

# THE CONTRADICTION OF FAITH.

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## Views and Opinions.

### The Contradiction of Faith.

Two contradictory things, said Dr. Johnson, cannot both be true, but they may both inhere in the same mind. If anyone doubts this, the most casual glance over Christian apologetics should be enough to convince him; for there is scarcely an instance in which controversialists may not be found championing two positions, either of which effectually cancels the other. There is, for example (to prove the providence of God), the thesis that things in this world are arranged in the way best calculated to promote human welfare. Having demonstrated this, the same apologist turns right-about-face and (to prove the probability of a future life) argues that things in this world go so badly that there must be another life in which the injustices and wrongs of this one are corrected. A writer will open a book written to prove that without belief in Christianity morality is insecure, with the statement that many of those who are not Christians are better behaved than those that are. In combating Utilitarianism, many a Christian will argue that to make happiness the end of life is to lower and degrade morality, but that we must believe in Christ because in no other way can we secure happiness throughout eternity. One might compile a very lengthy list of these inconsistencies; they pass almost unnoticed because where religion is concerned no one appears to expect the ordinary rules of logic to obtain. Christian logic moves in a way, at the side of which the traditional vagaries of Providence pale to insignificance.

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### Christ and Civilization.

Generally speaking, a writer such as Dean Inge manages to conceal many of these very obvious contradictions. They are not always absent, but they are not sufficiently near the surface to strike the ordinary reader. But in the *Evening Standard* for

January 4, he appears as an exponent of one of the most universal of all Christian inconsistencies. The mission of Christ, it is explained, was to save the world—save it not merely religiously, but ethically and socially. But, quite obviously, the world has not been saved. It has not been converted to Christianity, it has very grave defects in both its moral and social aspects. And to make the case worse, we are not merely told that it was the mission of Christ to save the world, but we are treated to reams of praise of the way in which the example of Christ has transformed human nature, and worked a miracle of moral transformation with human society. How are we to explain the failure? Well, they say, the influence of Jesus—which we are invited to admire in its transforming power—has been strangled by ecclesiasticism; as Dean Inge obligingly explains, "The enthusiasm that ought to be concentrated on the adventure of Christian living is devoted to augmenting the numbers, powers, and prestige of a Society (*i.e.*, a Church) with a very shady record. Scorn, hatred, and exclusiveness have quenched every spark of Christian charity in ecclesiastical politicians."

That being admitted, one would expect two things. One, that they who complain of the way in which the Church is eaten up by hatred, and envy, etc., and is devoid of "every spark of Christian charity" would leave it; and two, the admission of the complete failure of the Christian mission would follow as a matter of course. But those who complain loudest remain in the Church, enjoying the prestige that comes from its numbers and power and wealth. And they explain, with elaborate inconclusiveness, that the Christian Church has been diverted from its original purpose. Christianity has not failed because it has not been really tried. Well, but what is that but a confession of the most complete failure? "The history of the Church," says Dean Inge, "is a history of decline." "The Christian revelation came before mankind was ready for it." The case gets worse and worse. God gets incarnated for the purpose of giving mankind a special message, and no one pays attention to it. He founds a Church, and that goes steadily from bad to worse—except in the matter of salaries, the need for an increase of which is the one thing on which these Churchmen are agreed. God's judgment is evidently as questionable as his alleged power. So we are asked to admire the drastic failure and world-wide success of the same thing at the same time and by the same agency. We must praise the Jesus who is unconquerable, but who everywhere suffers total defeat. His success turns out to have happened in either the very remote past, for which no clear evidence has ever been given, or will happen in the distant future, of which we obviously know nothing at all. I wonder what Dr. Johnson would have said to Dean Inge!

### A "Pure" Fallacy.

There is no greater superstition connected with Christian apologetics than the belief that there existed a pure—morally pure, and socially admirable—form of Christianity to begin with, but which became gradually overlaid with abuses that sprang up. Take up any reputable and authoritative history of Christianity and the picture drawn century after century is the complete opposite of this. Reliable annals of what is officially the first century of Christian history are altogether wanting; but if one takes the New Testament as supplying this, two things become clear. First, that the aim of the first Christians, including the teaching of Jesus Christ, was not motivated by ethical and social ideals, but by purely religious ones. The utmost aimed at was a brotherhood of believers, united in terms of their adherence to certain crude superstitions. And side by side with this, still keeping to the New Testament, Christians are accused of all sorts of vindictiveness and intolerance, and in the language of Paul, of crimes worse than those existing among the heathens. Afterwards, century by century, we have it pointed out how much morals suffered by the dominance of certain Christian teachings. Moshlem does this when speaking of the second century. Of the third century, he says that Church rule "was soon followed by a train of vices, which dishonoured the character and authority of those to whom the administration of the Church was committed." Of the fourth century that "the number of immoral and unworthy Christians began so to increase, that the examples of real piety and virtue became extremely rare." The Fourth century saw the Christian Church in power, and from that time the denunciations of the immorality of Christians becomes more pronounced, and the details more revolting. Readers of Lecky, Lea, Milman and others will be quite familiar with the pictures drawn, and nothing in ancient history could be worse. Dean Milman said, very emphatically, that in its relations with the non-Christian peoples, "Christianity has given to Barbarism hardly more than its superstitions and its hatred of heretics and unbelievers."

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### An Ancient Type.

Of course, so long as one is content to accept vague and general statements as to the existence of some "pure" Christianity which became demoralized through secular ambition and social demoralizations, such articles as the one of Dean Inge will pass muster with those who read, not for knowledge or insight into historical processes, but to have their prejudices confirmed. It is when one asks for a place and date, for a latitude and a longitude, that trouble begins. It is also easy to make out a case if one reads into the New Testament exactly what one wishes to find there. This is no new feature in the history of Christianity. Dean Inges existed long before the twentieth century, and they will continue to exist so long as there is a Church to be defended or buttressed. Erasmus, writing in the sixteenth century, drew the following picture of the predecessors of Dean Inge:—

In general, it is the public charter of all divines to mould the divine oracles till they comply with their own fancy, spreading like a curtain, closing together, or drawing them back as they please. Thus indeed St. Paul himself minces and mangles some citations he makes use of, and seems to wrest them to a different sense from what they were first intended for. . . . Thus, when that apostle saw at Athens the inscription of an altar, he draws from it an argument for the proof of the Christian religion; but leaving out the great part of the sentence, which

perhaps if fully recited might have prejudiced his cause, he mentions only the two last words, *viz.*, "To the Unknown God"; and this too not without alteration, for the whole inscription runs thus; "To the Gods of Asia, Europe, and Africa, and to all foreign and unknown Gods."

'Tis an imitation of the same pattern, I will warrant you, that our young divines, by leaving out four or five words in a place, and putting a false construction on the rest, can make any passage serviceable to their own purpose; though from the coherence of what went before, or follows after, the genuine meaning appears to be either wide enough, or perhaps quite contradictory to what they would thrust and impose upon it. In which knack the divines are grown now so expert, that the lawyers themselves begin to be jealous of an encroachment upon what was formerly their sole privilege and practice.

The race of Christian apologists differs really very little from age to age. Whatever changes they undergo are superficial only. In essence they remain the same. Somehow or the other Christianity must be made to square with what is popular or with what is unquestionably and patently true. Religion is just what you care to make it. The unfortunate thing is that one so seldom comes across the ambition to make it either a thing that is intellectually respectable or morally useful.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

## Priest-Ridden Women.

"The excesses of a half-witted minority should not be allowed to prejudice the causes of a whole race."

*Gordon Guggisberg.*

"Man has passed Cape Turk but has not rounded Point Seraglio."—*George Meredith.*

THE predominance of women in every Christian congregation, from that of York Minster to the nearest tin tabernacle, is one of the indications that organized Christianity has failed, and is no longer in harmony with the time in which we live. Even priests are beginning to realize that "something is rotten in the State of Denmark," and they are making frantic efforts to reach the men, and to remove the stigma that religion is as much a feminine foible as face powder. Editors of religious periodicals are almost lyrical in their lament at the numerical superiority in the churches of the other sex.

Now and again one of these poor editors has the hardihood to suggest that even the feminine line of defence will fail the priests before long. Nowhere is the cleavage between Christian teaching and modern civilization more marked than with regard to the relation of the sexes. The orthodox marriage service of the Church of England, for example, is almost unbearable to people who take it seriously. Woman is not only treated as "the weaker vessel," she is regarded as a chattel, a mere piece of property. Even politicians have been more humane than the priests of the Christian Churches, and Act after Act passed by the Houses of Parliament has emphasized the equality of the sexes before the Law in direct contradiction to two thousand years' teaching of all the Churches of Christendom.

Throughout the Christian Era, it is true, both men and women were regarded equally as "sinners," but men were exalted at the expense of women. And priests exploited women ruthlessly. It is objected to woman sometimes that she is too slavish in her affections, too apt to prostrate herself before some object of devotion. The charge may be acknowledged as just, but this characteristic has been made the basest use of by priests. The trouble is

that organized religion is based on Oriental ideas, and is, in the last analysis, a perpetuation of some of the worst and most barbarous traits of the Asiatic spirit. So far from the Christian Religion being in the van of Progress, it is, in reality, one of the hindmost, and worst, of reactionary forces. Born under old-world tyrannies, this religion bears even to-day the lowly marks of its origin. As Nietzsche, and others, have pointed out, Christianity is, pre-eminently, a religion for slaves. Quietism, fatalism, the paralysis of the fighting spirit, the contempt for riches, the glorification of poverty, are all distinguishing marks of Christian theological teaching. And, ironically, owing to the wealth accumulated by priests, these alien Oriental ideas have been introduced into our Occidental culture until they threaten to undermine the best and most virile qualities of our race.

The English people accepted Christianity in all innocence, because it was presented to them with a voice of authority, but, latterly, such acceptance has been largely a matter of lip-service. The present preponderance of women in the Christian Churches is a clear indication that, so far as the authority of orthodoxy is concerned, the beginning of the end is at hand. The emancipation of woman must mean the passing of the power of the priest.

Although women have been faithful to the Christian Church, priests have never done much for their betterment. The flogging of women in the public streets, only abolished by law in 1817, and the remission of flogging as a prison punishment for women, provoked no word of commendation from the Bench of Bishops. With regard to the marriage laws, it must not be assumed hastily that the Episcopal Bench held marriage to be an insoluble tie, and the divorce of married persons and their subsequent re-marriage wrong in itself. No opposition came from the Right-Reverend Fathers-in-God to the private Divorce Bills of the nobility and gentry. So, in the case of more august persons, the Bishops were complacent and tolerant. Several of the Bishops supported King George the Fourth's divorce of Queen Caroline in 1820. It was against placing re-marriage after divorce within the reach of ordinary citizens that the Bishops strove, and strove in vain. The long struggle for legalizing marriage with a deceased wife's sister, in spite of such marriages being legal in the Colonies, was caused by Episcopal opposition. On five different occasions the votes of the Bench of Bishops in the House of Lords secured the defeat of the Bill. Let the Parliamentary record of votes and speeches tell how far the Christian Bishops have opposed all progressive legislation regarding women. The day may come when the people of England will pass judgment on the lawn-sleeved Lords Spiritual, and in that day strip them of power and place. Well would it be for the priests in that hour of trial if they could call on the common people of this country to bear witness to their gentleness and humanity.

The restraining hand of the priest in politics is a sorry story, but clerical animosity to progress, however humane, has been shown in many other directions. When chloroform was first used to alleviate the sufferings of women in childbed the clergy said, or, rather shouted, that this was an invention of Satan and was intended to remove the effects of the primal curse mentioned in "Genesis." Nor was this an isolated case, for advocates of "Birth Control" have had to endure the most determined and mulish opposition from the clergy, who contend that this much-needed reform is in direct conflict with the divine command to "increase and multiply."

As a matter of fact women tolerate the clergy be-

cause they represent to them the existing order of things. And, unfortunately, priests impudently claim to be sacred persons. Unless a man accepts them and their dogmas, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. That is priestly teaching for the masses, tempered with polite reservations for the classes. Doubtless, in time, with the widening of knowledge, women will yet discover, like little Red Riding Hood, that the Great Lying Christian Church is not a gentle grandmother, but a very greedy wolf.

MIMNERMUS.

### Christ at Hollywood.

It was bound to come in time. Christ on the "Movies"! Although the religious press was, not long ago, declaring that a representation of Christ on the "pictures" would never be tolerated in this country, the Board of Censors have passed it, and it is now being shown at the Covent Garden Opera House—an appropriate place to present a theatrical and mythological drama—under the title of "The King of Kings."

The curious thing about this film is, says "Kappa," who writes the weekly article on "Life and Politics" for *The Nation* (December 24) "that while the religious people were pleasingly surprised to find themselves not horrified, the critics almost without exception condemned it as a poor thing." And thinks it would be fair to say: "that many religious leaders are reconciled to the film, on the theory that a bad advertisement is better than neglect, and many feel that in spite of all the vulgarity, there is a residuum of something really moving." It is defaced, of course, he continues, "by some amazing silliness. Would it occur to anyone out of Hollywood to make Mary Magdalene the mistress of Judas Iscariot, who is presented as a corrupt millionaire who would never be tempted by anything so small as thirty pieces of silver?"

In the same number of *The Nation*, "Omicrom," who contributes the weekly article on "Plays and Pictures," says of the producer: "He shows Him [Christ] almost entirely without character of any kind, so 'meek and mild' that He can scarcely be said to have a human existence. Every possible opportunity to be sentimental is seized upon and made the most of. Nor could he resist the temptation to introduce Mary Magdalene as the typical film 'vamp' amid all the trappings of Hollywood luxury."

Mr. J. C. Squire, relating his "impressions" of the film, in *The Observer* (December 18), gives it the faint praise, that it "is not offensive." He considers Mr. Warner's impersonation of our Lord "is most glaringly inadequate when he is driving the money-changers out of the Temple." But otherwise he carries off the part well. He also notices "the early episode of Mary Magdalene, preposterously introduced as a fashionable demi-mondaine driving a chariot drawn by zebras. That is sheer vulgar sensationalism." He thinks that all parties have done their best, but, "the trouble is that Hollywood's best is nothing like good enough." For instance:—

There is a silly procession of shadowy Deadly Sins who tempt the Magdalene. There is a Jackie Coogan child who haunts the scenes. When Judas is paid thirty pieces of silver, we see the coins several times dropping from the priest's hands to the table; at a distance, then close up, then at a distance again. When the woman taken in adultery is about to be stoned, all the emphasis is laid on the stones. A Jew, close up, passes half a brick to

another Jew, so that we can be quite certain that stoning is contemplated. Then, in series, sinner after sinner drops his stone; then finally, we are given a picture of all the unused stones lying about the ground. This sort of thing is not merely superfluous, but throws the whole film out of proportion.

Mr. Squire also complains that we are seldom allowed to pause and contemplate what we would wish to contemplate—though if we were, he mournfully adds, “as things stand at Covent Garden, the conductor and his band would be whanging out ‘Lead Kindly Light,’ or ‘Rock of Ages.’” Judged in the light of the best possible, Mr. Squire thinks “The King of Kings” “lamentably fails.” He adds: “The intention is good; the photography is good; there is merely a complete absence of intellect, imagination, dramatic sense, and religious awe.” The scenes remind him of the paintings of Leonardo, or Correggio, a crucifix, or the old religious pictures in *The Quiver*; but when the story is properly done, he says, the producer “will be inspired to make new pictures, not to copy old ones, making a series of very superior Christmas cards.” And concludes:—

Artistic representations of religious stories, to be impressive, must either be the naive work of simple believers or the strongly imagined re-creations of genius. The simplicity of Hollywood is not the right kind of simplicity: and if a man of poetic genius went there, they would not know what to do with him. Some eminent persons have approved this film. I think they must have been agreeably surprised at not being shocked, and experienced an emotion of which they did not know the source.

Mr. Sydney Carroll, a very competent dramatic critic, also gives his opinion of “The King of Kings,” in *The Sunday Times* (December 18). He describes the film as “an amazing one. It comes from America, and bears the source of its origin unmistakably on its surface.” It tries to utilize the popularity of the moving picture to devotional ends: “Unfortunately, it fails. It has, obviously enough, been conceived by a mind attuned, not to the noble and inspiring spirit of the New Testament, but to the spectacular orgies of Hollywood potentates.”

It certainly succeeds, says Mr. Carroll, “in arousing similar interests and emotions to those kindled by a contemplation of certain elaborately designed religious oleographs, but it never approaches the truly spiritual.” “We are painfully conscious throughout of a succession of stage tricks and grimaces while the actor plays the principal figure, poses through the action operatically luminous and flaccid, centrally poised, and suggestive chiefly of stardom *in excelsis*.” The painful details, such as the scourging, the crowning with thorns, etc., are unduly stressed, “and the blatant treatment of these scenes gives us an uncomfortable suspicion that they are so dealt with not because of their spiritual values, but because they make ‘strong stuff’ in the picture sense.” “If this picture had so dealt with the life of Mohammed,” says Mr. Carroll, “it would have brought down upon its designer the wrath of the entire Mohammedan community. But we evidently are not so sensitive or scrupulous.” And he sums it up in the following words:—

This picture is nothing more or less than a glorified religious melodrama, an over-elaborated “Sign of the Cross,” with less than one half of the spiritual appeal of that popular stage play. Mary Magdalene is shown as the over-dressed and pampered paramour of Judas Iscariot, a Zoo-loving and zebra-drawn courtesan of a Hollywood circus. Judas himself is the scowling and treacherous villain, who in the last act hangs himself, to the accompaniment of an earthquake. The cataclysm

swallows not only the villain but hundreds of innocent victims, and Pelion is piled on Ossa for tremendous stage effects that would turn David Belasco green with envy.

The scene in the temple resembles, with its endless procession of sheep, goats, etc., an annexe of the Agricultural Hall suffering from a surplus of entries. Caiphas is a caricature; the leading Jews of the city, instead of being shown as thinkers and responsible citizens, are drawn as a gang of low, grinning conspirators and murderers. The struggle of Christ with the evil forces of this age consequently loses its dignity and beauty, and becomes the main movement in a crime play in which the falsely-accused hero, arrayed in spotless raiment and subsequently stripped naked, endures excruciating sufferings for no other purpose than to make the groundlings weep.

In conclusion, Mr. Carroll observes: “It makes a crude but forcible appeal to those whose early religious training has been fostered by the cheap pictorial monstrosities which pass for scripture illustration. It is often painfully obvious and underlined, and those who love to be harrowed in the theatre, and are easily satisfied, will find their needs liberally supplied.” “For these reasons, and for others that are unprintable, I must record my opinion that the film is almost wholly undesirable, and I regret its exhibition in public.”

It will be observed that the critics are unanimous in throwing the blame for the crudity, coarseness, and vulgarity of the film, on the shoulders of the producers and directors at Hollywood. This is not quite the truth. The millions that have been sunk in the film industry at Hollywood have not been subscribed for the purpose of teaching the people proper views about art, or anything else. Those millions have been subscribed to earn a dividend; and this can only be done by supplying what the American public want. If the public demanded pictures like the German films, “The Student of Prague,” or “The Last Laugh,” they would get them. The crudity and vulgarity of this film are what we complain of in nearly all American films. It is a taste quite understandable when we realize that there are twenty-five million Fundamentalists in America to cater for.

A thousand feet have been cut from this film, as unsuitable for exhibition in this country. Considering the trash that has been passed as suitable, we can only speculate as to the quality of the other thousand feet. Perhaps it contained the incident of the cursing of the fig tree for not bearing fruit out of season; or of the casting out of the devils into the swine. Hollywood is quite capable of it.

The same people are going to produce a film entitled “The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire”! We may confidently predict that the story will not be told according to Gibbon, the title of whose splendid history they are taking in vain. It will be more in the vein of Canon Farrar; the Pagans all black, vile and brutal; the Christians all white, just men made perfect, being tortured by the brutal pagans. We shall see the Roman Arena with the patriarch, with his long white beard, in the centre, gazing up into heaven, while young women in spotless nightgowns cling round him, and the lions and tigers will be seen in their cages in the rear, impatient for the feast. Meanwhile the bloated emperor lolls on his throne, surrounded by his concubines, and the audience await the coming slaughter with evident delight. No doubt a few of the repulsive-looking Hollywood children will be thrown in, to heighten the emotion. Thus will history be butchered to make a Hollywood dividend.

W. MANN.

## The Christmas Legend.

WHATEVER else Christmas may bring forth, it is a fact that the annual festival gives golden opportunities for the practised journalist to fill a page of his newspaper with a rehash of the "old, old story." He has, no doubt, to obey editorial behests, and as a general rule, the editorial mind, if not peculiarly so, is generally devoutly religious. As an interpreter of public wishes, an editor is quite aware that Christmas day is the day of all days for bolstering up the dying belief in an orthodox Jesus—that is, a Jesus, who is the son of the "living" God, who came down specially from Heaven so that He might die to save "sinners." In general, even a hardened journalist does not like to put it quite that way. It savours too much of the Salvation Army's "bloody" creed. The best way is to show that if the "sneering infidel" or "blatant Atheist" or "crass Materialist" believes in science, he does it entirely on "faith"—why, therefore, should not the devout Christian believe in that "miracle of history"—the story of Jesus on precisely the same grounds? When Colenso and other higher critics knocked the bottom out of the credibility of many of the Old Testament narratives, Christians hugged themselves with the belief that after all, the Old Testament was not *really* necessary to Christianity, and so long as the "divine" figure of Jesus was not touched, they were not seriously perturbed. Besides, what mattered higher critics when Jesus himself vouched for Jonah and Moses and other Old Testament worthies? And when the New Testament itself withered under the modernist attacks, when its authenticity and credibility were seriously challenged by churchmen, who (until then) were considered pillars of orthodoxy, those Christians who knew of the formidable assaults and who were unable to answer them, consoled themselves with the assertions that nothing could shake the *people's* belief in the greatest figure in human and divine history—Jesus of Nazareth, a man—if he were a man—who was truly "divine"—if there was such a thing as divinity—a man, whose miracles were, at least, "miracles" of "history." On these lines, any competent journalist can knock off quite easily a page of eulogy and panegyric of Jesus destined to completely reassure any orthodox wavering or hesitating questionings of some of the "religious-at-heart" public for another year. A typical example of the kind of thing I mean was given in the *Weekly Dispatch* of December 25, 1927.

Here we get a gentleman who writes quite entertainingly on the "loves" of great men and women, and various historical incidents in the lives of famous people, carefully culled from memoirs and other works of reference, writing in exactly the same way on Jesus. His business is to show that the life of the Christian Deity, if not exactly true in fact, is in substance, and to demonstrate how particularly easy the dreadful infidel or unbeliever can be annihilated. Take as an example that humorous incident relating to the Gadarene swine. Mr. Doig (as our enterprising journalist is named) tells us that "Huxley maintained that the story of the Gadarene swine could not be true because nowhere did the hill go sharply down to the Sea of Galilee. Now Dr. Schwartz, a German excavator, has found a heap of medieval rubbish which, being cleared away, reveals a typical "steep place," just where it ought to be."

Could anything be more convincing? The perfectly idiotic story of devils taking possession of a number of unlucky pigs, and causing them to commit suicide is absolutely true, because somebody has discovered a place where the hill is "steep" on the

shores of the Sea of Galilee. This kind of argument is put forward seriously. It is expected to convert a "waverer" into a convinced believer. It is meant to be an unanswerable proof of the truth of the Jesus story, and it shows how utterly mistaken poor dear Huxley was.

Some of us don't always see eye to eye with that master of English prose, but I do wish he were alive to answer Mr. Doig's howling drivel. I should, for once anyway, feel a little sorry for Mr. Doig.

Our "Defender of the Faith" also sets out to interpret a cryptic utterance of the Master. "Can a man," said the great teacher, "by taking thought, add a cubit to his stature." Most of us would say he couldn't, any more than by adding one to two, we could make a tree grow. Mr. Doig, however, beautifully illustrates the Sublime Text. It seems that Dr. Mingana, of the Rylands Library, Manchester, has discovered a Syrian document, a hymn by Theodore. In this, it is "suggested, that Christ, like Napoleon, was of less than ordinary height." How Theodore (whoever he was) knew about Napoleon is not stated. But perhaps this is a bit of Mr. Doig's knowledge about the height of Napoleon shoved into the article as a proof of learning. Now when we remember "that Peter was as big as Christ was small," we have a "flood of light" thrown on to our text, and the defeated sceptic is once again hopelessly confounded. "To give still another example," as Mr. Doig says, he goes back to the assertions of "sceptics and higher critics," who say that writing is a late invention—say about 600 B.C. Well, Egyptologists and Assyriologists—whose names are not specified, of course, have found that long before Abraham were "whole schools of writers." This proves that the "early writings about Christ, Josephus and the Early (capital E, Mr. Printer) Fathers" are all true. What do you say to that, Mr. Infidel? Won't Dean Inge and Dr. Barnes be pleased?

"We hold our New Testament," says Mr. Doig, "because it was done from Hebrew into Greek." Could that piece of profound scholarship be equalled? Or, as I ought to put it, could silly ignorance go much further? "How did it come about," asks our great scholar, as a layman, "that the Story of Christ was first put in writing by St. Paul . . . when there were no posts, or telegraphs, or libraries?" Alas, how indeed?

I know it would be useless to point out to Mr. Doig that St. Paul did not put into writing the "Story of Christ," unless you say that the constant reiteration of "Christ Jesus crucified" is the story. But what can one do? It is not as if Mr. Doig believes the yarns himself. He obviously doesn't think there's any truth in the Virgin Birth, the Resurrection or even the Ascension. His mind boggles at some of the wonderful things in the "old, old story." But it's those he doesn't boggle at which he insists, even among the "Agnostics and Atheists" are "holy ground."

Mr. Doig will, of course, learn in time—that is, if he makes any sort of investigation into the Gospel history. He will realize that the story of Christ is one of many written round a God whose business it was to succour the unfortunate, the downtrodden. He will see that if ever it is proved there was a "real" Jesus, a carpenter of Nazareth, not a word in the four Gospels has any reference to him. That up to this day not a solitary scrap of evidence outside the gospels has been brought to light referring even in the remotest way to a genuine Jesus, a "carpenter of Nazareth."

It is true that the greatest painters in the world have ever found a happy hunting ground of subjects

in Gospel incidents, but their work in this way is not more remarkable than their work portraying incidents, very often extremely realistic, in the lives of pagan Gods. Pictures are no evidence of the truth of the story of Jesus, any more than is the death of Christian martyrs.

We may be grateful for all legends and myths, but let not the beauty and symbolism in them, if such exist, take our attention away from the misery and evil in the social life surrounding us now. It is to living man where our duty lies, not to a dead Christ.  
H. CUTNER.

### Acid Drops.

It is the hardest thing to kill a Christian lie, and we are sanguine enough to think we shall be able to do it. And we have before exposed this particular lie as told by the Rev. Alexander Irvine. According to this lineal descendant of Ananias, as he writes in the *Mehodist Times*, Charles Bradlaugh was lecturing in a garrison town, and when question time came, Mr. Irvine, who was then a soldier, mounted the platform and said, "I have a joy in my heart. It comes from belief in God. Would Mr. Bradlaugh take that away and put nothing in its place?" The profound originality of the question was striking! and the conclusion was impressive. Bradlaugh, says Mr. Irvine, came close to me, put his arm round my shoulder, and said "'No, my lad, Charles Bradlaugh would be the last man on God's earth to do a thing like that. Stick to your joy.' The applause was deafening in the extreme, and I vanished into obscurity, having love in my heart for the man I had hated."

That is all. So I will content myself with repeating the letterpress which appeared under one of Phil May's cartoons. "Jim," said one coster to another, "Did you tell Bill I was a liar?" "No," said Jim, "I fort he knew it."

The Chicago Church Federation states that their city is 90 per cent. religious. From the report before us it would seem that this is the reply courteous to the fact that the eyes of the world have been turned on Chicago in connexion with its gang-wars and general crime record. Perhaps we may be allowed to peep over the edge of the Atlantic and murmur that the excuse does not seem to be any better than the complaint.

For a little fun in the flat world of stagnation commend us to the B.B.C. in their explanation of policy. Mr. Leo Maxse and Mr. F. Handley Page were to debate on the subject, "Is Flying a Fraud?" but it has been cancelled. The B.B.C., in a letter to Mr. Maxse, make the astounding remark that "it is, of course, perfectly true that almost any subject worth talking about at all is controversial." Now this seems a case of pure inspiration on the part of the B.B.C., and although it is not a matter of immediate interest to this paper as to what Mr. Leo Maxse would say in the debate, he replied to the letter, saying that he thought it was impossible to debate any public question without being suspected of propaganda, and he declined to proceed further. From this it would appear that someone is sitting on the lid covering the pit of thought, and is determined that England shall remain on the level of the House of Commons during the solemn proceedings over the Prayer Book. England therefore may turn over on its side and slumber again, and a hungry world will never know if flying is a fraud, or if aeroplanes are only sent up to show off the sky to advantage. In the meantime Freethinkers must continue to use telescopes to sight a little horse-sense in the distance.

Seeing how fond Christians are of peace and goodwill and brotherhood and friendliness between nations and love, and all the virtues without any exception,

considering all this you would have thought that at least a Bishop or a Canon would have been the first to give the order of the boot to all the tanks and guns in Manchester. But that is just where you are mistaken. It is the Manchester Parks Committee that is only waiting for support from the Corporation to move these war relics that are on a level with the scalps round a Red Indian's waist. And when the tribe of modern medicine-men has grown smaller and visibly less, human beings may find and take for granted that each country cannot but have the finest army in the world; but what and how much they can settle can be seen by a glance at Europe to-day.

After the commotion over the "King of Kings" film, which was apparently as noisy as the mixing of the contents of the blue paper with the contents of the white of a seillitz powder, there is another film on the way, entitled "I.N.R.I." It is made in Germany, and we are convinced that the noise over this will equal the explosion of a paper bag—in reality, but what our consequential Christian friends will say of it will set agog the eyes of church workers, parochial spinsters, erudite church periodicals, and all those who gather together in one place and believe that Jesus was a man. That he requires protecting from his friends is an axiom of Free-thought.

The Rev. Dr. F. W. Norwood says that every man discovers as he goes along that his assumed certainties grow less and less. It is in our youth that we are sure of things, and in our maturer age less certain. For many men, he says, the lessening of certainty means lessening of faith. Multitudes of people become agnostic by the time they are fifty, and multitudes of church members, after they are fifty, are far more agnostic than they are believers. If Dr. Norwood is right, what truth is there in the favourite tale of Christian defenders—that agnosticism is a common malady of callow youth which is discarded and replaced by religious belief when the intelligence becomes more mature?

Dr. Norwood also says that the last thing that men seem to learn is to be tolerant, and the only way they learn it is by discovering their ignorance. We presume that Dr. Norwood bases his assertion on observation of Christian men. Ordinary people become tolerant so soon as they realize that every man has the right to think and to declare his opinions, and that he cannot exercise his right unless he allows the same freedom to his fellows. Christian people, on the other hand, take a long time learning to be tolerant, because their creed contains nothing which encourages tolerance. When a man knows he has the truth, because it has come from God, he is not disposed to be tolerant towards those who differ from him. It is the nature of religion—any religion—to breed intolerance. And the Christian religion has exalted intolerance into a virtue. "As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever more shall be . . ." The intolerance a Christian acquires through his religion he carries with him into the every-day affairs of life.

Miss Maude Royden has been banned by the Chicago Churches because she has confessed to smoking cigarettes, and the very religious city of Chicago cannot stand that. Had Miss Royden visited Chicago accompanied by a cohort of gunmen, with an armoured car, and a retinue of bootleggers, the religious susceptibilities of the city would have remained quite unaffected.

The *Daily Herald*, in a leaderette, remarks that it is regrettable the quarrel between non-smokers and smokers should be made the subject of "Christian controversy," and adds: "The Founder of Christianity pleaded constantly for toleration." We wonder whether the *Daily Herald* will do us the favour of enlightening our ignorance to the extent of telling us just where this constant pleading for toleration exists? Or alternatively, when will it cease to gull its readers with this kind of

religious tomfoolery? One would like to hope that the Utopia of the future will hold accuracy of statement as a virtue of no mean quality.

On the inquest of F. Fielding, who was hanged at Strangeways Jail, the Coroner remarked that there were petitions in favour of the reprieve of nearly everyone who was condemned to death. This showed to him a stange confusion between humanitarianism and Christianity. We can assure Mr. Rodger that Freethinkers are not guilty on this count. They would never think of confusing two things so widely apart as Christianity and humanitarianism.

At the funeral of Mr. John James Sainsbury, head of the firm of provision merchants, so large was the attendance of relatives, friends and heads of the firm's departments, that the church was soon crowded. Our heart goes out to the Rev. Priestly Swam, who conducted the service. It is enough to throw any speaker off his balance to have to speak in circumstances so unusual. The incident, however, has its brighter side. The clergy know now what they must do to fill their churches. The death of the Saviour has lost its appeal—they must kill the head of a firm of provision merchants.

Does the Church of England, asks the Duke of Buccleuch, belong to the people or to the Bishops? Well, the Bishops have always called the tune and done the piping, and the people, their dupes, have always done the paying. In view of this an answer to the Duke is comparatively easy.

The Bishop of Worcester is reported as saying that he could not, in honour, divulge the discussions and divisions of the Bishops; if the figures were published, the prevailing impression of Divine guidance would be dispelled. Since so many Christian prevailing impressions (*i.e.*, Christian popular delusions) have been dispelled already, surely one little one more would make little difference? And poor Sir Henry Slesser believes the Bishops are divinely appointed!

Deep thankfulness to Almighty God, says the *English Churchman*, is the uppermost feeling in Protestants, over the defeat of the Prayer Book measure. "The result was so unexpected that it was impossible to believe in prayer not to see the Divine Hand in it." On the contrary, the Rev. H. W. Blackburne says: "I believe with all my heart, that in spite of this knock-out blow, what has happened will be over-ruled by the Providence of God for his greater glory in this our beloved Church of England." If the Christian God has a sense of humour, he must be enjoying himself just at present, watching the antics and hearing the prayerful messages of his faithful people. What we should like to know is, what the deuce *has* God done? One side thinks he has done everything possible; and the other side suggests he has done nothing, but will do a devil of a lot presently. These Christians are funny.

The New Spirit. The *Methodist Recorder* remarks:—

Amid some disquieting features as the year closes, we may surely find encouragement in the prevalence of a new spirit of mutual respect, conciliation and co-operation. How differently, for example, the public discussion on the Revised Prayer Book has been conducted from former controversies. The traditional *odium theologicum* has found little or no expression. The vulgar personalities, the fierce invectives and harsh judgments of former days, have entirely disappeared.

If the discussions were as nice as our contemporary alleges, there certainly has been shown "a new spirit." But assuredly it is not Christian, for it is utterly unlike that which Christians have shown throughout the Christian era. We hope the new spirit is not too ethereal, so as to fade into space when Christians encounter and have dealings with Freethinkers. The new spirit will surely not countenance the boycotting of the *Freethinker*. But perhaps that is expecting too much.

The new spirit consists of "respect, conciliation and co-operation" between Christians. It has not yet soared to the height of tolerance towards all opinions and non-Christians.

Funds are being raised by the Scottish Commercial Travellers' Christian Union to place a Bible, with consent of the proprietors, in every hotel bedroom in Scotland. We don't suppose the un-Christian commercials will object—an emergency supply of shaving-paper is always welcome.

To the office of the Blaina and Nantylu Distress Committee came recently a girl of seven, who had limped miles over the frost-bound roads, clad only in a ragged coat. When any measure is before Parliament dealing with something affecting the cause of distress such as this, the House of Commons witnesses a muster of only about forty honourable gentlemen. When a Bill concerning the proper manner to eat a God is to be discussed, nearly all the 600 honourable gentlemen discover a conscience, and crowd into their benches *en masse*. This is obviously a Christian nation, for the representatives of the people are deeply concerned with things spiritual. "As it was in the (Christian) beginning, is now, and evermore . . ." we hope not.

"Devon," an ex-teacher, told the *Daily News* recently that he thought children of the present generation did not often experience the utter wretchedness of many a child in Victorian times. Then, he declared, people were harder. Most children, he added, suffered from fear of some kind. There was fear of the Judgment Day, fear of parents (often unapproachable), fear of teachers, and fear of the dark. Another reader said his childhood was overshadowed by fear, occasioned by: (1) Gustave Dore illustrations in the family Bible: (2) ideas of physical torment for spiritual "sins," derived from the expression "pains of Hell for ever" in the Scottish Shorter Catechism: (3) the harsh discipline of a country school; (4) gloomy passages in old houses. It seems almost unnecessary to add that the Victorian parents were very nicely Christianized, and that the fears which haunted these two readers (and many other unfortunates) were induced, directly or indirectly, by that nightmare creed, the Christian religion of love. The younger generation of Christians ought to be thankful that they have been reared at a time when parents have become so much less Christian. And while they are being thankful they might give a thought to the Freethinkers who have helped so much to bring about the improvement.

The weakness of broadcast sermons, thinks the Vicar of Avonbury, is that though most of them are excellent from the ethical point of view, there is in them nothing distinctly Christian. They would come nearly as well from a Liberal Jew, an enlightened Mohammedan, or Buddhist. They are "little calculated to give peace of mind to an anxious soul, grieved and wearied with the burden of sin." Quite so. We are inclined to fancy that what the vicar would like is more talk about fearing God, and the Judgment Day, etc. Christian fear having been thus nicely worked up, the Christian message of Atonement and Redemption and forgiveness of sins seems then so cocoling to anxious souls.

The *Methodist Recorder* thinks that it is not a little remarkable that at a time when attendance at Church is said to be decreasing, the Wesleyan Church should be putting forth almost unparalleled efforts to provide additional churches. The Committee has during the past four years sanctioned schemes of church building, involving the expenditure of upwards of £2,000,000. Part of this sum has been expended in renewals and enlargements, but the greater portion has been devoted to new erections amid new centres of population. Our contemporary asks how the seeming contradiction can be accounted for. Why, asks our godly friend, seek to make costly provision for the supply of a need which

either is no longer felt or is as adequately met by other means? The reply appears to be—so far as we can understand our contemporary's pious jargon—that provision for worship is not a mere instinct, it is a conviction; a sacred obligation to God and man; a duty to the past, and to the future to which must be handed on a priceless treasure. That, of course, is the real truth of the matter. It would be wrong to suggest that the parsons were getting new churches built because they are afraid they may lose clients, unless these, migrating to new areas, are carefully shepherded into a new praying pen.

God is preparing a catastrophe in Switzerland greater than any of its kind, it is said, since the Ice Age. A mountain 5,000 feet high is spitting, and some 7,000 million cubic feet of rock may fall into the valley below. This is the Motto d'Arbino, near Bellinzona, above Lake Maggiore. Nearly forty years ago fissures first appeared and have been widening ever since. Several mountain-side villages are already deserted. The large village of Arbedo is threatened, and there is no knowing what may happen to Bellinzona below. Faith, we are told, can move mountains. That kind of faith is not much use in Switzerland just now. The kind that is required is that which will prevent mountains coming unstuck.

Sir George A. Macdonald, in a religious weekly:—

I think that tears came into this difficult world earlier than laughter. From all we know of the ancient history of man, it would seem that sorrow is the elder sister of joy. Cruelty and mercilessness, oppressors and oppressed and victor and vanquished; their marks are discernible even now. Their monuments stand, from the Pyramids to the Roman Coliseum, to attest the groaning and tears of our forefathers. Perhaps it is only since Christ walked the earth and left his teaching to spread over it that happiness and real laughter have come to their own, before that further time shall come when "God shall wipe all tears away."

If tears were more common than laughter in the years before Christ, the Creator must be held responsible. He made men cruel and oppressive. We are glad Mr. Macdonald put in a "perhaps" when he suggested that happiness and laughter coincided with the advent of Christ and his teaching. It suggests that he is not quite sure. Nor are we, when we recall the appalling bloodshed, torture, persecution and misery that the Christian religion was responsible for.

In the Isle of Man there is an annual dedication of the Herrings (hoping they may be caught easily and numerously). In Boston (Mass.) at the Newton Theological Institution, the President thereof solemnly dedicated to Almighty God the radio set and an automobile. Nothing whatever was said about the "cat's whisker" for the former, and the "gas" for the latter. The reverend president let the cat out of the bag amongst the gas, however, by saying, "The great aim of religion to-day is to see that all new things are *capitalized* to the glory of God."

Do you remember the *Detroit Free Press* of our youth? Humour was its strong point. Bill Nye, Robert Barr, and others created for it a demand in England as well as America. Times seem to have changed. The following is from a recent editorial in the same journal:—

In the course of the next week or two many people in Detroit will undertake to "observe" the Feast of the Nativity by consuming intoxicants smuggled by thugs who have no qualms whatever about committing murder or any other sort of violence which seems to them convenient and "safe."

It's a lovely custom, this prevalent observance of a very sacred festival by drinking virulent forbidden liquor, unlawfully provided by a special class of cold-blooded assassins. Do you happen to be one of those that practise it?

The Romans were content to speak of human brotherhood, and by it they meant what they said. Christians always talked of *Christian* brotherhood, and by that they evidently meant something of a quite distinct kind. And a quite distinct kind it always has been. In the United States, white Christians will not pray in the same church as the black ones, and, while intoxicants were permitted by law—instead of as at present, by arrangement—they would not get drunk in the same public house. They were all brothers in Christ, but they declined to sleep in the same room.

The latest example of this peculiar Christian brotherhood reaches us in the columns of the *Gold Coast Spectator*, published at Accra. At Christiansborg there is a Presbyterian Mission, "and it strongly believes in the brotherhood of all men in Christ. There are whites and blacks belonging to the Church, but, says the *Gold Coast Spectator*:—

These sections are of the same church, and yet they would not co-mingle in a common worship. Once every month the whites, evidently all Scots, attend the church. The sermon is delivered by the Rev. Dr. Wilkie. On these days the church bells peal after the blacks have finished with the evening service, and the Europeans then walk in to their devotional service. It is all fine and ship-shape.

And it is all quite on the customary lines. There is no religion in the world that has talked more about the brotherhood of man than has Christianity, and none have paid less attention to it in practice. And they are still at the same talk—and the same practice.

A contributor to the *Daily News* writes: "Humbag and hypocrisy are pressing. Gone is the mock-modest woman with her manoeuvring and trickery, and the despotic man with his cloak of chivalry. Let us acknowledge it and be thankful." Seemingly the paganized men and women of to-day are improved a little on their pious Victorian forebears.

Bridesmaids must wear hats when attending a wedding in the church of the Rev. S. M. Wheeler, of Nottingham. The rev. gent. ordains this, because not to wear a hat is "an insult to God." If Mr. Wheeler's God is so particular, we wonder he didn't specify the exact angle at which ladies' hats should be worn in holy tabernacles. A rakish, or wicked, tilt might undo all the righteousness of wearing a hat.

According to the *Christian Herald* the Persian Government has demanded of the Christian missions that the Bible shall not be taught to Moslems in the mission schools. The bishop, says our contemporary, is faced with the alternatives of closing the schools or keeping them open for Christians only. "Prayer is asked of all friends that the veto may be removed." We presume that while the Lord is persuading the Persian Government not to be naughty, the missions will have to be content to "mark time." Still, this need not hinder the missionaries writing glowing reports of the success of their mission.

The Wesleyan Missionary Society says that 1927 has been a wonderful year for the Society. In India caste people have been baptized. In West Africa the vast movement continues. In China "our missionaries have been preserved midst grave dangers." This last item is specially interesting. The missionaries were preserved because British soldiers and vessels of war were there to do the preserving. Presuming God caused them to be sent, we think it must be nice for the missionaries, as followers of the pacifist Jesus, to know that they owe their lives to those who manipulate life-destroying weapons. One would imagine that even missionaries might wonder why their God, with an illimitable number of means for safeguarding his servants, should have selected armed men to do the job.



## "Freethinker" Endowment Trust.

I HAVE received congratulations from all quarters on the success of the Trust. I take this method of acknowledging them, and the opportunity of expressing the belief that we have made a move in the right direction, one that ought to have been made years ago, and which, once made, opens up great possibilities in the future.

But it will not do to assume that we have now reached a position of affluence, and that no one need bother any more. There is plenty more that can be done, and should be done, to give this paper the position it ought to occupy. So on behalf of the Trustees, and for the information of subscribers to the Fund, there are some things that need saying.

First it has to be remembered that, apart from the appeal on behalf of the Trust, there has been no special appeal to make good the deficits of 1925, 1926, and 1927. As was stated each year, this was included in the appeal for the Endowment Trust. There has been £350 in the shape of income from the Trust during the past two years, but that is all. About £850 is short in this direction. That will be made good in course of time.

During the past two years and a quarter a gross sum of £8,000 has been raised. A full year's investment of £8,000 at an all-round five per cent. would ensure an income of £400, which is the loss on maintaining the *Freethinker*. On such investments as have been made there is at present deducted an income tax of twenty per cent. We have applied for the return of this tax, on the ground that while the capital is the property of the Trust the income is the property of the *Freethinker*. Correspondence with the Income Tax authorities has so far brought a refusal to return the tax. Counsel's opinion, which has been taken, is that we have quite a strong case for the return of the tax. We are now appealing to the Commissioners, and the matter will be argued in due course. But the return of this tax will make a considerable difference to the income available.

The full income from the whole of the sum subscribed will not be available for another twelve months. £3,000 of this could not be invested till this month, for the reason that it had not yet been subscribed. That will leave the *Freethinker* something to the bad in the year that ends with March 31—approximately over £100.

Mr. Peabody, when he paid me his cheque for £1,000, expressed the great pleasure it gave him to be called on to redeem his promise, and also the hope that the Trust would be kept open till at least £10,000 had been accumulated. The expression was striking, since the same hope had been expressed by all the Trustees.

So what will be done is this. There will be no formal and no special appeals on behalf of the Trust. But there are always newcomers who will be ready to help, and there will be those who will be glad to continue to help. An advertisement of the Trust will appear in these columns from time to time, and acknowledgements of receipts will be made in the usual way. If anything special eventuates, information will be given. The accounts of the Trust will all the time remain in the hands of an official accountant.

The need for a larger income for the *Freethinker*, not merely for the purpose of making deficits good, but for that of expansion, should be clear to all, but if it is not, the making it so involves a statement of a personal character.

Ever since the death of Mr. Foote, in 1915, I have carried on the whole work of the *Freethinker* single-handed. I have done this on a salary which is little more than half what I should have been paid as a working compositor on trade union wages, and solely because I wished to keep the deficit down as low as possible. It is this fact that led me to say more than once, that although I have not presented the *Freethinker*

with a substantial cheque I am yet one of the largest contributors to its funds.

But it is clear that this cannot, and ought not, to go on for ever. I do not mean that I am making a claim for larger payment for myself. But it is time that I began to think of getting some permanent help on the paper, and to have someone at hand who could carry on in the event of illness—from which I am fortunately free, or in the event of my being "translated to another sphere." Of course, if Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is right, I might still dictate articles and paragraphs from the next world, but if I undergo the same process of rapid mental degeneration that all other spirits appear to undergo, it is likely the acting editor would reject them as not up to standard.

I am thinking of the future, and what can be done. Apart from myself, to make the future of the paper secure is largely a question of having command of sufficient funds for the purpose indicated.

There is also the question of advertising the paper. Any surplus over could be very easily and very profitably spent in this direction. There are many inexpensive schemes I should often have liked to have tried, but I was loath to make the inevitable deficit larger than was absolutely necessary. I hope that these explanations make the position tolerably clear.

A number of those friends who have written tell me that I ought to regard this raising of the largest sum of money ever raised in a similar period in the history of our movement as a great personal triumph. That may or may not be the case, but in any case I have always done my best for the paper and for the movement, and shall continue to do so while my health continues. I have given over thirty years' continuous work to the paper, and I have plenty of unfulfilled and unpublished ambitions concerning it. What has been done is an earnest of what can be done. It has also been an indication of the strong hold the *Freethinker* has on the affection of its readers. As the subscription lists have shown, many substantial cheques have been forthcoming, but I must confess that I received them with much greater calmness than I did donations from those who, out of their small weekly incomes, subscribed at regular intervals a shilling or half-a-crown. I do not say they felt an interest in the paper greater than that of the larger subscribers, but there was a fine flavour about them that has helped to repay me for anything I may have done during my connexion with the Freethought movement. It is the human touch that makes the work of the unpopular propagandist as easy as it can be made. For the past twelve years I have received the most loyal and the most generous support from *Freethinker* readers, and I value the feeling implied and expressed more than I can say.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

### A Hymn for Freethinkers.

Lo! here hath been dawning  
Another blue day:  
Think, wilt thou let it  
Slip useless away?

Out of eternity  
This new day is born;  
Into eternity  
At night will return.

Behold it aforeside  
No eye ever did;  
So soon it for ever  
From all eyes is hid.

Lo! here hath been dawning  
Another blue day:  
Think, wilt thou let it  
Slip useless away?

GOETHE

(translated by Carlyle.)

## 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.

FREETHINKER ENDOWMENT TRUST.—D. H. Kerr, £25; Don Walton, £2/2/6; J. H. Daniell, 10/-; W. Ballance, 5/-; J. H. English, 2/-; Mrs. E. Taylor, £1; Old Bill, 4/-; D. Aberdeen, £1; M. Magee, 2/-; Mrs. F. Richards, 5/-; T. F., 10/6; The Flea, 5/-; J. W. Patterson, 5/-. *Correction*:—"C. V. Sharpe, 10/-" in the issue for January 1, should have read S. Blagg.

M. D.—We should not like to place much reliance upon Roman Catholic statistics. But we agree with you that the growth of Roman Catholicism is something that would repay watching.

S. A. MERRILL.—Thanks for promise to contribute later to the Endowment Trust. Books are being sent.

J. P. (Portsmouth).—Thanks for article, but the ideas are hardly striking enough to warrant publication.

T. SEARGENT.—Sorry we cannot use your MSS. on account of its length. We are overburdened with essays that run to too many articles to make them easy for publication. Why not break it up into separate articles? A very little trouble would do it.

R. CRAMP.—The two principal religions of Japan are Buddhism and Shintoism. In Russia, the official Church before the Revolution was the Greek one. Lately, we understand there has been a development of Roman Catholicism in Russia, but not what might have been had the Government and the Vatican concluded an arrangement that was on the carpet some three years ago.

*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.

This is almost the last opportunity we shall have of calling attention to the Annual Dinner, which is fixed for January 21. We are hoping to see, not merely a good muster of London Freethinkers and their friends, but also a good muster of provincial friends. As the dinner is on a Saturday evening, the latter will have a good chance of getting to town on a week-end ticket, and returning on either Sunday or Monday as is most convenient. *But applications for tickets should be made at once.* It is useless leaving this to the last moment, and then grumbling because none are available.

There will be good speeches, a first class entertainment, and a good dinner. And, with a good company, there are all the ingredients for a good and pleasant evening. But the sooner we know the number who will attend the better.

To-day (January 15) Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Picton Hall, Liverpool, at 7 o'clock. He is taking for his subject "The Priest and the Child, the Fight for the Future." Admission will be free, but there are reserved seats at one shilling each. We trust that Freethinkers will endeavour to bring one or two Christian friends along to the lecture.

There was an error made in announcing the title of Mr. Cohen's lecture in the Public Hall, George Street, Croydon, on Wednesday, January 18. His subject will be "The New Warfare Between Religion and Science," and it will commence at 7. Admission will be free, and there will be opportunity for questions and discussion.

Our old friend, Mr. G. F. H. McCluskey, whose connexion with the Freethought movement ante-dates our own, writes congratulating us on the success of the Endowment Trust. He doubts whether "so large a sum for a purely forward movement" could have been obtained in even the best days of fighting Freethought. Quite wisely, he hopes "that the party does not think that nothing more remains to be done. What has been done should spur us on to fresh and larger efforts. It should whet our appetites, not surfeit them." Mr. McCluskey also looks forward to an improvement in the style and get-up of the *Freethinker*. So do we, and we will have it so soon as circumstances permit.

To-day (January 15) Mr. R. H. Rosetti will lecture in the Engineers Hall, Rusholme Road, Manchester. At 3 o'clock his subject will be, "Does Atheism Demoralize?"; and at 6.30, "The Animal Origin of Human Nature." Tea will be provided for the convenience of visitors who wish to stay for the evening meeting. We hope to hear of crowded meetings.

Those who think of Lenin, the late Russian revolutionary leader, as a mere wild enthusiast, will doubtless be surprised to learn that his literary works, now in course of publication by Mr. Martin, is expected to cover about thirty volumes 8vo. The last issued, Vol. 13, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, has just reached us, and is philosophical in character, and offers a defence of Marxian Materialism against all comers. The criticism is acute and interesting, even when one is not inclined to agree with the critic, and the outsider's estimate of the mental calibre of Lenin is certain to rise in consequence of the reading of a volume of this character. The weakness of the volume appears to us to lie in the readiness of the author to test every kind of philosophic teaching by its conformity with what he takes to be the true Marxian position, which paves the way for the development of a mentality not very different from that of the medieval Church. "Thus saith the Lord" has worked so much harm in connexion with theology, that the less we have of it in connexion with other things the better. For the rest, it is a pity that the critic did not set himself to decide exactly what is meant, or what ought to be meant by "matter," and thus distinguish between its crude realistic meaning, and its philosophical or methodological significance. One does not wish to unduly blame Lenin here, it is the fault of nearly all who have taken up either the championship of materialism, as well as of those who have attacked it. The published price of these volumes is 10s. 6d. each.

We have to announce that by the will of the late Mr. H. Tucker, of Plymouth, the National Secular Society has just been paid a legacy of £500, free of duty. We expect to be able, in the course of two or three weeks, to make an announcement in connexion with another will by which the Society benefits.

Mr. F. P. Corrigan took advantage of a recent visit to the north of England to deliver a lecture on "Christianity in the Melting Pot," in the Psychological Hall, Darlington. A good report appears in one of the local

papers, and it is given with a quite evident desire to be fair to the speaker. That is all to the good, and judging from the manner in which the report appears, we take it that the lecturer impressed the audience with both his fairness and his ability. It is hoped that the lecture will lead to others. There are many thousands of Free-thinkers in the two counties of Durham and Northumberland, and we should like to see something done to draw them together.

Our shop manager tells us that he is being overwhelmed with orders for copies of Hannay's *Roman Religion*. These he is no longer able to supply, the stock being exhausted. The work was published at 12s. 6d. and sold by the Pioneer Press at 4s. 6d. As usual, those who intended to have the book left it later and later, till, finally, they overshot the mark. We would remind all that no remainder is sold by the Pioneer Press that is not at least worth reading, and when they are announced, those who wish to have copies should write at once. There is only a limited number available in any case.

### Spiritualism amongst Pagan and Savage Races and as Revealed in the Bible.

(Continued from page 21.)

TRUE it is that in the huge majority the visions mentioned in both Testaments are either of God or his angels (Matt. i. 20 ; ii. 13-20), unnamed and unidentified, only on rare occasions do ghosts of once-living men actually appear as in the instance just given of Samuel ; and the somewhat similar case of Moses and Elias appearing to Jesus. But mediums, or witches as they were called in those days, lived in mortal fear for their lives : the witch of Endor was dubious and suspicious of a trap. Any truck with ghosts or spirits was set down as devil worship. Moses was explicit in the matter :—

When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abomination of those nations. There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch. Or a charm, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.

Certain it is that apart from direct revelation by voice, vision or symbol from God and his angels, and thaumaturgic practices by Christ and his disciples or apostles, no other form of pneumatological knowledge was recognized or admitted, and this attitude founded on patristic revelation has been continued through the ages to the present day. Every other exhibition of cryptic knowledge was dubbed devil worship, every other spirit was evil, and those who claimed intercourse were witches, wizards and sorcerers, and as such were liable to sudden extinction. (1 Sam. xxviii. 3 ; Lev. xx. 27.) But despite the denunciation and persecution of which the Scriptures provide such abundant evidence the worship of the dead flourished. It was clearly indicated in the custom of providing food for departed souls, a custom tabooed<sup>5</sup> by the command of Jahvah. It was evidenced in the idolatry<sup>6</sup> which persisted despite the destruction of idols, temples and pictures. (2 Kings xxiii. 24.) The fourth commandment itself is an additional indication of ancestor worship.

<sup>5</sup> "I have not eaten thereof in my mourning, neither have I taken away ought thereof for any unclean use, nor given ought thereof for the dead." (Deut. xxvi. 14.)

<sup>6</sup> The derivation of the word idolatry signifies image-worship.

The chief god of the Canaanites was Beelzebub. The gods of Babylon, of Greece, of Rome, of Egypt, were deified human beings;<sup>7</sup> Vishnu, Brahma, Siva the phallic god of India, are names for once-living men. Thor, the war god of the Scandinavians, was a son of Odin, Buddha is nothing but a deified priest. So scores of other gods can be traced, provided one likes to take the trouble and time, to their human originals. To-day worship of the dead dominates every religion known. The savages on the Congo, the Chinese, the Japanese, the Hindoos, the Polynesians, the Maoris : all are worshipping the spirits of dead kings or heroes. There isn't a Catholic who doesn't symbolize this every time he makes the sign of the cross, or worships a departed saint. Indeed the whole Christian religion, Catholic and Protestant, is the worship of the spirits of a dead evangelist by name Christ Jesus.

Intimately associated with the religion of every race were magic, sorcery, divination and all the hocus-pocus with which the high priests of every religious order have seen fit to impress the gaping yokels of the day. Buddhism depends almost entirely on conjuring tricks;<sup>8</sup> the "adepts" of its higher manifestation whom Madam Blavatsky was supposed to consult are thought readers and clair-audients ; the prophets of every ancient religion were trance speakers.<sup>9</sup> Daniel and Elisha were pious frauds who did what a hundred mediums are doing to-day. What is the Holy Communion but an exhibition of primitive magic ; what is the supposed lustrating influence of Baptismal ritual but a survival of barbaric and medieval superstition ; what is the Jewish rite of circumcision but a form of human sacrifice ; what is the Catholic Mariolatry and saint reverence but necromancy ; what the tonsure of the priests but a relic of sun worship ; what the anointing but an analogous practice to that of the savages of Melanesia or the cannibals of the Congo ; what the edict which requires that a female must wear her hat in a place of worship, but a relic of the three thousand year old idea of conception through the ears?

It is profoundly difficult for the non-critical to sufficiently realize that the Bible as it reaches us to-day is the work of the patristic Christians, and that in consequence the terms used in describing the idolatrous religions of those days are grossly misleading. It is obvious, it is incontrovertible, it is undeniable, that all the religions of the so-called pagan races, before the birth of Christ, were idolatrous, in other words the pneumatological worship of the dead. It is further evident that what were called the sun, serpent and phallic observances were essentially and fundamentally ancestor worship. But the anonymous writers of the Gospels, and treading in their steps with meticulous care, the whole hierarchy of priests for nineteen hundred years, have one and all dubbed

<sup>7</sup> Garnier in *The Worship of the Dead*, p. 53, says : "Thus although these gods can be identified with human originals, this in ancient times was known only to the priesthood and to the initiated ; while to the common people the gods were merely beings possessed of certain powers and characteristics, whose material manifestations were the sun and certain planets, and whose spirits were supposed to inhabit certain images and temples."

<sup>8</sup> To this day the Buddhist temple is the home of marvels ; and in front of many statues of Buddha there is a table of china on which an apparatus similar to a planchette is used for ghostly communications. This planchette has been known for many hundred years.—Quoted by Garnier from Lenormant's *Chaldean Magic*.

<sup>9</sup> The spirit-speaking of Egyptian priests was nothing but a self-induced or simulated trance, in which they were supposed to become the mouthpieces of gods, in precisely the way that the modern medium becomes the mouthpiece of discarnate souls.

this worship of the dead as devil worship. The existence of spirits is admitted. But strangely enough only evil spirits, demons, devils. In Jesus Christ the incarnate son of God, lives the only admitted God: in the spirit of Jahveh and his hierarchy of angels, the only good spirits. Plainly, though Christianity teaches immortality, it denies resolutely the communication with dead souls—apart from the demonology of the Scriptures. Hence the persecution of witches up to a matter of a hundred years ago, the attempts to wean savages from their worship of evil spirits in active progress to this very day, the opinion of the clergy that the souls communicated with by spiritualistic mediums are evil spirits impersonating dead relatives.

The ritual of Christianity in vogue to-day teems with relics of demonology and admits at every turn the existence and danger of evil spirits. Baptism in its original form was purely a protective rite against demons, a similar form of lustration exists in nearly every primitive religion; the act of consecration at Communion, with its chanting of the magic formula is the remnant of an old exorcism, the sole object of which was to expel any devil or devils that had gained access, in precisely the same way as savage medicine-men chant invocations over their magical hocus pocus, or as witches in the middle ages hymned ditties over their devil's stew; while the Eucharist itself at the time of its origination was neither more nor less than a form of sacrifice inaugurated in a spirit of rivalry to the blood sacrifice of the pagans. Thus St. Paul:—

But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils. (1 Cor. x. 20-21.)

Primitive religious records teem with evidence that the consumption of the blood implied the consumption of the spirit or life. In consequence, blood was the food of gods and devils alike.

GEORGE R. SCOTT.

(To be continued.)

### Books and Life.

A VERY readable novel of Manchester life is *What Does It Matter?* by J. M. Stuart-Young, The C. W. Daniel Company, 7s. 6d. net. It is a sequel to *Johnny Jones, Guttersnipe*, which has been favourably noticed by eminent authors, and such diverse papers as the *Edinburgh Evening News*, the *Birmingham Gazette* and the *Merthyr Express*. Throughout there is a grey atmosphere, accentuated by the fearful ignorance of a stupid father, true to type, and he would have a long way to go to reach that stage to obtain the forgiveness of his son (the hero) for being his father. Johnny Jones, the hero, puts up a stout fight against his environment, and in the development of his character we can see the truth in the aphorism of Vauvenargues, "The world is what it must be for an active being, fertile in obstacles." He struggles, fails for a time, and finds himself in prison. Here Johnny finds himself in the truest sense of the word, and the description of his life during his incarceration is powerfully portrayed. The author touches the spot when he writes of his hero: "The change, the improvement, the regeneration and the complete reformation must come from within himself. . . He had to be his own saviour." The record of prison life is reminiscent of Dostoevsky's *House of the Dead*, and the hero hears of and sees brutalities that are a question mark to much that is done in the name of legal punishment. Mr. Stuart-Young gives the reader full measure, and we think that he cherishes a great affection for Dickens. Nietzsche's position is not so

clearly defined, but we occasionally get favourable glimpses of this philosopher in the attempt at an orientation of the rascal's ideas with those of his hero. This novel should have a wide public in Manchester, and also with those who will not be denied their little bit of hope. It is pathetic and true of working-class life that centuries of relentless toil have reduced it to a peculiar state. A little extra leisure is slowly being squeezed out of the industrial machine, but against this leisure is placed the doubtful benefit of academic instruction that bewilders the eager mind with words. The art of teaching people to think is the only art that matters, but it has fatal consequences to humbug and shams that occupy front places; progress in this art must necessarily be slow. We leave Johnny Jones *en voyage* for South Africa, where the reader feels sure he will make good, and Johnny finds in Nietzsche's philosophy, that which must be found by anyone who has the courage to face the world as a thinker, speaker, or writer in an unpopular cause—enough self-reliance—"So that one may endure to be with oneself." We shall look forward to the next novel by Mr. Stuart-Young, who brings philosophy in abundance to his work at a time when most novel writing has become simply an excuse for covering paper.

Like the dramatist who depends on a chorus to reveal his message, so the novelist, in his craft, conveys with many subtle turnings, his intention and goal. There is nothing new under the sun, but there is no end to the methods whereby a new view-point may be obtained. In the course of some two hundred pages, Mr. Eden Phillpotts, in his latest novel *Arachne*, relives himself of some acute criticism of modern art, and his thesis is so carefully elaborated that the story of human limitations is daylight clear. *Arachne* challenges Pallas Athene to a contest of weaving with disastrous results. The story affords many opportunities to the author for giving us different view-points whilst taking sides with none. Polydorus is a lover of *Arachne*; he is worldly wise, and attempts, without success, to improve her mind. *Arachne* cannot be bent, and with a little change of names here is a very modern criticism of those vendors of magic we have in our day: "Why, then," she asks, "should Man, if Zeus loves him so much, have sprung from earth rather than fire, or some more noble element? Why mix mud as a chalice for conscious intelligence, when he might have set the divine magic of life in a finer vessel?" And Mopsus, a rival of Polydorus, with an eye always for the practical, says, "You are hungry, for I have noticed that you are least patient with the accepted order of things when you lack food." This novel is a very delicate exposition of a Greek virtue—the golden mean—nothing too much—balance and poise, and is particularly refreshing at a period when a saxophone player can take a higher salary than a cabinet minister, and when the pavement is the only canvas that artists can find to give their treasures to the people—to tread on. Courage brothers, we shall never be asphyxiated with common sense. Messrs. Faber & Gwyer are the publishers of this novel, price 6s. net.

In 1918 there was published in the Cambridge Manuals of Science and literature, *The Psychology of Insanity*, by Bernard Hart, M.D. (Lond.). If this book is unknown to readers who are interested in a youthful science, they will thank us for mentioning it. Dr. Hart's implications are in no way flattering to the history of superstition. He does not torture his subject with jargon, and his modesty conveys more than it conceals. In the dispassionate examination of a surgery he gives us a diagnosis with observations, and we recommend this book as an introduction to a subject that is in many quarters suspect through the people who jabber about it without coming down to earth. We returned to the little book above, through reading *Our Fear Complexes*, which we notice is advertised in this journal. The authors have steered clear of making a separate glossary necessary for the subject. You may remember that Carlyle wrote, "We must get rid of fear," but he did not tell us how to do it. This book will be found

most useful; it indicates the technique of methods towards understanding of ourselves and others. As you may also remember, Voltaire writes somewhere, "To know all is to forgive all," and *Our Fear Complexes* is well worth a careful study to assist us in keeping in order that menagerie which exists in an undisciplined imagination. We are a stringer of pearls in this paragraph, and to those who ask, what is the good of psychology, we would refer them to an article in our contemporary *The New Age*, December 15 issue. Mr. W. T. Symons has an article "Adlerian Economics," in which he brings to his aid the discoveries of Dr. Adler with good effect. He writes: "Psychology, at last become a fully human science, without evasions or necromancy, sheds a powerful light on the dark rivalries and confusions, of personal and communal life." And further on he states, "Material fact, common sense, and psychological truth have met together; they are henceforth inseparable." Well, as far back as we can remember the *Freethinker* has never in its wildest moments stood for anything else. As a matter of fact, there is one philosopher who has grown grey in his life work of trying to get a fat-headed public to see that things that are different are not the same, and that if one cannot find philosophy in a plum pudding, he is hopeless to find it elsewhere. Within proper definitions we help others by helping ourselves, and we improve the world by improving ourselves, and we justify Nietzsche's aphorism in this way, when we have ceased to look forward to rewards beyond. "To see the world as an aesthetic phenomenon" requires strong eyes, a stout heart, and unlimited courage, and no Freethinker will ignore the help in his task to be gained by understanding motives, getting a new view-point of problems, and understanding why humanity is stuck in the mud of theology, instead of analysing the mud. In this, psychology will help him; it will also help him to understand why Mr. G. K. Chesterton attacks it.

To us, trees have always had a fascination, which we have never attempted to understand or explain. Trees are steadfast, and have their roots in the earth (a wonderful truth this). They seem to say, "Here I am; you can look at me or do the other thing." They remind us of the cheerful inconsequential advice of Montaigne, Burton, and Xavier de Maistre on whether or not you should read what they have written. Trees do not roam about, and when we see the one in Cheapside, we console ourselves that the axe of the vandal cannot yet bring it to the saw mills. For our good conduct, a friend has given us *Wayside and Woodland Trees*, a pocket guide to the British Sylva by Edward Step, F.L.S. It is published by Frederick Warne & Co., Ltd., London, price 7s. 6d. There are many beautifully coloured photographs of tree blooms, of different trees in winter and summer, and, like grasses, each tree has some distinct mark giving it individuality. Trees are bird sanctuaries, pillar-boxes for love letters, distractions of artists, enemies of jerry-builders, sunshades for cattle, sievers of wind, and glories of this earth, which is the best one we know, and better if we care to make it so. Mr. Step has completed his labour of love with care, and the reader will, besides other pleasures, be inducted into the game of "Oblionker! my fust konker." In case you have forgotten it, Omar included a tree as one of the requisites for the perfect life when he had tired of worrying the cars of the world; his philosophy had its roots in the ground of commonsense, and many moons will wax and wane before the placard goes out on that place that there is "Standing Room Only."

WILLIAM REPTON.

Also Ran.

SLOW-MOVING minds may reach conclusions sound,  
Which genius attains with one great bound;  
No tortoise can outrun the speedy hare,  
But, given time, the tortoise too gets there;  
The panting hare may run himself to death,  
But who has seen a tortoise out of breath?

BAYARD SIMMONS.

Correspondence.

METHODS OF CONTROVERSY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Permit me to point out to Mr. Alan Tyndal that when I used the phrase, "Surely you don't believe that damned nonsense," I was indicating a method not suggesting a formula. I am no advocate of the tactless handling of delicate situations.

At the same time, when one has the whole of modern science and the whole trend of modern life and thought behind one, it does not seem to me to require much courage to declare as nonsense, a nonsense so palpable as Christianity. How one states the fact will depend on circumstances, but assuredly one need not do it with fear and trembling.

VINCENT J. HANDS.

TELEPATHY.

SIR,—In answer to "Querulous," telepathy often occurred between my wife and me, but always on trifles, and never when tried for. It is no use to ask for experimental evidence; one might as well demand to be shown a meteorite falling. And it is no argument to say telepathy is useless. So is my little toe, but I am nearly sure it exists. Colds are catching, so are thoughts. We admitted the former as a fact before we knew how it was done. We must do the same with the latter.

C. HARPUR.

SIR,—Your correspondent "Querulous" writes you to give his opinion that in my book *Towards the Answer*, I give "a fool solution" to the problem of the two trains. From the way he expresses himself, he seems to be under the idea that the trains are approaching each other; but the fast train is supposed to be overtaking the other. He asks if I have read Einstein. I have not, for it would require a professional mathematician, a first class expert, to follow and understand the higher mathematics of the subject. But I have, of course, read some of the attempts to put the matter into simple language. In my book I refer to *Mathematical Recreation*, by Professor Rouse Ball, especially the chapter on Hyper-space (my copy is the eighth edition—I am not sure that the chapter is in every edition.) The example of the trains is only one of many that illustrate Zeno's Paradoxes, and I do not think it is claimed by or for Einstein that he has elucidated the mysteries of them.

If a train going at sixty miles an hour is sixty miles behind a train going at thirty miles per hour, then when it has traversed the sixty miles, the other train is thirty miles in front. When the fast train has done that thirty miles, the slow train is fifteen miles in front. Always when the fast train has got to where the slow train was, the latter is a definite, proportionate distance in front. The miles can come down to yards, to inches, to thousands of an inch, and the logic holds good. But we know that the fast train can actually catch up to the slow one, and if on a parallel line, could pass it. In other words that definite proportionate distance gets annihilated. But how, when, where? Our minds are incompetent to make a concept of it, or alternatively are under an inhibition as regards grasping the phenomena (there may be a very big difference in the two alternatives.) "Querulous" says I have made "a fool solution." Actually I have not only made no solution at all, but hazarded the opinion that the solution is beyond our present powers. So it is now up to "Q" to make his initials into Q.E.D. by giving us his solution. It is also up to him to give a plain yes or no to the question, has he read Einstein?—by which I mean, has he read him properly, fully, gone through his equations and formula step by step, understanding as he went on. At the moment, until "Q" assures me otherwise, I guess he is no mathematician at all. His talk about A's and B's is what leads me to this opinion. Signs and symbols are the essence of mathematics. I cannot imagine a mathematician having written the seventh line of "Q's" letter.

As regards telepathy, the subject is in the stage where every man has to be his own investigator, his own authority. Let "Q" visit several mediums succes-

sively. At each interview let him hand over his handkerchief or glove, and listen to what the medium will reel off. Or let him attend a few services at a Spiritualist Church. I think he will find scraps of "information" given that could only have been got in an abnormal manner. There will probably be a bushel of chaff to each grain of wheat—but that grain will call for explanation, and telepathy seems the simplest explanation. I do not accept the spiritist explanation but that is plausible compared to the explanation which presupposes superhuman "smartness" on the part of the medium. If the latter does happen to be "Q's" particular explanation, let him ask himself if any of the mediums are half as "smart" as he is. I do not think he would admit this, for as a rule mediums are far from "smart." If after some experience of mediums "Q" still thinks that smartness does the trick, let him get the smartest person he knows to try to equal the medium's performance. It should be easy for "Q" to arrange such an experiment, for I guess he will consider that one of the smartest men you could get hold of is under his own hat. But I guess further that he would make a mess of telepathy. In fact his last sentence but one shows that he has not a correct idea of what the word itself means, for he there confuses it with prophesy. "Q's" argument, that if telepathy was found anywhere it would be between husband and wife, and if not found there, is a proof that there is no such thing, is very bad logic. We know too little about the subject yet to be dogmatic about it.

C. R. BOYD FREEMAN.

### The National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY,  
JANUARY 5, 1928.

The President, Mr. Chapman Cohen, in the chair.

Also present: Miss Kough, Miss Vance, Messrs. Clifton, Coles, Moss, Quinton, Rosetti, Samuels, Silvester, Wood, and the Secretary.

Minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed. The monthly financial statement was presented and adopted.

New members were received for the Glasgow, Manchester, West Ham, and West London Branches, and for the Parent Society. Permission was given for the formation of a new Branch of the Society, to be called the Fulham and Chelsea Branch.

Correspondence was received from the Birmingham, Liverpool, Plymouth, and West London Branches, and from members of the Society.

Mr. Cohen reported a highly successful meeting at the Co-operative Hall, Plymouth. The Secretary reported that Mr. Whitehead, as delegate of the Society, had taken part in a discussion on the question of a future life, at a meeting held by the Workers Educational Debating Society.

Mr. Clifton and the Secretary reported progress with regard to the arrangements for the Croydon meeting on January 18, to be addressed by Mr. Cohen. The Executive decided to hold meetings at Fulham and possibly Deptford.

The Executive considered the arrangements for the Society's Annual Dinner, and decided to arrange for a Social Evening to be held in February.

FRED MANN,  
General Secretary.

### Society News.

#### NORTH LONDON BRANCH.

Our Spring Session opened last Sunday with a very excellent debate on the Drink Traffic, between Mr. Alexander Thomson of the United Kingdom Alliance and Mr. T. F. Palmer.

To-night, Dr. Arthur Lynch is giving an address on "Tom Paine and Edmund Burke," and we urge all North London friends to make this as widely known as possible. An address from Dr. Lynch is always an intellectual treat.—K.B.K.

### 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.

CROYDON (Large Public Hall, George Street): Wednesday, January 18, at 7 p.m. Lecture by Mr. CHAPMAN COHEN. Subject: "The New Warfare between Science and Religion." Questions and Discussion cordially invited. Doors open at 6.30 p.m. Admission free. Collection.

HAMPSTEAD ETHICAL INSTITUTE (The Studio Theatre, 59 Finchley Road, N.W.8): 11.15, Mr. William Platt—"Has Science a Gospel?" Wednesday, January 18, at 8.30 p.m.: A Social Evening at The Studio Theatre.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W.): 7.30, Dr. Arthur Lynch—"Tom Paine and Edmund Burke."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (30 Brixton Road, S.W., near Oval Station): 7.15, Mr. F. Mann—"Freethought and Democracy."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7.0, Mrs. Walter Layton—"Child Insurance: National or Industrial?"

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (The London Institution Theatre, South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11.0, S. K. Ratcliffe—"England as Defoe Saw It (1724)."

THE METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (34, George Street, Manchester Square, W.1): 7.30, Mr. A. Howell Smith—"The Religion of a Freethinker." Thursday, January 19: Rev. A. Claxton—"The Life of Swedenborg."

##### OUTDOOR.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 3.0, Mr. Fred Mann (Gen. Sec. N.S.S.)—"Freethought"; 6.30, Messrs. Campbell-Everden and B. A. Le Maine. (Ravenscourt Park, Hammersmith, W.): 3.0, Mr. Campbell-Everden—A Lecture. 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. Price—"Mohametanism." Chairman: Mr. F. Phillips.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY, Branch of the N.S.S. (No. 2 Room, City Hall, Albion Street): 6.30. For particulars see Saturday's News or Citizen.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, H. Bellerby Lowerison—"Children's Games."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Picton Hall): 7.0, Mr. Chapman Cohen—"The Priest and the Child: The Fight for the Future." Admission free. Reserved seats 1s. (18 Colquitt Street, off Bold Street): Saturday, January 14, at 7 p.m.—A Grand Social. Admission, including refreshments, 1s. 6d.; tickets at the door.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Engineers Hall, 120 Rusholme Road): R. H. Rosetti (London)—3.0, "Does Atheism Demoralize?"; 6.30, "The Animal Origin of Human Nature." Questions and Discussion.

##### OUTDOOR.

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

PRIZE Bred Yorkshire and Norwich Canaries for sale. Cocks, 10s., 15s., £1; pairs, £1 and 25s.—W. HOWARD, 1 Hollicondane Terrace, Ramsgate, Kent.

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