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Views and Opinions.

Bishop Barnes on His Defence.

I HAVE said more than once that the most severe indictment of present-day culture is that men may gain the reputation of being advanced or daring thinkers on account of their public repudiation of belief in such stories as the Biblical account of creation, or the magical transformation of bread and wine into human flesh and blood. In a gathering of children one might reasonably admire the shrewdness of a youngster who ventured the opinion that the visit of Santa Claus, via the chimney, was all bosh. In a gathering of adults such a confession would only be taken as an indication of undeveloped intelligence. It is not the disbelief, but the belief in the historical accuracy of Bible folk-lore that should create surprise. Unquestionably, the historian of the future will conclude when he studies the records of twentieth century religious controversy, and notes the comments in the Press that a great deal of our development was, to use an expression of Bishop Barnes, "upon the level of savage culture," and he may even cite Bishop Barnes and others as illustrative instances.

Under the title of *Should such a Faith Offend?* Bishop Barnes has just published a collection of sermons, intended to show his fellow Christians that though he may not believe all they believe, he has yet quite enough of the beliefs of the Stone Age to justify his inclusion in the ranks of faithful believers in Christianity. He is anxious to make it quite plain that, in fact, he believes all they believe, but not in the same way. In ordinary matters, if a man attaches a different meaning to a formula that would be taken as equal to a rejection. If I ask for enrolment in some die-hard Conservative club, but explain that by Conservatism I mean the doctrine of the State which now obtains in once "Holy" Russia, there are not many Conservatives who would accept me as a faithful member of the party. They would say that if I do not attach the same meanings to certain things that others attach, then I do not believe in them at all. And in ordinary things they would be

quite right in so declaring. It is only in religion that two men may be held to agree if they accept a form of words, while each attaches a different meaning to it.

* * *

Heretics and Heresy.

There is much in this collection of sermons—those on Toleration, Commerce, Science and Humanism, etc., which almost anyone will be able to read with considerable sympathy. I suppose it is too much to expect that a Christian Bishop, even while condemning the persecution of one body of Christians by another, should spare just a passing word of recognition for the large number of Freethinkers who endured persecution of the most malignant kind, and who really made it possible for Bishop Barnes and his kind to say what they have said. Yet it is quite certain that without Paine and Robert Owen, Hetherington, Carlile, Southwell, Holyoake, Bradlaugh and scores of others, Bishop Barnes would never be able to say with impunity what he does say. It ought never to be forgotten that the quantity and kind of heresy leaders of religion express is always determined by the quantity of disbelief general in the community. Where heresy is concerned a parson is a barometer, not a motor.

* * *

Gentle as a Sucking Dove.

Those who pictured Bishop Barnes as either leaving the Church, or remaining in it while pursuing a persuasively educational policy that would educate many out of Christianity altogether, will not receive much encouragement from this confession of faith. He reaffirms his disbelief in the miraculous transformation of the bread and wine into flesh and blood, but affirms that the Sacrament is the means by which "spiritual grace" is given to the worshipper. He prefers the psychological miracle to the physical one, which is a distinction without any substantial difference—unless he means that if the believer eats the bread and drinks the wine, believing that he will receive the grace of God in doing so, he will feel some benefit by it. In that case all it means is that if a man "kids" himself hard enough he will believe; and one may assume, if the *Freethinker* was taken by the communicant in the same spirit, it would have an identical effect. Evolution is "a vast scheme planned by God," "the whole evolutionary process . . . is the result of God's continuous action," although we are still left in the dark why a God who could create the universe with all its forces for the purpose of working out a plan, should have found a plan necessary at all. A plan is only a means of reaching an end, and if the end can be realized at once without the slow and bungling movements of a "plan," it would seem to be folly not to pursue the

direct method. He also accepts the story of the resurrection, because without it "We cannot understand the history of the early Church." Moreover, it is "congruous with our expectations." That is possible, but one may question the reasonableness of the expectations.

Science, he says, "has banished the gods," but he asks, "Has it banished God?" Well, if it has banished all the gods that it has come into contact with, that is all that it can reasonably be asked to do in the way of god-killing. It cannot banish what it does not know. It is incredible to him that the universe should be "a self-acting machine," and for that reason science cannot do without religion. For one thing science cannot, on the assumption of the universe being a self-acting machine, explain man's "spiritual faculties," or the "religious sense." But there are no such things as a "religious faculty" and a "religious sense." The qualities of mind that man uses in relation to religion are exactly the same qualities of mind he uses in relation to other subjects. Bishop Barnes might just as well argue that science must admit the existence of ghosts because it cannot explain man's sense of them. Science deals with ghosts, not by way of explaining them as due to the activity of some mysterious ghostly "faculty," but by laying bare the cause which led people to believe in them. And that really is all there is to deal with in religion. Find out why people came to believe in Gods and ghosts, and you know all about them. Never yet was there a God who could withstand an exposure of his origin.

* * *

The Bishop and the Bible.

One could, if one were so inclined, make each chapter in Bishop Barnes's book the subject of a separate article. And as a study in fallacy that might prove interesting enough. But I must content myself, for the present, with dealing with what I consider to be, not merely a fundamental fallacy on the part of Bishop Barnes, but of apologists in general. Bishop Barnes, in common with many modern apologists, is engaged in the task of "reinterpreting" Christian doctrines. And he appears to think, again a common feature of the tribe, that if it is possible to make Christian doctrines and the Bible mean something they never have meant to those who believe in them, the situation is saved. He gives them, he claims, a better faith than the one he is asking them to discard. That kind of thing might be admissible if we were dealing with something on which no settled beliefs had hitherto existed, or attempting a new interpretation of admitted facts. But I dissent most emphatically when we are dealing with a religious system, and when the aim is to keep that religious system in being by means of the suggested reinterpretation. More, I claim that it involves fundamental, even though unconscious, dishonesty. Bishop Barnes says in his chapter on the Bible, "the Bible that really matters to us is the Bible discovered by modern scholars." But that is emphatically not the case. If we are talking of the Bible as an object of Christian veneration, and of Christianity as the Christianity which the world has known and has believed in, we must mean the Christianity and the Bible in which people have believed. It will not do to mean by "Christianity" something in which people ought to have believed, or something in which one day they may believe. If we use the word honestly and properly we must mean what people have always understood by the term. But there is no question as to what has always been meant by belief in the Bible, neither is there any question as to what the Christian

Church as a whole has meant by it right up to recent times. The Bible was the Word of God. And by that they meant it contained the truth and nothing but the truth. They held that when it said certain things about the creation of the world and of man, these things were wholly true. The Bible was literally the word of God. Any attempt to question that was dealt with as the most serious of crimes. There are plenty who, even to-day, would drive Bishop Barnes out of the Church for questioning it. If we are to act honestly by one another we must take words to mean what their users understand by them, not by what it is possible for us to make them mean.

* * *

Identity and Difference.

I do not think that this much will be questioned by anyone. But Bishop Barnes says that does not matter, because we have learned to understand the Bible better. We know that the science of the Bible was the science of its writers. We know that the Bible was wrong about a whole host of things, scientific, ethical, religious, and historical. But nothing of this matters because modern scholarship shows us the Bible as "the revelation of God, not in some perfect scheme of abstract thought, but in the writings of men buffeted by the storms of life and baffled by human limitations as they tried to understand God's nature and purpose and to explain our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Thus, goodbye to all inspiration. The writers of the Bible were just ordinary men making guesses at the problems of life. All that one can say is that if that is the proper view of the Bible, there is no one that I know of who would ever have questioned it. To state it is to refute it.

But for the purpose of my argument it does not matter in the least whether Bishop Barnes is correct in his view of the Bible or otherwise. The plain fact that emerges is that, if he is right, all generations of Christian believers have been wrong, and all Christian teaching has been wrong. And that is what Freethinkers, from Spinoza to our own day have said. What I should like Bishop Barnes to explain is how one can show a specific teaching to be right by making it mean something entirely different from what it always has meant. It is no answer to say, "the belief I put before you is a quite reasonable one." I do not say it is not. I am content to say that it is not the established, the historic teaching, and if it is not that teaching, then it is a different teaching. And you simply cannot make a teaching right by suddenly making it mean something entirely different from what it has always been taken to mean. What Bishop Barnes rejects is the historic Bible. He may offer another Bible in its stead, but it is not the Christian Bible. What he appears to think is that if he can get people to believe that the Bible means something quite different from what they have always held it to mean, then it will remain the same Bible. And with quite admirable obstinacy his critics contend that if it is not their Bible that is being offered them, then it is another Bible altogether. That sounds very much like common sense, and also as an expression of common honesty.

So we come down to fundamental facts. A teaching must always be to those who believe in it what they take it to mean. If the meaning they attach to it is in conflict with truth, then the teaching is to them in conflict with truth. They do not show themselves to be correct by accepting an entirely new rendering, any more than a believer in the teaching that the sun went round the earth, could have proven that although he accepted the theory that the earth

went round the sun, he was always in the right because he had always believed in the same earth and the same sun. We should take up this attitude with regard to any question other than religion. Why cannot we act with equal honesty with regard to Christianity? Perhaps Bishop Barnes will condescend to supply an answer. But I have a rather strong suspicion that he will not venture on anything quite so risky.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Shelley's Favourite Poem.

"Sun-treader, life and light be thine for ever."

Robert Browning.

"O heart whose beating blood was running song."

Swinnburne.

"Spirits are not finely touched
But to fine issues."—Shakespeare.

It is related of Robert Browning that, as a young man, he one day passed a bookstall, and saw a volume advertised as "Mr. Shelley's Atheistical Poems, Scarce." Badly printed, shamefully mutilated, these discarded blossoms touched young Browning to new emotions. Indeed, this contact with the dead singer was the dawn of a new life to the clever lad. From that time Browning's poetic production began. This result was not surprising. Shelley is one of our greatest poets. To him song was natural speech. With a great outlay of labour, special education, and careful selection of circumstances, many have purchased their poetic rights as the chief captain bought the name of Roman, but Shelley was poet-born. Many of his contemporaries who completely overshadowed him whilst he was living have almost faded into mere names, but Shelley has still a future, for he has a message for generations unborn.

Shelley sang of a golden age, not behind us, but ahead. Long will it be ere the time when men "shall not learn war any more," or "live and move harmonious as the sacred stars above." Shelley's contemporaries were perfectly agreed that such ideas were but a mad illusion. And society denounced him accordingly, and fined and imprisoned the men and women who sold the poet's "Queen Mab." Florence to the living Dante was not more cruelly unjust than Georgian England to the living Shelley. Not until thirty years after the English poet's untimely death was his poetic glory widely acknowledged, and even at the Centenary Celebration at Horsham, most of the speakers referred very discreetly to Shelley's Freethought and Republican opinions, and emphasized his claims on the petty Sussex county families.

Shelley's subjects were not "Hours of Idleness," nor the naughty love affairs of Don Juan, but the perfectibility of human nature. It is the alpha and omega of his poetry. In the splendid rhetoric of "Queen Mab," in the nobler music of "The Revolt of Islam," in the exquisite melody of his masterpiece, "Prometheus Unbound," its expression glows well with the majestic inspiration of prophecy. And Shelley meant every word that he wrote. Shortly before his own untimely end, he said to his friend Trelawny, "I am ninety," meaning that he had lived and felt so intensely that he felt far older than his years. Nor was it an idle boast, for he was himself the Julian of his poem:—

"Me, who am as a nerve o'er which do creep
The else unfelt oppressions of this earth."

Shelley lived like a Spartan. A hunk of bread and a little fruit served him for a meal. "Mary, have I dined?" he once asked his wife. His income was largely spent on the poor, on helping struggling men of genius, and on necessitous friends. To help the

needy and to relieve the sick seemed to him a simple duty, which he carried out cheerfully. He inquired personally into the circumstances of his charities, visited the sick in their homes, and kept a list of poor persons whom he assisted. At Marlow he suffered from acute ophthalmia, contracted whilst visiting the afflicted lacemakers in their cottages. So practical was he that he even went to the length of attending a London hospital in order to acquire medical knowledge that should prove of service to the sick he visited.

Because of Shelley's Atheism, Christians gave the poet a bad name, and would gladly have imprisoned him, as they actually did imprison the men and women who sold his "Queen Mab," which was not the juvenile work that orthodox critics pretend. During the last years of his life, when his intellect was mature, Shelley told Captain Trelawny that the matter of that poem was good; it was only the treatment that was immature. Shelley's masterpiece, "Prometheus Unbound," written in the meridian of his splendid genius, deals with emancipate Humanity no less than the earlier work. The glorious speech which ends the third act describes thrones, altars and judgment seats, as parts of one great system of misrule, and pictures man as really free, and only hampered by death from oversailing:—

"The loftiest star of unascended heaven,
Pinnacled dim in the intense inane."

The great poet springs from the earth like his own skylark. And the same magnificent idea finds expression at the close of the fifth act:—

"To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;
To love and bear; to hope till Hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent;
This, like thy glory, Titan! is to be
Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free,
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire and Victory!"

This is the keynote of this masterpiece. "Prometheus," said Shelley himself, "is my favourite poem. It is, in my judgment, of a higher character than anything I have yet attempted. It is original, and cost me severe mental labour." He was right. His picture of emancipated humanity is noble and inspiring in its scope and significance, and grandly conceived. It is the finest triumph of Shelley's lyrical genius, and one of the glories of a thousand years of English literature.

What Shelley might have been we cannot conceive. At the age of thirty he was drowned, and his death was the greatest loss English literature ever sustained. Shelley has not only written "Prometheus Unbound," but he had just composed "The Cenci," the finest tragedy in the language since Shakespeare dropped the pen. And the realism of "The Cenci" is vastly different from the lyrical loveliness of "Prometheus Unbound," and only serves to show that there were many facets to Shelley's genius. Indeed, there was something of the genius of Shakespeare in this younger poet. For fecundity of ideas and figurative opulence Shelley yields only to Shakespeare, and, had his life been prolonged many years, what masterpieces might he not have written? Think for a moment! Had Shakespeare died at the same age as Shelley we should only have known of him as a young poet of much promise, and the full splendour of his incomparable genius have been denied us by an unkind Fate.

Shelley has been underrated by Christian writers who hated his Freethought opinions. These jaundiced critics declared, ignorantly, that Shelley was a poet concerned only with clouds and moonshine, and the stern realism of "The Cenci" was there to re-

buke them. Pious pundits said he had no humour, and Shelley's "Peter Bell," and his correspondence gave them the lie direct. The same critics damned "Queen Mab" as a schoolboy's essay, and it remains one of the most wonderful books ever written by a very young man. Not only is it full of poetry, but the scholarly and voluminous notes would not have discredited a German professor. So far from Shelley being an ineffectual writer, he is the one English author of the nineteenth century whose poems seem likely to outlast the twentieth century.

Shelley's ashes rest beneath the walls of Rome, by the Appian Way, and "Cor Cordium" ("Heart of Hearts") chiselled on his tomb well says what all who love Liberty feel when they think of this young Atheist poet, who gave his life to Humanity, and whose splendid genius was as free as an eagle with outstretched wings above the clouds.

MIMNERMUS.

"South Wind."

NORMAN DOUGLAS is an author whose books are sought after by the collector; the crank who sees joy in hoarding volumes, the first of their kind and possessed by few others. It is a typical product of the Christian countries, this collecting. Greed, selfishness and stupidity are lumped together and pass muster as a mildly intellectual and eminently respectable practice, affecting Christian and unbeliever alike. Should the bibliolater, however, by some strange chance, venture in within the covers of his find, especially if that find be *South Wind*, he would come upon some worldly philosophy calculated to make him see the current values in a different, if somewhat clearer light, to that attainable by the collector's myopic vision. Common folk have the opportunity of imbibing the philosophy of *South Wind* by the publication of a three-and-sixpenny edition of Mr. Douglas's book in the Adelphi Library, and it may be noted in passing that a book containing such destructive criticism of Christianity can be broadcast at the present day by and as the result of the efforts of the old pioneers of Freethought. Their fight for mental freedom made it possible for a Bishop Barnes to strut his fitful moment on the stage and for the far more important work of men like Norman Douglas, whose book is a definite contribution to a reasoned conception of life.

South Wind is a book of philosophy dressed up in a little fiction. The south wind itself is that which blows across the island of Nepenthe, and is held responsible for, among other things, the return of a bishop to sanity, although that involves the condoning of a murder, and the materialistic utterances of one Keith, who is an unspoilt Atheist and an unrespectable member of a community given to respectability at any cost. But he moved in respectable society, and so came in contact with the Bishop of Bampopo, whose interest in the well-being of some incurable heathen in Equatorial Africa had arrested his spiritual development. Keith undertook to make good the deficiency, and discoursed to the listening Bishop on the origin of gods. He had no use for them himself. "I can find no room in my Cosmos for a deity," he said, "save as a waste product of human weakness, an excrement of the imagination." "Nowadays," he goes on, "though I still pick up an Oriental rug now and then, I have no further use for Oriental gods." "The drawback of Oriental gods is that they have been manufactured by the proletariat for the use of the aristocracy. They act accordingly; that is, they distill the morality of their

creators, which I consider a noxious emanation. The classic gods were different. They were invented by intellectualists, who felt themselves capable of maintaining a kind of comradeship with their deities. Men and gods were practically on a level. They walked hand in hand over the earth. These gods belonged to what one might call the horizontal or downstairs variety." The upstairs or vertical variety was that created by the proletariat, who wanted a god who could look down upon them and approved of grovelling. "They exalt this to an infinite degree in point of goodness and distance, and in so doing they inevitably abase themselves." The Bishop, naturally, could not grasp the distinction between the horizontal and vertical god idea, and Keith was at pains to point out that a god dwelling at some vast distance "necessitated a troublesome code of verbal signals, unintelligible to common folk, for the expression of mutual desires. You cannot have any god of this kind without some such cumbrous contrivance to bridge over the gulf and make communication possible." The Bishop had the hang of this all right, he was on his native heath, so to speak, but Keith denounced the system as both vulgar and expensive. "Think of the wastage, of the myriads of people who have been sacrificed because they misinterpreted some enigmatical word in the code." And when his lordship shifted his ground to that of morality, the irrepressible Atheist continued the attack. "The laws of morality," boomed the Bishop, "have been written down for our guidance in letters that never change." "Never change!" "The proof that the laws of good conduct change is this, that if you were upright, after the fashion of your great-grandfather, you would find yourself in the clutches of the law for branding a slave, or putting a bullet through someone in a duel. . . . The Spartans, a highly moral people, thought it positively indecent not to steal. A modern vice, such as mendacity, was accounted a virtue by the greatest nation of antiquity. A modern virtue, like that of forgiving one's enemies, was accounted a vice proper for slaves." And so on until the Bishop was fain to admit that morality was not a boon from on high, but the expression of a reasoned self-interest here on Earth.

Another member of this delightful community, Count Caloveglin, the cultured fabricator of the Locri Faun, a priceless antique, and the friend of Mr. van Koppen, an American millionaire, whose idea of the millennium included "something with girls in it," fired broadsides into the Bishop's wavering faith. The Bible, in his opinion, was a violent document. "The Goth or Anglo-Saxon has taken kindly to this book because it has only suited his purpose. It has suited his purpose because, according to his abruptly varying moods he has never been at a loss to discover therein exactly what he wanted—authority for every grade of emotional conduct, from savage vindictiveness to the most abject self-abasement. One thing he would never have found, had he cared to look for it—an excitement to live the life of reason, to strive after intellectual honesty and self-respect." Which seems to me a moderate enough indictment of a creed that has specialized in intellectual dishonesty and debauched the mental currency perhaps more than any other religious system.

To return to Keith: his interest extended beyond that of religion; he kept his finger on the pulse of things. Lafcadio Hearn somewhere says, that the mission of the Jews was to bring light and sweetness into art and literature. Keith saw them at sterner work. "Have you noticed what a disruptive and irreverential brood they are? They move up and down society like some provocative fluid, insensible to our

ideals; they take a diabolical pleasure in shattering our old-established conceptions of right and wrong . . . and with all this materialism they have a mysterious feminine leaven of enthusiasm and unworldliness." Unfortunately, the only member of the Chosen Race on the island was anything but a light-bringer, but that did not overset the critic's judgment.

He was a full-blooded iconoclast in dealing with "Erehwon" Butler. J. M. Robertson, in his book on the Shakespearean Sonnets, has some very severe things to say about the "factitious falsity" of Butler's theory of the sonnets being a record of homosexual vice, and Keith is equally severe on his reaction to the work of Darwin. He was "bewildered by phenomena." "Think of when he wrote. It was an age of giants—Darwin and the rest of them. Their facts were too much for him; they impinged on some obscure old prejudices of his. They drove him into a clever perversity of humour. They account for his cat-like touches, his contrariness, his fondness for scoring off everybody from the Deity downwards, his premeditated irresponsibilities . . . He personifies the Revolt from Reason. He talks about the Scylla of Atheism and the Charybdis of Christianity—a state of mind which is not conducive to bold navigation. He was always wavering between the two in an attitude of surburban defiance, reconciling what is irreconcilable by extracting funny analogies all round for the edification of "nice people" like himself . . . He understood the teaching of the giants. But they irked him. To revenge himself he laid penny crackers under their pedestals. His whole intellectual fortune was spent in buying penny crackers . . . He lacked the male attributes of humility, reverence and sense of proportion."

The Bishop of Bampopo avowed he liked to hear Keith talk; I cannot imagine a Freethinker, who appreciates good writing and sound sense, being in anything but cordial agreement with the Prelate.

H. B. DODDS.

Masterpieces of Freethought.

II.—LETTERS ON JESUS CHRIST.

By John Clarke.

I.

THE full title of John Clarke's remarkable work is really worth giving. It is "*A Critical Review of the Life, Character, Miracles and Resurrection of Jesus Christ in a series of letters to Dr. Adam Clarke (Minister of the Gospel) by John Clarke (late of the Methodist connexion), who, for his religious opinions, was found worthy, by the Christian judge, Newman Knowlys, Recorder of London, on Thursday, June 10, 1824, in the New Court, Old Bailey, to be confined, in his Majesty's goal of Newgate, for the term of three years.*" They were fond of long titles in those days, and, in any case, this one has the merit of being clear, and of recording the infamous punishment of one of brave old Richard Carlile's shopmen. I have been unable to find any particulars of Clarke, except those given by our ever faithful Joseph Mazzini Wheeler in his *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers*. There is no mention of his birth or death. His three years' imprisonment was for publishing a "blasphemous" libel in the *Republican*—in which journal, no doubt, may be found a fuller account of Clarke. But in prison he wrote one of the most powerful attacks ever written against the Bible and Jesus. It was first published—think of it—in the *Newgate Magazine*, and then in 1825 and 1839 in book form.

Clarke was, what would be called nowadays, an uneducated man; yet I venture to affirm, very few Christians, and quite possibly no Freethinkers, possessed a greater knowledge of the Bible. He seems to have known it completely by heart. Throughout his long work he constantly quotes it with the most wonderful skill against Jesus and Christianity. As Mr. John M. Robertson says, "he treated Christian feelings as Christians had treated the feelings of Freethinkers, with a much more destructive result."

But this very true criticism does not do full justice to the work. I doubt whether anything more bitter has ever been written against Jesus.

Clarke admits his indebtedness to both Thomas Woolston and Peter Annet, and his style is not unlike theirs. But he often proceeds on his own lines, and in some ways, I can hardly believe his arguments could be bettered. He was—at least as far as the Christian God is concerned—an out and out Atheist. His seventh letter deals with the God idea, and is a slashing attack on deities in general, and the Bible God in particular. He develops his argument with extraordinary skill and though that particular form of attenuation, the hazy metaphysical deity may be urged against him, yet as far as a God of design is concerned (and after all, that is the only God that matters to the great majority of believers), Clarke literally makes mincemeat of him. He gives full Bible authority for the following extract—how many readers would be able to pick out the texts in justification?—

One who is a spirit, that hath neither flesh nor bones, yet he is described as having a head, with hair, face, eyes, nose, lips, mouth, ears, tongue; besides feet, hands, arms, fingers, loins, heart, bowels, blood, organs of generation and backparts, possessing a soul, with all the passions, sensual desires, appetites, powers and faculties, which are found in the human body!

Although never bound 'prentice to any trade or calling, yet he professes to be a gardener, a tailor, a God-midwife, a house builder, a draughtsman, a butcher, a gravedigger, a schoolmaster, a stonemason and graver, a potter, a doctor, a threshing instrument maker, a barber, a cook, and slave dealer, besides an instructor of plowmen, threshers and candlestick makers. He is not only a murderer, a tyrant, a liar, a fool, a deceiver and a blackguard, but he is a consuming fire. Therefore, as Paul has informed us, that *it is a fearful thing to fall into his hands*, the sooner, I think, that we get rid of him the better. For what indulgence or mercy can we expect to receive from one who would not spare his only begotten son!

This is a very small extract from this chapter, but it gives one an idea of John Clarke's bitterness and ruthlessness. He knew the Bible so well that it excited his bitter contempt. He knew Christians so well that they excited the same bitter contempt, only more so.

Clarke's first letter opens as does the gospel according to Luke—but with the name of Adam Clarke instead of Theophilus. Dr. Adam Clarke, in those days, was a great Wesleyan divine, whose commentary on the Bible was supposed to be almost the last word on the subject. Both he and his work are almost forgotten, except to those of us who delight in hunting out man's mistaken activities in the past. Dr. Clarke, like the lamented Matthew Henry, adds to the gaiety of nations.

His namesake John, thus apostrophizes him:—

As I am about to commence a strict and impartial inquiry into the nativity, life, death and resurrection of Jesus called the Christ: as it is recorded in those books which are now attributed to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; I have selected you from amongst

the body of theological doctors, because from your researches and commentaries on these books you have arrived at an eminence far beyond your brethren. And from your superior and extensive knowledge, you are most capable of appreciating my conclusions and correcting me wherever I may unfortunately happen to err.

I do not know if Dr. Clarke, following the noble example of Bishop Watson in replying to Thomas Paine, tried a tilt with brother John. Possibly he felt, with many others, that the precedent was not an unqualified success and dared not risk a fall. For a fall he undoubtedly would have had. Did any other writer essay an answer to John Clarke? I do not know, but if any old Freethinker who has delved into the almost forgotten archives of Freethought controversy should happen to see this notice of a brave and doughty champion in the noblest of all causes and knows of any such answer, I hope he will give the readers of this journal the benefit of his knowledge.

Like his great predecessor, Thomas Paine, Clarke endeavoured to criticize the Bible by itself, and he was particularly well qualified to do so. His own words are, "I shall not depart from the books themselves to find reasons for my conclusions, but shall confine myself entirely to them; as it is written, 'by thy words thou shalt be justified and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.' Matt. xii. 37."

His exhaustive analysis of the Genealogies was, in its own time, necessary though nowadays, it is difficult to find any Christian ready to defend them or their conclusion that Joseph had two fathers. In the second letter we get an extremely entertaining discussion on the Virgin Birth, full of the shrewdest observations, and, if making fun of the Holy Ghost is the last word in sin and can never be forgiven, John Clarke must be having a terrible time of it at the moment.

In this letter, the author shows the utmost contempt for priests and parsons, charging them with fraud, lying and swindling, and therefore he claims they had little difficulty in imposing upon the credulous and ignorant the Biblical stories. "Consequently," says Clarke, "more liable to be imposed upon, in things which reason cannot comprehend nor you explain; such as a woman being with child and yet retaining her pucelage. Though the book itself does not authorize you to draw such a conclusion, as it nowhere states or intimates that Mary, after her adulterous connexion with the Holy Ghost, was ever considered a virgin; nor was her conception ever considered miraculous, or else it certainly would have been noticed by some of those *holy* men, particularly Paul, who would surely have eulogized Mary's faith in his catalogue of the faithful as well as Rahab, the *harlot!*"

Clarke deals very fully with the famous prophecy from Isaiah, and my only regret is that I cannot quote him more fully. But space forbids.

H. CUTNER.

(To be concluded.)

THE WAY OF THE BLIND.

The blind and superstitious allegiance to Beneficent and Destructive Forces around us has varied and fluctuated with climate and other circumstances. It has comprehended the Elements, Animals, Trees, Plants; it has existed in some form from a period of the highest antiquity . . . and it survives to-day in the unreflecting adoration of Wells and of Fountains, of Bones, and of Relics. Many of us, ready to enter on the twentieth century here in England, are more be-nighted than the Mexicans of the fifteenth, who erected a pyramid "to the invisible god of the universe," and a temple to "the unknown god of causes."—*W. Carew Hazlitt.*

Books and Life.

We remember the ever genial and urbane chairmanship of Mr. George Bedborough, who is at present in God's own country. We also remember him for his love of William Blake and his very effective booklet entitled *Love and Happiness*, being letters to Tolstoy. Our edition is dated 1917—a year when the love of Christian nations was so thorough that standard bread and margarine had almost become a luxury. Another of this persuasive writer's books, *The Will to Love*, is now being reprinted by the Love Culture Society, although the author does not commit himself to an endorsement of the general propaganda and literature of the society. Love is an awkward word; it has also suffered all the penalties for being associated with a theological vocabulary. Swedenborg has some very wise remarks on this word in his *Divine Love and Wisdom*, and in the form of a question states a great deal: "Do not thought, speech, and action grow cold in proportion, as the affection belonging to love grows cold?" Patanjali states that you cannot know a thing truly unless you love it, and, a thought cherished by the present writer is that there is even love in the idea that an Englishman will not kick a man when he is down. The muddy and ruffian hands of so-called refined writers—who can make fortunes by writing "bawdy"—have, however, sullied the word which, however, may be counteracted by a reading of *Manon Lescaut* and *Les Miserables*—or even the *Book of Tobit*, from the Apocrypha. We prefer the word, in these days, of "kindness." An engineer, Major Douglas, has defined concisely enough for any thinker the two chief movements at work in the world; they are kindness and force, yet we wish well that the efforts of the society mentioned above may reach the intellect through the emotions in the land of Stars and Stripes. The address is Box 636 Mayville, Wisconsin, and we, for one, should enjoy the spectacle of seeing the world killed by kindness, or infested with secret societies engaged in conspiracies of happiness against the human race.

A delightful hour may be spent in reading *Kew Gardens Adventures*, published by the C. W. Daniel Company, at 2s. 6d. net. The author, Mr. M. A. Muegge, is in holiday vein in these choice fantasies for grown-ups, for his fame rests chiefly in his introduction to Nietzsche in *The Peoples Books*, and *Nietzsche, His Life and Work*, published by T. Fisher Unwin, which happily ran into four editions. "Damn braces—bless relaxes," wrote Blake, and the blessing of relaxation may be found in these tales when the puck-like spirit is released to create the charming pictures that invite us to the irresponsible fields of pure enjoyment. *The Fairies Cinema* is perhaps the best of the collection, where Andrew Fenn witnesses the proceedings in a fairy Law Court. The Defender of the Dead is pleading for a delinquent: "As an eminent Pedagogue, he might, humanly speaking, have been forgiven if he had acted as his class and his set expected him to act. At a time when whole nations went mad, when clever rogues exploited the passions of evil, when almost all writers, teachers, and priests told deliberate and wicked lies: this intrepid man stood up against the jury of a vulgar Press, and against the yelpings of a million cowards. So they made him resign his post as head-master of Tone School." It is a peculiar truth that hatred binds quicker than—yes we shall have to use the word—love, and many noble souls must crack against the pressure. A stone statue for speaking unpopular truths is cold comfort, when one is dead. This little book deserves to be well known, for it carries the weight of wisdom lightly.

The Loeb Classical Library is well known to readers, and now facilities are offered by the Associated Book-buyer's Co., that will enable the purchaser to acquire as few as three volumes at the cost of about two shillings a week. We see that Lucian disports himself in eight volumes. *The Golden Ass* (Apulcius) is in one, and Seneca is in two. Petronius, along with other illustrious names, awaits a purchaser, together with all the fathers of antiquity, and the covering letter states that "the

Humanities are being neglected more perhaps than at any other time since the Middle Ages." Well, whose fault is that? It is certainly not that of the *Freethinker*, which, in its unpopular style of calling a spade a spade, has never omitted to turn the eyes of its readers to all that is best in the history of the written word.

A flute-player, some time ago, used to produce a few notes each week from the *Freethinker* for reproduction. The thoughts were always worth a resurrection, and now, in a more substantial form we have *Essays in Freethinking* (second series), at the easy price of half a crown. Twenty-four essays in clear thinking at a little more than a penny each is something of an achievement, and, in book form, the editor has attempted to skim cream off cream. We need reminding of many truths in these essays; a truth well phrased (one of many) shines in the essay entitled "An Old Maxim," and it attracted us and will attract anyone who is interested in the aristocracy of his own species, "That the unbeliever will risk material well-being for an opinion is something that the average Christian cannot in the least understand." There are no medals for veterans or youth in the Free-thought army, and the material reward would balance on a pin-point, but the question is one of precious souls or posterity; how could one with the elementary truth of cause and effect as part of his mental make-up say that posterity was not his business? But this is a harder doctrine than that held by those who are making sure of a place in the world to come.

WILLIAM REPTON.

Acid Drops.

The much talked of film, "The King of Kings," is to appear after all—face of Christ and all complete. It is to be taken in hand by the parsons, and an audience of black-coated servants of the Lord—including several bishops—are to sit in solemn judgment on it, and decide whether it is a film that a Christian ought to see, or even one that other people should be permitted to see. We can hardly believe that the cinema proprietors care a brass button for the opinions of these parsons, but they do know what harm they can do by underhand and back-stair methods. Hence the desire to secure their good word. And yet there are some who think we are not priest-ridden.

Writing about the film the Bishop of Norwich says, "The greatest question is this: Is the film so constructed so as to make those who see it think of Jesus as the Son of God? Does it lead them to regard Him as a good man cruelly persecuted and killed, or to recognize that in a sinful world His sufferings were the necessary road to the glory of His resurrection." In other words, the Bishop of Norwich says the test of whether the film should be permitted or not is whether it helps the parsonic business or not. If the film gives them a Church of England Jesus, then the film is good. But if it gives them a Labour Party Jesus, then it is bad. And if it gives them a picture of a wandering Eastern religious fanatic, which is what Jesus, if he existed, most probably was, then it ought to be promptly suppressed.

It is gratifying to learn that at long last an effort is to be made to bring the Churches together to make a bold stand for a national Peace policy. The *Sunday School Chronicle* says this as a preliminary to a report of a conference attended by Christian and Jewish leaders. The speakers, as might be expected, trotted out the usual platitudes so comforting to the religious mind. As a sample, the following by the Rev. Morris Joseph, of the Jewish Peace Society, is about as good as the rest. Said he: "In religion alone lies the great promise and potency of universal peace." A student of history might be almost inclined to believe Mr. Joseph, but for the fact that the various sects cannot keep the peace among themselves, and that religion has been responsible for

many wars, and has accentuated the bitterness between combatants in wars not caused by religion. Mr. Joseph will have to wait until all the history books are destroyed before he gets his statement accepted.

As a nursery for the Church is how Mr. T. H. Higham, J.P. of Southport, regards Sunday Schools, and organizations like the Band of Hope, Young People's Guild, and Christian Endeavour. Quite so. And the young people graduating from nursery to Church are expected to retain the nursery type of intelligence when they arrive at the adult kindergarten. Otherwise, the pastor has difficulty in keeping the young lambs within the fold.

The Bishop of London appears to be specializing in dispensing fatuous compliments. The other week he was broadcasting them to London schoolteachers. The next thing we hear is that he had lunch with a crowd of Congregational laymen, and told them they were "a jolly lot of fellows." We wonder whether his opinion of the Congregationalists will change if, in the future, he should learn that they were supporting a measure to disestablish his Church.

The patrons of St. Cuthbert's Church, Darwen, are still squabbling with their vicar. After a demonstration, the rev. gent. was given police protection on his way home. If a small bunch of Christians belonging to one sect cannot agree among themselves, how promising is the outlook for a future coming together of the many Christian sects! And yet there are people who wish us to believe that religion is the thing that will bring peace to the nations. If the antics at St. Cuthbert's are a reliable guide, the signs don't look exactly propitious.

Christians are requested by the Lord's Day Observance Society to make the following Christmas resolution:—

At this season of goodwill I will help the Lord's Day Observance Society, which is needing my help.

It seems a very odd kind of "goodwill" that takes the form of seeking to interfere with other people's freedom to do as they think fit on Sunday. It is a kind of goodwill that is entirely Christian—thank the Lord, from whom all such blessings seem naturally to flow.

A weekly paper relates the story of two steel-erectors working 140 feet from the ground. One man slipped, and in falling clutched the leg of his mate; he, also falling, managed to seize a rope. Says our contemporary, "it was only by God's Providence that a rope was within his reach." It was thoughtful and merciful of God's Providence to provide the rope when needed. But would not G.P. have been more thoughtful and merciful had it (or him) prevented the accident from occurring? Providential prevention is better than providential help.

Are Sunday theatres coming? A pious weekly says that if only a feasible case for the introduction of Sunday theatre performances can be put forward, there is every likelihood of the concession being granted—in spite of the Churches, and in spite of the members of the theatrical profession, the greater proportion of whom are strongly against Sunday shows. This last statement is misleading. What the majority of the profession are against is, working seven days a week. They do not object to Sunday performances provided that they are assured of one free day a week as a recompense.

"How Cycling Killed Prejudice" is the heading to the following excerpt from *Cycling*, written by Mr. Reginald Wellbye:—

An unpleasant thing of which we who came in with the pneumatic caught a glimpse was the dour, narrow old-fashioned Sunday. There was in the late 'eighties just enough lingering Sabbatarianism to cause some inconvenience to those who chose, against no inconsiderable section of public opinion, to spend their Sundays

on the open road. I well remember how, being a sensitive youth who meant to go his own way but disliked shocking people who viewed things differently, I used to try to circumvent the crowds going to or leaving church; for the expressions of disapproval on the faces of average churchgoers were unmistakable and unceasing. I recall, too, numerous difficulties experienced in the way of obtaining refreshment other than at licensed houses (and often there, too . . .). For the host of country restaurants, tea shops, tobacconists, and sweet-stuff shops now to be found open on Sundays, the latter-day rider has to thank the cycling habit to a far greater extent, I am sure, than is commonly realized.

An interesting speculation is, what part has the cycling Freethinker played in helping to kill the stupid Christian prejudice against Sunday cycling? We believe that the part he has played has been a considerable one. Not caring a tinker's cuss for sour puritanic looks, he never troubled to slink by churches apologetically. He cycled wherever he willed, and showed openly that he was thoroughly enjoying his Sunday amusement. Thus, there is no doubt that he encouraged the faint-hearted to seek their pleasure on the open road in defiance of Sabbatarian opinion. In this field, as in others, it was the Freethinker who was the pioneer.

The writer in *Cycling* thinks that the latter-day cyclists have, in comparison with the former generation, gained much in having the various shops catering for their needs open on Sunday. No doubt. But it is well to remind cyclists who profess allegiance to churches, that if Christian leaders could have their way, the privilege would not be available for long. The Lord's Day Observance Society is doing its utmost to get the refreshment houses and the 250,000 shops which open on Sunday closed. As there is still a considerable number of Sabbatarians in this country supporting the Society, organized bodies of cyclists (such as the Cyclist's Touring Club) may yet have to fight in defence of what has been gained. The Sabbatarian is quite as eager as his forefather to dictate to other people how they shall spend their Sunday leisure. And, we would remind Sunday cyclists, he has still a considerable backing in money and influence to enable him to do so.

Village chapels are deserted. The National Free Church Council has been trying to discover why. The Council's enquiry report declares that if village chapels receive no support from the town churches, many of them will inevitably go under. The cause of the desertion, it appears, is modern conditions. Motor vehicles, transport facilities, secular influence of towns on the villages, newspapers, wireless, and sports "have detracted from what was once the dominant interest and influence of the village chapel." In other words, the world, the flesh, and the devil have won a notable victory—that is the impression the Council desires to give to the devout. It is thought inexpedient to frankly admit that chapels are empty because the villagers have ceased to believe in the Christian religion. Yet this is the fact of the matter; for if the villagers did really believe, "modern conditions" would not have influenced them. By the look of things, we fancy that wonderful revival just about to visit this wicked land will impinge upon very indifferent village minds. Country folk seem to have as badly strayed from the fold as their cousins in the towns. And the good shepherds are left wailing in empty pens.

"Toc H," the pet scheme of the Rev. "Tubby" Clayton, is touting for £250,000 to provide salaries for a paid staff, and club-rooms for young men to sing hymns in. The chief features of "Toc H" are a bit of mystic ritual, a big slab of vague religiosity, and a much talked of comradeship. The notion at the back of the scheme is to capture for the churches the men who served in the war. No doubt it has roped in a few thousands. But as, we believe, most of these already belong to some church or chapel, the net gain is not very great. What is certain is that "Toc H" makes little appeal to the

vast majority of ungodly ex-service men. These finished with religion, churches and parsons when they saw what a sorry part the Churches played in the war.

The Lord Chief Justice favours the idea that magistrates should sit in robes. He believes that decorum and order, reticence and reserve, which are a feature of British courts of justice, are to some extent attributable to wigs and robes. We doubt it. Educated people are not influenced by wigs and robes. The type of intelligence impressed by such things is very poor and is rapidly getting scarcer, owing to the spread of education. What conduces to decorum and order in a court of justice is the belief that here will be obtained courtesy, strict impartiality, and merciful justice. To the securing of these, wigs and robes do nothing. Wigs and robes belong to the age when bullying, corruption and vindictive sentences were the rule rather than the exception. The sooner they disappear the better.

Dr. Saleeby recently addressed some city men at a London church, on the subject of "Health and Holiness." His argument was that no one had the right to call a scientific man a materialist, because so many diseases very considerably affected morality and conduct. He specially mentioned sleeping sickness, and general paralysis of the insane, the work of mysterious parasites, which led to extraordinary aberrations. Even though what the Doctor says is true, he ought not to say it before Christians. It is calculated to undermine faith in the Bible, for this asserts positively that moral turpitude and evil conduct are caused through temptation by a devil.

The Doctor also referred to the importance attached to bathing in Roman times. He admitted that it may have developed into licentiousness, which might partly have accounted for the fall of Rome. But he declared that the early Christians' opinion that the body was a corrupt thing, and therefore to be neglected, was a false one. The body, he said, should be regarded as an organ, from which the organist could not produce good music if the organ were neglected. What the Doctor might have added is that the false notion of the Early Christians was obtained from the Bible, that it lasted very many centuries and that the outcome of it was appallingly evil. We suppose it is left to a Freethinker to point out that God must have known that the notion was false, yet he said nothing and did nothing.

Christians believe prayer and "spiritual meditation" to be communion with God. Coué's discoveries and teaching have done, and will do, as much as anything, we fancy, to undermine that belief. Christian leaders are already attempting to disprove that prayer is merely auto-suggestion.

A work advertised as of intense value to all Bible students is called *The Local Colour of the Bible*. Each chapter deals with a definite episode in Hebrew history. We hope the pious authors have given the "local colour" of that most interesting episode, the immaculate conception or Virgin Birth. The best way of doing that, we suggest, would have been to show the vast amount of ignorance and credulity existing at the time in Palestine.

Miss Evelyn Underhill has an extensive knowledge of Mysticism of the kind approved by Christians. In *Man and the Supernatural*, she declares that the "mystic knows for certain, but he does not understand." Perhaps he would manage better if he took into his mental apparatus a cargo of common sense.

If we love our Bible and our Shakespeare, there is hope for England, says Miss Lilian Bayliss. It seems a pity not to mention beef, beer, and baccy—the three things which, combined with the other two, made England great.

The "Freethinker" Endowment Trust.

I FEEL very much like one conducting a Dutch auction with regard to this Fund. Some weeks ago I was able to offer the *Freethinker* £1,615 for the sum of about £900. Every week since then I have been reducing the amount of the purchase money, until to-day I am able to say that this £1,615 can now be purchased for the trifling sum of £85 12s. 3d. And both the purchase money and the money purchased goes to the same party. It is the most remarkable sale in the history of auctioneering. It is certainly the most remarkable in the history of Freethought. We have still over a fortnight to go, and all those who have been waiting till the last moment will now be sending.

We have had to announce several gifts from very old Freethinkers, the last item on the list published this week comes from the youngest subscriber, Leah Meerloo. She brought it into the office accompanied by her mother, and seemed as proud as could be that she was taking a hand in the business. We hope that as she grows up she will have every cause to feel proud of her early association with Freethought.

Here is a letter from Mr. J. Breese, a part of which I print, only because there is a strong request that I should do so:—

When I think of the past few years, I am amazed at your pluck in keeping the best hated paper alive and kicking. I am confident that it will be one of the happiest days of your life when you see the *Freethinker* safe financially, and realize that your pile of troubles on this score is ended. The best of good wishes to you and the best of luck for the *Freethinker*.

And now to change the subject. I was about writing on the very topic suggested by T. G. J. I am with him absolutely, I predict the Fund will exceed £8,000. If it does, I propose the balance be made the nucleus of a purse to our Editor. Will you please let my suggestion see print? If there is no balance, then I am just as much in earnest in signifying my appreciation in the same way as I have done for the Fund nearing its close.

Others have written in much the same vein, so I may as well reply to all at once. I appreciate very much the good feeling, and if I closure any such suggestion, at least for the time being, it is not because I am wallowing in wealth, but because there are other things to be done at present, and I want to see them done before I take a rest from this part of my work. There is plenty that our friends can yet do on behalf of the paper; I would not like to divert a single shilling from that. On this subject I shall have more to say early in the New Year.

On the matter of the Fund, Mr. F. A. Hornibrook also writes, while enclosing further cheque for the Fund:—

At all costs the amount required for the Fund must be forthcoming. It would be little short of a disgrace to the Freethought Party if it fell short. It is no use saying, when it is too late, "I wish I had done more"; the time for each one to do his bit is now. There should be a large number of subscriptions forthcoming before 1927 reaches its close.

We have not the least doubt but that the £7,000 figure will be reached by December 31. We know it will, because we know there are many yet to send who have not yet done so. And we take this opportunity of reminding those whose promises have been made public, that their cheques will be due before December 31. Mr. Peabody will be in England in January, and I know he will be delighted to then pay over his cheque for £1,000 to the Fund.

FOURTEENTH LIST OF SUBSCRIPTIONS.

PREVIOUSLY ACKNOWLEDGED		£ s. d.		£ s. d.	
J. Crompton	...	25	0	0	
H. W. Jyder	...	0	2	6	
J. Yettram	...	1	0	0	
We Three	...	0	5	0	
J. McMillan	...	2	0	0	
Mossey	...	0	5	0	
W. Colchin	...	0	2	6	
W. Ellis	...	0	5	0	
A. Black	...	1	0	0	
E. C. Saphin	...	2	2	0	
J. W. Roberts	...	0	10	0	
Mr. & Mrs. G. H. Brown	...	1	0	0	
F. A. Hornibrook (4th Sub.)	...	5	5	0	
H. Higgins	...	1	0	0	
John's Granpa	...	3	0	0	
X.Y.Z.	...	0	5	0	
E. Lynden	...	1	0	0	
G. Burger	...	1	0	0	
J. Breese (2nd Sub.)	...	5	0	0	
H. T. Humpidge	...	1	1	0	
L. Williams	...	0	1	0	
W. Bennett	...	0	1	0	
H. Arunell	...	0	1	0	
In Memory of W. P. Ball	...	1	0	0	
T. E. Luff	...	0	5	0	
J. Burrell	...	0	2	6	
J. P. Ives	...	0	2	0	
W. C. Chinnier	...	0	5	0	
In Memory of Charles Bradlaugh	...	0	10	0	
H. N. F.	...	0	2	6	
A. J. V. Templeman	...	5	0	0	
J. Flintoff (2nd Sub.)	...	0	10	0	
E. B. Side	...	1	0	0	
A. L. K.	...	0	10	0	
W. Dixon	...	1	1	0	
J. Campbell	...	0	10	0	
W. Graham	...	0	2	6	
P. Dewar	...	0	2	6	
A. Stevenson	...	0	2	6	
J. G. Burdon	...	0	2	6	
A. E. Stringer	...	5	0	0	
J. Wearing	...	0	1	0	
J. Hayes & A. Millar	...	0	5	0	
In Memory of J. W. Gott	...	0	5	0	
M. M.	...	0	2	6	
E. H.	...	0	2	6	
G. Davis	...	0	5	0	
Dinah	...	0	2	6	
A. W. Davis	...	4	0	0	
D. T. Saunders	...	0	5	0	
H. R. (New Zealand)	...	1	2	3	
Atheist	...	1	0	0	
G. O. Warren	...	2	0	0	
J. H. Daniell	...	0	10	0	
W. Howie (Per A. Millar)	...	0	7	6	
R. Seeley	...	0	1	0	
J. Gogee	...	0	5	6	
Mr. & Mrs. Terry	...	0	10	0	
Mr. F. Terry	...	0	10	0	
The Rising Generation, Leah Meerloo	...	0	10	0	
Total		£6,299	7	9	

Promised on condition that a further £85 12 3d. is contributed by December 31, 1927 £1,615 0 0

Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to the *Freethinker* Endowment Trust, and crossed Clerkenwell Branch, Midland Bank, and directed to me at 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

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

F. G. SHIPTON.—Thanks for cutting, but the point was noted in these columns some weeks ago.

J. McMILLAN.—Sorry to learn that you have been in the doctor's hands. Hope you are now quite recovered.

W. ELLIS.—Thanks. We fancy the Endowment Trust will open up many possibilities as time passes. It is, we flatter ourselves, a business-like method of overcoming what has always been a serious, and sometimes an insurmountable, obstacle in the way of Freethought propaganda.

A. D. HORN.—We have dealt before with Sir Oliver Lodge's "proved experiments" of the truth of a future life. The expression is certainly not used in a scientific sense. The proof is just of the kind that religionists have always advanced. It is satisfactory to all to whom it gives satisfaction. So are the visions seen of Jesus, or of the saints singing round the throne.

E. MASSEY.—We are gratified to learn that our *Materialism Re-stated* has answered so many of the problems that have been perplexing you. Certainly, we have other books in contemplation; the thing is to find time to write them. With the weekly work on the *Freethinker*, travelling long distances to lecture, and a very large correspondence, does not leave much time for writing books. But, as soon as possible.

J. WRIGHT.—We share your regret at Mr. Lloyd's illness, and we know that all our readers do likewise. Unfortunately we have no good news to impart. He is still very ill, there is no telling what the result will be. But we are hoping for the best.

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 connexion with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Mr. F. Mann, 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.

There are very often delays in the delivery of parcels at Christmas time, and for several years we have had complaints of some subscribers not getting their copy until after the holidays. To avoid this we shall go to press with the issue dated December 25 on Monday December 19. This means that anyone wishing the insertion of any item of news in that issue must get their letter to this office by the first post on Saturday, December 17.

Mr. Cohen had two good meetings at Plymouth on Sunday last. The hall was not full, but the attendances were an improvement on previous meetings, and the hall is a large one to fill. Both lectures were evidently much appreciated by those present, and there were many requests for a return visit. This will probably come off early in the new year. Mr. McKenzie occupied the chair in the afternoon and Mr. Edwards in the evening.

We do not believe there is any revival in religion, but there is undoubtedly a revival of interest in religion, and the many discussions now going on should present good opportunities for introducing the *Freethinker* to likely new readers. This can be done by the purchase of an extra copy, or by sending along the name and address to us accompanied with six halfpenny stamps, for postage, and we will forward specimen copies for six weeks. We get many new subscribers by both these plans.

The Wireless Correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* says that, regarding the proposal to broadcast a daily religious service, "the views of listeners were sought, and most of the people who wrote were in favour of the plan." We should like to know how these views were sought, and who had the counting of the votes. Candidly, we would not care to trust the mere word of the religious people in charge of this. The Correspondent adds that if the daily religious service is decided on "there will be a chorus of protests." We hope there will be, and we hope that all who do object will make known their objections as speedily as possible. And we should also like the letters to be received by some independent party. In this matter we would not trust the ordinary Christians so far as we could see them.

Mr. Boyd Freeman, whose writings are by now familiar to *Freethinker* readers, is also the author of two Freethinking novels, *By Thor, No!* and *Towards the Answer*. He offers fifty copies of each work, the whole of the proceeds of the sales to go to the *Freethinker* Endowment Fund. This offer holds good until January 1. Those who wish to have the copies must write to this office. The prices are, *By Thor, No!* 6s.; *Towards the Answer*, 4s. 6d. They will be sent post free.

The Confessional.*

(Concluded from page 796.)

It is another case of the priests trying to get it both ways. When getting on the soft side of people they talk about their God being a loving Father. They speak of Jesus (who is one with God) blessing little children and saying, "suffer them to come unto me for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Oh yes, when it suits their purpose, the Heavenly Father is very very good. All the human race are His children. He loves them all. And they must love each other for their common Heavenly Father careth for the least of them.

Hm! Now we turn to the other side of the medal.

"One of the least of these" is born—to Non-Catholic parents. It is born, it breathes, it dies—and goes to its Heavenly Father. Where, no doubt, it will be well cared for? Oh dear NO. What does its Heavenly Father do? According to the priests He asks: Has this child been properly baptized? And when the answer is No, then the Heavenly Father says, according to the priests, To Hell with it!

You are shocked? I want you to be shocked. I want you to realize the infamous nature of Roman Catholicism. The priests in their theology, blacken the character both of God and the human race. They have a dogma based on the Adam and Eve legend, that because of Adam's and Eve's sin the whole human race is wicked and accursed. On the doctrine of Original Sin, all the race (even new-born infants!) is naturally, inherently, vile and wicked and guilty, just as responsible for Adam's and Eve's sin as they themselves were. None of the race does, or could do, anything right. All of us, in our natural state are an offence to God, and unless we behave exactly as the priests (God's representatives) tell us, the Heavenly Father will not forgive us even for just merely existing! Except under conditions—priests' conditions—the very fact that we exist at all, will be sufficient to condemn us to eternal torture. No matter if a man (e.g., a Nonconformist) is eager and willing to be a good child of God, all his good intentions will go for naught if he does not keep the last and least punctilio of priests' regulations. The Non-Catholic child of God may forgive those that do him hurt seven times. Yes, seventy times seven. But however good-intentioned he is, God will not forgive him once. Not once.

According to the priests, men are sinners at every turn, and God is jealous of His rights, and revengeful in regard to even the smallest offences, beyond all reason, or imagination. The only safety is in frequently and systematically, and very humbly, confessing sin to the priests. Unless the punctilios of confession are observed the Heavenly Father is offended beyond forgiveness, and dreadful punishment is inevitable.

Even if the punctilios are kept, the forgiveness is not full and free. It is only "just" that the sinner should pay the penalty of his sins. Consequently even the pious Catholic must have a dose of purgatorial fires. There was, you remember, a parable of

a prodigal son. When the son had owned up to his foolishness and begged forgiveness, the father forgave him freely—and fetched out the fatted calf. But then that was a mere human father, who was so glad to get his lad back, that he did not think or talk about what was “just.” If the parable had been designed to represent the priests’ Heavenly Father, the lad would have been handed over to the father’s minions and well horsewhipped, after (mind you) that father had fallen on his neck and kissed him and wept over him, but *before* the fatted calf was brought out. To make the parable still closer to the priests’ religion we should have to say that after the father had ordered 500 lashes, the son, by bribery of the minions had got his punishment reduced to fifty. But he would still have come to the fatted calf with a very sore back! The parable of Jesus, like his entire religion, has been so hanky-pankied by the priests that one can scarcely recognize any trace of it in “Holy” Church.

Mr. McCabe says that the essential evil thing about confession is its almost incredible stupidity. But this is letting it down too mildly. If it could be considered as an honest device to make people moral (without any further fetch in it) it would still be worse than stupid because anybody with a grain of sense could have foretold that its effect would be the reverse of moral, and in actuality it is about the most positively immoral agency known. The most respectable argument that can be advanced for it is based on a supposition that everybody has a lively sense of the immorality and wickedness of sinning—a silly supposition for anybody to make. What happens, what naturally happens, is that those who practice confession get the idea that no matter what sins they commit, they have only to go to the priest’s moral toilet saloon to be made morally clean again. They come to have little or no compunction about doing any sort of dirty work.

For example. Thieving is wicked. The State says so, and emphasizes its opinion by putting thieves, when caught, into gaol—a fact which acts as a strong deterrent of thieving. “Holy” Church says thieving is wicked; oh certainly it is very wicked and naughty. Then “Holy” Church goes on (in effect) to say, “but if you do thieve, you have only to come to me, confess your sin, say you are sorry, and be absolved; morally speaking, you shall be thoroughly cleansed and made honest.” Not much deterrent about that is there? In Spain “Holy” Church gives absolution to thieves on a commission basis. Wherever and whenever this vile Church has been supreme, there has been practically no morality except a sort of it based on expediency. How could there be? When everybody is Catholic, everybody knows that anybody else can commit any crime (except against the priests) and then get absolution from the priest—and everybody takes advantage of the fact for himself, and as a defence against all the other licensed sinners. So practically speaking all are rogues together. Stupid?—yes, if you like, but the word seems inadequate. Read up the condition of the Papal States, when they were ruled entirely by the priests. No State that ever existed could show more rascality, villainy and moral putridity—to say nothing of idleness and poverty, in which also they excelled.

From the point of view of priests, whose main aim is absolute power, confession is not stupid. It is probably the most efficient detail in the trade. Their dupes begin to confess at the age of seven. They grow up priests’ slaves and chattels *without realizing it*. Slavery is their normal condition, and as it is slavery of the mind, it is the most complete of all. They are taught to believe that the freedom which other people enjoy is a state of danger, and their own

state is a happy condition of security. As far as free thought and will are concerned the priests have got them to the condition of sheep. And this spells power—for the priests.

For example, one of the chief purposes of sheep is to be shorn. It is amazing how the Roman Catholic laity pay up for all sorts of worthless superstitious rubbish. Never was there such easy money as that of Roman Catholic priests. And that they can work their “confidence tricks” is largely due to the confessional.

Confession enables the priests to get the personal touch with a completeness nothing else does. All the details of a pious Catholic’s life are open to the priest. Never was there such an information bureau, such a thorough secret service.

Confessions are based on the understanding that they are absolutely secret. But this is bunkum. Nineteen-twentieths of what is told may be kept secret, simply because it is not worth turning over again, though the information gained, if not repeated literally, is valuable and useful. But if there is any information received that would be useful higher up, it is passed up. And if the higher ranks of the priests want information, no one but a simpleton will believe that they neglect any of their means to hand. Political secrets are liable to pass along, and in time of war military information may leak, by “confession.” During the nineteenth century Austria was the chief Roman Catholic State, and it is practically certain that the Roman Catholic Church helped Austria to both political and military information. It has been stated very confidently that British Cabinet secrets have leaked through the confessional.

It would be well for Non-Catholics to realize that in any dealings with an individual Catholic, it is not one person that is being dealt with, but two—the person of the first part, and the priest behind him (or her).

In the case of marriage, it must be remembered that if the girl is a Roman Catholic she is a priests’ slave. She will go and tell him all her secrets, so that really he will know more about her than her husband does—a nice state of affairs, eh? If there is a clash of wills she will obey the priest—naturally; for she believes he can shut heaven for her and, if he thinks fit, consign her to hell. She can go astray, then confess and be absolved and be an “honest” woman again—and have more excursions of the same kind. If this is not making a fool of a man, I should like to know what is. It is surprising that men ever allowed priests to get to such a strategic position.

We, in England, rid ourselves of the nuisance in the time of Henry VIII, and for 350 years were practically free of the plague. It is curious therefore to find at the present day that Roman Catholic countries are following our example of 350 years ago, whilst we are allowing the disease to appear again. It is said that in Italy most men have ceased going to confession, but, of course, the difficulty is with the women. The story is told of an Italian who, having stopped himself, forbade his wife to go to confession. The sweet (but imbecile) young thing said “but how can I be naughty if I cannot go to confess?” Which shows another priestcraft point about confession. It solves the problem of how to be naughty with little or no inconvenience to conscience. Of course, it can only happen with people of no intellectual training, for it does not need much cleverness to see the intellectual absurdity of it. But from the priests’ point of view, it is better for people to be naughty than intellectual. They are helped by the fact that it is harder to be either moral or intellectual than to be naughty. The “confessional” has its use therefore,

in side-tracking people from thinking and from trying to live on a higher plane. Make no error, the confessional, from the point of view of priestcraft, is not stupid at all. It is very ingenious and effective.

Yes, as a conspiracy against morality and patriotism, freedom and human dignity, the confessional is very ingenious and effective—and blackguardly and damnable. A priest who opens or runs a confession establishment ought to be considered a criminal—far more so than a woman with a fortune-telling parlour. And anybody who goes to confession ought thereby to be liable to be had up for examination by the lunacy commissioners.

C. R. BOYD FREEMAN.

Superstition.

THE recent storm amongst Anglican clerics over sacramental teaching has started numbers of thoughtful people wondering whether the present generation is as free from superstitious beliefs and practices as it is prone to fancy itself to be.

A consideration of our inheritance from the distant past, when primitive man was an intensely superstitious being, should prepare us to discover that even educated people will have to do a great deal more than just pitch their motor-mascots over the hedge before they can flatter themselves that superstition has been relegated to a few cultural backwaters.

Superstition is defined as "credulity regarding the occult or mysterious," and as "ignorant dread of the unknown." This makes superstition and religion to a large extent convertible terms; indeed, we know that the religions of to-day are the superstitions of to-morrow. "Credulity regarding the mysterious" may be likened to the soil wherein the priest grows his choicest blossoms of ritual and dogma, and "ignorant dread of the unknown" provides a very stimulating manure for these wonderful plants.

So "the mysterious" may be regarded as the seed or germ of the priest's business: he is a mystery-merchant. Only a short while ago an Anglican Bishop was reported as saying that no definition of the doctrine of the sacrament was possible—it was too great a mystery. In the hey-day of the medicine-man and the priest nearly everything was mysterious, and right good care was taken that it remained so. It is only recently that the mysterious has been challenged by modern science, which does not admit mysteries: science deals with problems, some soluble, others insoluble at present.

A consideration of the differences in attitude of the priest and the scientist toward phenomena in general should make it clear that the cry of the modern cleric to the effect that there is nothing antagonistic between science and religion, "rightly considered," is just a smoke-screen—and pretty thin at that. The scientist explains mystery in terms of knowledge; the priest explains mystery in terms of further mystery. No truce can be patched up between these two; the mental atmosphere surrounding them is different.

But contemplation of the wonderful results of science in so short a time must not blind us to the enormous field still held by the mystery-merchants, and to the ponderous mass of credulity which supports not only the priest of religion, but the priests of other institutions.

Consider for a moment Finance. Numbers of intelligent people to-day continue to regard Financiers and Bankers as priests of the mysteries of Credit—a subject of which they stand in almost "ignorant dread."

It used to be generally accepted—and the view still

obtains wide credence—that bankers merely lent a portion of the money which their customers deposited with them. But, just as in days of old, when the Earth rested upon an elephant, certain restless sceptics began to enquire what the elephant rested upon, so, of late years, financial sceptics have been enquiring where the deposits come from. And it is found they come from the loans. In fact, so far from banking being a business of obtaining deposits in order to make loans, it is truer to say that it is a business of making loans in order to obtain deposits. Major Douglas has described the banker's position as being "without parallel" in the following terms: "He is probably the only known instance of the possibility of lending something without parting with anything, and making a profit on the transaction, obtaining in the first instance his commodity free."

The credit these gentry lend is, in the last analysis, neither their own nor their customers, but the credit of the community (which includes themselves and their customers); yet we allow them to monopolize the issue and recall of credit, upon which hangs our whole national prosperity or otherwise, without ever calling their bluff.

It has been recently said that the theory of relativity should have been obvious to all mathematical physicists as soon as the velocity of light had been ascertained. Similarly, the "New Economic" views on credit should have been obvious to all economists as soon as Mr. Reginald McKenna "blew the gaff" on the technique of credit-creation over seven years ago. Will the interval in the latter case be as long as in the former? One almost begins to sympathize with Professor Soddy when, lecturing at Cambridge some four years ago on "The Inversion of Science," he exclaimed that "the man who said that it was not possible to fool all of the public all the time was fortunately quite ignorant of the methods of modern banking."

But credulity concerning the mysteries of credit almost sinks to insignificance when we come to the "gold-standard complex."

The priests of finance have ordained that the amount of credit they will issue shall bear a direct ratio to the amount of gold held in their vaults.

Suppose, for instance, that a community wishes to undertake any constructive project for the good of its members. Suppose that they have at their command all the necessary organizing ability, all the skilled workers, all the raw materials for the work, and food, clothing, etc., for the workers, or, alternately, various products which can be exchanged for any of these. Suppose, further, that they can pledge the necessary "Security" for the financial credit they require in order to commence operations. Yet, forsooth, they must wait for this "accommodation" until such time as the gold at the Bankers' control can bear the weight of credit required—albeit that credit can be created by the simple and almost costless method of writing numerals in a ledger.

Mark well the situation. All the physical factors necessary for the operations ready to hand; workers available and willing to start; yet before the first step can be taken the solemn ritual of digging a definite quantity of a "precious" metal out of one hole in the ground, transporting it several thousand miles, and burying it in another hole in the ground, must be gone through!

For sheer grovelling superstition it would be hard to beat that anywhere round the Seven Seas!

Verily this generation has a long row to hoe ere it can afford to smile upon "the heathen in his blindness."

A. W. COLEMAN.

Everything is Nothing.

A STOUT gentleman who signs himself G. K. C. has taught the world that to find everything is to find nothing. In a grotesquely commonplace parable he has imagined the ordinary man opening the household "junk" drawer and then exclaiming: "I can find nothing"; when, as a matter of fact, he can find everything. Now it is a curious thing that I get that feeling about doctrinal Christianity. Having had it drummed into my ears that "Christianity" is necessary for my peace and salvation, I have approached the drawer thus labelled, opened it, and then am compelled to cry "I can find nothing." Yet, as our fat philosopher has it, I really can find everything; and the use of everything, as everyone knows, is nothing.

The junk drawer of Christianity is both amazing and interesting. Having opened it and got over the first pangs of pained disappointment, one turns over the contents with the same interest developed in turning out old personal papers and letters, picking one out here and there for closer examination. And the original errand which prompted the opening of the drawer is forgotten in this contemplation of something exceedingly similar to a museum after an earthquake.

Paganism in various aspects and disguises, polytheism and monotheism, miracles and natural law, free-will and determinism, Bible scientific and Bible allegorical, evolution and creation, socialism and capitalism—everything is there pell-mell. If you have patience, and capacity as a rigorously exclusive sorter, you will find anything you wish to in the drawer labelled "Christianity."

The recent controversy centred about the personality of Dr. Barnes indicates, in no uncertain fashion, the "Catholic" capacity of the "Christian" drawer. Dr. Barnes does not believe in the "real presence" of Christ in the bread and wine consecrated for consumption at Holy Communion. Other clergy appear to believe in the same shadowy "real presence," although they subscribe to the denomination claiming Dr. Barnes' allegiance. Yet both have explicitly rejected the doctrine of the "real presence." Dr. Barnes declares that he is willing to test the matter by scientific experiment. His opponents reply that scientific methods can neither confirm nor negate any religious truth. Both sides give the impression, if it is not definitely asserted, that the other side ought to resign from a church the principles of which they do not agree with. It is easy to see that this controversy is a succinct epitome of the capacity of Christianity to cancel itself out. It is just as difficult to see the vaunted rock-like stability of belief in Christianity, amid the quicksands of life and "mere" intellectualism, when half the believers assert that the other half are heretics.

As for the "Roman" brand of the universal church; the rest for the downtrodden weary and harbour for the intellectual wanderer par excellence, the case is exactly similar. Ask a "Roman" what is meant by the "real presence," atonement, the fall, the position of hell, etc., and whether these things are dogmatically defined by indubitable authority and beyond interpretative manipulation, and you will discover that the extra-cathedra utterances of the infallible Pope are as mysterious in meaning as they are conveniently few in number. The strong man must be careful how he uses his strength. The infallible man must be careful how he exercises his emancipation from contradiction.

But the most interesting discovery I have recently made in the anything and everything receptacle called Christianity tends strongly to confirm a widely prevalent and often vocal suspicion. In a contemporary Sunday newspaper there appears week by week a queer collection of obiter dicta called "Sayings of the Week." Among these there recently appeared the following: "All big business of the world is done by credit, and credit is faith." The Bishop of St. Albans is responsible for that shaft of illumination. Of course you can construe "faith" just as you wish, from a belief in conjuring to cure cancer to an eupeptic capacity in the enjoyment of life. But I can hardly help deciding that the Bishop means by "faith," Christianity. And credit is

faith. Therefore credit is Christianity. Not small business as expressed by the delivery of goods in plain vans but big business as expressed by dividends and directors. Yes, it is found in the drawer at last, "Trade follows the Missionary." Everything is there. Everything. But as the large round "Catholic" known as G. K. C. insists, everything is nothing.

PERCY S. WILDE.

Correspondence.

ARTEMUS WARD IN SUMMERLAND.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Many many moons ago I wrote quite a lot of letters to Mr. Punch of your town on several subjects. Since when I have past over. I was past over many times befor, but this pass over seems final.

I have tried to get thro to Mr. Punch again, but I can't get onto him somehow.

I tried Mr. Doyle, but he wos to busy. It seems there is sich a demand for fickshun that troo trooth is not payin.

Hense these few lines.

I am ankshous to let you know what it is like where I am.

I am in the abode of Spirits, which is not bad for a free born American. But there aint no exsitement in it Mr. Editor, its gastly! It aint nothin like when I uster show my wax works round the States at ten cents a time. Not a bit.

Folks don't seem to have no likin for wax works round here. I consider becos they're so common, being that way inclined themselves.

Onyway I don't make no livin.

They tell me I'm in the 3rd heaven: I could believe that if I could drop acrost a cocktail now and then. I axed once where I could get a cocktail, but the party sed he didn't know any by that name, but the glory of bird life was far, far in advance of any on the other side, and perhaps I should meet the creature I was after in another spear. I sed, I hoped so, as it was pressin.

I have got my wax works show here, but I can't onderstand what's happend to it. It floats.

For a wax work on a solid basis, Mr. Editor, I have a grate respect, none grater, but what I can't abide is a hole show floating about just like they was balloons, and changing color. It worries some.

I spoke about it once, and a individooal with a sheet on told me it was my thorts what did it.

I don't see that, onyway. I met a chap here who sed he was a loomrist on earth.

I axed him what name, and he anserd, Twain crisened Mark.

I sed he was sadly needed here, but he seemed lorst in thort.

He sed, "Adst heard that our natif land is dry." I sed I adst, I noticed the same many a time.

He sed, "Nay Brother, but dry onto weariness, dry onto eternity, dry like onto the desert."

I axed whyfore?

But alars he anserd not. I aint set eyes onto him since. I think he was what you call a dry loomrist.

This is a curious place, Mr. Editor, a lot of brothly luf and sichlike, but no amooment. All hybrows, if you understand me.

There aint no negros either. I never noticed sich a remarkable absence of negros befor. I wonder where they go.

I rec'lect writing to Mr. Punch about the Tower of London. It was a imposing edifis. But O! what I could tell about the edifises over this side. For imposiveness there aint nothin to beat them.

But they have a nasty habit of disapeering when you least expect it. Its most annoying when you know you aint tasted one for ages.

They tell me its all thorts. Thorts didn't uster take me like that. Thorts can do anything. Thorts is all powerful, that's our motter.

I've thort a lot about the people what uster get inside my wax works without payin. I hope they like it.

There's lots more I could tell you about what these thorts do, but I'm fed up, and wish I was back in Utah.

Yours respectfully,
THE SHADE OF ARTEMUS WARD.

Obituary.

MR. WM. PIERCE KERNOT.

I REGRET to announce that Mr. Wm. Pierce Kernot, an earnest Freethinker, who was connected with the Secular Party at Walworth, when the Branch was founded there in 1876, and later with the Battersea Branch, died on December 5, at a nursing home at Worthing, after a brief illness. At an early age he embraced the principles of Freethought, and his lengthy sojourns in distant lands—for he surveyed mankind during 86 years in every country of Europe, in India, Burma, Egypt, Morrocco, and the two Americas—only served to deepen his distrust of every species of priestcraft. Wherever he went he never hesitated to proclaim the doctrines of Freethought. I enjoyed his friendship for over fifty-one years, and our Party loses in him a sturdy fighter in the best of all good causes, that of intellectual freedom.

His remains were cremated at Golders Green, on Saturday afternoon, December 10, and a Secular service was conducted by the undersigned.—WM. HEAFORD.

MRS. E. SAPHIN.

It is with the deepest regret that we have to record the death, at the age of sixty-eight years, of Mrs. Saphin, the wife of Mr. E. Saphin, the well-known Freethought lecturer. The deceased was of good courage in spite of much suffering during the last few years, and her faith in Freethought never wavered. Mrs. Saphin was in full accord with her husband's propagandist activities, and unselfishly encouraged work which frequently took him away from home. She was a real help-meet, and her death leave a gap in the lives of her family, to whom we offer the sincere sympathy of the movement.

A Secular ceremony took place at Golders Green Crematorium on December 7, conducted by the undersigned.—G. WHITEHEAD.

Society News.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH.

NORTH Londoners were glad to welcome Mr. Campbell-Everden, the Chairman of the West London Branch, last Sunday evening. Mr. Everden's address was listened to with great interest, and followed by a lively discussion, the lecturer laughingly remarked that he had not expected to find himself in "a hornet's nest." Mr. J. Mann's lecture on "Woman," to-night closes our Winter Session. We re-open on January 8, and are looking forward to several lively debates between our opening date and the end of April.—K.B.K.

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Affirmative:—MR. FRED MANN, London.
(General Secretary N.S.S.)

Negative:—MR. DAVID R. S. SMITH.
(Organizing Secretary, Glasgow Psychic Investigation Center).

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Questions.

Tickets on sale at the Bookstall, or from the Members of the Committee, the Secretary, and the Glasgow B. B. Library at 61 Charlotte Street, 218 Duke Street, 73 Main Street, Cambuslang.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W.): 7.30, Mr. Fred Mann—"Woman."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (30 Brixton Road, S.W., near Oval Station): 7.15, Mr. L. Ebury—"Should We Love our Enemies?"

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (The London Institution Theatre, South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11.0, Dr. Bernard Hollander—"The Development of Personality."

THE METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (34, George Street, Manchester Square, W.1): 7.30, Debate on "Is Christianity Necessary?" between Mr. Wheale and Mr. Botting.

OUTDOOR.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 3.0, Messrs. Campbell-Everden, Jackson and Hyatt; 6.0, Messrs. Campbell-Everden and Le Maine. No Meeting at Ravenscourt Park, Hammersmith. Freethought meetings every Wednesday and Friday in Hyde Park at 7.30. Various lecturers.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH N.S.S. (Assembly Rooms, Front Street): 7.15, Mr. Jno. T. Brighton—"The Nervous System." Chairman: Mr. G. Swinburne.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY, Branch of the N.S.S. (No 2 Room, City Hall, Albion Street): 6.30, Mr. Wm. Thom—"Relativity and its Implications."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (18 Colquitt Street off Bold Street): 7.30, Mr. S. Cohen (Manchester)—"Value of Freethought." Admission Free.

OUTDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S.—Meetings held in the Bull Ring on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, at 7 p.m.

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