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## Views and Opinions.

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### Materialism.

There are a number of questions in connection with Materialism that might well be discussed, and some of these have been raised by correspondents. One puts questions with regard to the phenomenon of personal identity, and another that of causation. We will deal with both of these topics very soon, but for the moment we think we will bring this series of notes to a close by summing up the position at which we have arrived. The fear that, as so often happens, readers may not be able to see the wood for the trees, kept us from overloading these notes with detailed examples of scientific fact in support of Materialism. Our aim has been to keep the mind of the reader fixed on general principles, so that the essential issue between the Materialist and the Supernaturalist might be plainly seen. The essence of Materialism is, we hold, contained in the simple statement that all phenomena, no matter to what order they may belong, are due to the composition of natural forces. It is not tied down to any conception of "Matter" or of the atom, although both have played a great part in the historic discussion of the subject. But the Materialist takes his conceptions of these from contemporary science and is at liberty to revise them just as advancing knowledge demands. He does not say that life is a property of matter, nor that life is a matter of physics and chemistry, but simply that life is a function of certain organized bodies, and that chemistry and physics supplies the conditions of its appearance. And he holds that to find an explanation of the origin of life we have to discover the conditions under which living phenomena appear. That is all that is meant, in science, by explanation. As Shadworth Hodgson says, "Dependence means a relation such as that, given a conditioning phenomenon, the dependent phenomenon invariably occurs, and in the absence of the conditioning phenomenon the phenomenon called dependent invariably makes default." And so long as we keep ourselves to the facts of which we are conscious, we escape the pitfalls into which we may fall through following supernaturalistic will-o'-the-wisps, either in their original form, or in the forms

that meet us with so many who consider they are dealing with the subject in a strictly scientific manner.

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### Determinism.

It is not seriously disputed that it is upon this Mechanistic, or Materialistic, conception that modern science builds. Properly conceived no other is possible. You cannot study a mystery that defies explanation; all you can do is to adore it—which is the reason why mystery plays so great a part in religion. Nor can you understand a force which has no organic relation to what has gone before or to what will come after. If we study anything with a view to understanding and explaining it we must assume the possibility of reducing it to ascertainable and intelligible conditions. If we think at all we must do so in terms of known forces. It is simply impossible to think in terms of what we do not know. And if we assume that things are explainable we are bound to think of them in terms of causation. Determinism is not something that we can adopt or put on one side; if true, it is the condition of sane thinking. It is a law of thought, and a scientific law must be exemplified in the case of those who do not believe in it as well as in the case of those who do. Otherwise it is not a law at all. The laws of physics, of biology, and of psychology, were as operative in the days of the cave-men as they are to-day; the difference lies in our recognizing the nature of processes of which earlier generations were completely ignorant. These are my reasons for insisting upon the truth that the Materialistic principle is one upon which all sound science rests. The case of the man who discovered that he had been talking prose all his life without knowing it has a wide and a varied application.

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### A Losing Fight.

So far as the physical sciences are concerned the Materialistic principle is admitted by all. And having admitted it thus far, one looks in vain for any reasonable limitation of its application. If we believe that man's body came by evolution, why should we assume that his intelligence came by any other road? If we see that up to the appearance of life all changes occur as a result of the composition of known forces, why should we look for a new agent because some new phenomenon makes its appearance? The advocate of a life force has no knowledge other than that possessed by the scientist. His case, at best, only rests upon the alleged impossibility of the Materialist explaining exactly how life began. But that only involves temporary ignorance. And the ignorance of science is a very poor foundation upon which to build a positive belief. As Dean Inge says, "Those who take refuge in gaps find themselves in a tight place when the gaps begin to close." And gaps in our knowledge of natural processes do close sooner or later. The Vitalist—the disguised Supernaturalist—is fighting at the wrong

end. When in pre-revolutionary France it was suggested that women ought not to be allowed to study science, some wit wrote a pamphlet with the title, *Should Women be permitted to Learn the Alphabet?* The meaning was clear. Those who wished to stop women studying science should never have allowed her to read. Once that was permitted, all else followed. And if the Supernaturalist desires to make an intelligent fight against the Mechanistic conception he ought to begin with the simplest and widest group. After admitting its applicability so far it is absurd to place limitations upon it because it threatens to supersede some cherished superstitions. In this warfare the Vitalist is not a soldier in an army that is advancing to the conquest of new territory; he belongs to the rearguard of a retreating force that has fought its principal battles and has experienced hopeless defeat.

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#### The Growth of Science.

If the principle of Materialism is true it cannot be set aside in practice, it can only be denied in theory. Moreover, it must apply to the development of intelligence in all directions. We may take an illustration of that from the domain of religion itself. In the first place there is the general abandonment of the idea of a God who continuously interferes with natural operations. In place of a deity who interferes with natural operations in the interests of man, we have a deity who exists somewhere behind nature, responsible for the existence of things, but now only seeing them go. In practice this reduces God to a negligible quantity. If things act as they do act, because of their inherent properties, it is not a matter of vital concern whether these properties were originally given them by God or not. They are there, they affect all people alike, and will continue to do so whether we believe in God or not. The assumption that God once upon a time did something does not in the least affect the question whether he does anything or not now. It admits the first principle of Materialism that the world we *know* is what it is as the interaction of natural forces. Materialism has always claimed that the closest scrutiny of the known world fails to reveal the slightest trace of superhuman or supernatural influence. It has nothing to do with a God who exists somewhere at the back of nature—wherever that may be—and it leaves the proof of his existence to those who believe in him. No Republican has ever objected to a king who did not occupy a throne, and who played no part in national affairs. If the action of God is excluded from the world of natural phenomena he has for all practical purposes ceased to exist.

#### A Useless Deity.

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The position is not improved—for the Theist—if instead of a God apart from nature he assumes a God who permeates nature. That reduces God to a mere algebraic expression, but without the function of utility. Moreover, it lacks the essential characteristics of a God, personality and intelligence. Some people seem to be under the impression that God is to be saved by being beaten out thin, and that his dignity may be preserved by leaving him with nothing to do. Moreover, this does not escape the Materialistic principle; it rather asserts it. We have already said that it is a matter of complete indifference whether we call existence matter, or spirit, or merely X. So far as Materialism is concerned, the essential thing is that phenomena shall be conceived as the necessary consequence of non-personal forces. Merely to call this existence "God" makes no material difference. It does not benefit Supernaturalism and it does not injure Naturalism. To say that

"matter" is not ultimate, but is the produce of something that is, the whole being the product of mechanical processes, is only turning Materialism out by the door to re-admit by the window. What the Theist does here is to bring God within the Materialistic category of a natural force operating in fixed, definite, and calculable manner. He manages to retain a God, by dropping the essential qualities of one.

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#### The Passing of the Ghosts.

Finally, on the one hand, we have the primitive Supernaturalism of which our modern vitalistic theories are the lineal descendants. Under whatever form presented these are no more than the primitive animism masquerading as science. Ringing the changes on the name ought not to cause us to lose sight of that fact. Behind the "Directive Force" of Sir Oliver Lodge, or the "Life Force" of Mr. George Bernard Shaw, there lies the "vital principle" of the mediæval metaphysician or theologian, and at the back of that is the ghost of the primitive savage. That is one side of the picture. On the other side we have the growth of the Mechanistic conception in every branch of knowledge, a conception that admits of verification in every direction where verification is possible. It is, indeed, an indispensable condition of sane, scientific, and profitable thinking. Until nature in all its phases is thought of as following a determinable order, human thought is little better than a chaos. And if the determinable order is there, Supernaturalism in all its phases is doomed. If it is not there Science is doomed. That is the simple issue, and there is no logical half-way house. The ghosts of exploded theories linger, and inherited modes of thinking are hard to remove, but their influence becomes weaker. Time and experience tends to fully justify the Lucretian claim that nature does all things of itself and without the aid of the Gods.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

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### Atheism a Vital Factor.

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DR. F. THEODORE WOODS, Bishop of Winchester, is in many respects a very remarkable man, both as theologian and evangelical preacher. Long before he became a Bishop he was exceedingly well known for exceptional pulpit gifts, and his friends generally described him as a man with a future. He is a great grandson of the celebrated philanthropist, Elizabeth Fry. He was appointed Bishop of Peterborough in June, 1916, and of Winchester in September, 1923. He recently delivered a characteristic discourse at St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, at the annual service of the Industrial Christian Fellowship, which appeared in the *Christian World Pulpit* of February 4, under the title of "Reckoning without God." The text, Isaiah xxxi. 1-2, is highly significant: "Woe to those who make their way to Egypt for help, relying on their horses and on their chariots, relying on their cavalry, they are so strong; and never heeding Israel's majesty, never consulting the Eternal. Yet the Eternal has his own plans." The Bishop says:—

As in the nineteenth century after Christ, so in the eighth century before Christ, the competition for alliances was in full swing. As it seems Israel had concluded an alliance, and thus they imagined they had secured their future, cavalry and chariots taking the place of battleships and submarines. But one element they left out of account, and that element was God.

That is the usual way of stating the case for religion. Isaiah claimed to represent Jehovah, the Eternal, and to speak in his name. He was a vehement opponent of alliances, and he attributed Israel's defeats to their putting their trust in alliances rather than in God. The truth is, however, that trust in God has never justified itself in actual history. President Kruger and the Boers were intensely religious people, whose emotional trust in God knew no bounds whatever. Like Israel, they regarded themselves as the Lord's peculiar people. When war with Great Britain loomed on the horizon, the great President comforted and inspired his followers with the assurance that the Supreme Being was on their side, and that he would certainly not desert them when the testing time came. And yet, alas, despite the fact that the right was on their side, and despite their invincible trust in God, the war of 1899-1902 completely robbed them of their national and political independence. As Napoleon loved to say, "The good God is always on the side of the big battalions," or as the French teach, "God helps those who help themselves," both of which sayings really mean that there is no proof whatever that God does anything at all. According to Bishop Woods this is sheer Atheism, and we fully agree with him. It is Atheism, and there are no facts to disprove it. Curiously enough, as his lordship declares, "Those who profess religion are often the first to relegate God into the background."

Dr. Woods maintains that what he calls "aggressive Atheism is at a discount," but on this point he is radically mistaken, the fact being that militant Atheism was never more active than it is to-day, while the number of Atheists is steadily increasing. Of course, the Bishop is not in so favourable a position for ascertaining the truth on this point as some of us are, who live and move and have our being among people to whom God is non-existent.

The Bishop gives expression to several heart-searching truths, although he employs the wrong word. He severely condemns what he calls "the Atheism of money" in the following terms:—

One of our historians, describing the pre-war state of Europe, speaks of a new nationalism of the pocket; the measurement, that is, of men and women by a standard which has nothing to do with character and everything to do with cash.

We beg earnestly to inform him that it is absolutely wrong to hold Atheism responsible for the curse just mentioned. Atheists despise and denounce the "new aristocracy" quite as drastically as he himself does. Besides, the so-called "idle rich" are generally firm believers in God and a future life, and generous supporters of churches and chapels, hoping that thereby they will secure for themselves prominent positions in the Glory Land after death. If Secularism, which is essentially Atheistic, were to prevail, the very idea of such a selfish aristocracy would be universally intolerable, while at present, as a rule, the Christian Church extends a hearty welcome to members of the new aristocracy if they apply for recognition; and is it not a proverb that in all churches alike the poor and the working classes are conspicuous only by their absence? Equally false is the Bishop's contention that Atheism and hope are not on speaking terms. He says:—

Alongside of all this there is what I would call, though it is a contradiction of terms, the Atheism of hope. I mean, without this dominating factor of God, there is no hope worth speaking of for the human race, let alone for the community in which we live. For this worship of the material breeds stupidity and blindness, produces exactly that temper described by Isaiah, "Never heeding Israel's

majesty, never consulting the Eternal." To concentrate on the material deprives a man of the power of sight. He misses the things that matter, and, missing them, he misses the very things for which he strives. Wealth and pleasure, apart from spiritual meaning, turn to gall and wormwood in his mouth. It has been argued that in the seventeenth century kings and rulers and leaders had a greater idea of God at the back of their minds than their successors in these days; but this old faith, so says a very acute observer, at the beginning of the twentieth century, had faded under the light of scientific criticism. The people of the nineteenth century believed that they had to be strong, energetic, earthly, practical, egotistical, because God was dead, and had always, it seemed, been dead. And this is a very serious thing. For to be bankrupt in spiritual vision means in the long run to be bankrupt of common sense.

In order to be fair to his lordship we have transcribed that long passage without either omission or abbreviation, and while giving him the credit of being sincere we are bound to accuse him of indulging in gross prejudice and mischievous misrepresentation. Nothing can be farther from the truth than the assertion that Atheism "breeds stupidity and blindness." Does the Bishop really mean what he says? The immortal poet, Shelley, professed Atheism, but was he on that account stupid and blind? Professor Huxley admitted in a letter to Charles Kingsley that from the Christian standpoint he was an out-and-out Atheist, but has Bishop Woods the hardihood to affirm that the great Victorian scientist was for that reason stupid and blind? Charles Darwin as a young man was devoutly religious, and entertained the idea of going in for Holy Orders; but we learn from the *Life* that the more he knew of Nature the weaker became his belief in God, and that for some time ere he died he was a thoroughgoing Atheist; are we on that ground justified in calling him stupid and blind? As a matter of fact, some of the most ardent Atheists have been equally ardent servants and benefactors of mankind, and the man who has the audacity to dub them stupid and blind thereby proves himself to be incorrigibly prejudiced and hypocritical. What does the Bishop mean by declaring that the Atheist "misses the things that matter, and, missing them, misses the very things for which he strives"? What are the things that really matter? Are they not the love of truth, integrity, and vicarious service? Are they not loyalty to conscience and the glad practice of neighbourly virtues? Without a doubt these are matters which the majority of Atheists do not miss, and in the pursuit of which they show their Christian neighbours, who look down upon and malign them, an exceedingly good example. Again, what does Dr. Woods understand by "spiritual meaning," apart from which "wealth and pleasure turn to gall and wormwood in the mouth"? We challenge him to supply an intelligible definition of the adjective "spiritual," or of the noun "spirit" from which it is formed.

The Bishop has an extremely poor opinion of the Christian world as it is to-day, for which disheartening fact he seems to hold Atheism responsible. That is a charge against Atheism of which it cannot in the nature of things be guilty. Until quite recently, it has never been in the ascendancy in any country under the sun. For the evils, corruptions, and anarchy said to be predominant in the world, only the utter failure of the Christian Church to fulfil its self-appointed mission can legitimately be held accountable. But the Church has not only failed to redeem the world and convert it into a paradise, it has also contributed on a lamentable

scale to its ever deepening degradation. It has itself committed many of the darkest and most damnable crimes on record. Besides, it has persistently been the opponent of social reforms, and the enemy of the working classes. Byron, who was not a Christian, was the only one who had the courage to speak for the Nottingham workers in the House of Lords. The Bishops were notoriously silent on such occasions. When did they ever initiate and insist on carrying to a triumphant issue any grand and glorious social reforms? Never. Did they ever rise up as a class in rebellion against the wicked combination Acts? It is only since modern knowledge began to dawn among mankind that there has been any sign of an irresistible movement towards the genuine improvement and uplifting of social conditions, and ever since it has been gradually more and more evident that science, not religion, is destined to set the world right, or to solve the perplexing problem with which it is confronted to-day.

J. T. LLOYD.

## Newspapers and Nastiness.

The entire early training and life of England's higher ecclesiastics seem to render the majority of them incapable of taking in facts patent to everyone else.—*The Duke of Argyll.*

The zealot is so infatuated by the serious mockeries he imitates and repeats that he really takes his own voice for that of a god.—*Landor.*

THE clergy have rare noses for nastiness. For years they have carried on a campaign against what is called "the social evil," although this is a polite misnomer for the most ancient and least honourable of the professions. There are so many social evils, and more evils which are unsocial. But when the clergy attacked prostitution they did so in such a half-hearted fashion that they only excited the amusement of real reformers. What, after all, did it matter if a promenade at a music-hall was closed, and its saucy frequenters driven into the streets? And did it make much difference to the national well-being if courting couples were chased from the parks by tired policemen? The real evil remained in all its sordiness and depravity just as if no such thing as a clerical caste existed at all.

Lately the clergy have taken up the question of the press reports of divorce cases. They contend that the publication of unsavory details is harmful, especially to young persons and children. There is something to be said for this attitude, for the newspaper proprietors rely upon salacious reports to help their huge circulations. But the clergy are not the people to carry on this crusade, because, like persons who live in glass houses, they cannot afford to throw stones. They are chartered libertines themselves, and it is just as well that they should be reminded of the unpleasant fact.

At a recent meeting on this subject the Archbishop of York, the second most important prelate of the Anglican Church, used many adjectives and much rhetoric in describing the harm caused to children by reading accounts of what happens in Christian homes when love flies out of the window. His Grace appeared to be under the impression that national degradation would inevitably follow the publication of reports of law cases concerning domestic discord. If so, it is a trifle belated, for divorce cases have been reported for generations, and England still stands where it did. Perhaps it is divorce itself that causes His Grace so much fever of the brow, and not so much the mere report of such proceedings. For the majority of the Anglican

clergy are Romanist at heart, and, naturally, they hold with Catholic ideas of the indissolubility of the marriage tie.

However, as the Archbishop has objected publicly to divorce case reports in newspapers, it is as well to be precise. Papers are not given away; they have to be purchased. And not many children, we fancy, spend their scanty pocket-money on newspapers. Sweets and toys are more in their line, with, perhaps, a comic paper now and again. A juvenile would have to be quite a young "high brow" to wade through a newspaper daily. So, it almost seems as if His Grace's anxiety as to the children is a little over-coloured.

If the Archbishop really is concerned with the reading permitted to children, he should remember that the clergy themselves are responsible for thrusting the open Bible into the hands of innocent childhood. And this Oriental fetish book is far more open to criticism than newspapers. There are things in the sacred volume which are calculated to bring the blush of modesty on any face except that of a priest. Naked filth, which cannot be read aloud to a mixed congregation, is forced compulsorily into the hands of every child. Clergymen attach such loose meanings to the words they fling about so recklessly, but how such men can read the story of Onan, or the adventures of Lot, without remark, and shout at the alleged depravity of modern newspapers, is inexplicable, except on the hypothesis that they are insincere.

If the reports of divorce-court proceedings, after being edited, are likely to corrupt the morals of young England, what, in the name of common sense, is the Old Testament calculated to do? There may be found plain, unvarnished accounts of rape, unnatural vice, and other filth, written with all the nasty particularity and love of salacious detail which is the peculiar birthright of all Eastern writers. The florid, heated rhetoric of the "Song of Solomon," which unlettered Christians imagine was written by "Solomon," leaves nothing to the imagination, and the least educated reader can appreciate the glowing periods. Newspapers, indeed! This Oriental nastiness actually begins where Occidental pornography leaves off.

Nor is this all the indictment. There are hundreds of passages in the Christian Bible which are entirely out of harmony with modern humanist ideas. Here is a passage from the "Psalms":—

The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance; he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. So that a man shall say, verily there is a reward for the righteous; verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.

Equally grave are the objections to other passages:—

Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.

And, again:—

When he shall be judged, let him be condemned; and let his prayer become sin. Let his days be few; and let another take his office. Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow. Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg; let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places.

So one might go on quoting passage after passage which show quite clearly that the Christian Bible is open to many ethical objections. If the clergy had any real reason for safeguarding the interests of young England, they would see at once that, if an ordinary newspaper is likely to exert a malign influence on children, the Bible is an impossible

volume. No editor would dare to fill the pages of his paper with such things as the Bible contains. He would be imprisoned, and his papers destroyed. Yet the clergy force the Bible, which contains so much really objectionable matter, into the hands of every child.

We do not believe in bowdlerizing books, but if ever there were any occasion for such drastic treatment it certainly should be directed against the Bible. If, however, all the objectionable passages were deleted, "God's Holy Word" would be so reduced as to be unrecognizable. It would also be unfitted for priestly purposes.

In this connection, the less said about children the better. A story is told of a little girl who was crying bitterly outside a Council school. Asked what was the matter, the little one said she could not find her way in. The kind-hearted questioner pointed to the door marked "Girls" and to another with the inscription "Infants," but to no purpose. "I'm a mixed infant," said the child, "and there ain't no door for me." Children of to-day reared on the barbarities and indecencies of the Bible are likely to be very mixed in their ideas. Before they become truly civilized they have to unlearn so much. For the Bible is a repository of so much that really civilized people would so willingly let die, and the clergy are the prime movers in its preservation in the curriculum of the schools of this country. Forcing this out-of-date fetish-book into the hands of children is a crime against real education, for this broadcasting of certain kinds of filth is one of the most serious of all brutal offences, for it hurts the minds of children, and causes life-long damage, not only to the children themselves, but to Humanity.

MIMNERMUS.

### "Fresh Air."

"HOR air" from the preacher we get in abundance, so that a plea for fresh air to blow upon religion comes to us as a delightful surprise. The title of an article in the *Methodist Recorder* is "Fresh Air; a plea for the opening of windows." The windows which the writer, Mr. J. Napier Milne, avers need opening are those of the theological mind. Mr. Milne, the reader must understand, is one of those gentlemen who congratulate themselves on having dumped much obsolete junk treasured by the Fundamentalists. Having thus lightened his religious ship, he is anxious that others shall do likewise.

The fear of fresh air, he asserts, is by no means confined to the physical realm; it may be carried over into any department of life and thought. The common desire is that, "as things have been, so they should remain—no change, no open windows, no blessed current from the divine hills.....clearing away our mental cobwebs." He laments:—

How very unwillingly oftentimes we give hospitality to new ideas! We have got accustomed to the stuffy intellectual and theological atmosphere, and we have come to love it. We rigidly resent the thing that is new, partly because it is new, and cling to any old-fashioned custom or creed as though it were a very pillar and prop of Heaven itself.

He is right about the average Christian's conservatism. But the cause, if you please? Here he is silent where he should be vocal. Why are people, and especially Christians, so very antagonistic to new thought? In our opinion, the cause should be looked for in religion itself. If people are averse from new ideas, and especially ideas that touch religion,

they are so because they have been constantly taught to believe that the Bible contains all they need to know about anything affecting their lives, that it is the last word in wisdom, and that it transcends all other books of knowledge. They have been given to understand, too, that to question anything declared by their priests to be sacred, of divine origin, is "wicked." They have been taught to regard those men and women who do analyse and question religious beliefs—the Freethinkers—as people to be boycotted and suppressed. Hence, Christians tend to carry this attitude of conservatism into matters outside religion. Therefore the task of a reformer in any sphere of thought is always a difficult one.

It is the Christian leaders, past and present, who are responsible for breeding the very state of mind which Mr. Milne now deplures. The more progressive-minded Christian leaders of to-day have become progressive because of the influence on them of science—a thing essentially pagan Greek in origin and in outlook. And now when they desire to effect an alteration in the current religious conception of the Christian creed, they find themselves up against the very inertia they and their forerunners have produced. They are thus hoist by their own petard. Their pet weapon against the Freethinker is turned against them. They often receive much of the vituperation once reserved for the Freethinker. Thus, the feet of Nemesis plant themselves on the liberal theologian's own dog-collar!

Mr. Milne, however, does not wish readers to suppose he contends that the new is necessarily the true, nor that there is no need to sift new ideas. Some people, he thinks, have minds too hospitable to new ideas. For instance, Sir A. Conan Doyle believes there is a strong case made out for the genuineness of fairies, and Sir Oliver Lodge is disposed to hold that a gipsy can foretell the future. Some Christians embrace in turn sect after sect; and such broadminded "theological sponges," he says, are not in the least bigoted. For our part, we would not, as does Mr. Milne, regard them as being particularly broadminded. We think they are merely people seeking new religious excitement—they are not one whit superior to the blasé society butterfly chasing after some new pleasure to give a zest to life.

"The Gospel," we are next told, "is wholly opposed to the shut mind. We are to grow to knowledge, abandoning old forms, reviving ancient truths." But this assertion is at best only a half-truth. Christ may have exhorted his followers to abandon the old forms of religion, and to grow in knowledge, but they were to do so only that they might embrace his particular creed—the final religion, the last word in knowledge. The ancient truths he wished men to revive were but those commonly held by the Jewish faithful at that time. And those ideas in the Old Testament and that ancient conception of God, which our liberal theologians now find repulsive, were those which Christ himself believed to be of divine origin. We cannot recall to mind anything Christ said that explicitly condemns what modern minds find repulsive.

"Do we not need," Mr. Milne continues, "the fresh air to blow in upon some of our present-day views of the Bible?" To that the Freethinker will retort, most assuredly we do! But that fresh air needs a Freethought tang in it to be really fresh. Mr. Milne declares, "No one is fit to preach new ideas of the truth who has no reverence for old ideas which perhaps may be transcended." Now, personally speaking, we cannot see why anyone should reverence any old idea, however useful it may once have been. If an idea is seen to be stupid or useless,

it is so, and there's an end to it. It is not entitled to exalted respect or veneration. And as for a new idea, why reverence that? The truly progressive man treats it only with the respect it deserves, and no more. He is prepared to scrap it so soon as a better reveals itself. And while his religious friends are still deciding the exact degree of reverence it deserves, he has oftentimes discovered a better idea.

Mr. Milne declares:—

It is the most natural thing in the world that people who are liberal in all other matters should be conservative in religion. When you ask a sincere man to give up a religious conception in which he has been reared, he instantly fancies that religion itself is endangered. It is thus that the progress of religious thought can never be commensurate with the progress in other departments of life.

For our part, we should rather put it that people conservative in religion are rarely, if ever, liberal in other matters. They reverence old ideas too much to be receptive to new. We can understand the sincerely religious man's fancying religion to be endangered when he is asked to revise his cherished conceptions. His instinct seems a sure one; for when the liberal theologian starts pruning religion, and then offers the attenuated remainder to his followers, we see a decline in church-going. What the more intelligent believer appears to do is to go on pruning until he finds nothing much left, and so he becomes altogether indifferent to religion. It is true that religious thought does not progress at the same rate as other kinds of thought. That is to be expected when we remember that men believe religion to be given to them by God for all time. As a matter of fact, religion can hardly be said to progress. All the liberal theologian does is to exchange a new absurdity for an old absurdity. He doesn't go forward, he takes a circular tour.

Mr. Milne says he finds certain Old Testament stories "peculiarly cruel and unworthy." He doesn't believe God did what the ancient Jewish scribes attributed to God's agency. Some of the Psalmists and prophets, he contends, were not wholly Christian in mind and temper. The Bible is not purely divine, but both human and divine, he thinks. Hence we need to revise our existing conceptions of the Bible and God. "Everything in the Bible must be tested by Christ's spirit and teaching. That is the criterion. It is not difficult to know God's authentic voice when we sit at the feet of Jesus." But Mr. Milne ignores the fact that Jesus himself did not find the Old Testament stories repulsive; he regarded the ancient books as divine—God's revelations to man. Seemingly, our new theologian knows better than the Son of God! Again, there is no conclusive evidence that a divine personage called Jesus ever lived on earth. And, too, the teaching and spirit of Jesus in the alleged history of his life and work have both of late years come in for some pretty acute criticism. Scholars seem not to be agreed as to what is the "authentic voice" of Jesus; they suspect much of what is attributed to him as having been interpolated by later writers. Hence, to discover what in the Old Testament is "God's authentic voice" is not so very easy a task as Mr. Milne would have his readers believe. And grovelling at the feet of Jesus will not make it any easier.

For one thing, if Christians take Jesus as their exemplar, his intolerant attitude towards all men who happened to differ from him (the Pharisees, Levites, and all the rest), is not calculated to make them any the more tolerant than they have been in the past, when they have shown themselves to

be an intolerable nuisance. For another thing, though under the new conception of Mr. Milne the Christian is deprived of his infallible Book, he still believes in his conduct being based on God-inspired passages or teachings in that book. And that notion of the believer it is that hinders true progress; in that it does not teach men to depend on human experience and reason as their guide—the two things upon which all real progress depends, and by which it has been achieved.

We fear the average Christian who likes to experience an orgy of religious excitement is not likely to welcome very warmly this new conception. For in making his wonderfully progressive conception, Mr. Milne appears to have reversed the miracle at Cana. He has turned the religious wine into water. It wouldn't exhilarate a half-dead fly, let alone a live Christian donkey.

D. P. STICKELLS.

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## Acid Drops.

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Are we civilized? We are afraid the answer can only be, In parts. Consider. The other day, in the Roman Catholic Church, in Ely Place, Holborn, about five minutes' walk from this office, a Roman Catholic priest administered the blessing of St. Blaise to people suffering from sore throats. The priest explained to a newspaper man that he had been doing this annually for forty years. Those who had sore throats between times had to get rid of them as best they could, or put up with them until the anniversary of St. Blaise came round again. One could not expect the saint to be constantly at Ely Place. Of course, people have written to him that they were cured after they had got the blessing, and so far as that goes, we have got rid of a sore throat after the blessing was given to someone else. Still, this Roman Catholic priest evidently thinks *he* is civilized. And he may be so far as wearing trousers instead of paint is concerned. But mentally? Well, we have have our doubts.

Once upon a time this healing of special complaints was one of the principal occupations of some of the saints. Those who can consult Pettigrew's *Superstitions Connected with the History of Medicine* will find a very lengthy list set out. St. Blaise was the one for sore throats, St. Polonia attended to toothache, St. Domingo looked after fever, St. Roque cured the plague, the speciality of St. Gervase was rheumatism. Even the body was mapped out and a special part given to a saint. It must have been a hard time for doctors. A man who was ill had merely to consult the Church directory, look up the saint who had charge of his special disease, and the priest attended to the rest—for a consideration. It was a good time for the priests, and as there was always plenty of disease while it was left to the heavenly powers to keep people in health, the priests had a good time. Still, it makes one ask, Are we civilized? Is Ely Place, after, all, so far from Central Africa as it seems?

The next item of news we come across leads us to ask, not are we civilized, but are we honest? The *Daily Sketch* seizes on the case of a woman, who had been indulging in Spiritualism, and who had committed suicide. The jury blamed Spiritualism for it, and they may have been right. But the *Daily Sketch* writes:—

It is certainly time something was done to control the activities of an increasing number of mercenary humbugs who, by acting as mediums, or by writing clotted nonsense in freak publications, earn comfortable incomes at the expense of those who can never detect a fraud if it struts in the habiliments of piety.

What brave words! Here we have the British press at its boldest and its best. Those who strut about in the garments of piety imposing on the ignorant should

be prosecuted. But not if they belong to an established church and have money and power behind them. One could not expect a British paper to mean that. If the person meets in an ordinary room and plays on the ignorance of men and women, they should be prosecuted by all means. But if they meet in an elaborate building, and have a set uniform, that is quite another matter. And yet one would really like the *Daily Sketch* to tell us where lies the difference between the Spiritualist medium living upon the credulity of their dupes, and the Roman Catholic priest, or the Protestant faith-healer living upon the ignorance of others? It is impossible that the leader writer of the *Daily Sketch* should fail to see the absolute identity of the two cases. A man who can see the one must see the other. And if Spiritualists could only establish themselves as the Christians have established themselves, the Coroner would not call their practices rubbish, the *Daily Sketch* would not call for their imprisonment as frauds and humbugs. That is all the difference between ignorance established and disestablished. With such a press, and such a religion, and so much ignorance abroad, one would need the pen of a Swift to do the situation justice.

That pious defender of the Christian Sunday, Mr. Arthur Mee, tells us that without change there is no life. "And to insist on clinging to old ideas because we have grown used to them is as stupid as refusing to alter the date after yesterday has passed away." We agree. But Mr. Mee should be the last to lecture other people on that score. For so long as he clings to his antediluvian Christian Sunday and to that anachronism called the religion of Jesus, he himself is stupidly refusing to alter the date after yesteryear has run its course.

Some people think Christians don't progress. But if we can believe the Rev. Hubert Simpson, of Glasgow, undoubtedly they do. He told a gathering of Free Church ministers recently that they had during the past ten years just come through the most difficult time in the history of the Church. But, he continued, "one thing at least can be said—we have got rid of a great deal of humbug and hypocrisy." That, we think, is indeed good news, a real sign that Christians can improve if only they try hard enough. But we advise our pious friends not to be too elated. There is among them a great deal more humbug and hypocrisy to be got rid of yet, before they can make themselves acceptable to decent folk. One thing we are rather curious to learn is, to what agency does Mr. Simpson attribute this sweet reform? Our own opinion is that Freethought propaganda has done more than anything else to bring about this delectable improvement. But Christian nature being what it is, Freethinkers do not expect to receive any expression of gratitude from their pious friends for achieving this seeming miracle of making the Christ-like more human.

Discussing the possibility of reunion among the Christian sects, the Bishop of Winchester affirms that there is now a new openness of mind, a new readiness in each Church to scrutinize its own position, a growing conviction that the motto of the Crusaders is true of this still greater enterprise—"God wills it!" From what the Bishops says it would seem that God first "willed" the separation among Christians (with its appalling persecution and bloodshed), so that he might have the pleasure of re-uniting them after nineteen centuries of separation. A queer game, that. Having but a finite intelligence, we cannot see who benefits by God's happy scheme. Possibly it is for finding employment for the angels; their work, we presume, being to keep busy bringing about re-union. But there is another "growing conviction" which the Bishop forgot to mention. And this is, the masses are becoming convinced that religion is of no use to them. Perhaps God is "willing" this also, as part of the old scheme or of a new one just beginning. If so, all we can suggest for the Bishop to do is to cling to his fatalistic Crusader's motto and get what consolation he can out of that.

What's the use of shingling? asks Canon H. T. Powell, of Darent. A woman, he says, can be shingled, bingled, or bobbed for half-a-crown; but to shingle a church-steeple costs hundreds of pounds. It appears that the old church steeple at Darent "is crying out to be re-shingled, and nobody will do it for less than £130." Hence, the Canon appeals to all ladies in or out of his parish to send "one bob to help Old Mother Church to a re-shingling which will last her for a hundred years." If we may be allowed to advise these ladies, we suggest they leave Old Mother Church to pay for her own barbering. From what we can see of the various activities in ecclesiastical circles, the old lady appears to be making desperate efforts to be in the fashion. She is giving the Cursing Psalms an Eton crop, bingling the Prayer-book, bobbing the Bible, and putting the whole Christian doctrine in knee-high skirts. But we doubt if all these efforts will make her fashionable. The ancient lady is doomed to be put upon the shelf with the rest of humanity's childish toys.

In discussing a theme, "Is church-going a habit?" a Methodist writer asks: "How much can we depend on habit, and in how far can it be trusted? Can we go to church habitually? We cannot help but say that many of us do." We agree, Christians do go to church mainly from habit. But we cannot help saying that it is a very bad habit to get into. If indulged in too long, it petrifies the sense of justice, sterilizes the reason, and atrophies the sense of humour. But, continues the writer, "church-going may be from habit of motive. When Sunday comes round we may have a returning feeling, we may habitually want to worship." Our action is accompanied by feeling, and "the worth of the action lies in the motive that causes it." Hence, he declares, in educating children it is important to teach them habits of motive, and to inculcate the right feelings so that the outcome will be right actions. Though this good Methodist does not say so in plain language, what he is really suggesting is—Catch 'em young! That is, get the child to believe that going to church is right and not going is wicked. Send the child to church every Sunday to establish that "returning feeling" of a habit that will become a reflex one. Then when he reaches adulthood, he will automatically tuck his Bible and prayer-book under his arm and wander churchward when the bell begins to ring. Thus the church will never lack clients, nor the preacher a salary. As the conjurer says, and that's how it's done!

We hope the pious readers of the *Daily News* read, marked, and learned, and inwardly digested this piece of wisdom from Mr. Robert Lynd:—

The lack of a sense of humour prevents a man not only from seeing a joke that is meant to be nonsense, but from seeing that many an apparently serious statement of fact is nonsense. The most useful function of a sense of humour is not that it enables you to see a joke, but that it enables you to see through humbug. And in these far from enlightened days it is becoming increasingly important that men should be able to see through humbug.

We agree. If the pious would but cultivate a keener sense of humour and take it with them to church, how much less often they would be imposed upon by solemn nonsense and holy humbug from the pulpit!

Religion is a lovely thing wherever it is met with. The *Daily Chronicle* special correspondent publishes a horrible story of the outrages committed by the Turks on Christians in the East. It should be said that the stories are all taken from deported Christians, and the quality of truth-telling is one for which they are not famed. But assuming the stories to be true, we have a glaring example of the way in which passions, dangerous enough in themselves, are made still more so when sharpened by religious hatred. National and racial hatreds are bad enough, but apart from religion they are more likely to expose themselves. It is religion that throws the cloak of God's blessing over the vilest

of barbarities, and blinds men and women to the real nature of their acts. Christian history is full of examples of this, and the new Turkish barbarities—if the stories are reliable—is but one more illustration. One is reminded of the words of Kingdom Clifford:—

When we love our brother for the sake of our brother, we help men to grow in the right; but when we love our brother for the sake of somebody else, who is very likely to damn our brother, it very soon comes to burning him alive for his soul's health. When men respect human life for the sake of Man, tranquillity, order, and progress go hand in hand; but those who only respected human life because God had forbidden murder, have set their mark upon Europe in fifteen centuries of blood and fire.

Mohammedanism or Christianity, in identical circumstances, there is little to choose between them.

The B.B.C. continues to distinguish themselves for fatuous imbecility where religion intrudes. Captain Berkeley, whose banal "White Chateau" play was broadcast on Armistice Night, had another, and worse (if possible), produced last week. "The Quest of Elizabeth" seems to have sickened even the B.B.C.'s pious censor. They broadcast the play up to and including the death of Elizabeth, and accepted the "Suffer little children to come unto me" rubbish. Apparently the subsequent justification of little children "suffering" was found to be too much (or too long-winded). Captain Berkeley protests. His words would grace the pages of the *Literal Christian*, referred to in another column. He writes to the *Evening News*: "What seems a terrible calamity—an accident to a little orphan child—is no calamity at all; the child's death, with the promise of her reunion with her loved ones, is a very beautiful thing for her." (The italics are ours.) Unfortunately it is always somebody else whose sufferings are so beautiful.

It is very difficult to find out what is the real state of affairs in China. The Europeans there naturally hang together to prevent the possibility of hanging separately. The newspapers only tell us what they think it good for us to know. The missionaries will support anything that supports them, and damn everything that is against them. So we are pretty much in the dark. But there is no denying that the Nationalist movement in China is very strongly anti-Christian. That is admitted on all hands. In a special article on "Foreign Affairs," by Mr. A. M. Chirgwin, it is pointed out that in leaflets widely distributed in Hunan these statements are made:

We oppose any belief in religion:

Because we look for intellectual progress, but religion is conservative and traditional.

Because religion emphasizes divisions and class distinctions.

Because we advocate science, not religious superstition.

We oppose Christianity in particular:

Because the doctrine of Redemption encourages further wrong-doing.

Because Christianity is the forerunner of imperialistic exploitation, which is proved by its demand for indemnity and extra-territorial rights.

Because Christianity suppresses patriotism, reproaches China as a nation, and destroys the independence of the Chinese people.

We oppose the Christian Church:

Because they make use of prominent men, maintain alliances with officials, and flatter the rich.

Because they attract members with material temptation and vain-glory.

Because Christian leaders prepare the way for imperialistic dominance: sometimes they even smuggle ammunition to sell to bandits.

Because the only results of preaching in China for 400 years are the displacement of idols with God and the cultivation of the worship of foreigners.

We oppose mission schools even more vigorously:

Because the students are not allowed freedom in thought.

Because students are taught that if they do not believe in God the devil will get hold of them.

Because students, whether Christians or not, have to go to Church and attend Bible classes.

Because if students do not go to church they are not allowed leave of absence, and not even allowed to eat.

Because the teaching methods, the courses, and the general administration are hopelessly old-fashioned.

It is quite evident that the Chinese do not want Christianity, and many know that they never have wanted it. It has been forced upon them, and when Chinese know Christians at home in England and elsewhere they seem more than ever convinced that the less they have to do with them the better.

There are plenty of Christians left in the world, and in Brockton (Mass., U.S.A.), the editor of a Communist paper is to be tried for Atheism, having voiced his disbelief in God in the course of a speech. The prosecution is under an old law which dealt with the persecution of witches. We do not blame Christians. If God is to continue to exist people must be stopped talking about not believing in him. In "Peter Pan" Barrie says that every time a child says he does not believe in fairies a fairy dies. And that is exactly the case with the gods. They will live for ever so long as people continue to believe in them. But they will not live for five minutes after men and women give up believing in them.

A Nonconformist parson, the Rev. Frank Rowley, has had a brain wave. As clients are getting scarce, he proposes that, to get the "outsiders" into the chapels, homes in their vicinity shall be systematically canvassed and a benevolent fund started for furnishing clothing, etc., to the needy. This looks as if the chapels must be in a bad way when they depend upon "rice Christians" to fill them.

A disciple of the poor Nazarene, the Rev. William Silvester Davies, of Enfield, has left behind him £36,713. As Cowper puts it, "He found it inconvenient to be poor." If the Bible really means what it says, we fear the deceased gentleman is now finding it inconvenient to have been rich.

The Rev. R. Moffat Gantrey laments, "It is for lack of the spirit of Puritanism that England is so sick in soul." No. It is not England that is sick, but the Puritan. One happy outcome of the decline of Puritanism would appear to be indicated by Mr. Lyon Doyle, who says, "The old, sickly puritan standard of modesty has gone." But nobody will shed tears over that, save a few of our whey-faced fanatics who can't pass a draper's window without shuddering.

The logic of our preachers is a never-ending source of wonder to the plain man. For instance, a Methodist parson declares that there is a type of mind which is rather too ready to see the hand of God in the strange vicissitudes of life. Occasionally, he says, he feels disposed to defend God against the absurd things attributed to Him by people who profess to enjoy God's confidences.

How frequently, for instance, is He dragged into tragedy and made the author of every conceivable catastrophe that comes along! It is not fair. It is not right. It is better that we admit that His ways are past finding out—a confession of which we need not be ashamed, inasmuch as it is the only honest statement of the position.

After thus waxing indignant at people who attribute to God's agency what is obviously not done by man, our preacher later in his discourse declares, "But I do know that the government of the world is on His shoulders, and not upon ours." From which we infer that God governs the world, but "every conceivable catastrophe that comes along" just happens, and so we must not blame him for that, even though there appears to be no one else responsible. Well, well, Christian reasoning is a weird and wonderful thing. Only a village idiot would attempt to make sense from it.



### To Correspondents.

- B. A. MILLICHAMP.—Great ideas have a way of finding a mouthpiece when the occasion arises. Perhaps that is because ideas that spring from life express truths that are forced to the front by the pressure of events. Certainly we find pleasure in our work, and if it helps others on the way we are well content.
- A. G. MILLAR.—Very sorry to hear of the death of our old friend, George Wetherell. There was no man for whose character we had greater respect. In sturdy independence he belonged to a type that, we fancy, is not quite so common as it was. Don't take the other matter too seriously. Better treat it as a humorous interlude in a world where humour is not too intrusive. We were not at all hurt, and shall not reopen the subject unless we are forced to do so. There are plenty of other things to keep us busy.
- "FREETHINKER" ENDOWMENT TRUST.—S. R. A. Ready, 38.
- J. GENTLE.—We do not see any connection between the paragraph to which you refer us and Couéism. Auto-suggestion is a fact, and plays its part in recovery from most complaints. Thanks for compliments, which we hope we deserve.
- V. J. HANDS.—We may reprint the notes on Materialism—with additions and elaborations—when we can find time to do the necessary work.
- A. S. G. PANTON.—The whole of your criticism of the articles on Materialism is printed as sent. What we have left out is the introductory paragraph, referring back to some previous letter of yours, which has no connection with what follows.
- J. BERNSTEIN.—What is meant by the Materialist conception of history is the theory that in the evolution of society the economic factor is the determining one. Religion, morals, etc., being an expression of the economic conditions. A discussion of that does not come within the limits of an outline of scientific Materialism.
- C. BENTLEY.—It is a piece of sheer ignorance to assume that evolution is dependent upon Darwinism. Natural Selection is only one of the suggested ways in which species have been developed. Mendelism is concerned with the question of inheritance. It is in complete accord with the idea of evolution.
- A. B. MOSS.—Pleased to have your appreciation of our effort. We have both lived long enough in the movement to see some great changes take place, and it is comforting to feel that we have done what we could towards bringing them about.
- A. FOX.—Thanks. Naturally the Churches of Manchester are upset. It has broken in on their customary policy of suppression and misrepresentation, and some few must have their eyes opened as a consequence.
- J. BREESE.—Next week.
- J. W. WOOD writes pointing out that in the last lines of the second column of "Views" last week the words "latter" and "former" should be transposed. We are obliged for the correction.

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### Sugar Plums.

To-day (February 14) Mr. Cohen will lecture, afternoon and evening, in the Gaiety Theatre, Plymouth. Good meetings are anticipated, and there will be some vocal and instrumental music before each lecture. Local friends are, we understand, working hard for the success of the meetings, and we trust their efforts will be rewarded. Next Sunday Mr. Cohen lectures in Manchester.

The meeting in Bolton on Sunday evening last was quite a good one, the Spinners' Hall—quite a pretty hall, by the way, being comfortably filled, although not crowded. Here also Mr. Sisson, the Secretary, and his friends had worked hard, and are carrying on a constant outdoor propaganda, and it is evidently having its influence in the town. Persistency and ability are the requisites to a good Freethought propagandist, and we fancy Mr. Sisson has both qualities.

Mr. Cohen's article in the *Manchester Evening News* seems to have seriously disturbed the local churches and chapels. The matter appears to have been too serious for the usual ostrich policy to be adopted, and at a meeting of the Executive of the Manchester and Salford Council of Christian Congregations it was decided that "a reply of some kind" should be made by representative Christians. So, in the *News* for February 6 the Dean of Manchester, Archdeacon Aspinall, Dr. Grieve (Principal of Lancashire Independent College), Rev. H. H. Johnson (Cross Street Chapel), and the Rev. K. L. Parry (Chorlton Road Congregational Church), met and concocted an article. It is headed "The Churches' Answer to Mr. Chapman Cohen." All we can say on that is the heading should be revised. By no reasonable stretch of the imagination can it be called an answer; it is no more than a shaky reply. Granting the complete honesty of each of the signatories, they do not appear to have even understood the points raised. If this is the best that five of the leading Manchester Churchmen can do, it is little better than a case of judgment by default.

It is true the writers of the article say that many of the arguments "would require a whole article to refute," and we sympathise with the plea that an attempted refutation of a statement often requires more space than the statement itself. But there are remedies for that. If the editor of the *Manchester Evening News* does not care to continue the articles in his column, there are plenty of religious newspapers in the country, and, failing these, there are the columns of the *Freethinker*, where these representative Christians would have the opportunity of addressing their arguments to those who, from their point of view, need them most. These distinguished Churchmen need not lack opportunities of placing their case before the public, if they really desire to do so. We shall see whether they have given a reason for not answering, or an excuse to hide their inability to do so.

The *Manchester Evening News* deserves noticing for having been the only paper in Britain which has had the courage to break through the cowardly conspiracy of bluff and sham which presents readers with a symposium on religion while carefully keeping out all that would make against religious belief. It remains to be seen whether other papers will act with greater honesty in future, or whether, under pressure from other representatives they continue a policy that is a gross trading upon the ignorance of large numbers of their readers.

In response to very many enquiries and suggestions, we have revised our original intention, and decided to reprint Mr. Cohen's article on "Have We Lost Faith?" in the *Manchester Evening News*, together with the

reply of the representative five, and Mr. Cohen's rejoinder. This will appear in our next issue, and it offers a good opportunity for Freethinkers doing a little extra propaganda work by taking one or two extra copies and distributing them among their friends. We are printing an extra supply for that purpose.

The following is from the *Evening Standard* of February 3:—

Mr. Chapman Cohen, a prominent Freethinker, in an article on "the other side" of the question, "Have We Lost Faith?" writes in the *Manchester Evening News*:

"Highly placed Christian leaders openly reject doctrines the mere questioning of which a while ago would have cost them their positions, if nothing more serious. Leading men of letters, prominent scientists, publicly proclaim their disbelief in a God and a future life, or are content to let such questions go with a hesitant 'It may be so,' and with the intimation that it does not matter much anyway.

"Nine-tenths of the pleas on behalf of religion are dissertations on the value of morality or of social effort about which there is no dispute at all.

"For a time that policy succeeds in fooling some. But, as Abraham Lincoln said, while you can fool some people all the time, and all the people some of the time, you cannot hope to fool the people all the time.

"Common sense is catching, even if it does not act in the riotously epidemical manner of established folly."

It is interesting because although the heading of the article plainly states that Mr. Cohen is the Editor of the *Freethinker*, that horrible fact is disguised under "prominent Freethinker." We wonder he was not described as an advanced religionist. Anything rather than mention the name of the *Freethinker*.

## The Story of Evolution.

### II.

(Continued from page 92.)

SOME of the tribes of men are in some respects lower in intelligence than the orang-utan and chimpanzee, which have developed in a different direction and are now stationary in advancement. Mankind, on the other hand, has made excessive progress in some localities, but in some others may have even deteriorated. In any place progress would not be continuous, even among the most brainy. There have occurred waves when communities have advanced rapidly by the influence of individuals and there were other times when reactions set in. The use of language has greatly helped to change the habits and conditions of tribes, and the last stage of progress came when speech became general. The first cry of an animal is one which calls for help and is addressed to the pack. All animals have such, and man is no exception. Another cry is a love-call, and a very important one was in the nature of a challenge.

To fully understand what the earliest men were like, we can go to tribes who are very low in their life-conditions, and some selections from travellers' accounts of existing primitive peoples will be given as examples of the life of very early man.

#### THE STUDY OF THE EMBRYO.

As already stated, the embryo is an undeveloped living individual; that is, it is the first rudiments of an animal from the moment of inception to the time when it leaves the egg or the womb, as the case may be. It also is the undeveloped seed of a plant, but it is the former which claims our present attention. The facts which we shall give may be checked by any text-book of animal physiology, and a good book on evolution will verify the conclusions to which the reader is directed.

Thousands of embryos have been taken from worms, fishes, birds, frogs, rabbits, and other mammals, examined under the microscope, compared with one another, sketched, and published for any student to scan. Their development has been followed throughout, and, as an instance of the exactitude of the enquiry, let us see what has been done with the eggs of the domestic hen. A newly-laid egg was dissected and found to be composed of a chalky shell, containing a quantity of albumin (the white), inside that a body of plasm (the yelk), within that a sac (the tread), covering an extremely small nucleus, in which was a nucleolus, the germinal spot. After a day's sitting under the hen, an egg was dissected and it was found that the nucleus had grown into an open ball or globe made up of numerous nuclei, and inside were seen a complicated mass of vesicles. By taking an egg each day from this stage it was found that these tiny vesicles developed into lungs, liver, heart, arteries, gut, etc., while the outside became the skeleton, backbone, head, and limbs. The yelk was absorbed by providing nutriment for the growing form.

A similar method was adopted with the ovum (egg-like) of the rabbit, and the same development was seen to occur. But the scientists were not satisfied, so they dissected the ova of every living thing which was available, and, from the lowest form of vertebrate—the lancelet, a worm-fish of one or two inches in length, which lives buried in the sands of the sea, and is a simple, lance-shaped leaf-like form—up to the ape, all demonstrated the same lesson; namely that there is, firstly, a division of a simple single nucleus into two, then into four, then into eight, and so on, each little part taking its place to build up the organism, and continuing to divide and form more and more copies of itself up to a time when the animal was fully developed. It was further found that the lower, or less complicated the form was, the sooner it came to maturity, and *vice versa*.

The sponge and coral have been examined with the greatest precision. Their fossils, as already stated, are the oldest records we have of an early life, and a knowledge of fossils confirms the idea of the embryologist, that a slow evolution produced mankind from a worm-like organism, and it is undoubted that the lancelet reveals the secret of the origin of the vertebrates from the vermes. In the sponge embryo, the nuclei gather together to form a mass or ball, then one side of the ball collapses or falls inwards, and lies close to the inner side of the other. This produces a cup-sphere, the open part draws together, but does not quite close, so that sea water can flow in and out of the opening. The inner layer of cells acts as a stomach (hence the name *gastrula*), by absorbing nutriment. The outer cells harden into a horny skin or coat, and in later animals, as well as in the coral, lime is deposited as in the tunicata (coated fish) like the mussel. In still others it becomes the backbone, and between the layers of cells is developed the internal organs of the more advanced families.

When a scientist speaks of sponges and corals he does not mean the rubber-like bunches called bath-sponge, or the rock called coral, but the small organisms which produce these things. And when fossils are mentioned, it must not be thought that any part of the original being is present. A fossil is a cast in lime or flint of some existence in the far past which, having died and disappeared, has been replaced by the percolation of water charged with carbonic acid gas and holding in solution silica (flint) or carbonate of lime (chalk). Some shells of past times are, however, found in certain rocks. Sometimes the water in the chalk dissolves the little

sponge skeletons made of silica, putting down carbonate of lime in their place as it does so. The silica will be deposited elsewhere, and new carbonate of lime taken up to make room for it. As a rule a substance will be deposited where some already exists, and thus the silica is gradually deposited in knots where the greatest number of sponge spicules occur. This action causes changes which many fossils undergo.

It has been proved by microscopical analysis that the vermes gastrulation agrees with the others. Passing a little higher fishes go through the same process, but continue the development to form a more complex organism. Then the reptiles take up the tale, and lastly we arrive at the anthropoid apes, whose economy is the final stage of development. We say the final stage, because there is absolutely no further change in the frame, the bones, the internal organs, or the functions of the body. There is some improvement in the brain of some humans, and that is all we can find.

Besides the geologist, there has been called in the aid of the chemist to decide this question of evolution of the races of mankind. He tells us that the cell is made up of two different active constituents of the soft living substance called protoplasm, belonging to a group of albumenoid matter, that of the cell body is plastin, and the essential element of the nucleus is named nuclein. In the most rudimentary cases both substances seem to be quite simple and homogenous, without any visible structure. But, as a rule, when we examine them under a high power microscope, we find a certain structure in the protoplasm. The chief and most common form of this is a fibrous, or net-like "thready structure" and the frothy "honey-comb" structure.

The human ovum is not different from the lowest forms of life in its first stages. It goes through the same processes of development, and although some of the stages are restricted, it continues to follow the same path until the child leaves its mother and has a separate existence. Before impregnation the ovum is only one-twentieth of an inch in diameter, it will therefore be appreciated how delicate must be the research into its nature. It consists of a transparent envelope, surrounding a granular yolk, and in the interior of this, to one side, is a clear nucleus, named the germinal vesicle, with a distinct nucleolus, or germinal spot.

The ovum is impregnated with a spermatozoa (the male tadpole-like germ), which is about one-five hundredth of an inch in length, and the nucleus immediately begins to grow and break into segmentation, forming first a ball, then a gastrula (as described in the sponge), then a complex system of rudimentary organs; passing through the fish stage, the reptile stage, the lower mammal stage, and finally the monkey stage, and there it stops until after birth.

In all multi-cellular organisms, including man, in which a certain number of similar cells are bound together in virtue of certain laws of heredity, the shape of the cell is determined partly by their connection and partly by their special function. Thus, for instance, in the human tongue, the mucous lining is made up of very thin and delicate flat cells of roundish shape. In the outer skin we find similar, but harder, covering cells, joined together by saw-like edges. In the liver and other internal organs they are thicker and softer, and are linked together in rows, and some possess two nuclei. While in the bones and teeth they are star-shaped, and are connected by numbers of net-like interlacing processes.

The cells of the brain are in complete contrast to those in other parts of the body. It has a most

elaborate and delicate structure. Numbers of extremely fine threads, like the electric wires of an electric station, cross and recross in the protoplasm of the nerve cell, and branch out from it in communication with other nerve cells, or nerve fibres.

E. ANDERSON.

(To be Continued.)

### "The Literal Christian."

I HAVE been all my life ignorant of the existence of that charmingly sincere and frank weekly, *The Literal Christian*. Its circulation cannot be large in this country, and I am not disposed to exaggerate its influence in ordinary Christian circles. Obviously it ought to represent a very large section of the millions who still profess a belief in Christ and His Holy Word. I fancy the circulation of *The Literal Christian* may be greater in certain primitive communities in the United States. Its contents are singularly interesting, and readers of the *Freethinker* will thank me for rescuing the following extracts from the obscurity of the pages where they appear.

Evidently, "Wayback, Wash.," where this journal is published, has a larger number of "Literal Christians" than any other city in the world. I anticipate that the publication of this friendly notice will lead to a great exodus of many Christians, who, in this country, are often disgusted with the contrast between Christian Commandments and Christian behaviour.

#### SPLENDID NEWS: MORE DEATHS.

Wayback, Wash., is happy indeed in possessing so excellently insanitary a river, so perfectly charming a swamp, and such gloriously unhealthy white-lead mines. Compared with Widnes, Eng., Smellino, Russ., and other black-list towns, Wayback still holds its own in normal times, but we are proud to report that last year nearly half the population went straight to the arms of Jesus. Heaven's gates opened wider last December than ever before in all eternity. Some stragglers who looked like surviving were helped to glory by a few hefty sledge-hammers, but in the main the deaths were admirably natural. Oliver Knox, who is regrettably well at present, desires the prayers of believers everywhere that he may catch diphtheria—one of our favourite diseases.

Ping-Pong Bill wishes to return thanks to God for his present illness: he is glad to say he cannot last another week. Ruddy Roger, who met the Chicago express train in the tunnel, asks your prayers lest he recover—fortunately there is not much risk of that. Roger says he had no intention of hurting the engine—that was an accident.

We are glad to find that some of the healthier cities of the West are now establishing disease centres where the more fatal disease-germs can go right ahead. Pacific City—the Coney Island of the West—is running some excellent amusements, such as Precipice Leap, Looping the Submarine, Sky-scraper Diving, and other usually fatal pastimes.

The National Death Society is petitioning Congress to organize shooting parties so as to give the entire population a fair chance to depart this vale of tears and taxes. For Ever With The Lord.

#### FINANCE.

We still hold quite a number of bags of gold, and a quantity of unsaleable property left with us by various rich converts. Last week Mr. Peabody Rockyoil, after immersion, denuded himself of all his possessions, sold literally all that he had, and would willingly have given it all to the poor. Poor Americans are scarce and poor Christian Americans are almost non-existent. We give to everyone that asketh, from 10 till 4 daily.

## RESIST NOT EVIL.

The fighting in our streets continues almost incessantly. Strangers, many of them prize-fighters, and students from distant Christless colleges, come to use our citizens as boxing dummies; an excellent opportunity is thus afforded for the exercise of one of our Saviour's treasured commands. I am pleased to say I have received more than my share of these sacred and sanctified strokes. Only last night I nearly had my face fractured with a terrific blow on my right cheek. Turning my left to the smiter I was delighted at having all my teeth knocked out and my jaw dislocated. These blessed experiences rouse all one's enthusiasm—indeed, I feel more than satisfied. (P.S.—I am writing from the hospital, with a screen round the bed).

## AN EYE FOR AN EYE.

We are sorry to plead guilty to disobedience to one of our Bible commands. Hitherto we have blacked a man's eye if he blacked his wife's eye, although in the case of Henry W. Higgins we are a little in arrears. Henry has blacked both eyes of at least a dozen women, and we have only blacked Henry's seventeen times up to now. Our black-eye executioner is working overtime, but we have to wait for all black eyes to heal before administering the next. And now comes the blow to our faithful record. Peter Puncher, in a drunken frenzy went round with a gun last week and blinded three citizens. Peter has only two eyes, and we are somewhat puzzled at the problem which confronts us.

Perhaps on another occasion I may receive further copies of the *Literal Christian*. If so, I will share my prize with my readers.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

## Correspondence.

## MATERIALISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I have followed your article on "Materialism" with considerable interest, at the same time appreciating the difficulty of the task; but it does not expose any "difficulty" in which, it is suggested, I am involved.

Whether we know or not who believes it, it is a fact that in general the same law operates through the whole gamut of sciences, from astronomy to society. This law pervading evolution may be stated thus: That which is dominant at a certain stage, generates its own negation. Dependent upon the pace of evolution this negative comes into irreconcilable conflict with the dominant or positive, which generated it, which results in a period of revolution, cosmic, geological, meteorological, psychic, economic, or political, according to the particular stage. The new negative always triumphs and eventually dominates the old positive, transforming it to conform with the rest. Thus the negative becomes the positive or dominant element of a new cycle. The function of humanity is to consciously control that which promotes the negation of its present organization, leading to an evolution into a higher one. I think this is sufficient endorsement of the "scientists who hold that whatever exists in the universe, obeys the laws that are known to operate in the world of matter." It is quite possible that Mr. Joad knew more than Mr. Cohen is prepared to grant him.

*Dead Matter*.—Without making further comment, I challenge Mr. Cohen to show that "the energy that meets us in the form of 'life' is not identical with the energy that meets us in the physical world." The "ignorant man" would not pass "judgments which only the most careful study would warrant."

Although it is true, unfortunately, that many scientists attempt to protect their "integrity" from the "stigma" of Materialism, theological prejudice is not generally the cause, albeit a convenient cloak to cover the true cause. A study of Materialism and Ethics

through history reveals the economic and political interests which reflect themselves in philosophy and religion (superstition). Whether beliefs tend to Materialism or Religion depends upon which way the "wind blows." There are many instances of this in history. If this was not the case, the *Freethinker* would not be boycotted or blasphemy laws enacted against it. But it must not be forgotten that religion has been of immense benefit to mankind, though it is to-day a useless and unnecessary appendage; it is static and stagnant, so in so far as the civilized nations are concerned.

Mr. Cohen says: "People assumed as many still assume that, apart from the world as represented in consciousness, we have a knowledge of some other world which is dignified by the term reality." All of which may or may not be a fact; at least, I, as a realist, do not believe it; to me, it is nonsense. No realist, that is, scientific realist, as far as I know, ever believed it, or ever will. To them the external world is as knowable as the internal, both being reality. I must mention that my position is not altered one iota. Incidentally, Mr. Cohen's position is in the same category with this difference: He says we cannot *know* it, which is as much a "metaphysical nightmare" as the position of these so termed "realists."

I disagree absolutely with Mr. Cohen's statement of the meaning of Matter: "Matter is an hypothesis," and refer him to my request concerning this at the commencement. How he is able to separate "natural forces" from matter, I am unable to conceive.

*World of Reality*.—Whoever the critics are, I certainly am not one. After being told we are conscious of externality, and that it can be moved and persists, we are informed that, "the world outside of us cannot be the same world that is within," which is the position of the "realists" previously dubbed as a "metaphysical nightmare."

If this statement was correct, then we would have the peculiar condition of unlike knowing like. But how Mr. Cohen knows this would be interesting reading. So that readers may understand what I mean by this, I would request a little extra space to give an example, and make it as clear as I possibly can. A gramophone record is as good an example as could be given; it not only illustrates my point, but it is also, to a certain extent, an analogy of mind.

If a blank record is placed upon the revolving table and set in motion, and an individual sings or speaks into the receiver, whatever is sung or spoken will be heard if the receiver is placed at the commencement of the record again. This illustrates the fact that an individual can register vibrations in the record, and the experiment reveals the fact that the vibrations are identical, by going a little further. If that record is played a sufficient number of times, a person purposely listening will have those vibrations repeated in the brain through sense organs. The machine can be stopped, and the listener will repeat the identical song or speech, which was mechanically stored in the record. Then we say the person *knows* the song. The experiment may be stated thus: The object (the singer) registers in the subject (the record) certain vibrations, and *vice versa*, the object (the record) registers the identical vibrations in the subject (the singer). This proves that the objective and subjective are fundamentally one. The foregoing is an example of the Law of Repetition, objective and subjective, external and internal. Now if the "externals" in the examples given, were not identical with the "withins," how could the individual concerned, or the record, repeat that which was registered. If the vibrations set up by the singer were of a different frequency to those registered in the record, we would not have a repetition of the singing, but something else. The same applies to the record, that is to say, if the frequency of the vibrations set up by the record were not identical with those registered in the brain, how could the individual repeat them! Yet it is a fact that the identical song is heard. The same applies to a knowledge of externality or matter; that which we know is the only reality. In the light of these facts, if Mr. Cohen's position is carefully analysed, it will be found

that he is not only refuted by a conscious being, but by a *material object* which repeats the identical song or speech. *It cannot assume anything, it has no "peculiarity of the senses,"* it just repeats the external reality. The Realist's position then, can be illustrated by other than a thinking being. So the argument of the "practicality of our senses" will not hold water.

The reference to "bright surface" and "colour" may delude many; we might as well say that being "blind," there are no vibrations to which we give the term "light." It must be born in mind that, if there was no "light," eyes would not exist. Merely to say, "If all men were blind" is not sufficient; we must first know *why they are blind*.

I notice that ether is termed an hypothesis. If Mr. Cohen means the elements put forward by scientists as composing "ether," then I agree. But the *fact* remains, there is something that vibrates; that is what really matters, call it what you will. Matter, however, can be weighed and handled, while "ether" has not been "discovered," not to mention handled or weighed, though I will not stress this too strongly.

Mr. Cohen's position appears to me as follows: He accepts the persistence of the external world, and yet assumes it only. He goes further than this, and says, we are ignorant of this external world, it being different from the world within, therefore can know nothing about it. This is either the position of the "metaphysical nightmare" or historical Idealism, which is only half the truth. I feel, however, that I am doing both an injustice, because Mr. Cohen's article is a jumble of all sorts, truths, half truths, and nonsense.

If Mr. Cohen is correct, then we cannot *know* ourselves, we can only *assume* ourselves. *We* are not the *real self, ourselves* are a mystery to *us*. *Self* cannot be *known*. What a nightmare! I may wake up one morning and find *me* not *myself*.

As previously suggested, the dispute between Idealists and Realists is that the former says, "All we can know are ideas," while the latter denies this, saying, "The energies of ideas are identical with the energies of nature, and therefore we know both. If we can know only ideas, then we cannot know them, and therefore nature, whether "assumed" or not, is outside the realm of thinking altogether, it is a contradiction. That is why I said in the first instance, that Huxley's file is broken and, I will add, rusty.

A. S. E. PANTON.

[Mr. Panton appears to be under the impression that my notes on Materialism were written as part of a personal controversy with himself. This is not the case. We must therefore leave readers to judge of the relevancy of his criticisms. But if he had taken the trouble to understand what we said about the nature of "Reality" and an assumed world outside consciousness, much of what he has said would never have been written. I would also suggest his consulting a good text-book in order to discover the precise function of the "ether." We are also wondering what on earth "light" is apart from eyes. Mr. Panton's sources of information appear to be as wonderful as those of a hard-shell theosophist. Once more may we remark that if Materialism can be saved from its friends, it has nothing to dread from its enemies.—Ed.]

PENAL REFORM.

SIR,—In answer to Mr. Phipson's note on my recent article and letter: I am in favour of abolishing corporal punishment. I make no exceptions.

A very large number of schools and parents never resort to corporal punishment, and they succeed in producing good citizens. Where less enlightened conditions survive you generally find a superficial "good behaviour" purchased at the price of good character.

Much parental infliction of these punishments is mere thoughtlessness and lack of self-control. Sometimes the pain is trifling, occasionally it is quite cruel, but always it is a proof that the parent's temper rather than the child's welfare has won.

We ought to get away completely from the theological idea of punishment. Not only one kind, but any kind, of punishment is a mistake. Parents, teachers, and officials are slowly finding out this truth.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

The Question.

WHAT do I know of you?  
A phantom, passing all my senses through!  
A movement, colours, and a voice!  
A being, body of my choice!

What do I know of sight?  
A presence, giving all my self delight!  
An urging, self made, out of sense,  
To whither, and deriving whence?

What do I know of you?  
A phantom, passing all my senses through!  
A moment, happy and a change,  
When you are out of sense's range!

Why should I ask of you  
A trifle more than your movements show?  
That having, always, I can make,  
Vision as vivid, still senses' ache.

What do I know of you?  
A phantom, passing all my senses through!  
A movement, colours, and a voice!  
A being, body of my choice!

G. E. FUSSELL.

Obituary.

Tyneside Freethinkers will learn with genuine regret of the death of Mr. George Wetherell, for many years of Gateshead-on-Tyne. A self-educated man, his well-stocked and extensive library was not alone well used by himself, but was also at the command of any who had an appetite for the acquisition of knowledge. He was a very sincere, a very earnest, and a very good Freethinker. No man hated shams, either in words or in action, more than he did, and our recollection of him is among the brightest of the memories we have. We know of no one for whom we have greater respect. Some years ago he left for Canada, and his letters from there showed that he retained all his old interest in intellectual matters, and still continued to act as a centre for men whose minds were above the level of the ordinary. We are not surprised to learn that all who knew him there had the same admiration for him that was felt by his many friends here. His sturdy independence of character belonged to a type which was, we fancy, a little commoner than it is to-day. He had, as he desired, a Secular service over his grave, and paid an eloquent and deserved tribute to one of the most modest and the most intellectually fearless of men. We can well believe that in far-off Canada he had no enemies, and even those who disagreed with him retained a high respect for his character and intelligence. —C. C.

It is with sincere regret that we have to announce the death of Mr. Robert Bulman, on January 30, at the age of eighty-eight. Mr. Bulman was a lifelong follower of Freethought, and a constant attendant at lectures until failing health made journeys very far afield inadvisable. Of a modest and retiring disposition, he did not take an active part in Freethought work, although his affection for Freethought never wavered. All who knew him held him in high respect as a man of sterling character and generous disposition. Mr. Bulman's interest in Freethought is evidenced by his directing that on the death of his widow the whole of his estate is to be divided between the National Secular Society and Bartholomew's Hospital, for research into the nature and cure of cancer and consumption. Mr. Cohen is appointed one of the trustees and executors of the estate.

To deny the eternity of everything that exists and can exist in order to degrade and misrepresent it as having been made from nothing by an outside agency—that is true blasphemy.—Schopenhauer.

## North London Branch N.S.S.

A fine muster of "the elect" gathered last night to hear Mr. Palmer and Mr. Ratcliffe debate the fate of Progress under Socialism. Both debaters were in fine form and much enthusiasm was roused in the audience, who showed how keenly they were interested by the numerous questions and speeches in the discussion which followed. Mr. Royle made a most excellent chairman. We hope for a good audience for Mr. R. B. Kerr, the editor of the *New Generation*, who opens the debate this evening.—K. B. K.

## 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.

ETHICS BASED ON THE LAWS OF NATURE (Emerson Club, 14 Great George Street, Westminster): 3.30, Lecture in English by the Hon. Mrs. Grant Duff on "Lord Avebury." All invited.

NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (101 Tottenham Court Road): 7.30, Mr. E. C. Saphin, Lantern Lecture—"The Solar Origin of Christianity."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W.): 7.30, Open Debate—"Does the Secularist Movement Shirk Big Issues and Concentrate on Trifles?" Opener, Mr. R. B. Kerr.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7, Mr. Tom Gillinder, "Labour and the League of Nations."

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

### COUNTRY. INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Brassworkers' Hall, 70 Lionel Street): 7, Mr. F. E. Willis, "Churches and Workers." Questions and discussion invited. (Collection.)

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S. (No. 2 Room, City Hall, "C" Door, Albion Street): 6.30, Mr. William MacEwan, "Which was Dead and is Alive." Questions and discussion invited. (Silver Collection.)

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Operetta—"The Wishing Cup." Performed by children of the Secular Sunday-school. (Silver Collection.)

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Gaiety Theatre): Mr. Chapman Cohen, Afternoon, "Things Christians Ought to Know"; Evening, "When I am Dead."

## YOU WANT ONE.



N.S.S. BADGE.—A single Pansy flower, size as shown; artistic and neat design in enamel and silver. This emblem has been the silent means of introducing many kindred spirits. Brooch or Stud Fastening. Price 9d., post free.—From THE GENERAL SECRETARY, N.S.S., 62 Farringdon St., E.C.4.

MIMNERMUS SAYS "advertisers would not support a paper with such very advanced views." Exceptions to this nearly unbroken rule are—exceptional; exceptional firms and exceptional folk, with exceptional methods and exceptional motives for truly pleasing you as a true Freethinker. Write at once for any of the following:—*Gents' A to D Book*, suits from 55s. to 65s.; *Gents' E Book*, suits all at 67s. 6d.; *Gents' F to I Book*, suits from 75s. to 98s.; *Gents' J to N Book*, suits from 104s. 6d. to 124s. 6d.; or *Ladies' Fashion and Pattern Book*, costumes from 60s., coats from 48s.—MACCONNELL & MABE, New Street, Bakewell, Derbyshire.

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

## SALE AND EXCHANGE.

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

### FOR SALE.

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

ELEVEN years *Freethinker*, bound in cloth, 1912-22 inclusive, and 3 years, 23-25, unbound. What offers?—M., c/o *Freethinker* Office, 61 Farringdon Street, E.C.4.

TWO "Durham Duplex" safety razors; new; 2s. 6d. each.—M., c/o *Freethinker* Office, 61 Farringdon Street, E.C.4.

BLACK marble calendar clock, by Baume and Larard, Paris; perfect timekeeper; cheap at £15.—M., c/o *Freethinker* Office, 61 Farringdon Street, E.C.4.

BOG oak carved open bookcase; 3 tiers; £3 10s.—M., c/o *Freethinker* Office, 61 Farringdon Street, E.C.4.

PEN-PAINTED table centres, piano and sideboard covers, etc.; prices—very reasonable—on application; very suitable for presents.—MRS. AINSLEY, 37 Westgarth Terrace, Darlington.

ÆSOP'S *Fables*, with prints, 1722; *Other Men's Minds*, 7,000 choice extracts; Crabbe's *Works*, 1847, and others.—Box 65.

BROWN Tweed Suit; 34 in. chest, 5 ft. 7 in. height; worn once; £5 15s. 6d. new (1925); accept £2 15s., carriage paid; £1 to Endowment Trust on sale.—Box 98.

### 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.

*The Glory of the Pharaohs* (Weigall).—Box 81.

WORKING-CLASS Mother wants book on Motherhood; cheap or on loan; every care taken if on loan.—Box 99.

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.

## Four Great Freethinkers.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

President: CHAPMAN COHEN.

General Secretary: Miss E. M. VANCE.

Headquarters: 62 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."

Name .....

Address .....

Occupation .....

Active or Passive .....

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

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

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

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

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