see a joke without a surgical operation. It is entirely owing to the mental shortcomings and density of these Oriental fanatics that the Christian religion is a nightmare. Knowing little of literature, these intellectual babes and sucklings misconceived the Bible from the first blunder in "Genesis" to the final absurdity in "Revelation." Artlessly, they took the Eastern boastings and exaggerations as being in the nature of an affidavit, the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. History's page records the fearful results, which so often reminds us that the story of religious enthusiasm is but the story of religious mania.

To the Westerner, the Oriental alarms and excursions contained in the Bible are full of latent humour. We must, however, "speak by the card, or equivocation will undo us." The Holy Ghost's humour is not as our humour, nor his jests as our jests. Written by barbarians, the Bible is not so satirical as Heine, so ironical as Gibbon, nor so genial as Anatole France. Quip, repartee, and epigrams are strangers to the Biblical pages. Maybe, a ghostly humour is best suited to a book with a ghost for the author. Although we cannot say that there is a laugh on every page, the pristine burlesque of the Bible will suffice. There are sly stories, Rabelaisian anecdotes, and farcical yarns, sufficient to have enlightened the people who sat in the pews had they possessed the capacity of being amused.

As a humourist, the Holy Ghost somewhat resembles Artemus Ward, although he is the famous American showman's superior as a writer of fiction. The Ghost is a showman, absolutely calm about his exhibits, as a showman should be. He says the most deliciously funny things without turning a hair. That astonishing story of the prophet Jonah and the lodging-house whale is the perfection of unemotional joking, and the account of the poor whale who had a bed-sitting room in his "tum-tum" is sufficient to excite the sympathies of all lovers of animals. The humour, too, of the tale of the grand old gardener, Adam, is infectious. He is stated to have been the first man, and if he had been a shoemaker he would also have been the last man. He starts life at full age, and without the assistance of any parents, or any monthly nurse. He is able to throw hundredweights about on his first day on the earth, and he lives to be near a thousand years old. The nautical yarn of Noah's Ark is another Oriental masterpiece, including, as it does, the suggestion that millions of creatures from lice to elephants were crammed into a seagoing pantechnicon. The cream of the joke is reached in the further suggestion that only two fleas accompanied this excursion party of innocents abroad. The stories of the talking snake in Eden; Daniel in the lion's den; the

ten plagues of Egypt; the Tower of Babel; and Eze-kiel's banquet, are also examples, more or less brilliant, of Eastern humour.

The life of the "Man of Sorrows" in the later pages is almost sufficient to make a bronze statue burst into smiles. When the hero walks the waves; holds a debate with a fig tree; turns water into wine; feeds thousands with some buns and a few sardines; and finally sails away in the ether like a balloon; we feel that the *Arabian Nights* and the *Adventures of Mother Shipton* are sober history in comparison.

We admit cheerfully that there is a falling off in the latter pages. There is, however, a sprinkling of fun, a taxi-cab's ride between each jest, but what of that? A pearl is none the less a pearl even if it is surrounded by an intolerable deal of oyster. Learned men, who find out everything in time, have discovered some additional jocosities. Mark Twain has pointed out that the phrase, "the street which is called straight," is ironic; for, he adds, the thoroughfare in question is "straighter than a corkscrew, but not so straight as a rainbow." Byron, the poet, a gallant admirer of female beauty, found a sarcastic reference to a lady's nose as resembling "the tower which looketh unto Damascus." Professor Huxley extracted much fun from the anecdote of the be-devilled porkers, but never met a rasher opponent than Gladstone, who was as innocent of humour as the "high-brows" who profess to find Bacon in Shakespeare's pages. Colonel Ingersoll, too, made tens of thousands laugh with his inimitable *Mistakes of Moses*, founded entirely on the sacred volume.

Fed on such food, Christians should have waxed fat and become as jolly as sandboys. To class the Holy Scriptures as sober history, or earnest fiction, is the work of men who know little of literature or even life. It is a wonder-book of riotous, exuberant, Oriental imagination. If people would only read the volume instead of permitting 50,000 priests to chatter about it such innocent misconception would be very rare. The Ghost must be a more subtle humourist than he gets credit for, and, rightly read, his works should add to the gaiety and not the gloom of the nation. The refusal of the stupid, good, pious folk to see his jokes must have often astonished and even perplexed the Ghost. He never expressed his own amusement, but "let concealment, like a worm in the bud, feed on his damask cheek." It is well, for if he had let himself go, he must have held his two sides, which are six, until his three heads, which are one, ached from the explosion. MIMNERMUS.

Gods and Gardens.

A garden is a lovesome thing, God wot!
 Rose plot,
 Fringed pool,—
 Ferned grot,—
 The veriest school
 Of peace; and yet the fool
 Contends that God is not—
 Not God! In gardens!
 When the eve is cool?
 Nay, but I have a sign;
 'Tis very sure God walks in mine.

—T. E. Brown.

THERE appears to be an historic connection between gods and gardens. If there is any reliance to be placed in Holy Writ nowadays, it would seem that God commenced his creative career in a garden—and incidentally made his first blunder. The legend of the Garden of Eden is also to be found under various forms in other mythologies than the Christian

one; and it is recorded that Jesus Christ—who, of course, was also God—sought the solitude of the Garden of Gethsemane, prior to shuffling off this mortal coil according to plan. Even to-day, as the oft-quoted poem of T. E. Brown will testify, gardens are still assumed to be a sort of connecting-link between man and the "something" that learned men and women, who apparently know more about the matter than I do, tell me there "must be."

A lady quite recently asked me, in a tone that implied complete incredulity, if I was *really* an Atheist. Upon my assuring her that such was emphatically the case, she exclaimed: "But surely there *must* be something; what makes all the beautiful flowers grow and bloom so wonderfully?" Gods and gardens! The lady had been through Cambridge—without honours—and was a school-teacher; she made the statement in the same tones of easy-going confidence which she uses when telling Bible stories to seven-year-olds. I replied: "Madam, it is evident that your knowledge on these matters surpasses my own. Here I have been studying Darwin, and bothering my head with all manner of theories, the while you, with the happy intuition of your sex, have stumbled on a great truth. There must, you say, be something; and that something must be God. Very well, the matter is settled, save for questions of minor detail—unfortunately for me it is the minor details that I find so worrying. Is the Great Horticulturist, whose existence you aver to be essential to the production of beautiful flowers, *distinct* from the flowers? Is he, peradventure, underneath, pushing each one up separately; or has he a staff of highly competent "pushers," who act under his instructions? Further, speaking as one who has a vested interest in a small plot of land, will you tell me who the devil pushes the weeds up? To produce a rose, and then proceed to choke it with weeds, or devastate it with slugs, seems to me such a darned silly process, that I am left wondering whether your deity is really *non compos mentis* or merely irresponsible." The rest of the conversation is hardly worth reporting, as the lady would insist that I was trying to be facetious.

To revert to Brown's poem: it is a lovely little thing and I'm jolly glad he wrote it, but it's a damnable piece of reasoning, although Sir Oliver Lodge thinks quite a lot of it. Mark you, if there is a God he shows excellent judgment in frequenting gardens (it is worthy of note that one of God's ambassadors—the Bishop of London—finds much to amuse him in Hyde Park), but why "when the eve is cool"? I grant you, it is pleasant in the cool of the evening; but why—presuming there is a God—should he be most likely to be found "when the eve is cool"? What does he do with the rest of his time? In any case, I should think that a really useful God, with portfolio, would hardly have to wait for evening; he would say: "Let it be cool," and it would be cool. It might affect Mr. Brown's rose plot if God started messing the weather about in that fashion, but it would convert the Atheist, and if the chief function of a garden is to glorify the Lord, Mr. Brown ought not to complain if it does the job. The present state of affairs is most unsatisfactory; for as things are, Mr. Brown—who would most probably believe in a God in any case; he's darned silly enough, anyway—is the only one who is convinced that God walks in his garden. One hopes the Deity observes the injunction: Keep off the grass.

Voltaire summarised the be-all and end-all of philosophy by saying, "We must cultivate our garden." And whether we see in a garden evidences of a divinity or not, that much remains true. In the philosophy of the Atheist there is room for the weeds

—the theist can take them away, but he cannot explain them away.

A garden is a lovesome thing, we read.

Fat slug,
Tough weed,
And blight,
—unite

To kill the tender growths we rear,
(The theist turns to heav'n, and says, "Hear, hear!"),
What God! In gardens!
Where the strife is cruel?
Say, if that is a sign,
There'll be a row if I find God in mine!

VINCENT J. HANDS.

Books and Life.

We shall deserve, if we do not get, the thanks of our readers for directing their attention to a cheap reprint, by Heinemann, of a novel entitled, *Word of the Earth*,¹ written by Mr. Anthony Richardson. It originally appeared in serial form in the *New Age* during the many vicissitudes of that paper—a fate common to all papers that will not consent to play or pander to ignorance, stupidity, or the demoralization of its readers. Hamlet's advice to Polonius through his daughter, instructing her father to play the fool in his own house might be taken to heart by writers who are but jack o' lanterns, and whose aim is to fill a column. Jacob Boehme, a little of whom goes a long way, speaks of the *sound* given out by a man. In our opinion there is the true ring of sincerity in *Word of the Earth*, and, if we know anything about the hard work entailed in good writing, Mr. Richardson has expended not a little energy on his book. The "Lady Gwendoline" is an ancient inn on the Wiltshire Downs. Here, night after night, in the tap-room, sit the Poet, the Physicist, the Shepherd, and the Village Idiot. They drink their beer and whisky-toddy and—talk, and the author with nothing but the essentials in his view has scrupulously avoided any charge of wasting the reader's time. There is a strong antagonism, finally dissipated, between the Poet and the Physicist; the Shepherd is neutral, but always intervenes to bring them both to earth, and the Village Idiot plays the part of chorus in the same manner as Edgar in "King Lear."

With these four characters Mr. Richardson pokes and prods nearly every question under the sun and illuminates them. Early in the book, the Shepherd discourses on "Grass":—

There's only one way to know the grass. You must lie full-length on your stomach, with your nose stuck to the ground. Look slantwise along, low down, with your eyes on a level with their stems. You'll see 'em then—the thin poor shoots you tread on.....They're all like men. Fine-looking, some of 'em, and crooked and queer the others.....Grass is like men, and that's all there is to it. It's like women too. Soft and tempting, and cuts your fingers if you ain't careful.

The Poet, in discoursing about himself, blurts out a truth that is not yet on the map of recognition:—

I think we're all lonely. I don't hate you (the Physicist) as much as I did, I only dislike you intensely. I think it's just because everyone is so very lonely that people like one another; it's the only thing people really have in common. What I hate about you is that you try all the time to reduce everything to formula. I like to think that we each of us has a free will, and can create his own life.

The Physicist grunted at this, but in a previous moment he had also let loose a truth that is as yet dimly perceived:—

There's a way that's straight and clear and easy to follow, but it's not known yet. One day the time will come when all branches of knowledge are one knowledge, but now we're only at the beginning of the great discovery. So I, I shall die, full of knowledge that

¹ *Word of the Earth*, Anthony Richardson, 3s. 6d. net. William Heinemann, Ltd., 20-21 Bedford Street, W.C.2.

has been of little use to *me*, and that has only made the way harder, yet I shall live on in the faith that one day on the foundations of my work, and the work of other men, there will stand a goodly house fit for men to live in, and whose corridors hold no secret traps.

And the Village Idiot, whose remarks from their context are rather obscure, says, "My dog 'ates 'awks, but the brambles bites 'is ears." The temptation to quote more is very strong, but we must desist. The four characters have simply shared each other's virtues and have benefited by so doing. The party breaks up; the Physicist goes to Borneo, the Poet returns to London, the Shepherd leaves to sit on the downs, and the Idiot remains to draw water and wash up pots. A verse of Clough's brings the book to a close:—

When we have proved, each on his course alone,
The wider world, and learn't what's now unknown,
Have made life clear, and worked out each a way,
We'll meet again—we shall have much to say.

Anthony Richardson is one of the few who renew and revivify—a prophet, a man before his time, but none the less necessary when readers have nothing left but the dead bones to rattle of novelists whose purpose is diametrically opposed to the sanity, health, and true progress of humanity.

The reason is not yet revealed that will explain in each particular individual a love of trees. There is a clump of pine trees on a spacious common near to London that always awakens a sense of affinity in the writer. The oak, the beech, the birch, the sycamore are second loves; but on bleak November days this particular clump of pine trees stand out bravely against the dull silvery sky whilst the others must wait for summer to dress them. From every aspect all the year round they stand for and are pine trees, whilst the others are simply trees. They say what they think, they proclaim themselves in wintry snows as well as summer heat, but the summer smile of indulgence has to fall on their shy brothers to make them articulate. And, as moralizing is no part of our task, you may read anything in this paragraph that you choose; Shakespeare must have been in the same predicament when he wrote "Twelfth Night." This polite conceit of youth, this ruffling of young feathers with the battle-dore and shuttlecock of wit must have defied definition, and as the shades of evening cover everything so, "What you will" covered this comedy that tells us that the characters had at least the leisure to live.

There are not a few readers and writers who are grateful to the producers of the "Everyman's Library" series, that has now reached to the figure of seven hundred and sixty volumes. The catalogue represents a liberal attempt to reach the poorest readers with the best that has been bequeathed to us by those who did not trouble to think about what posterity had done for them. Æschylus, Bagehot, Cobbett, Ereckmann-Chatrian, Huxley, Marryat, Paine, Swift, Voltaire—all for two shillings each since the war that was to end war came to an end. Voltaire, however, is only represented by the *Life of Charles XII*. The enterprising firm of Messrs. J. M. Dent & Sons have recently published No. 1 of their catalogue, entitled the *Bookmark*, printed with characteristic good taste. A study of the late W. H. Hudson is included, and Mr. Edward Garnett publishes a letter from this nature writer that shows up in queer perspective. Hudson discounts Mr. Garnett's praise of the picture of human life in *Far Away and Long Ago*. He writes:—

Of course, these middle chapters would interest you more in the book, but the real interest of the book is the feeling for nature and wild life—and that appeals only to those who have it in them, in whom it is a passion and more to them than interest in human character and affairs. (Our italics.)

Our italicised passage makes us suspicious that there is the misanthrope speaking. The late writer had evidently not read one of Blake's Proverbs of Hell. Like a gunshot it sounds and proclaims the man who believed in the aristocracy of his species. "Where

man is not, nature is barren." Shall we away to a cottage and live the life of a hermit, to study the habits of animals and birds? If we do, and exalt them, forgetting our debt to the men who built the cottage, the bakers who make the bread we eat, and everything we touch wrought by human hands, we cut ourselves adrift from all that Prometheus stole for us from heaven, and in a court of justice that exists nowhere we could be tried for blasphemy. In a play, "Jitta's Atonement," translated by Mr. George Bernard Shaw, Jitta, a woman, worldly wise, says to a friend of hers who grieves excessively, "You'll go mad unless you get back into the current of life again"—which is a warning to backsliders from their duty to recognize the tragedy and comedy that lurks behind tears that may be the most precious jewels to open man's eyes to "his sense of oneness with his kind."

The late Joseph Conrad liked to be taken for a horse fancier, and he in turn made a wrong diagnosis of the calling of the late W. H. Hudson, who came on a visit to him one day. Looking through the window after the doors were bolted, the author of the *Nigger of the Narcissus* mistook the naturalist for the bailiff. In his book, an appreciation of Joseph Conrad, Mr. F. M. Ford tells us that the influence of Marryat on Conrad was profound and lifelong like the undertone of a song. Who can read through *Midshipman Easy* and forget Jack, Mr. Joliffe, or "Mesty" with the ideas of Rousseau on the rack of practice? "Mesty," as you know, was the negro who had been a prince in his own country. His head was long and narrow—and like a recurring decimal we have his refrain in the story that his descent was marked and complete by his office of having to "boil de kettle for de young gentlemen." In his *Prophetic Books*, Blake, who was looking at the world, emitted a spark: "O African, black African! (Go, winged thought, widen his forehead)." Blake and Marryat, phrenologers both; but, Joseph Conrad is best remembered by the present writer in the following statement: "Those who read me know my conviction that the world, the temporal world, rests on a very few simple ideas; so simple that they must be as old as the hills." If circumstances give us no garden to dig we can at least cultivate our minds. We have emphasized our thesis of "books as tools"; Joseph Conrad's ideal was to make things "shipshape," and we take his affirmation to life quoted above, as a "set-square" of simplicity for all time, which for ever excludes the glibberish of theology.

WILLIAM REPTON.

Mr. G. Whitehead's Mission.

Mr. Whitehead reports the seven meetings held during the second week in Bolton were in every way as good as the first. The Catholics carried on their usual tactics, but only succeeded in gaining sympathy for the Secularists. Large and interested crowds gathered every evening, and innumerable questions were asked and answered. Messrs. Partington, Addison, and Sisson all worked well and deserve honourable mention. A small indoor meeting was held on the Sunday evening after the fortnight's mission had closed to rope in the new members. In spite of the strain on his vocal organs Mr. Whitehead reports that his voice is in splendid condition and that he is keeping as fit as possible.—E.

Among those who attempt to exist without human sympathy, the pure and tender-hearted perish through the intensity and passion of their search after its communities, when the vacancy of their spirit suddenly makes itself felt. All else, selfish, blind, and torpid, are those unforeseeing multitudes who constitute, together with their own, the lasting misery and loneliness of the world. Those who love not their fellow-beings, live unfruitful lives, and prepare for their old age a miserable grave.—Shelley.

Acid Drops.

We are glad to see Professor Ray Lankester correcting the advice of Dr. Bather—a brother scientist—that teachers were to restrict themselves to imparting “facts” to their pupils and leave theories alone. He rightly says that it means a mere parrot-like repetition of phrases. This is what we have said so often that we are pleased to find it so well endorsed. It is not a knowledge of the facts of science that is of supreme importance, but the thinking that accompanies it. All the facts are known to the most stupid of people, and the most unscientific of thinkers. It is the scientific method that matters.

On the other hand, we do not agree with Sir Ray Lankester when he says that evolution is no more than a theory. That is not the case. The fact of evolution is demonstrable. It is this or that theory about evolution that is in question. But on embryology alone evolution is a demonstrated fact.

Nor do we agree with Sir Ray when he objects to the division of the disputants in the Dayton case into scientists and religionists. And, he adds, that his belief in the duty of discovering truth, and refusing to believe anything on insufficient evidence, is a religious belief and it is his religion. The use of religion in this way is anything but scientific in method or in spirit. The religious man does not believe in what is insufficient evidence to him. It is only insufficient evidence to us. It is like saying that the religious believer does not reason because his reasoning does not accord with ours. It is faulty logic that is in question, not want of reasoning. And the stating of the issue as between religion and science is absolutely accurate. It is surely because he does not agree with the way in which the religionist teaches his conclusions that he calls himself a Freethinker. The latter is in opposition to the methods employed by modern science, and will not be guided by the same rules. It is for that reason that Sir Ray Lankester offers opposition. Why not, then, mark the division clearly? We must come to that result sooner or later. Why not sooner? Perhaps if people had been more ready to come to a logical conclusion Daytonism might not be so prevalent as it is.

A contributor in the *New Age* asks the following pathetic question, which would come better from the pulpit. He bleats, “Shall we be driven in despair to turn from the path of our fathers and seek consolation in the “religion of humanity”? This man wants to fall out of one feather bed into another if he thinks that consolation is the stuff that any fighter for humanity wants, hopes for, or gets. We trust that he will get back again as quickly as possible: there are brick-bats and persecution whilst alive for those who strive for the genuine advancement of humanity and there may be a reward some few hundred years after they are dead. Religion as an investment has permeated the mind of the writer; his inclinations in the other directions show that he still wants something for nothing.

By contrast to above, in the “Notes” of the *New Age*, the editor is to be congratulated on his constructive thinking. He very clearly points out the dilemma of the Church in her controversies with Freethinkers. Christians have been obliged to retreat to the fields of belief, which is, after all, a matter of taste, but, in their retirement, they have always served Mammon. Add to this the fundamental barbarity of their particular religion and we can easily see that, beyond casuistry, they have no case against the relative few who believe that the human race is not a Peter Pan or a pot-bound plant.

From their own statements professional Christians would have us believe that they had a monopoly of all the virtues. When they want to make the flesh creep

they speak of blatant Atheism, of brutal Atheism—as the spirit of rage moves them. When they are ready to put their own house in order we shall be glad to have pointed out to us the restraining power of religion in the case of the Rev. Robert Ernest Sheaf, who was, at the Leeds Assizes, sentenced to six months' imprisonment in the second division for fraudulently converting £1,500 which he had received for the St. John's Clothing Fund.

“Die Outdshoorn Courant” (S.A.) reports that a gentleman who has visited a number of South African gaols interviewed 942 prisoners, and found that 912 had attended Sunday School for an average period of five years. And yet there are some who fancy we can get on without religious education!

The Bishop of Southwark, in an address at the Synod of Clergy, held in Southwark Cathedral, made the assertion that, “The history of religion, both pre-Christian and Christian, shows again and again that purity of faith and practice has been lowered by the concession to popular demand.” We agree, and we are all out for keeping the Christian religion in its pristine purity as lately presented at Dayton.

Religion is altogether a cock-eyed theory of things, and it naturally involves some cock-eyed reasoning. What we mean by this is that a man will point out quite reasonably the absurdity in the reasoning of a rival religionist, and then straightway proclaim the same absurdity in defence of his own belief. Thus, Mr. Stuart Hodgson, in reviewing a work, *Crop Production*, pokes fun at the author for suggesting that God made earth worms because he knew that man would not dig properly, and so made the worms to do what man himself should have done. Says Mr. Hodgson:—

On the other hand, the opinion in the best worm circles is, I understand, that God made the apparently useless, if not noxious, creature Man for the purpose of breaking up the topsoil so as to render somewhat lighter the labours of honest, industrious, and respectable worms; while the Souls, the Lord Balfours, among robins hold speculatively that the real reason for Man's creation was to dig up the worms for the robins to eat. All these three opinions seem to me entitled to about equal respect. But it is easier and pleasanter, and incidentally truer, to hold a fourth—that God created Man, Worm and Robin because, for reasons occasionally rather obscure, He liked them each and all.

That is quite good, until one comes to the final sentence. And that is just about as reasonable as is the opinion of the author cited. God created worms, and man, and the robin, because he liked them all. He liked to see the worm turning over the soil, and because of this he made the bird to eat the worm, and then, still in search of amusement, he made the man to kill the bird, and finally created many other things to kill the man. God has a rare sense of humour! But, as Heine reminded the deity, his jokes are apt to become monotonous.

The Wesleyan Methodist Conference has again had before it the question of whether women should be admitted to the ministry, and again has referred that to a committee for consideration. It has now been discussing this subject for about twenty-five years, and has never been able to decide on so un-Christian a step. The introducers of the recommendation that women be admitted pointed out that no woman would be likely to be admitted unless she happened to be “remarkable in every way.” A very ordinary kind of man will do—does do, look at the preachers! But a woman must have the ability of about half-a-dozen men to get there, although, once more, when one looks at the men, the woman would not be so very remarkable after all. The surprising thing is that so many women submit to this assumed superiority on the part of the men. Had they not been brought up so religiously they probably would not do so.

The *Church Times* says that the Blasphemy Law, as at present interpreted, gives a positive protection to the

"Freethinker." That is a "dark" saying, and one is a little puzzled as to precisely what is meant by it. It is true that it permits him to attack Christianity, but only in such a way as Christians cannot reasonably raise objection to. But while the Blasphemy Law stands it is for Christians to say whether their religion is being attacked in a proper way, and that is a very curious kind of protection. Moreover, the Freethinker does not ask for protection at all. All he asks is that he shall be accorded the same rights and privileges as other people, and that religious opinions shall receive no more—and no less—protection than other forms of opinion. The idea of the Blasphemy Law affording protection to Freethinkers is absurd.

Every right-minded person will sympathise with the Gladstone family on the slander published by a certain Captain Wright on the great British politician, W. R. Gladstone. Some pretty hard things have been said in the press about this slandering of dead men, and with these we quite agree. Nothing could be said that would be too severe. But we would take advantage of this incident to remind the world generally that the very worst and the very vilest slanderers of dead men have been, and are, Christian advocates. The filthy lies told about men like Paine, and Voltaire, and Bradlaugh, and others, have been current for many years, and we have never yet seen any repudiation from responsible persons. And it is not at all surprising if, so long as this kind of thing is considered permissible in the field of religion, it should now and then manifest itself in other directions.

The Rev. F. B. Meyer has just returned from a holiday in Canada, and so gives his impressions of the Dayton trial. He says there can be no ultimate collision between science and the Bible. But he intends to wait until science speaks with a united voice before he attempts to reconcile Science with the Bible. Meanwhile he continues to go on believing in the Bible. It is true he has no evidence that the Bible speaks the truth, but it is the Bible, and that is enough. And if present science contradicts the Bible, he will wait for the future till science has finished its investigations, and then he will reconcile that and the Bible. But he will believe in the Bible whatever happens. And yet men with brains like this have got a vote, and are called one of the higher animals? But perhaps this is merely sarcasm.

The Rev. Ensor Walters pointed out that the ordination of women was without precedent in the Christian Church. That contains the gist of the whole thing. The only influence that woman has to fight here is Christian influence, or if one goes deeper still, religious influence. It is the childish superstitions that grow in primitive times around the nature of woman that causes her to be set on one side, and denied the freedom of intercourse and movement that man has. And then when this primitive superstition, in its original form, is beginning to wear thin, a religion such as Christianity, with its reversion to pure savagery, comes along and forges moral and ecclesiastical reasons why the spiritual subjection of women should continue. The Christian Church has never hesitated to use woman to do its donkey work. She would collect its funds, or visit its sick, or pander to its preachers, but when it came to preaching, that must be reserved for man.

And this, it must always be borne in mind, is truly Christian. One of the speakers at the Conference said that in Christ there was no sex. Maybe not, but in woman there is, and that creates the trouble. For there were no women selected by Jesus to preach the Gospel. "Woman, touch me not," is the way Jesus greets one who had followed him, while man is allowed to touch him without rebuke. It is the old religious teaching that the touch of a woman is pollution. "I suffer not a woman to teach," says Paul. She must be silent in the Churches, she must obey her husband as Sarah obeyed Abraham. In the Pagan religions she could

teach and preach. Christianity stopped all that. It took from her the freedom that Roman and Egyptian civilization gave her. It merged in the person of her lord and master, and reduced her to a mere possession of her husband's. And it was a Christian people that could not be induced to give woman a vote until she had shown how useful she could be in time of war. When she proved that she could help to kill as well as make Christians, then some of the prejudices of a Christian population gave way. In the course of the past nineteen centuries woman has had only one persistent enemy, and that has been the Christian Church.

Some of the Christians in Weston-super-Mare are disturbed at the existence of Sunday excursions. It is disturbing the peacefulness of their Sunday, and they care little that it may give many hundreds of those who are all the week cooped up in a town a few pleasant hours at the seaside. But some of the letters in the local papers are really amusing. Thus, one writes that he admires the protest as expressing a love of principle, and he points out that the "restfulness" of the Sunday at Weston has been an asset, and those who run heavily rented boarding-houses do not want the one-day trippers, as they bring no benefit from a commercial point of view. Another writes that shopkeepers would like to keep their shops closed on Sunday, but the presence of so many trippers induces them to open them. All of which appears to mean that however much the Christians of Weston love their Sabbath, they love the chance of making money much more.

Lord Parmoor's efforts towards an enduring peace are sufficiently universal to be known and appreciated beyond the confines of the parish pump. In a message to a League of Nations' Union meeting, he stated that the next outbreak of aggressive war means the doom of Christian civilization. It is well known that politicians talk through their hats, and parsons through their surplices, but we do ask Lord Parmoor to cultivate longer mental legs in considering this question in which the word "Christian" only fuddles the issue.

The expansive grin of history is seen in a newspaper report from Chiasso. A young man among the pilgrims from Perugia had his head bludgeoned by a Fascist whilst taking part in a procession. The Pope gave the unfortunate man his blessing, but, as a benevolent neutral, we think that a bandage for it was of more service. However, there was a time when Roman Catholic processions enjoyed special privileges; the whirligig of time has changed all that, and one may see that there is nothing to choose between the authority of fear and the authority of force.

To put up a tent the first requisite is to fix the tent-pole. The tent-pole of life, if the reader will allow us the jingle, is the four elements. This is perfectly simple until we introduce the fixed idea of "original sin." This comet, which is a fixed star to most theologians who think so lowly of their species, is active in strange places. A survey of newspaper placards would ratify the belief in original sin; a volume of *John Bull* placards would convince the unthoughtful and theologians that the only solution was annihilation. A volume of sermons would have the same effect. Mr. Leonard Woolf, judging by an extract from his novel, *Fear and Politics*, if he has not written it with his tongue in his cheek, must be classed with the no-sayers. Here is his own condemnation: "Man will never be happy and civilized and the world will never be safe for democracy or for any other animal until each human animal is confined in a separate cage." "Original sin" is protean in character; by the Nietzschean standard it is not life-furthering. Freethinkers must take it as read, and continue to strive to build Blake's Jerusalem—which is not the same as Spurgeon's Tabernacle or Westminster Abbey. At the same time they must dip a little deeper into Blake and be amply repaid for their labour.

The National Secular Society.

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

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

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

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

To Correspondents.

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

J. M. SUMMER.—There are no open-air lectures being delivered in Liverpool at present. We agree with you that if the suggestion as to the formation of social and athletic clubs for Freethinkers were to be acted on it would do much good. But it lies in the hands of the Freethinkers themselves. If those who wish to see these clubs formed would bestir themselves it can be done. One or two energetic spirits to set the ball rolling is all that is required.

H. T. O.—We had overlooked the Bootle case at the moment of writing. Thanks for report. If anything further transpires we should be glad to receive information. Bootle wants waking up.

M. BARNARD.—Capital letter, and the citation by the editor of the *County Chronicle*, with approval and acknowledgment, should do good. Generally, newspapers are afraid to mention the *Freethinker*, even when they crib from it. We have often come across whole "chunks" from the "Views and Opinions" reprinted without the slightest acknowledgment.

R. PARKER.—Thanks for the article by Prof. J. A. Thomson on "Religion and Evolution." He prides himself on writing it in the interests of clear thinking. In our opinion it is hopelessly confused. The notion that Religion deals with values and matters with which Science cannot deal, is about as unscientific as one could wish. And we should very much like to know on what ground a scientist can accept the religious conclusion as valid, in the absence of a single verifiable fact? When science says it finds no "soul" and no purpose in nature it is proclaiming the result of its investigations. It is for the religionist who asserts otherwise to produce his evidence. And so soon as he does this it becomes the subject of scientific enquiry, and must submit to scientific canons of evidence. It is a pity that so many of our leading scientists should so promptly forget all that matters in their scientific training the moment they touch religion. But the Bible says something about the inability to touch pitch without being defiled.

S. JONES.—We daresay that what you say may be correct. But our purpose is not to save readers the trouble of thinking, but to set them doing their own thinking. To get the thinking *against* religion done for you, is not much better than to get the thinking *for* religion done by some other person. It is what a man *thinks*, not what he says, that is of importance, and we would sooner have intelligent dissent than unintelligent agreement.

D. S. CURRIE.—No doubt the Glasgow Branch will be pleased to get into touch with a musician who is willing to help with musical selections before the meetings. Your letter has been sent to the Secretary, and you will no doubt hear from him.

The "Freethinker" is supplied to the trade on sale or return. Any difficulty in securing copies should be at once reported to this office.

The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

The National Secular Society's office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, giving as long notice as possible.

Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, by the first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, and not to the Editor.

All Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to "The Pioneer Press," and crossed "Midland Bank, Ltd., Clerkenwell Branch."

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

We are asked to announce that to-day (August 9) the Glasgow Branch will visit the Museum at Tollcross Park for the purpose of inspecting the Orrery. A friend is to be present who will speak to those present and will explain anything that calls for explanation. The meeting place is at 3 o'clock outside the Museum.

The Failsforth Secular Society holds its Anniversary Service to-day (August 9), and no doubt there will be many Manchester friends present. We cannot announce the name of the speaker, as Mr. Hands, who was booked to be present, is prevented being there. But some substitute will probably be found.

Dr. Manson, of Warrington, speaking at an annual meeting of the British Medical Association, was strongly in favour of stamping out the unqualified practitioners in the interests of public health and sanity. As far as we can gather no mention was made of Hickson. When it came to a discussion of spiritual healing a Dr. Hawthorne took the view that it was a matter for the public and the conference passed on to the next business. The prestige of the medical profession suffered a severe blow following the introduction of the Prussian Insurance Act; here was a chance to regain it, but we presume that as courage was required to smite the spiritual healers—the opportunity was missed.

It takes a kitten a long time to find out that its tail is its own property. At West Runton there have been exciting scenes and scuffles over the Red Flag and the Union Jack, and we presume that as long as individuals can take the pattern and colour of cloth as fit matter to fight about—they are secure from any attack of useful ideas.

Away with the bugbear that to be good we must be pious. Come halfway and agree with us, with common-sense, and with universal experience, that religion has nothing whatever to do with morality. If a man is moral and upright, he is so whether within or without the church. If he is mean and unprincipled, it is the same. Nero would have been a tyrant if he had been a Christian, Henry VIII. would have been a monster if he had been a pagan, Aurelius would have been a true man if he had been a Christian, Washington would have been a good man if he had been a Stoic. It is in nature, in character, in disposition, not in religious opinions.—
Lester F. Ward.

The Gospel History a Fabrication.

IV.

THE TWO VIRGIN BIRTH STORIES.

THE earliest Gospel legends of which we have any knowledge—viz., those from which the three Synop- tists derived the main portion of their Gospels— commenced with the preaching of John the Baptist, as in the canonical Mark. Later on, new stories came into circulation relating to the births of Jesus and the Baptist, and to the infancy and childhood of the Saviour—the originators of the legends being unknown. From this latter class of literature two of the Gospel writers, Matthew and Luke, have given us revised versions of the Birth stories, derived in each case from primitive narratives now called apocryphal (Matt. i., ii.; Luke i., ii.).

Matthew, in chap. i., introduces Joseph and Mary, and speaks of the latter as being "found with child of the Holy Ghost." In chap. ii. he says:—

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa in the days of *Herod the king*, there came wise men from the east, etc.

Further on, we find this king to be Herod the Great, who reigned thirty-four years (38 B.C.—4 B.C.), and also that the birth is placed towards the end of his reign. Next, it is stated that Joseph, Mary, and Jesus went to Egypt, and did not return until after the death of Herod. Furthermore, Herod is stated to have slaughtered all the male children of Bethlehem "from *two years old* and under, according to the time which he had carefully learned of the wise men." It is implied in the narrative that the time of the appearance of the star coincided with that of the birth. These statements are all the data we possess for fixing the year of the birth of Jesus Christ; whence we have but to consider the following alleged circumstances: (1) Herod did not massacre the babies until nearly two years after the first appearance of the star; (2) he lived for some time, long or short, after the massacre; (3) he died in 4 B.C. Hence, according to Matthew, the birth of Jesus could not have been *later* than 6 B.C.; but it may have been earlier.

We come now to Luke's account, which commences as follows:—

Luke ii. 1-5.—Now it came to pass in those days, there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the inhabited earth should be registered. This registration [first] took place when Kurenios was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, every one to his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judæa, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem.....to register himself, with his betrothed wife, etc.

Luke, as already stated, took the first two chapters of his Gospel from apocryphal writings, in one of which—the Protevangelium of James—it was stated (par. 17): "And there was an order from the emperor Augustus that all in Bethlehem should be enrolled." The words "enrolled" and "registered" are merely translations of the same Greek word, which in the Authorised Version is rendered "taxed."

Now Luke, in consulting the *Antiquities* of Josephus for historical data connected with the alleged Gospel events, noticed among other matters the statement that Quirinius (therein called Kurenios) came to Judæa to superintend a registration; but not taking time to properly understand the matter, that evangelist wrote, as we have seen, that all the inhabitants of countries subject to Cæsar

were to be registered for taxation—which registration explained, he thought, why Joseph had to go from Nazareth to Bethlehem. But Luke was mistaken. There was no such decree made by Cæsar Augustus: the facts are simply as follows.

Ten years after the death of Herod the Great, Archelaus, who had governed Samaria and Judæa, was deposed by Augustus, and his kingdom was made a Roman province. As a preliminary to this change of government, Cæsar, after appointing Quirinius president of Syria, sent him into Judæa "to take account of the people's substance," and with him went Coponius as procurator. This was all. A registration was made of the people living in those two provinces, who would be required to pay tribute to Cæsar, and the list doubtless included those who had previously paid to Archelaus (*Antiq.* 17, 11, 4; 17, 13, 2 and 5; 18, 1, 1). As to "Joseph the carpenter," if he was then living in Galilee, as Luke states, he would pay his tribute to the tetrarch of Galilee: the registration related only to the two provinces that had been governed by Archelaus. But, in any case, there would be no rushing about of the whole population to cities in which some remote ancestors had once lived. The names would be taken in each city as it stood, where the residents, and their social position and property, were known. The idea of Joseph journeying from Galilee to Bethlehem to pay a tax not required of him is nothing less than idiotic.

Furthermore, all Luke's statements in chap. ii. respecting the birth and childhood of Jesus are but a revised version of fictitious narratives which he found in the apocryphal Gospels of his time. The story of the child Jesus, for instance, being found by his parents in the temple, sitting surrounded by learned rabbis (Luke ii. 41-52) is still found, almost verbatim, in one of the few apocryphal writings that have come down to us—the Gospel of Thomas.

There is one word in the foregoing Gospel statement for which Luke is not responsible: this is the word "first" in the sentence, "This registration *first* took place when Kurenios was governor of Syria." The word should have been expunged by the New Testament Revisers; but, instead of so doing, those Christian scholars made the passage read: "This was the *first* enrolment made when Quirinius was governor of Syria"—a statement which implies that at least *two* enrolments were made during the governorship of Quirinius. The reason for this misrepresentation is obvious. In Matthew's account, the birth of Jesus took place in the reign of Herod the Great, in the year 6 B.C., or earlier; in Luke's account Jesus was born during the registration under Quirinius, in the year A.D. 6—that is to say, twelve years later. The only way to reconcile these conflicting narratives is by first boldly asserting that *two* registrations were made under Quirinius, the first in 6 B.C., the year of the Birth, according to Matthew; next, by brazenly asserting that Quirinius was governor of Syria in that year also. Now, astonishing to relate, both assertions are actually made, and the historical registration recorded by Josephus, A.D. 6, is declared to be a *second* enrolment, and *not the one referred to by Luke*. This method of harmonizing shows the lengths to which Christian advocates will go to conceal obvious Gospel fictions, as well as their utter disregard for truth. For, needless to say, there was no registration in Judæa in the latter part of the reign of Herod the Great, nor in any later years, save that mentioned by Josephus in A.D. 6. Neither, again, had Quirinius been governor of Syria before the latter year. Josephus speaks of him as new to the presidentship, though he had held "other magistracies" (*Antiq.* 18, 1, 1).

It is further a fact of history that from 12 B.C. down to 3 B.C., the office of president of Syria was held by two persons only, Saturninus and Quintilius Varus, the latter succeeding the former in 5 B.C. (*Antiq.* 17, 5, 2). During this period—which covers the "Birth" of Matthew—Josephus refers to the ruling president thirteen or fourteen times, and in each case mentions the one or the other by name. There was therefore no place for Quirinius between 12 B.C. and 3 B.C. If further proof be needed of the registration to which Luke referred, it is given by Luke himself, who represents a Jewish rabbi as saying (Acts v. 37) :—

After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the Registration, and drew away much people, etc.

Here it is clear that Luke knew of but *one* "registration" or "enrolment," namely, that made by Quirinius (or Kurcnios) in A.D. 6, as narrated by Josephus, who in the same paragraph (*Antiq.* 18, 1, 1) records the insurrection raised by Judas of Galilee against the payment of tribute to the Romans. Here, too, we have proof that the word "first" in Luke ii. 2 is a later addition.

But the Christian falsification of history is not yet ended. In a Christian text-book called *Aids to the Student of the Holy Bible* I find an "Historical Epitome" arranged in tabular form, from which I make the following extracts :—

- 6 B.C.—The census or registration of the Roman world (Luke ii. 2) begins.
- 5 B.C.—Antipater is convicted before Herod and Varus, legatus of Syria.....Birth of Christ..... Quirinius legatus of Syria the first time.
- 4 B.C.—Local rebellions, especially under Judas of Galilee, plunge Palestine into anarchy and bloodshed.....Varus, legatus of Syria, restores order, with fire and sword, crucifying 2,000 Jews.
- A.D. 6.—Augustus banishes Archelaus.....Quirinius, again legatus of Syria, makes a taxing-census.

From the foregoing, it will be seen : (1) that the two conflicting "Birth" stories are merged into one, and placed in 5 B.C.; (2) that Quirinius is fraudulently represented as legatus, or imperial governor, during that year; (3) that Judas of Galilee, who is named in the Acts as an agitator "in the days of the Registration" (i.e., A.D. 6) is transferred to 4 B.C. Here we have a sample of the methods employed by Christian reconcilers to nullify the results of adverse Biblical criticism.

In the foregoing "Epitome" the words I have placed in italics are nothing less than falsifications of history. In Luke ii. 1-5, Jesus Christ is said to have been born at the time when a registration was being made in Judæa : this is the one great fact to be borne in mind. Now the first statement in the foregoing extract (under 6 B.C.)—that "the census or registration of the Roman world (Luke ii. 2) begins"—is untrue, and is made simply to support Luke's error respecting "a decree.....that all the inhabited earth should be registered." As already stated, there was no such decree by Cæsar Augustus : neither was there an historical registration of any kind in 6 B.C.—or one begun in that year—nor in 5 B.C. or 4 B.C. If a census at Rome be referred to, there was one in 29 B.C., in 8 B.C., and in A.D. 14; but none in 6, 5, or 4 B.C. But, even had such been the case, it would not affect Palestine, or any other country. The Epitome statement could only deceive the very ignorant.

Next, with regard to "Judas of Galilee," that individual only became known, even according to the Acts, "in the days of the Registration," at which time he raised an agitation against paying tribute to

the Romans. There was no registration in 4 B.C., where Christian falsifiers have placed him, and no question of paying tribute to the Romans; he has therefore no place in history but A.D. 6, when that tribute was about to be paid.

Lastly, in this Epitome, Quintilius Varus is president of Syria all the time. He is named as *legatus* both before and after the "Birth of Christ"; and when anarchy arose in Judæa during the absence of Archelaus in Rome, it was Varus, *not* Quirinius, who marched with a legion from Antioch, and put down the disturbances. Varus was the governor of Syria : Quirinius is but an interpolated name. It is almost needless to say, there is no historical record of this Quirinius being president of Syria prior to A.D. 6.

One other question remains to be noticed. Luke states in his Gospel (iii. 23) that "in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar" (i.e. A.D. 28) Jesus "was about thirty years of age." This statement places the "Birth" in the year 2 B.C.; that is to say, four years *later* than the time given by Matthew; and eight years *earlier* than that previously given by Luke himself. There are thus *three* conflicting dates to be reconciled instead of two. And, after all this investigation, the evidence for the historicity of the Virgin Birth stories remains the same : Matthew and Luke found them among some lying apocryphal writings of their time, and made revised copies of them—the original concoctors of the stories being unknown. If to this lack of evidence we add the conflicting dates, the flat contradictions of the stories themselves, and the utter improbability of a Virgin birth, we arrive at the only conclusion possible—that both were early Christian fabrications.

ABRACADABRA.

Electricity versus Spiritualism.

PURE modern physical science is alone fully capable of offering a final and irrefutable solution to the question of Spiritualism, independent of all opinions of admittedly the first professional "representatives" of either "flesh" or "spirit." The whole controversy rests on the one and only foundation of the entire universe, in that the latter was created solely by and from the interactions of electricity, both in its substance and energies. *This is a fact free from all spurious mystery and resulting from well understood laws, which have been proved correct to the satisfaction of the entire scientific world.*

As it is now known that all matter (i.e. everything we can and cannot see) is built up solely of positive and negative electrical units or electrons, and works solely from their free energies, so is, therefore, whether it be tardily admitted or not, the whole of medical science. This theory presents no loophole offering medical science a means of evading the fact that all interactions are referable to these electrical energies in every question of health and disease, whether constitutional or in its relation to germs, considered as antagonistic forms of the same style of life, and in all ideas of "soul" or "spirit" which as a whole the medical fraternity remain silent upon this from policy. This is precisely that basis of which the late lamented and great scientific doctor, Sir James Mackenzie, portrayed the idea, and sought all his life for the solution without success, as he so pathetically remarks in his last long letter published in the *Times* of February 11, 1925. It is now fully proved as outlined completely in the new Modern Electronic Theory of Life of Overbeck, which unifies medical science with this long sought for basis (of un-haphazardism, as Sir James designated it) of elec-

tricity, in its fundamentals purely and simply, and by the aid of the theory all the "mysteries" of medicine become relegated to the limbo of past numbers, together with those mysteries of all religions which depend for belief far more upon man's ignorant credulity than his real knowledge of their value, in the light of now well examined antiquarian *historicity*, as seen in the books on the Higher Criticism.

The properties of matter illustrate only the *results* of their electric constitution, without which they could not possess them. In other words, electricity has taken the place of matter in all our cosmic conceptions. Hence the very conception of a spirit is a physically incongruous anomaly, accredited with being able to move things and speak, etc. Such are sheer impossibilities, except when they are the result of free electric energy. (We do not give ventriloquism even a sporting chance.) If we grant that "they" (spirits)—as unclassifiable entities, could do so, they must also be simply electric phenomena or they could not influence or be influenced by it. Thus they stand condemned as impossibilities either way.

Few will envy Sir Conan Doyle's aspirations to come into contact with angelic "intelligences" (!) composed of an energy-free structureless nature, and therefore, from our knowledge of various brains, without "sense" possibilities. All ideas of "similar individual equipment" in the (gratuitous) new life become absurdities after what we now know of the constitution of everything. That such ideas are different from what has been taught in church we can appreciate the better, because no two clerics think alike on anything of real importance.

We can lightly pass by Sir Conan Doyle's "new busy and happy world," composed of nothing—nowhere—and so evidently busy with the same commodity, and certainly with "unlimited room for intellectual and spiritual development." But to what purpose? When Sir Conan Doyle selects six clericals (we remember to have read some of their press statements!) with a long row of un-named scientists, we also bear in mind that the opposite view can easily be multiplied by 100,000 and still remain considerably within the limit, which seems rather a stiff majority. We fully concur that "psychic knowledge and cool judgment are needed to determine what is fraud and what is not." Some of our most scientific men living and dead have been imposed upon, as they admit, and yet they were our best trusted judges. In stating that "we are spirits here and now" where does he find room for them in Nature, as she is now universally accredited to have been brought about by electricity, and worked by the same? Sir Conan Doyle forgets in including ideas of Christ in his controversy against medical science, that he is entering into competition with the special prerogatives of the clergy, thus raising again that question of *Historicity* (intelligent interest in which has never found favour with them!), in referring to what "He" stands for in the "scheme of creation." The latter science now declares to be a result, not a cause. An originator of electricity alone typifies "The Cause" to all men of learning, whether in scientific or historic knowledge.

We now envisage Sir Arthur Keith's view as representing medicine. A most striking opinion of his is that "A human soul is the most precious of possessions." Sir Conan must be able to desery in this opinion the comfort that Sir Arthur would be a psychic if his conscience would allow him, in thus admitting himself to be able to possess something he is even unable to define upon the basis of universal modern scientific thought, and therefore on that account alone must be considered the most gallant of antagonists. In quoting Sir Conan Doyle that as we "pass on" we are wrapt in a "new medium"; of

course, as people die every minute somewhere, so must this medium also be ubiquitous. The statement of Sir Conan that we change after death neither in appearance nor feeling, *i.e.* after we have lost both from our electrical configuration, is simply, well, eye-wash. Modern science answers all questions as to where are the regions of space in which the spirits are fashioned. They are produced, and live alone in "our electric imagination."

Sir Conan Doyle says "our whole point is that when spiritual forces come down upon this plane of matter, they are amenable to natural laws." Here the whole fallacy is again woefully manifest. Firstly, what force *sends down* these Spirituosities? For nothing moves without a prior force being experienced to produce the movement. Secondly, there exists no "planes of matter." Matter is confined to stellar districts or orbits only, and no forces can enter "our cosmos" but electric ones, for no other forces are known to exist, there or can interact with those in our universe. For "something" strange and different to be entering casually, constantly, and universally, to become suddenly amenable to our electric laws, and vanish again, backwards and forwards, is as purely absurd as our scientific laws prove such ideas to be. Also by the converse reasoning, when these spirituosities "leave" us, what force throws them out, or draws them away? In quoting authors, Sir Conan forgets that for each one quoted, a thousand could be quoted against the same idea. When he quotes that psychic phenomena are more powerful in the dark, has it ever struck him that every night some hundreds of millions of *bodies* go to bed in the dark, have nothing to do, and therefore free from disturbing influences, and ready—only too ready—to converse with the "dear departed," who are undoubtedly present according to Sir Conan. Yet they have been *proved* to have never done so, year in and year out. This in itself should be answer enough for all who wish to enter such Elysian fields.

With regard to "Ectoplasm," a name given to a supposititious materialised spirit, wax was asserted to have been poured over the hand of a materialised spirit (as Ectoplasm) and upon subsequently becoming dematerialised, or spirit again, left the hollow impression, but most unfortunately the spirit at the same time left some plaster of paris in the psychic gloves (evidently of a prior cast) with purposely obliterated traces of finger prints, and the imprint of an old hairy hand. This settles its analysis, and also that "he" was old enough to know better. A paraffin solution-coated jelly will answer just as well as plaster and can be dissolved out afterwards, leaving no finger prints worth mentioning. I offer the idea for whatever it may be worth, in view of the *necessity* for de-materialised spirit gloves. No psychic professors would, I fear, subscribe to this "plaster of paris" ectoplasm. Sir Conan Doyle "claims to bear a religious message to the world, a message far more important than any phenomena." When a man sets himself up as a message bearer from someone or somewhere, we cease entirely to be able to follow his modesty in which also he suffers from much competition of a similar nature in Hyde Park every Sunday.

Sir Arthur Keith, the eminent physician, has referred to various amusing but uneducated psychic phenomena, and recital of which would be uselessly wearisome. He, however, very rightly refers to the ease with which the human brain becomes liable to (electrical) unbalance, and how "subjective" appearances transmute into "objective (*i.e.*, fancy confused with reality at the time). To all intents and purposes, every nightmare, with its voices, faces and force used, are, according to this, neither more

or less than spiritual communications, and so is delirium, which is no compliment to the spirits; for in their connection, there exists no differentiating tests at all, they being all "under-proof." We have all battled, as Sir Arthur rightly says, with such as children, even when we were only afraid to go to bed in the dark. Just as a person may rightly guess riddles, so analogously is it possible for anyone at times to solve some "missing person mystery," precisely in the same way that a blind fowl may sometimes find a corn. To us, the most wonderful thing in the whole of Sir Conan Doyle's "spiritual communication" lies in the fact that his very logical and deductory human "stories" of Sherlock Holmes do not in the slightest reflect the "spirit" of his later writings on spiritual "Truth."

In the result of the broken casts of materialised feet, claimed to have been taken from spirits (very rum) we can only deplore how exceedingly unlucky spiritualists are in being unable to preserve intact their most "valuable" assets. I should not be at all surprised to hear that the fraud of wax gloves as residua of de-materialised hands with the *Human* imprints of an old man's hand having finger prints obliterated, will go the same way, and thus lose all provable traces of their plaster of paris origin, the remaining presence of which is sufficient to prove more than fraud, so far as the owner of the hand objected to leaving his finger prints behind him, fearing lest they be traced! This is the only proof of spiritual intelligence we have so far been able to connote. The Blondlot rays seem to be related to the "influence" of Abrams' box, also a "mystery," even yet (!) to Sir Thomas Horder.

When one departed materialised spirit leaves two left hands, it seems to prove two things, first, that he had done better not to have left any at all, and, secondly, that in any case, one of them is not "right." The sum and substance of the views expressed for and against is founded on the one and only basis of medical and pure science throughout the whole universe, and that is, that, since we are solely built up of electricity and worked by it, there remains no loophole for the medical profession to deny the irrefutable truth that the whole of medical science of flesh and mind must be entirely self-contained within that fundamental fact, and that our life, mental (often mis-called spiritual) and bodily, owe their origin and entire existence solely to the varied electrical effects presented in our constitution in health or disease, according to how the free electricity effects the electrically built up atoms of which our materialised existence consists. That nothing else exists in connection with ourselves is now proved absolutely, together with this extraordinary conclusion at which we are compelled to arrive, namely, "that our materialism is entirely immaterial" since all matter is itself immaterial, being constituted of electric units which possess only their ordinary electrical properties, except when combined so as to form solid, liquid, or gaseous matter, as "properties" resulting from such interactions. ELECTRON.

The candid world is beginning to compare the fruits of theology with those of science. And what does it find? It finds that theology, though as old as human history, has brought few, if any, beneficial results; while on the other hand its manifold evils lie scattered all along its pathway. Take from its history all the details of its wars, its conquests, its persecutions, and its massacres, and there would be nothing left but the graves of its hundred million victims, and the magnificent temples and costly tombs which it has taken the bread from a starving world for four thousand years to erect.—Lester F. Ward.

Correspondence.

THAT WICKED ATHEIST.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Relative to "The Wicked Atheist" in "Views and Opinions" in the *Freethinker* of June 21, allow me to say that I fail to comprehend why Editor Fyfe should question General Haig's real Christianity because the latter proposes to abuse, maim, or kill, inoffensive horses. If General Haig has any tender mercies in his heart he may be an Atheist, but not a consistent Christian.

The Christian's Father and God, Jehovah of the Jews, shows throughout the Old Testament much activity maiming and killing, not only horses, but all other inoffensive animals, as well as children and babes. He drowned millions, animals and men indiscriminately, young and old, good and bad, in the flood. He made a holocaust of Sodom and Gomorrah and other cities, and the fumes from the flesh of the innocents therein was, no doubt, sweet to his nostrils. It appears that he was fond of the smell of scorching flesh, especially when quiveringly fresh, young and tender (and not overdone for the taste of his priests).

His pleasure in the agonies of dumb brutes (it would be absurd to suppose he would do anything that did not please him, having all power) is further exemplified by his commands to Joshua (perhaps to others; I don't know, one's enough) to "hock all their horses." Some thousands of horses crippling around on two legs (think of it!), trying to crop a living from short grass, and no water, their mutilated limbs swollen and fly-blown, must have been a spectacle certainly not of a nature to promote kind and humane sentiments.

If Jehovah, the Christian's God, disregards the life of a horse (he may have his mind on sparrows, though) why should such care be expected of a Christian?

The tender mercies of the Christian are cruel, and to say a cruel man is an Atheist because he is cruel, slanders the Atheist.

J. SELBY.

Ashville, U.S.A.

DEBATES AND DEFINITIONS.

SIR,—From the nature of his letter, in reply to mine, it is evident that the philosophical ire of "Keridon" has somewhat increased. The question at issue is a simple one. Two debaters were arguing as to whether both man and machine generate energy. One of them asserted that a man generates energy and a machine does not. "Keridon" took this as a text, jumped into the scientific pulpit and commenced to deliver a sermon on the subject. This sermon contained some bad science, and it was necessary in the interests of the *Freethinker* to challenge his incorrect statements. A new reader of this paper, with even a mediocre knowledge of physical science, would at once cast it aside if he read that "What a body or steam, or a motor does is to liberate it (energy) from its static form and make it kinetic." The modern theory of steam, and also all other gases, is that the molecules move with very high velocities—in some cases exceeding two thousand feet per second. The rate of motion can be partly checked by the velocity of efflux, though this is merely corroborative evidence; all the proofs are indirect, not cumulative. The energy of steam is therefore on this theory, the truth of which will, I presume, not be denied, evidently kinetic and not static.

I pointed out that in debates it is necessary to have the meanings of words clearly defined. Your correspondent in reply is apparently of the opinion that the meaning of a word can always be ascertained from the context. This is sometimes true when a reader already knows the various meanings which a word has, whether as a noun or verb, etc. If we take a word used by "Keridon" himself, his opinion is obviously not a valid one. He says, "the energy of the universe is as "Trepn" admits, a constant." In a court of law and in a controversy, the word "admit" is used in connection with an admission which is unwillingly given. I did not unwillingly make the statement quoted; it was made by me, in the first place, to bring home to your contributor the fact that energy cannot be generated, but can

be transformed. "Keridon" must therefore *admit* that his inuendo is false, or else *admit* that the exact sense in which a word is used cannot be gathered from the context, and its meaning should, where necessary, be defined, notwithstanding his laboriously built up theory to the contrary. It is immaterial to me on which horn of the dilemma "Keridon" inpaes himself.

TREPEN.

LOGIC AND SCIENCE.

SIR,—Your esteemed contributor, "Keridon," refers to logic as a "pseudo science," and compares it to "an art that bears much the same relation to truth and falsity as the art of healing does to health and disease." I have always regarded logic more as the tools of the mechanic without which he cannot construct. Logic, the instrument of organization, science organized knowledge. From what I have read of the informative writings of "Keridon" I do not attribute to him any metaphysical or intuitive pretensions. Therefore, I shall be grateful to him if he will tell me what base of science and test of truth and evidence there is superior to logic, deductive and inductive.

M. BARNARD.

A Serious Matter.

It is a serious matter whether you are call yourself an Atheist, or some other term, if you *are* an Atheist. There is nothing to be afraid of, or ashamed of, in the name. Atheist is as honourable a name as theist or Christian. We hold it to be more honourable. It is at least an honest name.

An Atheist is a person whose attitude towards the universe does not belie facts. All that we know of the world is what we learn from Nature. We have no knowledge of God.

A person who affirms the existence of God is bound to prove his proposition. We challenge the person who says there is a God to show *what* and *where* God is. We are not opposed to the existence of God, we simply cannot see that existence. We see Nature, but nothing in Nature reveals God.

It is not the Atheist's part to prove that God does not exist. We deny nothing that exists. We accept everything that is, but we do not see wherein a person is justified in saying that God exists unless he can prove it. We frankly admit that we lack faith in God, and that we can find in that faith no proof of his being. We have no necessity to disguise our attitude towards the universe. We believe that the universe is all right and we have faith in it. We put our trust in its laws. If there is a God in the universe all we can say is that there is no evidence of it.

If a man is an Atheist why should he deny it? He has no reason to be ashamed of it. All that we say is that nothing in the universe seems to be under the direction of God. We see no miracles, no trace of God's hand in the affairs of man. Where there is order there is proof of law. A God would govern the world by doing things according to his will by divine caprice.

We see no sense in a man who is an Atheist refusing to acknowledge it. We know that it is nobody's business what any of us are, but there is just as much reason in saying what one does not believe as in saying what we do believe. Nobody knows anything about a God. The most that man can say is what he believes or disbelieves. God has changed so during the last two hundred years that he would not be recognized, could the men of those days come to life. This shows that men make their God to suit themselves. The God that once sent more to hell than to heaven has been outgrown by the growing humanitarianism. As man becomes better his God becomes kinder and more merciful. Some day God will be as good as man.—L. K. W., in *New York Truthseeker*.

The happiness of your life depends upon the character of your thoughts.—*Marcus Aurelius*.

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.

OUTDOOR.

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

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

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

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 3.30 and 6.30, Mr. A. D. McLaren will lecture.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY.—Ramble to Virginia Waters and Windsor. Conducted by Mr. Wakely. Train Waterloo 9.18 a.m. Cheap return to Virginia Waters, 2s. 6d. Tickets to be excessed for return from Windsor, 2d. Will all ramblers bring lunch and verify times of trains please?

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

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S.—A visit to the Tollcross Museum; meet at Tollcross at 2.30. The Committee will meet at 4. All members are requested to attend.

NELSON BRANCH N.S.S.—August 8 to 15, Mr. Whitehead's Mission.

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

ARE YOU TROUBLED in any way over your Income Tax? I am not able to abolish it, of course, but probably I can save you money, if you allow me to make up your Annual Accounts and deal with the Inspector of Taxes on your behalf. A number of clients come to me every year, and the fact that not one for whom I have acted, has dropped out of my list, proves that they are satisfied with what I have done for them. In some cases I have succeeded in obtaining a reduction amounting to over a hundred pounds in the claim, frequently I find payments are being made when there is no liability. In cases of over-payment, I have obtained repayments, and always I secure the very lowest assessment or exemption. If you want advice, write to me for interview.—ACCOUNTANT, Direct Tax-payers' Association, 11 Salisbury Road, E.7.

LET ANY MAN SPEAK long enough, he will get believers. Exactly; but we are not after a new creed so much as a new customer—yourself. The damnation we would redeem you from is costly and unnecessary trouble, and we offer you knowledge, not scripture. Write now for any of the following:—*Gents' A to H Book, suits from 56s.; Gents' I to N Book, suits from 99s.; or our Ladies' Pattern and Fashion Book, costumes from 60s., frocks from 41s.*—Performers, not preachers.—MACCONNELL & MAHE, New Street, Bakewell, Derbyshire.

"THE HYDE PARK FORUM."—A Satire on its Speakers and Frequenters. Should be read by all Freethinkers. Post free, 6d., direct from J. MARLOW, 145 Walworth Road, S.E.1.

VISITING TEACHER, wide experience, gives lessons in English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Hebrew (Biblical and modern), Russian, Danish, Norwegian, Mathematics and Science; preparations for all examinations; translations completed.—Terms on application.—TEACHER, c/o Freethinker Office, 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.)

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.

New Work by GEORGE WHITEHEAD

BIRTH CONTROL AND RACE CULTURE

THE SOCIAL ASPECTS OF SEX

A Common Sense Discussion of Questions that affect all, and should be faced by all.

Price ONE SHILLING. Postage 1d.

Pamphlets.

By G. W. FOOTE.

CHRISTIANITY AND PROGRESS. Price 2d., postage ½d.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF SECULARISM. Price 2d., postage ½d.

WHO WAS THE FATHER OF JESUS? Price 1d., postage ½d.

THE JEWISH LIFE OF CHRIST. Being the Sepher Toldoth Jeshu, or Book of the Generation of Jesus. With an Historical Preface and Voluminous Notes. By G. W. FOOTE and J. M. WHEELER. Price 6d., postage ½d.

VOLTAIRE'S PHILOSOPHICAL DICTIONARY. Vol. I., 128 pp., with Fine Cover Portrait, and Preface by CHAPMAN COHEN. Price 1s., postage 1d.

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

DEITY AND DESIGN. Price 1d., postage ½d.

WAR AND CIVILIZATION. Price 1d., postage ½d.

CHRISTIANITY AND SLAVERY: With a Chapter on Christianity and the Labour Movement. Price 1s., postage 1d.

GOD AND MAN: An Essay in Common Sense and Natural Morality. Price 2d., postage ½d.

WOMAN AND CHRISTIANITY: The Subjection and Exploitation of a Sex. Price 1s., postage 1d.

SOCIALISM AND THE CHURCHES. Price 3d., postage ½d.

CREED AND CHARACTER. The influence of Religion on Racial Life. Price 6d., postage 1d.

THE PARSON AND THE ATHEIST. A Friendly Discussion on Religion and Life, between Rev. the Hon. Edward Lyttleton, D.D., and Chapman Cohen. Price 1s., postage 1½d.

DOES MAN SURVIVE DEATH? Is the Belief Reasonable? Verbatim Report of a Discussion between Horace Leaf and Chapman Cohen. Price 6d., postage ½d.

BLASPHEMY: A Plea for Religious Equality. Price 3d., postage 1d.

RELIGION AND THE CHILD. Price 1d., postage ½d.

By J. T. LLOYD.

GOD-EATING: A Study in Christianity and Cannibalism. Price 3d., postage ½d.

By A. D. McLAREN.

THE CHRISTIAN'S SUNDAY: Its History and its Fruits. Price 2d., postage ½d.

By MIMNERMUS.

FREETHOUGHT AND LITERATURE. Price 1d., postage ½d.

By M. M. MANGASARIAN.

THE MARTYRDOM OF HYPATIA. Price 1d., postage ½d.

By A. MILLAR.

THE ROBES OF PAN. Price 6d., postage 1d.

By WALTER MANN.

PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN MORALITY. Price 2d., postage ½d.

SCIENCE AND THE SOUL. With a Chapter on Infidel Death-Beds. Price 4d., postage 1d.

By ARTHUR F. THORN.

THE LIFE-WORSHIP OF RICHARD JEFFERIES. With Fine Portrait of Jefferies. Price 6d., postage 1d.

By GEORGE WHITEHEAD.

JESUS CHRIST: Man, God, or Myth? With a Chapter on "Was Jesus a Socialist?" Paper Covers, 1s. 6d., postage 1½d.; Cloth, 3s., postage 2½d.

THE CASE AGAINST THEISM. Paper Covers, 1s. 3d., postage 1½d.; Cloth, 2s. 6d., postage 2½d.

THE SUPERMAN: Essays in Social Idealism. Price 2d., postage ½d.

MAN AND HIS GODS. Price 2d., postage ½d.

By ROBERT ARCH.

SOCIETY AND SUPERSTITION. Price 4d., postage ½d.

By H. G. FARMER.

HERESY IN ART. The Religious Opinions of Famous Artists and Musicians. Price 2d., postage ½d.

By COLONEL INGERSOLL.

MISTAKES OF MOSES. Price 2d., postage ½d.

IS SUICIDE A SIN? AND LAST WORDS ON SUICIDE. Price 2d., postage ½d.

WHAT IS RELIGION? Price 1d., postage ½d.

THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH. Price 1d., postage ½d.

By D. HUME.

ESSAY ON SUICIDE. Price 1d., postage ½d.

PIONEER PRESS PUBLICATIONS

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.

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.

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.

HISTORY OF THE CONFLICT BETWEEN
RELIGION AND SCIENCE.

By J. W. DRAPER, M.D., LL.D.

(Author of "History of the Intellectual Development of Europe," etc.)

Price 3s. 6d., postage 4½d.

THE 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.

THE BIBLE HANDBOOK.

For Freethinkers and Enquiring Christians.

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

NEW EDITION.

(Issued by the Secular Society, Limited.)

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

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

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

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.

A Book that Made History.

THE RUINS:

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

By C. F. VOLNEY.

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

Price 5s., postage 3d.

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

*The Egyptian Origin of Christianity.*THE HISTORICAL JESUS AND MYTHICAL
CHRIST.

By GERALD MASSEY.

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

Price 6d., postage 1d.

A Book with a Bite.

BIBLE ROMANCES.

(FOURTH EDITION.)

By G. W. FOOTE.

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

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

The "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 FARRINGTON STREET, E.C.4.

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