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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page
<i>The Essence of Materialism.—The Editor</i>	- 49
<i>"The Miracles of History."—J. T. Lloyd</i>	- 51
<i>The Churches and Brotherhood.—Mimnermus</i>	- 52
<i>Materialism Up to Date</i>	
—J. C. Thomas, B.Sc. ("Keridon")	53
<i>"Freethinker" Endowment Trust.—Chapman Cohen</i>	- 57
<i>The Gospel History a Fabrication.—Abracadabra</i>	- 58
<i>Of Armaments.—W. Thompson</i>	- 60
<i>Freethought Charivaria</i>	- 61
<i>"The Rusty Church Door."—D. P. Stickells</i>	- 61
<i>Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, etc.</i>	

Views and Opinions.

(Continued from page 34.)

The Essence of Materialism.

If we are correct in describing Materialism as resting on the assertion that the whole world of phenomena may be explained in terms of the composition of forces, in such a way that given an adequate knowledge of the forces in conjunction the result could be predicted, it follows that all sound science is of necessity materialistic, whether it is admittedly so or not. We do not mean that Materialism is able to fully explain all that occurs. Such a claim would be absurd, since it would imply complete knowledge. What we mean is that, apart from the belief in that possibility of doing this, science is meaningless, and that all scientists work upon this assumption. The work of a scientist in every branch, and with every problem, is to find out the cause of the phenomenon before him, and to describe it in terms of causation. In physics and chemistry this would be admitted by all. Some would question the possibility of describing biologic and psychologic phenomena in terms of a mechanistic causation, but it does not take much scrutiny to see that the sole ground of their objection is the extreme complexity of the phenomena before them. We are only unable to do in biology and psychology what has been so brilliantly done in physics and chemistry, because our knowledge is so very incomplete. But there are few scientists who would deny its possibility, and in any case so far as they pursue their studies on scientific lines, they endorse the mechanistic principle. They subscribe to Materialism in fact, if not in theory. That is what we mean when we say that science is materialistic or nothing.

* * *

The Meaning of "Matter."

Since we commenced writing these notes we have received a number of questions, to each of which we have promised to reply in their order. And this seems the place at which one might deal with the right meaning of the word "Matter," although it is not easy to put into non-technical language one of the most discussed questions in the history of philosophy. A full discussion would involve the determination

of such questions as How do we get our knowledge of things? How far is our knowledge reliable? What do we know of Reality? etc., plenty of material for a large volume instead of a paragraph. And they are not questions for what is called the "plain man," by which is usually meant the ignorant man, who will, in spite of his ignorance, pass judgments which only the most careful study would warrant. But we will try to make ourselves plain; and our first proposition is that "matter" is an hypothesis; that is, it is a conception framed to express one aspect of human experience. The plain man has no doubt that the world actually exists, outside his consciousness, as he sees it, and he proves it as Dr. Johnson confuted Berkeley, by kicking the ground to prove its existence, which Berkeley never denied, and which only proved the ignorance of the great doctor. To the plain man the world exists as he sees it. Matter is one thing, mind is another. He will tell you he knows both quite well, when as a matter of fact he is quite ignorant about both. And, as is so often the case, this ignorance can only be removed by the acquisition of considerable knowledge.

* * *

A World of Experience.

So we can take a jumping-off ground with the assertion that the world we know—our world—is a world of experience. We mean by that the indisputable fact that our knowledge of the world is derived from the experience of the individual and the race. Of a world that lies beyond experience, actual or possible, we know nothing. We cannot even think of such a world. It is true we can think of a rose tree, bearing all sorts of coloured blooms, and standing a few hundred feet in height, or of an oak tree a few inches high only, of a man with the head of an eagle, or of an eagle with the head of man, we can think of an infinite number of curious combinations, many of them wholly incredible, even impossible, but every part of the combination may be referred to actual experiences. We have, so to speak, just taken our experiences, separated them, shaken them in a sack, and then put them together again just as they came out. We can think of things unknown, but only in terms of the known. To think we must have the material for thinking, and we cannot think outside the range of human experience, because the mind has been built up by experience.

* * *

Inside and Outside.

The next step is that the world we know is the world as presented in consciousness. And one of the plainest divisions of this world is into an inside and an outside, a material or a non-material, a me and a not-me, a subjective and an objective existence. In the one case we have a number of experiences—sensations of pleasure and pain, ideas, etc., which belong in a special sense to us. In the other case experiences such as the table on which we write, the room in which we are writing, the "choir of heaven and furniture of earth" which we share with

other people. We do not question that our sensations will cease to exist when we cease to be. But we do not assume that the table will cease to exist when we leave the room, or that if we die in May an eclipse of the sun will not occur in June. We say these things have an objective existence because, among other reasons, when other people are brought into relation with them they have the same experiences that we have. These things persist in a way that our feelings do not persist. And one great quality of the things to which we attribute an external existence is the capacity for offering resistance. We know the table is there because if we touch it it offers resistance. And indeed the action of every one of our sense organs, that of sight or hearing, or smell, or taste, or touch, may be expressed in terms of pressure on a sensitive surface. There is thus associated with our sense of the existence of an external world persistence, resistance, and a relation in space. The things to which we attribute externality can be moved, or do move from place to place. It is this which led Sir Oliver Lodge to not inaptly describe matter as a conception of the sum of resistance, Spencer to say that the ultimate fact in consciousness was the persistence of force, and Mill, in discussing the question from a more subjective point of view, as the permanent possibility of sensations.

* * *

The World of Reality.

But, the critic replies, this does not remove externality beyond consciousness. We quite agree. Our knowledge of the world must lie within consciousness for the simple reason that we cannot get beyond it. What the world may be like out of consciousness we do not know, but it certainly cannot be the same world that it is within. If we had been born blind the table would not be known to us as having a bright surface, but only as having hardness and shape. And if all men were blind, our world would be without colour. The world is to us what we are aware of, and our awareness is conditioned at every stage by the nature of our sense organs. Of this there can be no reasonable dispute. What we are trying to fix is the meaning we can reasonably give to the terms matter and externality. And when we have settled what these words stand for in consciousness we have settled what they are to us, and in what sense they should properly be used. Externality is thus primarily a fact of awareness. We experience a particular sensation and we assume an external something of which the sensation is the consequence. And this something, because it is felt in common with others, possesses a quality of permanence which our sensations do not possess. No one feels any difficulty in believing that when he ceases to exist his feeling of pain or pleasure will cease to exist also. But we cannot believe that when we cease to exist those things to which we attribute materiality and externality will cease to exist also. We therefore call—science calls—this assumed external existence “matter,” but as Materialists we are quite willing to call it merely X, without the alteration in name affecting our Materialism in the slightest degree. That is why we have said that Materialism is not bound down to any particular conception of matter or of the atom. It is the mechanistic principle, the possibility of explaining the world of phenomena as a consequence of the composition of natural forces to which it is committed. “Matter” is to science an hypothesis, used, as any other hypothesis is used, to help us understand the world around us. In this way we know as much of matter as we know of the ether—also a pure hypothesis framed to enable us to under-

stand certain groups of phenomena. It is a fact of consciousness, because we cannot know anything that is beyond consciousness. It is real in the only sense in which “reality” has intelligibility. None of the confusion would ever have arisen had people asked themselves in what sense science used the word “Reality,” instead of assuming that it meant something which lay outside of consciousness altogether. What existence is like apart from our consciousness of it we do not know, nor can we even think what it is like. It is a region to which we shall only penetrate when man is able to pick himself up by the waistband of his trousers and carry himself round a room.

Agnosticism.

* * *

There are other aspects of the subject to be touched on later, but this seems to be the proper place in which to deal with the use made of the word Agnosticism. This word has quite a legitimate place in philosophy; in religion it has no right whatever. In the case we have been outlining we have assumed an existence independent of our mental states. But an analysis of the way in which we acquire knowledge shows an entire ignorance of what it is like apart from its presentation in consciousness. Thus we may assert Agnosticism here because while we assert existence we assert also immovable ignorance as to its nature. There is something to be ignorant about. But we do not admit the existence of God, if we did, we ought to call ourselves Theists and have done with it. We do not admit there is anything to be ignorant about. The truth is that current Free-thinking Agnosticism, and Agnosticism as used by Huxley, rests upon a sheer confusion of the philosophical with the religious question. The question of an ultimate reality, and the question of the existence of a God are quite distinct things. They have entirely different origins. But as ideas of God became discredited, and as philosophy advanced, acute theologians sought to cover their retreat by identifying the two, and it often suited the philosopher to wink at the confusion, partly because it protected him from theological animus, partly because it gave an opening for his own remaining vestiges of religion. But there is no reason why the Freethinker should help play the religious game. A genuine Freethinker does not say, “I am willing to assume a God, but do not know what he is like.” He says, “I do not believe in the *existence* of a God,” and therefore there is nothing for me to profess Agnosticism about. There is, for him, nothing about which he can suspend judgment, nothing about which he can be an Agnostic. He is simply without belief. And that is not a state of mind at all. It is the negation of mental activity.

* * *

We are not sure whether we ought not to apologise to our readers for having compressed several volumes of philosophy into a few paragraphs, but they will doubtless overlook the assault on their patience.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

(To be Continued.)

What! A God who loves men, provided that they believe in him, and who hurls frightful glances and threatenings at him who does not believe in this love! What? A conditioned love as the feeling of an Almighty God! A love which has not even become master of the sentiment of honour and of the irritable desire for vengeance! How Oriental is all that! “If I love thee, what does it concern thee?” is already a sufficient criticism of the whole of Christianity.—*Nietzsche*.

"The Miracles of History."

TIME was when the Rev. Charles Gore was regarded and by many denounced as a dangerous heresiarch. During that period the late Father Ignatius angrily protested against his being allowed to speak at a meeting of the Church Congress. As editor of *Lux Mundi*, published in 1890, he was severely condemned for permitting so much unsound teaching to see the light; and yet only two years later he founded the Community of the Resurrection. In 1891 he delivered the Bampton Lectures, which formed his most important book called the *Incarnation*. He was appointed successively Bishop of Worcester, Birmingham, and Oxford, and he gradually came to be looked upon as the leader of the High Church or Catholic party in the Anglican Church. For some years he has resided in London, and every now and then a new theological work from his pen makes its appearance. In the *Christian World Pulpit* for January 14 a sermon recently preached by him in Grosvenor Chapel, North Audley Street, is to be found. It is entitled *The Miracles of History*, and in it he assures us that true prayer is "based upon an accurate knowledge of God and his purposes, such as comes only to those who believe that God, the immeasurable, inconceivable God, has really disclosed himself in the intelligible outline of human character, in Divine redemptive acts, so that we can know in whom we have believed." Such, he tells us, is the teaching of the Litany, "as we have it in the Church of England service," a teaching of the truth of which we possess no convincing evidence whatever. In the same document something else of a much more dreadful nature also finds expression. The Bishop says:—

The Litany further leads us to look out with unflinching eyes upon the terrible aspect of a world lying in wickedness, and to take account in all our petitions of the needs of such a world. To-night I want to speak of the sort of hope which animates this prayer; it is the sense of something unaccomplished, and yet something which lies in the purpose of God, so that we can call upon him urgently to act, to do something, to consummate that which he has begun, to fulfil his plan and scheme. With a deep psychology and insight, the Church has appropriated to itself each of the great moments or acts of redemption, with the intention that we should keep the different festivals as though we were for the first time experiencing them.

By "moments or acts of redemption," Dr. Gore understands alleged events in the Redeemer's history, such as his birth, death, resurrection, ascension, and his appointment of the Holy Ghost as his representative on the earth. Each of these acts is celebrated in a festival:—

Year by year we pass through all the sequence of the great redemptive acts. Stage by stage we put ourselves, as it were, into the place of those who first experienced them. We should approach the celebration of each festival with a great sense of need.

What the Bishop presents to us here is dogmatic theology, not well accredited facts of history. The Gospels are in no sense whatever biographical documents; they are rather a collection of interesting fables with which in somewhat different forms the world had been familiar for unnumbered centuries. Chesterfield spoke of "the fabulous birth of Minerva," and many critics unhesitatingly apply the same adjective to the birth of the Gospel Jesus, who never could have enjoyed the sense of an objective existence. And yet Bishop Gore treats the Four Gospels as veritable biographies of the incarnate Son

of God, with the result that he can say that "all that is in Jesus is all that human nature needs." He adds:—

There can be no disclosure of God to man, or of man to God, greater and more complete than is in him, in whom God has appeared in the flesh. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." There can be no greater revelation, no richer storage of grace, than flows from him. But he has gone, and he has sent down his Spirit, and his Spirit has found the same welcome as he himself found—a poor welcome. The humanity on which we look is still the same humanity—resisting, reluctant, rebellious. It is still the same world going about its business and pleasure, leaving God out of sight.

Bishop Gore forgets or purposely ignores several vital points which show the utter foolishness and futility of his plan of salvation. He forgets that, according to the Bible, the world is God's creature. It was he who by a word brought it into being, and if it is now in a fallen condition, it follows of necessity that it was very badly made. The belief in human free will in no sense or degree relieves the Creator of the responsibility for "the terrible aspect of a world lying in wickedness." Another point the true significance of which the Bishop fails to perceive is the unwillingness of humanity to have anything to do with God. It leaves him out of sight simply because it does not really believe in him. No such thing is within the bounds of possibility as "an accurate knowledge of God and his purposes." Even the Bishop himself is self-deceived if he imagines that he possesses such an accurate knowledge. At best or at worst, he has but faith; he cannot know. All through the centuries priests have been vainly declaring that "God one day is to come into his own"; but he has never yet come, and to-day he seems further away from that desired consummation than ever.

The Bishop admits in this sermon that God is "inconceivable," and yet he has formulated and offers in all his books and discourses a most elaborate and definite conception of him, which, however, on being calmly examined is seen to be wholly unsusceptible of verification. We now supply it in the preacher's own words:—

In the old Prayer Books, out of which our present Prayer Book was fashioned, the collects for the five Sundays before Christmas began, with one exception, with the same words, words which had the meaning "to excite," "to stir up"; prayers that God would stir himself up, and that he would also stir his people up. God may have many purposes of mercy and of wisdom in apparently leaving the world so long, and under such precarious conditions, yet, no doubt, what chiefly hinders the manifestation of his Person and of his purposes is the wilfulness, the sluggishness of our wills. He is always more ready than we are; it is our slackness which hinders his response. If we were hearty, urgent, persistent in our prayers we should see much more of God, we should feel his presence, we should know his power. We should see his arm visibly at work.

What a completely irrational and immoral conception. If such a God really existed he would have every reason to feel thoroughly ashamed of himself. Here is an infinitely just, powerful, and loving being who glories in being known as the Saviour of the world, who will yet let the world perish for ever unless the few already saved plead with him in passionate prayer to have mercy upon and save lost mankind. Those who so pray are morally superior to the object of their prayers. Indeed, the Bishop's language is puzzlingly remarkable: "There is in

our hearts the image of what man is for, of what God's purposes are; and then we look out into the world with an infinite dissatisfaction, and into our own hearts also, so that we cry out with urgency that God would manifest himself," "Awake, and be not absent from us for ever." Such a God would be in a state of infinite and never-ending self-contradiction. Is it any wonder that "the world is going about its business and pleasure, leaving God out of sight"? The Bishop himself does more for the enslaved and miserable classes than the God he so ardently preaches. He is an eminent social reformer, an active enemy of sweating in all its nefarious forms. He resigned his bishopric six years ago in order to be free to devote the remainder of life to social service. Of course, he believes that the good work upon which he has entered is God's, and that he is doing it simply as God's instrument. But we are convinced that he would do it with equal zeal and success even if he did not believe in God at all; and he must be aware that there are devoted and successful social workers who are avowed Atheists. Is it not an undeniable fact that possibly the majority of professing Christians have no philanthropical ideals whatsoever, but are the victims of the most disastrous forms of selfishness? Believing that they are endowed with souls they regard the securing of their eternal safety as the supreme mission of their lives. Atheism discourages the cultivation of that selfish disposition and helps to engender the brotherly spirit which gives rise to the impulse to love and serve one's fellow-beings.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Churches and Brotherhood.

The creed of Christendom is gradually melting away, like a northern iceberg in southern seas.—G. W. Foote.

We think our civilization near its meridian, but we are yet only at the cock-crowing and the morning star.—R. W. Emerson.

THE clergy are busy assuring people that the brotherhood of man is one of the primary elements of Christian doctrine. They now ignore all their platitudinous and mischievous nonsense concerning the "God of Battles," and bid men and women turn their eyes to the "Prince of Peace." The founder of the Christian Religion, they tell us now, proclaimed: "Blessed are the peacemakers." The clergy themselves, however, were always half-hearted in their efforts for peace, although the Roman Pontiff sought to impose short truces during the last war, overlooking the fact that little could be gained by postponing wholesale murder by millions of armed men for a few short hours at Christmas or Easter. Such minor palliations are of small moment compared with the grim fact that the clergy never set themselves in opposition to Militarism itself. For war, in the last analysis, is but wholesale murder.

Turn, for a moment, to the history of our own country, and refer to the record of the Anglican clergy. During the nineteenth century Britain waged about a hundred wars, great and small. In every instance the Anglican Church was the general servant of the Government then in power; blessed the regimental flags; christened battleships; and sung Te Deums for victories. The Prayer Book, issued like the Blue Books, with the sanction of Parliament, politely assumes that justice is always on our side, and informs credulous worshippers that "there is none other that fighteth for us but only Thou, O God," which is not a compliment to the rank and file of the army.

In the last great upheaval, whole nations, professedly Christian, were engaged for years in murder on a wholesale scale. Europe was a shambles, a slaughter-house, in which perished in millions the flower of the manhood of the Christian world. It was a complete indictment of the religion of Christ, which has proved itself the most powerless and hypocritical thing on earth. The millions who professed to be followers of the "Prince of Peace" were entirely unaffected by his teaching. When passion or self-interest was aroused, every commandment and every precept was forgotten. Nor is this all the shameful story, for a few persons were actually treated as criminals for attempting to take the Christian religion seriously, and to have been a Conscientious Objector was a worse stigma than to have been a convicted thief.

So far as the prelates of the different Christian Churches are concerned, the profession of Christian ethics is a mockery and a delusion. Whether they be Roman Catholic cardinals, Anglican bishops, Nonconformist divines, or priests of the Greek Church, the fact remains the same. As for the brotherhood of man, no one remembering the awful treatment of Jews, Heretics, and Freethinkers throughout Europe for many centuries can but see that Christian doctrines are of one aspect, but its practices of another.

Religion has divided men instead of bringing them together. It is in the very nature of things religious. Anglicans consider Nonconformists to be wrong and harmful. Dissenters return the doubtful compliment. Roman Catholics consider Churchmen and Nonconformists alike as being simply fuel for hell. It is nauseous nonsense on the part of the clergy to pretend otherwise.

The clergy are fluent liars, and are now very anxious to persuade everybody that they have had a very important share in the social improvement of the condition of the people. They wish people to forget such trifling incidents as the votes of the forty Bishops in the House of Lords. They want folk to overlook the great war, and the shameful share of the clergy in it. Hence the hymn-books of the Christian Churches contain pathetic appeals to the sympathies of the working-man. Christ is no longer the dreadful "God of Battles"; he is not even an itinerant evangelist. He has become a carpenter, a sacred wielder of the jack-plane. And, strange to add, this latest of transfigurations has taken place for no higher purpose than to safeguard the salaries and position of the clergy themselves.

Without elaborating the matter, this change of front, this childish camouflage, is disingenuous and by no means clever. What has become of the hymns of hate, the spiritual songs of hell and the blood of the Lamb? Where are the passionate appeals to regard the Union Jack among the most sacred symbols of our national religion? Is it within the bounds of possibility that the growth of the Labour movement has frightened the petticoated priests, and they are preparing for the dreadful day when the Red Flag will fly at Westminster?

Someone ought to remind the Black Army of clergymen that it is quite possible that mediæval mummeries and bygone beliefs may be found somewhat incompatible with materialistic efficiency. With every generation the social conscience becomes quickened and increasingly sensitive. Men cannot accept to-day ideas which were considered satisfactory by their less-educated and more simple-minded forefathers. The Christian Superstition is at length being found out, and the clergy seen to be a costly and mischievous anachronism. The world-war produced horrors and evil enough, but there is a bright

lining to the blackest of clouds if this awful outbreak has shown once and for all that the Christian Religion is but a superstition, and the Gospel of Christ is of the things that perish. The collapse of the Christian Churches is too complete to be glossed over by the glamour of false sentiment and assumed heroics. Let the people of this country disband the Black Army of petticoated priests, and work out their own social salvation without the frauds and fables of a fatuous faith. Modern man has surely outgrown the dogmas of outworn Eastern creeds, and civilized man is better and nobler than all the many-headed gods of decadent and debased superstitions, the perpetuation of which is detrimental to the best interests of Humanity and Civilization.

MIMNERMUS.

Materialism Up To Date.

AN American lawyer, Mr. G. L. Roberts, M.A., has recently published a singularly able exposition of Materialism in the light of the latest knowledge. It is entitled *Objective Reality* (Watts & Co., 287 pp., 7s. 6d.). The first part of the work is devoted to the anatomy of the human mind; and, without fear of compromising one's judgment by overstressing a fact, I will at once state that a more thorough and clean piece of dissection has never been performed. The author's scalpel is handled with the skill and dexterity of an expert anatomist. The history of psychology shows that it is not so easy a task to disjoint the mind into cardinal parts as it is to disjoint the body into head, trunk, and limbs. The division into sensation, intellection, emotion, and volition is a decided improvement upon the old tripartite division of feeling, thinking, and willing once so much in vogue. Sensation and emotion are too heterogeneous to admit of being grouped together in one class. As volition is only feeling in action, some may question its claim to be a separate class.

The style of the work also calls for comment. The thought is expressed in so condensed a form as to be comparable to ornate and sententious Latin. Though one sentence may occupy a quarter of a page or more, it is never ambiguous or obscure; nor yet has it a touch of the pomposity of the inflated style of the great Dr. Johnson.

In so informative a journal as the *Freethinker* a brief epitome of the analysis which Mr. Roberts attempts will, I trow, be not out of place.

1. He starts off, as he should, with the categorical statement—that what the mind is immediately conscious of consists solely of sensations and sense-impressions; whereas all knowledge is mediate or inferential. Here he is at one with the Idealist, and is on a bedrock foundation. All that Berkley and his ilk succeeded in doing was to show that objective knowledge is entirely inferential or mediate—a point on which there can be no dispute.

2. The author then proceeds to show that the elements—the A B C—of all knowledge are the deliverances of the seven senses—of sight, sound, touch, taste, smell, heat, and effort. That is, that mind or consciousness is a composite affair, and therefore is not, as one might gather from the way the terms are generally used, a homogeneous entity. What can be more disparate in character than the sensations of sight, sound, and taste, or the pain of a toothache? And, however intimately they coalesce in the composite idea of a concrete object, they never lose their individuality, as the elements of matter do in compound substances. The sensations of sight, of taste, of weight, and of solidity, which make up

the concept of an apple, always remain distinct; but the elements of which it is composed are lost to view in the union.

3. This disparity, however, between the elements of consciousness is only a duplication of the disparity which objectively exists between different types or modes of physical energy, the various sense-impressions of which are their psychic replica. For example, the sensation of sound represents the vibratory energy of matter; that of sight, the radiant energy of the ether; while taste stands for the chemical energy of food-stuffs. Moreover, whenever it served the well-being of the organism, even variations within the compass of the same order of energy are availed of for awakening different sensations to serve as mental hieroglyphs in consciousness—*e.g.* light and heat belong to the same order of radiant energy; only a difference of wave-length stands for the psychic difference between the view of a landscape and the warmth of a fire. Again, how different are the sensations of colour, say of red, blue, and violet; and yet they represent only a difference of wave-length. Nevertheless, how paramount is their importance; without them—*i.e.* without a colour-scheme—the range of visual recognition would be of little use to a creature which, under penalty of death, must find the right food and avoid lethal foes. Mr. Roberts shows with a wealth of detail that the sense-organs are mere material contrivances, adjusted with superlative accuracy and sensitiveness, to its physical and chemical environment for tapping its energy with which to work the bodily mill.

4. It is next shown that self-conscious or apperceptive man has found a new use—a use that he is progressively extending—for his higher senses, especially that of sight. In the sub-human world their sole objective is the preservation of the life of the organism and the perpetuation of the species. Civilized man, of course, shares these ends with the brute; but for him the eye has, for instance, acquired a new rôle—*viz.* to act as the handmaid of the intellect in the acquisition of knowledge—that is, to report upon the mutual relations existing between phenomena in respect to likeness or causation. Perhaps this fact could be made somewhat more explicit; but it is abundantly implied throughout the treatise.

5. It is thus apparent that not only in respect to its elements does knowledge correspond to objective reality, but also in its intrinsic nature. Our mediate or inferred knowledge consists primarily in the cognition of likeness or difference—a fact that would be absolutely meaningless if Nature was not at bottom essentially discrete in the atoms of the chemical elements which are then segregated into heterogeneous groups of similar units. So “to know”—*i.e.* to recognize—is obviously the mental counterpart of the physical fact that Nature consists of objects struck from “dies” of which she has a vast store of different patterns. In the second place, “to know” means to understand, which implies an awareness of a causal relation between phenomena. This, again, is the mental analogue of the fact that “existences, agencies, or occurrences” are “links” of endless chains of events forged by energy as it re-distributes itself.

The foregoing facts admit of no explanation whatsoever except on the postulate that matter and energy (molar, molecular, and radiant) are objective realities. There are, however, other pertinent facts touched upon in the book that still further clinch the argument. The first is that all the seven possible sensations proceed from one and the same focus (object or agency). It acts as a nucleus, in which all the attributes seem to reside or inhere. The sight, the

sound, the touch, the solidity and weight of a bell, for instance, co-dwell in one existence. That we can know nothing of the bell save in terms of the sensations it awakens is a truism—such is the essential nature of mind. This unity of source is singularly exemplified by the intimate way that experience welds together into one concept the various sense-deliverances, so that when one sense is excited the others are instantly revived in memory. The low of a cow, the bleat of a lamb, the crow of a cock, the tramp of a horse, and the rumble of wheels, or the whistle of an engine, instantly recalls the entire object.

The permanence of objects is then dealt with. Close your eyes, and the object vanishes; open them, and it reappears in the same place. Did it cease to exist in the interval? Yes, certainly, according to the Bradleyites (and they know) if no eye kept squinting at it!

The persistency of attribute is next demonstrated. It is not merely as an existence that an object persists; its attributes also, under constant conditions, are eternal. The properties of oxygen or of iron are, when under identical conditions, the same as they were ten million years ago.

The activities of the entire world, from the most trivial to the most momentous, are all undertaken on the conviction that Nature is absolutely uniform in its workings. Given the same collocation of causes, you get identical results. That is, energy redistributes itself with absolute uniformity—a corollary that inevitably follows from the great generalization that the energy of the universe is a "constant," though eternally oscillating from static to kinetic forms.

But possibly nowhere does the scalpel of the author of this able treatise show keener edge, or the skill in using it, display greater mastery, than in the way is traced the life history of general and abstract ideas until re-embodied in words, they become fictitious entities, as in the realism of Plato and his progeny. The same penetrative acumen is likewise revealed in showing why the existence of matter was inferred, or rather intuited, by primitive man; whereas a knowledge of its constitution, as well as of the existence of the ether, of energy, and of electricity, is only a thing of yesterday. It is shown that the existence of matter is an immediate inference of the two basic senses—the senses of effort and of touch; while the others required, as a preliminary condition, a cultured mind, and vast accumulations of scientific knowledge, for which the sense of sight has contributed most of the data.

In the second chapter it is shown how all ideas are essentially divisible into two kinds—primary and secondary; a cardinal distinction of paramount importance. The author clearly indicates how the former are real, while the second are imaginary and hypothetical until they are submitted to the sensory test and are confirmed by it. This section alone is fully worth the price of the book to anyone interested in the study of the human mind. Here Mr. Roberts lays down a postulate which he fully substantiates—viz. that the known, the unknown, and the unknowable must be congruent; a most useful compass when mind is navigating the shoreless and starless seas of existence. This leads to what might be pertinently called a philosophic axiom: "That no product of the imagination possesses any warrant of reliability as a subjective representation of an objective reality until such correspondence is actually verified by means of sensory experience."

My aim, in this rapid survey of a masterly work, has been to give the reader a general idea of its

varied contents. I should like to indicate some points of disagreement with its author; but such criticism, with the Editor's permission, must be reserved for another article.

J. C. THOMAS, B.Sc. ("Keridon").

Acid Drops.

Two men were summoned at Tipton, Staffs, for threatening an old woman. Their defence was that the old woman was a witch. The Chairman of the Court said there was a surprising amount of superstition in the district, and begged everybody to get rid of such silly ideas with education and intelligence. Quite a good suggestion, but how is it to be done with all the Churches and chapels, with their thousands of parsons, and, above all, with the Bible, encouraging superstitions of various kinds? The Chairman might have pointed out that the great agency which keeps superstition alive is the Christian Church. But the probability is that after giving this advice the chairman would assist in the perpetuation of superstitions which are not one whit more respectable than the one he was denouncing.

Consider another case. In Birmingham fifteen vicars are defying the Bishop on the question of the Real Presence in the Sacrament. This is a dispute as to how much of the actual body of Jesus Christ is present in the consecrated bread and wine, or in what sense it is present. Bishop Barnes denounces it as a form of magic. So it is, but it is part of Christianity, and the largest body of Christians in the world actually claim that by the blessing of the priest the bread and wine is transformed into the actual body and blood of Jesus, and when one eats and drinks these one actually eats and drinks the body and blood of their Saviour. It is pure religious cannibalism. Bishop Barnes is quite right in denouncing it, but how much more rational are many of his own beliefs? They are less revolting. They are less crude in their presentation. But that is all. His own religious beliefs have no better foundation than have those of his revolting vicars. They are letting the world see the kind of stuff of which Christianity is made. And Bishop Barnes does not like it. That is all there is in it.

That Christians have no strict regard for truth is a statement often appearing in these columns. And that our allegation is not the outcome of mere prejudice is amply proved by the following from a correspondent to the *Methodist Recorder*:—

In the desire to impress the outside world of success in the various branches of our work, I suggest we are not always particular enough to be accurate in our statements to the press. I have read reports I have known to be inaccurate and would not bear investigation. Considering the press is so good to us in printing accounts of our special services we ought surely to see our statements are correct. It would be better to say nothing than to stoop to window-dressing in the Churches.

Then those wonderful accounts of revival meetings where people are converted wholesale which are published to impress the outside public are not true after all. This Methodist correspondent calls this misstatement of fact "window-dressing." Honest men would dub it plain lying.

In the *New Age* a noticeable article entitled "Spiritualism," by "R. M.," was, by its clean and straight lefts reminiscent of that paper's good old days when writers wrote what they meant and damned the consequences. "Before we are grown up enough," states the writer, "to learn the news of affairs in the next street or in the next continent we are pretentious even to the conduct of the next life." This is the frontal attack on Spiritualism; the attack by mining and sapping is in the doctor's study. "R. M." concludes his onslaught as follows: "Who does not find

the Bible more enlivening, more reassuring, than the prattle of Raymond, Swinburne's swashbuckling Atheism more hopeful than the medium's meddlesome devotion, is in a sorry way." This is rather refreshing, for certain parts of the *New Age* lately have been like Russian tracts for pale people; "R. M." has opened a window in a stuffy room.

In an article, "The Calendar Miracle," the Rev. W. H. Saturley after listing the various kinds of calendars used through different periods of history in all parts of the civilized world, tells us that one name alone has proved able ultimately to rule the calendar. "Adopted as a starting point after an interval in which its owner, had He been an imposter, would have been forgotten, it has secured a universal acceptance which is only emphasized by the exceptions. Obscured, persecuted, slain, the Galilean holds His sceptre across the centuries. The calendar is His permanent miracle. He governs the ages!" Seemingly, now that the Biblical miracles are no longer "permanent" the parson is looking around for others to replace them. The only miracle we should think impressive would be that of a parson talking religion and sense at one and the same time. Perhaps even that miracle may come about when Christ ceases to govern the ages.

An Inspector of Schools, Dr. Harold Wagner, lecturing at University College, said:—

The real factor of interest in education is the use of the brain....Nature study, however, is intended to arouse interest in natural phenomena, and thus to develop a spirit of enquiry tending to the rejection of authority. Human credulity is perhaps a more serious menace to the race than is human mendacity.

If Mr. G. K. Chesterton can find his heaven in the medieval period, Mr. G. G. Coulton, in this game of diving into the past can find precisely the opposite. In Mr. Coulton's book, *The Medieval Village*, we find that the author has brought to light many painful facts in man's progression towards enlightenment. From this bran-tub of the Dark Ages we take the following prizes, and although our present dispensation is nothing to shout about, we will part company with Mr. Chesterton and leave him to regress alone: "It was held to be so improbable that a peasant had lived without having defrauded the Church of tithe that, at his death, the Church felt secure in claiming compensation." The Seneschal of Bigorre appeared to be as thorough as one of Voltaire's popes; we read that when he took possession of the abbey of St. Pierre, he "pulled down the gallows which the abbot had had from time immemorial, set up new gallows in their place, and hanged a certain man forthwith on the said gallows in order to vindicate his position thereof." This is only one page in the history of perfecting man according to plan; the Atheist acquits God of any share in the melancholy story, and looks for an explanation in the vice and avarice of those who spoke in his name—in Latin.

A writer in the *Daily Chronicle* calls attention to the house in Lewes in which Thomas Paine used to live. He says the house is several years old, and is one of the most charming examples of Tudor architecture it is possible to find. He wonders it is not better known and more visited. Perhaps this may be taken as an example of the efficiency of the Christian boycott. To have called attention to the house might have called attention to Paine, and if that had been done, the ignorance and prejudice of the Christian world might not have been so strong as it is. Christians take good care that as little that is good of great Freethinkers shall be known. There is not one Englishman in ten thousand who has any idea of the part played by Paine in the creation of modern democracy. Nor have they of the work of men like Carlile, or Hetherington, or Bradlaugh, or others who, along with their social and political work, carried on a war against the master superstition. And, unfortunately, a great many con-

temporary Freethinkers, who are so placed as to do justice to these men, are too fond of the pastime of burning incense at the altars of respectable heretics of the Huxley type to call attention to their work.

We cannot expect anything from America that is not on a business basis. A copy of *Weekly Unity*, with the sub-title of "Practical Christianity for Peaceful Christians," appears to be the goods, and a plentiful sprinkling of capitals rather indicates that the producers have caught a very old trick from theologians. We quote one verse, and duly acknowledge the copyright of the poem entitled "In the Garden":—

I'd stay in the garden with Him
Tho' the night around me be falling,
But He bids me go;
Thro' the voice of woe.
His voice to me is calling.

This sample has not the homely vigour of the curious poem from America taken from the book, *Scenes at the Holy Home*:—

Jesus and Joseph at work! Hurra!
Sight never to see again,
A prentice Deity plies the saw,
While the Master ploughs with the plane.

We agree with Oscar Wilde that in matters of this kind we should have some protection.

In the art of facing both ways there is none to better the press. Having burst like a lion into the religious arena, the *Daily Express* will have to be careful or it will find itself on the wrong side, and that will never do. We are not impressed with the term "public opinion," for public opinion is where the newspapers like to put it, but it is something for a daily paper to publish the following; it is almost human:—

Public opinion does not accept the medieval ecclesiastical view that divorce invariably implies social outlawry of the respondent and co-respondent. A great university should emulate the charity and tolerance of the divine saying, "Let him that is without sin first cast a stone." Oxford expelled Shelley. The expulsion of Mr. Haldane brings Cambridge into line with Oxford at her worst.

The picture of the *Daily Express*, Bible in hand, lecturing Cambridge is a joke that does not happen every day.

Speech is the metaphor of the mind, and although expounders of religion are striving for unworldly things their limitations are shown in their use of language. We catch the note of gardening in the title of the Rev. Hubert C. Libbey's series of papers entitled "Human Intensive Culture," and also there is a faint suggestion of Mrs. Beeton about the reviewer's summary:—

Let an earnest Christian man anxious to extend the Divine Kingdom choose twelve young lads and bind them together under his leadership. Let him pray long before he does this, and devote himself to train them till they reach full manhood to be loyal to their Christian profession and to the task of making a holy, healthy, happy England.

There is plenty of scope to make England a healthy and happy country, and we will discourage no one at the task, but we draw the line at holy. This is a sphere of speculation that compares with the catching of water in a sieve.

The Bishop of Gloucester says:—

When I see those huge barrack-like Council schools, where hundreds of children are brought together with so little friendly or religious influence to bear upon them with their large hideously paved playgrounds, with their attention to everything that is material and their neglect of everything that is spiritual, etc.

That is just nonsense, and, as is not uncommon in such cases, slanderous nonsense. The Bishop stands as a champion of the Church schools, many of which are insanitary, where the general conditions are bad, the teaching less efficient than in Council schools, and the mental and moral welfare of the children less intelli-

gently cared for. But the Bishop's real desire is that the children shall be pumped full of the right sort of religion, and if that is done nothing else is of much moment. We would say, if it were not a Christian Bishop we are talking about, that he ought to be ashamed of himself. But in this case one can hardly expect that. All we can say is that he makes a good bishop. And if that is considered severe, our defence must be that he deserves severe treatment.

The American Bible Society reports that the printing of a large number of Bibles has now been authorised by the Government press at Moscow and Leningrad, and these are to be distributed, without profit, to all religious groups in Russia. The *Christian World*, with the cock-eyed ethic characteristic of the Nonconformist conscience, thinks it quite a good and right thing. It appears that when a government interferes to hamper the propaganda of religion it is wholly wrong, even criminal. When it interferes to help religion, that, as it says, must be counted to it for righteousness. It does not strike the *Christian World* that if the principle of government interference is permitted in the one case it cannot well be denied in the other. The only sound rule in the matter is for the government to leave religion entirely alone, and so long as a religious body does not interfere with others, give it exactly the same measure of protection that it gives to all other associations.

The *Christian World* welcomes the news because "the open Bible is the surest guarantee for a peaceful, brotherly, and industrious Russia." Really! We have had the open Bible for several centuries and the degree of brotherly love it has induced is not very impressive. The relations of the different European countries at the moment is not the best of advertisements for such a contention. We wonder whether if Europe had never heard of the Bible it could have presented a worse picture than it has done during the past ten years!

Judging by the following facts culled from the *Baptist Times'* "Notes of the Week," conducted, we believe, by Mr. A. W. Shakespeare, B.A., the outlook for Christian missionaries in Turkey is none too rosy. Missionaries, it seems, are now subject to all rules and laws that apply to Turkish citizens. They must pay taxes, be judged in Turkish courts, and must obey all regulations excepting only military service. The Turkish Government has now passed a law excluding from the schools throughout the country all religious teaching, including even that of the Moslem faith. As a very large part of Christian missionary effort in Turkey is along the line of education, the Baptist writer thinks this changed attitude of the Turks in relation to education is of utmost significance to the missionary movement there. This attitude, he says, may be stated in two words, "control" and "secularization." Now, only those subjects may be taught in any mission school which are approved by the Government. No book may be used unless it has the sanction of the educational authority. Teachers may be only such as are acceptable to that authority, and no religious instruction is hereafter to be allowed. There is to be a complete separation of religion from education.

As the whole atmosphere of these mission schools in Turkey has hitherto been Christian, and the Bible the chief text-book used, the Baptist writer declares: "It is a perplexing problem to be compelled to give such moral and ethical teaching as may be allowed without a definitely religious basis or backing." Hence, there is every prospect of the mission schools having to close. From all this it would appear that the Turkish Education Authorities see religion in its true colours. They are evidently determined to keep the child-mind "pure and undefiled." To do this they realize they must exclude from the schools the pious savagery of religion, whether it be Mahomet's special brand, or Christ's. The modern Turks are evidently men of vision and intelli-

gence. Meanwhile, in the British Isles educational authorities think it best to teach the child religion rather than morality.

A good few wireless users we know (not Freethinkers) make a practice of switching off when the Sunday sermon begins. For, as one listener-in explained to us, there is a limit to even human endurance. The dreary platitudes and the quaint logic of the Sunday address is clearly not to everyone's taste. And we have often wondered whether this ability of the parson to be able to produce broadcast sermons of such uniform mediocrity, not to say imbecility, is a natural gift or only an acquired habit. Now, however, we fancy we may have lighted on a possible explanation. In an interview, the former Dean of Salisbury declares that in his opinion the clergy nowadays are so taken up with parochialism and ritualism that they have no time to be students, no time even to keep up to the level of their congregations. Wearing out on Saturday night, they scribble off something. Churches would be less empty if the preacher had more time to prepare his address.

That's the explanation, then. The poor sermon is not, as we suspected, due to lack of intelligence, but to brain-fag; not to ignorance, but to lack of time to acquire knowledge. The wretched sermon-maker "feels himself spent and fumbles for his brains."

Reports inform us, says one of Harmsworth's pious weeklies, that religious leaders in Germany are seriously alarmed at the number of folk renouncing membership of the churches there. According to this paper, it appears that Prussian law decrees that a person once baptised by a clergyman of any denomination remains a member of that particular church until he has renounced his membership in legal form. He is bound to pay a church tax, amounting roughly to ten per cent. of his income-tax, for the support of his church, and he has the right to the administrations of the clergy. Until recently it was a very difficult and involved procedure for a Prussian church member to renounce his position. Hence, large numbers of people remained attached to their church because they could not conveniently get out of it. These are the people who, under a new law, are now renouncing Christianity in large numbers. A Prussian newspaper comments: "The flight from the churches is a catastrophe for the Lutheran clergy." We can appreciate that!

The English editor, however, does not regard it so. He says:—

This seeming catastrophe will prove a blessing in disguise, ridding the Prussian churches of folk who are Christians only in name.....the result should be a cleansing of the churches. It will then be their task to win to the Faith those whom they previously held by bonds of law.

What a hope they have! The freed slave does not usually go back to a master who has not used him rightly. The liberated wild bird doesn't return to its cage. To use a theatrical phrase, the parsons will "get the bird." They will like that about as little as do the theatrical folk.

The organist of Bangor Cathedral has objected to playing the music for what is styled the "cursing psalm." He is progressing. He seems to have acquired a healthy un-Christian conscience. We fear his Bishop will retort with verse seven: "Let his days be few; and let another take his office." Still, our musical friend may seek consolation in the other verses: "Though they curse, yet bless thou; and let them be confounded that rise up against me." "Help me, O Lord, my God: O save me according to thy mercy." "O deliver me, for I am helpless and poor; and my heart is wounded within me." There seems to us a world of solace in these particular verses, especially to a man who finds himself faced with the difficulty our organist is now likely to be in. But that is one of life's little ironies.

"Freethinker" Endowment Trust.

THE purpose of this Trust is to acquire sufficient funds which, by investment, will produce an income of £400 annually, the capital remaining intact. It is an endowment secured by legal Trust Deed, administered by five Trustees, of whom the editor of the *Freethinker* is one. It means giving the *Freethinker* permanent financial security, and is thus a businesslike and sound scheme, which should commend itself to all supporters of the Cause. A full explanation of the Trust was given in the issue of the *Freethinker* for October 4, and further information will be given to anyone interested.

Previously acknowledged, £3,566 7s. P. G. Peabody, £100; Mrs. Mary Rogerson, £1 10s.; W. Wearing, 10s.; Messrs. Chapman Bros., £1; "Cestrian," £3 3s.; J. Brown (2nd sub.), £5; P. A. Bunyan (Toronto), 10s.; J. Hewitt (Leeds), 2s. 6d.; W. Walker, £1; T. Dobson, 5s.; J. McCartney, 10s.; J. English, 2s. 6d.; S. Waring, 2s. 6d.; A. R. Williams, 5s. Total, £3,680 7s. 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.

The Special Appeal on behalf of this Trust will close on January 31.

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.

R. CHAPMAN.—Pleased to hear from you, and shall hope to meet you again soon. Our regards to the family.

P. A. BUNYAN.—Glad you find the *Freethinker* so welcome in your part of the world. We have many Canadian readers, and hope for more.

J. THACKRAY.—Thanks for correction. As you will see, we were mistaken in announcing the meeting at the Coronet Theatre. It is the Century Theatre, Archer Street, Westbourne Grove.

S. DOBSON.—Certainly social gatherings of members and friends are a source of strength to a Branch. We are pleased to learn the one held by the Birmingham Branch on Sunday last was so successful.

L. FRANCIS.—Thanks for translation. It is useful and interesting.

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

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

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

When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Miss

E. M. Vance, giving as long notice as possible. Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, by the first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

To-day (January 24) Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Saloon, City Hall, Glasgow, at 11.30 and 6.30. In the morning his subject will be, "The Way to Study Religion," and we should like to hear of a crowd of parsons attending, who need instruction in that direction more than most people. In the evening his subject is "When I am Dead." The "I" has no particular personal reference. Admission is free to both meetings.

On Sunday next (January 31) Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Century Theatre, Archer Street, Westbourne Grove. By an error the name of the theatre was given last week as the Coronet, a mistake easy to make as there happens to be a theatre of that name in the neighbourhood. Friends will please note the correction. This will give Freethinkers in West London a chance of hearing a lecture with little trouble, and we hope they will take advantage of the opportunity and advertise it among their friends.

As we said last week, what we want is the names of a number of enthusiasts who will undertake the distribution of notices of the meeting in the neighbourhood. There would be no doubt of a "full house" if this were done, and it is simply impossible to exhibit posters all over London as one might in a provincial town. Names should be sent at once to Miss Vance, at the Society's Office.

May we call special attention to the fact that the special appeal on behalf of the *Freethinker* Endowment Fund closes on January 31, and by that time we should like to see the full £4,000 contributed. That would mean destroying, for ever, one half of the annual loss on the maintenance of this journal. That in itself is no mean achievement, but there is no reason why the other half should not be wiped off.

Mr. J. Browne, in sending a further subscription of £5, writes:—

I note the Endowment Fund is progressing but slowly. After the vigorous start it got it seems a little discouraging, but Rome was not built in a day, neither can the Cause be that you champion so skillfully and so gracefully. "Onward Un-Christian Soldiers" should be the cry. You lead an army that the lights of reason is swelling, eventually to sweep away the myths of darkness to the beyond from which they sprang.

Of course, we could not expect the Fund to grow at the rate it did in the first two or three weeks of its existence, but we are hopeful of another jump forward soon.

A friend who has already subscribed to the Endowment Fund, desires to help further by the sale of a set of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, the whole of the proceeds to go to the Fund. The set is the tenth—the *Times* Edition, in 25 volumes, bound in cloth. They will be disposed of to the one who sends in the highest offer.

In both number and agreeableness this year's Annual Dinner of the N.S.S. gave satisfaction to those who were present, although an unusual number were prevented by illness from being present. Among those present from the provinces were Councillor Hall (Manchester), Mr. W. J. W. Easterbrook (Dartmouth), Mr. Dobson, Senr., with Mr. and Mrs. Dobson, Junr. (Birm-

ingham), Mr. and Mrs. Rudd (Luton), and Mr. Alward (Grimsby), whose youthful appearance gave the lie to his age and his very lengthy association with Free-thought. And from the mid region, as we may term it, owing to their nearness to London, Mr. and Mrs. Fincken, with their family and friends, made a gallant and pleasing show. Illness accounted for the absence of other provincial friends. Among the London visitors we noted Mr. and Mrs. Quinton, Senior and Junior, Mr. and Mrs. Collette Jones, Mr. and Mrs. Royle, Mr. G. Smith and daughter, Mr. J. C. Thomas ("Keridon") and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Corrigan, Mr. and Mrs. Cutner, Mr. and Mrs. Repton, Mr. and Mrs. Rosetti, Mr. S. Silverstein, Mr. S. Samuels, Mr. T. Gorniot, Mr. and Mrs. Clarkson, Mr. and Mrs. Streimer, Junr., Mr. R. H. Clifton, Mr. and Mrs. G. Wood, and Mr. H. Samuels.

In addition to the address by the President, there was the toast of the National Secular Society in an effective speech, proposed by Mr. Harry Snell, M.P., with responses by Mr. R. H. Rosetti and Mr. J. T. Lloyd, "Freethought at Home and Abroad," proposed by Mr. A. B. Moss, and responded to by Mr. G. Whitehead, and "The Visitors," proposed by Mr. Ratcliffe, and responded to by Mr. George Bedborough. The musical programme was well arranged, and thoroughly enjoyed by all. The arrangements for the dinner, which were in the hands of Miss Vance and Miss Kough, went with their customary smoothness. Most would have liked the evening to have been longer, but all things have to be brought to an end, and at 11.15 the conclusion came by the singing of "Auld Lang Syne." One more annual dinner had been numbered with its predecessors, and it may safely be said it had served to knit closer together the many workers in one of the best of causes.

We are a little late in making our acknowledgments to our friend, Mr. H. Black, for his efforts to get the *Freethinker* into the Salford Public Library. Mr. Black was again unsuccessful, which in view of the number of public libraries that have the paper, is making these Salford bigots look even more ridiculous than nature intended them to look. We are not at all alarmed, nor depressed. It means they are afraid of the *Freethinker*, and we are never displeased at Christians being afraid of the paper that has never hesitated to tell the truth and the whole truth, about their religion without either compromise or disguise. Salford and Manchester Freethinkers will smile, and go on with the work.

Mr. Black also made an attempt to get the *Literary Guide* into the library, but the Council was adamant in its determination to keep the Christian faith secure. Alderman McDougall said they would try and keep the Christian faith pure, Councillor Greatorex supported its exclusion because it undermined the faith that gave comfort to so many, and Councillor Moylan denounced the *Guide* as blasphemous, which is really a compliment in disguise. The Salford Council is merely making itself ridiculous, although if its members had wit enough they might retort that they were living up to their Christian faith.

We notice a column and half descriptive report of Mr. Cohen's recent debate with Canon Storr in the *Arrossan and Saltcoats Herald*, signed "Avondale." We fancy we could guess the name of the writer, but judging from the account he evidently enjoyed the discussion, and gives quite a fair account of the arguments.

On Saturday evening (January 23) the Glasgow Branch is holding a "Social" in the D and F Café, Glasgow Cross. High tea at 7 p.m., followed by music and dancing until 11 p.m. Whist tables will be set out for those not wishing to dance. Tickets, 2s. 6d. each, may be obtained at the commencement of the social by Glasgow and district Freethinkers, to whom this may be the first intimation of the function.

The Gospel History a Fabrication.

II.

EXORCISM AND MIRACLES.

"THE primitive Christians," says the historian Gibbon, "had their minds exercised by the habits of believing the most extraordinary events. They fancied that on every side they were incessantly assaulted by demons, comforted by visions, instructed by prophecy, and delivered from danger, sickness, and sometimes even death, by the supplications of the Church." This is true; but long before a Christian society or "church" came into existence, and for several centuries after that event, both Jews and Gentiles had a firm belief in the existence of demons and demoniacal possession. This belief was common to the peoples of Palestine, Egypt, Greece, and Rome, and can be traced in the literature of those countries. Demoniacal possession is mentioned as an undoubted and well-known fact by the Jewish historian Josephus (*Antiq.* 8, 2, 5; *Wars* 7, 6, 8), and is found in the Talmud and other Jewish literature.

Such a widespread belief naturally brought into existence a class of healers who professed to be able to cure those possessed by expelling the demons—the latter being supposed to be invisible. Amongst the Jews, these exorcists were recognized as legitimate practitioners, and their power to eject the evil spirits was not disputed. If the disease grew worse or the convulsions were repeated, a plea was always at hand—the demon had returned. The case was then one for prayer and fasting (Mark x. 29). This being the settled belief of the times, it is not surprising that Jesus was represented as going about expelling these imaginary demons, which beings were in some cases believed to be the cause of insanity, epilepsy, blindness, dumbness, and other infirmities; upon the ejection of which the disease or infirmity departed. The following are examples from the Gospels:—

Mark v. 2-13.—And there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit.....and no man could any more bind him, no, not with a chain..... and no man had strength to tame him, etc.

This maniac Jesus is stated to have cured by the command, "Come forth, thou unclean spirit, out of the man." In this case, however, it was a "legion" that came out.

Matt. ix. 32-33.—And as he went forth, behold, there was brought to him, a dumb man possessed with a demon. And when the demon was cast out, the dumb man spake.

Matt. xii. 22.—Then was brought unto him one possessed with a demon, blind and dumb; and he healed him, insomuch that the dumb man spake and saw.

Mark ix. 17-29.—And one of the multitude answered him, Master, I brought unto thee my son, which had a dumb spirit; and whosoever it taketh him, it dasheth him down; and he foameth, and grindeth his teeth, etc.....Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I command thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. And having cried out, and torn him much, he came out.

Here the command to "enter no more into him" indicates the plea of the exorcists when taxed with failure. In some of the Gospel cases the demon is represented as recognizing Jesus, and his divine power (Mark i. 23-26; v. 7; etc.); also, when upon one occasion Jesus is accused of expelling demons by the agency of Satan, he retorts by referring to the professional Jewish exorcists: "If I by Beelzebub

cast out demons, by whom do *your sons* cast them out?" Here, no doubt is expressed as to the expulsion of the evil spirit, the question being only as to the agency. It is unnecessary to cite further examples. The Gospel accounts of the casting out of evil spirits prove incontestably that both the primitive writer and the later editors shared the common superstition of the times. But these accounts prove more: they prove that the Gospel narratives which record the expelling of demons are deliberate fabrications. Demoniacal possession, as we know, was a delusion born of the crass ignorance and great credulity of the times—the so-called "apostolic" age being one of far greater mental darkness than that which gave birth to the belief in witchcraft. It is almost needless to say that no such events as those narrated in the Gospels ever actually occurred. The writers simply concocted the stories in accordance with the ideas prevalent in their days. If Jesus went about attempting to expel evil spirits, he was just as ignorant and credulous as the Gospel writers themselves, and he certainly never caused a dumb demoniac to speak or a blind one to see: these fabrications were written for the credulous people of the Gospel times who believed in demoniacal possession.

I turn now to the other miracles ascribed to "Jesus the Nazarene." The upholders and defenders of these alleged miraculous works tell us that Jesus performed them by the power of God, and that "with God all things are possible"—which is the usual apologetic way of begging the whole question. Science knows nothing of the existence of God, or of the omnipotence with which he is credited. As Hume justly says:—

Though the Being to whom the miracle is ascribed be in this case Almighty, it does not upon that account become a whit more probable; since it is impossible for us to know the attributes or actions of such a Being, otherwise than from experience which we have of his productions in the usual course of nature. This still reduces us to past observations, and obliges us to compare the instances of the violation of truth in the testimony of men with those of the violation of the laws of nature by miracles, in order to judge which of them is most likely and probable.

The soundness of this reasoning is proved by the fact that in every case in which a Bible miracle can be tested by history, the alleged miracle is found to be a fabrication. Of this fact the following are notable examples: the Three men in a furnace—the Writing on the wall—Daniel saved from the lions—the Destruction of the army of Sennacherib (Dan. iii., v., vi., 2 Kings xix. 35). In the latter case we have also irrefutable evidence, which proves that the Hebrew deity was powerless to protect his servant Hezekiah from Sennacherib.

Hence, the question of the actual occurrence of miracles must, in the last resort, be decided by evidence. With respect to the miracles ascribed to Jesus Christ, we are first asked to believe that all the superstitious ideas held by the people of the apostolic age were rational and correct. How, otherwise, could Jesus cast out demons, if demoniacal possession had not been an actual fact? We are next asked to believe that an ignorant and credulous man in that age possessed the power to cure any disease or infirmity by merely touching the person afflicted and commanding the distemper to depart. To ask any rational person of the present day to believe such crudities is simply preposterous.

Coming, now, to the Gospel miracles, what evidence do we possess for the actual occurrence of the following? Peter's mother-in-law cured of a fever—a leper cleansed—a ruler's daughter raised from

the dead—a paralytic cured—a man's withered hand restored to health—two blind men made to see—a centurion's palsied servant cured—five thousand persons fed with five loaves—Jesus walking on the sea—Jesus stilling a tempest by saying "Peace, be still"—Jesus blasting a fig-tree by his word—and several other miraculous performances. What evidence have we that all or any of these alleged miracles really occurred? We have none whatever. All we know is that Matthew, Mark, and Luke—who did not live in apostolic times—found them recorded in an old primitive Gospel, and took the liberty of copying them, besides making sundry additions and improving the composition—that is all. Who the primitive writer was, or whence he obtained his accounts, nobody knows. The probability is, that he belonged to the sect of the Nazarenes, and merely committed to writing all the hear-say stories in circulation in his day.

What, again, are we to say of the twelve other miracles recorded by the Synoptists—one being the raising a widow's son from the dead (Luke vii.)—which were not taken from the primitive Gospel? These were obviously unknown to the writer of the primitive account, and must, therefore, have been concocted after his time. They were probably found amongst some apocryphal writings that have not come down to our day. To the foregoing may be added seven other miracles recorded only in the "Gospel of John"; but in the latter case there is no mystery—the writer piously fabricated these himself.

The Essenes and Nazarenes, as we know, spent much of their time reading the Old Testament scriptures, and must have noticed the following passage (Isaiah xxxv. 4-6):—

Behold your God will come with vengeance.....he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing.

The foregoing is figurative language; but the Nazarenes understood it literally, and ascribed such works to a deceased member of the sect who was esteemed a prophet—an exorcist named "Jesus the Nazarene," whom they called the "Anointed One" or "Christ," because the spirit of God *was said* to have descended upon him at his baptism.

Readers who think it unlikely that the foregoing passages in Isaiah suggested the stories of Jesus working miracles of healing are, of course, at liberty to reject the theory; but, whether this be so or not, there can be no doubt whatever as to the character of the Gospel miracles. They are, one and all, silly Christian fabrications. Moreover, when no evidence is forthcoming to corroborate a number of alleged miraculous occurrences, we are obliged to fall back on reason, common sense, and experience; and these tell us in the plainest language that—whether believed to have occurred or not—no such supernatural events ever really happened. The Gospel miracles were piously fabricated by different persons, and at different times, between A.D. 70 and 140; but were all concocted for one and the same purpose—to gain converts to the new Christian religion, or, as the forger of the Fourth Gospel puts it, "that ye may believe that Jesus is the Anointed One, the Son of God" (John xx. 31). And that the early Christians *did* fabricate stories for this purpose is proved by the number of lying apocryphal Gospels that were in circulation before the canonical Gospels were written. Christian apologists, of course, assert that these were all the work of heretics; but no proof of such authorship has ever been produced. The only case in which one of these ancient fabricators is mentioned is that

of the writer of "The Acts of Paul and Theckla," respecting whom Tertullian says (Of Baptism 17): "Know that, in Asia, the *presbyter* who composed that writing.....after being convicted, and confessing that he had done it from love of Paul, was removed from his office." This *presbyter* was not a heretic; but he had the misfortune to live a little too late, and he had no friends in his church to declare at the end of his narrative "and we know that his witness is true" (John xxi. 24). Furthermore, those who concocted the stories of the Virgin Birth, and of the infancy and boyhood of Jesus, believed in the divinity of that Saviour; they were, therefore, orthodox Gentile believers. The Nazarenes and other so-called heretics, who believed Jesus to be only a man, could not have fabricated such narratives.

The historian, Mosheim, in his *Christianity before the time of Constantine*, says of the author of the *Shepherd*:—

He knowingly and wilfully was guilty of a fraud. At the time when he wrote, it was an established maxim with many of the Christians that it was pardonable in an advocate of religion to avail himself of fraud and deception, if it were likely that they might conduce toward the attainment of any considerable good.

The fact here referred to is historically true. And that this "established maxim" has been actually carried out, and fraud and deception stretched to their fullest extent, the existence of our four canonical Gospels is a conclusive and a standing proof.

ABRACADABRA.

Of Armaments.

AN ALLEGED BACONIAN FRAGMENT.

"*Salus populi suprema lex*"—"The safety of the people is a supreme law": thus conclude the Roman Twelve Tables as compiled by the Decemvirs; whereof much might be said in commendation, for that which endangereth the body politic or threateneth disintegration to the social fabric as evolved throughout the ages must of necessity be of paramount evil. Inasmuch as in past ages when nation was continually at war against nation and a conqueror exacted not only heavy tribute from the conquered, but moreover subverted the laws and customs for his own ends, the despotism of the most tyrannical monarch seemed to his subjects preferable to so radical a change, whether it may have been for good or evil. Such is the inherent conservatism of mankind, and thus do those who control the destiny of a nation seek to preserve this spirit of conservatism inviolate; deeming that a popular international understanding tendeth to undermine patriotism, perchance.

In these democratic days, although the power of a reigning monarch to alter the destiny of the nation is nugatory and kingship hath become an anachronism, yet still do we find those elected by the people maintaining large bodies of hired fighting men and immense quantities of varied weapons of war, not with shrewd¹ intent, for each will maintain they are for self-preservation and not for aggression. For hath not Armageddon taught all a lesson, victor and vanquished alike, and shown indubitably to both how Glory hath departed from the battlefield, how War lurcheth² ravenously the financial resources of both and how all nations are interdependent? Even the mighty Empire of Almaine³

realized the truth that he of whom many are afraid ought to fear many. As Diogenes said of the young man that danced daintily and was much commended, so might be said of the nation great in Armaments—"The better, the worse."

Therefore have the elected representatives of the great European powers foregathered so that might be signed a pact or treaty binding all the signatories to coerce by economic or military force any one nation that breaketh the peace and refuseth an adjustment of its alleged wrongs other than by arbitration. Even, too, hath the suggestion been broached that the great nations form alliances; not alliances in groups, one group against the other for aggressive purposes, but alliances for mutual disarmament.

Yet must it be emphasized that such assertions as the above be viewed warily and well considered lest we be led to anticipate an imminent Utopia. Such matters lendeth endless possibilities for dialectics and rhetoric among the vote-catching politicians, the place-seekers and the hereditary governing class. Do the voices of these theorists indicate the true spirit that animates the people and their teachers? What of the war-like priesthood, those servants of the Prince of Peace, who, dressed in military garb and a natural hypocrisy, preached during war-time a doctrine of "kill and spare not"—incidentally, as a class, obtaining total exemption from active participation themselves—and who are ever ready, in fact, foremost to assist in any pompous display of the military or naval caste wherein a "holy" blessing, in the name of God Almighty and Messrs Pommery & Greno is to be given to some diabolical barge bristling with projectile throwing weapons? An individual priest may perhaps preach tolerance, yet as a class they are the most intolerant and ever ready to keep good quarter⁴ with the powers that be and bow down and worship Mammon. Hence doth it seem unlikely that the true spirit of tolerance necessary to the adoption of Universal Disarmament will be widely propounded by our parasitic "spiritual" teachers. However innately truthful an individual priest may be, one must always remember that he is a member of the organized hypocrisy of the cloth, whose bread and butter dependeth upon him paying lip-service to vested interests and from whose mouth perversion and suppression of the truth, equivocation, evasion, and fraud come unconsciously. He becometh unconsciously corrupt. As Solomon saith: "A righteous man falling down before the wicked is as a troubled fountain, and a corrupt spring."⁵

It is from the people that the demand for emancipation from the Armaments fetish must proceed. Yet what of the spirit that induceth the mob to applaud to the echo any military display and view with complete approval the dedication of a stone representation of a howitzer to the memory of their Glorious Dead? Would they applaud with equal enthusiasm a model of an emissary who is depicted in the act of polluting a city's water supply with typhoid germs or of air raiders dropping poison gas upon a defenceless population? It is but a matter of degree; howitzer or typhoid germs, either method of massacre is equally as civilized as the other. Yet one doubteth not that the sycophantic priesthood would place their benison indiscriminately upon anything that met with the approval of the commercial magnates, international financiers, and brewers, in whose many companies they hold shares, and the unthinking majority simply take for granted the homicidal ethical code of those who receive honours and decorations—besides huge salaries—for playing at the game of war and playing it indifferently well. W. THOMPSON.

¹ Mischievous.

² Eats up.

³ Germany.

⁴ Keep on good terms.

⁵ Proverbs xxv. 26.

Freethought's Charivaria.

Teachers, above all other classes of mankind, declares Professor C. K. Webster, ought to have vision to see into the future. They ought. A few have—they visualize a future with a purely secular education in the schools.

"In this democratic age," says Father Knox, "the sick man is the only genuine tyrant." We think Father Knox should have said "a sick religion." For sick or well, it is always a tyrant, and especially when it is Roman.

Science is ultimately beneficial and not brutal, asserts the Bishop of Birmingham. But it is only the ignorant Christian who needs assuring of that. Science becomes brutal when Christians misapply it.

Sir Frank Dicksee: "The mere imitation of nature is not art." But the Bible-thumper's imitation of cordiality is art right enough—the art of simulation.

To many people work is life, says Lord Cave. Then most of our clergy must be merely existing.

According to Sir Oliver Lodge, even poetry has to close its eyes when confronted with ultimate origins, and can only murmur, "In the beginning, God." Seemingly, religion is not only the opium of the people, but of poetry and scientists too. Sir Oliver murmurs in his sleep.

There was no question of shirking in the war, says Lord Jellicoe; why should there be any shirking to-day? We don't know. Perhaps it is that people see how effectively parsons shirked in the war and have decided to imitate them in the peace.

Nominally, we all accept the Sermon on the Mount. We do not really understand it, however, because we fail to put it into effect, asserts Mr. Gilbert Thomas in a Methodist journal. Well, how the deuce can we put it into effect before we understand it? Putting into effect a theory he does not understand on the off-chance of understanding it later seems pre-eminently a Christian's way of doing things.

Speaking of the decline of ceremony, Mr. Arthur Hoyle in the *Methodist Recorder* tells us: "Sooner or later we are bound to attempt a recovery of ceremonial as essential to our security.....in the State or in the Church. Ceremonial is the safeguard of decency." We always thought of it as a cloak for irrationality, inanity, folly, and nonsense.

Sir Charles Higham, publicity expert, announces that public opinion is waiting for sound information about anything. We should say that if it wants sound information about *nothing*, the Churches can supply that.

Do you mean to tell me you have to go abroad for fairy-tales? enquires Mr. A. Bonnet Laird. Archibald, certainly not! We have our reports of revival meetings. We still cherish that collection of fairy-tales which "Q" calls a miracle of English literature—the Bible.

Games, says an eminent doctor, are essential to the development of character. Then our Sabbatarian prohibitors of Sunday games must be stupidly hindering that development—their own and other people's.

"The Rusty Church Door."

MISS MAUDE ROYDEN, of the City Temple, is a very popular preacher. Judging by what she says in some recent articles, we think her popularity is to a considerable extent due to her trick of giving the people a goodly selection of elementary Freethought ideas. She, however, being an honest Christian, always forgets to make the necessary acknowledgments to the *Freethinker* as the source of her notions. What we should like to know is, does she think it quite honest to deceive her public into believing that what she has to say is of Christian origin? For that she has derived most of her notions from a source other than the Bible are known from the confession she once made: "I have learned more of religion from scientists than I have from theologians." But one would say she has learned much more from anti-Christian criticism. One can tell that by noting the large number of repulsive orthodox dogmas she has dropped—which Freethought criticism has made the better-educated Christian ashamed of.

In a recent article, "The Rusty Church Door," she says so much that can only have come from the *Freethinker*, and admits so many of the charges levelled at the churches by this paper during the last forty years, that one almost expects to hear she has applied to the N.S.S. for a membership card.

She agrees that to-day the Churches have no power, and that they appeal only to those comfortably off and to the elderly. She admits that during the war they took the popular side, and that many preachers even fanned the flames of hatred. That after the war the churches did nothing towards bringing about a lasting peace. She says, too, that they have never in the history of industrialism taken the side of the workers to secure better wages and conditions and to diminish child-labour. That they took no part in the woman's struggle for freedom. But, says she, the churches can fight if they like—among themselves, and over disestablishment in Ireland and Wales, and such-like highly important matters.

After giving this list of splendid achievements she says of organized religion, the churches, that:—

Because it has so rarely been on the side of the weak and the oppressed, the underdog doesn't trust *them* very readily, and those who are fighting his battle don't readily trust them either. That is hard luck, but anyone can see how it happens.

Anyone can indeed see how it happens! That is why the more alert men of the Labour movement are content to let "the rusty church door" continue to be rusty.

Miss Royden won't admit that organized religion has ceased "to meet a need." That need, she thinks, is for fellowship. The churches it seems have this on tap, two brands of it. One, fellowship with "a great Power"; and two, fellowship with the members of the churches. Miss Royden appears to believe that if only the churches will take up the cause of the oppressed, they (the churches) would become "alive" once more. We can assure Miss Royden that it is too late in the day for the churches to do this without arousing the suspicion that their support of the oppressed (as she styles the workers) is but an adroit move to secure more clients.

As for the need for fellowship, people are discovering that this craving, purely social in its origin, can be met quite well outside the churches. Hence, to the wheedling of the parsons is turned a deaf ear. "That is hard luck, but anyone can see how it happens"!

D. P. STICKELLS.

After Buddha was dead people showed his shadow for centuries afterwards in a cave—an immense frightful shadow. God is dead: but as the human race is constituted, there will perhaps be caves for millenniums yet, in which people will show his shadow. And we—we have still to overcome his shadow!—*Nietzsche*.

North London Branch N.S.S.

The debate between Mr. Cutner and Mr. Walsh provoked a very good discussion. The opponents were both in excellent form. Mr. Walsh is to be congratulated on the success of his first debate. To-night, Mr. George Royle addresses a North London audience for the first time, and we feel confident he will give a very good account of himself. We hope for a good audience, and the subject, "Religion and what we shall put in its Place," gives ample scope for discussion.—K. B. K.

Obituary.

My friend, of the neighbouring village of Stevenston, an excellent Freethinker, has lost his little son, Willie McAllister, aged six, the causes of death being diphtheria, fever, and meningitis. I met the father in the street, whose loss was written on his face—so common, yet so pathetic, tragic fate; but when it comes to our own door.....our late leader, G. W. Foote, often pictured that reality. The father's consolation, in his own words, is that he always did his bit by his little son while living, and if there was a "judgment" he would be judged by his actions, not by words. We all wish the parents courage in their calamity; for wounds will heal, and hope revive, in a life made richer by death. And again we realize.—A. MILLAR.

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): 7.30, "An Evening with Mr. Hyatt."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W.): 7.30, Mr. George Royle, "Religion and what we shall put in its place."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7, Holford Knight, "Disarmament—the Moral Dilemma."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Lit., "The Reform of Marriage."

COUNTRY. INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Brassworkers' Hall, 70 Lionel Street): 7, Mr. E. Clifford Williams, "The Bible and Science." Questions and discussion invited. (Collection.)

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S. (The Saloon, City Hall, Candle-riggs): Mr. Chapman Cohen, 11.30, "The Way to Study Religion"; 6.30, "When I am Dead." Questions and discussion invited. (Silver Collection.)

LEEDS BRANCH N.S.S. (Trades' Hall, Upper Fountain Street): 7.15, Mr. A. Booth, "Richard Ostler—The Leeds Factory King." Questions and discussion invited. Admission Free.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. F. R. Melton, B.Sc., "Science and the Survival of Man."

RING IN THE VALIANT man and free; the larger heart, the kindlier hand; ring in the creed that only we shall hear first speech of your command, when clothing needs renewing. Tell us to-day which of the following interests you most:—*Gents' A to H Book, suits from 56s.; 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.

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.

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Devil's Pulpit, vol. i.; Thomson, *Essays and Phantasies*; Sherwin, *Life of Paine*.—A. G. BARKER, 29 Verulam Avenue, Walthamstow, E.17.

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).—Box 65.

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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 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 their 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 your interest and ability. 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.

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Any person over the age of sixteen is eligible as a member on signing the following declaration:—

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