

The
FREETHINKER

FOUNDED · 1881

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

Registered at the General Post Office as a Newspaper

VOL. XLVII.—No. 1

SUNDAY, JANUARY 2, 1927

PRICE THREEPENCE

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page
<i>The Truth About Missionaries.—The Editor</i> - - - - -	1
<i>Peace and Goodwill.—Mimnermus</i> - - - - -	2
<i>Anatole France.—W. Mann</i> - - - - -	3
<i>John Davidson.—H. B. Dodds</i> - - - - -	5
<i>Peter Charron.—Peter Simple</i> - - - - -	6
<i>The "Freethinker" Endowment Trust.—Chapman Cohen</i> - - - - -	9
<i>Strange Tales.—Alan Tyndal</i> - - - - -	10
<i>The Making of the Gospels.—Abracadabra</i> - - - - -	10
<i>"If Everything Were Known."—G. J. F.</i> - - - - -	12
<i>Drama and Dramatists.—William Repton</i> - - - - -	12
<i>Lines to Annie.—S. P.</i> - - - - -	14
<i>Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.</i>	

Views and Opinions.

The Truth About Missionaries.

A fortnight ago, when dealing with the subject of Missionaries in China, I promised to return to the question, and allowing a week to intervene, will not have robbed the topic either of its interest or its importance. It has certainly given the Christian world time to say both its best and its worst, although anyone accustomed to Christian controversy might easily have foretold what would have been said under either heading. In the first place, Canon Peter Green and others informed Lord Inchcape that while he might be an authority on shipping he was not entitled to speak on Christian Missions, which strikes one as a cheap and easy method of misleading easily confused people. For Lord Inchcape did not attempt to gauge the religious quality of Christian beliefs, but merely the effect of Christian Missionaries in China so far as they affected the relations of the Chinese people to this country. And on that topic Lord Inchcape is quite a good authority. He is a man engaged in a form of commerce with China. And our relations as a nation with China are purely commercial. As a nation we are in China, and dealing with China for no other purpose. It is sheer hypocrisy to pretend otherwise. And Lord Inchcape, looking at the matter as a commercial magnate desiring to keep on good terms with the Chinese, says that one great obstacle to this is the dislike of the Chinese to missionary activities. Obviously he has nothing to gain by attacking the missionaries. He will not carry favour here by so doing. One of the most dangerous things that a man can do in this country is to speak the truth about the Christian Churches. Not many have the courage to do it. The vindictiveness of Christians is too well known for them to risk it. And when a man in the position of Lord Inchcape braves Christian influence by telling the truth, one may take it that the case is pressing. And he is talking about what he knows. The effects of missionary activity on commercial relations

is something on which Lord Inchcape is an authority. Canon Peter Green is not.

* * *
Christian Traders.

The other line of attack has been to throw the blame on the traders. I am far from defending them. They may be as unscrupulous as the defenders of the missions say they are, and it may be true that in their desire for gain they will go to any length in defiance of the rights of the natives of the country they are exploiting. But on that two things may be said. First, these traders are themselves of Christian origin. They go to China, to Africa, and elsewhere, carrying with them the influence of a Christian training and a Christian environment. And if all the generations that lie behind them have not succeeded in making them respect the rights of the people amongst whom they go, why should we expect that Christianity will have any better effect on the natives to whom it is now being preached? If it has failed to moralize or humanize the one, why should we expect it to moralize and humanize the other? Are we not in the person of the trader supplying the Chinaman and the African with an example of the kind of man the Christian religion can turn out? Second, if the missionaries are aware of the evil habits of these traders, how comes it that they only inform the general public of the facts by way of a retort to the trader when he rounds on the missionary? They must have known it all the time. But all the time they remained perfectly silent, they did not conceive it to be their duty to say to the people at home that these traders were evil men, whose dishonesty and rapacity would excite native feeling against us, nor did they feel it their duty to protect the natives against their cupidity. It is only when the trader exposes the missionary that he retorts in kind. Why is this so? Assuming that what the missionary says is true, does it not look like honest folk getting the truth because two rogues have fallen out? The trader might excuse his silence by saying that it was not his business to expose the missionary unless he was compelled to do so. But can the preacher of truth and righteousness legitimately make use of the same plea? If he does, Confucianism or Buddhism would have taught him a little higher ethic than that.

* * *

Missionary as Trader.

But the missionary is on rather dangerous ground when he tilts at the trader. First, concessions on which the missionary builds were very often gained by the trader, and it is very often the trader, not the missionary, who blazes the way. Anyone who has studied the history of European intercourse with the peoples of China, or Africa, or Asia, know quite well that in a great many cases it is the trader who has gone before, it is the missionary who has come

after. And is the missionary himself quite innocent of the trading spirit? One would like to have a complete list of the trading enterprises in the New Hebrides, in India, and in Africa and elsewhere, in which missionaries are interested. If these were brought before the British public in a full list, it would cause many eyes to open pretty widely. Many who go out as missionaries often remain as growers of cotton, or tea, or other things, and some of the missionaries are frankly trading concerns—"Industrial missions" is the technical name, in which native labour is exploited to the benefit of those who employ them. I have, myself, received complaints from growers of the unfair competition of these trading missions, and if the whites on the spot could only be induced to speak out some very pretty tales might be told.

* * *

A Dishonest Plea.

So much for the attack. What of the defence? Lord Inchcape complained that the missionaries went there to attack the faith of the natives and the natives object. To this the reply was issued that the missionaries do not go to China to attack the native faiths. Well, in the name of common sense, what, then, are they there for? Are they there to see that the native faiths remain undisturbed? It is true that in China neither Confucianism nor Buddhism is seriously disturbed by Christianity, but that is not the fault of the Christian missionary. And if the Christian missionary preaches Christianity as the only true religion, with all others false ones, what is that but an attack on the native faiths? Besides, we know the type of preacher who becomes a missionary. We know his narrowness and want of culture at home, and we know what to expect from him abroad, when all the home restraints are removed. I wonder whether these missionary advocates would have the honesty and the courage to tell these to whom they appeal for subscriptions, "We are not going to China or to India in any spirit of hostility to the native beliefs. We do not wish to attack them, we do not wish to replace them. We only want to preach another religion." Well, if they did that, the £4,000,000 at present sent out from this country, and the many comfortable posts for secretaries and the like, would soon disappear. It is a thoroughly dishonest plea, and is intended only to throw dust in the eyes of the general public.

* * *

Rice Christians.

Another defence is found in telling of the way in which the Christian missionaries have set up schools, and colleges, and medical dispensaries, and of the number of natives who come to them for instruction and attention. I do not doubt that for a moment. Rice Christians are common everywhere, even at home, where they are more than common, and if the Chinaman or the Hindoo is offered something for nothing he will accept it as readily as will the Englishman at home. But that is not what the missionary is in China for. He is there to preach the Gospel, to gain converts to Christianity, and his success must be tested by that, and not by the number of natives who are willing to take something for nothing. The Rev. Archibald Fleming writes to the *Times* about the "almost insatiable demand in China, on the part of the Chinese, for Christian literature, and on the increasing conviction among patriotic Chinamen that only Christianity can save them from an epoch of blank materialism." We should like to see Mr. Fleming explain why, in that case, it is that one of the largest of the Societies (the C.M.S.), after a year's work of over 1,300 agents, and an expenditure of over £82,000, finds itself with over 200

fewer supporters than it had last year. It looks as though the Chinese manage to keep their insatiable hunger for things Christian well under control.

* * *

Civilization and Superstition.

The Chinese are not such fools to be unable to distinguish between essentials and non-essentials. As to the ability of the West to teach China something there has never been any question, just as among enlightened Englishmen there has never been a question but that we might learn something of importance from the East. The contact of civilizations invariably leads to an interchange of ideas, and to a modification of cultures. But this is done by a contact of cultures, not by the preaching of a religion, and what the missionary takes with him of the outside culture he takes as a member of another social structure, not as the preacher of a revealed religion. The trader and the traveller does this work quite as well as does the missionary, and causes, on the whole, less trouble. He also undergoes as many hardships and faces as many dangers, probably more. The picture of the missionary living a hard and dangerous life in either China or India, and many other places, is not true. The majority of them have comfortable existences, many of them live luxuriously compared with the way in which they would live at home, and they have long holidays at home, during which time they can exercise their inventive qualities in narrating what they do between holidays. On this head we have no doubt whatever but that Lord Inchcape could possibly say a great deal. Whether he will or not remains to be seen. He has rare courage in daring to say a little of the truth about Christian enterprise in a Christian country. But I doubt whether he would have the courage to speak the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, about one of the greatest of our religious impostures.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Peace and Goodwill.

The services of the clergy are imaginary, and their payment should be of the same description.

—G. W. Foote.

It is always jam to-morrow, or jam yesterday, but never, by any chance, jam to-day.—*Alice in Wonderland.*

JOHN MILTON was not, like Edward Gibbon, fond of irony, but the great poet's sonorous hymn on "The Nativity of Christ" reads like the bitterest mockery in these days of unfaith:—

Nor war, nor battle's sound
Was heard the world around,
The idle spear and shield were high up hung;
The hooked chariot stood
Unstained with hostile blood;
The trumpet spake not to the armed throng;
The kings sat still with awful eye,
As if they surely knew their sovran Lord was by.

Peace and goodwill among men was but a dream in Milton's time; and, now, many generations later, it still remains an aspiration and a hope. The world-war has been succeeded by a series of industrial crises which are scarcely less terrible in their results than war itself. Religion, which in Europe means the Christian Religion, has deepened the divisions among men, and made bitterness where there should have been none. There is no hatred so venomous as religious hatred, as the age-long conflicts between various Christian churches show beyond cavil and dispute. The history of the so-called Reformation, for example, is but a story of battle and murder fomented by fanaticism, and is indistinguishable from similar homicidal conflicts between Hindoos and Moslems, which are only held in check by the armed forces of the British Government.

While at Christmas-tide tens of thousands of surpliced romancers speak of the Christian Religion as being the mainspring of peace and goodwill, the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem, popularly supposed to be the site of Christ's birth, has its aisles guarded by police whose duty it is to prevent murderous attacks between rival followers of the Greek and Roman Catholic Churches. Religious antagonism is so bitter that, should a Greek priest set so much as a foot on a carpet belonging to the Roman Catholics, it is enough to cause a bloodthirsty riot. Indeed, a Christmas spent on the alleged birth-place of the founder of Christianity is at once an eye-opener, and also an epitome of the history of a religion which has shed more blood than any other superstition the world has ever seen.

A mere historian is bound to note the curious religious habit of desiring to murder anything strange, and new. The purely human origin of the Christian Religion is shown by the plain fact that it carried on the foul work of persecution used by its predecessors. In old-world Athens, Socrates was condemned to death for his freethought, and drank the hemlock among his sorrowing disciples. The Christian priests, even more fanatical than their predecessors, sometimes dispensed with the mockery of a trial, and, as in the case of the unfortunate Hypatia, resorted to plain murder. The great Galileo, when he was old and poor, suffered in a Roman dungeon, and Roger Bacon was on two occasions imprisoned, once for a period of ten years, on the common charge of heresy and magic. Yet he, too, like Galileo, was only guilty of disturbing the pious ignorance of his contemporaries with ideas of discoveries that were to be realized after his death.

Nor can we forget that the hapless Giordano Bruno, perhaps the greatest martyr of all, suffered the horrors of a cruel imprisonment before the tragic end by burning at the hands of the hired assassins of a Christian Church. Nor were Freethinkers the only sufferers. Roman Catholics burnt Protestants, and Protestants murdered Papists, and both attacked Unitarians. Fortunately, the conscience of the race is rising above these crudities and barbarities. Anyone who reads attentively the utterances of the clergy and their apologists, in periodical literature will perceive that they are conscious of the reproach which the world-war implied.

It had been the clerical boast that the Christian Religion had civilized Europe, even if it had failed conspicuously in Abyssinia. None, except the priests of Christ, had the audacity to claim that the late war was in harmony with the principles and ideals of the Christian Religion. The clergy of all denominations had preached brotherhood and peace for centuries, but had been discreetly silent in times of war. But the world-war was so colossal, so widespread, that it upset the delicate mechanism of religion like the intrusion of an iron bar. The wheels ceased turning, the familiar hymn-tunes died into silence, broken by the clangour of guns, the groans of the dying, and the noise of falling thrones. Not only religion, but philosophy, literature, science, art, and all the amenities of civilization were arrested suddenly. At one terrible stroke we were back in the times of barbarism and savagery, and millions of dead men dyed the soil crimson. The pre-war conditions were the fruit of centuries of evolution, centuries of moral and intellectual advance; a labour not of yesterday, but very many yesteryears of civilization and progress. Humanity had been hoodwinked by its priests, and just too late the clergy discovered the true state of affairs. Just as if a mere apology would atone for wholesale murder and far-spread destruction on a scale never before known by the human race.

A widespread popular sentiment harps on the degradation of Europe in coming to this awful pass after two thousand years of the Religion of Love. The responsibility of the failure is laid, with justice, at the doors of the Churches. In intellectual circles, this means despair of organized Christianity, for the complicity of the great Churches with the old feudal ideas and old social order precludes any hope for their future. The Church of Christ is, indeed, and in very truth, the handmaiden of Kingcraft, and not a few doubt the possibility of her adaptability to new ideals and a higher morality.

English society is dominated by Priestcraft, and English law is saturated with priestly influence. In spite of the growing number of Freethinkers, the persecuting Statutes remain, and fifty thousand clergy continue to oppose progress in any form. Only this week the Bishops and their satellites in the House of Lords defeated a proposed Act of Parliament humbly to regard certain illegitimate children as human beings. One of the most pressing legal reforms is that of making a clearance of all those unrepealed statutes which are either superseded, obsolete, or no longer in harmony with the present age, and which remain in evidence of the barbarity and tyranny of the past. Another, and even more pressing matter, is the elimination of the priest in politics. This can be best accomplished by the disestablishment and disendowment of the Anglican Church, which no longer represents any more than a mere fraction of the nation, and whose continued existence is a menace to Freedom, and a blot upon civilization itself. Present-day people are not interested in religion as were their more superstitious forefathers. They are like the stockbroker who found himself in heaven, with an angel handing him a gold harp. "What shall I do with it, my dear?" he said, "I only know two tunes, 'Horsey, keep your tail up'; and 'Tea for two.'"

MIMNERMUS.

Anatole France.

ON October 12, 1924, there died, in his eightieth year, at Tours, in France, the greatest of modern French writers, Anatole France. He was not only a great writer, but—what does not always follow—he was also a great man. He has been accused, by the religious, of being an idle *dilettante*, a mere mocker; he was not idle, as the long list of his works shows, neither was he a *dilettante*, for his archæological and historical knowledge was wide and deep. Like Voltaire, France was a mocker, he mocked at religion, he mocked at priests, he mocked at hypocrisy, imposture and cant, but, like Voltaire, he did not mock at the good, the beautiful, or the true.

Anatole France was also physically and morally courageous. He proved the first when, upon the outbreak of the Great War, he offered to serve in the ranks as a common soldier in defence of his country; although, like Voltaire, he had a hatred of war and had been a leader in the anti-militarist campaign. He showed his moral courage when he came forward to the defence of Captain Dreyfus against his legion of enemies. In fact, it may be said that if it had not been for the strenuous efforts of three Atheists—Zola, Clemenceau, and Anatole France—Dreyfus would never have been released from the hell of the "Devil's Island." The proceedings for a new trial would have been burked, and the trial would never have been re-opened. They also saved the Republic. Never was the Republic in such danger of being overthrown, since its establishment. All the forces of reaction, the Royalists and the Church were arrayed

against Dreyfus. It was the realization of the reactionary influence of the Church, and its danger to the Republic, that decided the Government to prevent a recurrence of its interference in politics, by repudiating the Concordat with Rome, secularizing the State, and deporting the Catholic religious associations from France.

Anatole France's mockery was not like that of Dean Swift, whose contempt and hatred of humanity glows through his savage satire, especially in the voyage to the *Houyhnhnms*, where a gracious and gentle race of horses, endowed with reason, rule over the *Yahoos*, beings human in shape, but brutal in nature. Matthew Arnold's lines to Goethe would also apply to Anatole France:

He took the suffering human race,
He read each wound, each weakness clear;
And struck his finger on the place,
And said: Thou ail'st here, and here!

The recently published volume of conversations with his friend Nicolas Ségur (*Conversations with Anatole France*. Lane, 7s. 6.), shows us the real man, Anatole France, as he was in actual life. Many writers are quite different in their private life from the idea we form of them from their writings. Anatole France is not, his conversations display the same sympathetic mocking gaiety touched with melancholy, but wholly humanitarian and compassionate, when he is touching on the follies and frailties of mankind as he expounds them in his novels. These conversations read just as if one of the characters out of his books had suddenly materialized and come to life and speech.

In these conversations with M. Ségur, France is even more outspoken about religion than in his works. Speaking of Saint Paul preaching the "Unknown God" to the Greeks at Athens, he observes:—

His preaching made no impression. Preachers like that were an everyday phenomenon, and it was literally "bringing owls to Athens" to go talking to them, and in such a rough-and-ready fashion, about a new God. Saint Paul's efforts proved a fiasco. "We'll hear the rest to-morrow," his listeners called out to him, ironically, as they went away. He drew a blank at Athens, and yet this amazing little Jew carried the future in his wallet. In place of the wise and gracious divinities of Greece, he was destined to substitute the ancient Javeh and the young and sad-faced Adonis of Palestine. (p. 33.)

To which M. Ségur objects, that to him religion seemed to be the least successful of the Greek creations. "It is unillumined by morality, and all these gods and goddesses seem a prey to purely human passions." To which France replies:—

In talking like that you merely repeat what all the fools go saying up and down the world in order to flatter and delude us. They want Christianity to be superior to Paganism, and so they make believe it is so. But why, why? Don't you see that it is the inability to represent the diversity of nature by a corresponding variety of symbols that led the Jews to institute that monotheistic system which Monsieur Renan praised so highly? For my part, I don't at all see why they should be praised for having only been able to invent one God. It was precisely their broader and more comprehensive view of Nature that enabled the Greeks to understand the diver's aspects of the divine. They turned with love and yearning to the whispering wind, to the song of a bird, to the starry sky, in a word, to Beauty wheresoever they perceived it. And of whatsoever they laid a spell upon their minds and hearts they wrought a symbol, instinct with living fire.

I admire them particularly for having conceived unmoral, inconsequent, unjust and impulsive deities—the deities resembling men. In doing this they showed how logical they were, and rendered their divinities endurable. Whereas our One Just God,

who created this mad, cruel world in which we live, is really grotesque, with His omniscience and His perfection. How can we ascribe goodness to Him when we reflect on the atrocious manner in which He does His work? He has cast us, crammed full of instincts, here upon this earth, He has filled us with longings and desires, and He tells us to be moral. Furthermore, He threatens us with purgatory and Hell if we do but trip, when, all the while, He has left nothing undone to bring us to perdition. What malignity, what unheard-of perversity, to make His favour conditional upon our saving ourselves, when He Himself labours incessantly to undo us! (pp. 34-35.)

This belauding of the pure monotheistic religion of the ancient Hebrews, in contrast with the degrading polytheistic and idolatrous Pagans by whom they were surrounded, is the purest tosh and bunkum. Jehovah—or Jahveh, as it should be written—was in no respect better than any other of the Pagan gods. He was merely a big man, he walked about in the Garden of Eden "in the cool of the day" and talked on familiar terms with Adam and Eve. He demanded bloody sacrifices to be made to himself, and, if the numbers of the congregation were anything like those recorded in the Bible, who were required to give a sacrifice, the Temple must have run with blood like a shambles. As a matter of fact the Jews of the Old Testament were not monotheists, even as late as the time of Ezekiel which, according to the date on the margin of the Authorized Version, was written 594, B.C., but was probably written much later. Havet, indeed, dates it about 40, B.C. Ezekiel himself declares that he saw women worshipping Tammuz—known to the Greeks as Adonis—in the very Temple of Jehovah itself (Ezekiel viii. 14). This is confirmed by the archaeological discoveries of the last few years, which prove that the ancient Jews worshipped half-a-dozen other gods in addition to Jehovah. As Anatole France further remarks:—

Nothing more completely at variance with the Greek genius than the Jewish religion was ever created. Look at the early history, the origin, of this little Javeh. He protects the flocks and herds, He is patriarchal and peaceful, however, He comes into collision with other Semitic religions, He develops a taste for blood, and takes joy in exterminating, in putting to the sword, the worshippers of Molock and Khamos. So ferocious is He that He grows mad with rage. One day during a procession, when a well-meaning man courteously approaches to support the Ark which was in danger of falling, Javeh strikes him dead for having so much as dared to lay a hand upon it. And then He commands us to be just, as if the conditions in which He created us would admit of it, as if injustice were not the sentence to which He had set His seal. (pp. 36-37.)

Anatole France's criticism of Christianity is drastic and uncompromising. The work of this great Freethinker and humanitarian should find a front place upon the shelves of every Freethinker.

W. MANN.

A Thought on the Deep.

THE placid moon broods o'er the silent sea,
And seems for us alone: There's not a breath
Of air astir: It seemeth as if Death
Were ravished with her own tranquility:
The boundless blue, and dome of studded light
Do wear an aspect of Infinity,
Appalling in its charm; for, on this night
The voiceless Spirit of Eternity
Breathes o'er the scene with melody divine:
The holiest sights and songs we see and hear
Are for the soul, and seek the inner shrine;
They need the purer light and Spirit cheer:
Here all things grey to Life, e'en from the slime,
A boundless realm, defying Age and Time!

W. J. LAMB.

John Davidson.

JOHN DAVIDSON, the author of *The Theatrocrat*, *The Ballad of a Nun* and other equally little known works, went out of this world by way of suicide; the dread of cancer—a stinking death, he called it—being the chief cause for his resolve to quit before his time. It has been suggested that he was driven to it by the scorn of an anonymous reviewer of his work, but Davidson was of too tense and robust a character to allow a journalist to divert him from his appointed way. "If a poet can be killed by a review, then the sooner he is dead the better," summed up his attitude on the matter, and no man went through life with a higher courage or a more undaunted front than he did. Davidson was a Freethinker of a type that found fault even with the thoroughness of G. W. Foote's freethinking. Many years ago in the *Freethinker* he was urging that no label was broad enough to cover the man who really faced the problems of life, and contending that "Atheist" or any other designation, had a narrowing influence on the development of outlook and character. He was intensely serious. Man, he contended, was the universe become conscious, an idea he thought was his very own, and in pressing the implications of his theory on mankind he expended himself in a succession of "Testaments" and plays, all of which reach a high-water mark in fine, vigorous writing. For Davidson could write; it wasn't the strained, bizarre touch of the modern poet or that of the fluent artist, who builds up a pile of words to be understood neither by himself or anybody else, but beautifully balanced English, which conveyed an idea clearly and musically. Some of his ideas were quixotically ideal. Someone has said that poets are "the acknowledged legislators of mankind," hewing a way in advance of their fellows. The great majority of them, really, do the journey along a well-paved path, with the thick of the crowd, and just as often as not encouraging the ruck to go backward rather than ahead, and ever keeping in mind that giving the people what they want is the surest road to success. Davidson was above and beyond all that; he had a quite definite idea of what the people needed, and he urged it in season and out.

That need was certainly not what the people demanded; not even what the more enlightened people thought necessary; it was what a poet, whose imagination soared to unimaginable heights wanted, and never was the region of the unknown so ransacked and never more glittering jewels of fancy displayed before mankind in the elaboration of a social theory. His view of things was materialistic; a view that left no speck of room in the universe for divinity or even humanity. Both were fanciful terms, he avowed. There was a certain amount of pessimism involved in his theory. After that part of matter which had become self-conscious as a human being had died, there was only a remote chance that it would again be chosen to assume the mantle of humanity. There was so much of it, to start with, but even if it was, it is unlikely that it would have any memory of its former consciousness, so that "humanity" really did not fit the case. Man would never be human. It was a pessimistic view that was only slightly relieved by his speculation that when some of the rarer gases which he suggested might maintain the mechanical mixture of oxygen and the nitrogen of the air, stood out of the way and allowed these two to combine chemically to form protoxide of nitrogen, which is laughing gas, the whole world would go up in one mighty spasm of laughter. It is certainly a more cheerful way of ushering in the Judgment Day than by having

the stars falling about your ears or the moon turned into blood. But that aspect of it did not trouble Davidson. He was concerned more with the new outlook of mankind once it had realized the grandeur of knowing itself to be the universe alive and conscious. There can be nothing higher than man, he said, he being the very essence of that ether which permeated all things. Inability to understand this is the root of man's every misery. He goes astray in his efforts to comprehend, and translates his vague longings as God and original sin, and all the other nightmares of ignorance.

This ranging in cloudland did not prevent Davidson from seeing clearly when his feet were on the earth. "Other World," as he called it, was peopled by fancies set up by Man's inability to see the true nature of his being in this, the only world, and he caught and fixed these delusions in unforgettable blank verse. When the Freethinking bishop in *The Theatrocrat* is preaching "All is matter" from the stage, a gallery boy shouts: "Hi, what price sod?" All the pent-up feeling of the speaker against that bogey burst forth and he denounces—

"God" as the shutters of the mind;
A fire-proof curtain: ghastly cul-de-sac;
A last excuse; sublime taboo; a tip;
A patent medicine; an accepted lie.

Then a fighting parson charged the stage and all the house followed, eager to stamp the blasphemer into pulp.

"For God!" they roar, parson and moneylender,
Broker and banker, counter-jumper, peer.
The women, too; they all believe in God;
Duchesses, milliners, wives and prostitutes,
They scream for God. God pays! you bet! God pays!

And the argument, used whenever Christians have had unlimited power, is employed against the bishop.

The hope of personal immortality is another of these denizens of "Other World," and Davidson disposes of it by pointing out in rough and sweeping verse the only immortality man will ever achieve.

Think how some common drudging neighbour-wight,
Could happily beget for fifty years
A hundred wholesome children annually
How every rosy Jill encloisters germs
Of many thousand brats; think this, and laugh
Aloud, delighted with the naive, the rich
Conceit of immortality and vast
Exuberance of the race that swells and throbs
In every man and woman.

A brimming life hereafter that would appeal to many if the economic stress could be side tracked. Davidson, in one of his Testaments, created a God who held somewhat similar views, which involved a bountiful mastery of life. His deity bundles into eternal fire—

Ye that stained
The haughty morning and the radiant night,
With cries and intercessions, prayers and tears,
Ashamed to use the glory I had given
Ye rancorous poisoners of life that found
Temptation only where I offered joy.

Ye hypocrites, that with a holy lie
Tarnished the cleanliness immaculate
Of human generation, soiling life
On to the end of his pellucid fount.

The positive side of that is the logical outcome of Humanity attaining Man's estate. There is a touch of Nietzsche in this: a disregard and overthrowing of the current morality and the will to power, the mastery of life by men completely self-conscious, in its place. That is the negation of the democratic idea. Davidson had no respect for the code that keeps men awake at night whimpering about their souls. The degradation of men had marched side

by side with the growth of the slave morality of Jesus. Christianity he said,

Is the foe of life
Of health, of wealth, of intellect and strength
The friend of all the feeble, the diseased.
The low, the loathsome, the depraved, the dirt,
The offal of mankind.

and he proudly tells how,

In England here an aristocracy
Of brains and culture

Long kept in check,
Dynamic pressure of the Christian lie
That men are equal in the sight of God.

That idea prevailed, however, and Freedom came in with a welter of fighting, grasping units, each intent on his own aggrandizement. But poets are ever hopeful, even in their most hopeless moments, and so Davidson glimpsed the dawn of a finer day in which men will be the masters instead of the victims of Evolution.

The slow adagio begins:
The winding sheets are ravelled out,
That swathe the minds of men, the sins
That wrap their rotting souls about.

The dead are heralded along;
With silver trumps and golden drums,
And flutes and oboes, keen and strong
My brave andante singing comes.

Then like a python's sumptuous dress
The frame of things is cast away.
And out of Time's obscure distress,
The thundering scherzo crashes Day.

H. B. DODDS.

Peter Charron.

AMONG my ragged regiment of seventeenth century publications there is one that should appeal with special force to Freethinkers. It is an old volume, calf-bound and battered, like some old veteran resting upon his laurels, of Charron's *Wisdom*, translated by Sampson Lennard, and published in St. Paul's Churchyard in 1670 by Ranew and Robinson. At that date the work was already nearing its centenary, at any rate it was published in 1600, so that it had already travelled over seven-tenths of that period. 1670 was not, however, the date of Charron's first appearance in an English dress. An edition was issued by Blount and Apsley some twelve years earlier, but as I do not possess a copy it may be just as well to say nothing about it. Not that the possession of a book, or the reading of a book, is absolutely necessary to writing about it, as many of our newspaper reviewers prove, but it is at least a convenience, and I prefer to write with as many conveniences as possible.

Peter Charron, writer of "a book which made a great noise," as Bayle quaintly puts it, was born in 1541, a period when scientifically and religiously the world of thought was drifting away from its old moorings, and the geographical discoveries that were enlarging men's views of the physical world was being fairly paralleled by the wider intellectual vistas that were beginning to open. From his father, a librarian, he probably inherited his literary tastes, but could hardly have inherited much else. A librarian with twenty-five children to support, must have found life anything but a light burden, and the statement that he was in "straightened circumstances" may therefore pass unchallenged. His father did nevertheless give his son as good an education as the times permitted. At an early age he was sent to the University at Paris, studied law, graduated and practised for five or six years, and finally entered

the Church. Eloquent as a preacher, he attracted the favourable notice of his Bishop, who raised him to the post of canon, but ultimately, after some difficulties with a couple of the powerful religious orders, he adopted the profession of a secular priest, a character he sustained until his death, which took place suddenly in the streets of Paris in 1603.

Not the least among the influences that moulded the intellect of Charron was that of Montaigne. There is a distinct flavour of the father of French Scepticism running through Charron's work, a flavour that becomes more pronounced in the later writings. This is agreeably observable in the section dealing with the treatment of children, Montaigne's advice to Madame de Foix that children are to be reasoned with, not beaten, to be taught "to sift all things with discretion, and harbour nothing by mere authority or upon trust," so that they be instructed "to quit [their] weapons unto truth as soon as they shall discern the same, whether it proceed from the adversary or from himself," and to remember that "it is not a mind, it is not a body that we erect, but a man," being closely followed by Charron's teaching: "We do condemn that custom which is common in all places to beat, and to box, and with strange cries to harass children, and to keep them in fear and subjection," for "blows are for beasts that understand not reason. He that is once accustomed thereto is marred for ever.....Neither is it enough to make them give their judgment, but that they maintain it, and to be able to give a reason of their saying.....We must teach him to take nothing upon credit and by authority; this to make himself a heart, and not to suffer himself to be led by the nose like an ox; but to examine all things with reason, to propose all things, and then to give him leave to choose. And after the mind comes the body, whereof there must likewise be a care taken, at one and the same instant with the spirit, not making two works thereof. Both of them make an entire man."

In addition to the book "which made a great noise," Charron also issued some sermons—said to have been written in order to divert attention from the heresies of *Wisdom*, and also "The Three Truths," a work only less famous than the one with which his name is usually associated. "The Three Truths," however, was orthodox, if not severely so. It was aimed at the Church's three opponents, Athcists, Mohammedans, and heretics. Against the first it was argued that there existed a good and a true religion. Against the second that of all religions the Christian religion was the only true one, and against the third, that of all Christian communions the Roman Catholic is the only true Church. Published in 1594, in spite of some rather heretical tendencies, the book was received with applause by the Catholic world and ran through several editions.

Six years later, 1600, Charron published his greatest work, *Of Wisdom*, in three books, which shows a marked change in opinions, and even in method, when contrasted with the earlier publication. The opening of the seventeenth century in France was not an ideal time for the putting forward of advanced opinions, and one can readily understand why the appearance of this book stirred up much opposition and abuse. Three times the sheets were seized while the work was passing through the press, and on its appearance, the task of answering the work was entrusted to one Garasse, a Jesuit, the nature of whose reply may be gauged by the following excerpt:—

I have defined this brutish, drowsy, or melancholy Atheism to be a certain fantastical humour, which has introduced Diogenism into the Christian religion, by which humour a man besotted with his

languishing and lazy melancholy laughs at everything through a dull, ridiculous, and pedantic gravity.....In our time the Devil, who is the author of Atheism, and the ape of the works of God, has raised two profane men, Christians in appearance and Atheists in reality, to imitate Solomon in writing *A Wisdom*, the one a Milanese (?Cardan) who wrote in Latin, the other a Parisian who wrote in his mother tongue, both equally pernicious.

Garasse's reply covered something over a thousand pages of print, but it is only fair to record that at least one eminent churchman protested against its unfair tone. Yet, to a devout Christian Charron's book must have been a most exasperating production. It said much, but it suggested more, and the author's habit of *suggesting* a defence for religious beliefs in one part, and explicitly showing the weakness of such defences in other parts, must have contributed very powerfully towards building up the scepticism which became so marked a characteristic of French thought a little more than a century later.

Of Wisdom, aimed at being a species of whole duty of man, a text book on philosophy, morals, and religion. The influence of Montaigne is plain on almost every page, in the praise of suspense of judgment where no clear data is obtainable, in the marshalling of quotations, is the praise of scepticism, and even in the nature of the language used. In scientific knowledge he is greater than Montaigne, in ease and grace of style much inferior, and in reading him one often feels one would willingly sacrifice a little of the knowledge for greater felicity of speech. Over and over again he protests against that anthropocentricism which leads man to think not only that the earth, but

The heaven, the stars, all this great celestial motion of the world, is only made for him; and that all the gods are in contention for him alone. And the poor miserable wretch is in the meantime ridiculous. He is here beneath, lodged in the last and worst stage of the world, most distant from the celestial vault, in the sink of the world, amongst the filth and lees thereof...and yet he makes himself believe that he is the master and commander of all, that all creatures, yea, those great luminous incorruptible bodies, whereof he knows not the least virtue, and which he is constrained with astonishment to admire, move not but for him, and to do him service. And because he beggeth his living from the beams and light, of the sun, from the rain and other distillations of heaven, he sticks not to say that he enjoyeth the heavens and the elements as if all had been made and still move only for him. In this sense a gosling may say as much, and perhaps more justly and peremptorily.

PETER SIMPLE.

(To be Concluded.)

Acid Drops.

We deal elsewhere in this issue with the Chinese question, but the following from the *Church Times* is worth quoting:—

If the European States could have offered to China and India the best of Christian civilization; if the colour question, hardly realized in the early nineteenth century, had never arisen, or if it had risen, had been repudiated by the Christian conscience; if the efforts of Capitalism and Commercialism to exploit the uncivilized races had been sternly suppressed; if there had been less aggressive and provincial Protestantism in the mission field; if economic competition had not sundered the white men from their black and yellow fellow beings; if our own and other Governments had been less susceptible to Mohammedan prejudices, it may be that the

East and Africa would have bowed to what would clearly have proved itself a higher civilization.

All of which appears to amount to saying that if things had been different from what they have been they would not now be as they are. But it really does not need a very profound wisdom to venture on that much.

Apart from this aspect of the matter the passage justifies almost all we have said about the quality of these Christian missions. The natives of India have not been presented with a people who showed substantially higher morals, or substantially better character than they did themselves. The religion these visitors professed did not prevent them plundering and murdering, and assuming airs of superiority on very slight grounds. And what the Christians brought was, on the one hand, a number of superstitions not substantially different from native ones, and a certain amount of scientific knowledge which the Chinese and the Japanese and the better-educated Hindoos were quite ready to accept. And all the time they have seen the missionaries hand and glove with their exploiters, urging on the application of brute force, and blessing the armies that were marching in the name of Christ and him crucified. The Chinese and the Japanese have not hesitated to avail themselves of whatever genuine knowledge we had to offer them. They do not want and they will not have our stupid superstitions.

Canon Sinker, of Blackburn, is not by any means so silly as one might think. Recently he asked the laity to remember the clergy in their prayers—although if God really had a hand in their selection, to pray to him for them would seem to hint either that his choice has not been of the best, or that he has forgotten them. The Canon says it would be much better if the laity instead of talking to each other about the clergy would talk to God about them. We have no doubt that would be much better—for the clergy. It would not hurt them in the least. What God knows—God only knows. Other people are not informed about it. There is a decided element of artfulness about the Canon's advice.

The Rev. Dr. Fosdick, to whom we made reference last week as an advertised great force in the religious world, has been falling foul of those who indulge in what he calls "magical prayer." He discerns that a man may be "a praying man and still be a knave and a fool. As a matter of fact, he may be more of a knave and a fool because he is a praying man." It sounds almost as though Dr. Fosdick has been reading the *Freethinker*. But he says that the idea of magical prayer, the notion that man can get God to do things for him, goes right back to primitive savagery. Again an echo of what the *Freethinker* has always taught. It is astonishing how these very advanced religious thinkers gain their reputation by repeating some of the very oldest and the most elementary of this journal's teaching. Dr. Fosdick might have saved himself a lot of trouble by advising his readers to get the *Freethinker* regularly. But that might put him out of the pulpit altogether.

But as he is in the pulpit, and intends to stop there, it is clear that Dr. Fosdick, after a burst of common sense, must give a good dose of nonsense, or the pulpit will not retain him. So it turns out that, after all, he does believe in prayer. It is the prayer of communion he believes in, and "God has many good gifts for us." So that when we pray for communion with God, we are really paying to get a share of the gifts that God has in store for us—if we ask him for them. So that, after all, the prayer that Dr. Fosdick believes is a disguised asking for something. And all that Dr. Fosdick and his advanced thinking amounts to is that he is sufficiently advanced to see the absurdity of directly asking some supernatural beings to give us something, but not enough advanced to see that he is asking the same thing in a roundabout way. Which is not really advanced

thinking, but very confused thinking. And it leaves us with the impression that if a man cannot gain the reputation of a thinker in the modern Christian world, his stupidity must be very pronounced indeed.

Now that so many of the Labour people are out to capture the Catholic vote, and we have the Conservatives and the Liberals both tied up more or less with their respective groups of Churches, between the lot the subject of Secular Education is being left almost entirely to Freethinkers. And we warn them that unless they get active in the matter we may shortly see a form of compromise set up that will establish religion in the schools much more firmly than is at present the case. For example, it is announced that during the coming year there are hopes of getting a measure that will establish religion as a compulsory article of instruction in all schools with some form of priestly control, denominational schools will receive full support from public funds, the managers of schools will pass under the control of ecclesiastical authorities, while there will be some form of religious test for teachers. It is useless waiting till this becomes law and then howling. Nor can we expect much help from the political parties. The religious vote is the more ignorant vote, and with an immense electorate each of the political bodies will be out to capture it. It is Freethinkers who will have to work, and by shaming some and educating others prevent a measure of injustice to the rising generation.

More of our home-made savages. The Vicar of Frizinghall relates the story of a crippled girl who was brought to a faith-healing mission, where she saw a vision of Jesus walking among the sick, and afterwards went home able to walk. She is now making progress towards complete recovery. A little more knowledge than the Vicar possesses might have led him to look for something like a nervous origin of the girl's inability to walk—even accepting the Vicar's story as he tells it. And anyone but a Christian parson would ask himself why, if Jesus could cure the girl, he did not do it all at once, instead of doing it gradually with some risk of a relapse? The Vicar also admits that many of those who asked Jesus to cure them remain as they were, which would lead reasonable people to wonder why Jesus is so one-sided in his favours. But questions are not in place with the true believer. As it stands, the Vicar's theories of the origin and nature of disease places him upon much the same mental level as any other savage.

The Vicar would like to see all doctors ordained. Naturally, with all doctors as parsons, and all the laity members of some church or other, what a fine world this would be—for the clergy.

The *Malay Mail* reports trouble with the Christians of Kuala Lumpur over the question of Sunday Observance. The local clergy are protesting against the playing of games on Sunday. It is admitted that most of those who do play games are not Christians, but that does not matter. The good Christian is one who not only wants to be happily miserable himself, but wants to see that others are in a similar condition. A good Christian is never so satisfied as when, with a face like a cheap funeral, he is singing how happy he is with Jesus, and threatening with fine or imprisonment anyone who looks a little more healthily cheerful.

Roumania is not exactly what one would call a liberty-loving country, but we do not quite understand what real cause the President of the Baptist Union has for complaint over the way in which Baptists are treated there. He says that the Baptists are denied the status of churches and subjected to the general law regulating mere societies. Now the laws regulating societies may be good or bad, on that we have no opinion to express,

but on the facts named, Dr. Rushbrooke is complaining because the Baptists are not as a body given special privileges over non-religious societies. And that is a different question altogether. There ought to be in Roumania a much greater amount of freedom than exists. The Jews in particular are, we believe, badly harassed, but it is one thing to demand greater freedom for all, and another to ask that a special section shall have greater freedom than others.

The *Church Times* is quite orthodox in its habit of using "Christian" as synonymous with civilized, and taking non-Christian as the equivalent of barbarism. So in spite of its general dislike to Mussolini, it quite thinks that Mussolini is right in claiming control over Asia Minor, because at present the Mohammedan is supreme there, and it is impossible to suppose that "a Christian country like Italy will forever tolerate the abandonment to barbarism of districts that it could well colonize." It is the old story of anything being excusable so long as it is done in the name of a Christianity with which one happens to agree. But one wonders if the Turk made the same claim to take over, say, Abyssinia, what the *Church Times* would say?

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle will have had one disagreeable thought with him over the Christmas holidays. As a "psychic expert" haunted houses are his delight, and the noise of a perambulating ghost among the sweetest sounds to which he can listen. And just before Christmas it was announced that another ghost had been dissolved into an innocent mouse and a reel of cotton. Some time ago Mr. Stephen Phillips took a house at Egham. Returning home after a visit to the Continent, his wife met him with the information that a ghost had driven her and the children out of the house. They had heard strange noises in the night, servants declared it was like the rattling of a skeleton's bones, and there were sounds like a baby being choked. Crowds came to visit the house, psychic experts pronounced on the matter, and a story was found of a farmer who had strangled a child in that house some sixty years before. And, as is the way with ghosts, the child appears to have liked the strangling so much that it repeated the performance whenever possible.

Anyway, Mr. Stephen Phillips had to give up the house. But then appeared upon the scene an unspiritual, materialistic plumber, a man whose imaginative capacity showed itself only in the making out of a bill. And not being a psychic expert, instead of shutting his eyes and thinking of all the stories of haunted houses and uneasy ghosts he had ever heard of, he looked round the room from which the sound came and found a partly unwound reel of cotton resting against the wainscoating. The cotton ran under the wainscoating and connected with the home of a number of mice, and the mice playing with the cotton had produced the strange tappings which had become the gaspings of a strangled baby, etc., etc. So goes another ghost. Our sympathy lies with our poor "psychic experts." Damn the mouse!

Miss Rebecca West appears to be a little surprised at discovering in New York a church in the Negro quarter where the worshippers danced the Charleston as an act of devotion. Students of religion will find nothing strange in that. Dancing has always played a prominent part in religious ceremonies. Apart from the famous instance of David dancing naked before the Lord, primitive peoples dance a great deal of their religion, the dances being part of a flourishing system of magic. That is why mimicry enters so largely into primitive dances.

There are some faults slight in the sight of love, some errors slight in the sight of wisdom, but truth forgives no insult and endures no stain.—*Ruskin*.

The "Freethinker" Endowment Trust.

PREVIOUSLY acknowledged, £745 13s. 2d. Buenos Aires, £5; G. Allcom, 3s. 6d.; E. Wall, £1 1s.; G. Brady, £1 1s.; J. Milroy, £1 1s.; G. Davies, £1; V. H. Smith (3rd sub.), 5s.; E. Kernan, 5s.; A. Kirby, 1s. 6d.; E. Lyons, 10s.; H. G. (2nd sub.), 5s. 6d.; E. Johnson, £2 2s. Total, £758 17s. 8d.

Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to the *Freethinker* Endowment Trust, and addressed to me at 61 Farringdon Street, E.C.4. Every contribution will be acknowledged week by week in the *Freethinker*.

Correction.—E. Bentley, 12s. in last week's issue should have read C. Bentley, 21s.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

To Correspondents.

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

THANKS to the many readers who have sent us New Year's greetings. We cannot reply to them individually, so take this opportunity of making our acknowledgements.

E. KERNAN.—Glad you took us at our word. When we said that we wanted every ounce of help, great and small, we meant it. And we are not likely to value anyone's help by the mere amount given.

C. MASON.—Mr. Cohen's pamphlet on *Foreign Missions* has been for long out of print. It was based entirely on the figures supplied by the Missionaries themselves, its deadly feature being that one year's statements were checked by those of other years. And the result was rather startling.

H. WARNER.—We have not bothered Mr. Lloyd with your letter. He would feel neither interested nor concerned with your interest in his spiritual welfare. And he is not at all likely to return to Jesus. He has only been unwell. His mental condition is quite sound, so that your hopes of his reconversion have nothing whatever to go upon.

J. G. DOBSON.—Shall be glad to see you at the Annual Dinner, with any other of our Birmingham friends who find themselves able to attend. But applications for tickets should be made at once.

H. MERRIN.—Mr. Cohen will be in Glasgow at the end of February, and will be lecturing in the district for several evenings. Perhaps you will be good enough to make yourself known to him if you are at any of the meetings.

T. EVANS.—We should very much like to see Freethought more active in Cardiff and in other parts of South Wales.

G. F. MACAULAY.—We agree with you that much of the opposition offered to Psycho-analysis is reminiscent of that offered to Darwinism.

C. C. BENTLEY.—Sorry for blunder. The figures were evidently transposed.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

We take the opportunity of this being the first issue in 1927 to wish all our readers a very Happy New Year. And certainly it would not require an overdose of good fortune to make 1927 a much happier year than was 1926. The latter half of the year was full of trouble, and its consequences are with us yet, and will be for some time to come. Always a trying task to keep a paper such as this one in existence, 1926 touched the high-water mark of anxiety. Still, we are looking forward to an improvement during 1927, so once more we say, A Happy New Year to all—including ourselves.

One of the first events of importance to London Freethinkers is the Annual Dinner, which takes place at the Midland Grand Hotel, on Wednesday, January 12. The tickets are 8s. each, and there will be the usual speeches, with the customary excellent concert. We shall hope to see very many of our London friends present, as well as some from the Provinces. The Dinner gives Freethinkers a chance of meeting each other, application for tickets should be made as early as possible, as the number is strictly limited. They may be obtained either from the *Freethinker* office or from the National Secular Society's offices.

One of our readers, writing from Buenos Aires, and enclosing a cheque towards the Endowment Trust, says:—

I may perhaps relate how my indignation and sense of the necessity of supporting them were first aroused by a stray copy falling into my hands containing an account of the brutal sentence passed on J. W. Gott. I believe the poor fellow would have been pleased to know that at least one languid Freethinker was stirred by his martyrdom.

We are glad to hear that the Christians had to pay this much for their bigotry and brutality. But while we are pleased that these things should rouse Freethinkers to sense of what they ought to do, we should like to see them all alive to it *between persecutions*. During the whole of its existence the *Freethinker* has never failed to make Christians pay as heavily as possible for their pleasure in victimizing Freethinkers, and we think we may say, without conceit, that these acts of victimization would have been much more frequent had this paper not been in existence. And if all Freethinkers in this country were to be as active as they might be the Blasphemy Laws might soon be swept away altogether. We have seen what the Roman Catholics have gained by recent legislation. We ought not to be lagging behind them.

Our friend's letter may well serve as a reason for once again referring to the Endowment Trust. It will be remembered that in addition to the £1,000 promised by Mr. Peabody, we have another £450, making £1,450, the collection of which is dependent upon our raising the sum of £6,650, which will make £8,000 in all. Towards this we have received in donations, this year and last, £4,660 1s. 6d. In promises we have £1,450, making a total of £6,110 1s. 6d. This leaves a sum of £1,889 18s. 6d. yet to be raised if the £8,000 is to be realized, and the promised £1,450 received.

We have till December 31, 1927, to raise the required amount, and what we propose to do is this. We shall keep this special appeal open for about another two months. Then we shall give the matter a rest until

about September next, when we hope to make a big drive to gain the rest of the amount. We know there are many who intend to subscribe early in this New Year, and many have promised to subscribe regularly until the Fund is complete. But before the Fund closes this year the total should reach well over the £5,000 figure, which will leave us to make our big effort at the close of the year. It is the biggest thing ever attempted; it will give the party an endowed paper, and we *must* make the effort a success. Up to the present we have only touched the fringe of the possible subscribers.

One other matter. We are going to make a determined effort this year to improve the circulation of the *Freethinker*. Unfortunately, we cannot do much along the lines of paid advertisement, although this will be done so far as means permit. But we want our friends to lend a hand. And they will do this by making January a month of endeavour and trying during that time to get one new reader each. That can surely be done, if each one settles down seriously to the work. One new subscriber in 31 days! We are not asking them to take an extra copy, but to get an extra subscriber. We would rather have it that way. For the rest, we are still ready to send the paper for six weeks to anyone, quite free, on payment of postage—3d.

Strange Tales.

BROUGHT up in the strictest Presbyterian fold, we were taught very early to revere the Scriptures. We regarded it as a fetish and held firmly to its plenary inspiration. We believed the punctuation even to be arranged by the Almighty.

When a Presbyterian of the old school got fairly into his stride, he could hammer out his Fifthly with considerable vehemence. We were left in no doubt as to the meaning of election, sanctification, or justification.

Children naturally take an anthropomorphic view of sacred subjects. My minister, a very tall, solemn, corpulent Scot, arrayed in flowing whiskers and his Geneva gown, represented, to me, the figure of the Deity. And Moses was a similar personage. When God spake unto Moses face to face, or vice-versa, they were, to me, two heavily-built Caledonians.

It was no joke being a full-fledged Presbyterian in those days. We were steeped in the milk of the Word. The two names that were anathema were Paine and Voltaire.

And there was "nae whustlin'" on the "Sawbath."

Toole, it is said, hit off the Scotch Sawbath very neatly. Taking a walk in Glasgow one Sunday morning, he was warned by a policeman to be careful. "Why, what am I doing," said Toole, "I'm not even whistling?" "No," replied the limb of the law, "your'e no whustlin', but ye're lookin' maist as happy as if it were Monday."

Though the whole of the canon was equally inspired—even the genealogies—yet we had our favourite passages. Tales of adventure and plenty of hard fighting in the Old Testament, stimulated our imagination. Paul was dry, and we had no patience with Epistles to the Colossians. The Acts were passable, as there were more travels, and gaol-breaking, and lectures to the men of Athens.

Of the Gospels, we liked John the least. His style was somewhat different, and one felt a difficulty in keeping up with his metaphysics. But then, metaphysics are what nobody can understand.

Yet John can tell a wondrous tale. In some respects he can leave the Synoptics behind. That is a thrilling episode in the 11th chapter. Not even

the handsome lady who provided the stories for the *Arabian Nights* could better John.

In that narrative we have a master-stroke of condensation. In it occurs the brief verse we liked to read at Sunday School, "Jesus wept."

Some preachers claim that Jesus must have smiled on several occasions, but if so, it has not been recorded. That is a pity, for it leaves us with rather a pathetic picture of the Man of Sorrows. One preacher recently declared that Jesus must have been a sociable guest. One can hardly think so. We cannot imagine his conversation setting the table in a roar. He was no match for Jack Falstaff, though they held some things in common.

Anyhow, the Saviour of Mankind performed a wonderful deed that day at Bethany. He was friendly with the small family—two sisters and one brother. This brother sickened and died before Jesus could be brought to his relief. Indeed, the visit was purposely delayed presumably to heighten the dramatic effect.

Mary and Martha both came along when their Lord was nigh, and the spectacle was very affecting. Never before had a corpse "so far gone" been resuscitated. Yet everything is possible if one has faith. Lazarus was brought forth with one clear call, and John records it as a matter of course, though he is the only one, and several generations passed before he set it down.

What were Matthew and Co. thinking about? Why did they allow John to "scoop" this piece of news? What became of Lazarus? Did he marry and bring up a big family? Did he frequent the village-inn, and relate to the oldest inhabitant, that mysterious journey across the Styx, and how Old Charon fetched him back at short notice?

ALAN TYNDAL.

The Making of the Gospels.

THE CRUCIFIXION.

THE Gospel narratives recording the alleged sufferings and death of Jesus Christ are, like the rest of the Gospel "history," pure fiction. No such trial as that narrated ever took place. All the various incidents connected with the Crucifixion were suggested by so-called "prophecies" in the Hebrew scriptures. Foremost among these "prophecies" was the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah—or, more correctly, Isaiah lii. 13—liii. 12. Anyone who reads this chapter will perceive that it is not a prediction at all, but a narration of disastrous events that had come upon the Jewish people, whom the Lord here calls his "servant." The same appellation is applied to the nation in many other passages, including the following: Is. xli. 8-9; xlii. 1; xlii. 1; xlix. 3, 7. The first of these reads:—

"But thou, Israel, *my servant*, Jacob Whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend.....Thou art *my servant*, I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away."

The afflictions which the nation had suffered "at the hand of the Lord" in his "overflowing wrath" and "fury" are referred to in the following passages: Is. li. 17, 22; liv. 6-8, 11-14, 17; lx. 14-15; lxxv. 8-9. There can thus be no doubt as to the meaning of the great fifty-third chapter which the early Christians, without exception, interpreted as a grand prophecy respecting Jesus Christ. The Gospel fictionist, in fact, makes Jesus apply the chapter to himself.

Luke xxii. 37.—"For I say unto you, that this which is written must be fulfilled *in me*: And he was reckoned with transgressors; for that which concerneth me hath fulfilment."

In the unhistorical Acts of the Apostles we are treated to a story of an Egyptian eunuch reading his chapter seated in his chariot (vii. 27-35), and of one of the apostles misinterpreting it to him. "And Philip.....beginning from *this scripture*, preached unto him Jesus."

The Gospel-maker's idea of an atonement through the death of Jesus is placed by one of the evangelists in the mouth of the high priest Caiaphas. This reads:—

"But a certain one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said unto them.....It is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. Now this he said not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation," etc. (John xi. 49-52).

The author of the Fourth Gospel thought that the office of high priest was held for one year only, like that of the Roman consul, and that while filling that office he had a foreknowledge of coming events. The same author represents Jesus as saying that his death must be by crucifixion, as typified by the Brazen Serpent (Num. xxi. 9).

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so *must* the Son of man be lifted up" (iii. 14).

There being no account in the Old Testament of anyone having been crucified, the Gospel-maker, in default of a "prophecy," had to fall back upon a "type." But apart from a few brief statements in the Pauline Epistles—*e.g.*, "Jesus Christ and him crucified"—we have no evidence that an historical Jesus who suffered death by crucifixion ever lived. Moses' brazen serpent on the top of a pole, however, placed the matter beyond all doubt: this was certainly a type of Jesus Christ; Jesus was therefore crucified, and a detailed narrative of the event had to be written.

In this narrative Jesus was represented as silent before his accusers in accordance with the statement in Isaiah liii.—"He was oppressed, yet he humbled himself and opened not his mouth," etc. False witnesses were brought against him at the trial (Mark xvi. 56) in order to fulfil a "prediction" of what had already occurred—Psalm xxxv. 11. The council, we are told, had sought for other witnesses against Jesus, but "found them not." Had the last-named personage really destroyed a herd of swine without recompensing the owners, as narrated by all three Synoptists, someone would certainly have been forthcoming to depose to such a wanton destruction of property, more especially since an account of the alleged occurrence is stated to have been published by the herdsmen "in the city and in the country."

Jesus was next represented as having been mocked, scourged, buffeted, and spat upon, in order to fulfil another "prophecy" of Isaiah (l. 6)—indignities stated to have been suffered by Isaiah himself. That the Gospel-maker had his eye on this passage is proved by the fact that, some time before, Jesus was described as saying to his disciples:—

"Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and all the things that are written by the prophets shall be accomplished unto the Son of man. For he shall be delivered up to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and shamefully entreated, and spit upon; and they shall scourge and kill him," etc. (Luke xviii. 31-33).

A passage in the Psalms (xxii. 7-8), in which the writer described the treatment borne by himself, was likewise brought into requisition. This passage reads:—

"All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighteth in him."

After reading this passage the Gospel-maker had no difficulty in describing the treatment of Jesus by the imaginary Jews he represented as present at the Crucifixion.

"And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying.....He trusted on God; let him deliver him now, if he desireth him" (Matt. xxviii. 39-43).

The words put in the mouth of Jesus on the cross in the First and Second Gospels—"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—were copied verbatim from Psalm xxii. 1. Those given in the Third Gospel—"Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit"—were copied verbatim from Psalm xxxi. 5. Whether Jesus had said them, or not, they were at least suitable to the occasion, and the Gospel history had to be written.

A second saying in the Third Gospel—"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"—appears to be a later interpolation; for it is not found in some ancient MSS. Jesus was described in the Gospel story as crucified between two robbers. This was done to fulfil the statement in Isaiah liii.—"He was numbered with the transgressors." It was the continuation of this statement—"and made intercession for the transgressors"—which suggested the second saying placed in the mouth of Jesus—"Father, forgive them," etc.

The piercing of the hands and feet by the nails in the cross, and the giving vinegar and gall to drink, were suggested by the following passages in the Psalms:—

Ps. xxii. 16.—"They pierced my hands and my feet."

Ps. lxix. 21.—"They gave me also gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink."

The author of the Fourth Gospel made his Lord say "I thirst," in order that they might give him the vinegar and gall, and so fulfil the "prophecy"; and when this was done, and everything fulfilled, he made him say "It is finished." The latter exclamation referred, not to the work of redemption, but to the fulfilment of prophecy.

The same conscientious writer fabricated two new incidents as a further fulfilment of prophecy. According to this story, the soldiers received orders to hasten the death of the three men crucified by breaking their legs; but when they came to Jesus they found he was dead already, and so "brake not his legs." One of them, however, pierced his side with a spear. The veracious narrator of these incidents then says:—

"For these things came to pass, that the scripture might be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced."

The language of the first passage quoted (Psalm xxxiv. 20) is metaphorical, and signifies that "the righteous" who trusted in Yahveh would not be allowed to perish under afflictions. The reference in the second passage (Zech. xii. 10) is uncertain.

The words of Psalm xxii. 8—"They part my garments among them, and upon my vesture do they cast lots"—contributed to the making up of the history of the Lord Jesus. These two sentences are an example of Hebrew parallelism, the second being simply a varied repetition of the first. The "vesture" was but another name for the "garments," and the division was made by casting lots. The three Synoptists were aware of this, and say: "And they crucify him, and part his garments among them, casting lots upon them, what each should take." The author of the Fourth Gospel, however, took the

two parallel sentences as independent statements of fact, and framed his narrative in accordance.

John xix. 23-24.—“The soldiers therefore, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to each soldier a part; and also the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore one to another, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.”

We may assert, without much fear of refutation, “These things therefore the soldiers did” *not* do.

The darkness which is alleged to have taken place at the Crucifixion was, like all the other incidents, suggested by prophecy—a genuine one in this case.

Amos viii. 9.—“And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord God, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in clear day.”

Luke xxiii. 44.—“And it was now about the sixth hour, and a darkness came over the whole earth until the ninth hour, the sun failing.” (The “sixth hour” was noon.)

The story of the burial of the body in a tomb belonging to a rich man, Joseph of Arimathæa, was invented to fulfil a statement in Isaiah liii.—“They made his grave.....with the rich in his death.”

The fable of the watch at the sepulchre (Matt. xxvii. 62-66) is one of the few incidents in the Gospels not derived from the Hebrew scriptures. The story was fabricated as an answer to deniers of the alleged Resurrection, who contended that if the tomb was found to be empty, it was because the disciples had secretly removed the body (Matt. xxviii. 15).

ABRACADABRA.

(To be concluded.)

“If Everything Were Known.”

I HAD before me a shilling volume nearly twenty years old, with a title which must be one of the shortest in existence: *IF*. On the cover of the book was a picture of a pig with wings, and, as I glanced at it, the absurdity was heightened by a clerical gentleman, in my hearing with the help of the wireless, addressing his deity as one “which passeth all understanding.” Inside the volume, I noticed particularly three pictures—a railway station, a landing stage and a prison. Each was headed with the same phrase, “If everything were known” and each contained a huge crowd. This attempt to forecast the effort of the transpiration of the moral delinquencies of the man in the street caused my thoughts to traverse a well-worn path of speculation. What would happen “if everything were known” with regard to religious opinion?

Two recent personal experiences suggest that there would be disclosed a large body of unsuspected heretics. In one case a brilliant, young man of Jewish parentage, acknowledged his disbelief in the ancient faith of his fathers immediately on hearing my views. He had not told his parents as he thought it might upset them, and he never told anybody else because if he declared himself an Atheist he might be suspected of endeavouring to hide his Jewish origin.

The second man had suppressed his opinions to avoid giving pain to his parents. They were deeply religious, and had compelled him when a child to attend church with unusual frequency and regularity. He found it difficult to justify his non-attendance now, but had discovered a novel excuse. Church-

going, he informed his parents, was like the old type of volunteering; you attended so many drills and then you were proficient, and he had completed his quota as a child.

Notwithstanding the discovery of a large number of Freethinkers, the publication of religious opinion would show the existence of a vast majority who in fact, as well as nominally, supported one or other of the “true faiths”—modified “true faiths, but none the less “true faiths.” Of these, we should want to know something more. How did they come to adopt their faith; and why do they cling to it? We should find it largely a matter of geography; their beliefs were settled by their places of birth. They are where they are, mentally, because they are where they are, physically, and because they are what they are. They made no conscious effort to get to their present mental position, and are not likely to make one to get away from it.

Picture a spiritual sergeant-major (if it is possible to contemplate such a contradiction in terms) pointing to one of an awkward squad, and demanding: “How did you become a Christian?” And the inevitable answer: “I was standing at the corner of the street.”

G. J. F.

Drama and Dramatists.

THE very title of the play, “Yellow Sands,” has an atmosphere that provokes the mind to think of “The Tempest.” Mr. Eden and Miss Adelaide Phillpotts have, in their play, reached the autumnal stage of English Comedy. Ripe, mellow, gentle, persuasive and with more sense to the square inch than may be found in the numerous ruined hulks of plays now encumbering the London stage, it reaches port in the third act, leaving us unconsciously in agreement with Meredith’s definition of comedy. “To love comedy you must know the real world, and know men and women well enough not to expect too much of them, though you may still hope for good.” Life is neither a vale of tears nor a Turkish bath of delight. It is a little of each, and a human face at sixty years of age is a map on which may be traced the marks from the hand of Time. It was James Thomson who, in writing of Leopardi, stated that there were three stages, but Leopardi only reached the second. The first stage was that everything in the world was good. Here we must pause to make our bow to a polite fiction, from which we emerged, slightly battered and dog-eared. The second stage was that, where the world was all bad. Was not “Timon of Athens” an enlargement of this distorted picture? The third stage was, that a point was reached, providing that the old man with the scythe had not interfered with progress, at the period when the world was a bit of each—which is something like backing a horse both ways. Perhaps Blake, with his gift for epigrams, defined this stage with a minimum of words:—

Man was made for joy and woe,
And, when this we rightly know
Safely through the world you go.

For every sorrowful man found by Pascal, Voltaire offered to find a cheerful one, and the joint authors of “Yellow Sands” have deftly conveyed the philosophy of cheerfulness in the common speech of our country leaving quidnuncs and superior people to jangle over the profound question of the pronunciation of the words Pall Mall as to whether it should be Pell Mell, Pal Maul or Pill Mill, when anybody knows that it does not mean the New Cut.

There are only eleven characters in the play, but each one is vital to the unity, and each one helps to produce a perfect picture of life that is the dream and despair of the idealist. If only real life could be like it, with nothing more at its fiercest than a punch on the nose, much modern rubbish that passes for necessity would be obliterated. Richard Varwell is a good-natured old man, who has his price, despises clothes, and plays the

piano is public houses. His comments during the progress of the play are of the same nature, in their directness, as that of the little child in the fairy tale who called out that the king was naked.

Uncle Dick is discovered in the first act, engaged in sunning himself on the beach, and his Whitman language on the necessity of loafing and dreaming begins at once to thaw the hearts of the audience engaged in their spare time with questions about coal. The story revolves itself round a will that is made by Aunt Jenifer Varwell, who has more than her usual share of shrewdness and insight. Joe Varwell, her nephew, is the outspoken Socialist, who chooses his aunt's party in the drawing-room as a fitting time and place for a fight. Mary Varwell, a relative, is a sanctimonious woman compounded, one would think, of vinegar, tin-tacks and broken glass. Always with an uncomfortable and Christian chorus, she delivers her observations in the wrong place, yet one cannot fail to recognise the type which flourished in abundance about twenty years ago and is not yet extinct. At the reading of the will following the funeral, black justice is meted out, and the lawyer reminds the pleased and displeased that the woman has exercised her irrevocable right of having the last word. The parrot, "Cocoa," described by Uncle Dick as having round, religious eyes like those of his sister, Mary Varwell, is allocated to one; the prize lobster, and the ship worked in wool are left to others, together with sums of money. Our hero, none other than Uncle Dick, somewhat testily and impatient about lack of news, asks the lawyer: "Is the family in sight yet?" And then the family bequests are read. One hundred pounds to himself, provided that none of it is spent in alcoholic liquor, and on condition that he buys himself a new suit and two pairs of boots. He is very good at arithmetic. What does he want two pairs of boots for?—he has only two feet. And this gives Mary Varwell an opportunity of reminding him that she has seen the time when he needed them. To this lady, who has been listening in high hopes, there is left a text from over the mantel-piece in the bedroom: "Faith, Hope and Charity." To the Socialist nephew is left the bulk of his aunt's money and the cottage, with the injunction that the claims of the under-dog must be met without disturbing the upper-dog. The third act comes to a close with a pairing off of the marriageable couples after a love scene in which the author excels. These are usually mawkish affairs on the stage, but Mr. Phillpotts has the happy knack of making them real, simple, and sincere.

The Thames still flows under Westminster Bridge, "The Farmer's Wife" still plays to a crowded house, and "Yellow Sands" appears to have every chance of taking root at the Haymarket. One novelist, Richardson, lost a lot of money there, but this particular theatre has all seats bookable—doubtless to the annoyance of the Street Entertainers' Union.

Mr. Cedric Hardwicke as Uncle Dick is excellent. He acts with his legs and arms and body, and makes the old reprobate lovable and likeable, plus his song about the beggar with a shirt that let in the wind and the fleas, and his trousers that let them out. If ever anyone should despair of the art of characterization on the stage here is an actor to bid the pessimist rejoice. Mr. Frank Vosper did splendidly as Joe Varwell who hated the "blarsted capitalist," and Miss Amy Veness, as Mary Varwell, admirably filled the part of those saintly wet blankets that prowl round villages doing the minimum of good with the maximum of harm and discomfort. The rest of the caste were on the same level of excellence and the company enjoyed the play, whilst giving pleasure to the audience.

"What we want," says Uncle Dick, "is mercy for ourselves and justice for everybody else." This would appear to be an oblique agreement of the authors with Schopenhauer, when he wrote that we might address anyone as "Fellow Sufferer," be he rich or poor, good or bad. The only reason Whitman desired immortality was to enable him to read all the good books in the world. In terms of eternity, a human life is as a grain of sand compared to all the other grains in the world. With the wand of comedy, cruelty is brushed aside, gentle laughter leads us away from the commonplace

world marked out with minutes on the clock-face, and interest holds us until we have breathed the south-west air from the sea of make-believe.

When Prospero broke his staff it was thought that Shakespeare had come to the end of his work for the stage. We hope that there is no such parallel in "Yellow Sands," and that Mr. Eden Phillpotts will continue to sweeten national life with his comedies. If there were such things as wise Governments, it would pay them to subsidise performances of such comedies in cities, towns and villages. In wrestling, there is a term called the "double nelson," a two-handed fatal lock. In this art used in connection with religion, plain and fancy, Mr. Phillpotts is a past master, and he should give courage and energy to those who are in the front rank of the fight with humbug. And, after all, it was very pleasing to hear an audience taking medicine with a laugh.

WILLIAM REPTON.

Correspondence.

KARL MARX AND JESUS CHRIST.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I feel obliged to Mr. J. L. Garrickson for his kindly reference to my *Reminiscences*, which appeared in the issue of December 19, and would like briefly to reply to his criticisms. He finds the sting of the article in the tail. Curiously enough, I sent a copy of it to a Spiritualist friend of mine, and he found the sting in the head. I also posted one to a dear Christian friend, and he found the sting somewhere about the middle. I sent these *Freethinkers* in place of Christmas Cards, hoping to stimulate the Christmas feeling of peace and goodwill, but it appears I was only successful in producing a number of stings. Some people have such sensitive skins that they feel the prick at the very sight of a pin-point.

My offence, with Mr. Garrickson, was in coupling the names of Karl Marx and Jesus Christ, and making him partly responsible for the miners' debacle. I was using these names, of course, as synonyms for the activities of the bodies who profess to be their followers. And in saying that Karl Marx had led the miners into a ditch, and left them there, I was only stating what appears to me to be an indisputable fact. It is not a question of the validity of any economic theories, but purely a question of fact. Mr. Garrickson questions the "relevancy of coupling the names of Karl Marx and Jesus Christ." It is justified in this way. Christianity has always taught the people to be content with their miserable lot here on earth, with the promise of happiness in the heaven to come. The Communist also justifies present suffering and misery on a wholesale scale with the promise of some social millenium that may, or may not, arrive. Karl Marx's Atheism is not to the point. I could tell him of other equally prominent Atheists who have inaugurated social movements which have only aggravated the evils they set out to redress.

Mr. Garrickson asks: "Why do Freethinkers show such a ready tendency to dub as cranks anyone differing from them politically?" This query shows, I think, a slight misunderstanding of the Freethought position. Freethinkers, as such, have no politics; whatever their views as citizens and patriots may be. I may have as definite economic views as Mr. Garrickson, but I do not obtrude them upon the readers of the *Freethinker*. The "ill-suppressed bias," of which I am accused, is only imaginary on our correspondent's part.

The gratuitous suggestion as to what Freethinkers should concentrate upon, is, I imagine, best left to individual Freethinkers themselves. We cannot all be Foote's or Cohen's, and can only do the work for which our capabilities fit us. And in that work, I am sure, we will all be glad of Mr. Garrickson's co-operation.

JOSEPH BRYCE.

ARE WE AUTOMATONS?

SIR,—In your issue of October 31, you say that Mr. Bullett "sadly needs to pay more attention to the meaning of 'Causes' in discussing either Science or

Scientific Determinism." Mr. Bullett explains the doctrine of Determinism as follows:—"Everything that is or happens is at once the effect of innumerable causes and the cause of innumerable effects. The causes of our acts mental as well as physical) are in ourselves, but those causes are the effects of other causes which are anterior to ourselves, and for which, therefore, we cannot be held responsible." This seems to me quite clear and undeniable. The fault with most determinists is that they try to obscure the fact that all loving creatures are natural automatons, doing as they must do. Of course we are responsible to our fellows, but not to Nature which has made us, and makes us do what we do. The apparent freedom of the will is Nature's lubricant to keep the more complicated parts of his machinery moving. Time and the hour roll on and Destiny reveals itself automatically in a series of living pictures. We have presented to us the spectacular drama of Fate's Kinema without money and without price. Words are useless to disguise the fact that men do as they must do, and can do no otherwise. Therefore we are all natural automatons.

J. G. ROOSE.

REASON *versus* TRUTH.

SIR,—When Dr. Stanton Coit, in his after-dinner speech on the occasion of Mr. J. M. Robertson's birthday denounced the theory which he is reported to have described as deriving "all initiative, all drive, all mental energy in man.....from the instincts we share with the lower animals," I seemed to hear an echo of the outcry of Darwin's opponents nearly seventy years ago. They, it will be remembered, asserted very vehemently that those who taught the descent of man from the lower animals degraded and humiliated humanity.

I am neither opposing nor supporting Dr. Coit's Championship of Reason against Instinct, but merely pointing out a vital fact which he seems to have forgotten, and which cannot be over emphasized,—*i.e.*, that it is not Reason but Truth which should be the object of our quest. Reason is but the lamp which lights us in our search for Truth, and we must abide by what it shows us—not by what we should like it to show us.

The whole question is surely a matter of evidence, and it is Reason itself which must first weigh and then accept or reject what is put forward (whether for or against) the New Psychology. If the decision, scientifically based on facts, should be in favour of the latter, the dictates of Reason must be obeyed, even though it seems in a measure to dethrone itself. Otherwise Rationalists are flouting the very Reason they profess to honour and follow.

New Psychologists *find* facts—they do not *make* them. "Things are what they are," observes that judicious reasoner, Butler, "and the consequences of them will be what they will be." And, as he very pertinently asks: "Why, then, should we seek to deceive ourselves?"

F. E. M. MACAULAY.

Lines to Annie.

ANNIE dear, whate'er betide you,
In the paths of yet-to-be,
Let enlightened reason guide you;
This alone can make you free.
There are creeds and dogmas many:
There are countless preachers, too;
But the question is, dear Annie:
Are these creeds and dogmas true?
I remember once a tutor,
In a country Sunday school,
Said: "The unbelievers' future
Is a boiling lava pool:
There all unbelievers languish,
Doomed to never, never die,
Ever racked with pain and anguish."
Annie, don't believe this lie.

S. P., 80 years old.
To a grandchild, 20 years old.
(A Sunday School Teacher).

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.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E. (corner of Southampton Street): 7, Mr. G. F. Holland, "Art and Modern Life."

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (101 Tottenham Court Road): 7.30, Mr. A. Hyatt, a Lecture. Thursday, January 6, at the same time and place, Mr. Botting, "Evolution."

OUTDOOR.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Common): 11.30, a Lecture.

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Hyde Park): 11.30 and 3. Speakers—Messrs. Botting, Hart, and Piper.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Concert (in aid of Leicester Infirmary).

Glasgow Secular Society (Branch of the N.S.S.)

The President and Committee
wish

Members and Friends

A Happy and Prosperous New Year

IN A MOMENT the ashes are made, but a forest is a long time growing. Ashes have never been our pursuit, and our forest, which is a perfect tailoring system, is already much more than a mere plantation. Clients, which are its trees, are even in your locality. Get their names by writing immediately for any of the following:—*Gents' A to D Patterns, suits from 55s.; Gents' E Patterns, suits all at 67s. 6d.; Gents' F to I Patterns, suits from 75s.; Gents' J to N Patterns, suits from 104s. 6d.; Gents' Overcoat Patterns, prices from 48s. 6d.; or Ladies' Fashion and Pattern Sets, costumes from 57s., coats from 53s.*—MACCONNELL & MABE, New Street, Bakewell, Derbyshire.

UNWANTED CHILDREN

In a Civilized Community there should be no UNWANTED Children.

For List of Birth-Control Requisites send 1½d. stamp to
J. R. HOLMES, East Hanney, Wantage, Berkshire.
(Established nearly Forty Years.)

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.).

CHARLES BRADLAUGH, by THE RIGHT HON. J. M. ROBERTSON. An Authoritative Life of one of the greatest Reformers of the Nineteenth Century, and the only one now obtainable. With four portraits. Cloth Bound, 3s. 6d. (postage 2½d.).

VOLTAIRE, by THE RIGHT HON. J. M. ROBERTSON. In Paper Covers, 2s. (postage 2d.). Cloth Bound, 3s. 6d. (postage 2½d.).

ROBERT G. INGERSOLL, by C. T. GORHAM. A Biographical Sketch of America's greatest Freethought Advocate. With four plates. In Paper Covers, 2s. (postage 2d.). Cloth Bound, 3s. 6d. (postage 2½d.).

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 Farringdon Street, E.C.4.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, Ltd.

Company Limited by Guarantee.

Registered Office: 62 Farringdon St., London, E.C.4.

Secretary: MISS E. M. VANCE.

THIS Society was formed in 1898 to afford legal security to the acquisition and application of funds for Secular purposes.

The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of inquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularization of the State, etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

Members pay an entrance fee of ten shillings, and a subsequent yearly subscription of five shillings.

The liability of members is limited to £1, in case the Society should ever be wound up.

All who join the Society participate in the control of its business and the trusteeship of its resources. It is expressly provided in the Articles of Association that no member, as such, shall derive any sort of profit from the Society, either by way of dividend, bonus, or interest.

The Society's affairs are managed by an elected Board of Directors, one-third of whom retire (by ballot), each year, but are eligible for re-election.

Friends desiring to benefit the Society are invited to make donations, or to insert a bequest in the Society's favour in their wills. The now historic decision of the House of Lords *in re Bowman and Others v. the Secular Society, Limited*, in 1917, a verbatim report of which may be obtained from its publishers, the Pioneer Press, or from the Secretary, makes it quite impossible to set aside such bequests.

A Form of Bequest.—The following is a sufficient form of bequest for insertion in the wills of testators:—

I give and bequeath to the Secular Society, Limited, the sum of £— free from Legacy Duty, and I direct that a receipt signed by two members of the Board of the said Society and the Secretary thereof shall be a good discharge to my Executors for the said Legacy.

It is advisable, but not necessary, that the Secretary should be formally notified of such bequests, as wills sometimes get lost or mislaid. A form of membership, with full particulars, will be sent on application to the Secretary, Miss E. M. VANCE, 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

The Ethic of Freethought

By KARL PEARSON, F.R.S.

Price 5s. 6d., postage 6d.

A Candid Examination of Theism

By "PHYSICUS" (G. J. Romanes)

Price 3s. 6d., postage 4d.

Kafir Socialism and the Dawn of Individualism

By DUDLEY KIDD

Price 3s., postage 6d.

Only a very limited number of each of these books are available. Those desiring copies should order at once

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 Farringdon Street, E.C.4.

PIONEER PRESS PUBLICATIONS

THE BIBLE HANDBOOK.

For Freethinkers and Enquiring Christians.

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

NEW EDITION

(Issued by the Secular Society, Limited.)

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

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

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

A Book that Made History.

THE RUINS:

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

By C. F. VOLNEY.

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

Price 5s., postage 3d.

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

GOD AND EVOLUTION.

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

A Straightforward Essay on the Question.

Price 6d., postage 1d.

COMMUNISM AND CHRISTIANISM.

By BISHOP W. MONTGOMERY BROWN, D.D.

A book that is quite outspoken in its attacks on Christianity and on fundamental religious ideas. It is an unsparing criticism of Christianity from the point of view of Darwinism and of Sociology from the point of view of Marxism. 204 pp.

Price 1s., post free.

Spectral terms for quantities.

A Book with a Bite.

BIBLE ROMANCES.

(FOURTH EDITION.)

By G. W. FOOTE.

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

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

The Egyptian Origin of Christianity.

THE HISTORICAL JESUS AND MYTHICAL CHRIST.

By GERALD MASSEY.

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

Price 6d., postage 1d.

CHRISTIANITY AND CIVILIZATION.

A Chapter from

The History of the Intellectual Development of Europe.

By JOHN WILLIAM DRAPER, M.D., LL.D.

Price 2d., postage ½d.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 Farringdon Street, E.C.4.

London Freethinkers' THIRTIETH ANNUAL DINNER

(Under the Auspices of the National Secular Society.)

AT THE

Midland Grand Hotel, N.W.

ON

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 12, 1927

Chairman - - Mr. CHAPMAN COHEN

Reception at 6.30.

Dinner at 7 p.m. prompt.

TICKETS 8s. Tickets will be considered sold, and the seats reserved, unless returned by January 8.

EVENING DRESS OPTIONAL

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

THE NEW PSYCHOLOGY

FIVE AUTHORITATIVE WORKS. ALL AS NEW

The Psychology of Self-Consciousness

By JULIA TURNER, B.A. (Lond.)

Published at 6s. 6d. net. Price 3s. 6d.
(Postage 4d.)

Our Phantastic Emotions

By T. KENRICK SLADE, B.Sc.

Published at 6s. 6d. net. Price 3s. 6d.
(Postage 4d.)

Taboo and Genetics

A Study of the Biological, Sociological, and Psychological Foundation of the Family; a Treatise showing the previous Unscientific Treatment of the Sex Problem in Social Relationships

By M. M. KNIGHT, Ph.D.;
IVA LOWTHER PETERS, Ph.D.; and
PHYLLIS BLANCHARD, Ph.D.

Part I.—The New Biology and the Sex Problem in Society
Part II.—The Institutionalized Sex Taboo
Part III.—The Sex Problem in the Light of Modern Psychology

Published at 10s. 6d. net. Price 4s.
(Postage 5½d.)

The Psychoanalytic Method

By Dr. OSKAR PFISTER

With Introduction by Professor FREUD and
Professor G. S. STANLEY HALL

A Comprehensive Introduction to the
Subject, with special reference to Edu-
cation. 591 pages and 6 plates

Published at 25s. net. Price 6s. 6d.
(Postage 9d.)

The Caveman Within Us

A Study of the Play of Primitive Impulses
in Human Society with Suggestions for
turning these to Useful Purposes

By W. J. FIELDING

Published at 10s. 6d. net. Price 4s.
(Postage 6d.)

Only a very limited number of each of these
books are available. Those desiring copies
should order at once

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGDON STREET, LONDON, E.C.4.

Printed and Published by THE PIONEER PRESS (G. W. FOOTE AND CO., LTD.), 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.