

# The FREETHINKER

FOUNDED · 1881

EDITED BY CHAPMAN COHEN    ■    EDITOR · 1881-1915 · G. W. FOOTE

*Registered at the General Post Office as a Newspaper*

Vol. XLVI.—No. 5

SUNDAY, JANUARY 31, 1926

PRICE THREEPENCE

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## Views and Opinions.

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### Science and "Matter."

It should be clear to readers of the preceding notes that a great many of the difficulties connected with Materialism arise from the way in which the question is stated. And a question that is not properly asked cannot easily be clearly answered. Instead of first of all determining in what sense science (not, be it observed, particular scientists) uses the term "matter," a definition of it has been taken by the anti-materialist, who has then set to work to demolish something that should never have existed. To illustrate what is meant, one may take the part played by the conception of a universal ether. One still meets with those who write and speak as though something was actually known about the ether in the sense that I know and can verify the existence of the moons of Jupiter. But the truth is that the ether was actually *invented* to make certain things that were known to occur, understandable. How, for example, is light transmitted to us from the sun? If there is nothing between us and the sun but empty space, we lack a medium of transmission. So far as can be seen, it is an absolute impossibility for waves of light to cross empty space. But, said scientists, if we assume that between us and the sun, in fact, filling all space, there is a continuous, jelly-like substance, waves of light may be transmitted through this, and it will supply an explanation of what occurs. It was in this way, and for reasons similar to this, that the conception of an ether established itself in science. The only evidence we have of the existence of the ether is its utility. It was invented in order to work, and it is accepted because it works. And that is precisely the function of "matter" in the world of pure science. It is a conception that helps us to explain things as nothing else can or does. And so far as Materialism is concerned it would make no difference if this particular conception gave place to another one so long as the mechanistic principle remained established. Thus, the function of a scientific hypothesis is that of helping us to understand what occurs. Hypotheses are conceptions that are accepted when they

are seen to work. A certain number of observations are made and classified. Then, it is said, if we assume such and such to be the case such and such events should follow. If the events fulfil expectations the hypothesis is accepted as correct. That is the part played by all scientific laws and general conceptions. They must help us to explain what has occurred. They must help us to predict what will occur; and they must not contradict a single known fact. In science the exception does not prove the rule; it shows that our rule is untrustworthy.

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### The Thing in Itself.

The religious mind loves a mystery. It feels that in a world where things were understood there would be no possible chance for the supernatural. Hence the universal practice of religious advocates to stress the immediate ignorance of science in certain directions, and the immovable ignorance of mankind in others. And so when it is realized that the Materialistic conception is steadily establishing itself, some consolation is found in the assertion that, after all, we do not know what matter is in itself, we do not know what electricity is in itself, or what gravitation is in itself, and so on, the implication here being that if the Materialist can be driven back to ultimate ignorance there is a chance for some form of supernaturalism. But what is it we mean when we speak of matter, or electricity, or gravitation? When we speak of matter, the matter we mean is the matter presented to us in consciousness, with the physical qualities by which we distinguish it from non-matter. Just that and nothing more. If it is said there is something beyond this, we do not deny it, but it is not the matter to which we refer, and it is not matter as science understands it. So with the other things named. Science does not ask us to believe in something which we *know* as gravitation and electricity, and then to further believe in something which is called gravitation and electricity in itself. In a loose, but convenient way we speak of a stone falling to the ground as a consequence of gravitation. But strictly speaking, the stone falling to the ground *is* gravitation. Gravitation is a name for the observed fact that masses of matter everywhere attract each other in a way that can be definitely measured and described. And when we understand this we know all there is to know about gravitation. We do know gravitation "itself" because gravitation is nothing more than the mutual attractions of matter reduced to an exact descriptive formula. The proof of this is that if we take away these special movements of matter all gravitation disappears. There is nothing left to know.

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### Science and Method.

What is true of gravitation, is true of electricity, of life, of mind, of every generalization framed to describe natural phenomena. Phenomena are classified as physical, chemical, biological, or psychological, as each group exhibits characteristics in common.

The laws of chemistry are descriptive of the behaviour of one group. The laws of biology of another group, and so on. The thing in itself is the thing covered by the term used—that is, it is the thing we know. Indeed, if electricity, gravitation, etc., are not the things we know by these names, then they are not these things at all. Life must be life as we know it, mind must be mind as we know it, or it is not life or mind at all. It seems curious to have to emphasize that if things are not the same they must be different, and if they are different they cannot be the same, but it is plainly necessary to do so. And it illustrates the truth we have so often emphasized, namely, that an ounce of understanding of the methods of science and of the principles of science is of far greater importance to correct thinking than a ton of such facts as the size of the stars, or the exact distance of Jupiter from the earth. The larger number of these metaphysical difficulties are self-created, and are perpetuated because so few will ask themselves what the trouble is about, and will not think the question out for themselves. And this applies not merely to the man in the street, but to a large number of those who stand before the world as recognized teachers of science.

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#### Materialism and Mind.

Another curious fallacy abroad in connection with Materialism is that the Materialist is bound to explain life and mind in terms of physics and chemistry, and that he actually does attempt to do so. Thus, Professor Arnold, in his *Scientific Fact and Metaphysical Reality*, comes down on the Materialist thus:—

Materialism is the most uncritical of philosophies, but it is in one respect often like a true theory of existence as a whole; that is, it tends to be of an analytic character, though stopping short of a full analysis.....Materialism takes as its basis one of three types of existence.....and practically it omits the other two.

That is, Materialism is uncritical because it ignores mind. If this were true, Materialism would not be merely uncritical, it would be sheer fatuity. Writers who deal with the subject in this fashion might at least pause and ask whether it is possible that Materialists are so stupid and so blind as to ignore the fact of mental life and its call for an explanation. Materialism no more ignores psychological facts than it ignores physical ones. It has a place and a meaning for both, and it offers an explanation of both. Whether its explanation is adequate in detail, may in the present state of our knowledge be queried with justice. But that the explanation when found will be on mechanistic or materialistic lines there can be no reasonable doubt.

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#### A Question of Science.

To the same class belongs a comment of Professor Needham, the eminent bio-chemist, that "Mental processes cannot possibly receive explanation or description in physico-chemical terms," and the triumphant declaration of Sir Oliver Lodge that "to explain the psychical in terms of physics and chemistry is simply impossible." And to this he added that while physics and chemistry might explain a sunset, they could not explain our sense of joy or perception of beauty at beholding it. The fallacies in both these statements are amusing, but not more so than the reply of one who, claiming to defend Materialism, asked Sir Oliver, "Why not?" That makes one re-echo the words of an Eastern king, "Allah, save me from my friends, I can look after my enemies myself." For the proper question to

put to Sir Oliver Lodge is, "Why?" Why should physics and chemistry explain everything? If they could, what is the need for either a science of biology or of psychology? Why should the Materialist be called upon to explain an emotion in terms of chemistry or physics? If anyone tries to explain an emotion in terms of chemistry he will soon see what a hopeless task he has set himself. The Materialist may show, as science does show, the physical conditions of a sunset, but that and the emotion at beholding a sunset clearly belongs to two different categories. Physical science may show that the physical equivalent of a sensation of redness is a vibration impinging on a sensitive surface, but when that is done the sensation of red remains an ultimate fact of its kind. Sir Oliver is quite right in saying that Materialism, as he conceives it, cannot explain things, but he must not expect one who understands the case to take his description of what is Materialism for granted. In making this statement Sir Oliver Lodge has not merely misrepresented Materialism, he has ignored a very important part of the work of science, which is to group phenomena of like kind, and frame laws that will properly describe them. And, as an elementary scientific truth it does not follow that we must be able to describe the qualities of a compound, or of a combination in terms of the qualities of their constituents. We may say that the elements of a given biological phenomenon are chemical and physical, and that of a psychological one biological, without in the least committing ourselves to the statement that we can explain psychology in terms of biology, or biology in terms of chemistry and physics. Again, I must insist that if things are the same they would not be different, and the mere fact that we all class some things as psychological, others as biological, others as chemical or physical, is a plain admission that we require a different set of terms to describe them. And, so far, the only reasonable explanation given is that offered by a scientific Materialism.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

(To be Continued.)

### Pulpit Extravaganza.

To explain the Christian religion is to expose its falsity. To supply a detailed statement of its contents as taught by the Church is to show its essential untruth. Preachers, for example, treat it in such a way as to render an intelligent belief in it an absolute impossibility. In the *Church Times* of January 15 there is a sermon by Dr. W. J. Sparrow Simpson, entitled "The Self-Limitation of God's Son," which contains numerous fundamentally incredible assertions. Adopting the language of the Nicene Creed, Dr. Simpson declares his belief "in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-Begotten Son of God. Begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, Begotten, not made, Being of one substance with the Father, by Whom all things were made." What an infinitely ridiculous claim to make for the Gospel Jesus. The very language transcends all conceivable intelligence, and is quite as absurd as it sounds. Indeed, to make the Christian Faith "an object of intelligence" is beyond the power of any man. Dr. Simpson is a stupendous believer; his capacity for belief seems limitless, as, in fact, is that of every orthodox theologian. The sermon under discussion is a fair sample of the stuff which Anglo-Catholic priests deliver to their congregations. Dr. Simpson says:—

So far the Son is contemplated within the life of the Godhead, in the region of the eternal—prior to

the existence of any creature. Then, with a rapid transition, the Creed passes on to existence outside the Deity. The Son of God is the Creator of the universe. It is He "by Whom all things were made." As the Epistle to the Hebrews explains, the Son is the Father's Agent in creating; "by Whom also He made the worlds," or, as St. John describes it, "all things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." Seeing, then, that the Holy Trinity, in the perfection of uncreated Love, were self-sufficient in the depths of Deity with their infinite resources, why should their life, which could not stand in need, be invaded by the existence of creatures who must be everlastingly dependent upon their Creator?

Now if we ask this question, Why did God create? the only answer that we can give is, Because life, intelligent and moral life, is good, too good a thing to be withheld; a blessing to be imparted so that others might share. The motive of creation is love. God would not keep existence to himself. He loved us before we existed, and created us in order to have beings on whom He might bestow his gifts.

Looked at in the light of reason that long passage is the quintessence of blind credulity. It deliberately ignores modern knowledge. The very terms "creation" and "creatures" are culpably anachronistic. They are Bible words which ever since the birth of modern science have been completely out of date. There is not even the shadow of evidence that the worlds were ever made. No geologist or astronomer entertains such a stupid error. Dr. Simpson evidently occupies precisely the same ground as the American Fundamentalists and a few men of letters in this country who are Catholics.

Dr. Simpson, regarding the universe as a Divine creation, believes that God by bringing creatures into existence restricted himself. He says that creation is at once self-expression and self-limitation:—

God was free to create or not, free to select what forms creation should assume. He might have chosen to create worlds substantially different from the universe which actually exists. But when once God created the material world He restricted his independence by the material which he had chosen. He thereby compelled himself to act in certain ways and not in others.

This theory of Divine self-restriction by the act of creation colours the whole of Dr. Simpson's theological thinking. He maintains that when God created persons, men and women in his own image, he involved himself in unspeakably greater self-restriction, but why? He answers thus:—

For he brought into being persons who had the power to resist him and defy his will. All the possibilities of moral discord were incurred when God created man. Henceforth there were other wills in existence beside his own. There were spheres in which his will would be contradicted.

This conception of the creation of man is a wicked attempt to justify the Creator at the cost of doing the creature an irreparable injury; but it has never succeeded in achieving the desired result. Fortunately, however, the world at large is gradually getting to realize the fact that man did not come into existence in the manner described by the theologians. It has taken him many millions of years to become what he is to-day. His history has been one of more or less steady ascent from lower states, not of descent from a higher one. He is a product of evolution, not of a Divine handicraft. Even the late Professor Drummond, a zealous evangelist, firmly held and openly taught this scientific view of man's origin. He published a large book, which

went through many editions, entitled *The Ascent of Man*.

Of course, Dr. Simpson looks down upon the scientific conception of man with withering contempt, and delivers a long and eloquent account of the incarnation of God's Son, which is as follows:—

There was nothing He was not prepared to do for his creatures. Before the Creation began He foresaw exactly what sacrifice He would make if He brought these creatures into being. Nothing could come upon the Son of God as a surprise. He saw the course of his procedure while as yet the human race existed only in his thoughts. He realized what would be the consequences to himself if He created them. He saw with inexorable clearness his future career on earth. For He—the Son of God—would not be contented to create them, or to send them messengers, or to impart to them his gifts. He would go among them in Person, He would identify Himself with His creatures. He would share their experiences. Bethlehem and the helpless Infancy, and all that it would involve, of lowliness and humiliation, the amazing condescension, the reversal of positions, whereby the Creator would take a place in the ranks of the Creation, and become submissive and subservient to his own creatures, so that man should exercise dominion over Deity, and God in manhood should be at the mercy of man.

Of the beautiful diction and stirring eloquence of that extract there can be no doubt whatever, and the same is true of the whole discourse; but an awkward question forces itself upon us here, namely, where and how did the preacher acquire the astounding information which he pretends to be able to convey to his hearers and readers? The Apostle Paul asserted that his Gospel had come down to him by a direct revelation from heaven; but he did not pretend to know half as much about the Holy Trinity's thoughts and plans in eternity prior to the creation of the universe, as Dr. Simpson claims to know and ventures to impart to us in his sermon. He omits to tell us by what authority he speaks as he does, and we suspect that he does so by no valid authority whatever. He draws alone upon his own imagination, or upon that of others. As a matter of fact he is fully as ignorant of eternity and the Holy Trinity as Secularists are. What he offers us in this finely phrased discourse is the fruit of a lively fancy—mere dreams, and, as Dryden so well puts it:—

Dreams are but interludes which fancy makes  
While Monarch Reason sleeps.

J. T. LLOYD.

### To Oscar Wilde.

Inspired by Epstein's Monument in Pere Lachaise Cemetery, Paris.

ASPIRING SOUL!

Striving to soar, while the weights of your pinion,  
Designed for your service, refuse your dominion.  
The thrill of your flight, you know in your candour,  
Is less than it may be, as love to a pander.

Were the grace of your flight so much less in our eyes,  
In the war for your soul, the gods had less prize;  
By their gifts had not damned you into a hybrid  
With a wealth of speed, but no body rapid.

So the gods in the good old traditional style,  
By the medium they work in are more than futile;  
Their designs no more flawless than those of the man  
They twist and distort in their efforts to plan.

Aspiring soul!

G. E. FUSSELL.

## The Atheist as Villain.

In religion,  
What damned error, but some sober brow  
Will bless it, and approve it with a text.

—Shakespeare.

You do not believe, you only believe that you believe.  
—S. T. Coleridge.

THE cinema is, far and away, the most popular form of entertainment. In this country it has almost destroyed the cheap theatres and music-halls. Its potentialities, for good or ill, are so vast that statesmen have even permitted the screen to be used for national propaganda. Other folk, with axes to grind, have also exploited the silent drama, and religious organizations have been unusually active for years. That these pious folk have not brought the cinema into utter contempt is very largely due to the influence of the big financiers in the cinema business, who realize that too much propaganda is fatal in matters concerning public amusement. It is true that cinema frequenters have had to endure faked pictures of such Biblical incidents as the Israelites crossing the Red Sea, with the waves politely holding themselves back to allow a dry passage. It is also true that pictorial lives of Christ have shown very quaint studies in obstetrics, presumably meant to convey an idea of the impressive birth of the founder of the Christian Religion in a stable with ecclesiastical furniture and fittings.

But, in the main, the religious propaganda has been confined to realistic pictures of American chorus-girls, posturing as Christian martyrs, and being apparently eaten by an entire zoological collection of a travelling circus, doped by a kind keeper for the terrible occasion.

Indeed, so far as the great American film-producing firms are concerned, there has not been a great deal for a Freethinker to worry over. But some of the Continental firms are by no means so scrupulous, and films have been shown which exhibit the worse traits of pious propaganda. One of these precious films is worth noting, and as it bears the title of "The Atheist," it may be worth a little attention in a Freethought periodical.

The central figure in this propagandist photo-play is described as a scientist. As he looks like a plumber, presumably his studies are on sanitation. This is pure guesswork, however, for in the play his principal occupation is listening to a friend playing a church organ. His chief relaxation appears to be that of quarrelling with members of his own family, which, oddly enough, seems in keeping with the spiritual physiognomy of the plumber. True to religious fiction, the plumber-scientist's son and daughter both tread the primrose path to perdition. The son commits forgery, and the daughter seems predestined to become what Police Court charge-sheets describe, with cold-hearted camouflage, as "a clergyman's daughter." The daughter develops hereditary paralysis, and is cured by a visit to the shrine of the Virgin at Lourdes, which is shown in close detail. The plumber-scientist is in so great a hurry to recant his scientific and anti-religious opinions that he begins to make the sign of the cross half way through the play, and, so far as one can see, whilst sober and without the slightest provocation. Before the film closes the erstwhile terrible Atheist is a Roman Catholic veteran of half-an-hour's standing.

The whole thing is crude Catholicism, and the producer has simply wallowed in propaganda. The sub-titles have a large crucifix on each like a trademark, and the Atheist's scientific acquaintances ap-

pear to have been modelled on some of the handsome murderers who once peopled the Chamber of Horrors at Mdme. Tussaud's famous waxworks. A scene is also shown to represent the alleged vision at Lourdes of the Virgin to a French servant-girl, and the august visitor is an exact replica of a portion of a stained-glass church-window. It is very doubtful that the Christian God, who is said to be three-fold, had a mamma, but it is even more doubtful that she would be a life-sized copy of a Pre-Raphaelite drawing. But gods are very queer things, as any visitor to the British Museum, or the India Museum, may well see.

Hatred of Freethought, and glorification of the Christian Religion in its most debased form is the keynote of the whole film. We use the expression "debased" advisedly, for there is nothing whatever to differentiate the pictures of the Lourdes shrine from similar pictures of Eastern pilgrimages. The worshippers and priests may be differently garbed, but the actions have a family likeness which is unmistakable. The culture of priests and believers is on the same low level in both instances, although one is in Europe and the other in Asia.

As for the faith-healing at Lourdes, it is worthy of a church which invites adoration of faked relics of people who never lived, and which battens on ignorance and superstition. The Lourdes shrine, like so many others, is a very profitable source of revenue to the priests. Fifty thousand French people die yearly of the dread disease of consumption in spite of all the thousands of shrines in that country. The still more horrible disease of hydrophobia was not checked by adoration of sacred images, but by the patient research of scientists. So one might go on quoting example after example. The alleged "miracles" at Lourdes can be easily explained by those who have made a study of faith-healing. All miracle-mongers, it will be noted, whether Roman Catholic or otherwise, stop short at the restoration of an amputated limb.

This child-like credulity is passing wonderful in grown men and women. To study it is to essay an enquiry into the psychology of a crowd, and an ignorant one at that. Let there be no mistake on this point. Roman Catholics are mainly ignorant folk. They are not allowed to read any books or newspapers criticizing their religion. They are told plainly that by doing so they are in danger of eternal damnation. Even colporteurs of Protestant Bible Societies are ill-treated in Roman Catholic countries, for a zealous Papist will no more read a Protestant version of the Bible than he would read Ingersoll's *Mistakes of Moses*. No Roman Catholic may even become a Freemason, because priests object to all secret societies other than their own. If a Catholic young man attends a Freethought lecture he is said to sin more grievously than if he stole his employer's money. Even the rank and file of the priests are only half-educated. They may know their own theology, they may be able to spout a sermon, but they know little of what is called "Belles Lettres," and nothing of science. The Papal *Index Expurgatorius* contains the titles of nearly all the books worth reading for generations, and devout Catholics are debarred from reading any of them. This Church, be it remembered, is really the most powerful church in Christendom. Its power may be estimated by the fact that, although England is a Protestant country, sixty per cent. of the priests of the Anglican Church are Romanists in everything but name. The United States is Protestant, but the Catholics can count millions of supporters in the Great Republic of the West. The plain, unvarnished truth is that Protestantism is losing ground every-

where, and that the Roman Catholic Church, especially since the collapse of the Greek Church, remains the chief among the warring sects of Christendom. Astute observers have more than once pointed out that the fight of the future will be between the Roman Catholic Church and Freethought, and that the many "fancy religions" are only of transient importance. It may well be so, for the once-powerful Anglican Church is always at the mercy of an adverse vote of Parliament, and a strong Labour Government, which meant business, could soon disestablish and disendow it, and with no more trouble than followed the similar procedure in the cases of the Irish and Welsh Churches at the hands of the Liberal Party.

However, that is another matter. The hereditary enemy of Freethought is the Church Catholic, and it is more than likely to be the principal enemy of the future. Nevertheless, Papists will not advance their cause among thinking people by means of silly films and screen propaganda of the crudest description. Such tactics may please Roman Catholics, but will only excite merriment on the part of outsiders. And when a religion is laughed at publicly it is not good business for the priests. It is simply bringing religion into the contempt it deserves.

MIMNERMUS.

## Materialism Up To Date.

### II.

(Concluded from page 54.)

To make this notice quite ingenuous, points of difference should also be recorded and stated with the same emphasis as those of agreement. I shall therefore add a few words by way of criticism.

Mr. Roberts virtually identifies the attributes of living matter with those of the non-living. And he takes his stand upon the fact that we cannot forecast the properties and qualities, whether chemical or physical, of any compound substance from our knowledge of the properties of its constituent elements. For example, those of water could never be predicted from what we know of oxygen and hydrogen. And the same is to a great extent true of all the million and one substances known to the chemist and mineralogist. I cannot, however, close my mind to the fact that this nescience of ours, even if it were more general and emphatic, is hardly relevant to the point at issue. The characteristics of living matter are palpably *sui generis*, even if we leave consciousness out of account.

The peculiar properties of a composite substance consist in general of the affinities of its molecules to those of other substances; of how stable it is as a chemical and physical structure, and of the temperatures at which it assumes the solid, liquid, or gaseous state. They involve nothing but physical considerations, pure and simple, and are probably related to the static strains set up in the ether surrounding the molecules, by the vortex spins of its constituent atoms which press molecules together (attraction) or drive them asunder (repulsion). There can be little doubt that every chemical union alters the planes of the spins if not their rate, and thereby the etheric strain engendered by them as well as the susceptibility of the substance to radiant energy or heat. Be that as it may. But if we add to the above facts the physical meaning of chemical action, we shall at once be impressed by the chasm that yawns between the living and the lifeless process.

What is chemical action from the physical viewpoint? A parting with energy. Every tendency

possessed by portions of matter to approach each other is due to a *mutual* urge between particles or masses; and it is, in consequence, a source of energy as long as they are separated from each other. As that space interval is diminished their energy is diminished *pro rata*, until, on contact, it vanishes altogether. It is no longer energy but a "persistent force" binding them together. To re-endow the particles or objects with their lost energy, the space factor must be restored, *i.e.* they must be pulled apart again. For example, about half of the crust of the earth consists of oxygen. But it is quite inert, for its original characteristic energy disappeared with the satisfaction of its affinities in chemical union to form the substances which make up the crust of the earth. Only an insignificant moiety—a mere trifle, that is, the amount left uncombined in the atmosphere—now retains its original and available energy; a fact, by the way, that made the phenomenon of life, as we know it, a possibility on this planet.

Now let us see the bearing of this truth upon the activities of living plasm in plant and animal respectively. Broadly speaking, the result of the vital process in the plant world is the partial *restoration* of the chemical energies of the organogens (carbon, oxygen, hydrogen, and nitrogen) that were lost in the substances, water, carbon dioxide, and compounds of nitrogen. That is to say, that in every plant the inorganic process is *reversed*. The lost energy is partially restored in a way that it can be released gradually, *i.e.* without explosive violence. As a result of this restoration, the bonds, which draw and tie together the organogens in the inorganic world, are loosened in the realm of life, and a boundless set of new affinities come into being which bring about the formation of countless legions of substances of a totally new order.

Again, the outstanding characteristic of the animal body is the fact that the entire organism is a complex mechanism for getting possession of this restored chemical energy, and for releasing it as a continuous stream to operate the body-mill.

Now to this difference in the intrinsic nature of the organic and inorganic processes must be added the two characteristic impulses associated with the process in living matter—*viz.*, the impulsion to *feed* and that to *procreate*—a fact that makes the living world purposive from top to bottom. All the activities of a plant or of a creature are directly and wholly subservient to these two ends; whereas the absence of purpose marks all movements and reactions in the inorganic realm—a realm of fortuitous chance. The essential activities of living plasm in both plant and animal forms may be summed up in the verb "To search."

In the plant world it is effected through growth and expansion of root, branch, and leaf. In the plant the impulse is not accompanied by at least animal consciousness; and the reason for it is obvious: that it would be of no service to it. An object fixed to the same spot needs no guide; and that which is always in touch with its external excitant needs not the stimulus of hunger and thirst.

In the animal kingdom this seeking becomes infinitely more manifest; it is now an incessant roaming quest. And the impulses are no longer blind, for they are duplicated or mirrored in consciousness as hunger, thirst, and sex-love.

As neither of these impulses can possibly be derived from any known urge or force in the inorganic world, it is pertinent to ask, Whence came they? Natural selection, *i.e.* the process of eliminating the least fit, only increased the efficiency of organ and function to enable the impulses to realize their ends.

Nevertheless I am more convinced than ever that the organism in its totality emerged from ultimate substance, which is, in my opinion, both physical and psychic in essence; but this is not the place to append my reasons for the "faith that is me."

Mr. Roberts not only merits our praises, but also our gratitude, for the sane policy of using a "clean slate" for recording his valuable work upon. The metaphysician, a term which too often would correctly denote the psychologist, writes and talks as if he lived two thousand years ago and belonged to the Platonic and Gnostic era of dreams—an era when words, whether as class names, or names of imaginary objects or beings, or as abstract terms, were regarded as real entities!

It is no wonder that the dreamers covered their "slates" with meaningless scrawls scribbled by the hand of manhood, but guided by the mind of childhood. It should be borne in mind that it was a period when true scientific knowledge hardly existed at all; a period when conceptions of the material universe were akin to those which a Hottentot would possess to-day. The wonder is that civilized man, in the twentieth century, should not consider it as his peremptory duty to clean the slate of "the brood of folly without father bred" before placing any more writing upon it. What has given to scientific knowledge its unique and trustworthy character is the fact that it is built not on the quagmire of ignorance and credulity, but upon the solid ground—the deliverances of the senses; and Mr. Roberts, to his great credit, has, in this psychological study, quitted the ancient bog of dreams and guesses for the bedrock of the sense-impressions as the foundation of his mental edifice.

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

## Acid Drops.

One of our readers asks whether we had noticed the address of Bishop Barnes delivered recently to the Science Masters' Association. Yes, we had noticed it, and have had lying on our table for some days a report of the speech, waiting for an opportunity for comment. But there are so many things with which to deal, and there is only a limited amount of space, with the result that many things have to be put on one side. The address is the usual mixture of professed liberalism and actual obscurantism; an avowed acceptance of evolutionary science, with a determination to have at the same time anti-evolutionary ideas, and disguised pre-scientific religious beliefs. Here is a sample:—

Science has also banished the gods. The universe is a unity, and not subject to the control of independent super-personalities. All things work together, are inter-related, parts of an organic whole. The observed sequence of phenomena are not arbitrary nor discordant. Science is built on the uniformity of nature and its triumphs show that its postulate is sound.

At this point the theologian pops up, and the preacher of science takes a rest, for we are informed that when we come to consider cause and effect we must further postulate purpose. But as the tracing of cause and effect is only showing how a certain given number of factors act when in combination, we quite fail to see what it has to do with causation at all. Purpose implies that the consequence expressed in the effect was intended. It had nothing whatever to do with cause and effect as such. Then, "Science has banished the gods, but has it banished God?" Aye, there's the rub! Science has banished every god we have been told about, or defined in any way, but has it banished the God we have not been told about, who has not been defined, and

who cannot be understood? Why, certainly not. Science has never banished a thing which, so far as it knows, does not exist. We suggest as a conundrum which Bishop Barnes might work at when he has finished preaching, and can settle down to a little thinking, the following: Can science banish something without first admitting that it exists? Or, as an alternative, Can one be charged with killing a man who isn't alive? On Canon Barnes' theory it would seem that one can be so charged.

Bishop Barnes finds it impossible to believe that the world is a self-acting machine. What then becomes of the belief that all things work together and are part of an inter-related organic whole, and that the observed sequences of phenomena are not arbitrary or discordant? Evidently the world acts as though it is a self-acting machine, for it does not alter the fact as it appears to us to place behind it, or above it, something that Bishop Barnes chooses to call God. And then the Bishop makes the wonderful discovery that Christianity was originally a pure, spiritual, and highly ethical faith, but it "absorbed pre-Christian and magical beliefs." The strange thing is that we never at any time meet Christianity without these pre-Christian and magical beliefs. And how on earth Bishop Barnes knows there was originally a purely ethical faith is more than we can tell. It is not in the New Testament, and it is not in the early Church. It must be in Brummagem, which has for long had a reputation for the manufacture of shoddy goods.

Whilst admiring the independence of the *New Age* and its outspoken views on matters not the immediate concern of the *Freethinker*, we regret to see in the "Notes of the Week" a very doubtful use of matters theological. The *New Age* case does not require, nor does it gather, any strength from a statement such as "Nobody was invited to vote on the question of the Crucifixion." In the use of such a phrase much ground is given, and we cannot see how the *New Age* can hope to expect any support from the preaching profession, the members of which live in the present by living in the past. If the *New Age* is not sailing under false colours, let it have done with the jargon associated with Christianity—the P.S.A. Labour leaders will see that this side of the business is not neglected, and if it can make a new world where the priest may do something useful instead of playing the part of bogey-man and child frightener, we shall welcome it with both hands.

Mr. Grant Richards is a bookseller. He also has ideas of his own on the selling of books. And, furthermore, it would appear that he reads books. In mentioning the Rev. C. L. Tweedale's book, *Man's Survival After Death*, as being a successful seller he states:—

It is a big, fat volume, and it seems to have within its covers all the evidence there is for personal immortality. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle has given it his warm commendation, and bishops have, in effect, blessed it. I suggest that booksellers should see to it that when a copy is sold their assistants should also sell a copy of a book rather on the other side, E. S. P. Haynes's *The Belief in Personal Immortality* (7s. 6d.).

We trust that Mr. Richard's impartiality in matters of this kind will not go unrewarded.

The *Morning Post*, in the following extract, reminds us of the good old days of Protestant toleration far away and along ago before Mr. Hilaire Belloc sang of beef and beer, and Mr. G. K. Chesterton was quoted as an authority on science. Here, in all its glory, is the brief chronicle and abstract of the times two hundred years ago:—

Extract from the *Weekly Worcester Journal* of December 31, 1725:—

"Yesterday Morning a Centinel of the Third Regiment of Foot-Guards was whipp'd in Hyde-Park for being a Papist, and then drum'd out of the Regiment."

It is nice to hear a well-known public man talking Freethought. Thus the Right Hon. C. F. G. Masterman: "The English Sunday is still, for the most part, a day of dullness or debauchery. The idea appears to be that if you shut out every other avenue of occupation, you may drive your young men and boys into church and chapel." On the contrary. "They are driven into loafing round street corners, playing cards in secret places, or doing much worse.....I should like to see every available green patch round the cities occupied by boys and girls playing cricket, football, tennis, or any other healthy sport on a Sunday afternoon." He says it is hypocritical righteousness to open the National Gallery, and the museums, and cinemas, yet to keep closed the theatres, music-halls, and swimming-baths. Mr. Masterman also says:—

I have come to realize more and more that prohibitions, inspectors, police, and laws embodying restrictions are calculated to do more harm than good.....No man can be made moral by Acts of Parliament; such Acts.....can only make people change and not renounce their sins. You may restrain burglaries by fear of jail. You may limit adulteries from fear of hell. You have, however, done no benefit to the individuals concerned except to substitute cowardice for desire, and cowardice is the meanest of the deadly sins..... The continual passage into law of restrictions and prohibitions is, in the main, a vicarious method of forcing hazardous and purely external conformity. It may produce punishment, but in no case makes the crooked mind straight or excites the will to better things

What Dr. David Smith says about the Lord's Prayer in his new *Life of Jesus* will, we think, startle some of the pious. He declares that it surprised the disciples that their master never taught them how to pray; but still more surprising is the sort of reason he at length vouchsafed them at their request. He taught them nothing new, nothing that they did not know, nothing which was not inculcated by the Jewish teachers. His model prayer is no more than a series of petitions from the Jewish Liturgy; its sole originality lies in their felicitous selection. As it was given, it ended abruptly, since the familiar conclusion, "For Thine is the Kingdom, etc.," is an early liturgical addition. Even this is mere Jewish doxology. The Methodist writer thinks Dr. Smith's remarks are a disparagement of the Lord's Prayer. We don't see why the candid statement of a truth should be styled that. Seemingly, this unwelcome disclosure does not suit the Christian. He prefers his pleasing illusion rather than a sober fact. 'Twas ever thus!

In Nottingham ambition is not dead. A notice outside Arkwright Baptist Church may be seen delivering the following message: "If you want to put the world right, start with yourself." We hope that the instructions will be taken seriously, when we shall find that neither priest nor pastor will be required.

We are indebted to the *Daily News* for the information that the wife of Mr. Irving Berlin, the jazz song writer, has been hoping in vain for her father's blessing. It appears that Mrs. Berlin's father is a devout Catholic, and is doubly pained at her marriage with a Jew and the absence of any religious ceremony. The younger generation do not waste any time in even knocking at the door.

America's immaculate soul is bound to be saved. With Tennessee within, and a machine to destroy daily a thousand cases of prohibited liquor, the millennium in that country must be close at hand.

That familiar saying, now almost classical, "One over the eight," now appears in another form. Mr. Alexander Carlisle, aged seventy-two, concludes that he has lived two years too long. On the authority of the *Daily News* we read that he has very strong opinions

and asks: "Why should old men and old women be afraid of death? Why should mourners wear black? Why must the 'Dead March in Saul' be played?" We give him the only reply possible from the Freethinker's point of view; it is because the fear of death has been the priests' stock in trade for many painful centuries.

The Rev. G. C. L. Lunt, vicar of All Saints, Northampton, has made an attack on church worshippers for making their contribution in the form of threepenny pieces. Can it be that the congregation believe in payments according to value received? After all, threepence for listening to a penny sermon is generous, but, as the above gentleman is leaving England to take up his appointment as Archdeacon of Egypt, he will be getting nearer to the land of the origin of the widow's mite—that parable which is the story of Ananias and Saphira inverted.

A notion of fair-play appears to be penetrating even the skull of the kill-joy. A Wesleyan Methodist writer, speaking about the using of "The Lord's Day," says he thinks Wesleyans make a mistake in adopting what is chiefly a negative attitude towards Sunday. They will have to consider, he says, what was the New Testament attitude towards Sunday, the Christian day, not the Jewish Sabbath. He suggests, "In this most difficult question, the solution will come with time rather than by legislation." A welcome admission we call that, a sign of the times. A confession that the Lord's Day Observance Act is a failure in respect to compelling people to treat Sunday as does the Puritan. This writer says that though he himself prefers the quiet Sunday to which he was brought up, yet he thinks he is bound to appreciate the younger generation's different viewpoint. Hence, he suggests, "Our best course is to preach the positive values of the day of rest and worship, to insist on the need that both factors shall enter into our Sundays, and leave to the individual conscience what else shall or shall not be done." This good man is getting quite broad-minded. He has not, however, yet reached the stage of advocating that all legal Sunday restrictions shall be removed to allow the individual conscience free choice of "what else shall or shall not be done" on Sunday. His head, we suppose, being full of Christian notions of justice, has no room for other ideas of justice to enter.

Our godly friend admits that the young Methodists' attitude towards religion has greatly changed of late, but he is, he says, not prepared to declare Methodist home-life is therefore deteriorating. "The Methodist people have passed through the great changes in religious ideas which have come since Darwin, without loss of faith." There is, he remarks, much less narrowness now, both in religious and other matters; interests are wider. Science, art, literature, and drama are discussed in many homes where once they were known only to the few. He adds, "Many old beliefs and customs are going, but I rejoice again and again to find how the reality of Christ remains more deeply than ever rooted in the hearts of our people; so long as that is so, we can be content." We are glad he confesses Methodists exhibit less narrowness to-day, that they have become broadened through contact with the things of culture. To make Methodists still broader-minded, then, all they need is more culture and less Christ. They will then dump more of the "old beliefs and customs." As for the reality of Christ being more deeply rooted, that is merely a pious wish, not a statement of actual fact.

We think what the eminent artist says about the cinema—its false psychology, false morality, and false sentiment—could as appropriately be said about the Church and the Christian religion. And in the same connection, too, his remarks about religious ecstasy and how a certain mood can be induced, are equally well worth noting. For the stagey art of the priest—the

chants and processions, the elaborate ritual or ceremony—and the hymn-singing favoured by the revivalist, what are all these but the mystery-mongers' methods of playing upon the worshippers' emotions to induce a certain mood or ecstasy? The incense, the vestments, and the elaborate church architecture also are means to the same end. That aim appears to be to lull into quiescence the reasoning powers and to excite the emotions. For it is only when the worshipper is in such mood and among such surroundings that he is likely to assimilate most easily the irrational doctrines of religion. But with the people of to-day, less ignorant than their forebears, all this stage-play is becoming less effective. They now find their emotional needs satisfied by things outside religion—by books, the drama, and art. And so they cease to patronize those buildings where is to be found our modern equivalent of tom-tom beating. And that this is so is all the better for progress, for true culture.

Perhaps we may add that to us there seems nothing which so clearly reveals the spurious nature of the culture claimed by our so-called educated classes as does their fondness for "high-church" or Catholic ritual and gaudy secular ceremonial. For we know that most of this fustian is of primitive origin and appeals most readily to minds that are primitive. What, too, is curious in classes claiming to be educated in these persons' staunch belief in the supernatural, and in mascots, palmistry, astrology, fortune-telling, and all the rest of the mad and bad delusions by which the cunning grow rich on credulity. Seemingly, the beauty of the culture which our betters pretend to is only skin-deep. Of course, all classes are infected with these beliefs. But this is to be expected when we see the churches inculcating belief in the supernatural and the irrational—they exist by mystery-mongering. Hence there is engendered a frame of mind that easily gives credence to all the other conglomeration of beliefs that have survived from a more irrational age.

There was no newspaper placard to chronicle the death of Nurse Catherine Anderson. Whilst riding home after visiting patients in the neighbourhood of Cockburnspath, Berwickshire, her motor cycle skidded in the snow and she was killed instantly. There is nothing dramatic, nothing to appeal to the pennies of a press-fed multitude in any special mention of this regrettable fatality. We wonder what would really happen if newspapers decided to give the wearisome twaddle of dukes' and duchesses' parties, divorces, murders, and robberies a rest, and, instead, inform the world of the quiet and brave people who hold the nation together! There is still room for one newspaper that shall chronicle the best in mankind.

One of Dr. Glover's Saturday articles in the *Daily News* is cheek by jowl with a humorous drawing of the route taken by a liver pill to find the liver. His theology is the usual ponderous structure raised on a foundation of evangelical verbiage. By a sample, the learned doctor evidently thinks that he has put a poser when he asks, "Did Jesus and Joshua understand God equally well?" This form of spreading the gospel belongs to the period when divines seriously discussed the consequences of a mouse eating a holy wafer.

"Beachcomber," in the *Daily Express* (a paper which will be remembered as preaching to Cambridge), gives short shrift to the Bishop of London, who wants the London County Council to take the place of the Lord Chamberlain. It is peculiar, but the Bishop appears to be always looking round for an ally when, as everyone knows, the Lord is on his side. "Beachcomber" does not waste many words on him and makes the following helpful suggestion: "Why not hand over the management and proprietorship of the theatres to the clergy and let the theatrical people run the churches?"

One advantage of this would be the filling of the churches and the emptying of the theatres. What could a bishop desire more?" And, as one would say, "It's your next move, partner."

The most painful kind of joke is that which has to be explained. In the "Father Knox" affair on the wireless it was mentioned that there was a surprising amount of credulity manifested. This fact may explain why Father Knox and his kind flourish.

The pastor of the Wesleyan Central Hall, Tooting, is a business man, and is to be congratulated on moving with the times. He has filled the hall holding 2,000 people by obtaining "America's Foremost Coloured Quartette" to sing six bright hymns sandwiched between prayers and the sermon. Religionists in general and particular dare not preach the hell fire of fifty years ago; we trust that the above pastor's example will be widely followed. It will, in a small way, make for a brighter London, and eventually there will be no difference between Wesleyan Halls and other places of amusement.

To the long list of religions plain and fancy must now be added another sect, "The Eurekaists." Emanating from Ireland, it is to be proclaimed at New Orleans, U.S.A., on April 2, and, among the multitude of newists and isms will soon be lost in the country that in Tennessee has the choicest old variety.

A reader of an Anglican Church newspaper, in commenting on the modern increase in Registry Office marriages, says:—

I hold strong religious views, and if I were about to be married, I should wish the occasion to be marked by a suitable religious ceremony. But I regret to say I should most certainly be compelled to content myself with civil marriage alone, while the English marriage service remains what it is—marked with the grossest indecency, and the degraded views that it expresses with regard to the position of the wife.

This pious reader is progressing. Her next step is to discover that the pioneers of her religion had views on marriage and women which were grossly indecent and degraded. Hence the disgusting features of the Anglican marriage service which she deplors.

Mr. Augustus John, the eminent artist, was asked recently: Does the cinema deserve to be called art? His reply was:—

It would be an art if I had charge of it!.....One is disgusted by the false psychology, false morality, and false sentiment in nearly everything that is put on the films. The art of the film is to play on the emotions of the multitude. If you know the psychology of the multitude, you can do it, and, I think, do it legitimately. But to play down to them! It is not a question of trying to educate them in the ordinary sense, but to affect their emotions with good art.

In reply to another question, Mr. John remarked: "You can produce a certain frame of mind by beating a tom-tom. In art you can always induce a mood. That is how you arrive at the ecstasy of religion."

Whether low comedy as in "Charley's Aunt" is the natural place for the curate is a subject for mothers' meetings or an official pronouncement from an Archbishop we do not know. At any rate, the curate liked London, and now presuming the miraculous that the curate has grown up, a novel writer has a book entitled *Our Parson Goes to Paris*. The Rev. F. W. Norwood, D.D., and the Rev. R. C. Gillie, M.A., have both given it their blessing, so that we conclude it may be read without qualms and distributed as a Sunday-school prize.



## "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, £3,680 7s. 6d. John Rennie, £1; "Passing Sympathiser," £1; T. Millar, 2s.; E. Turner, £1 1s.; W. Richardson, 5s.; J. Ralston, £2; W. Howell, £2 2s.; W. E. Bullock (2nd sub.), £5; R. H. Wellings, £1 1s.; B. A. Millichamp, 5s.; E. Newton, 2s. 6d.; M. T. S., £5. Per Mr. R. H. Rosetti: E. Parker, 5s.; C. B., £2 2s.; Miss E. A. Barker, 2s. 6d.

Total, £3,701 15s. 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.

W. HOWELLS.—We did not expect to get the whole of the amount required by the Endowment Trust in one year. But we are satisfied that the object will be realized in the near future. Thanks for your own contribution.

J. RALSTON.—Sorry to hear of your brother's death. We have pleasant memories of meeting the members of the Ralston family.

W. E. BULLOCK.—Yours is a very practical way of showing your appreciation of and indebtedness to the *Freethinker*. If all were equally alive the Trust would have been closed long since.

R. WELLINGS.—It is a long while since we had the pleasure of meeting you, but have not forgotten the old days. Pleased you have not lost your interest in the old Cause.

B. A. MILLICHAMP.—Quite a lot of our oldest friends in the Freethought movement appear to be turning up this week. We recall very easily our first meeting at Birmingham, now well over thirty years since. The world has changed much since, and some of us may congratulate ourselves that we have done our best to see that the change should be in the right direction.

E. NEWTON.—Mr. Cohen has booked March 7 for Ashton-under-Lyne, and will be writing you later.

H. BLACK.—Next week.

E. G. MILLOT.—Of course, when reckoning the Christian population of the world, the whole of the peoples of so-called Christian countries are counted. Jews, Freethinkers, and the rest of the non-Christian population all swell the total.

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 com-

munications 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 31) Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Century Theatre, Archer Street, Westbourne Grove. He will take for his subject, "When I Am Dead," and will have something to say on the series of articles now running through the *Weekly Dispatch* under that title. The theatre can easily be reached by bus, tram, or train from all parts of London, and we hope for a good audience. Mr. G. Bedborough will take the chair.

Although this paper is dated January 31, we go to press on the 26th, so that we are unable to make a general statement concerning the Endowment Trust this week. There are still some days to run to the date given for the closing of this special appeal, but our friends will have to look up if the first half—£4,000—is to be subscribed by January 31. Still the response has been good so far, and most of those who have subscribed are determined to do what they can to complete the sum required.

Next Sunday (February 7) Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Spinners' Hall, Bolton. The lecture will commence at 7.30, and a good muster of Freethinkers in the vicinity is anticipated.

The *Manchester Evening News* has now opened its columns to a discussion of "Have We Lost Faith?" and announces articles by a number of leading ecclesiastics and literary men. There is one aspect of this series which will be gratifying to Freethinkers. Some of the readers of the paper challenged the editor to insert an article from the anti-Christian point of view. The editor asked Mr. Cohen to contribute, and he has written an article which will probably be published by the time this issue of the *Freethinker* is in the hands of its readers. Judging from the letters published in the *Manchester Evening News* the announcement of the article has aroused widespread interest.

The first article in the series was from the pen of Mr. G. K. Chesterton. Probably Mr. Chesterton meant his article to be witty if not clever. It achieves neither object. Large parts of it are simply silly. To say that we have lost faith in Darwinism, and the Higher Criticism, etc., is not really clever, although Mr. Chesterton may take it as such. And to pen a line such as primitive man "is always represented as an ape, because the only remains of him show that he was an artist," appeals only to those who care more for sound than sense. Such a sentence may appear witty, but it lacks all the elements of real wit and genuine humour. Both involve the statement of a truth of some sort. But there is not the slightest glimmer of truth, or even a half truth. If it defies criticism it is because of its intellectual emptiness. It is downright buffoonery, without even the caricature of the truth that buffoonery may often contain.

Mr. Cohen's *Theism or Atheism?* appears to have got on the nerves of some of the Christians of Govan (Glasgow), and they recently paid it the compliment of denouncing it as a dangerous book. Well, that was exactly what it was intended to be. And if it were said to be the most dangerous book ever written, Mr. Cohen would feel the more flattered. May the Lord keep him writing dangerous books, for a book that is not dangerous to every lie and every sham in the neighbourhood is not worth bothering about.

The trouble arose in this way. There was a proposal to place a copy of the book in the Elder Library, Govan. It should be said that among those who supported the placing of the book in the library was the Rev. Mr. Lee, who rightly said that the only way to be able to refute a book was to read it. We congratulate Mr. Lee on his very un-Christian sentiments. But the other Christians were not to be deceived or persuaded. They attacked the members of the Labour Party who supported the motion for the purchasing of the work, and Councillor McGregor (Labour) warned them that the one thing likely to cause a split in the Labour Party in the near future was its attitude on this question. The *Glasgow Observer and Catholic Herald* is pleased with the result, and thinks it quite wrong for the Labour Party to use its forces for the purposes of getting "infidel" books into the public library. Of course, so long as the party votes for Christian books, that is quite right and proper. Perhaps Councillor McGregor is right, and if members of the Labour Party stand up for freedom of thought and demand equal rights for religious and non-religious, it may cause a split in the party. On the other hand, if the Labour Party resolves, for the sake of votes, to stand by and connive at injustice to non-Christians, while helping the Christian policy of lying for the greater glory of God, it will soon stink in the nostrils of genuinely honest men and women. For there is no pretence that *Theism or Atheism?* is scurrilous, coarse, abusive, ill-written, or badly reasoned. The avowed ground is that Christians do not like the opinions expressed, and Christians think it proper to suppress it.

We are naturally more charitable than Christians are. With our case we can afford to be. And so we make them a sporting offer. Instead of boycotting the book, let them secure one of their best men and answer it. And so that the reply shall reach the right kind of people, and prevent them preaching to the converted, we will place a portion of the Freethinker weekly at their disposal. We fancy we could safely offer them the whole, for we are quite certain they will lack the nerve to accept the offer.

Owing to the ban on *Theism or Atheism?* one who is interested in the sale of this work has made it possible for us to offer a limited number of copies at 2s. 6d. each—that is, at half the published price, postage extra. The offer is primarily for Glasgow readers, although those in other parts of the country are not excluded. Those who wish to take advantage of this offer must write at once.

On February 14 Mr. Cohen has arranged to pay a visit to Plymouth. He will lecture in the Gaiety Theatre, which is centrally situated, and the Plymouth friends are working hard to make the meetings a success. We trust that all those who can give the Branch assistance in its efforts will do so. The Secretary is Mr. J. Mackenzie, 4 Swilly Road, Plymouth.

Mr. R. H. Rosetti will lecture twice on Sunday, at 3 and 6.30, in the Pendleton Town Hall. Trams from Manchester run by the doors of the Town Hall, and there should be a good muster of Manchester friends, as well as those in the immediate vicinity. We hope they will see that Mr. Rosetti has the audience he deserves. In the afternoon he lectures on "What Shall we do on Sunday?" in the evening on "Monkeyville, Evolution, and the Bible."

We are glad to hear that the debate between Mr. Clifford Williams and the Rev. John Lewis, at Birmingham, on Sunday last, was a complete success. On both sides perfect good feeling was displayed, and the interest of the large audience was marked and sustained. Debates of this kind can do nothing but good. We understand that further debates with Mr. Williams are in contemplation.

In looking over the notes written on the N.S.S. dinner we find that we omitted to notice the presence there of a very old friend and sturdy supporter of the Cause in the person of Mr. Wilson. We have known Mr. Wilson ever since we have been in the movement, and he was in it long before we were. Mr. Wilson is now eighty-six, and is as full of enthusiasm for Freethought as ever. Mr. Wilson, Mr. G. Alward, and Mr. Wilkinson formed a triumvirate of octogenarians which furnished evidence that whatever Freethought may do, it does not bring men to an early grave. If one could only place the three on end they would stretch back to the seventeenth century, and so one of them might have witnessed some poor demented old woman being burned for witchcraft. They were days when Christianity was really alive.

Mr. Walter Mann's pamphlet, *The Religion of Famous Men*, has been long out of print, and it has now been rewritten, with new portions added. The pamphlet runs to thirty-two pages, and is issued by the Secular Society, Limited, at one penny. At this price the pamphlet should have a rapid sale, and we advise the purchase of quantities by those who wish to do a little useful propaganda.

## The Gospel History a Fabrication.

### III.

#### THE MINISTRY IN GALILEE FRAUD.

We have examined the accounts in the Synoptics of the alleged ministry of Jesus in Galilee, and find them to be merely compilations made from hearsay stories, originated by nobody knows whom. A further examination of the subject from another point of view leads to the same inevitable conclusion—that there was *no* public ministry of "Jesus the Nazarene" in Galilee at all. This fact becomes obvious when we come to consider the rough-and-ready method of maintaining order in Palestine in the first century.

Both before and after the reputed time of Jesus, it was the uniform practice of all rulers, whether king, tetrarch, or procurator, to suppress all abnormal gatherings of the people by sending against them a body of troops, with orders to slay the leaders and chief followers, and disperse the rest. This was done as a precautionary measure against insurrections and the wanton destruction of life and property by the mob. The grossly ignorant and credulous people of those times were easily led into excesses by cunning agitators or self-styled prophets: hence these were hunted down and slain whenever they showed themselves. The mere fact of the appearance in public of an individual who preached a new religion or counselled "innovations" was sufficient to bring down upon him and his followers the guardians of the public peace. In considering this subject, our modern ideas of liberty and the right of public meeting must be set aside. The people of the first century, more especially the Jews, could not be trusted to assemble in large numbers without committing all kinds of excesses, and acting like madmen. After the death of Herod the Great, when his sons were in Rome waiting to be appointed tetrarchs of Galilee, Samaria, and Judæa, all the hooligan population of those provinces plunged the whole country into

anarchy and bloodshed, which was not suppressed until Varus, president of Syria, came with a legion of Roman soldiers, and crucified two thousand of them. Again, when, during the siege of Jerusalem, the hooligan element gained the upper hand, the city was turned into a pandemonium, and all the quiet and peaceable inhabitants were subjected to the most horrible outrages: and this went on daily until the city was taken.

The following examples of "innovators" are mentioned by Josephus.

1. A religious pretender who led a number of people to Mount Gerizim in Samaria. Pilate, being then procurator over that province, "sent horsemen and foot-men" against him, who slew the leader and put his followers to flight (*Antiq.* 18, 4, 1).

2. John the Baptist, who was put to death by Herod the tetrarch "lest the great influence John had over the people might put it into his power and inclination to raise a rebellion" (*Antiq.* 18, 5, 2).

3. "A certain magician named Theudas," who called himself a prophet, and led a multitude of people to the Jordan. The procurator Fadus, as soon as he heard of the gathering, "sent a troop of horsemen out against them," who slew many and dispersed the remainder. "They also took Theudas alive, and cut off his head, and carried it to Jerusalem" (*Antiq.* 20, 5, 1).

4. The two sons of Judas of Galilee, James and Simon, were arrested by the procurator Tiberius Alexander, who caused them to be crucified. Their offence is not stated: probably they were seen in public with crowds around them, and their father having raised an agitation forty years before, the governor thought it safer to crucify them offhand.

5. An Egyptian, who proclaimed himself a prophet, and drew after him "a multitude of the common people" towards the mount of Olives. As soon as Felix, the procurator, was informed of the event, he sent from Jerusalem "a great number of horsemen and foot-men," who slew four hundred of the followers, but the Egyptian managed to escape (*Antiq.* 20, 8, 6).

6. The procurator Festus sent "horsemen and foot-men" against a "certain imposter" who had induced a number of people to follow him into the wilderness: the pretender and his dupes were slain (*Antiq.* 20, 8, 10).

In recording the putting down of these "innovations" Josephus implies that the authorities performed a duty they owed the public. Moreover, it is quite probable that none of these pretenders had the smallest idea of raising an insurrection against the State; but the populace, when excited, might get out of hand and do much mischief: hence the prompt action taken to suppress the innovations.

Coming now to the case of "Jesus the Nazarene," that teacher (according to the Gospels) appeared in Galilee as a prophet and miracle-worker, and was followed wherever he went by great multitudes of people (*Matt.* iv. 25, etc., etc.); so much so indeed that he had to go up a mountain or into a boat to escape them. He is also said to have spent two whole years of his ministry (A.D. 28-30) in Galilee, wandering from city to city, and from village to village—always followed by a vast multitude. The question arises, then, Where was Herod the tetrarch? For it is quite certain that, had that ruler heard that a self-constituted prophet was going about Galilee preaching a new religion, both Jesus and his disciples would have been summarily dealt with before the new ministry was a week old. News of a prophet declaiming to the populace in every city or village which he entered would not be long in reaching the ears of Herod, and would be immediately followed

by an order to his chief captain to send a strong force against the innovator, and to see that neither he nor his disciples were allowed to escape. This is what every ruler in Palestine did in those times, and what Herod himself had done in the case of John the Baptist. Why, then, did Herod the tetrarch permit this innovation to go on? The answer is, that he had no occasion to do anything; for Jesus never came into Galilee as a preacher. Had he done so, the tetrarch would have heard of it at once; for he resided at Tiberias, a city near the sea of Galilee which he had himself built some years before. The Nazarene could not have gone about the province followed by his multitudes, as represented in the Gospels, without having his ministry curtailed by the sword.

THE JERUSALEM MINISTRY FRAUD.

According to the accounts in the first three Gospels, Jesus and his disciples came into Judæa a few days before the passover, and upon leaving Jericho "a great multitude followed him" (*Matt.* xx. 29). When the procession neared Jerusalem Jesus rode upon an ass, "and the multitude.....cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Having in this manner entered Jerusalem, it is not surprising that "all the city was stirred," more especially as the multitude shouted, "This is Jesus the prophet" (*Matt.* xxi. 8-11). Next, "Jesus went into the temple, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves." And no one in the city appears to have had the power to check such high-handed proceedings. The "chief priests and scribes," it is true, "were moved with indignation"; but they were helpless and did nothing. In the evening Jesus retired to Bethany (*xxi.* 12-17). Next morning he returned to Jerusalem and went into the temple; there the chief priests and elders asked him, "By what authority doest thou these things?" This question he evaded by a quibble, and then told them some parables in which "they perceived that he spake of them (*xxi.* 18-46). On that day, or the one following, Jesus publicly denounced the hypocrisy and evil doings of the scribes and Pharisees, the calumny taking up the whole of chapter xxiii. From this oration I make the following short extract:—

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! .....Fill ye up the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye off-spring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgment of hell?

We have no evidence that the scribes and Pharisees of the time of Jesus were "hypocrites," or that they did any of the things of which they are accused; nor do we know that one of them was such a systematic perverter of the truth as the writer of the first primitive Gospel, or the later forger of the Fourth Gospel, to say nothing of the fabricators of the admittedly lying apocryphal Gospels.

But it is unnecessary to follow the career of Jesus farther: the Gospel accounts of his doings in Jerusalem, and of his arrest, trial, and crucifixion, are all pure fiction. Had Jesus really appeared in Judæa in the days of the procurator Pilate, and he had entered Jerusalem at the head of a shouting multitude, both his ministry and his person would have been cut short by the Roman soldiers who were always on guard there. There would have been no arrest or trial: he and his disciples, and the most prominent of his shouting adherents, would have been put to the sword before they could have penetrated far within the city. The fabricator of the Jerusalem story appears not to have known that from A.D. 6, when Judæa was made a Roman province, until the be-

gining of the Jewish war (A.D. 66) a garrison of Roman soldiers was stationed at Jerusalem, their quarters being the spacious tower of Antonia, which was close to the temple. This fact is several times referred to by Josephus. (*Wars* 2, 12, 1; 5, 5, 8; *Antiq.* 20, 5, 3, etc.). Thus, he says of some narrow passages near the temple—"through which the guard went several ways, with their arms, on the Jewish festivals, in order to watch the people, that they might not attempt to make any innovations." This Roman garrison is referred to in "the Acts" (xxi.-xxiii.) as rescuing Paul from the hands of the infuriated populace: the Gospel writers, apparently, knew nothing of it.

At the time when Jesus is represented as riding into Jerusalem, that city would be filling with Jews from all parts, who came to find lodgings for the passover week; and Pilate, or his chief captain, would be making preparations for dealing with anyone making "innovations." Jesus would thus be entering a trap from which there was no escape. To cut down the self-styled prophet and his disciples would be the first step in quelling the disturbance, no quarter being given to those caught red-handed: for Jesus was the leader of a hostile demonstration against the priests and elders and others in authority. This was a greater innovation than any of those recorded by Josephus; for none of those pretenders had the audacity to march into Jerusalem, to set the city authorities at naught, and to utter denunciations against them. No Roman governor who was responsible for the order of the province committed to his care would have permitted such an innovation, and if he chanced to be absent, the officer commanding the Roman legion within the city would know how to act. In either case there would be no trial, though there might be many executions. Josephus has not recorded Pilate's suppression of this astonishing innovation, though he has mentioned minor ones that occurred before and after. We may safely say, then, that the Gospel accounts of the "triumphal entry" into Jerusalem, and all that is said to have followed it, are unhistorical; otherwise we should have some account of the affair, and of the punishment dealt out to the innovators.

It has been said that the Jews had no power to put Jesus to death, and so brought him to Pilate to go through the farce of a trial; but, as a matter of history, we find that they often took the law into their own hands, more especially in a question relating to their religion. In the case of Stephen (Acts vii.) we are told that "they cast him out of the city, and stoned him." There was no handing him over to the procurator, and, though the incident is not historical, this is exactly what they would have done to Jesus had he really uttered the denunciations recorded in Matt. xxiii. The latter chapter, too, is a further proof of fabrication. Who heard the words uttered? Who wrote them down? From whom did the primitive writer get his report? The answer is in each case the same—"No one." The chapter was fabricated for the occasion. ABRACADABRA.

By ideas it is that men lead, nations prosper, and dominions are established; by ideas dynasties are overthrown, nations convulsed, and peoples scattered; by them the tyranny of custom and the dogmas of schools are broken up; by them we interpret, we work, and we prophesy. But an idea is something more and other than an abstraction, it is a growth; an insight springing out of an integration of racial experience, and functioning through intellect an imagination together; therefore the mind cannot become, as Huxley said he desired for himself, "a clear cold logic-engine in smooth working order."—*Sir T. Clifford Allbutt*.

## Who Was Jesus Christ?

I THINK your readers are to be congratulated on having recently had placed before them the views of two such clear-headed writers as Mr. Cutner and Mr. E. Egerton Stafford. They have together effectually disposed of the myth that Jesus Christ was a man, who lived, walked, and talked on this earth of ours. Mr. Stafford in his article says, "Surely the Freethinker may be expected to make some effort in the direction of a more enlightened interpretation of the subject in terms of the comparative mythology data which can be had even by the general reader." Assuming that the general reader does desire a more enlightened interpretation of the Ancient Myths I give the following theory as a working hypothesis.

In a previous letter on the subject of "Was Jesus a Freethinker?" I asserted that Christ is the Moon, so that while the Man-Christ is an untrue myth, the material-Christ is a reality. Probably the following extract from the Manichæan religion will throw some light upon the subject (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. xvii., page 575): "Jesus of the gods first new moon, thou art God.....Jesus, O Lord, of waxing fame full moon." "Mithras (MS. Mitra) great messenger of the gods, mediator (or interpreter) of religion, of the elect one Jesus—virgin of light." We may further consider the Mandaean religion for the purpose of ascertaining who and what were the so-called prophets. *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. xvii., p. 556, states, "Another false prophet and magician was Yishu M'shiha, who was in fact a manifestation of the planet Mercury." This false prophet was, I believe, John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ.<sup>1</sup> These two celestial bodies have been in some religion confused, hence we get two birthdays of Christ.

The question then arises how did the moon and Mercury have birthdays? In order to answer I must ask my readers to accept for the moment the truth of my theory, and then ascertain if it answers or gives reasonable interpretations of the various myths of mankind. Space will not allow me to give the astronomical, geological, geographical, biological, etc., evidences, and I feel in the position of one who is enunciating a theory without the opportunity of giving the proofs.

About the year 3400 B.C., a huge comet came into the solar system. This body was moving at a speed of not less than 300 miles per second, and its tail spread out through millions of miles. The whole looked like a serpent, and is the foundation of the Serpent Myth. This mass of matter is known as the Leviathan, we call it in our country the Devil, other races of mankind call it Maui, Cagn, Tiamat, Quetzalcoatl, Zeus, Typhon, Apophis, Manobozho, Ahriman, Ahi the Serpent, Gargantua, Vrittra, the Blind God Loki, or by some other local name which has been handed down to the descendants of the unfortunate people who witnessed the event.

The Devil, as ill luck would have it, instead of passing through the solar system, which it ought to have done, unfortunately struck a planet. Both became incandescent and together gave out a light equal to the sun itself. There was, so people said, a quarrel amongst the gods or there was a revolt in heaven. Tiamat the Dragon said to Kingu—the planet she struck—"I have magnified thee in the assembly of the gods."<sup>2</sup> As a result of this stupen-

<sup>1</sup> The crucial test of this part of theory will depend on whether Mercury revolves on its axis, that is, whether it, like our own moon and the moons of the other planets, presents always the same face to the central body.

<sup>2</sup> *The Seven Tablets of Creation*. British Museum, line 133.

dous catastrophe the broken pieces of the two were dispersed throughout the solar system. Millions of angels appeared, spots of light shining through the sky, and we remember it by keeping the feast of St. Michael and All Angels. Two large portions, probably the crust of the planet, rolled themselves into balls under the force of gravitation. One of them circled, and still circles around the sun as the planet Mercury; the other, having a higher velocity, which it had nearly lost when it approached our planet, circled around, and is still circling around us, and we call it the moon. The new star seen in the East was either Christ or John the Baptist. Of this planet, or God, Jesus Christ is "the first begotten of the dead (Revelation i. 5). This planet had also various names; it is known as Balder, Osiris, Chokanipok, Heitsi Eibib, Tsui Goab, Kingu, Tammuz, Adonis, Uranus, etc. I was at one time inclined to think that Dionysus was another name of the planet, but the myths are not sufficiently clear to assert whether this deity is the moon or the planet; he is certainly one of the two. Dionysus, like Noah, planted vineyards, and, according to the Algonquin myth, vines are the entrails of Chokanipok. Evidently, therefore, wine is the blood of God or the blood of the enemies of the gods. The late Lord Kelvin had a belief that the vegetation came from other planets, so that in the event of criticism, I must call upon him to back me up.

Christ, the moon, was near the earth for about three years, or to be possibly more accurate, 1,260 days, though this exact figure cannot be relied upon. This was his period of teaching mankind, and there was "hell upon earth." Then the earth and moon in combination met huge masses of the broken planet. The moon suffered severely, and it is now conclusively proved that the so-called volcanoes of the moon are actually shell-holes.<sup>3</sup> The moon became red as blood, the sun was hidden from our sight, and became black as a sackcloth of hair. The American writer on the subject of "Volcanoes or Shell Holes?" says the event took place millions of years ago, while I, on the other hand, assert that it happened during the existence of sentient man. The moon was knocked farther from the earth, and this was the ascent of Christ into Heaven. The people thought that, as the moon had borne the brunt of the attack Christ had died to save humanity. Mankind also suffered terribly: "And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains" to escape the awful aerolith storm. The fire of God had come down from Heaven to punish mankind for his wickedness. Probably some religious reader can explain the particular wickedness of which poor unfortunate humanity had been guilty. The aerolith storm was Prometheus, who stole the fire from the sun; the meteorites incandescent with the heat derived from friction with the air were the minor flying fiery serpents of the Bible.

The idea that the moon is a newcomer, will seem to most readers a strange one, but the following quotation from Hesiod points to the occurrence being a fact. Provided, of course, we can identify Aphrodite as merely a name for this mass of matter. Dr. Andrew Lang, in his article on "Mythology," in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. 19, page 141, says, "From the blood of Uranus (this feature is common in Red Indian and Egyptian myths) were born furies, giants, ash-nymphs and Aphrodite." These old tales are no doubt the mysteries of ancient

Greece. In the Eleusinian mystery we find in Psyche's appeal to Demeter "by the unspoken secrets of the mystic chests, the winged chariots of thy dragon ministers, the bridal descent of Proserpine, the torch-lit wanderings to find thy daughter, and all the other mysteries that the shrine of Attic Eleusis holds in secret."

If all the moons were formed from their planets in the same manner that the planets were formed from the sun, then it will be difficult, if not impossible, to account for the retrograde moons of Jupiter and Neptune.

The finding of a mammoth elephant embedded in ice and the tusks of thousands of these animals on the shores of the Arctic Ocean are explainable only on the assumption that there was a sudden change of climate which has remained permanent. How this sudden change took place can be accounted for by the myths of mankind, and the explanation is a perfectly natural one. It does not require supernatural agencies, which were assumed as our ancestors, from lack of knowledge, were unable to conceive any other reasons. Unfortunately the existence of these supernatural agents has been regarded as portions of the essential facts, whereas they are merely theories of the ancient world, and before we can clearly ascertain what happened, these theories must be disentangled from the myths. The Gods of mankind are masses of inorganic matter and not sentient beings; they move in obedience to the laws of gravitation and not of their own free will.

If my theory is correct we inhabit a world which a few thousand years ago was almost shattered by external agencies, and we are the descendants of the miserable remnant of mankind which survived. Max Muller asked, when speaking of the mental condition of man when the myths were developed, "Was there a period of temporary madness through which mankind had to pass, and was that madness identically the same in the South of India as in the North of Iceland?" If we delete "had to" and insert "did" we can answer "Yes," and say that mankind went stark raving mad with terror at the terrible events they witnessed, and the similarity of the myths all over the world indicate the same origin and are but the confused and faint records of a great calamity.

WILLIAM CLARK.

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## Correspondence.

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### PRISONS AND PENAL REFORM.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I am not surprised to find that my recent article in the *Freethinker* has aroused a good deal of interest, not on the merits of anything I said, but because many members of the N.S.S. feel that here is a question on which Freethinkers feel very strongly. Freethinkers historically regard all questions relating to the liberty of the individual as peculiarly their concern. The fact that criminals have no votes and that elections do not turn on humanitarian issues will not prevent secularists from forming sound views and agitating for their adoption.

I should be glad to see the N.S.S. affiliating itself to the National Council of Societies working for the Abolition of the Death Penalty, because I think that union is strength.

Miss Margery Fry, J.P., Hon. Secretary of the Howard League for Penal Reform, to which society I referred appreciatively in my recent article, has written asking me to make clearer than I did that the Howard League is an entirely unsectarian body, with members of every shade of opinion. This will be evident to all who know Miss Fry, the League and its literature.

<sup>3</sup> *Scientific American* for August, 1924.

Miss Fry draws my attention to a fact frequently overlooked, that prisoners who are not of any religious denomination can usually obtain the visits of somebody in place of visits of the chaplain. Freethinkers should take steps to put this to the test wherever practicable.

The "practical objects" of the N.S.S. quoted in my article express the principles of all penal reformers; I am inclined to think however that they need a little revision, more verbal perhaps than actual. Most of all, I should like to emphasize the view of Freethinkers that prisons and all places of detention ought to be regarded as the last resort where they are necessary at all. The principal aim of reformers should be to keep as many people out of these institutions as we possibly can. I should like the N.S.S. "to aim at the abolition of prison sentences wherever it can be done without immediate danger to the public." I believe too, that we are generally agreed on the prohibition of corporal punishment in all prisons, reformatories, and other places under public control. Could we not also go so far as to say that "we aim at eliminating the idea of vengeance or punishment in the treatment of offence?" The idea of punishment only misdirects the energies of those who are trying to improve our penal laws (the word penal is, of course, derived from the same wrong notion). It is a theological conception. The Church Liturgy still asks God to "punish wickedness and vice."

The treatment of the insane is, I think, bound up with the treatment of the criminal, but I should be sorry to see offences (against often stupid laws), regarded as signs of unhealthy intellect: often they are quite the reverse. But when you come to extreme violence it is very difficult to see the exact line of demarcation between temporary insanity and a criminal act. In any case I invite the views of readers, and I hope that by the time the N.S.S. Conference takes place we shall be generally agreed about humanizing our treatment of offenders.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

### Society News.

#### GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S.

Our Social Evening on the 23rd was a most enjoyable affair, although there was not the usual large turn-out of members and friends as on previous occasions, this in part was due to circumstances over which we have no control. Mr. Cohen was present for a part of the evening, and, in the course of the few remarks, laid stress on the essentials of Freethought. Our next Social will be on February 20 in the D and F Café, Glasgow Cross, and it is hoped that members will advertise this to the best of their ability, and in passing I would like to emphasize the fact that these functions are not held exclusively for members of the Glasgow Branch, everybody is made welcome. So if you reside in or near Glasgow please make a point of coming to this one. Tickets can be had in the hall on the evening of the Social, if not beforehand at any of the Sunday meetings. J. R. R., *Secretary*.

#### NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.

We were sorry there were so few present last Sunday to hear Mr. Royle's very interesting address on "Religion and what we shall put in its Place." The excellent rendering of Rupert Brooke's poem, "Heaven," with which Mr. Royle prefaced his lecture, was greatly appreciated. We hope that North Londoners will make a point of giving Mr. Graham Peace a well-attended meeting to-day (January 31). His lectures on the Land question are always most interesting and inspiring.—K. B. K.

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

"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.  
FOUR White Angora Rabbits; splendid pets for children; 6s. each, carriage paid; accommodation limited; dislike killing.—AINSLEY, 37 Westgarth Terrace, Darlington.  
PAIR of Electric Brass 10-inch Motor Head Lamps (Ducceller, Paris).—Box 63.  
*Anthropology* (Topinard), from C. Bradlaugh's library; *Bible Handbook*; original edition; what offers?—Box 65.  
ENGLISH Concertina; Lachenall's patent; mahogany case; as new; 2 guineas.—Box 67.

### WANTED.

SHARP Wire-Haired Fox Terrier Dog, must be over distemper and absolutely house clean; this most essential; no fancy price; approval; 5s. to Fund if satisfied.—WOOD, Rozel House, Chard, Somerset.  
*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 Freethought works.—Box 64.  
FOOTE'S *Crimes of Christianity, Freethinkers' Text Book*, Part ii. (Annie Besant).—Box 65.  
*The Glory of the Pharaohs* (Weigall).—Box 8r.  
WORKING-CLASS Mother wants book on Motherhood; cheap or on loan; every care taken if on loan.—Box 99.

## 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.

CENTURY THEATRE (Archer Street, Westbourne Grove): 7, Mr. Chapman Cohen, "When I am Dead."  
NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (101 Tottenham Court Road): 7.30, Mr. Maurice Mowbrey, "Man's Outlook."  
NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W.): 7.30, Open Debate—"Peasant Proprietorship v. Tenancy." Opener, Mr. J. W. Graham Peace.  
SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7, Mr. William Kent, "Dickens and Religion."  
SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Lit., "A New Morality."

### COUNTRY.—INDOOR.

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S. (No. 2 Room, City Hall, "A" Door, Albion Street): 6.30, Mr. J. Grant, "Did Jesus Ever Live?" Questions and discussion. (Silver Collection).  
LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Grand Concert, "Arcadian Orchestra" and Local Artistes. (Silver Collection for Leicester Infirmary.)  
MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Pendleton Town Hall): Mr. R. H. Rosetti, 3, "What Shall We do on Sunday?" 6.30, "Monkeyville, Evolution, and the Bible."

FREETHINKER in urgent need of employment.—Can any reader offer me a job as Collector, Assistant in Warehouse, Porter, etc.? Strictly sober and honest; good references.—C/o Miss E. M. VANCE, *Freethinker* Office, 61 Farringdon Street, E.C.4.

## UNWANTED CHILDREN

In a Civilized Community there should be no UNWANTED Children.

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

(Established nearly Forty Years.)

# 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 FARRINGDON STREET, LONDON, E.C.4.

### Form of Membership.

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

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

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Address .....

Occupation .....

Active or Passive .....

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

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

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

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