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## Views and Opinions.

### Materialism.

When dealing with the work, *Science, Reality, and Religion*, I refrained from dealing with some of the statements made by those of its writers who were bent on making out a case for religion, because of the space such a reply would require. It was best to wait for the opening of a new volume of the *Freethinker*. And for long I have promised some of my readers to deal with the question of Materialism as fully as space and ability would permit. Moreover one may take it that most readers of this journal will be interested in a discussion of so well used a term as "Materialism." Unfortunately one cannot deal clearly with this in a paragraph or even in the course of a single article. A fallacy may be stated in a sentence—it often is—but its exposure, a plain statement of the truth challenged by the fallacy may occupy a moderately sized volume. It takes little space to say that Materialism teaches this, or that, but how can one disprove such a statement without showing exactly what Materialism does teach? Often it is best to refuse to answer a question when neither space nor time permits of the right one being given. It is well to bear in mind the wise rule of Buddha, that when a simple "Yes" or "No" would lead to misunderstanding, the wiser course is silence.

### Curious Examples. \* \* \*

I had collected a number of statements concerning Materialism, made by various writers, with which I intended to deal specifically. But I have abandoned that idea because it would mean going over the same ground many times. Still we may take a sample from bulk, all from a little book by Mr. C. E. M. Joad, a work intended for popular consumption, and which specifically declares that the Materialistic, or its equivalent, the Mechanistic view, of the universe, has "broken down." Mr. Joad informs his readers that, "Until recent years the prevalent view among scientists was that whatever existed in the universe obeyed the laws that were known to operate in the world of matter." I am rather curious to know who were the scientists who thought that the same "laws" "operated," say, in psychology as in physics, in the sense of covering all the phenomena of mental life. It would seem that the very fact of scientific men having framed "laws" for biology and psychology

would alone be sufficient to indicate that they did not think the laws of physics were enough to describe all that occurred. Mr. Joad next says that with Materialism, "the universe, in short, is conceived as a gigantic clock. Somebody or something at some time or other would wind the clock up. How this winding-up process came to pass, of course, nobody knew." I should say not. Certainly not the Materialist, since he has always laughed at the idea of creation or of setting an absolute beginning to things. It is Spiritualism that has insisted upon this, and then tried to cover the absurdity by assuming another existence—God—without any beginning at all. But we live and learn, as with the statement that "many physiologists came to regard mind as a very highly rarified form of matter," and that during the nineteenth century they came to think of "mind" as a "rarified material essence surrounding the brain like the halo round the head of the saint." All I can say on that is that the physiologist who actually thought in this way ought to have given up his job and entered the Church. But the citations certainly show that there is room for a reasoned statement of what Materialism actually is.

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### Dead Matter.

One other example of the kind of argument brought against Materialism may be instructive. It is taken from Maeterlinck's *The Great Secret*. He tells us that the Materialist

has recently been compelled to admit that no such thing exists as dead matter, and that a pebble, a lump of lava, sterilized by the fiercest of infernal fires, is endowed with an intramolecular activity which is absolutely fantastic, expending in its internal vortices an energy which would be capable of hauling whole railway trains round and round the globe. Now what is this activity, this energy, if not an undeniable form of the universal life.

Maeterlinck is a man of letters, and not a scientist, so some licence would usually be allowed him on that score. But it would be easy to give dozens of quotations from others to the same end. I do not know that anyone who has any right to speak in the name of Materialism ever conceived "matter" to be without energy, but if they did it would be manifestly unfair to take an old-fashioned and discarded view of matter and treat it as though that represented the Materialism of to-day. And it is quite clear that "dead matter" was never used save to distinguish it from matter that was "alive." Besides, when science speaks of the inertia of matter it does not mean an absence of energy; it means only that "matter" will persist in its existing state unless something—some rearrangement of its internal energies, or the incidence of some external force—occurs to disturb it. And that is not an assumption, it is an axiom. It is a necessity of thought. One must note the common trick of first of all appealing to man's sense of wonderment—as though one part of nature really is more wonderful than another—and,

having aroused this often narcotic quality, quietly take "energy" as an expression of universal life. It is a trick that ought not to impose on a schoolboy. Yet it does, apparently, impose upon thousands, if not millions. There is no justification whatever for assuming that the special energy that meets us in the form of "life" is identical with the general energy that meets us in the physical world. It is standing science on its head. As a matter of fact, it is not science at all; it is not philosophy; it is just nonsense. And no matter how great a man may be in the world of science or literature, when he makes a nonsensical statement it is well to call it by its proper name.

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#### Theological Prejudice.

In sober truth Materialism has suffered from both its friends and its enemies. First of all, it would be losing sight of an important fact to ignore the truth that the tone of the opposition to Materialism, as in the case of evolution is entirely due to religion. With Materialism religion can make no terms. There is no such ambiguous ground as is found with some terms adopted by those who have outgrown the belief in ghosts while still retaining their fear of them, and against this uncompromising and unconquerable enemy all the tricks of a shady religious controversy have been brought into play. There is, for example, the association of the word "materialistic" with a low and sensual view of life. This having been called a materialistic view, and feeling having been excited against it, the next step is to use the hostility to an ethical Materialism to excite antagonism against a scientific Materialism, with which it has not the slightest possible connection. And there are always a large number of people who do not like to take to themselves a label that is generally considered by the world to be bad. When one finds a certain number of scientific men, whose whole philosophy and outlook is necessarily materialistic, taking elaborate care to protect themselves from being called materialists, there is no discoverable reason for this apart from the fear of theological prejudice. The theologian does not hesitate to use his power, and the ordinary publicist is afraid to face it. But this simply encourages the "Black Army" to pursue its old tactics. The clergy will only cease to act unfairly when they find it does not pay to do so. When Bradlaugh was urged to drop the title of Atheist because some people would misunderstand it, he replied that that was the greater reason for fighting for it. But all are not Bradlaughs, and most who find themselves drifting into heresy are often found trying to discover some remaining shreds of grace that will commend them to the orthodoxy they are forsaking.

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#### 'Ware the Enemy.

Finally, there is the fatal mistake of taking a statement of one's case from the enemy. A very casual examination of many of the defences that have been written on behalf of Materialism shows that they have been defending a position that no materialist was called upon to defend. It by no means follows that because a religionist says Materialism teaches that "mind" is a form of matter, or that if Materialism be accepted then we are bound to explain life and mind in terms of physics and chemistry, that it is so. Neither does it follow that a Materialist living in the twentieth century is bound to defend a conception of matter that was current two or three hundred years ago. The materialist is as much at liberty to revise his conception of "matter" as he is to revise his conception of anything else. His chief care should be to make sure what it is, in a scientific

philosophy, "matter" stands for. And, above all, he should always follow the legal plan of making it a first task to examine the terms of the indictment. Otherwise he may find himself pleading to a charge with which he has nothing whatever to do. If both these rules had been followed many defences of Materialism would never have seen the light.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

(To be Continued.)

## Reflections.

FOR a few years we have been hearing and reading a good deal about the possible and desirable reunion of the Churches; but, judging from appearances, no amount of talking and writing will ever eventuate in the realization of such a dream. The Catholic Church claims to be the only true Church of God on earth. It has deliberately declined to acknowledge the validity of Holy Orders in the Church of England, which is equivalent to a declaration that the latter is not a church at all, and has not even the shadow of a right to exist. Curiously enough, the Anglican Church, disowned by Rome, is itself guilty of disowning the Nonconformist bodies. In its estimation Dissenting ministers are not Divinely ordained, and therefore have no authority either to administer the sacraments or even to preach the Gospel. They are but interlopers, and the societies over which they preside are contemptuously described as "mushroom growths." The desire for a reunion is cherished only by a very small minority. The general attitude is well represented in a letter from Dr. Carey, Bishop of Bloemfontein, published in the *Church Times* of December 11, in which the right reverend gentleman says:—

I hear that I am supposed to have allowed a Nonconformist to preach in our cathedral. This is wholly false. It has never been done and will not be done. I was asked to allow Dr. Fraser to speak in our cathedral, and I said No. I was asked to preach in a Wesleyan chapel on a fiftieth anniversary. I refused.

The Bishop of Bloemfontein is only one among many who harbour the same hateful spirit of exclusiveness.

But what about the Nonconformists whom Dr. Carey will not allow to speak in his cathedral, and in whose chapels he will not permit himself to preach lest he soil his official robes? Are they celebrated for the liberality of their views and sympathies, or can we honestly say that they are dominated by the beautiful spirit of brotherliness? The impossibility of answering that question in the affirmative is abundantly demonstrated by the reign of Sectarianism among them. There are many hundreds of religious sects in Christendom, and each of them imagines that in it alone is pure and undefiled Christianity to be found. About sixty-eight years ago the first Wesleyan church was opened in a certain Welsh village. In another hamlet less than two miles away the only place of worship was of the Calvinistic Methodist persuasion, the senior deacon of which had a son eight years of age. A woman of the neighbourhood, who was really a Wesleyan, invited the little boy to accompany her to the first service in the new Wesleyan chapel, and he went without asking permission. When he returned and it was discovered where he had been, his father gave him a severe thrashing for going to such a place to imperil the eternal safety of his immortal soul. Wesleyanism was then regarded as synonymous with Arminianism, and without the slightest doubt Arminianism was of the Devil. Congregationalists were only a little

better than Wesleyans, while the Baptists were even worse. As an inevitable consequence, the Christian denominations were continually in a state of more or less violent warfare. They cursed one another in the name of Christ whom they all professed to love and serve. The conflict may not be quite so ferocious now as it used to be sixty or seventy years ago, but a reunion of the sects is as far off as ever.

Now why are the sectarian battles less fierce now than formerly? One and perhaps the chief reason is that Christianity itself is gradually losing ground. The majority of professing Christians to-day do not believe as fervently and passionately as their ancestors did. The pressure of the supernatural has been slowly weakening for many years, with the happy result that the earth means much more to us than it did to our fathers. It is on record that Goethe once wrote: "When I suffer under the pressure of the finite I take refuge in the Infinite." Whether the great man used that phrase in a religious sense or not we do not undertake to determine, though the probability is that he did not. In any case, the Infinite, in the religious sense, is steadily receding from people's belief, and very few indeed ever take refuge in it. It is the pressure of the natural that counts at present. Men, women, and children at school, are no longer able to concentrate their minds upon what preachers call spiritual things, simply because they do not really believe in their existence. Christian leaders are complaining bitterly of the growing lack of interest in religion. They deplore with tears the undoubted fact that so many churchgoers are not sure even of God, and less sure still of Christ, and with yet deeper sadness the further fact that seventy-five per cent. of the population of this country must be regarded as entirely outside all churches and chapels. Here is a school girl of eighteen years of age who says: "I should like to think there is a God, but I can't, not yet," and another of twenty who makes the following confession: "I don't expect anything in the future, I never did. When we die we are dead, and there is an end of it. All the same, I mean to do my best to live in a right manner, for the sake of those who come after." It will be remembered that Professor Leuba, an eminent American psychologist, published during the war a remarkable book, entitled *The Belief in God and Immortality*, in which he supplied statistics showing the comparative numbers of believers and unbelievers in certain sections of American society. On consulting those statistics we find that the number of Atheists in America is largely on the increase, especially among biological scientists, the number of believers in God among them being only a little over sixteen per cent.

For the deserted churches the facts just cited are sources of terrible consternation. Their officials never worked harder for the spread of the Gospel than they are doing at present. Pulpit appeals are as eloquent and impressive as they ever were. And yet the masses are not reached. Seventy-five per cent. of them never darken a church door; and even when addressed in the open air they pay no heed whatever. The so-called spiritual world does not exist for them at all, and they recognize no voice as that of God. But while these facts cause the churches to mourn, they fill the hearts of Freethinkers with exhilaration and joy, for they are the direct fruit of generations of their labours. The present writer remembers the time when sermons were looked upon as direct messages from heaven, not as human compositions at all, and the duty of congregations was, not in any sense to criticize them, but to lay them to heart, and thank God for them. The Freethinkers treated God as a myth from whom no

message ever could or did come, and the preacher as a sham who played upon the ignorance and stupidity of his hearers. As a result, the preachers of to-day are universally believed to deliver, not messages received from God, but their own compositions carefully built up on the days between the Sundays. They may still dare to say to their hearers, "God wants you to act so and so"; but everybody is fully aware that what they really mean is, "It is we who impose those duties upon you." Thus Freethought has done something towards rationalizing the Christian pulpit, at least in the sight of those who sit under it.

There are those who declare that Freethinkers are wasting time and energy in flogging a dead horse. "The doctrines you attack," they assure us, "are no longer held. They were surely proclaimed in mid-Victorian days; but in the twentieth century not a trace of them is left." This view found forcible expression in recent issues of the *Times Literary Supplement* and the *Nation*; but it is a radically false view. The fact indisputably is that the theological dogmas preached in the Victorian age are still preached at the close of the first quarter of the twentieth century. Those who believe them are fewer now than at any previous era; but the preachers are equally zealous and emphatic in their enunciation of them, not as messages entrusted to them by God, but as jewels of truth revealed to the Church from time to time. These are the objects against which we are called upon to fight with all our might during the new year now before us. To us this will be a happy new year only in proportion to our earnestness and fidelity in the fulfilment of our chosen mission. Let us, therefore, heartily hail it, each of us saying with George Eliot:—

O, may I join the choir invisible  
Of those immortal dead who live again  
In minds made better by their presence: live  
In pulses stirred to generosity,  
In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn  
For miserable aims that end with self,  
In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars,  
And with their mild persistence urge man's search  
To vaster issues?

J. T. LLOYD.

### The Saving of Sam Johnson.

Reason is a rebel unto faith.—Sir Thomas Browne.  
The crime of enquiry is one which religion never has forgiven.—Shelley.

We shall never enfranchise the world without touching people's superstitions.—G. W. Foote.

SOME time since the Bishop of Manchester fluttered the dovescotes of the faithful, and, incidentally, excited the languid interest of the ordinary citizen, by administering the rites of confirmation to a condemned murderer in prison at Manchester. The wicked journalists, scenting "copy" from afar, made bold headlines for the incident, and, before that murderer was "jerked to Jesus," he had the sacred halo of press popularity around his close-cropped head. Nor did the convert's fame end there, for, after his execution, testimonials as to the pious prisoner's change of life and heart came from very unexpected, and even distinguished, clerical quarters.

The prisoner was Sam Johnson, a blacksmith, of Stretford, near Manchester, who was hanged at Manchester for the murder of a young woman. At his trial, which lasted only a few minutes, Johnson pleaded guilty, and refused legal assistance. The story of his crime is soon told, and is commonplace. A married man, he had tempered Christian marriage with adultery, and associated with a young woman

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for two years. One day he saw her going home with a sailor, and stabbed her to death with a knife.

At the inquest on the hanged prisoner, the Dean of Manchester, following in the footsteps of the right-reverend Father-in-God who had confirmed Johnson, made some remarks. He said:—

We should like to say how much we admire in that man who has just passed away—the whole conduct in life since the crime, his conduct in confessing his sins and pleading for that forgiveness which we know he will receive, his attitude towards his fellow-citizens, and his refusal to make any effort to avoid the punishment which he felt to be justified.

In a farewell letter to his family Johnson said he had been very thankful for the help that the Bishop, the Church missionary, and also the prison-chaplain, had given him, and he added: "I think what has taken place is only what should be. I am happier than I have ever been."

The case is clearly a record one in religious conversion, and, admittedly, has excited the admiration of a Dean of the Anglican Church. Nor is this all, for a Bishop, a prison-chaplain, and an auxiliary evangelist, had each a hand in leading this sinner to the Throne of Grace. Hence it is not impertinent to discuss the celestial frame of mind resulting from the ministrations of three of the Lord's Anointed.

Firstly, the convert does not appear to realize that he has robbed his unfortunate victim of her life. His first concern is for himself, and his own "soul's" welfare. She had no time for conversion before the knife fell, but Johnson, although a Christian, averts his eyes from the damnation which awaits his unhappy victim. Secondly, he insists that he was never happier than he was in the condemned cell with the shadow of the gallows over all, which is sheer, unadulterated cant, and nauseating at that.

Yet such a Christian conversion excites the admiration of the Bishop and the Dean, and, doubtless, of the more humble Church missionary. Christians everywhere will regard the whole sorry business as a case of a brand plucked from the burning to the greater glory of their God. Saner folk, however, will raise their eyebrows at such a conversion.

This is not an isolated case. So many murderers "find Jesus" whilst in their little rooms awaiting execution. Prison chaplains say so, and are they not honourable men? So it follows that quite a number of murderers go to "Heaven" when they die. And "Heaven," according to the Christian Superstition, is a state of perpetual and unending bliss. All good Christians are supposed to aspire to this celestial and bejewelled paradise, without, perhaps, fully realizing that it is partly a colony of murderers and criminals.

Conversely, unconverted persons are supposed to go to "Hell," which is said by the same authorities to be a place of torment. It used to be pictured as a red-hot-poker department, but the clergy nowadays, when addressing decent folk, are a little shy of admitting the hot impeachment. In the mission fields it is boldly described as very tropical; in the Sunday-schools it is not so hot; whilst in the better-class churches it is almost arctic in its climatic conditions. In controversy with very wicked infidels it is even described as a mental state, a sort of headache, which, presumably, a Daisy powder would relieve. So, the Christian pays his pew-rent and makes his choice between the top and bottom of the thermometer. Whether "Hell" is a Turkish Bath place of torment, or an ice-cream bar, is a matter for prayerful cogitation; but, anyhow, it is a place of unpleasantness. At its best it is perhaps like a seaside lodging-house bedroom with plenty of fleas. At its

worst the imagination recoils from the pictured horrors.

The cream of the joke is that, whereas murderers are so often booked for Heaven by the clergy, the "intellectuals" are just as certain of reaching the other place. Unbelievers are considered to be the very worst kind of offenders by the clergy. If there is a word of truth in Christian teaching, all the Free-thinkers who have ever lived are in Hell. And that great army includes some of the most famous names in all history. From Hypatia, in far-off Greece, to Huxley in our own England; from Abelard to Anatole France; what a procession of famous men and women! The very names sound like martial music; and so splendid are their records that they march, as it were, under blazoned banners. The bare fact that such persons were judged to be the worst of miscreants by the Christian clergy is a lasting condemnation of their Oriental religion and their boasted culture.

This conversion of the Manchester murderer would have been unworthy of serious attention, had it not been for the boastful complacency of the Bishop and the Dean. These self-satisfied persons appear to imagine that the whole sorry business is a subject for admiration; whereas it is a disgusting spectacle which proves beyond the shadow of a doubt that men may be high ecclesiastics of a powerful Christian Church and yet be as uncivilized in mind as any Gold Coast nigger, or South Sea beachcomber. The blunt truth is that sixth century theology is out of date in the twentieth century, and is as archaic as the ecclesiastical dress which distinguishes the higher clergy from their fellow citizens. Few worse misfortunes can befall a people than that of possessing a priestly caste in its midst that hinders the wheels of progress, and actually endeavours to stop the clock. Modern life is enormously changed from the primitive conditions under which the early Christian fanatics existed, for these neurotics never lived in any real modern sense of the word. To perpetuate their narrowminded fanaticism is to attempt to put the clock back near two thousand years, which is really as likely to be successful as Mrs. Partington's effort to sweep back the Atlantic Ocean with a household mop.

MIMNERMUS.

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### "Robert Louis Stevenson—Man and Writer."

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QUITE recently we have read with the greatest interest and pleasure what seems to us a final and illuminating verdict on R. L. Stevenson under above title by Mr. J. A. Steuart (Samson Low, 2 vols.). Admirable and exhaustive as the volumes are we are more particularly interested in certain Freethought "explosions" of the novelist's youth and his subsequent attitude towards religion. After the manner of "reputable" biographers, those early heretical outbursts are rather lightly passed over, coupled with certain sexual indiscretions of the youthful Stevenson. One recalls the "wild talk" of another young Edinburgh man, one "whose morals were irreproachable," a student of eighteen, who "suffered with the Bible in his hand," and in the reign of the non-persecuting king, William III., but in the hands of cruel judges eagerly supported by a merciless clergy.

"The ministers demanded, not only the poor boy's death, but his speedy death, though it should be his eternal death. Even from their pulpits they cried out for cutting him off." Their impatience for the sacrifice was perhaps partly owing to their fear that the King might hear of it and interpose between them

and their holy zeal. Be that as it may, "the preachers, who were the boy's murderers, crowded round him at the gallows—it was 'slow strangulation' in those days—and, while he was struggling in the last agony, insulted Heaven with prayers more blasphemous than anything he had ever uttered."

How often in the religious history of Scotland had heaven been so insulted, and always with impunity. Heaven then, as now, was old and blind and deaf, and the prayer, "Avenge, oh Lord, thy slaughtered saints," has in all ages, on all occasions, ascended heaven in vain. Such was the fate of young Aitkenhead in his time. Stevenson offended in a more tolerant age, or, instead of *Treasure Island* we might have mourned another martyr, added one more damning spot to the long history of religious persecution.

Says our biographer:—

The young Louis, who had ever a *flair* for the limelight, was seized with the seven devils of scepticism.....Huxleyism and Tyndallism were in the air like an epidemic, and were proving most frightfully infectious.....There is something striking and dramatic in such a clean sweep of cherished faiths .....appeals especially to the theatrical instinct, and Louis was captivated.

Here our excellent biographer would seem to be obsessed more with the impolitic than the impious youth. But what was honour and intelligence in Huxley and Tyndal, why should it be disgraceful in the young Stevenson? Precocity is natural to genius, and the crime of being young and wise is always better than that of being old and foolish. Is free thought foolish in youth and only wise in age? This is the tender training of the nursery—it is wicked at five to doubt the good Santa Claus, and wrong at fifty to believe in fairy tales. Did Huxley and Tyndal speak only to the old, and tremble that the young should hear? Our impression is that both the professors lectured University students. Had not the cleric been there first, and captured, not captivated, the child such "wild talk" would sooner have been wise talk in old and young; and the "savage talk" of both old and young have sooner become less common. But the thoughts of most adolescents, the Stevensons in particular, are long, long thoughts, deep and serious, clear and logical, according to their lights: we remember our own: and whence comes the light of later years—or the darkness? from the cradle. it may be said. Infancy and youth are the gift ages—of gold or dross, the light of simple truth, or the dreams and fables of the above. It is conceivable Macaulay was, and Mr. Steuart is, mentally emancipated, but the one was, and the other is, constrained by the pressure of religious and literary conformity. Neither must offend the pulpit or the "Literary Society." It is easy to infer that Stevenson himself was constrained, though in his heart, like Burns' minister:—

He weel believes and thinks it auld wives' fables.

Speaking once of his disbelief in posthumous torture, Stevenson exclaimed: "Should I waken up in hell, it will not shake my cast-iron faith!" But this, perhaps, only "honest doubt," and the vindication of a good God, for which in other times he might have been well and truly, if slowly, hanged. Freethought is growing in spite of canons, schools, and colleges. And has not this wild talk of the youthful Stevensons and Aitkenheads been paralleled in the lives of scores of great writers who to the end of their days remained Freethinkers? In our author's closing volume little reference is made to the final opinions in religion of R. L. S. But he must be aware that Mr. Lloyd Osbourne has stated definitely that the "family worship" scenes at Samoa were

mere pose in the interests of the savages surrounding him; such Christian ritual being admirably suited to their native stage of culture, a culture little improved upon by "the savage in our midst" at home.

We may infer, also, that the later suppression of Stevenson's early freethinking—or the utterance of it—was mainly due to the fear of alienating a public favour he had so resolutely set out to win. That such wisdom is justified of its children let the many Caines and Corellies testify. But these irreligious opinions, if unexpressed, so far as we know, remained with him to the last, only maturing with time—they remained the groundwork of his philosophy—if he had one, and were such as a robusiter and not necessarily coarser mind might have avowed more openly. Burns was not an out-and-out Freethinker, but so far as his scepticism went, and it went far, there was never a shadow of politic reticence save in the usual amenities and tolerances of social life. Stevenson's frequent and polite references to the Deity and the machinery of Calvinism were but the emotional expression of a loving and earnest but hideous early teaching. With such a creed, parental example and precept, is not this intellectual-religious, or natural-supernatural, struggle the supreme epic one in the mind of every lad of parts; one which, but for the mistaken promptings of sex, the timidity of parents and playfellows, and public opinion generally, would invariably issue in the triumph of reason, followed by a less futile, because less distorted, view of life and morals?

Apart from such special considerations there is so much to interest and charm in Mr. Steuart's *Life* that one is tempted to trespass on even the precious space of the *Freethinker*; but one cannot even summarize, only suggest the mine of interest and charm in these fine volumes, and hope they have attained a public worthy of their outstanding merits.

In the opening chapters one may be permitted a smile at Stevenson's search for a Celtic ancestry, one which engrossed him to the end of his life, and which Mr. Steuart has posthumously completed for the wistful and romantic Scot. He has to exchange Rob Roy for a fierce and predatory, even murderous, lowland John Blair—something to be proud of after all! and his "foreign inheritance" is French. Dickens remarks of certain blue-blooded people that they would have been as proud of their Norman descent if William the Conqueror had been William the Conquered we add that such research seems as useful and inspiring as meditations amongst the tombs and recall the lines of Pope:—

Go, though your ancient but ignoble blood  
Has crept through scoundrels ever since the Flood:  
Go, and proclaim your family is young,  
Nor own your fathers have been fools so long!

One gathers that some of the dominating and external factors in the life of Stevenson were, first, he is an only child; second, his father's cheque book; third, his father's Calvinism. He, himself, is the airy, delightful, adventurous spirit we can all admire. We learn that he gloried in unremitting toil over his literary work. Is this inspiration caught from heaven? No; neither as means nor end; it is a simple, earthly, common urge, the aim at first definite but deceitful; persevering, use doth breed a habit in a man, or, the labour we delight in physics pain; disillusioned, but still deceived, creation alone becomes its own exceeding great reward, even as the life-long consumptive, Stevenson, exercised and found it, even with one foot in the grave; still the result not holy writ, and not of heaven, but of earth only, and sufficing, unless we wake up, as we do too often, as Leopardi did for good, to "the nullity of all

things," this perhaps the greatest height the mind of man can reach, a rarified atmosphere in which few can endure. The "literary instinct" the love of glory, of romance, of something few of us could define, the desire of fame, these are some of life's allurements—of fame Stevenson felt the prophetic certainty—something within us prompts and illumines; it is fame—Fame, that vanity of vanities:

A thing beyond us even before our death,

but losing sight of which we are dead long before we die. Stevenson was no unique hero after all—he pleased himself—he did no more even if he pleased us too.

Pride of ancestry our hero had, of country, of a college and a class environment, the atmosphere of a "gentleman"; an eagerness to live equalling the indifference to life of that greater and still more suffering spirit, Leopardi. What pathetic questing after health which he (S.) never found! Was it heroism or folly thus to cling to half a life? Was it the sense of his worth to the world? No, not that, but rather as suggested in the *Elegy* :—

For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey,  
This pleasing, anxious being e'er resigned?

It was in this thought, in the glory of his work, the love of his own kind, that made even such a life as Stevenson's worth living.

No mystery is here, no special boon,  
For high and not for low.

Only in the grand aggregate of all the immortals was even his life of much concern—one star the less in the crowded firmament of letters; yet what alms for oblivion, when having founded his Samoan retreat, he perished! and now lives mostly in *Treasure Island*, a book for boys, which, with his verses for children, will remain always in the memory of the young and lead them on to his other fancies, and so on to a wider philosophy. R. L. S. was often, as are we all at times, faced with the enigma of existence clamouring for solution. This immortal and universal curiosity is quaintly and hauntingly negatived in the lines quoted by Mr. Steuart :—

Oh! I would like to ken, to the beggar wife, says I,  
The reason o' the cause an' the wherefore o' the why :  
Wi mony anither riddle brings the tear into my e'e—  
*It's gey an easy speirin'*, says the beggar wife to me.

The Bishops cannot answer nor the "Sees" that mourn. But confining ourselves to the sphere of the natural rational and human we, in Mr. Steuart's charming and intimate work, may have a full and final appreciation of Robert Louis Stevenson; man and writer.

ANDREW MILLAR.

#### THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGION.

The power of religious dogma, when inculcated early, is such as to stifle conscience, compassion, and, finally, every feeling of humanity. But if you want to see with your own eyes and close at hand what timely inoculation of belief will accomplish look at the English. Here is a nation favoured before all others by nature; endowed more than all others with discernment, intelligence, power of judgment, strength of character; look at them, abased and made ridiculous beyond all others by their stupid ecclesiastical superstition, which appears amongst their other abilities like a fixed idea or monomania. For this they have to thank the circumstance that education is in the hands of the clergy, whose endeavour it is to impress all the articles of belief, at the earliest age, in a way that amounts to a kind of paralysis of the brain; this in its turn expresses itself all their life in an idiotic bigotry, which makes otherwise most sensible and intelligent people amongst them degrade themselves so that one can't make head or tail of them.—*Translated by T. B. Saunders. Arthur Schopenhauer's "Religion: a Dialogue."*

#### Acid Drops.

The Rev. J. E. Rattenbury is concerned about the future of the Churches and their institutions, and he is not alone in that. Most other clergymen will share his anxiety. Their business is undergoing a slump, and there does not appear to be any great promise of improvement. But of one aspect of this decline he says :—

It is of course possible so to dwell upon the alienation of young intellectuals from the Church as to get a wrong impression of its value. Unfortunately this class is never large in any church. To this class there ought perhaps to be added a good many women who are feeling the effect of the women's contemporary women's revolt.

It is good to note the admission that the number of "young intellectuals" in any Church is never very large. But the serious thing for the Churches is that the proportion of intellectual young men who take up with religion is steadily decreasing. One need only to mix with a number of young men who take a serious interest in Church life to realize the truth of this.

Another confession of Mr. Rattenbury's is that "Christianity without the Church and its institutions is simply not Christianity." We leave Christians to fight this out between themselves, but we are interested in the admission that a Christianity which does not encourage a professional priesthood has no great interest for Mr. Rattenbury. And in this also, we fancy he will have the cordial support of other parsons.

Dealing with the same subject the *Church Times* recently noted the "further and serious drop" in the number of young men who present themselves for ordination. But it comforts itself with the reflection that "there is a plentiful supply of fit men ready to serve God," but needing only the means to follow the vocation. Which being interpreted seems to mean that if the salaries can only be made large enough to encourage men to embark in the business enough will come forward. We see no reason to seriously question this. But the same is true of most other trades and professions.

We notice in a report of a recent speech by His Excellency T. M. Healy, K.C., that this gentleman stated: "The only thing I can see that this Freethought gives is the right to loose living and loose thinking." This gem has all the particular flavour of forensic wit, and is known as the *onus probandi*. Mr. Tim Healy had better look a little closer, drop the abusive attorney touch, and give us facts before we turn the whites of our eyes towards the transcendental perfectibility of his own particular church. Here, boy, put this specimen of "Christian charity" in a bottle.

If any sceptical reader should doubt the value of prayer, let him ponder on the following: "Knute Rochne, "the finest football coach in U.S.A., and a recent convert to Catholicism," received Holy Communion with his team prior to a match in a big conference championship. His team "celebrated the event by winning a notable victory." The Catholic paper to which we are indebted for this piece of news adds that Knute always saw that his team "said a decade of the Rosary before entering the arena." We presume this team always wins—unless the other happened to have done likewise with the prayer business. In which case the Lord would leave the issue to be decided on skill alone. But is it "cricket" for one team to ask for supernatural aid in a match supposed to be won on skill? Is it fair for one side to seek to take supernatural advantage like this over the other? We think this incident clearly shows how demoralizing religion is to character.

One one occasion the pious team seems to have had some doubt whether the Celestial "Hello!" girl had put them through to headquarters. Things were going badly and something pretty desperate had to be done. So Knute withdraws his team to a corner of the field and quietly says a few prayers before the thousands of spectators. And here, rather exasperatingly, the narrative ends. We suppose the Lord soon got to work and crippled a few of the opposing side. Well, they had only themselves to blame. For only a flat-footed set of boobs would take on an encounter with a team which played God as an extra man, and expect to come out scathless.

The Scout movement, according to Sir Michael Sadler, "is the most striking contribution Britain has made to modern civilization." The epithet "striking" is a particularly happy one. It exactly describes the sensation experienced by our long-suffering ear-drums when the mellifluent bugle and the tuneful drum of the local troop, passing our window, salutes us with "a concord of sweet sounds." Seriously, one would hardly style the Scout movement a contribution to civilization, if by civilization one means an advanced stage of social development. There is in that movement rather too much "back to the primitive" to contribute to civilization anything of a really progressive nature. Like attracts like, we are told, and that maybe is why the churches have given the Scouts their benediction. There is little doubt that the churches, and especially the Salvation Army, are mainly concerned with the movement as a means of keeping a hold on the child, a potential customer.

However, in pointing out its primitive basis we are not blind to the better aspects of the Scout movement. It encourages the learning of useful crafts and hobbies; it keeps the child off the streets; it inculcates self-respect, and helps the young citizen to form useful personal habits; it gives him some knowledge of the civic virtues, besides training him to be self-reliant. And insofar as the Scout training is corrective to that herd-mentality which our school education and city life generally appears to engender, it may be commended.

There is one other thing we may say. The Churches will probably not get so much out of the Scout movement as they hope to do. This training of the scout to be independent and self-reliant, and to think out for himself solutions to his little problems, will tend to make the grown-up scout less easier for the parsons to manage than were his forerunners. He will be more apt to reflect a little about religion before accepting it. And when a man who has been taught to enquire into things does that, there is always a possibility that he may reject religion entirely if his enquiring habit of mind urges him to discover what is to be said against it.

Members of the teaching profession are not notorious for expressing their real opinions concerning religion. Indeed, in this respect, timidity would seem to be their most prominent characteristic, and "ca' canny" their motto. Still, the spirit of revolt which is in the air seems to have penetrated even the scholastic world, so that teachers are beginning to resent the gag upon their tongue which subservience to the parson or the pious school-manager forces them to submit to, as the direct result of religion in the schools. Teachers can now be noted talking back to a Dean or a Bishop. Thus a writer in the *Schoolmaster* says that teachers all know Dean Wellton's "outbursts at teachers and their work, gently proclaimed in a form which is distinguished as little by civility as by knowledge." After the Dean, the Bishop of Durham. It appears the Bishop had said that the vice of our education is its lopsidedness, and the result is seen in "the multitudes of citizens who are nothing better than educated savages."

To this "Antony Jedler" retorts:—

Things are evidently in a bad way; but I note with satisfaction that the Bishop allows that we are educated. The schools have done their job, evidently, and if we are savages it would seem that the churches have not yet accomplished their mission.

We think Antony is a little out in his reckoning if he believes the Church's mission is to civilize. We suggest he reads Dr. Draper's chapter, *Christianity and Civilization*, which we publish as a pamphlet. He may then learn exactly what her mission accomplished—that result can hardly be termed civilization. If after reading that chapter Antony still harbours his quaint illusion, he might take the trouble to ponder on the significance of the fact that with the decline of religion, humane feeling is everywhere more manifest. And that with the damping down of Hell-fire we find prison-cells being left untenanted. Indeed, prison-cells yawn so emptily that the police, apprehensive of a lack of Christian savages to fill them and fearful of losing a good job, hunt around for blaspheming Freethinkers to keep the cells well aired ready for their next Christian occupants. As the late G. W. Foote, whom the Church tried to civilize by means of twelve months of prison life, well asked: Why was there so little civilization in Europe when Christianity was supreme? Why was every reform opposed by the Church of Christ? Why is this age of progress the age of unbelief?

The latest revelation from the "spirit world" is a new life of the Apostles. We are not surprised at that since once upon a time a message came through from Adam Bede, and we see no reason why one should not come from Father Christmas. Of course, the Apostles speak in the language and style of our English New Testament, but there is nothing incongruous in that to the average believer. He may possibly find in it confirmatory evidence.

Mr. Ramsay Macdonald and Mr. Lloyd George are among the speakers at the World's Christian Endeavour Convention, to be held next July. Why not? These Christian Endeavourers, like those who are not endeavouring to be Christians, have votes.

Tennessee is still at it, and we admire its courage, even if we think little of its intelligence. From a report in the *New York World* of a speech by the Judge who tried the Scopes case, his idea of evolution is exactly what one would expect, and he says that if he listens to evolution he would lose his faith in the Bible, and then there would be nothing to stop him committing larceny. It all sounds very silly, and yet there are many thousands of Christians who would agree, and even when one analyses the statement of a great many highly-placed Christians as to the essential dependence of morality on religion, there is not a very great difference between them.

Suffering serves a useful purpose in the world, thinks Dr. R. J. Campbell. He instances the case of a father acutely suffering with cancer and the son tortured mentally because the one he cares for is suffering. Dr. Campbell tells us that he is not prepared to say that pain, whether physical or mental, is a good thing; it is not. If he had the power to banish it he would do so. But says he: "I do see plainly that human nature being what it is, we owe a good deal to the fact that we can suffer." He doesn't wish to go without the fine things that "suffering makes possible—sympathy, heroism, self-sacrifice, tenderness, care of the strong for the weak." And he adds: "If we thus perceive suffering sometimes results in good, the inference is a reasonable one that it may always be so."

We dare hazard a guess that Dr. Campbell if he were suffering acutely from some disease, would not be highly elated if he were told that God was making him suffer in order that his friends might manifest sympathy and

tenderness. He would declare that he was decidedly getting the worst of the bargain, and that he preferred a system of living in which was none of "the fine things that suffering makes possible" if by dispensing with these the suffering too could be banished. Mr. Campbell admits that pain is not a good thing; but why he attempts to show it as not wholly bad is because he sees that to condemn it as completely bad is to condemn God as the author of pain. Hence he is forced to adopt a Jesuitical plea that his God creates the bad that good may result from it. The God that Dr. Campbell reveals is a queer kind of Merciful Father for one to wish to worship. For all that, our reverend friend will go on loving Him at the same time as he praises the doctors for doing their best to interfere with the divine scheme by endeavouring to mitigate pain and to prevent the cause of it.

"The Things We Live By." This is not the theme of a discussion about the laity by a convivial dinner-party of parsons. It is the title to a lecture recently broadcast, and now printed in the *Daily News* as Dr. Saleeby's Christmas lay sermon. The things we live by are water and air, light and food—these for the body; work and play, love and worship—these for the soul. "These are treasure, all else is trash or treachery," says the Doctor, and his reason for telling us about them ought to interest Freethinkers. Says he: "Everywhere I see mankind, eager for life, rushing blindfold headlong to the grave for lack of wisdom to distinguish between the means of life and the means of death devilishly disguised to seem desirable." Now, as readers of the *Daily News* are aware, Dr. Saleeby is a good Christian. As such, he believes that God is wise, good, and all-powerful. Therefore we take it the Doctor would admit that God is responsible for introducing into the world the means of life and of death "devilishly disguised to seem desirable." As the Doctor's statement implies, not content with that, God blinds his creatures so that they fail to discern the true nature of things that vitally affect them, and allows them to rush headlong to their doom. Then God, instead of instructing each of his poor blind creatures individually, goes and opens the eyes of only Dr. Saleeby whose duty it is to enlighten all the rest of human creation. That way of doing things may exhibit heavenly wisdom, but—blasphemously speaking—it lacks common sense. An intelligent heathen to whom this was pointed out would declare that Christians were devil-worshippers.

We fear Dr. Saleeby has allowed his hygienic ardour to run away with his Christmas pen. If he talks about the harmful things of the earth as being "devilishly disguised," he will shock some pious readers into Atheism. Later, he tells us, "We live by worship, which is what love becomes when it is directed to noble and divine objects." Though how the devil we, being blinded, are able to judge what objects are noble and divine, the Lord above knows—and He prefers to devilishly disguise everything; thus turning life into a cross-word puzzle. Dr. Saleeby should leave Christmas sermonizing alone, for when he introduces theology he may be certain that his common-sense teaching will become "devilishly disguised."

We see announced a new "illustrated booklet," by Mr. Arthur Mee, one of the numerous machine-workers of the press, who edits *My Magazine*. We gather the title is "Sunday," and in the advertisement of this effort some "striking extracts" are given, such as Sunday being one of the "most potent factors in forming the sterling quality of British character, Sunday is the most British of all institutions, and one of the most precious," etc. The advertisement is followed by a fervent appeal to "help safeguard Sunday for our homes, our toilers, our Church, and our children." The only completely honest and straightforward part of this last sentence is that referring to the Church. For the Church is the only thing that is seriously interested in maintaining the British Sunday.

If Mr. Mee would pursue his studies on this subject with intelligence and fairness he would probably find that there is no other institution, except the Church itself, that has done so much harm to British character. Its institution soon led to an increase of drinking, it helped in the deterioration of manners, and any man or woman over forty years of age has seen an improvement in behaviour coincident with the neglect of the British Sunday. The people have grown more sober, and the young people improved in character and intelligence. All over the country police officials have borne testimony to the beneficial effects of taking young people off the streets on Sunday and providing them with healthy means of recreation and entertainment. And Mr. Mee might also bear in mind that the peculiar Sunday for which he pleads is, after all, only upheld by a small minority of professing Christians. The sterling qualities of British character has about as much to do with the peculiar English Sunday as they have to do with the transit of Venus.

Dr. T. R. Glover, in his weekly article in the *Daily News*, coquets with Catholicism, and in the course of his newspaper sermon takes in much cargo from Rome. He has a pretty wit, and we like his use of the phrase "Protestants are intelligent people generally"; it displays a masterly care in handling the verbiage of a dying creed, but it was rather unkind of the setter up to put below his article, "World of Puzzledom, Page Ten."

On the same page as Dr. Glover's article Mr. Stephen Graham's book is reviewed. In *London Nights*, it appears that the author has thoroughly done "slumming," but he does not tell us anything new about poverty and misery in the world in general, and London in particular. When the organized bodies of Christianity will cease beating the bush about the other world, and concentrate on this, it will not be necessary to read about tramps who do not want to wear out their shirts by sleeping in them.

A reader of the *Daily News* tells that paper that he is acquainted with a spirit-healing circle where the medium goes into a trance in broad daylight at the patient's own home, and the spirit "control"—the shade of a deceased doctor—prescribes the approximate treatment. If this sort of thing continues, the Medical Council will need to draft fresh rules to cover this unprofessional conduct of doctors who have "passed over." If some fatality results from this mode of treatment, will the coroner's jury call it "an act of God"? Or will a new type of verdict be invented—"death through an act of credulity"? It may be very nice to be healed by a spirit, but why can't the spirits more usefully employ their energies in warding off illness from the believer? We suggest to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle that he prayerfully beseech the Chief Spirit to instruct His ghostly satellites so to use their powers, on the principle that prevention is better than cure.

In *Love and Death*, a plea for Spiritualism, a letter is given by the mother who writes the book—a letter sent by her soldier son to his little sister. The soldier tells her that the padre in Church in between the lessons had a talk to children. It was on Joy. Said the padre: "J stands for Jesus, Y for you, and O is the figure nought, nothing. So the real meaning of Joy is Jesus and you, and nothing in between." Exactly; the parson unwittingly spoke the truth—there is nothing between Jesus and the reflective man who refuses to allow his mind to be bemused by words. Nothing, that is, on which intelligent people need waste their time and mental energy. Jesus and his creed may be summed up thus: J for joyless, E for empty, S for stale, U for useless, and S for sterile. When people realize this they refuse to put their pennies in the collection plate. And great is the howl thereat.



**"Freethinker" Endowment Trust.**

I HAVE said but little recently about this Fund—in deed, the whole matter was explained so fully when the scheme was first launched that there is little left to say. The whole plan of this scheme is to provide an annual sum of £400, the amount required to make good the loss on the publication of the *Freethinker*. The Trust is legally established, it is governed by trustees, and provision is made that in the event of the Trust being wound up the capital must go to the National Secular Society, or to some other bodies doing similar work. The editor of the *Freethinker* is one of the Trustees, and no Trustee is allowed to derive anything in the shape of profit or payment from the Trust.

It is the only scheme yet propounded which aims at placing the organ of the Militant Freethinkers of this country in a position of financial security. Up to date over £3,500 has been subscribed, and this means that about half the annual deficit on the *Freethinker* has been made good. Those who have subscribed will thus have the satisfaction of seeing their contributions bearing fruit year after year, without any further effort on their part. That seems an object worth aiming at. It is almost hopeless expecting a paper such as this one, which attacks the most dangerous and the most strongly organized of superstitions, to exist on a paying basis. There is no Freethought paper that does this, and with the largely increased cost of production—an increase that of necessity hits the reformer harder than anyone else—there is no strong probability that it will soon be otherwise.

In the case of the annual Sustentation Fund, the date of closing has usually been before Christmas. But many of those interested in the present scheme advised that in this instance the special appeal should remain open for a longer period. It has therefore been decided that the Fund should remain open until the end of the present month, which should give everyone a chance to subscribe who wishes to do so.

On all sides the scheme has been welcomed as a promising attempt to give to the *Freethinker* a reasonable certainty of financial security. With this I quite agree, or I should never have pressed the scheme upon my readers. I thank very heartily those who have already subscribed—some more than once—to the Fund, and I am sure there are enough Freethinkers in the country in a position to subscribe all that is required if they can only persuade themselves to do so. I do not know that more can be said, or ought to be said. I am asking for the Cause, not for any personal object.

It will be remembered that one friend offered an additional £50 on condition that nineteen others followed suit, which would mean a total of another £1,000 to the Fund. Two others have also promised, which leaves room for seventeen more if the £1,000 is to be secured. If these others do not come forward, all promises will be cancelled, and the matter will drop. These promises therefore will hold good only to the end of the month. If by January 31 the balance of the £1,000 is not promised, those who have been good enough to do so, will know that their well-meant effort has failed, and their promises are cancelled. But there is still a month before us, and we shall see what will happen.

Previously acknowledged, £3,476 os. 6d. R. Gaudin, £2; A. R. Wykes, £2; F. Maclachan, £1; Mr. and Mrs. Lane, £1; R. Crum, £1; C. S. Knight,

£3; A. Harvey, £5; W. P. Kernot, £1 1s.; W. Mather, £1; K. J. (Poplar), £1; E. Truelove, 10s.; F. H. Thomas (Cape Town), £2 2s.; Mrs. A. Lee, £1; J. Newman, £3; J. G. Burdon, 7s. 6d.; Exors. of W. A. Griffiths, per H. Black, £2 2s.; W. Graham, 2s. 6d.; Lieut.-Col. K. C. Sanjima, £1; "A Medical Priest," 10s.; H. Irving, 10s.; E. Lyons, 10s.; J. Farmer, 2s. 6d.; H. Silverstein, £1. Total, £3,508 2s. 6d.

Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to the "*Freethinker* Endowment Trust," and crossed Midland Bank, Limited (Clerkenwell Branch). All letters should be addressed to the Editor, *Freethinker*, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

**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.**

F. H. THOMAS.—Pleased to have the good wishes of one of our Cape Town readers.

MR. E. TRUELOVE, a name well known to those who are acquainted with the Freethought movement, sends a subscription and writes that after thirty years he looks forward to the *Freethinker* as eagerly as ever. He looks back with every satisfaction to the progress accomplished by Freethought.

(MRS.) A. LEE.—Many thanks for good year's wishes. We also hope that 1926 will be a good year for the "best of causes."

J. G. BURDON.—Spare our blushes. Appreciated all the same.

H. BLACK.—We note the Salford Libraries' Committee has again refused your offer to supply copies of the *Freethinker* to the reading rooms. From the Christian point of view we cannot condemn them. If we were a Christian we should probably act in the same way. We must wait for the Councillors to get a little farther away from the savage, or for other Councillors of a more civilized type of mind to get elected.

S. WARING.—The author of the saying was not Lord Coleridge, but his ancestor, Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The great minds are those with a wide span, which couple truths related to, but far removed from, each other.—O. W. Holmes, "*The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table.*"

## Sugar Plums.

A Happy New Year to all *Freethinker* readers, with a hope that when we repeat the wish twelve months hence, it will be to a very much larger circle than at present.

This might easily be the case if only a fifth of our readers would resolve, before the present month is out, to present us with a new subscriber. Once we get him, or her, we may be relied upon to hold them. It is a small contribution to make to a great cause, and we invite our friends to consider it. They can take an extra copy for distribution, or give their own away when finished with, or if they will send us the names of likely subscribers we will send a specimen copy of the paper for six weeks. Threepence in stamps to cover postage should accompany the list.

We beg to call special attention to page 15 of this issue. Membership subscriptions to the National Secular Society fall due on January 1, and the Executive is out to secure a record number of new members during 1926. We have no doubt that many will be surprised to learn that thousands of our Freethinking readers have not yet joined the N.S.S., but it is so, and we fancy that sheer carelessness is responsible for it. With a much larger—which also means a much *wider* membership, many new moves could be made and much more done. At the foot of page 15 will be found a form of membership. To all Freethinkers who are not members we say, cut it out, fill it in, and post at once to the Secretary.

To-day (January 3) there will be, as announced, a public discussion between Mr. Cohen and Canon Storr on "Should We Believe in a Personal God?" The debate will commence at 3 o'clock, in the Stratford Town Hall. Sunday afternoon is an unusual time for a discussion, but, presumably, the time suited the Canon best, and it will give all a chance to get home early.

Admission to the discussion is free. There are a number of reserved seats, and we regret that we have been quite unable to send to all who have written for them. Those who have not received them will take it that we have done what we could, and as there are about four times as many unreserved seats, the fact of not having a ticket need not deter anyone from coming. Only one hundred reserved seat tickets were at our disposal, and we had applications for about five times the number, some from as far north as Liverpool. We have done our best, but we could not make one equal five. Stratford Town Hall can easily be reached from any part of London. Trains and buses pass the door.

We hope that London Freethinkers, as well as provincial friends, will bear in mind the date of the Annual Dinner—January 12. This will be at the Midland Grand Hotel, and there will be the usual excellent programme of music, interlarded with speeches. Tickets are 8s. each, and for these early application should be made, the earlier the better. All tickets must be purchased before January 9. These can be obtained from either the General Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, or from the *Freethinker* office.

Freethinkers will be interested to know that the just issued *Oxford Book of English Prose*, chosen and edited by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, reprints a portion of Lord Sumner's opinion in the celebrated case of Bowman *versus* the Secular Society, Limited. The selection is a very fine piece of legal prose, well worthy of being reprinted, and it is of sufficient interest to reprint here—despite its length.

The words, as well as the acts, which tend to endanger society differ from time to time in proportion as society is stable or insecure in fact, or is believed by its reasonable members to be open to assault. In

the present day meetings or processions are held lawful which a hundred and fifty years ago would have been deemed seditious, and this is not because the law is weaker or has changed, but because, the times having changed, society is stronger than before. In the present day reasonable men do not apprehend the dissolution or the downfall of society because religion is publicly assailed by methods not scandalous. Whether it is possible that in the future irreligious attacks, designed to undermine fundamental institutions of our society, may come to be criminal in themselves, as constituting a public danger, is a matter that does not arise. The fact that opinion grounded on experience has moved one way does not in law preclude the possibility of its moving on fresh experience in the other; nor does it bind succeeding generations when conditions have again changed. After all, the question whether a given opinion is a danger to society is a question of the times and is a question of fact. I desire to say nothing that would limit the right of society to protect itself by process of law from the dangers of the moment, whatever that right may be, but only to say that, experience having proved dangers once thought real to be now negligible, and dangers once very possibly imminent to have now passed away, there is nothing in the general rules as to blasphemy and irreligion, as known to the law, which prevents us from varying their application to the particular circumstances of our time in accordance with that experience.

From the legal point of view that is a notable delivery, and unquestionably sets forth the better spirit of our Common Law. But while Freethinkers have every cause for congratulation in the fact that in the present state of the public mind an interpretation of blasphemy on the old lines is not at present probable, it is well to bear in mind that this security exists only so long as public opinion does not retrograde. Lord Sumner emphasized this in the expression that the fact of public opinion having moved forward does not preclude the possibility of it moving backward. The Blasphemy Laws are there, and so long as they exist the possibility of their being interpreted in a harsher form remains. All that is required for this is some change in existing circumstances that will give the narrower forms of religious belief a greater ascendancy than they have at present.

The moral of the whole situation is that so long as "blasphemy" remains an offence, even at Common Law, no Freethinker can consider himself safe. It is left for a Christian judge and a Christian jury—the latter nearly always left by the judge in a state of ignorance concerning the nature of Common Law, and the counsel too much concerned for his future practice to supply the omission—to determine whether a Freethinker has attacked Christianity in a permissible manner or not. And that is a situation that always holds out a menace to a genuine equality of all before the law.

Mr. J. Bartram writes pointing out that in the obituary notice of Mr. Newrick Richardson "the Mad infidel" should have read the "auld infidel." He also encloses a letter from Mr. Richardson in which he expresses a desire to leave a house he possessed to the *Freethinker*. We were also aware of Mr. Richardson's intention but as he died before making his will the desire remained a desire.

The *Manchester City News* professes surprise at Mr. Cohen saying "the Christians of Dayton are taking up a perfectly logical position in denying evolution," and regrets that "such an able man should adopt that method." We have no doubt but many Christians regret it with equal strength. But we should feel rather more interested in the reviewer indicating in what way the author is wrong in saying that Christianity and evolution are utterly irreconcilable. The feeling of the reviewer that Mr. Cohen is afraid of Modernism is quite unjustified. He simply has the same dislike to that as he has at all attempts to bolster up by special pleadings an utterly indefensible position, and has far more

respect for those Christians who are consistent enough to stand by what has always been understood by Christianity, instead of seeking by equivocal language and star-lined interpretation to harmonise Christianity with modern scientific thought.

The following incident is related by R. S. Crossley in the *Newspaper World* :—

Orator, debater, lecturer, and publicist, Charles Bradlaugh had few platform equals, and there were fewer still gifted with such skill of repartee. It must be well over fifty years since the incident here recorded took place at Darwen. The famous iconoclast was announced to address two meetings on the Sunday—one in the afternoon, the other in the evening. At the close of his afternoon speech, questions having been invited, a gentleman, well known in Darwen for his religious work, said he was acquainted with a poor bed-ridden old woman, living in a miserable cottage, who was believed to be at the close of a very unhappy life. If Mr. Bradlaugh, whose ideas of infidelity were abhorrent to him, would go to the dying woman and offer words of comfort to her he would give the lecturer a sovereign. Mr. Bradlaugh promptly accepted the challenge, and as I was the only newspaper man present it was suggested that I should accompany him to the cottage and give a report at the evening meeting as to what took place. Arrived at the house, Bradlaugh, a powerfully-built, tall man, had to stoop to enter the portal. The frail woman lay on an old-fashioned bedstead in a room scantily furnished. Advancing to the bed, Bradlaugh placed the sovereign in the palm of the withered hand, saying, "My good woman, a gentleman at a meeting I have been addressing this afternoon offered me this sovereign if I would come and say words of comfort to you. I am sure the sovereign will be much more comforting to you than any words I can offer. It will help you to buy much-needed nourishments which, I hope, will give you strength." Tears ran down the old woman's cheeks and her feeble voice thanked Bradlaugh, who replied, "My good woman, the sovereign was not mine but was given to me by a gentleman in my audience. Good afternoon." When, at the evening meeting, I presented my report, Bradlaugh's admirers rose and cheered to the echo.

On Sunday next (January 10), the Birmingham Branch will be holding a tea and social at Derricourt's Café, High Street, at 5.30. Tickets will be 1s. 6d. each, and may be obtained from the Secretary, 3 Daniels Rd., Little Bronwich, Birmingham.

Mr. Cohen is sorry to have to say that, quite unwittingly, he misquoted Mr. Joseph McCabe in his reply to him in last week's *Freethinker*. The expression used by Mr. McCabe of the writer of the paragraph, Mr. Cohen, was an "unmitigated ass," not "insufferable ass," as printed. An insufferable ass is one who can no longer be endured, an unmitigated ass is one whose asinity does not admit of diminution or alleviation. Everything about the article was quite in order, and the misquotation was quite a harmless one.

## The Gospel History a Fabrication.

### THE PUBLIC MINISTRY OF JESUS.

ACCORDING to the first three Gospels, the whole of the public ministry of Jesus, with the exception of a few days preceding his arrest and trial, was carried on in Galilee. And here the primitive writer's ignorance of the topography of the northern province is manifest. If we attempt to follow the alleged wanderings of Jesus through Galilee, we soon come to an *impasse*. Thus, taking Matthew's account, Jesus, after visiting Nazareth and Capernaum, and walking by "the sea of Galilee," went up into a mountain; and afterwards departed "unto the other side" (viii. 13) and came into "the country of the Gerge-

senes" (viii. 28)—which district is in some MSS. called "the country of the Gadarenes"; in others, that of "the Gerasenes"—after which he came by boat to "his own city" (ix. 1). Next he "passed from thence" to some unnamed place (ix. 9), and again "passed by from thence" to another unnamed place (ix. 27); after which he "went about all the cities and villages" (ix. 35). After this, "he departed thence to teach and preach in their cities" (xi. 1), and "at that season" he went through the cornfields (xii. 1), after which he "departed thence and went into their synagogue" (xii. 9), and afterwards "withdrew from thence" (xii. 15), and "on that day" he "sat by the sea side" (xiii. 1). Next, after discoursing at some unnamed place, he "departed thence" and came to "his own country" (xiii. 53, 54); but soon "he withdrew from thence in a boat to a desert place" (xiv. 13), then he "went up into a mountain apart" (xiv. 23), and, after walking on "the sea," came to "the land of Gennesareth" (xiv. 34). After this, he "withdrew into the parts of Tyre and Sidon" (xv. 21); but he soon "departed thence" towards "the sea of Galilee" and "went up into a mountain" (xv. 29). Next, he "came into the borders of Magadan" (xv. 39)—which Mark calls "the parts of Dalmanutha"—and, after orating, "he left them and departed" (xvi. 4). After this, he "came into the parts of Cæsarea Philippi" (xvi. 13) and "after six days" ascended "a high mountain," shortly after which he entered Capernaum (xvii. 1, 24), and finally "departed from Galilee, and came into the borders of Judæa" (xix. 1)—which completes the ministry of Galilee.

The accounts of Mark and Luke follow the same plan, and are of the same indefinite character. Now, after reading the foregoing, it at once becomes apparent that we have merely a number of unconnected, undated, and unlocated hearsay stories, more or less clumsily pieced together, which were certainly not taken from a biography written by an eyewitness. It is also clearly evident that the stories contained no other names of places visited by Jesus. The foregoing sketch contains all the cities or villages named in Matthew's Gospel. Of these, the words "his own country" refer to Nazareth; "his own city," to Capernaum. It is not stated that Jesus entered Tyre, Sidon, or Cæsarea Philippi—which were beyond the limits of Galilee—but only that he went into the neighbourhood of those cities. Again, "the country of the Gergesenes" and "the borders of Magadan" have reference only to districts. Hence, the primitive writer knew of but two "cities" which had been visited by Jesus—Nazareth and Capernaum. The writer, it is true, says that "Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues" (Matt. iv. 23; x. 35; etc.); but this could be stated by anyone who had no knowledge of any cities in the northern province. Yet Galilee, in the reputed time of Jesus, had a large number of towns and villages, as may be seen by the following list, mentioned by Josephus :—

CITIES.—Sepphoris (largest and strongest); Tiberias (next in importance); Tarichæ, Jotapata, Zebulun (strong); Garis, Scythopolis (large); Gischala, Arbela, Bethmaus, Asochis, Magdala, Besara, Garisne, Gabara, Kadesh, Gaba, Salamis, Jamnith, Julias, Bersabe, Sennabris, Sigo, Seph, etc.

VILLAGES.—Japhai (largest), Gabaroth, Dabaritta, Baca, Jamnia, Meroth, Achabare, Saab, Cana, Simonais, Emmaus, Meloth, Caphar-echo, Capharnaum, Chabolo, Ruma, etc.

IN PEREA (east of Sea of Galilee), which Jesus is stated to have often visited, were: Gamala, Gadara, Gerasa, Julias, Solyma, Bethenabris, Bezemoth, Giniubris, Arpha, Selucia, Sogana, Golar, etc.—the last six being villages.

How many of the foregoing places did Jesus visit during his public ministry? Well, according to Matthew, he entered one—the village of Capernaum.

#### THE CITY OF NAZARETH.

According to the first three Gospels, Jesus Christ passed his childhood and early manhood in "a city of Galilee named Nazareth," where, it is said, he and other members of his family were well known. Now, as a matter of history, so far as can be ascertained, there was no city in Galilee named Nazareth, either in the reputed time of Jesus or at any other. No such city is named in the Old Testament, in the apocryphal books, or in the Talmud, nor in any Jewish literature known. The historian Josephus, in his *War on Galilee* and in his *Life*, goes again and again over the ground where this city is supposed to be located, without ever once coming across it; hence, the only rational conclusion possible is that the city is purely imaginary, and was so named by the primitive Gospel writer through ignorance of the country and misapprehension.

The province of Galilee, as everyone knows, has for its eastern boundary the Jordan and Lake Gennesareth, the latter being called in the Gospels "the sea of Galilee." Speaking of the western side of this lake, Josephus says: "Now the lake of Gennesareth is so called from the country adjoining it.....The length of this country extends itself along the banks of this lake that bears the same name, for thirty furlongs, and is in breadth twenty" (*Wars*, 3, 10, 7 and 8). Thus, on the Galilee side of the lake, the land for nearly four miles along its banks was called Gennesareth. The fact that the writer of the primitive Gospel appears to have known (Matt. xiv. 34; Mark vi. 53), but not that "Gennesareth" was also the name of the lake; for the latter he calls "the sea" or "the sea of Galilee" (Matt. iv. 18; xv. 20; Mark vii. 31, etc.). Luke, however, had ascertained the correct name (v. 1); but he wrote later, and had consulted Josephus. The land was named "Gennesareth" on account of its great fertility and of the large number of fruit trees it contained: its appellation in Hebrew signified "garden of the prince"—the prefix *gen* or *gan* denoting a garden, and *nasi* and *sar* a prince.

The primitive writer, however, would seem to have imagined that the land of "Gen-nesareth" took its name from some city in the neighbourhood called Nesareth—that it was the garden or fertile land surrounding the city—so after making Jesus a native of that place, he represented him as visiting it several times during his public ministry, and as going into the synagogue there, and astonishing his relatives by reading from the Book of Isaiah.

#### CAPERNAUM.

From the way in which this "city of Galilee" is spoken of in the Gospels, it is generally supposed to have been one of the largest and most important of the cities in that province. Here Jesus is stated to have expelled a demon from a man in the synagogue, and also to have cured a man "sick of the palsy" (Mark i. 23; ii. 3; Luke iv. 33; v. 18). Now, as a matter of history, there certainly was a place in Galilee called Capernaum; but it was a mere village, noted only for having "a most fertile fountain" which watered the three or four miles of garden ground of Gennesareth in which it was located. Josephus states that when upon one occasion he was thrown from his horse, he was carried "into a village named Capharnaum" (*Life*, par. 72). The name signifies in Hebrew "the village of Nahum," *Kaphar* or *Caphar* denoting a village. As to whether every village in Galilee possessed a synagogue I am unable

to say, but I think it more than probable that they did *not*, more especially since nearly all the towns and villages in that province contained a large proportion of Gentile inhabitants. In any case, the going into an insignificant village, and holding forth to the few rustics found loafing about there, was not the way to make the new Gospel known to the people of Galilee—and this appears to have been the only place that Jesus ever actually entered. The reiterated statement that he went through all the cities and villages, preaching and healing the sick, is merely an editorial addition, and goes for nothing. It would thus appear that there was really no public ministry at all, and that all the primitive narratives from which the first three canonical editors took their accounts were simply pious fabrications.

#### CHORAZIN AND BETHSAIDA.

In the First and Third Gospels, Jesus Christ is represented as upbraiding "the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not." He is described as saying:—

Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which were done in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes" (Matt. xi. 21; Luke x. 13).

In the same category of unrepentant cities, Jesus also places Capernaum. Now, as to Chorazin, there is no mention of Jesus having ever visited that city in any of the Gospels; indeed, its existence as a city of Galilee appears to be more than doubtful.

With regard to Bethsaida, the case is different. There really was, at one time, a village of that name near the sea of Galilee; but it had been rebuilt, enlarged, and "raised to the dignity of a city" by Philip the tetrarch, at the beginning of his reign, and its name had been changed to "Julias" in honour of the emperor Augustus's daughter (*Antiq.* 18, 2, 1). Hence many years before the appearance of Jesus as a teacher, the stately city of Julias had taken the place of the little fishing village of Bethsaida, and everyone living in Galilee in the reputed time of Jesus would know that there was no place in that province called Bethsaida; nor is there any evidence that there ever were two places named Bethsaida near the sea of Galilee.

Bearing these circumstances in mind, we find it stated in Mark (viii. 22, 23):—

And they come into Bethsaida. And they bring to Jesus a blind man, and beseech him to touch him. And he took hold of the blind man by the hand, and brought him out of the village, etc.

This miracle is not recorded by any of the other evangelists; several other blind men are said to have been healed, but not at Bethsaida. Again, in the same Gospel, after the feeding of 5,000, it is stated that the disciples "entered into a boat to go unto the other side to *Bethsaida*" (Mark vi. 45). In the parallel account in the First Gospel, the disciples merely go "unto the other side" (Matt. xiv. 22). But Luke, in his account of the miracle of the loaves, said that Jesus and his disciples withdraw apart to a city called *Bethsaida*, and that "the multitude perceiving it followed him" (ix. 10), from which it would appear that the miraculous feeding took place within that city: but two verses further on it is said, "for we are here in a desert place," as stated in the parallel accounts of Matthew and Mark. Moreover, the writer of the Fourth Gospel tells us "on his own" that the three disciples Philip, Andrew, and Peter were natives of Bethsaida (John i. 44; xii. 21). It thus seems evident that stories were related of Jesus performing miracles at Bethsaida

in some of the primitive Christian writings in existence in the time of the four canonical evangelists, and that Mark has recorded one of them. It should also be stated that Christian reconcilers, as might be expected, have placed another Bethsaida near the sea of Galilee in maps of Palestine of the so-called apostolic times.

ABRACADABRA.

## Correspondence.

### BLACK AND WHITE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I wrote a letter in reply to a paragraph *re* "the bondage of the Kaffirs in the mines of South Africa" and a few lines to prove that our houseboys are slaves. I didn't, it is true, treat the matter very seriously because, as your readers may judge, the paragraph was too ridiculous to be replied to with a solemn face. Mr. Nance, however (November 1), takes me to task for getting "into that galley," but entirely endorses everything I say about the mine boys and lets the case of the houseboy go by default.

However, he has a backhanded slap at the mining companies by saying that they treat the boys well because it is their interest to do so—an insinuation quite unworthy and supported by no proof of any attempts to bully or enslave. Moreover, if it is to the interest of the mines to treat the natives well, it shows that the standard of treatment throughout the Union is high; as a matter of fact, barbarous labour of this class is probably better treated in the Union of South Africa than anywhere else in the world. It is therefore most unjust to single out the treatment of mine natives as an outstanding blot on the British Empire in general and South Africa in particular.

Mr. Nance switches off to the grievances of educated Kaffirs—this is an entirely new subject, and he has yet to learn whether I agree with him or not.

To a large extent I do, but we must keep our sense of proportion. The black millions of South Africa are not the well-dressed, sober, educated coloured men that you meet in the streets of London. The really educated Kaffirs are very few and they are mostly employed, as they should be, among their own people. The "civilized" Kaffirs we see on the Rand are two classes: young "bucks," got up like Solomon in all his glory, generally followed by a mob of admiring compatriots; secondly, flabby-looking men in clerical clothes who certainly do not look very refined as a rule. Their numbers are accounted for by the fact that every Kaffir who finds that his eloquence is admired wants to set up his own church and constitute himself a parson.

Mr. Nance says "the South African native has no rights whatever in his own land, in the only land he and his ancestors have ever known." Granted that the first clause is true, the same might be said of Mr. Nance's son, if he has one, living in his father's house. This does not mean that the son is oppressed or that it would be to his benefit to have a say in regulating the household economy.

Moreover, let us glance back a hundred years—what rights had the South African native then. Then he *was* a slave and the only punishment recognized by his owner was death.

When the vortrekkers came up north of Basutoland they found the whole country depopulated—the remnant of the population hiding in forests and caves, and Moselikatze's impis in possession. Moselikatze and his army were slaves of Chaka, who, to escape the death-penalty for non-success, had fled into the uplands and made a point of leaving no one alive behind them to direct the pursuers.

Now that is the Kaffir's past, since he exterminated the Bushmen and other indigenous inhabitants. The Europeans came to the country just in time to prevent the whole of its population being wiped out by the Zulus. The remnants of the Transvaal natives came out of their hiding places and now form a large population.

The males who used in the old days to hunt and go to war are enabled to live largely on the labour of their wives and children with a very small amount of labour and without the ever present menace of violent death which used to be constantly overhanging them. They owe this to the whites. Now if the whites are to remain in the country, which they, like the Kaffirs not so long before them, have obtained by conquest—or some times treaty—they must have means of making their livelihood and keeping up the standard of comfort of civilized men. This cannot be done if they are to admit into their Unions workers who have, by instruction from the whites, become equally skilled, but who are content to live on a handful of mealie pap, live in any old shanty, dress in any old rags, and who might, if encouraged, utterly swamp them in numbers. The same thing applies to the professions.

Now here may be a satisfactory solution to this difficulty. The *status quo* may be most unfair to the Kaffir who has picked up the arts of our civilization, but the solution is a matter of life and death for the European, and nothing is to be gained by throwing abuse about or talking about slavery where something quite different is meant.

J. LATHAM.

Johannesburg.

### MIND AND MATTER.

SIR,—My reply to your footnote to my letter in your issue of the 20th ult. is as follows: Berkley could not discover matter as a substantive and therefore denied its existence; personally justified. Hence my interpretation of "matter" where used. But to assume it does not help us to a knowledge of it. The Christian assumes God with the same result. On this my argument was based, for having a knowledge of something necessitates its existence. Therefore my reference to "unknown cause" was not a desire to score a point, but to show that the statement in which it was used was contradictory. It is immaterial what phrase was used if it implied the same thing. So it is well to point out here that "a hypothetical construction (of matter)" in general, is contradictory and impossible, for obvious reasons. We can only have a hypothetical construction of matter in particular. But you can have a hypothetical construction of gods in general, by the way. The analysis of Berkley is not impregnable as you think, and I doubt if it is what you make it appear to be. He confused knowledge with consciousness. Here I would point out that to him matter was no assumption when he commenced his examination, but it was his conclusion, for the simple reason that he gave us an *examination of consciousness*, from which he tried to explain or abolish externality, with emphasis on the latter; instead of an examination of nature, thereby explaining mind, and giving us an analysis of knowledge, which upon investigation is shown to fit in with the facts.

On his premise, to be conscious of mental states is just that and no more; the only knowledge we can have of these is, that a sensation is identical with its repetition. This however does not help us to a knowledge of externality or the cause of the sensations, which is vital. Therefore "our knowledge of externality is" not "a consciousness of mental states," and to say "we know only a cluster of sensations" is not only contradictory but an impossibility.

Knowing is the identification of something under two forms. This being so, "that we know nothing of matter apart from sensations," or, in other words, "all we know is a cluster of sensations," breaks down.

If it can be shown that the consciousness of a sensation can be identified with that producing it, we not only know the sensation but also its cause, by the fact of identity. This is done in two ways: (1) Through the senses the ego receives an impression which is identified with the external energy producing it; a repetition of itself, and thus we know both. (2) By impression which a sense organ (the eye for example) makes upon the ego, which is identical with its cause, the eye, thus again knowing both.

The first, external energy, repeating itself through the physical senses thus conditioning internal energy. The second, internal energy, the ego, being conscious

of internal energy, the eye, through other than the physical senses. In other words, we know the eye through the impression we have of it; we also know it through the *vibration of light*. This I hope will enable readers to understand that not only are we conscious of sensations, but we also know their cause—matter, and more so, because we know what we are by identity. If one is asked, "What is matter?" it can only be answered with: It is identical with the energy constituting our bodies. Mind is identical with the energy producing it. Matter and mind can only be explained each in terms of the other, and in no other way. Therefore we not only know what *sensations* and their *causes* are, whether concepts or emotions, but we also know all there is to know in the realm of matter and mind by identifying them with the fundamental energies of nature.

This is what no upholder of Berkley's analysis can or ever will explain. They remain in the "asylum of ignorance," and much more deserving of condemnation than those with a belief in God, which is partly due to the fact that anything else is beyond their intellectual plane, and partly due to tradition. The Godite can support his belief with his "ignorance"; the other can offer no such excuse; mere assertion is not sufficient evidence. Berkley's position turns out to be nihilism complete, or in other words, in individualism carried to its logical conclusion—extinction. To sum up in a few words: Realism represents matter; Idealism, from a scientific or monistic point of view, its conditions. Both are aspects of one—Matter. The trouble arises by endeavouring to separate them; an impossibility.

A. S. E. PANTON.

[I am afraid I cannot give the space to reply at length to Mr. Pantan's letter. But as I shall be dealing with his difficulty in the course of the present series of "Views and Opinions," I am only deferring my reply. All I will say at present is that I am quite at a loss to know how Mr. Pantan gets outside his own consciousness in order to know what lies beyond, and to point, on a question of fact, that Berkley did not try to abolish externality. On the contrary, he asserted it, and to use his own term, in the "vulgar" sense of the word. He said quite definitely that the external world existed apart from man. It was in stating the nature of that externality that he hoped to build up a theism. I am quite unable to follow Mr. Pantan in his use of the word "Identity."—ED.]

#### OUR ENGLISH CHURCH.

THERE is no church which dreads the light more than the English, because no other has such large pecuniary interests at stake, its income representing £5,000,000 sterling, which is more by £40,000 than those of the whole of the remaining Christian clergy in both hemispheres taken together. On the other hand, there is no nation which it is so painful to see thus methodically stupefied by this most degrading superstition than the English, who outstrips all the rest in intelligence. The root of the evil is that in England there is no ministry of public instruction, for which reason the latter has remained hitherto in the hands of parsondom; which has taken care that two-thirds of the nation shall not be able to read and write; and which even from time to time ventures with the most ludicrous impudence to yelp at natural science. It is, therefore, a human duty to infuse into England light, rationalism, and science through all conceivable channels, in order that these best fed of all priests may have their handiwork put an end to. When Englishmen of culture, on the Continent, display their Jewish Sabbatarian superstition and other stupid bigotry, we ought to meet it with unconcealed mockery—until they be shamed into common sense. For it is a scandal for Europe, and should be tolerated no longer. Hence one ought never, even in ordinary life, to make the least concession to the English ecclesiastical superstition; but, wherever it puts in an appearance, to meet it immediately with a most energetic protest. For the effrontery of the Anglican priests and their votaries is even at the present day, quite incredible, and must be banished to its own island, that it may thus be compelled to play the rôle of the owl by day whenever it ventures to let itself be seen on the continent.—Translated by E. Belfort Bax, "Schopenhauer's Essays."

## SALE AND EXCHANGE.

This column is limited to advertisements from private individuals only. Letters may, if it is so desired, be addressed to the Box Number, c/o "Freethinker" Office. Advertising rates 6d. for first line, every additional line 4d.

### FOR SALE.

ONE H.P. HORIZONTAL PETROL ENGINE, complete; new; £17; £5 goes to Endowment Fund when sold.—HAMPSON, Garden House, Duxbury, Nr. Chorley.

LEATHER SUIT CASE, 26 in. by 15 in.; practically new; exchange for Thomas Hardy's novels to value.—Box 60.

Woman's Mysteries (Talbot), Samuel Butler (Cannan), Baconian Heresy (Robertson), Shelley in England (Ingpen), and others; or will exchange for Olive Schreiner's Letters, Maude's Tolstoy on Art, or others.—Offers and enquiries to Box 61.

Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research, 6 vols., from 1882-1890; good condition; no reasonable offer refused.—Box 62.

Studies in the Psychology of Sex (Havelock Ellis), 4 vols., published 1920, Philadelphia, F. A. Davis Co., third edition; excellent condition; what offers?—Box 63.

History of the Reformation (W. Cobbet); Clarke & Haslam's Letters to the Clergy, Chapters on Human Love (Mortimer); sale or exchange.—Box 66.

### WANTED.

BOUND Volumes of National Reformer prior to 1866; also vol. for 1875; purchased or exchanged for modern Free-thought works.—Box 64.

FOOTE'S Crimes of Christianity, Freethinkers' Text Book, Part ii. (Annie Besant), The Prophet of Nazareth (Meredith), At Random (Saladin).—Box 65.

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

### LONDON.

#### INDOOR.

NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (101 Tottenham Court Road): 8, An Evening with Mr. Hyatt.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.—No meeting.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (New Morris Hall, Middle Floor, 79 Bedford Road, Clapham): 7, a Social.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7, J. C. Whitebrook, B.A., "The History of Witchcraft."

STRATFORD (Town Hall): 3, Debate: "Should We Believe in a Personal God?" Canon V. F. Storr v. Mr. Chapman Cohen.

### COUNTRY.

#### INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Brassworkers' Hall, 70 Lionel Street): 7, "Robert Green Ingersoll—The Man and His Work." Questions and discussion cordially invited. (Collection.)

LEEDS BRANCH N.S.S. (Trades' Hall, Upper Fountain Street): 7.15, Mr. A. Haigh, "Do We Survive the Death of the Flesh?"

NOT FROM THE PERFECT circle of the year can even winter's crystal gems be spared. Nor can the pages most held dear spare those loyal tailors who have dared to ask that thou shalt give them ear by writing now for any of the following:—Gents' A to H Book, suits from 50s.; Gents' I to N Book, suits from 99s.; Gents' Latest Overcoat Book, prices from 48s.; or Ladies' Latest Fashion and Pattern Book, costumes from 60s., coats from 48s.—MACCONNELL & MABE, 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.

# Why Not Join the N.S.S.?

There are thousands of *Freethinker* readers who are not members of the National Secular Society. Why is this so?

Naturally all who read the *Freethinker* are not convinced Secularists. With all who are, and are not members of the N.S.S., there appears only two reasons for non-membership. (1) They have not been asked to join. (2) They have not thought about it.

Well, the Society now asks all non-attached Freethinkers to consider this advertisement as a personal and cordial invitation to join, and to those who have not thought about it to give the matter their earnest and serious consideration.

For more than sixty years the National Secular Society has been fighting the cause of every Freethinker in the country. Its two first Presidents, Charles Bradlaugh and G. W. Foote, were the most brilliant Freethinkers of their time, and they gave themselves unstintingly to the Cause they loved. It is not claiming too much to say that public opinion on matters of religion to-day would not be what it is but for the work of these men and of the Society of which they were the successive heads.

Many of the things for which the Society fought in its early years are now well on their way to becoming accomplished facts, and are being advocated by men and women who do not know how much they have to thank the Freethought Movement for the opinions they hold. The movement for the secularization of the Sunday has grown apace, and may now be advocated with but little risk of the abuse it once incurred. The plea for the more humane and the more scientific treatment of the criminal has now become part of the programme of many reformers who take no part in the actual work of Freethought. The same holds good of the agitation for the equality of the sexes before the law. Other reforms that have now become part and parcel of the general reform movement found in the National Secular Society its best friend when friends were sadly needed.

To-day Freethinkers have won the right to at least standing room. They can appear as Freethinkers in a court of justice without being subjected to the degradation of the religious oath. The abolition of the Blasphemy Laws has not yet been achieved, but it has been made increasingly difficult to enforce them. Thousands of pounds have been spent by the Society in fighting Blasphemy prosecutions, and thanks to the agitation that has been kept alive, the sister organization, the Secular Society, Limited, was able to secure from the House of Lords a decision which stands as the financial charter of the Freethought Movement. It is no longer possible to legally rob Freethought organizations, as was once the case. For that we have to thank the genius of the Society's late President, G. W. Foote.

The National Secular Society stands for the complete rationalization of life, for the destruction of theological superstition in all its forms, for the complete secularization of all State-supported schools, for the abolition of all religious tests, and for the scientific ordering of life with one end in view—the greater happiness of every member of the community.

There is no reason why every Freethinker should not join the National Secular Society. There should be members and correspondents in every town and village in the kingdom. The Society needs the help of all, and the help of all should be freely given.

This is intended as a personal message to unattached Freethinkers. If you have not been asked to join, consider that you are being asked now. If you have not thought about it before, think about it now. The membership fee is nominal. The amount you give is left to the interest and the ability of each. The great thing is to associate yourself with those who are carrying on the work of Freethought in this country. To no better Cause could any man or woman devote themselves.

Below will be found a form of membership. Fill it up and forward to the Secretary at once.

## NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

President: CHAPMAN COHEN.

General Secretary: Miss E. M. VANCE.

Headquarters: 62 FARRINGTON STREET, LONDON, E.C.4.

### Form of Membership.

Any person over the age of sixteen 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 .....

Active or Passive .....

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

This declaration should be transmitted to the General (or Branch) Secretary with a subscription.

**When this Application has been accepted by the Executive, a Membership Card is issued by the General Secretary.**

Beyond a minimum of Two Shillings per year, members of the Parent Society contribute according to their means and interest in the cause. Branches fix their own Annual Subscription.

# London Freethinkers' Twenty-Ninth Annual Dinner

*(Under the Auspices of the National Secular Society.)*

AT THE  
MIDLAND GRAND HOTEL, N.W.

ON  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 12, 1926

Chairman - - Mr. CHAPMAN COHEN

Reception at 6.30.

Dinner at 7 p.m. prompt.

TICKETS 8s.

Tickets will be considered sold, and the seats reserved, unless returned by January 9.

EVENING DRESS OPTIONAL.

E. M. VANCE, Secretary, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C.4.

## A PUBLIC DEBATE

BETWEEN

CANON V. F. STORR

*(of Westminster)*

AND

CHAPMAN COHEN

*(Editor of the "Freethinker" and President of the N.S.S.)*

WILL BE HELD IN

# STRATFORD TOWN HALL

ON

SUNDAY, JANUARY 3, 1926, at 3 p.m.

Subject: "Should We Believe in a Personal God?"

Chairman - - Rev. J. MERRIN, M.A.

*(Vicar of Stratford and Rural Dean of West Ham).*

Doors open at 2.30.

Chair taken at 3.

Admission Free.

Collection in aid of Queen Mary's Hospital.