

ARE THE CLERGY HONEST?

The FREETHINKER

FOUNDED · 1881

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

VOL. XLVIII.—No. 18

SUNDAY, APRIL 29, 1928

PRICE THREEPENCE

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page
<i>Are the Clergy Honest?—The Editor</i> - - -	273
<i>Wonderful Mr. Wells.—Mimmermus</i> - - -	274
<i>Instead of an Article.—Bayard Simmons</i> - - -	276
<i>Religion and Fanaticism.—R. H. S. Standfast</i> - - -	277
<i>Freethought Flashes</i> - - -	278
<i>I've Chucked, Doyle!—Caradoc</i> - - -	280
<i>Rationalism and Education.—J. Reeves</i> - - -	282
<i>American Notes.—George Bedborough</i> - - -	282
<i>Books and Life.—William Repton</i> - - -	283
<i>The Shadow Show.—The Showman</i> - - -	284

*Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums,
Letters to the Editor, etc.*

Views and Opinions.

Are the Clergy Honest?

It is perhaps one of the signs of the times that a prominent place should be given in a religious paper to an article dealing with Dean Inge and Bishop Barnes, under the title of "Are they Honest Men?" In truth it is a question that many people must have asked themselves. Here are two prominent churchmen who disavow one established doctrine after another, but who still claim to be both Christians and loyal members of the Church. The confusion does not end there. So far as Christians are concerned the issue ends with the acceptance or rejection of certain doctrines. But with those who are not Christians the matter takes a wider range. Both Bishop Barnes and Dean Inge, with many others that one might name, show in their writings an acquaintance with a great deal that modern investigators have to say about the origin and the nature of religious belief. They do not deny the relevancy or the truth of these investigations; they sometimes definitely accept the results as being substantially true. But having done this, having denounced specific doctrines as being no more than relics of pure savagery, they proceed to deal with religious beliefs as though they were matters of historic fact that had never been called into question. We are told of what "Our Lord" said or did immediately before or after the resurrection, which they do not believe ever took place; they explain in their sermons the significance of the virgin birth, in which they have no faith; and in numerous ways they present the curious sight of men who reject a teaching on the apologetic platform, and straightway mount the pulpit and reinstate it.

* * *

The Will to Believe.

If men adopted this policy in any other department of life, there would be only one comment—that is, that they ought to get out. If a man does not believe in Trades Unionism, his place is outside; and

if he said that he wished to remain inside because he meant by Trades Unionism something minus organization or combination, he would be laughed at for a fool. That would be the position in connexion with anything save religion. And yet it is not an easy conclusion that men such as those mentioned are deliberately and consciously dishonest. That many of the clergy are deliberately dishonest is undeniable. But this is only saying that they are built as other men are, and are animated by the same feelings. And when position, income, etc., all combine to induce dissimulation, then dissimulation will be forthcoming with some, whether it be in religion, politics, or elsewhere. A large section of the clergy unquestionably believe the things they teach—they are too unintellectual to do otherwise. A certain number unquestionably are deliberately dishonest. The way in which, when once a lead is given by someone in position, or popularity is promised, these come forward and denounce doctrines they have hitherto preached fervently proves this. It is clearly impossible to believe that these men quite suddenly found out that what they had been teaching was false. What they discovered was that it was safe to voice the doubts they had hitherto concealed. The confessions they make prove this to be the case. They belong to the class of men who do not wish to tell a lie, but they will not tell the truth if telling it involves anything in the nature of a personal sacrifice.

* * *

The Game of Bluff.

There is a third class in which I think we may place men of the stamp of Bishop Barnes and Dean Inge. Here there is a bold show of facing the real issues in dispute, while all the time these are never once brought forward. The charge brought against such men by the more orthodox believers is that since they no longer believe in the orthodox doctrines of the Church, they have no right to be in its service. Their proper place is outside; their proper policy, that which has been adopted by many, to leave the church altogether. In defence, they argue that it is possible to so interpret Christian doctrines as to bring them into line with modern scientific thought. Granting that this is the case (I do not admit that it is so) it does not meet the issue, it evades it. Given sufficient laxity in our definitions, and it is possible to make a thing mean exactly what one wishes it to mean. But that is not the question at issue. The truth is that Christianity has always stood for a very definite number of doctrines—such as the belief in the Virgin Birth, the divinity of Jesus, in a sense in which the term divinity does not apply to man, the resurrection of Jesus, and the belief in the Bible as being inspired in a sense in which no other book in the world is inspired. Now it is clearly not establishing a character for mental honesty, to say that we may con-

tinue to assert that these beliefs are true, because we can give them an entirely different meaning from that which they have always carried. If honesty is so defined as to be made consonant with thievery, then every pickpocket in the kingdom may prove himself to be an honest man. If the Christian doctrines are not true in the sense in which people have always accepted them, then they are not true at all. That is the first issue which neither Dean Inge nor Bishop Barnes will face. Is historic Christianity true or false? If it is true, then the apologetics and restatements of these men are quite unnecessary. If it is not true, what moral justification can be offered for asking people to continue to accept certain things as still true, while giving them an entirely different meaning?

* * *

The Great Delusion.

The second issue, which I have never yet been able to get a single "advanced" clergyman to deal with, is concerned with a wider issue. It goes to the root of all genuinely religious belief. There is common agreement amongst anthropologists that all fundamental religious beliefs have their origin in the ignorance and fear of primitive mankind. There are numerous theories of the origin of religion, there is a wide divergence of opinion as to the order of development of certain religious ideas, but there is a very wide and a very substantial agreement as to how religious ideas came into existence. Modern anthropology regards all religious ideas as being in the nature of conclusions drawn from erroneous premises.

Now, what I would like Dean Inge and Bishop Barnes to do, is to face this issue clearly and honestly. Do they accept the findings of modern anthropology or not? Will they tell our scientists that they are all at sea when they classify and dissect the religious beliefs of savages, when they point out that our own religious ideas are derived from these primitive blunders? They know these conclusions are there—occasionally they use them to batter the heads of less "advanced" Christians. Do they believe modern science to be quite at sea in this matter? If they do, why do they not say so? If they do not so believe, what possible basis is there for the Christianity in which they say they have faith? You cannot go on believing that all existing religious ideas are derived from the ignorant blunders of the primitive savage, and at the same time accept them as substantially true. Can anyone get one of these advanced Christian clergymen to face *this* simple issue? I have been trying for nearly forty years without success. And yet if the anthropologist is correct, there is nothing left for discussion. There is no room for discussing whether gods exist, or whether souls go to heaven or hell after death. We are not, in studying the history of religious ideas, examining the gradual unearthing of truth; what we are studying is the history of a demonstrated delusion. The only thing there is room for in a scientific study of religion is a study of how and why people ever came to believe it to be true.

* * *

A Demoralizing Ethic.

I am not surprised that people ask, when they look critically at the clergy, whether they are honest men. Judged by such standards as apply to science, or even to politics, they are not. All the same, it would perhaps not be quite just to judge the clergy by the tests that apply to other walks of life. For the pulpit has always had its own standards of honesty, its own canons of righteousness. In science theories

are based on facts, they are constantly being checked by reference to facts, and they have no value other than that of explaining a given set of facts. In religion the theory is everything, the facts are of subordinate importance. In politics a man would be expected to give up a party so soon as he was no longer in agreement with it. In religion there is surprise expressed when a man comes out from the pulpit because he no longer believes. In ordinary commercial life, and in social intercourse, no one is looked upon with greater detestation than the man who goes about whispering slanders against the character of others. In the ranks of the clergy, slanderous whispers concerning one's opponents are taken as a matter of course. The result of all this is that the average man looks for neither the same level of intelligence nor of mental honesty in a parson that he does in a scientist, a man of business, or a politician. They are not surprised when a clergyman tells what is very like a lie, because they really do not expect him to tell the truth. Apart from the superstitious awe with which an ignorant Roman Catholic peasant regards his priest, it may safely be said that the ordinary educated layman treats his minister with a deal of tolerant condescension. He does not say certain things about religion to him, things which he knows to be true, because they are not the right thing to say to a parson. He professes belief in the presence of a parson, because it is the accepted thing to do. And often the educated parson is afraid to tell the layman what *he* knows about religion for fear of disturbing his faith. It is thus that when a parson voices a heresy that educated people have been familiar with for years, the world opens its eyes in amazement. How long is it since educated laymen gave up believing in the literal accuracy of Genesis? Yet the fact of a clergyman saying to-day that he does not believe in the garden of Eden is enough to provide a special article in the lay press. What are they surprised at? Is the surprise due to discovering a parson with intelligence enough to realize these things, or because one has been found honest enough to tell the truth about the religion he is paid to preach? It is a curious position of affairs. One wonders how long it will last.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Wonderful Mr. Wells.

"Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind."—Emerson.

"Freedom is the one purport, wisely aimed at, or unwisely, of all man's struggles, toilings, and sufferings, in this earth."—Carlyle.

MR. H. G. WELLS has for many years frequented the camp of the Freethought Army. Latterly, however, his writings have taken a bitter tone, especially since he has found a god, or, perhaps a god has found him. Maybe, they found each other. And the mutual recognition of two such distinguished personalities has been an event of journalistic importance. For, like so many worthy folks in similar condition, Mr. Wells has been fussy and loquacious. One of his pastimes, since his conversion, has been the hurling of insults at his former associates. Curiously, his jibes have taken the familiar form of the stock arguments of pale young curates. Presumably, Mr. Wells's conversion has depressed his levity, for the process reminds us of how Edward Gibbon, the historian, learnt Greek "at the cost of many tears and not a little blood."

As a popular novelist, Mr. Wells has a numerous following, not so large as that of Mr. Edgar Wallace, but still respectable in point of numbers. Therefore,

it would be unwise to ignore him altogether. What needs comment is his rehashing of the stale objections which have done generations of service on so many Christian pulpits and platforms, particularly when he says in his latest utterance, "The Open Conspiracy, Blue Prints for a World Revolution," that religion is the cement of society, and that, with the decay of religion, chaos ensues. After referring to two "bad patches" in modern history, Mr. Wells remarks:—

"There are many signs that to-day over large parts of the world there is a drift towards such another disintegrative and distressful phase. The brigand, the boss, and the adventurer become portentously successful and immune."

"Such another phase" implies that there is no longer any good faith nor any sweetness of soul in human life, except among the sacrificial simple. This is precisely the language used by the howling Dervishes of Christian Revivals, and is actually part of the stock-in-trade of the clergy. And who, might one ask, are these wondrous folks, the sacrificial few? Would it include the name of Terah Hooley, who gave a solid gold communion service for use in Saint Paul's Cathedral, or of that other Christian martyr, Horatio Bottomley, who has publicly expiated his sins?

These questions are not out of place, for Mr. Wells, like the clergy, insists that there is no good outside the particular brand of religion he himself professes. In his book, *God, the Invisible King*, he says, "without God the service of man is no better than a hobby or a sentimentalism or an hypocrisy in the undisciplined prison of the mortal life." Nor is this all, for Mr. Wells has even gone out of his way to taunt Freethinkers with their lack of philanthropic work, and with having no charitable and educational institutions in connexion with their movement. He adds, further, that the "professed Atheists and Agnostics" he has known "have been careful and comfortable people—and just a little self-righteous." So different, apparently, to the "down-and-outs" who grovel and "find Jesus" at mission services, and other religious orgies.

Such remarks show that Mr. Wells has been so busy writing works of fiction that he knows nothing of the actual working of the Freethought Movement, although he was once associated with it for a few months. Freethought is a poor struggling cause, its members are comparatively few and scattered, and it has no wealthy endowments to lessen the cost of a national propaganda. Still, the Freethought Party does manage to relieve its necessitous members and the Benevolent Fund is well supported. It is, probably, the only fund which is administered without a single farthing of expense. Until recently it was not possible to bequeath money for Freethought purposes with any real prospect of the trust being carried into effect, as it was in the power of the next-of-kin to invalidate the legacy on the ground that it was illegal. The famous Bowman Case altered this, but Freethought was robbed of thousands of pounds before this memorable legal victory.

Let Mr. Wells ponder the case of Stephen Girard, the American Freethinker. At his death, this large-hearted man left large bequests to charities, the principal being a munificent endowment of an orphanage. By express provision in his will, no priest, or minister of religion, was to hold any connexion with the college, or even to be admitted as a visitor; but the staff of the institution were required to instruct the pupils in secular morality, and leave them to adopt their own religious opinions. This will was most shamefully perverted, for the officials are all

Christians, and, in order to keep within the letter of the law, only laymen are so employed.

Does Mr. Wells know that Walt Whitman spent four years of his life attending the war hospitals during the American Civil War, and wrecked his health in the service of his fellows? And what of Robert Owen, who not only built the first infant schools, and improved the dwellings of his work-people, but sought to construct the ideal society of the future? Mr. Wells ought to have heard of University College, which was founded by Freethinkers to further the principles of Secular Education. Even the activities of the Sunday League, and of the Humanitarian League, both of which did such magnificent work, should be sufficient to silence Mr. Wells in his campaign of calumny.

Other names leap to the memory. Thomas Paine pleaded for the abolition of slavery, and the provision of old-age pensions for the poor. He besought the French Republic not to imitate the bad example of Monarchy, and stain itself with blood. Was it "hypocrisy" or "sentimentalism" that caused Paine to imperil his own life by pleading for humanity? Shelley, the Atheist poet, was a thorough humanitarian. To help the needy and to relieve the sick seemed to him a simple duty, and he kept a list of the poor persons he assisted. He attended a London hospital to acquire medical knowledge that should prove of service to the sick he visited. Is this a further example of Freethought "hypocrisy"?

Mr. Wells is guilty of the worst form of cant. As a Socialist, he ought to know that, whilst charity is good, what the world wants is justice. If the world were run on fair and reasonable lines there would be no occasion for philanthropy to exist. If, however, a belief in a god is necessary to make a man a humanitarian, how comes it that the votes of the bishops in Parliament is such a shameful record? Scores of measures for the bettering of the conditions of the working-classes have been opposed by these god-intoxicated priests. Nothing but self-interest excites their action. None even voted for the abolition of the whip in the Army and Navy. Curiously, since Mr. Wells himself has found a god his manners have worsened. Perhaps he remembers the legal advice, "no case, abuse plaintiff's attorney." By attempting to discredit Freethought, he shields, in a measure, his newly found god from the searchlights of criticism.

Like Mr. Facing-both-ways, Mr. Wells has a taste for taking life easily. He likes to patronize advanced ideas without losing the advantages arising from friendliness towards the old ones. He prefers to enter the arena when the fighting is nearly over, and to share in the victories won by better and braver men than himself. Kid-glove reformers, like Mr. Wells, have never been wanting when all danger is over. Their function is to rebuke and insult the pioneers, and to enjoy the social, political, and financial profits of this ingenious policy. When Henry Thoreau was in prison for conscience's sake, he was visited by Emerson. "Why are you here?" asked Emerson. "Why are you not here, Ralph?" retorted Thoreau. In like fashion, one might ask Mr. Wells why he is not fighting in the ranks of the Army of Human Liberation. It is a sorry sight to witness a man of ability chasing butterflies in the camp of the Superstitious, who have ever been the sworn enemies of Liberty.

MIMNERMUS.

Liberty, when it begins to take root, is a plant of rapid growth.—George Washington.

Instead of an Article.

WAS it not Laurence Sterne, the author of *Tristram Shandy*, who said, when asked how he achieved his works, "I set down one sentence and trust to Providence for the next"? If it was not, it is a small matter: the principle is the thing. Here am I, an indifferent writer, like so many of my tribe, gravelled for a subject with which to fill a column or so of the *Freethinker's* valuable space. Yet I am prepared to lay odds that it will be filled. Whether it will lead to the edification of any one, whether even it will find its way past the Editor into print, is, as the French say, another pair of sleeves.

The principle is the thing. An amusing story is told in legal circles of a certain advocate who used these very words. His manner of addressing a jury was florid in the extreme. One day, so the story runs, he was expatiating on the doubts which he said had begun to assail the plaintiff as to his wisdom in bringing the action. "The plaintiff," thundered this Serjeant Buzfuz, "can see the handwriting on the wall, *Eloi, eloi, lama, sabachthani.*" Here the learned judge pulled him up. "Really, Mr. So-and-So," said the judge, "this is very far-fetched, and in any case the handwriting on the wall was *Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin.*" Not a bit abashed, our counsel continued his address. "Of course, gentlemen, I accept His Lordship's correction; the handwriting on the wall was as His Lordship has told you, but I contend, gentlemen, that the principle is the same, and the principle is the thing."

Well, here is a page of foolscap filled already. About 240 words, I guess. I am getting on: Providence has not yet deserted me.

That story of the handwriting on the wall reminds me of the mock-Newdigate poems that float around among the divinity students of Oxford. There was one long masterpiece on the Book of the Prophet Daniel, all about Nebuchadnezzar and his successor Belshazzar. If I could quote the lot my space-filling problem would be solved. Also there would be no room in this issue for anybody else's lucubrations. Two stanzas must suffice. Of the first gentleman it records:—

Nebuchadnezzar, when turned out to grass
With docile oxen and the wild ass,
Said, as he munched the unaccustomed food,
It may be wholesome but it is not good.

The second stanza is the one brought to memory by the story of Buzfuz. We are told that:—

While all sat silent by the sight appalled
Someone suggested Daniel should be called;
The prophet came and just remarked in passin',
Oh, it's: Mene, mene, tekel, and upharsin.

Association of Ideas, which, of course, was the Providence that Sterne relied on, and on which, it is apparent, others may rely, is the cause of the bringing up to the surface of the mind of forgotten memories. Few of us quite realize how much we do know. We are each of us a whole barrelful of knowledge and ideas, gleaned over many years. But so few turn on the spigot, or pull out the bung, which will release the stream, or chain, of memories and ideas which will turn us into a writer or an orator. This simile of a barrel being, as it were, "unbunged" I owe to a prominent English politician. Nearly a quarter of a century ago, being urged by my comrades, and my own desire, to hold forth at the street corner on a soap-box, and hesitating as to how it should be done, there came to me the liberating thought of the, now, Right Honourable Gentleman, "Fill yourself up like a barrel and pull out the bung." Not an elegant simile, perhaps, but one that worked, and one that I confidently pass on to the

would-be secularist orator, shivering on the brink and fearing to launch away.

I have got a long way from Sterne, but will return now to the point that my associations of ideas have suggested to me as a possible subject for an article. Not that I shall treat it here, or at any rate, exhaustively: I have left myself small space for that. Besides which, encouraged by the progress I have already made in filling nearly three sheets of foolscap, I have already put that limiting caption at the head of these remarks. But it is an interesting subject for speculation and possible investigation, why many Divinity Students and even Clerks in Holy Orders are such flippant blasphemers. That they are so, cannot be gainsaid. There are more obscene jokes about the Virgin Birth among undergraduates in the divinity classes at our universities than anywhere else. A cherished possession of a young divinity student at King's College, London, just before the war, was a collection of the more scarlet jokes from the *Pink Un* and such-like sources. This was known to his fellow students as Billiken's Bible, and was much in demand. This state of affairs is well-known to educationalists, and is of no very serious consequence. Like other puerilities of adolescence, in due course it will pass away in most cases. In other cases, like that of the clerics Swift and Herrick and Sterne, the smutty outlook on life remains, to the great joy, it must be confessed, of many of their readers. But why, we repeat, should professed religionists be such blasphemous, if amusing, rogues?

Readers of Voltaire, of course, know that that witty Frenchman could be, and was—well, "broad." But even he has a mock-serious tilt at our Doctor Swift. Does not Voltaire write in one of his short stories (*Micromegas*, if I remember aright) that, unlike the Dean, he, Voltaire, "out of my great respect for the ladies," would not mention in what part of the giant's anatomy the midgets planted their tall measuring tree. Sly dog!

My fund of ideas and memories is now, I regret to say, running low, but the port is in sight. The lino-machine has, under the nimble fingers of the compositor, cast enough lines to fill something over a column. But I must not quit until I have given my opinion on the interesting question raised. And my answer will be that the reason for such outbreaks of clerical blasphemy and obscenity is to be found in the fact that the budding or fully-fledged priest in so many cases simply does not believe in the doctrine and dogmas he is taught, and which in turn he has to teach others.

The simple, earnest believer does not blaspheme; it would never occur to him to do so. Ribaldry in the modern theological seminary is due to the violence that is being done to the reason, and therefore to the conscience of the trainee. It is the voice of outraged nature. Smut is an outbreak of boils, due to the toxic quality of the food imbibed in these priestly forcing houses. The outbreak is in itself a testimony to the inherent reasonableness and honesty of man, and a protest against the régime of unreason that the victim is undergoing. In the words of the psycho-analysts, what is being witnessed is the phenomenon of "over-compensation." Bible is responsible for—Billiken's Bible. And with that solemn thought I lay down my pen, rejoicing that the Providence of the good Laurence Sterne has proved a friend to more than that sniggering cleric.

BAYARD SIMMONS.

Truth, like beauty, varies its fashions, and is best recommended by different dresses to different minds.

Johnson.

Religion and Fanaticism.

(Concluded from page 267.)

It is indeed wondrous strange that one of the liveried, earthly servants of Christ should confess that the roots of fanaticism lie too deep for any training of religion to penetrate. When one looks round at the world after the Christians have tried to train it for nearly two thousand years, one recognizes that such a conclusion, at any rate as regards Christianity, is obvious, but to have it in black and white from a real honest-to-God bishop makes it a bird of even greater suspicion. Christianity, however, is capable of penetrating to the roots of fanaticism, but what it does when it gets to those roots is not to tear them up, but to water them and tend them so that they gather strength anew and struggle for expansion, and the stifling weed of fanaticism spreads its blood-red flowers of evil all over the beautiful garden of human nature. In spite of the beneficial influences on unquestioning believers of the study and emulation of the mythological figure and life of Christ— influences which lose their potency through intellectual examination and consequent rejection on historical grounds—the basic principles of the “one and only God,” the one true “salvation” through the redeeming blood of the “Lamb,” and such like, with their attendant belittling of other faiths and theories and their damnable “cocksureness,” are prime generators of fanatical zeal. Religion can, but it does not, teach its adherents to be less fanatical; it can and does teach them to be more fanatical. Fanaticism is the very nature and essence of religion.

As to the widely diffused feeling of uncertainty and the undefined fears of which the Bishop speaks, cannot we find these in Christianity? Religion is ever a matter of uncertainty, and one of its foundations is fear. When a man, following his religious teaching, reflects that after “death” his fate of tasting “joy eternal in God’s abode of love,” or spending the rest of eternity toasting his feet in the company of all the wickedest of the wicked depends entirely on the whim of the changeable nature of God Almighty, and on whether that divine personage had a good breakfast, or is suffering from a touch of liver, that man is almost bound to suffer uncertainty and fear to the nth power. For, even if not literally, there was never hope of Heaven that was not overshadowed by the fear of Hell. The way in which priests through the centuries have played upon the imaginations and the fears of the masses, the way in which archaic and anti-liberty theories have been used to keep the people down, the way in which contentment and meek submission to their fate have been preached as the true ideals to the slaves living in poverty, filth, and cruelty, these things are shameful. They alone are enough to set decent and sane-minded people thinking about the real nature of religion. Only now are the down-trodden beginning to realize that as long as they stick to worn-out ideas about the respective places in life of the different sections of the community, they will never better their lot. See what a hard and bitter struggle the working classes have had, and are still having, to obtain their due at the hands of those for whom they toil and slave. Have they in their struggle for their rights received any help from the Church as a Church? Clergymen and their backers will shout an emphatic affirmative from every pulpit, platform, and house-top. Despite these assertions, an examination of history and of records will show one that they have not. It is true that the Church is now beginning to pay more attention to

the working classes, but only because they realize that it is their best policy, that the days when the rich were the community and the workers were less than the dust are passing, and that the world is no longer a capitalists’ and land-owners’ world, but a workers’ world. Therefore, it pays the Church best to transfer its allegiance. Business is business.

“Plague, famine, and general wretchedness provide the soil in which the rankest absurdities can flourish,” says the Bishop, as though these were entirely foreign matters to religion. They are not. On the contrary, religion forms a prolific breeding place for such things. Plague, famine, and general wretchedness were quite common, I believe, in the days before, at the time of, and after the alleged life of Christ, and one must presume that these provided the soil for the appearance of the rankest of rank absurdities, those collected under the title of religion, and in particular Christianity. Has Christianity ever done much during its career to combat these evils? The answer can be nothing else but negative. The earlier history of Christianity, early religious rites and practices, the style of life of so-called holy men, the teachings of the Church, each and all evinced little connexion with hygiene, sanitation, or morality. People were taught that plagues and famines were just and thoroughly-deserved visitations of the wrath of the “God of Love” on them for their sins, and that they must bear them without complaint as best they could. Any thought of running contrary to the will of God by fighting against his ways was surely blasphemous heresy and the worst of all sins. No wonder that general wretchedness for so long prevailed as the lot of the common people in religious countries. Peasants and serfs could drag out a miserable and cruel existence in the worst of poverty-stricken hovels on the poorest of life’s necessities, as long as God had plenty of palaces to be worshipped in and as long as his representatives were well off and had good homes and good food. Even to-day it is considered more important and praiseworthy to erect more and more palatial churches and chapels for the worship of this monstrosity of a God, than to clear away the slums and erect decent houses for the poor. Certainly there are in the uniformed ranks of the Church many fine fellows who are doing noble work, but it is humanity, not divinity, which makes them what they are, despite their own assertions about the inspiration of Christ and so on. It is also not to be denied that the Church to-day is more humane and more considerate of the needs and the welfare of the people than ever before, but this is largely because the people are getting to know a thing or two. The Church finds that it must do something or other for the people or the people will simply give it the go-by and get on without it altogether. And what would the priest do then, poor thing? If such a terrible calamity should happen and the black-clad men of God find themselves on the dole, I offer this advice free to those who care to make use of it: that they become commercial travellers. Their long experience of selling such a worthless thing in the world as religion should stand them in good stead for this lucrative line of business, and it would not be long before they had doubled or trebled their present income, for, as we all know through constant repetition in the Press, the job of a clergyman is the worst paid of all!

R. H. S. STANDFAST.

I love plain and bold speech between gallant men, and that our words should go along with our thoughts.

Montaigne.

Freethought Flashes.

But for man's overmastering inquisitiveness he would never have discovered that curiosity was the besetting sin of woman.

Generally it is wrong to say that a clergyman is one who does another man's thinking for him. You cannot divide zero.

The striving to be original is a form of weakness. It is a compound of vanity and an inability to grasp the connected nature of human thought. There is an ancestry for every one of our ideas as there is an ancestry for every one of the words in which we express them, and a man need no more feel ashamed of saying things which others have said before him than he should feel ashamed of expressing his thoughts in the language of his grandparents. No genuine and fruitful thinker can help taking from others. If his mind be susceptible to truth and reminiscent of his studies it will be full of intellectual waifs and strays that have come to him for shelter because they feel sure of a welcome. For that reason a man should feel proud when he finds himself unconsciously echoing the thought of a Plato, a Spinoza, or a Shakespeare. It is an indication that in some small way his mind is attuned to theirs.

How can one bring sense into such an expression as the "moral government of the universe" when at every step it outrages all sense of decency? Consider. It is possible for a man to commit murder after murder, to bring off victoriously a gigantic swindle, and, provided he escapes exposure, none of his friends may be any the wiser, and he may die with the reputation of a good man. His villainies leave no marks in either his face or his deportment. But let him engage in a course of drunkenness for, say, three months, and his friends will begin to note a difference in the texture of his skin, in the clearness of his brain, in the brightness of his eyes, and to such an extent that the whisper will go round that he is a drunkard. And yet nature passes by with comparatively little notice, or with no notice whatever, the much greater crimes that their seemingly reputable neighbour has committed.

A Christian trying to purify the Church by divesting itself of its historic doctrines is much like a man trying to purify his digestion by ridding himself of all his internal organs.

It is not death but pain that men have cause to dread, and it is not death but pain that most men have dreaded. The Church knew this when it stressed, not death, but the pain that awaited the sinner after death. Death, as such, has few terrors to those who are well, and none at all to those who are ill. It is, in fact, almost a contradiction in terms to say that as our hold upon life becomes weaker we should cling to it with greater tenacity.

The difference between the man of genius and the man of mere talent is that in the one case the brain functions, in the other it works.

Individual hallucinations are common, collective ones are very rare, and the hallucination of a multitude seems never to occur. It will be noted also that the frequency of religious visions is greatest with individuals. In the case of Balaam and the Ass, for example, it was the Ass that first saw the angel. Balaam only saw it through the ass's eyes. In this case it was the ass that taught the man. But in the history of religion the position of pupil and teacher are reversed.

Acid Drops.

The Vicar of Northwich has just been fulminating against the conditions which exist in his district. He says that there is a large number of houses with only one room up and one down, and no scullery. There is a tap between eight dwellings; the houses have no yard of their own, no wash-house of their own; there is terrible overcrowding and a lack of sanitary conveniences. He says that the Church in the nineteenth century "neglected social work. These evil days have left their mark, and the remissness of the Church will be remembered against her for many years to come." This is all very well, but it is curious that the Vicar should himself have only just discovered this state of affairs. To say the Church was remiss, is a very mild way of putting it. The Church was one of the principal agencies that kept the people in the state of mental servility that made such things possible. And it is curious that only when the Church is losing its hold on the people are a few of the clergy discovering that the state of things described ought to be ended.

We would advise the Vicar of Northwich to read carefully the four volumes compiled by J. L. & Barbara Hammond, dealing with the life of the English people between 1760 and 1830, and he will see how much religion had to do with making it possible for the very worst conditions of modern industrial life to exist. The very worst days of the factory system, the murder of children in mines and factories, the driving of the people off the land, etc., were coincident with a strong religious revival in which other-worldism was preached as it had never been preached since the days of the ascetic epidemic in the early Christian ages. And he might also discover that it is largely due to the Freethinkers of the late nineteenth century, that attention began to be paid to the social ills existing, and a stand made against the other-worldism of the Christian Church.

As another item of interest in the same direction, we may note the report of an inquest held in Liverpool on the body of a child who died from scalds after falling into a bath of hot water. The child with the mother, father, and six children lived in two rooms, all sleeping together in one of them. This is a sad state of affairs, but, after all, Liverpool has a fine new Cathedral and very many churches, so things might have been worse. And so long as the glory and goodness of God is being chanted, and plenty of clergy are employed, people sleeping six in a room is a very trivial affair.

Dr. Fyffe, Moderator of the Presbyterian Synod, says he dreams of a time when ministers will be paid the same as teachers and work the same number of hours. We have no doubt that would suit some of the lesser-paid clergy, but what of those in the upper circles? Besides, the test of social utility might be applied, and what would become of the clergy in that event?

A Methodist paper says that Methodist reunion draws steadily and surely nearer. A reunited British Methodism can profoundly influence the public life of Britain. "The Methodist note of challenge to social wrong will be intensified when the Methodist forces of Great Britain march under one flag." This means that, when Methodists are united, there will be better organized attempts at interfering with the personal liberty of other people, and at suppressing all wholesome recreation on Sundays. When bigots unite, let ordinary people prepare to defend their hard-won freedom.

It is estimated that the Rev. Hugh Hughes, of Pwllheli, aged eighty-six, has preached 23,000 sermons for the Wesleyan Church. "The evil that men do lives after them, the good is oft interred with their bones." So let it be with Hugh Hughes.

The editor of the *Methodist Times* does not like the idea of giving listeners to the wireless the chance of a musical entertainment on Sundays in place of the religious service. He says that no doubt the B.B.C. will

treat the suggestion with the contempt it deserves. The total amount of the broadcasting time each week set apart for religious exercises is little more than an hour; very small, in fact an entirely inadequate proportion. Except for this very short period each week the Rationalists can enjoy jazz or classical music, plays and lectures and debates. It is not they who have cause for complaint: rather is it within the province of religious-minded folk to protest that more time should be devoted to worship.

Our readers will note the puerility of this bigot's objection to an alternative programme. He conveniently omits to mention the absence of broadcasting items of a secular kind during the hours of churchgoing, morning and evening. Neither does he say anything about the unfairness of robbing licence-paying listeners of four or five hours of broadcasting entertainment at the dictation of the Churches. And not content with this robbery he would filch from them still more. His arrogant dictum is: "If you don't want to listen to religion, you shall listen to nothing at all." What a noble creature is a Christian bigot!

What this gentleman wants is a service that should include a larger proportion—that is definitely Free Church in character. "In ventilating this feeling we do not wish to write in any sense of hostility towards our brethren in the Church of England. But that Church represents probably less than half the professed Christians in England. Yet the broadcast services are preponderately Anglican. What this means is illustrated in one of many letters sent to us on this subject:—

'The B.B.C. services are a great boon to me as I am unable to attend the chapel services, a fact which I very much deplore. I cannot get on with the C. of E. services at all. Being so far down in one corner of England we have great difficulty in getting any other station than Daventry; hence, I have no option but to take the London services. Another thing: why not give the number of the hymns that have a universal appeal? If they want to reach everybody, why have exclusively C. of E. hymns?'

We commend these points to the serious attention of the B.B.C., assured as we are that they desire to benefit the largest possible number of listeners."

There are now two and a half million broadcast licence-holders. Nine-tenths of these, the B.B.C. would have one believe, sigh for Sunday to come round with its Christian message, and none of them would trouble to switch on to an alternative programme if it were available.

The protest in *Cycling*, by a N.S.S. member, (quoted here last week) against the religious feature of the annual commemoration at the cyclists' memorial at Meriden, has elicited a reply from one of the Conservators of the Memorial. He states that the religious service held annually at Meriden is not organized by the Conservators. He adds:—

The conservators purpose organizing a commemorative ceremony on the tenth anniversary of the unveiling by Lord Birkenhead, when doubtless due consideration for the conscientious scruples of Roman Catholics, Jews, and Atheists will be paid.

The protest has accomplished something. It has caused to be disclosed the fact that the annual commemoration is organized by merely a group of Protestant Christians, and is not—what the announcements and the press reports would have cyclists believe—a representative gathering of cyclists of all and no religious beliefs. It has also elicited a rather belated admission by one Conservator, that when a truly representative gathering will be attempted in 1931, the opinions and scruples of others besides Christians will be considered, although apparently the Conservators thought this was not necessary in 1921, when the memorial was unveiled. However, we don't suppose that consideration will amount to much. What the Conservators are likely to do is merely to invite preachers of the various religious sects, thinking that this will solve the difficulty. If this

should be the case, further protests will no doubt be forthcoming. Christians must never be allowed to forget there are other people on the earth besides themselves, other people whose scruples have a right to be respected.

The Wesleyan Temperance Department is appealing for funds to fight what it calls the drink and the gambling evils. Knowing the kind of mentality of "the people called Methodist," we daresay the money will be forthcoming. What it will be used for mainly, will be to encourage ill-balanced denunciation, sloppy rhetoric, and preachy propaganda. These things never have helped, and never will help to diminish the aforesaid evils. Indeed, human nature being what it is, they tend to encourage the evils by making them attractive to a certain type of mind, because they are branded "wicked." The diminution of drinking and gambling has not been achieved by temperance propaganda, nor by closing "pubs" and limiting their hours of business. It has mainly been brought about by the spread of education (which has given rise to more rational modes of spending leisure), better housing, and more opportunities for wholesome outdoor and indoor games, hobbies and amusements.

Says Sir Oliver Lodge: "We are not properly civilized yet." Of course not. Many of us still believe in ghosts and fairies and discarnate spirits, still harbour hosts of the mad and bad notions that dominated the thought and action of our barbarous forbears. About all this age can boast of is improved habitation, sanitation, communication, and locomotion. These things, either separately or collectively, are no basis for a claim to real civilization. Civilization in the proper sense of the word is a thing of the mind. And the brain-space of most inhabitants of so-called civilized countries is too highly packed with superstitions and other irrationalities, stupid customs and traditions, to permit anything but a modicum of civilized ideas to gain a footing, still less to grow. Freethought is the gardener of the mind, who clears away the weeds of irrationality that the seed of civilization may be sown.

It is a pity the papers are making so much fuss over the "psychic" pictures of the late Mr. Sims, R.A. The state of Mr. Sims' mind was evidenced by his committing suicide, and it should have rested at that. But because his pictures were away from his usual style, and dealt with weird topics, they are labelled "psychic" by those who are engaged in making that word stand for some unknown method of sensing what takes place the other side of the grave. It is not at all unusual when a man's mental balance is disturbed, for his actions to take the line of depicting any subject in which he happens to be interested. And, after all, the case of Mr. Sims is not the first by a long way of those whose pathologic condition is the true explanation of the visions they get. Why, because a man's visions deal with a religious topic rather than with other things they should be taken as a revelation, is more than we can see. We are quite certain that no mental pathologist would make this mistake.

The Turkish National Assembly has unanimously approved the separation of Church and State. There is no longer to be a State religion in Turkey, and the religious oath is abolished. Turkish members of Parliament now affirm on their word of honour. We wonder why the word of honour of Christian members of Parliament in this country is not considered enough? It is hardly complimentary to them as the case stands.

The *Methodist Recorder* tells us:—

Some may think that the disestablishment of Islam indicates a more tolerant attitude on the part of the Turkish Government toward other faiths, and in particular a change of sentiment towards Christianity. Unfortunately such hope has but little ground to support it. At present, at any rate, what evidence there is seems to point another way. We are pleased to hear it. The leaders of the Turkish

nation are, we like to think, too intelligent to encourage a new tyranny to occupy the place of the one deposed. Another thing we think the Turkish leaders are too intelligent to do—to attempt to suppress the religion of Islam. A religion cannot be got rid of by suppression. The only means of causing it to disappear is by education. Suppression fans the flame of fanaticism, education cools it and eventually extinguishes it.

This is the way history—religious history—is written. Says Dr. Glover in the *Daily News*, of April 21:—

It was not in the first instance a church, a priesthood, or a body of experts who decided what books were to be the Bible; it was the people, the religious people, who made the Bible. The prophets and historians made their books; the psalmists wrote their songs; and the people who could not have written either, had the religious instinct to make the Bible.

So the ignorant reader is induced to form a picture of a people selecting a body of writings and forcing their adoption upon the priests and the Church in virtue of their "religious instinct." But Dr. Glover knows quite well that the first glimpse we get of the Bible is not a series of writings beloved by the people, but as priestly books. In fact, if one is to trust the Bible, the books were altogether lost until some scribe fortunately "found" them again. And Dr. Glover also knows that it was the priests and the Church who ultimately settled which should be the authoritative Bible, and that the people had nothing at all to do with it. Some books were retained and some were rejected, and retention and rejection were both governed by what the Church desired. These are plain facts known to all who understand the history of the Bible; and one is left wondering whether there is a single subject under the sun in the handling of which men are so careless about the truth as occurs in the case of religion.

So, having once let himself go, and as he is writing about religion, on which neither accuracy nor sense is indispensable, Dr. Glover continues:—

When you realize the storms of criticism of one kind or another, political, philosophical, and literary, that have beaten about the Bible, without diminishing its genuine contribution to the religious instinct, etc., etc.

Again noting that ordinary rules of accuracy, or even truthfulness, do not apply where Christianity is concerned, one would really like to know (a) what is the religious instinct? It seems as remarkable as a football instinct or a plum pudding instinct. And (b) what are the contributions the Bible has made to the world's knowledge? The Bible was held up as giving us first-hand information on quite a variety of things, and in not one single instance have the claims set up been made good. Is there any other subject save this one on which such palpable nonsense would pass muster?

The *Church Times* thinks the neglect of church-going is "one of the saddest and most menacing characteristics of our time." We are left wondering as to who it is that finds it sad, and what it is that is menaced. The people who stay away are not sad. If one compares the faces of a number of people off for a Sunday at the seaside and into the country, with a crowd leaving church or chapel after they have been making a glad noise unto the Lord, the balance of happiness appears to be on the side of the Sabbath-breakers. And the only people it appears to menace are the clergy, who find their occupation slipping from them. But think of the number of people who find their occupations menaced by the existence of an alert police force!

But we are glad to see the *Church Times*, in spite of its sadness, saying "We have no sort of sympathy with the idea that the way to get people to Church is to prevent them getting anywhere else. It may be that if the Church were the only place to afford shelter on a wet Sunday evening, a considerable number of them might cross its threshold; but the probability of edification in such circumstances appears to us to be of the smallest." A dose of common sense like that appears to be quite

out of place in a Christian paper, but the *Church Times* has always been liberal on the question of Sunday usage, which we are sure does not endear it to the Nonconformist world, which would like to see a policeman on every man's doorstep, either enforcing religious observances or preventing their infringement.

The Duchess of Atholl rejoices to think that religious instruction has so well established a place in the national schools. Another thing to rejoice over, we presume, is that Jews and Freethinkers, and the great majority of tax-payers indifferent to religion, are compelled to pay for the religious instruction.

We are somewhat depressed at noting in a Nonconformist journal a large advt. announcing, "Healthy legs for all!" and illustrated by a photo showing a woman's legs exposed to the knees, and topped with a slit skirt. We are depressed because we feel sure the illustration will arouse erotic emotions in the breasts of male Nonconformists, and may incite them to evil living and to unwholesome ecstasy at drapers' shop-windows. We hope the un-Christian illustration will soon be suppressed. To godly males it must be as dangerous a sight as mixed bathing—and all good men and true know how wicked that is.

Mr. John T. Rose, late editor of the *Sunday School Chronicle*, says of John Philip Quinn, the American gold-brick swindler, and H. Noyes Hills, a notorious forger:—

It may surprise you to know that I have seldom met two more instinctively religious persons than these "crooks"; but the most inspiring thought I retain in connexion with my association with them . . . is that the early training they received in Christian homes was the determining factor in their reclamation to a life of useful service to their fellows.

Quite so; but, for the sake of the victims of these rogues, what a pity it is that the early Christian training failed to operate earlier. It is nice to know these "crooks" were instinctively religious. Most of the inmates of our prisons are endowed that way. And it would seem only fair that a special tax should be levied on church collections, to enable Christians to pay the cost of segregating their instinctively religious brethren.

According to a pious paper, when the Army was in France, a sergeant with thirty-two years' service informed a Methodist padre that the unit to which the sergeant belonged was the worst for betting and gambling, the chief game being "Crown and Anchor." Into the unit came a Regnal Cirele (Methodist), and after it had operated for awhile the playing of the game gradually ceased, although the game had never even been mentioned by the Regnalites. This story comes from a religious source; so one can be assured of its truth. Methodist padres never lie, not even to the glory of God and the Church.

I've Chucked, Doyle!

MANY thanks for your reply,
Glad my strictures caught your eye,
My Dear Doyle!

You condemn my "empty jeer,"
And my "supercilious pride."
You are peeved with me, I fear,
But, believe me, I have tried
Many times to see a Spirit
And investigate what's in it,

In a serious mood.

Perhaps because I'm so material,
Redolent of earthy soil,
That your latest Psychic Serial
Made me "Chuck it," Doyle!
Still I'll grant one proposition,
My verses—like the Inquisition—
Certainly fulfilled a mission,

Did, at least, draw blood!

CARADOC.

National Secular Society.

THE Funds of the National Secular Society are now legally controlled by Trust Deed, and those who wish to benefit the Society by gift or bequest may do so with complete confidence that any money so received will be properly administered and expended.

The following form of bequest is sufficient for anyone who desires to benefit the Society by will:—

I hereby give and bequeath (*Here insert particulars of legacy*), free of all death duties, to the Trustees of the National Secular Society for all or any of the purposes of the Trust Deed of the said Society, and I direct that a receipt signed by two of the trustees of the said Society shall be a good discharge to my executors for the said legacy.

Any information concerning the Trust Deed and its administration may be had on application.

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.

E. G. ELLIOT.—We saw "Woodbine Willie's" article in the *Radio Times*. It was really too silly for notice. The aim of the B.B.C. appears to be to turn itself into an evangelistic agency, with its paper as a kind of extra edition of the *Christian Herald*. It would be interesting to know the undercurrents at work in this business. Those who think England is not a priest-ridden country might do well to study the B.B.C. The difference between this and some other countries is that the clergy here are a little more underhand than they are elsewhere.

S. AMEY.—Sorry we cannot trace the quotation.

R. TURNER.—Shall hope to see you at Liverpool on Whit-Sunday. Please make yourself known. We shall be very busy, but not too busy for a little conversation.

W. L. E.—See "Acid Drops." Thanks.

H. M. COPE.—Article received. Shall appear soon. Personal experiences are always interesting.

R. BROWN.—Nothing like keeping up the bombardment.

J. DIXON.—Quite a good letter. We hope to be writing something on the matter later.

H. E. ANDERSON.—It is good to have it set down plainly that the B.B.C. will permit nothing of an anti-Christian or anti-religious tendency. It is a plain avowal that it regards part of its work to be the propagation of Christianity.

R. C. R.—Mr. Andrew Millar is the writer you mean. We hope to be publishing something from him very soon.

L. DEBRAY.—The custom of kissing the book, and the phrase "So help me God," may be abandoned in some courts, but it is not universally so.

J. GAIR.—We cannot imagine you losing interest in Freethought, and we are quite sure you will do what you can to promote it. Shall look forward to meeting you one of these days.

J. R. HOLMES.—So it appears that it was not the shamrock that enabled Baron Huenfoeld to survive the operations, but another mascot. We accept the correction, which does not materially affect the stupidity of the affair.

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 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, by the first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

We have just about a month between us and the Annual Conference of the N.S.S. at Liverpool, on Whit-Sunday. There is certain to be a good muster of delegates and members from Lancashire, but we are hoping to see a goodly number from farther afield. It is an occasion when those interested in the work have an opportunity of meeting each other and exchanging views, and in this way much enduring good is done. Every Branch should be represented there.

The morning and afternoon meetings will be devoted to business, and in the evening there will be a public demonstration in the Picton Hall, which will be addressed by the President and other speakers. A full list of these will be published later. Meanwhile those who are visiting from a distance, who wish accommodation provided should write at once to the General Secretary saying what they require. This cannot be done too early.

We continue to receive many letters from readers who have written to the B.B.C. protesting against the policy of handing over its machinery for the use of the Churches, and prohibiting anything on the opposite side, while refusing to provide an alternative programme for such as do not wish to listen to the appallingly stupid sermons that are sent forth. It is now over two years since we first called special attention to the matter, and we are glad to know that our friends have taken the hint so readily. Many hundreds of letters have been sent in, and many hundreds more should be sent.

We have received from our valued contributor, Mr. W. Mann, a reply to Mr. Steinberger's friendly criticism in last week's paper. We are obliged to hold this over till next week. We sometimes wish we had the same power that Jesus is said to have had with planks, and could stretch the *Freethinker* to whatever size was most convenient.

Mr. George Whitehead commences his season's outdoor work under the auspices of the N.S.S. Executive with a week's lecturing in South London. He will speak on Clapham Common at 11.30, on Sunday, and at Cooks Road, Kennington, every evening at 8 p.m. We trust that local Freethinkers will do what they can to be present.

The *Truth Seeker*, a lively little journal published in Auckland, continues to reach us regularly. The last issue is dated number eight, and we wish it a long and useful life. It is the only Freethought paper published in New Zealand, and we know there are enough Freethinkers there to give it a good circulation. The only thing is, will they do it? We know what it means keeping a Freethought paper alive, the constant worry, and unending labour for a financial return at which an ordinary labourer would turn up his nose. A history of Freethought journalism truly told would make a rare chapter in dogged courage, self-sacrifice and ability such as no other branch of journalism could show.

Rationalism and Education.

V.

AMONG the obstacles to the advance of rationality, and of education in the wider sense, we have to include the influence of many books, some of which were written as counterblasts to the Freethought Movement of the seventeenth century. I have mentioned *The Day of Doom*; and with it we may associate some widely read works of Richard Baxter. The following is the lurid title-page of one of them, published in 1691:—

"The Certainty of the World of Spirits—Fully evinced by unquestionable Histories—Of Apparitions, Witchcrafts, Voices, etc.—Proving the Immortality of Souls—The Malice and Misery of the Devils and the Damned—And the Blessedness of the Justified—Written for the Conviction of Sadducees and Infidels."

Another book, written at about the same time, became so popular that it "tumbled from the press in a succession so rapid that the booksellers became confused in attempting to number them." This was Bishop Boyle's *Practice of Piety*, "directing a Christian how to walke that he may please God." It consisted largely of finely spun theological exposition, and seventy-five pages were devoted to instructions for keeping the Sabbath. "Trimming, painting and panpering," on Sunday was "doing the Divil's work on the Lords' Day"; and among the condemned Sunday activities were "studying any books of Science other than Holy Scriptures and Divinitie," and also all "talk about worldly things." The fact that this book was much read well into the eighteenth, if not into the nineteenth century, doubtless partly explains the fact that some of us, when young students, were prevented from adding to our stock of useful information and ideas on the only full holiday of the week.

Of course, books of occultism, and books decrying science, are still written; and some of our newspapers and magazines contain much mystic and allied suggestion. In popular novels this feature is not infrequently associated with the amusing idea that, of all people, freethinkers—agnostics, atheists, infidels—are the most superstitious ("gullible" is occasionally added). This state of things can only be remedied by the slow growth of general enlightenment. But one deplorable feature may be attacked, namely, the presence in our public libraries of a number of papers and books of a superstitious and harmful kind.

Passing by the general overplus of journals which openly advocate "freak religions" and other superstition, we find some in which the real object is, to a greater or less extent, camouflaged by the title page. *The Science of Thought Review*, for example, according to its own statement, has for its object the furtherance of "applied right thinking." Among other curious matter, divine healing looms large, and "cards for healers," containing texts, comparable with the incantations that were so long used in medical practice, are advertised for sale.

Here and there, in reference rooms, we meet with a *Dictionary of the Sacred Language of all Scriptures and Myths*; and this weighty volume claims to give the true solution of the age-long problem of the origin, nature and meaning of these things. The quality of the matter contained may be estimated by the meaning given to "Golden Age"—"a symbol of the age of involution, which preceded the present cycle of evolution"; and to "Yima"—"there proceeded from the Absolute the Self who was formed from the interplay of those forces or Divine Attributes which are inherent in the Monad of Life." It

needs hardly be said that a young student might waste his time over and possibly be seriously misled by such nonsense.

Another very objectionable book is *Nature's Serious Tale*. This is an occult work masquerading as a book of science. It contains, in the earlier chapters, much curious botany, etc., with interspersed references to the limits of science, and the like. Then it breaks out into stark spiritism, serving up, by way of conclusion, such gems of thought as the following: "How long the fearful torture of devils contending with devils . . . is to go on in the case of those with bad records is beyond us . . ."

All this is little, if any, advance on the matter contained in various works of the early centuries of our era, such, for instance, as the *Physiologus of Leyden*, a collection of allegories, in which the following appears: "The lion when he sleeps hath open watchful eyes. Of the same mystery the Holy Church in the Song of Songs spoke to her spouse, when rejoicing he exclaimed: 'I sleep and my heart watches.'" Again, "when the lioness bears her cubs they are born dead; but she watches over them till the third day, when the father is accustomed to come to them. When he comes and finds them dead, he breathes between their eyes and makes them arise. In the same way God the Omnipotent Father made arise on the third day the first-born of all creatures, namely our Lord Jesus . . ."

It is probable that something is to be done to stem the ever-flowing tide of superstition by drawing the attention of librarians and members of library committees to the objectionable presence in public institutions of such current publications as have been mentioned; and also by drawing the attention of the police to establishments (usually small shops in towns) which still openly display invitations to people to have their fortunes told, and to take lessons in this and other superstitious and sometimes fraudulent practices.

J. REEVES.

American Notes.

NATURALIZATION.

Some officious, or at least official, friends of mine want to know if I am "taking out first papers." It appears that there is a certain amount of prejudice in some quarters against those who remain in America, if they do not take steps to become citizens. On the face of it, it seems a more civil attitude towards strangers than the British attitude of aiming half a brick at anyone who has an alien name. There is not much in it, all the same. If a man wants to become an American citizen, he had better not be any kind of a radical. If he gets a certificate from his church that he has never had any "subversive" opinions, he will be welcomed, even if he has had his tonsils and brains removed. U.S.A. judges are getting more and more adverse to radicals with foreign blood in their veins becoming citizens.

The latest case is that of a member of the I.W.W., who was naturalized four years before he joined that socialist organization. His naturalization has been cancelled. Aliens, even if naturalized, have disabilities as aliens, a fact intending "citizens" should not overlook.

One applicant had his application refused on the ground that he was the owner of a drinking-bar in the land he came from, although he had never transgressed the law in U.S.A.

Of course an Englishman must agree to renounce King George and all his works. It does not appear necessary to renounce the kingdom of Heaven or its king, or its laws, or its various vice-regents on earth. A persistent rumour claims that Mussolini intends restoring to the papacy some kind of temporal power. It would be rather interesting if such a "triumph" for

the pope had the result of turning all Roman Catholics out of the United States! Imagine Irish immigrants being asked to curse the pope as a condition of "bossing" the electoral wards of New York.

HITTING BACK.

In the days of our youth it was "common form" to hear priests of all kinds denouncing entertainments of all kinds, especially theatres and music-halls. Yet I cannot recollect a single case of the proprietors of such places hitting back courageously. Mr. Foote used often to remark that your amusement caterers left their defence to secularists. Many an actor and manager kow-towed to the very religious sections which were doing their best to deprive the artists of their livelihood.

In America a healthier spirit is springing up. The clergy are not always allowed the last word. Listen to this, from the cinema magazine *Photoplay* :—

"When the police go chasing criminals these days, they don't search the crowds that spend riotous evenings at those awful movies. No, the wise sleuths trail the sanctimonious brothers who attend prayer meetings. Two of the vilest of the recent criminals were led off to jail shortly after they had taken part in religious meetings."

Then follow particulars of some particularly atrocious acts, perpetrated by men like the Rev. E. Priddy, who for years past has made himself popular in evangelical circles, by fiery denunciation of the "Movies" and similar evils. It might be well to warn the churches that the sheep when roused are proverbially more vindictive than the wolves. In other words, all that the Freethought journals claim is that piety and religion do not make people moral. It looks as if the Movy-men are going out with a club, to show that religion is the active cause of criminality. If we lived in a scientific age, there would be no dispute as to the Freethought contention, which, after all, is both true and charitable. *Photoplay* gives a highly interesting and important story of how Cecil Clyde Campbell went straight from a very emotional "Revival meeting" to his hotel, where he smashed in his wife's head with a hammer. We must not, however, overlook the fact that other revivalists, equally excited by the hallelujahs, found less criminal outlets for their "revivality."

THE BIBLE IN THE SCHOOLS.

The sudden death of Rev. George W. McDaniel is to be greatly regretted by all secularists. Pastor of a Baptist Church, like the late Dr. Clifford, this American was a resolute enemy to the idea of religious privilege. He scorned the miserably sectarian arguments of the English nonconformists, and was never wearied of the fight against introducing a Christian text-book into the public schools, refusing to accept the tricky plea of Dr. Clifford and others, that it was only as a "great literary work" that it was to be accepted. Shortly before he died he wrote a wholly admirable article for that outspoken journal *Plain Talk*, which is worth summarizing. Dr. McDaniel regarded the separation of Church and State as "the one distinctive contribution to civilization that the United States has made." He claimed that the State has no religious function of any kind. This is important to note, because it is very unlikely that secular education will ever be passed in England until this view is held generally. And when this policy obtains acceptance, we shall see more important changes than even secular education. Dr. McDaniel shows how exceedingly different is the demand for Shakespeare or any other non-religious classic. He asks how the people of Virginia would like to have the *Book of Mormon* made a compulsory reading book of school life.

He opposed Bible reading and teaching in schools alike, in the interests of the teacher who does not believe, of the scholar whose parents ask for exemption, and of those who object just as much to persecute as they do to being persecuted. He asks, as many secularists have asked, what are the churches and the homes of Christian parents doing, if religion has to be left to the school teacher, who may not believe in it at all. The fact that persons are "unfortunately sensitive about their religion," is in his opinion a very strong reason AGAINST introducing the Bible into education.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

Books and Life.

IN the *New Criterion* for April, 1926, Mr. W. B. Yeats sought sanctuary for an article entitled "Our Need for Religious Sincerity." He explained that an Irish periodical had been pleased to accept and publish his occasional comments on Irish affairs, but the essay in question was refused as publication might have endangered that paper's existence. All the potter was about four verses in very simple and straightforward language. The subject was the Incarnation, viewed by superstitious and medieval people who had read into myth the plain fact of reality. In the course of his comments, Mr. Yeats, in his own characteristic style, had several very sound criticisms to make, which showed that his intellectual position in relation to religion was far from being definite. It was not fixed, say, in the same degree as that of Mr. G. K. Chesterton. The Irish veteran of letters writes; "I have thought it out again and again, and I can see no reason for the anger of the Christian Brothers, except that they do not believe in the Incarnation. They think they believe in it, but they do not, and its sudden presentation fills them with horror, and to hide that horror they turn upon the poem." Again, he states; "We grew up with the story of the Bible; the Mother of God is no Catholic possession; she is a part of our imagination." In this last statement, there is a poetic mind at work, separating myth from reality, and it is done effectively. Our Irish singer is at this point his father's son; John Butler Yeats, his father, writing to him on September 6, 1915, says; "I call myself a Greek, because I will not pretend to know what I do not know, and because I reject a faith which is not true to fact." The world can do with many fathers with such powers of expression.

The above recollections made us curious to read his latest book of poems entitled *The Tower*, published by Macmillan & Co., Ltd. Price 6s. net. Curious we were for the content, for we were never in doubt that the craftsman's art would present that same excellence that is the right hand of a genius. He is intimate; he is, so he states, old, but even in age, relativity assures us that his mind is vigorous, his wealth of imagery is not exhausted, and he writes beautifully of beautiful things when passion is not his master. In "Nineteen-Nineteen" the memory of troubled days is vividly set down in powerful strokes :—

"Now days are dragon-ridden, the nightmare
Rides upon sleep: a drunken soldiery
Can leave the mother, murdered at her door,
To crawl in her own blood, and go scot free
The night can sweat with terror as before
We pieced our thoughts into philosophy,
And planned to bring the world under a rule,
Who are but weasels fighting in a hole."

What is not written here is the poet's longing, is the striver's goal, is the seer's purpose. In the following verse he has expressed his meaning by leaving it out :—

"What youthful mother, a shape upon her lap
Honey of generation had betrayed,
And that must sleep, shriek, struggle to escape
As recollection or the drug decide,
Would think her son, did she but see that shape
With sixty or more winters on its head,
A compensation for the pang of his birth,
Or the uncertainty of his setting forth."

In a few lines he has covered the stage dominated by Fate; is it a mystery then that the poet's rage is directed against imposed and preventable imbecilities knowing what "bond-servants of chance we are all"? For the sensitive soul can link together cause and effect, and by uttering his thoughts forthright he becomes in danger of not being understood. One touch, and we wish the singer had given us more, moves us to ponder on friendship; of his friend he writes :—

"I thought him half a lunatic, half knave,
And told him so, but friendship never ends.
And what if mind seem changed,
And it seem changed with the mind,
When thoughts rise up unbid
On generous things that he did
And I grow half contented to be blind."

Readers will find in *The Tower* the intimate notes of self-revelation, an individual struggle—the hardest of all, passages of rare beauty and bold thought. For young writers who are to carry on the work of Free-thought, there will be found in this book an extraordinary example of clarity with a minimum of words, together with a vocabulary rich, varied and supple, but in all the artist's flights there is a kinship with humanity for which Mr. Yeats must accept our praise and thanks. That he should, after a stormy life, have no use for hatred, and prefer to think that wisdom is a butterfly and not a gloomy bird of prey, keeps him in the life stream of the aspirations of all good men.

The books of George Santayana are not easy reading, and, as a philosopher, this writer is in direct line of descent with Spinoza. You cannot gallop through his books, but when once you have tuned in to his style, you realize that he is the master of the art of compression. Our reading only extends to the *Sense of Beauty*, *The Life of Reason*, and *Platonism and the Spiritual Life*, but we consider the time well spent. We wanted to make notes from every page of *The Life of Reason*, for, in our opinion, he is, in popular language "dead right." The old Indian saying that truth is finer than the edge of a razor, is exemplified throughout *The Life of Reason*; who can express the following in fewer words? "As sacrifice expresses fear, prayer expresses need." And again, "Parables justify themselves, but dogmas call for an apologist." And when the reader has painfully mastered nine chapters, the tenth will show him, under the heading "Cosmic Piety," the lyrical materialist, and it will bring to mind the work of Lucretius. Of the universe at this point, Santayana writes, "Why should we not look on the universe with piety? Is it not our substance? Are we made of other clay? All our possibilities lie from eternity hidden in its bosom. It is the dispenser of all our joys. We may address it without superstitious terrors; it is not wicked." Dispassionately, faithfully and sincerely Santayana writes as though his work was for eternity—the aim of every writer—and if he does not allow imagination to make an impossible picture of happiness, this control at the same time shuts out needless miseries that have their birth in myth, superstition and faulty reasoning.

Will Anatole France endure the test of re-reading? In many shops may be seen his books with orange-coloured bindings made familiar to us by John Lane, and it would be interesting to know the number that have been placed with the reading public. The Epicurean philosophy of France is present in all his stories, together with the sweet wine of humour, and tragedy invariably finds a footing to make a sombre background. One of the best characters in *The Gods are Athirst* is Maurice Brotteaux, formerly Monsieur des Ilettes; he had taken under his protection Louis Longuemare, ex-capuchin, and a street girl known as Athenais. This was included in his indictment, and with delicious satire it is, in the judgment of the Revolutionary Tribunal, made a subject proving that the path of Lucretian virtue offers no medals and no rewards in heaven or on earth.

WILLIAM REPTON.

A Legend from Macedon.

A LEGEND long ago I heard
About a happy singing bird,
Which deemed the worm a tasty dish,
Inspiring as the heart could wish.

Until a vulture from the skies
Down-swooped, unmindful of its cries—
And both birds deemed, whate'er befell,
That Allah did exceeding well!

J. M. STUART-YOUNG.

The Shadow Show.

"For in and out, above, about, below,
'Tis nothing but a magic shadow show,
Played in a box—whose candle is the sun,
Round which we phantom figures come—and go."

OMAR KHAYYAM.

THIS WEEK'S NEWS REEL.

"From Greenly's icy mountains," we heard it in the Strand, how they conquered the Atlantic when they reached that barren land. No Ju-Ju Man at starting to bless their aeroplane, but they carried four-leaved Shamrock, so perhaps we can't complain. Strange how Science and Mumbo-Jumbo are oft' together found, from Greenly's icy mountains to Wembley Football Ground.

A Mascot or a Fetish still the average man enthralled, from a piebald lout of Huddersfield, to the Cross upon St. Pauls. A Medicine-Man is flying with his fetish to the Pole, with a blessing from the Vatican for the Eskimo, poor soul. The priest won't find it easy to explain his creed up there, unless he calls The Lamb of God a little Polar Bear! The Eskimo, poor devil, is an Infidel I'm told, yet if he hears of Flaming Hell, he'll cease from feeling cold. So in the circumstances, perhaps it's just as well not to stress the point in detail—or he'll want to go to Hell!

Kellog of the U.S.A. has a scheme to Outlaw War, though France looks rather dubious, and Russia's feeling sore, while Britain smiles benignly and welcomes the idea. *But are they scrapping Battleships?* My Oath! No ruddy fear! The World is mad, my masters, wild as an old wives' tale, till Mankind scraps its Fetishes, Disarmament will fail!

A Peasant Maid, like Joan of Arc, has had a Holy Trance. She saw the Blessed Virgin, on Wednesday last in France. It was raining when she saw her, and the villagers grew hysterical; I'm not surprised, for Nowadays, perhaps Virgins are a Miracle!

THE PAST PANORAMA.

To-day, April 29th, my Wicked Atheists, Reverent Agnostics, and Doubly-damned Disbelievers, as James Douglas would say, is the Feast day of St. Hugh of Cluny, St. Robert of Molesme, St. Peter Martyr and — But what's the use? Saints, like suckers, are "born every minute," judging by recent events.

On this date, in 1429, St. Joan of Arc entered Orleans in triumph. I am reminded of this by the news from Paris, that a peasant girl of fourteen is already well on the way towards being beatified. She is alleged to have seen the Virgin Mary—indeed to be visited daily by the Queen of Heaven, and pious pilgrims are already talking of building a new shrine to commemorate the miracle performed last week. According to the veracious reporter, it was pouring with rain when the spiritual peasant girl set out for her daily chat with the Virgin. She fell into an ecstatic trance—called out in a sweet unearthly voice—and instantly the rain stopped, and every candle but the one she carried went out!

There you are then. What more do you want? Jam on it? Of course, if you want to be a rank materialist you can point out the age of the peasant girl—fourteen—which was the same age as Joan when she heard the Heavenly Command to "Drive out the English." You will also, in your crude atheistical fashion, plead that so-called mysticism and puberty is a well-known pathological phenomenon. You will even have the impudence to quote to me extracts from *Religion and Sex*, by that hopelessly unspiritual writer and crass materialist, Mr. Chapman Cohen. With the low cunning of the Atheist he has carefully classified the ages of persons who are alleged to have seen visions—the average period being undoubtedly during puberty. In spite of all this, I say, the rain stopped. Would that we had a peasant maid so saintly in every English village this Holiday Time!

But on with the Past Panorama. Three hundred years ago to-day, a reign of terror swept over England, for on April 22, 1652, there was an Eclipse of the Sun. Crowds fell on their knees in the streets and prayed, all business was at a standstill, crazy prophets carrying flaming

torches ran through the streets of London shrieking, "Beware of the Wrath to Come!"

You smile pityingly perhaps? Not so fast—my masters. Flick the panorama forward a little. Only last year—that Old Moore calls The Year of Human Redemption 1927—crowds of people in North Wales fell on their knees and prayed during the Eclipse. "The fervour of the crowd was deeply religious," reports the *Daily Express*. "Many believed the End of the World was at hand," wrote another reporter at the time. "Plus ça change—" my little ones.

OFF WITH THE DANCE.

"Ugly scenes followed the Ban on Dancing by the Rector of Broughton, Manchester, the Rev. J. Daft. Police were called in to restore order in the vestry."—*Daily Paper*.

As the Lancashire Lad remarked afterwards:—

'E won't 'ave lassies smokin'
Won't 'is Reverence of Broughton,
'E calls Whist Drives provokin'
And that is why we fought 'un.

And as for holding Dances,
No wonder people laughed,
What do'st tha' think the chance is,
Why 'is bloomin' name is Daft!

POOR JESUS.

Dear dear. It really is distressing. What with Bishop Barnes alleging that the Carpenter of Nazareth wasn't omniscient, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle claiming him as a great and good medium, and an enthusiastic Red in the *Sunday Worker* defending him as the first and greatest Bolshevik and social reformer, which are we to believe?

I sympathize most deeply with Mr. E. C. Miller, President of the Magnolia Metal Company Inc., New York. Mr. Millar—may his metals 'increase—has just written a book, *Why I am a Fundamentalist!*

In it he declares:—

"If we change the formula as to the Virgin Birth, OUR LORD IS MADE A BASTARD; if we change it with reference to his atoning death, he immediately becomes A LIAR AND CHEAT; if we change the formula as to his resurrection, ascension, and promised return we make him THE MOST COLOSSAL HUMBUG AND FRAUD THE WORLD HAS KNOWN."

I said Fundamentalist, George—not *Funny mentalist!*

BEECHER'S BITTER PILL.

Mr. Miller is not the only devout Christian to be faced with this truly awful alternative. Henry Ward Beecher, the famous American Divine, stated the dilemma nearly fifty years ago in a sermon preached on Sunday, November 31, 1879. The divine paternity of Jesus not being understood in advance, the following conversation, according to the Rev. Beecher, would take place between the missionary and the poor benighted heathen:—

"Of what country?"
"Nazareth."
"Who were his parents?"
"Joseph and Mary, reputedly."
"Who was his mother?"
"Mary, who just escaped a divorce through the magnanimity of her betrothed."
"Who was his father?"
"No one."
"Um—a Jew—a bastard Jew. What did he do?"
"Worked as a carpenter in the shop of his putative father."
"What became of him?"
"He was charged with violation of the Roman laws, tried and convicted, and put to death."
"Um—a bastard Jewish mechanic, a malefactor, put to death for violation of the laws of his country; is that the fellow you bring to me to worship?"

"The Heathen in his blindness," alas! It is all very sad.

THE SHOWMAN.

Correspondence.

THE PAINS OF CHILDBIRTH.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In your issue of April 8, you—quoting from the *Daily Mirror*—have a note which states that, according to Mr. F. E. Baily, "women know that if doctors liked, child-birth could be painless." This assertion is, I think, incorrect, as no medical man, as far as I am aware, has paid any consideration to the matter, for each has accepted the pains attendant in child-birth as perfectly natural. If we regard the subject from the standpoint of probability, it appears that, if at present one woman in 250 dies in bringing a child into the world, then the tendency will be for those who suffer the least to survive in a greater ratio and transmit their characteristics to their descendants, until finally only those women will be left to whom the bringing forth of a child will not only be harmless, but also painless. Why then, the reader will ask, are women now subject to such pains? Is there any reason for assuming that races, whose females suffer such pains, stand a better chance of survival than other races which suffer no pain from similar occurrences; and if no reason can be found, then we must assume that there was a sudden change in the conditions of life, and this change must have been recent, in order to explain why we are not biologically fitted for our present environments.

In addition to the myth in the Bible, that these pains came into the world at the "Fall of Man," and were indirectly caused by that Old Serpent the Devil, we have a myth from the Ainus of Japan that the pains of childbirth are caused by snakes. The Ainus are a very primitive, absolutely ignorant, and illiterate race, they are therefore extremely liable to tell the truth; and in investigating the matter, I place greater reliance on their statement than on the similar one in the Bible, which book was written by intelligent people, who mixed up the facts and their theories in such a manner, that they and their subsequent readers were and are unable to distinguish one from the other. Practically the two statements are similar, consequently we have to discover who or what were the snakes.

A study of mythology shows clearly that the snakes were the aerolites which fell on the earth, or in the words of the Bible, "the stars from heaven fell on to the earth even as a fig-tree droppeth its untimely figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind." These glowing bodies on passing through the atmosphere left behind a trail of meteoric dust, and they were called snakes because in appearance they more closely resembled such reptiles than any other creatures on earth. The problem then becomes: how were women affected by this event, and what can be done to lessen or totally remove the pains which they now suffer in cases of maternity?

In order to make the subject clearer, I will briefly recapitulate the theory which I placed before your readers about two years ago. A vagrant or wandering star from the direction of the Milky Way came into the Solar System and struck one of its planets. The Milky Way is, according to Professor Beckerton, a breeding ground of such stars; and possibly one of them is responsible for the splitting in two by collision of Nova Pictoris, which event has been a source of wonder and astonishment to our astronomers. This vagrant star is known in mythology as that Old Serpent the Devil, Old Niki, Loki (luck), Fafnir the Dragon, Tiamat the Dragon, etc.; and the planet or god which was destroyed was called Osiris, Balder Adonis, Tammuz, etc. In the Legends of Creation it is stated that "Tiamat the Dragon spawned huge serpents which no man might withstand." From this and other similar statements we can infer that some of the broken portions of the destroyer struck our earth and the moon. This planet was removed farther from the sun, and the moon was removed farther from the earth. The second event was the ascent of Christ into Heaven. Christ in the Manichæan religion being directly addressed as the Moon.

As a result of these events the average temperature of our planet fell about 20 degrees Fahrenheit, there was a Deluge and a Glacial Epoch, the land became less fertile

and man had in consequence to work for his living. The geological evidence that there was a fall of temperature over the whole earth in recent times is so clear that its occurrence is now accepted as a fact by geologists, and this decrease in temperature implies less vegetable growth, and therefore less food for man and other animals. It was the Fall of Man or the End of the Golden Age, and there came with it the pains of childbirth to women, which from the standpoint of probability are unnatural.

Is it possible to restore the primeval conditions of life? I am afraid that as regards the earth as a whole this is impossible, but we may be able to perform such restoration on a small scale, sufficient to alleviate the pains of childbirth and cure minor diseases.

In connexion with this subject, on December 10 last, I obtained provisional protection for a patent, in which I outlined the methods by the adoption of which these pains can be partly or may be wholly removed. I took into consideration, as far as I know, the changes that such a vast quantity of aerolites could possibly produce, and those which would affect life in such a manner. Personally I think it is somewhat better than an even money chance that my idea is on the right lines, but I will not be dogmatic in the matter, and will merely remark that I prefer an *ex post facto* prophesy, and will leave dogmatic utterances until my method is tested.

In connexion with the Glacial Epoch, readers may refer to my letter in the *English and Amateur Mechanics* of January 20 last. I showed that this Epoch must necessarily have been a sudden event, and was probably the result of an astronomical occurrence. The astronomers have left my theory severely alone, although, when the Draysonian Theory of the cause of the Glacial Epoch was put forward, one writer—the Director of an Observatory—termed it “a brilliant example of equine nidification.” He has not criticized my statement.

WILLIAM CLARK.

Society News.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH.

AN interesting debate took place last Sunday, between Mr. Easton and Mr. Ebury, followed by an animated discussion, in which two of our lady visitors took a prominent part. To-night, our last indoor meeting of the Session will be addressed by Mr. Van Biene. Mr. Van Biene's lectures are always of the best, and we hear him far too seldom. We hope for a very good audience.

Our Open-Air Propaganda in Regent's Park, starts on May 6, at 6 p.m., Mr. Ebury will be the speaker.

K.B.K.

FOUR GREAT FREETHINKERS:

GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE

By JOSEPH McCABE.

The Life and Work of one of the Pioneers of the Secular and Co-operative movements in Great Britain. With four plates. In Paper Covers, 1s. 6d. (postage 2d.). Cloth Bound, 2s. 6d. (postage 3d.).

CHARLES BRADLAUGH

By THE RIGHT HON. J. M. ROBERTSON.

An Authoritative Life of one of the greatest Reformers of the Nineteenth Century, and the only one now obtainable. With four portraits. Cloth bound, 2s. 6d. (postage 3d.).

VOLTAIRE

By THE RIGHT HON. J. M. ROBERTSON.

In Paper Covers 1s. 6d. (postage 2d.). Cloth Bound, 2s. 6d. (postage 3d.).

ROBERT G. INGERSOLL

By C. T. GORHAM.

A Biographical Sketch of America's greatest Free-thought Advocate. With four plates. In Paper Covers, 1s. 6d. (postage 2d.). Cloth Bound, 2s. 6d. (postage 3d.).

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGTON STREET, E.C.4.

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.

HAMPSTEAD ETHICAL INSTITUTE (The Studio Theatre, 59 Finchley Road, N.W.8) : 11.15, Mr. R. Dimisdale Stocker—“Marriage : Some Contemporary Conceptions.”

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W.) : 7.30, Mr. Joseph H. Van Biene—“Chloroform.”

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (30 Brixton Road, S.W., near Oval Station) : 7.15, Debate between Rev. Father Vincent McNabb, O.P., and Francis P. Corrigan, on “Free-will or Determinism?”

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.) : Free Sunday Lectures. 7.0, Dr. C. W. Saleeby—“The Best of Everything.”

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (The London Institution Theatre, South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2.) : 11.0, Prof. G. Salvemini—“The Origins of the Fascist Dictatorship in Italy.”

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (34 George Street, Manchester Square, W.1) : 7.30, Mr. C. E. Ratcliffe—“Difficulties of Determinism.”

OUTDOOR.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Common) : 11.30, Mr. George Whitehead. (Cooks Road, Kennington) : Each evening at 8 p.m.—Mr. George Whitehead.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park) : 12 noon, Mr. James Hart—A Lecture; 3.0, Mr. Hyatt—A Lecture; 6.30, Messrs. Campbell-Everden and Le Maine. Freethought lectures every Wednesday and Friday at 7.30. Various lecturers, including Messrs. Campbell-Everden, Darby, Hart and Le Maine.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (18 Colquitt Street, off Bold Street) : 7.30, Mr. J. V. Short—“Happiness a Bar to Progress.” Questions and Discussion. Admission free.

OUTDOOR.

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

A STUDIOUS woman, not young, seeks bed-sitting-room in private house of one or two ladies. South of England (not London). Moderate terms. Full particulars to—G.D., The Freethinker, 61 Farringdon Street, E.C.4.

BOOKS FOR SALE.—The library of the late J. Fothergill, Secretary of the South Shields Branch, in large or small lots. A good collection of Freethought works, with others by Gibbon, Laing, Fielding; Oracle Encyclopedia (five vols.), history of Greece, good collection of poets, etc. Many in cheap editions, all to be sold at half price or less. So far as possible will be made up into 2s. 6d. or 5s. parcels, postage extra. Section lists sent. Address: Mrs. J. FOTHERGILL, 2 Hut, Madras Street, South Shields, Co. Durham.

60 WATT ELECTRIC LAMPS, all voltages, 1s. 3d. each. Guaranteed. Gillette type Razor Blades, 1s. 9d. per doz. Buy from a Freethinker.—A. C. MUSGRAVE, 160 London Road, Northampton.

UNWANTED CHILDREN

In a Civilized Community there should be no UNWANTED Children.

For List of Birth-Control Requisites send 1½d. stamp to:—**J. R. HOLMES, East Hannay, Wantage, Berks.**
(Established nearly Forty Years.)



Coming Home

"THERE is no place more delightful than one's own fireside." Cicero said this—and Thomas Hood wrote of "home-made dishes that drive one from home." You readily admit there is something strongly attractive about buying your clothes at your warm fireside, but you think there is something home-made about the idea. You think that because you order at home and have something to do with the matter yourself that the resulting garments must look uncouth and amateurish. Napoleon most truly said, "the human race is governed by its imagination."

To more and more Freethinkers every week the truth is coming home that science and progress have not ignored tailoring. Why should there be progress in all things but the making of clothes? Why should there be no way of being clothed save the one you have hitherto followed? We shall give you addresses of two Freethinkers residing somewhere near you, who will tell you that not only can you order your clothes at your own fireside, but you can do so *successfully*. They will tell you that to fireside happiness and hours of ease, we can truly add the crowning charm of certainty to please. We have all along asked you not to take our word, but to let your fellow Freethinkers give you their experiences of our service. Write to us and we shall put you in the way of writing to them. Joy is a partnership; grief weeps alone.

Send a postcard to-day for any of the following patterns:

B to E, suits from 57/-
F to H, suits from 79/-
I to M, suits from 105/-
EBORAC One-quality,
suits from 69/-
B Serges, suits 63/- to
100/-

LADIES' Book, costumes
from 62/-, frocks from 45/-

Patterns are sent out on the understanding that they will be returned to us. We pay postages both ways to all inland and North Irish addresses.

MACCONNELL & MABE, Ltd., New Street, Bakewell, Derbyshire.

ALL FREETHINKERS

Living in and visiting Glasgow should purchase their literature at

B. P. LIBRARY

263a, Buchanan Street, Glasgow.

We not only sell the *Freethinker*, we display it in the window. Also all Chapman Cohen's works and Atheist publications. Novels! Biographies! Histories! Splendid condition. New and Second Hand.

Freethought libraries purchased. All comrades wanting to sell books, write to GUY ALDRED, 13 BURNBANK GARDENS, GLASGOW, N.W.

The B.P. LIBRARY stands for Atheism and Socialism. It caters for all tastes and has no bias. But it will not permit radical literature of any description to be hidden or suppressed. Support it. You'll know the shop by the literature in the window.

SOME PIONEER PRESS PUBLICATIONS:

WHAT IS MORALITY? By GEORGE WHITEHEAD. A Careful Examination of the Basis of Morals from the Standpoint of Evolution. 4d., postage 1d.

THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH. By Col. R. G. INGERSOLL. 1d., postage ½d.

WHAT IS RELIGION? By Col. R. G. INGERSOLL. Contains Col. Ingersoll's Confession of Faith. 1d., postage ½d.

WHAT IS IT WORTH? By Col. R. G. INGERSOLL. A Study of the Bible. 1d., postage ½d.

THE RELIGION OF FAMOUS MEN. By W. MANN. 1d., postage ½d.

THE ROBES OF PAN. By A. MILLAR. Literary Essays. 6d., postage 1d.

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

THE "FREETHINKER" ENDOWMENT TRUST.

A GREAT SCHEME FOR A GREAT PURPOSE.

The *Freethinker* Endowment Trust was registered on the 25th of August, 1925, its object being to raise a sum of not less than £8,000, which, by investment, would yield sufficient to cover the estimated annual loss incurred in the maintenance of the *Freethinker*. The Trust is controlled and administered by five Trustees, of which number the Editor of the *Freethinker* is one in virtue of his office. By the terms of the Trust Deed the Trustees are prohibited from deriving anything from the Trust in the shape of profit, emoluments, or payment, and in the event of the position of the *Freethinker* at any time, in the opinion of the Trustees, rendering the Fund unnecessary, it may be brought to an end, and the capital sum handed over to the National Secular Society.

The Trustees set themselves the task of raising a minimum sum of £8,000. This was accomplished by the end of December, 1927. At the suggestion of some of the larger subscribers, it has since been resolved to increase the Trust to a round £10,000, and there is every hope of this being done within a reasonably short time.

The Trust may be benefited by donations of cash, or shares already held, or by bequests. All contributions will be acknowledged in the columns of this journal, and may be sent to either the Editor, or to the Secretary of the Trust, Mr. H. Jessop, Hollyshaw, Whitkirk, Nr. Leeds. Any further information concerning the Trust will be supplied on application.

There is no need to say more about the *Freethinker* itself, than that its invaluable service to the Freethought Cause is recognized and acknowledged by all. It is the mouthpiece of militant Freethought in this country, and places its columns, without charge, at the service of the movement.

The address of the *Freethinker* Endowment Trust is 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Just Published . . .

RELIGION AND WOMAN

(Issued by the Secular Society, Ltd.)

By George Whitehead

A psycho-analytic study of the influence of religious beliefs on the position of woman.

Price Sixpence. Postage 1d.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGTON STREET, E.C.4.

220 pages of Wit and Wisdom

BIBLE ROMANCES

By G. W. Foote

The *Bible Romances* is an illustration of G. W. Foote at his best. It is profound without being dull, witty without being shallow; and is as indispensable to the Freethinker as is the *Bible Handbook*.

Price 2/6 Postage 3d

Well printed and well bound.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGTON STREET, E.C.4.

The Case for Secular Education

(Issued by the Secular Education League.)

THIS booklet gives a concise history of the Secular Education controversy, with a clear and temperate statement of the arguments in favour of the abolition of religious teaching in all State-aided schools.

PRICE SEVENPENCE

Postage 1d.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGTON STREET, E.C.4.

History of the Conflict Between Religion and Science

By Prof. J. W. DRAPER.

This is an unabridged edition of Draper's great work, of which the standard price is 7/6.

Cloth Bound. 396 Pages.

PRICE 2/-. POSTAGE 4½d.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGTON STREET, E.C.4.

More Bargains in Books ! !

HUMAN BEHAVIOUR in relation to the Study of Educational, Social, and Ethical Problems. By STEWART PATON, M.D. (Lecturer in Neuro-Biology at Princeton University).

Published 1921 at 21/-. PRICE 7/-. Postage 9d.

RELIGIOUS THOUGHT AND HERESY IN THE MIDDLE AGES. By F. W. BUSSELL. Contains elaborate studies of Religion and Heresy in Hindustan and Further Asia, and Islam, its Sects and Philosophy. 873 pp.

Published 1918 at 21/-. PRICE 6/6.
Postage 9d. (home); 1½ (abroad).

ROBERT BUCHANAN (The Poet of Revolt). Complete Poetical Works, Two Vols. Contains the author's remarkable and lengthy Freethinking poems, "The Devil's Case," "The Wandering Jew."

Published at 15/-. PRICE 6/6. Postage 9d.

MATTER MAN AND MIND. By W. F. F. SHEARCROFT. The A.B.C. of Evolution—The Origin of Life—The Structure of Matter—Heredity—Psycho-Analysis—The Ether—Relativity—Radio-Activity—Vitalism—and a host of other topics.

Published 1925 at 8/6. PRICE 4/6. Postage 5d.

FREUD'S THEORIES OF THE NEUROSES. By Dr. H. HITSCHMANN. With an Introduction by ERNEST JONES, M.D., M.R.C.P. An English edition of this well-known book, which heretofore has been obtainable only in the imported American edition. It provides a summary and a sympathetic presentation of the Freudian theory.

Published at 12/6. PRICE 3/6. Postage 5d.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGTON STREET, E.C.4.

Essays in Freethinking

(Second Series)

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

Contains Chapters on: A Martyr of Science—Religion and Sex—The Happy Atheist—Vulgar Freethinkers—Religion and the Stage—The Clergy and Parliament—On Finding God—Vice and Virtue—The Gospel of Pain—War and War Memorials—Christian Pessimism—Why We Laugh, Etc., Etc.

CLOTH GILT, 2/6 POSTAGE 2½d.

Vols. I and II of *Essays in Freethinking* will be sent post free for 5/-.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGTON STREET, E.C.4.

Materialism Re-stated

BY

CHAPMAN COHEN

(Issued by the Secular Society, Ltd.)

A clear and concise statement of one of the most important issues in the history of science and philosophy.

Contains Chapters on:—A Question of Prejudice—Some Critics of Materialism—Materialism in History—What is Materialism?—Science and Pseudo-Science—On Cause and Effect—The Problem of Personality.

Cloth bound, price 2/6. Postage 2½d.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGTON STREET, E.C.4.