

THE LOGIC OF PERSECUTION.

THE

FREETHINKER

FOUNDED · 1881

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

Vol. XLVIII.—No. 26

SUNDAY, JUNE 24, 1928

PRICE THREEPENCE

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page
<i>The Logic of Persecution.—The Editor</i> - - -	401
<i>The Case of Jean Calas.—Mimnermus</i> - - -	403
<i>Atheism.—E. Egerton Stafford</i> - - -	404
<i>The Redeemer and the Redemption.—G. W. Foote</i> - - -	405
<i>The Machinery of Spiritualism.—George R. Scott</i> - - -	410
<i>Freethought Flashes</i> - - -	411
<i>How I Became an Atheist.—W. Mann</i> - - -	412
<i>"Humanist Sermons."—George Bedborough</i> - - -	413

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

Views and Opinions.

(Concluded from page 386.)

The Logic of Persecution.

THE question of how far the Roman Catholic Church endorses the policy of religious persecution is only a minor aspect of a much larger subject. This is why should intolerance, with its consequent persecution, be so generally and so universally associated with religion? This is the first thing that strikes one who comes to the study of the subject. Intolerance, the determination to suppress anyone who acts so as to give offence to the gods, is one of the oldest, the most general, the least questioned manifestation of religious feeling. So far as Christendom is concerned, until very recent times the right to persecute was hardly ever questioned. Roman Catholics might resent Protestant persecution, as Protestants might resent that of the Roman Church, but hardly anyone questioned the position that the suppression of heretical opinion was the first duty of the true believer. The Roman Church, on the one side, elaborated the most minute rules for the detection and punishment of heresy, and developed the most brutal methods of torture known to any system. On the other hand, Protestants were agreed that it was the duty of the civil power to root out heresy, even at the cost of the death of the heretic. As usual, whenever Christians agreed upon anything, it was nearly always upon something that was either idiotic or damnable.

The *Univers*, in the article with which we dealt last week, suggested that where the spiritual and temporal interests of the State were identical, heresy might well assume the form of a civil crime and be dealt with accordingly. I agree; and as the Christian aim is always to bring about this harmony of the secular and the religious interests, it explains why persecution has been so general a feature of Christian rule. In primitive societies this identity is actually in being. The gods play so large a part in the life of the community, that to offend them is a threat to the welfare of the tribe. Offending the gods may mean a shortage of food, the ravage of a disease, defeat in war, or some other disaster. We can see

the reversion to this primitive mode of thinking in the common Christian belief that God sends a war, or a disease, for the purpose of punishing those who ignore or offend him. From this point of view the suppression of the heretic becomes, in primitive communities, and with those who exemplify the primitive mind in civilized communities, an act of social sanitation. He is suppressed because his toleration exposes the whole of the tribe to imminent disaster.

* * *

Toleration and Unbelief.

From this primitive mental condition, Roman and Greek civilizations were almost free. Roman life was nearer complete emancipation than the Greek, although there was not in either case anything in the nature of the systematic legal persecution such as existed under Christian rule. If anyone questions this, he need only compare the freedom and the quality of the discussions of the gods such as meet us in either Greek or Roman literature, with the horror with which Christians shrank from anyone who questioned either the being or the conduct of their deity. Here, again, the growth of Christianity meant a reversion to a lower level of life and thought. The thought becomes more primitive, the spirit more intolerant. It heralded, as Gibbon somewhere says, that triumph of barbarism and religion over ancient culture which was to prepare the way for the Dark Ages. Religious persecution was not an act of intolerance, it was an expression of the highest religious and social duty. If Christianity be true, that attitude is logical and impregnable. If it be true that one cannot be a good citizen in the absence of Christian or religious belief, if—as was held for long by all believers, and by a very large number of Christians to-day—to reject the belief in God is to weaken morality and destroy the basis of social life, and if, in addition, the avowed unbeliever is one who endangers the immortal welfare of all around, then his removal is as justifiable as is the destruction of the germs of an epidemic disease.

The only escape from this conclusion is to admit that it does not seriously matter whether a man believes in the gods or not. And what Christian can, or dare, admit that? It would be a confession that his belief is a more or less amiable speculation that no one is the better for holding or the worse for rejecting. As a matter of fact, the decline of the spirit of intolerance has always taken place as a consequence of the weakening of religious belief. Historically, it is not true that Protestantism was either based on the belief in freedom of enquiry or the wish to attain it. What was claimed was primarily the right to differ from the Roman Church, but it was at one with the Roman Church on the duty of true Christianity suppressing all that was against it. Such

liberality as existed under Protestant rule existed for the same reason that Roman Catholics in this country do not openly ask for the suppression of all save themselves. With a multiplicity of sects, it became glaringly absurd to make no allowances whatever for differences of opinion. All over the civilized world toleration in religion is only an expression of the growth of unbelief.

* * *

Religion and Life.

It was the Christian Church—the iniquities of which the *Universe* attempts to make the secular State responsible for—that organized, legalized, and moralized persecution on a scale such as the world had never known before or since. And the influence of the Church on life and civilization was direct and disastrous. In the first place, it is entirely due to the Church that torture assumed the place it did in the legislation of Europe. It was the spiritual dragooning of European rulers by the Church, which compelled them to the set policy of persecution:—

It came a time when the old order of things was giving way to the new—when the ancient customs of the barbarians, the ordeal, the wager of law, the wergild, were growing obsolete in the increasing intelligence of the age, when a new system was springing into life under the revived study of Roman law . . . The whole judicial system of the European monarchies was undergoing reconstruction, and the happiness of future generations depended on the character of the new institutions. That in this reorganization, the worst features of the imperial jurisprudence—the use of torture and the inquisitorial process—should be eagerly, nay, almost exclusively adopted, should be divested of the safeguards which in Rome restricted their abuse, should be exaggerated in all their evil tendencies and should, for five centuries, become the prominent characteristic of the criminal jurisprudence of Europe, may safely be ascribed to the fact that they received the sanction of the Church . . . Of all the curses which the Inquisition brought in its train this, perhaps, was the greatest—that until the closing years of the eighteenth century, throughout the greater part of Europe, the inquisitorial process, as developed for the destruction of heresy, became the customary method of dealing with all who were under accusation; that the accused was treated as one having no rights, whose guilt was assumed in advance, and from whom confession was to be extorted by guile or force. (H. C. Lea: *History of the Inquisition in the Middle Ages*. pp. 559-60.)

The brutalization of the public mind effected by the Christian Church may be illustrated in many other ways, but the one given may serve as a deadly illustrative example. It need only be added that it was the work of the Italian Atheist, Beccaria, which first directed general attention to the proper method of dealing with crime and criminals, a work that was followed up with zest by the Freethinkers of France and England.

* * *

Civilization and the Church.

On the one side, the Church legalized and moralized brutality. On the other, it legalized and moralized intolerance and persecution. And just as the brutality of its legal methods reflected itself in social life, so intolerance became more marked than it would have been otherwise in things that were outside the scope of religion. Men were not ashamed of being intolerant—they took pride in it. Not to listen to the other side became, not the mark of a coward, but of a man with strong convictions. Nor were these the worst things that resulted from the power of the Church. Its worst consequence was the lower-

ing of the level of intellectual life, the breeding of the socially and mentally less desirable. Remember that for many generations the peoples of Europe lived under a rule that made honesty of thought and speech two of the greatest offences that any man could commit. The Church had compassionate words for the thief, for the murderer, the wife-beater, the drunkard. There was but one unforgivable offence—disbelief in religion accompanied by honesty of speech. It did not persecute hypocrites, they were beyond its reach, even if it had troubled about them. It was the man who said honestly what he believed that suffered. Generation after generation, this kind of rule was maintained; and it is not difficult to calculate its consequences. A well known theologian, Principal Donaldson, attributed the hardness and brutality of the Middle Ages to the influence of the Church teaching of celibacy which actually withdrew from the function of procreation the finer and more delicate characters, and left it to the coarser and more brutal natures to perpetuate the race. Intellectually, the same kind of process took place. The brave and mentally honest men who doubted were weeded out; the cowards, the liars, the hypocrites were told by the Church to be fruitful and multiply. A social environment was created which counted a hypocritical conformity to established beliefs the chief condition of advancement and public honour. For generations there went on a survival of the socially undesirable. Children were brought up with the teaching before them, that, if they wished to get on in the world, it would be best to keep their doubts on religion to themselves. That state of things is not yet ended. We have a House of Commons in which not five per cent of its members dare to tell their constituents what their real opinions on religion are. We have hundreds of local governing bodies in which the same cowardly hypocrisy is manifested. We have a press which dare not allow its writers to speak the truth about religion, but which purchases their mental freedom at so much per column. And very few see anything wrong in it. The Church has made hypocrisy so much a part of our public life that men who stand forward in public life are not even expected to tell the truth about their religious opinions.

This is part of the price we have had to pay for the existence of the Christian Church. Many pages—volumes—have been filled with accounts of the number of men and women who have been put to death by this or that Church. But the great, the lasting evil worked by the Church was not on the dead, but on the living. As with a disease, it is not the one that kills, but the one that maims that does most harm, so with the Church and heresy; it was not to those who died at the stake that the chief evil was done, but to the mental type that remained. We owe it chiefly to the Church that so much of our social life to-day is riddled with insincerity and hypocrisy. It was the law of the Christian Church which damned the honest thinker and crowned the cowardly conformist. And so far as an improvement has been effected in the environment of the rising generation, we owe it to the declining influence of that religion which Kingdon Clifford said wiped out two civilizations and came very near destroying a third.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The strength of a man's virtue is not to be measured by the efforts he makes under pressure, but by his ordinary conduct.—*Pascal*.

A man should never be ashamed to own he has been in the wrong, which is but saying, in other words, that he is wiser to-day than he was yesterday.—*Swift*.

The Case of Jean Calas.

"There is nothing else in history but the fight between freedom and tyranny."—Arnold White.

Though few,
We hold a promise for the race
That was not at our rising."

George Meredith.

AMIDST a number of new publications upon a bookseller's counter one bore the title, *The Case of Jean Calas*, by F. H. Maugham, K.C. (Heinemann). To an ancient bookworm like myself the association of these names was startling. Mr. Justice Maugham is a living High Court Judge, and the case of Jean Calas is more than a century and a half old. Moreover, the story of the unfortunate Huguenot cloth-merchant is one of those awful human happenings which are "too deep for tears." It was one of those terrible miscarriages of justice, like the more recent cases of Alfred Dreyfus and Francesco Ferrer, which roused honest men like a trumpet calling to battle. And the mere fact that the question "Guilt or innocence?" still goes on with regard to each of these cases, raises a matter of the very greatest importance to Freethinkers.

Jean Calas was executed, with all the horrors of the Ancien Régime, for a crime he never committed. The eagle eye of Voltaire saw at once that it was a gross travesty of justice, and he raised his voice in protest, just as Emile Zola did thirty years since, in the case of the unfortunate Captain Dreyfus. The soundness of Voltaire's judgment has been proved to the hilt by Mr. Justice Maugham, but Voltaire himself was rewarded with an avalanche of hatred which has not yet subsided, although he has been dead a century and a half.

The reason is not far to seek. Roman Catholics never forgive Voltaire for branding their Great Lying Church with the infamies recorded under the names of Calas, Sirven, and La Barre. Calas was a Protestant, and he was unjustly accused of murder, and duly executed. The others were accused of blasphemy, and were tortured and killed. France was, indeed, "the country of the St. Bartholomew Massacre," to quote the words of Voltaire, written at the time of the Calas affair.

Voltaire knew the difference between a Catholic country and a non-Catholic country. Englishmen owe him more than compliments, for Voltaire's visit to England marked a turning point in his career. He came to us a mere dilettante of letters; he left our shores impressed with the national seriousness. He built himself largely on British Freethought, and carried on the intellectual tradition of the English Freethinkers to such purpose that to-day Anti-Clericalism is written in letters of flame across the Continent of Europe.

Voltaire has been represented as a mere mocker, but he was so much more than that. His humanism is never in question for a moment. It was the awful cruelty and injustice inflicted on Calas and La Barre that caused him to break out into a blaze of righteous indignation; and the writing of his masterpiece, *Candide*, was occasioned by the news of the dreadful earthquake at Lisbon, in which the greater part of the city was destroyed, and forty thousand of the inhabitants killed. Voltaire's sympathies were roused by the Quakers' title, "The Society of Friends." It is Roman Catholic critics who denounce the great writer as a literary Mephistopheles, and they do this in order to discredit the most formidable of their opponents.

Remember that Voltaire lived in the eighteenth century, and that he had felt in his own person the dire effects of the tyranny of Clericalism. His own

books had been confiscated, and he had been forced to go into exile, and eat the bitter bread of banishment. If he had stayed, he might have had his tongue torn out, and his limbs broken on the wheel. Other men, less militant than he, underwent these hideous sufferings in the name of a god of love. Small wonder that Voltaire was determined to crush the Infamous. He made this crusade against Clericalism his life-work. In the last resort, be it noted, Voltaire's philosophy was Secularistic. It is the final moral of *Candide*. "What I know," says the hero, "is that we must cultivate our garden." Only a consummate literary genius could impart a philosophy and vastly amuse men in the process.

The name of Voltaire has ever been a terror to Christians, and, with the exception of Thomas Paine, none has been more hated, none more reviled. The reason is simple. A master of language, Voltaire attacked the Christian superstition, not in the dry-as-dust fashion of professors writing for a dozen other professors, but with wit and pleasantry which survives the winnowing-fan of time. He made bigots and tyrants appear ridiculous as well as odious, and those who felt the lash of his satire denounced him as a mocker whose writings all believers should shun as they would a plague.

It is only dull people who associate brilliancy with superficiality, and imagine that, because a man is witty, he must therefore be shallow. The soundness of Voltaire's judgment was only equalled by the happiness of his expression. A book might be written of his anticipation of modern thought. He accepted the view of man's savage origin. He derived the belief in ghosts from dreams, and he perceived the magical nature of early religion. He anticipated many of the social and political problems of our time. A pioneer among pioneers, he stated the population question before Malthus, and he cleared the way for modern science. Thomas Carlyle well says: "He gave the death-stab to modern superstition." That horrid incubus, which dwelt in darkness, shunning the light, is passing away, with its confessionals and its racks. It was a most weighty service. Voltaire's first claim on posterity is his potent genius, but he was also a humanitarian, and he fought in the Army of Human Liberation. He loved Liberty without misgiving, and Liberty, loving him in return, has crowned his memory with everlasting honour.

MIMNERMUS.

The Windmill.

I WATCH the windmill's sail each morn
And wonder why the wind
Should come to grind the miller's corn,
For that old man has sinned:
He coveteth his neighbour's wife,
And does not lead a moral life.

The rain, we know, falls on the just,
And on the unjust, too;
It merely falls because it must—
It can no other do:
But the wind bloweth where it lists;
Cannot be forced if it resists.

Therefore I take it that the wind
That grinds the miller's corn
Is really of the wanton kind,
Is faithless and foresworn:
But still I love to watch that sail
Turned by the gentle, wanton gale.

BAVARD SIMMONS.

Atheism.

(Paper read at the Annual Conference of the National Secular Society.)

PERHAPS the necessity of expounding the philosophy of Atheism cannot be better realized than by reading such statements as the following, taken from the work of a present-day scientist.

Dr. Benjamin Moore says, in *The Origin and Nature of Life*:—

True religion, apart from dogma, is the sublimed essence of the knowledge of the highest things in the world, and in itself is never opposed to natural science; but when there is error in men's conceptions of religion or of natural science, then there may for a time appear to be a conflict. But as time advances, and thought on both sides becomes clearer, it is found that both religion and science stand out as a united whole, purified by the removal of the dross, and more brightly radiant in intrinsic beauty and loveliness. (pp. 7-8.)

Here we have the scientist playing the theologian in full war paint, with as goodly a show of theological trickery as one might well gather from a short paragraph. "True religion" is distinguished from "dogma" as if religious dogma were something other than religious teaching in emphatic form, and we are presented with a definition of religion that has nothing to do with religion. We are told that religion is "the sublimed essence of the knowledge of the highest things in the world." A definition that might be given by an enthusiastic and emotional student to almost any branch of knowledge to which he might happen to be devoted. It defines nothing; but indicates the author's emotional attitude toward the subject with which he is dealing. Why not speak of art, literature, or some particular branch of science, such as astronomy or mathematics, as the *sublimed* essence of the knowledge of the highest things in the world?

Religion has nothing to do with the highest things in this world. Its concern is with what are conceived to be the highest things in some supposed to be other world. Do away with the conception of another world and there is no need for religion. Nobody ever found religion to be essential to the performance of any ordinary human function. The only time when a man needs religion is when he wants to get himself in touch with some other world; and I suggest that Atheists should insist upon this in order to make the issue between Atheism and religion as clear cut as possible. We have had enough of religion being defined so that it can be paraded as never having been opposed to natural science.

After informing us that true religion is not in itself in opposition to natural science, Dr. Moore goes on to reintroduce the trick of claiming that what appears to be the conflict of religion and science is due to errors in men's conceptions.

Evidently, Dr. Moore, like many another apologist, is incapable of realizing that religion as such has nothing to do with errors in men's conceptions. It simply claims to be right. The religionist who says he may be right or wrong in his religious views, is no doubt a very charming social individual, but he is talking rot as a religionist.

Religion must be right or it is of no use. It has no advantage over any other form of emotionalism, or over philosophy and science if it admits error to be possible. It is only the Atheist who has the right to say that religion is wrong. This also must be forced home by the Atheist, as the issue is obscured when the theological trickster is allowed to introduce religion as if it were an ordinary every-day affair. It is not that. It is something apart like the church and the priest. Set aside by society as out of the

ordinary run of things. No religion can be absorbed into science. No church can be the house of man. No priest, as such, can be absorbed into society; and any attempt to reunite religion and science is either folly or dishonesty according to the character of the man who makes the attempt.

When Dr. Moore informs us that religion and science will be purified and united as time and thought advance and become clearer, it is evident he has set aside the whole history of religion and of the development of science.

Not only have religion and science never been united, they never will be. Unity between them is an impossibility, as science in every sphere leads to Atheism. No one ever found god in the universe as understood by science. God simply does not exist.

Atheism is the philosophy of science in the fullest sense of the term. It is not only the denial of the existence of God, but is also an interpretation of the whole of man's relationship to the universe in which man is seen to be a small, if important, product of universal evolution. Like everything else, man is the outcome of natural conditions, and wholly dependent upon those conditions. He can react upon the forces of nature, just as they act and react upon each other; but there is no room for help from a supernatural power or being.

All happiness and welfare depend upon the mind of man being able to use external nature in such a way as to promote the best possible individual and social development. That is the teaching of science. It is rank Atheism and consequently the theologian, and the scientist playing the part of the theologian, seeks to obscure the clear cut issue between science and religion. It is known that science cannot be defeated, so it must be made to look like religion; but the very conditions of human thought make religion useless as a guide to or source of knowledge. All thought is dependent upon the brain and external objects. No knowledge is possible unless we receive in the brain impressions from the external world through the medium of the senses, and then by means of classification and co-ordination proceed to produce ideas to be checked and verified, or otherwise, by repeated contact with the external, and comparison with the ideas of other men. This is true whether our ideas are concrete or abstract; they are both derived from the external world, and leave no room for the supernatural if thought is to be consistent. No one has a more concrete idea of the other world or of his god than has the savage, but if we trace the supernatural world of the savage to its source, we find it to be but a rather concrete conceptual extension of the world in which he lives; having no place in actual existence or in a consistent theory of the universe. On the other hand, the supernatural world of the cultured modern theist is a more abstract conception built up from generalizations, in a way that will satisfy his more highly developed feelings, but having no objective existence.

In the sphere of Cosmology there is no room for the theistic view of the universe. In fact, the introduction of a god in any form simply means confusion of thought. The universe is without origin. The fact of matter being indestructible and always in motion, excludes the idea of a god as creator or prime mover, and the idea of origin is only justified with regard to the various forms or modes of matter in motion. Worlds and stars, suns and moons, may come into existence, but the fundamental substance, of which they are composed, ever existed, and will continue existing for ever if modern thought, based upon the findings of science, is of any value.

Sometimes we are told that even if matter in motion is indestructible, there must be someone designing

and perfecting the various forms which we see in the universe, especially man; but if we follow the evolution of the various forms, living and non-living, in which matter in motion presents itself, we find no evidence for design or perfecting. Every formation that takes place, whether we think it to be perfect or imperfect, is seen to be possible as a natural process.

In the sphere of biology, the idea of a god is hopeless. All the mystified talk about the origin of life as something supernatural is dispelled by science, although the "vitalistic" theory still hangs about like a nightmare. There is no line of demarcation between the living and the non-living, such as many would have us believe. There are the same elements in each, and the difference between the two forms of matter in motion is one of arrangement and function. Life is not a thing in itself; it is but matter in a certain state, or functioning in a given way; and if we grasp this fact, there should not be any difficulty in realizing that the organic evolves from the inorganic as a fact, and that it is also the only logical deduction from the findings of science. Viewed as the so far final product of a long line of evolution man himself is seen to be the outcome of natural processes, which leave no room for the working of some supernatural being.

With the knowledge that the highly complex multi-cell formation called man has been produced gradually during a long period of evolution, there should disappear altogether the idea of man having been specially created. If the general structure of man were entirely different from that of other animals, and if the substance of which he is constructed were also different, we might suspect the activity of some peculiar being in the making of man; but in biology man is but a different, if higher, form of animal life in relation to the rest.

Not even in the sphere of psychology can we find any justification for a theistic interpretation of the universe. Mind is but a mode of motion in which we have a manifestation of brain activity in response to stimuli that come from the outside world. By comparative psychology we are able to trace the evolution of mind from a most lowly origin. Proto-plasm, in its lowest forms, responds as a whole to external stimuli; then there gradually appears the elementary sense-organ; and later, the more highly differentiated sense-organ, culminating in the nerve system and brain of the higher animals, including man. There is a long line of evolution from the sensitivity of the lowest protoplasmic forms to the mind of man, which is seen to be impossible without the evolution of nerve and brain.

To the student of biology who is free from theistic preconceptions, the idea of mind without brain is ridiculous, and the conception of a soul appears as a myth, which has survived from the days of the savage.

In sociology and ethics, all the data that is at hand points to an atheistic interpretation of the universe. The formation and development of societies and institutions, whether for the purpose of social, political, religious, or industrial life is natural. There is no room for the hand of God in any form of social development. Human social relationships are the result of natural causes, and too often the outcome of struggle accompanied by pain and sorrow, to be attributable to a beneficent supernatural intelligence working for the good of mankind. The unevenness of intellectual and moral evolution at the present day can only be understood in the light of a sociology which interprets everything in terms of man's natural and continuous re-adaptation to his environment, and the introduction of a god makes a rational and understandable sociology impossible.

Theism vitiates and very largely destroys ethical relationships. Instead of happiness being dependent upon the development and culture of the best traits in human nature, it is to be had only by favour of God. Instead of the battles of life being won by strength of character, they are to be won by playing up to God and persuading him to exercise his power on one's behalf, while those least able to pray for help are to be left stranded and helpless. Only in as far as God has been left out of human life has moral development been possible. With the existence of a god who is willing to help one set of men against another, all chance of morality vanishes in proportion to his influence upon life. Human relationship resolves itself into a competition as to who can win God's favour most frequently.

In comparative mythology the position of the Atheist is also maintained. All religious beliefs and rites and ceremonies are seen to be products of man's natural development. They are just means whereby he has from time to time given expression to his feelings and thoughts, when unable to think clearly of what goes on around him. Thousands of gods are also known to be of quite natural evolution, including such saviour gods as Mithra, Osiris, and Jesus; and the theologian's contention that Christianity comes out of comparative mythology as the most sublime religion of all vanishes. The saviour-god Jesus has no characteristic that cannot be found in other saviour-gods; nor does he do anything that the others cannot do. It is the same with the All-Father. He, like all the other gods, falls into line with the findings of comparative mythology, whether in his Christian, Jewish, Grecian or any other form. Born of fear and ignorance, improved and moralized somewhat, as man has developed understanding, he still bears the marks of his lowly origin and cruel and vulgar early days. Like the rest, the All-Father is destined to fade away, unless we are to believe that a large proportion of humanity will never grow up to days of knowledge and wisdom.

E. EGERTON STAFFORD.

The Redeemer and the Redemption.

WALKING swiftly along a street in the very heart of London—our vast superb metropolis, with its splendors and squalors, its exaltations and abasements—my attention was suddenly aroused by the murmur of an approaching crowd, which for some inexplicable reason I instantly resolved, much against my general wont, to await. Ordinarily my dislike of crowds is intense; almost always they are composed of foolish, idle people, whom the merest trifle will attract and amuse: but now a sudden impulse mastered the strong habit, and imperiously bade me stay and observe. As the crowd neared, and while it passed, I perceived in its midst what may frequently be seen in London, a policeman, with stern implacable face, and rigid grasp, hurrying along a woman to a station-house hard by. She was horribly dirty and ragged, and with uncovered head, so that her features could be distinctly discerned. And such features they were! So marked by all manner of vice, so brutalized by incessant experience of evil, so utterly void of any trace of womanly softness, that one recognized her instantly as a social pariah, an outcast from her kind, doomed to perpetual war with the human family of which she must once have been a member, if only when she nestled, a baby, in cradle or at breast. Society had worsted her in the strife; she was seized and secured. Her face was distorted by an agony of appealing fear; and her eyes were suffused with tears, that fell not, because of the hot anguish which dried them as they gathered. Speedily crowd, captive, and captor passed from sight; but that woman's face, with its brutality and pain, had furnished food for infinite thought, which, if fitly expressed, would make a ser-

mon more eloquent and powerful than ever yet was preached from the pulpit of church or cathedral.

With whom rested the responsibility of that woman's sin? With her? No; with society itself; for as Quetelet profoundly observes, "it is society that prepares crime, and the guilty are only the instruments by which it is executed." Vice and insanity are similar in kind, and differ only in degree; the phenomena of both are alike consequences of definite conditions of animal tissues, which in turn are the result of definite pre-conditions of organization and environment. The unfortunate offspring of vicious parents, whose evil propensities are doomed to the aggravation of a corrupt training, are no more responsible than the saintliest of their fellows for the fearful legacy bequeathed to them by their parents, and its subsequent increments of depravity. Instead of pharisaically congratulating ourselves on being holier than these sinners, and showing our superlative virtue by visiting them with what we foolishly deem condign punishment, and then pursuing our way wrapped in the mantle of complacent pride, we should sternly ask ourselves whether we are not, after all, guiltier than they, seeing that we have perversely striven against a light of knowledge and a grace of truth denied to them. O good and pure, but thoughtless soul, why art thou so angry with thy brother, and thy sister, for their trespasses? When fate assigns to thee serene purity of mind and nobleness of act, and to them inward turpitude and outward baseness, canst thou not reflect a moment on the disproportion of your destinies, and cast an eye of pity on those less fortunate than thou? And thou, base-souled, selfish hypocrite, whose pride is but the cloak of secret shame, and who perpetually criest, Am I my brother's keeper? hear thou the words of one who knew that thy sanctimonious egotism is the natural balance and sustainer of the positive wickedness of murder and theft and lust: "Prisons are built with stones of law, brothels with bricks of religion."

Self-love, self-righteousness, self-salvation are at the root of all these human ills, and they are intensified instead of mitigated by orthodox Christianity, whose idea is not the highest certain welfare of all here, but the equivocal dubious welfare of some hereafter. And against them all the prodigal charity of benevolence is futile, because it deals never with their causes but only with their effects. That religion which has had every available appliance of human improvement for fifteen centuries at its absolute command, has proved itself utterly incapable of effecting that improvement, because its method is radically false. The Redeemer has come, Christianity has exclaimed through ages of time; and yet we must ask to-day, But when will come the Redemption?

Balzac in his wonderful "Peau de Chagrin," speaks of "that human malady which we call civilization." And much of our vaunted civilization is, indeed, a human malady; but mainly because the material progress of modern times has been by implication antagonistic to certain fundamentals of the popular faith. A nobler spiritual faith, in perfect accordance with material fact, is necessary to subdue the monstrous evils with which society is infested; a faith that shall gladly embrace every truth of science, which is man's conscience instead of his conceit, face to face with the laws of nature; that shall recognize that there is but one ultimate science, the science of humanity, which comprises and consummates all others; and proclaim that the supreme problem of the immediate future is how to lift the masses from their slough of ignorance and degradation.

G. W. FOOTE.

The world holds many good and beautiful things, and it offers opportunities for the display of many good and beautiful qualities, whether there is another life or not. And that is surely the most depressing form of pessimism which asserts that the love of husband and wife, of parent and child, the loyalty of friends, and the glories of art, science and literature are all so much dross unless we live again beyond the grave.

Chapman Cohen—"The Other Side of Death."

Acid Drops.

The next world, says Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, is very much like this one, and the resemblance appears to extend to such ordinary things as braces. According to a report in the papers of June 19, two visitors to a seance, at which a well known medium operated, sadly misbehaved themselves. The sitters were awaiting the materialization of a daughter of one of the ladies present. There were nineteen failures, and then a ghost-like figure made its appearance from behind the screen. But the two men in question say they detected, through the diaphanous veil covering the figure, a man's pair of braces. Thereupon one of the men seized the figure by the neck and the other by the arm. An electric torch, flashed on the spirit's face, showed a striking resemblance to that of the medium. Anyway, there was a scuffle, and the "spirit" and the rest of the believers attacked the two men—both very well known—and they escaped with a number of bruises, which it was explained by the Spiritualists present were caused by a number of "vengeful spirits."

We do not see why anyone should doubt this to be the case. We feel certain that if anyone applies to the leaders of English Spiritualism, say, Mr. Hannan Swaffer or Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, they will explain that sitters bring to the circle spirits similar to themselves, and that if they go expecting fraud, there are denizens of the other world who will play tricks on them. On the other hand, if they go in a spirit of trustfulness, "signs and wonders" will be given unto them. And why should not a spirit wear braces? If they can have spiritual whisky and cigars, if the Rev. Vale Owen can have a temple already built for him when he arrives in the summer land, why may there not be spiritual braces? Sceptics should be reasonable in their scepticism. Finally, there is the likeness of the spirit to the medium. This is not at all surprising. The spirit, it must be remembered has to use the ectoplasmic emanations of the medium, and it is not surprising that when it is "made up" it should bear traces of its origin. Finally, nothing can excuse the materialism of two men who actually grab a spirit in the act of materializing. If Spiritualistic records are examined it will be found that this has been done scores of times, but the faith of no true Spiritualist is disturbed by this kind of thing. It only impresses them with the value of the "New Revelation" that has been given them.

The Rev. Dr. S. W. Hughes, of Westbourne Park Chapel, tells a listless world that religious administrations are being challenged; institutions no longer survive on the claim of antiquity: State churches are not immune from criticism because of ancient dignities; therefore, people and nations are needing more and more the authentic witness that relates the Church to the Infallible Christ, for this is the only infallibility that remains seriously unchallenged. If Dr. Hughes imagines his infallible Christ has not been seriously challenged, he must be confining his reading to daily newspapers and the *Christian Herald*. Otherwise he would know that books are to be had which question the historical existence of Christ, and if he ever existed, his divinity, and which challenge the originality and the ethical value of Christ's teaching.

A writer in the *Sunday School Chronicle* describes how Old Testament difficulties are dealt with by modern Sunday school teachers. The plagues that deeply impressed Pharaoh with the power of God were, for the most part, the result of particularly poor flooding of the Nile; the Israelites were immune because they had healthy pastureland. Moses planned the passage of the Red Sea, when, by reason of a favourable wind and tide, the waters were low; and he may have used his Egyptian influence with the sluice-keepers. When Joshua planted a causeway across the Jordan, he was profiting by a landslide far up the river at a place called Adam. This modern information, we learn, shows how the leaders of Israel worked together with God. Absolutely convincing, isn't it?

The Rev. T. R. Spray, a Primitive of Luton, laments the fact of disregard of Sabbath observance. Says he, plaintively, though there has never been so much opportunity for week-day recreation, yet the Lord's day is being invaded by Sunday amusement. From this, one might suppose that the parsons had been the chief agents in securing this extra opportunity for week-day recreation, whereas they have done nothing whatever towards that end. In any case, Sunday amusements are no concern of theirs. They claim the right to choose their own Sunday amusement. And the man-in-the-street is determined to exercise a similar right. He doesn't require the impertinent advice of the parson to aid the choice.

The tendency of the age, says a writer, is to substitute excitement for exercise. This may be deplorable, but one good aspect about it, we note, is that the masses are not keen on that particularly unwholesome kind of excitement known as revival meetings.

The great New Oxford Dictionary has at last been completed. We think it might have found room for a definition of "Christian truth"—a euphemism for fable, fiction. And also for "blatant Atheist"—a coarse, foul-mouthed ruffian addicted to indelicate exposure of the Christian religion.

The Cross, says the Rev. Leslie Weatherhead, is a deep where all one's thoughts are drowned. Perhaps this explains why the average sermon is so full of dead thought.

As evidence that mankind is instinctively religious and, under a show of indifference, incurably reverent, we reproduce the following by the Archdeacon of Nottingham: "I may have to put on the door of the minster—'Men, take your hats off; women, put your skirts on.'" God evidently has a strong dislike for men's hats and women's undraped legs—which shows that God is really "quite naive" to know, and possesses "refined" instincts.

Beachcomber in the *Daily Express*, in his daily walk along the human shore of folly, picks up the following piece of wreckage. It is unkind of him to ask us; it should be sent to that gathering of pundits roped in by the *Daily News* in the discussion that has not yet been referred to the undertaker—but that would be Hamlet killing his step-father in the first act:—

WHERE ARE WE?

The announcement of the figures was awaited by a congregation kneeling in silent prayer. The result reached the worshippers through a loud-speaker.

Daily Paper.

The efforts of the Church to sound the popular note appear to be frantic, and almost leave one breathless. The English public that has to be convinced every year that one horse can run faster than another has been interested in a race called the Derby. This event called for something topical and, outside a church the following notice was posted: "Keep your money in your pocket; that's the only certain winner." In the vague hope, perhaps, that the church might get some of it, this advice was given by those who expound blessings and benefits of faith that are more illusory than starting prices and a study of form.

There is such a thing, in a newspaper-fed world, such a curious wild-fowl as Catholic truth. Standing on our heads, we can therefore give a joyful welcome with both arms to the *Universe* announcement on its placard: "Logic for Prayer Book Debaters." Having adjusted ourselves to a standing position, we step back and listen to the warfare between Catholic bladders and Protestant pop-guns.

Apropos of Parliament's rejection of the new Prayer Book, the Archbishop of Canterbury says that prayer will not be lacking that the Bishops "may be guided to interpret aright God's will and purpose for the Church."

This is interesting. Before the Prayer Book was rejected, the Bishops (and by prayer) were quite certain what was God's "will and purpose." Now that the mixed grill of religious and non-religious opinions has rejected the Book, the poor Bishops have got to start praying again and asking God what the deuce he really wants. God seems to be making fools of the reverend gentles. But perhaps the cause of the trouble is that they haven't been framing their petitions to God in the proper manner.

The Dean of Ripon has promised some former students of Ripon Diocesan Training College that, if living three years hence, he will present three special prizes—one for the longest hair, one for the longest dress, and one for the most gracefully covered neck. To this priest who teaches that mankind was made in God's own image, modern feminine revelations are indecent. For him we prescribe a dose of mental disinfectant. His trouble is a pathological one, induced by his reading of an obscene book.

A. Barrett Brown, M.A., Principal of Ruskin College, Oxford, says that although it may be admitted that it often happens that children who are taught to believe in God become little devils, there is no guarantee that children who are not taught to believe in God, or are even taught not to believe in God, will become little angels. In reply to Mr. Brown we maintain that the converse can also be assumed. And if that be admitted, we fail to see what advantage the religiously taught children have over the others.

A suggestion has been made that the Congregational and the Presbyterian Churches should unite. The *Methodist Times* welcomes this, and hints at the advantages of a united Free Church of England. If that should ever come about, the non-churchgoer can get ready to have his Sunday freedom interfered with more effectively than at present. To these Free Church busybodies there is no more pleasing pastime than interfering with other people.

To all those priests and parsons who look at women's legs with—publicly—a shudder, we commend the following by Mr. John English (in the *Daily Mirror*):—

When people talk glibly of this decadent age, they cannot have noticed the astounding change for the better in the appearance of modern women . . . no one can deny that the girl of to-day is fitter than her predecessors. The spirit of independence too, has something to do with this new Hellenism. The verdict of the sociologist on this age will favour feminism. He will prove, I think, that this the greatest revolution of all, has contributed more than any other to the well-being of humanity.

The girl of to-day, we suggest, wants now to ask herself how much she owes to the Churches and the priests for her new status. Mr. English's reference to the new Hellenism should indicate that to the old Christianity she is indebted for just nothing.

There have been deplorable happenings in Southport recently. The new sea-bathing lake has been opened to the public on Sunday afternoons. On the first Sunday of this dangerous experiment 7,500 persons (3,000 of whom were bathers, passed the turn-stiles. The Whit-Monday figures were 12,945 and 3,043. The Free Churches and the Sunday School Union have strongly opposed the opening of the lake on Sunday afternoons. Parsons of all kinds state that attendance at Sunday Schools and Bible classes has been seriously affected—which indicates that love of Jesus cannot compete with love of bathing. The vicar of St. Andrew's, with the kindly thought of the welfare of others typical of his tribe, suggested that the lake should not be opened until 4 p.m. The *Sunday School Chronicle* hastens to assure a hesitant world that there can be no moral objection to bathing on Sunday so long as it doesn't interfere with participation in corporate worship. On the contrary, everything "which makes for physical cleanliness in young people is to be encouraged as a true expression of

religion." Praise God for that! Even the unfortunate Freethinker, we presume, can now express true religion by taking a dip in a sea-bathing lake.

The *Sunday School Chronicle*, however, appears to realize that the Sabbath fanatics do not gain much by their interference with other people's enjoyment. Our contemporary says that a great proportion of the people is not interested in either Church or Sunday school, and therefore are not affected by the "clash between the claims of Church or Sunday school and Sunday bathing." or other legitimate recreation on Sunday. These people outside the Churches, our contemporary suggests, may be embittered if their "freedom is curtailed in deference to another section of the community at least not larger." We like the phrasing of that sentence. What is really meant is that the majority of people who are outside the Churches will resent officious interference with their liberty by a minority composed of religious bigots. And their resentment will make the Churches' task of coaxing them into praying-sheds still harder. The following tid-bits are worth recording:—

We shall not fill pews and classrooms by forcibly preventing people from going elsewhere . . . Religion will not thrive as a protected industry.

This wisdom is a little late in arriving. We would remind our contemporary that it is protection and privilege which has enabled the Christian religion to survive.

In case it has been overlooked, we put on record that we had a fine day on May 29 for the end of the world.

Watford Corporation has proposed to ban games on Sunday in the parks and recreation grounds. The Minister of Health told the Corporation that he was not satisfied that there was sufficient reason for prohibiting under penalty the playing of games in the pleasure grounds on Sunday. He pointed out that the playing of games in the grounds even on Sundays was in itself a lawful act. Having regard to the number of grounds in the district and the large area they covered, he did not altogether appreciate the arguments put forward by the Corporation. If, however, it could be shown that the playing of games on Sundays would cause substantial interference with the enjoyment of any or all of the grounds by the general public, he would be prepared to consider the matter further. By the look of things, we gather that the bigots have not received much encouragement in going about the Lord's business of cultivating an unhealthy Sunday in Watford. The Minister's statements should encourage our Freethought friends in every town to organize or arouse opposition to every proposal to prevent people from using their own recreation grounds on Sunday for the purpose the grounds were designed for.

Shoran S. Singha, B.A., writes in a religious journal about Christianity in Jugo-Slavia. Of Serbia he says that when it was a small independent kingdom, the Church as an established institution had no domestic troubles. The King, his councillors, and the members of Parliament had to be members of the Orthodox Church. The Venerable Patriarch was President of all charitable and philanthropic institutions, and the Minister of Religion in the Cabinet acted as liaison officer between Church and State. But the war changed the situation. The Orthodox Church no longer enjoys an exclusive privilege, for tolerance to all religions is the policy of the Government. Cinemas, dancing halls, and various other amusements are finding an important place in the life of the big cities. There is a loosening of religious life; and the Orthodox Church is deeply concerned for the young children. No doubt; but we fancy it is also deeply concerned about its loss of exclusive privilege. When that goes, the Church's hold on the people begins to diminish, and the kidnapping of children becomes more difficult.

Those who are in the habit of thinking that the doctrine of an eternal hell is false will receive a rude shock if they happen to read the article on "Where are the Dead?" by the Rev. J. P. Arendzen. Dr. Arendzen is

a Roman Catholic, and states the Roman Catholic position with the full approval of the Archbishop of Westminster. He says:—

Those who die with some unrepented, grave and deliberate sin on their soul instantaneously enter into unending sufferings, for they will suffer the eternal loss of the sight of God. They will also undergo a lesser pain of a positive character, inflicted on them by some agency which is called fire. This fire is, of course, not identical with that in our grates, yet it is some dread reality, distinct from themselves, the tormenting influence of which the lost eternally undergo.

So that we know that the glad tidings of great joy of an eternal hell is still accepted by the Church which numbers more than half the Christians—to say nothing of its acceptance by the primitives among Protestants. The dead will not roast in a fire identical with our coal fires, but we may take it as an article of faith that it is something infernally hot and damnably unpleasant. Still, there is some hope. No matter how great a blackguard you may have been, if you are wide awake enough to repent just before you die it will be quite well with you. What would the world be like without Christianity?

This is the kind of rubbish which is served up nowadays by newspapers which claim to be "leading" the people. The *Sunday Chronicle* in a leading article says, apropos the prayer book debate:—

The modern mind requires from the Church a clear and unambiguous declaration of belief . . . Above all, it looks to the Church to deal with the eternal verities.

We can quite imagine these sentences being written between whiskies, and the writer chuckling over his capacity for saying nothing with the air of a philosopher solving one of the world's problems. For if there are two things which everyone must know, and which most people will admit, they are that the "modern mind" does not expect the Churches to give a lead in anything, and that if any of the leading Churches gave a clear and unambiguous declaration of belief there would be as great a row as there would be if the *Church Times* requested the editor of the *Freethinker* to write a series of articles on Freethought. We have no hesitation in saying that any journalist who writes that kind of stuff does so with his tongue in his cheek. He knows the value of what he writes, and his contempt for the intelligence of the vast majority of his readers must be complete for him to venture on putting such sentences on paper.

Even the clergy would not claim nowadays that the people are hanging on the words of the Churches for guidance on any of the important questions which interest people. Their standing complaint is that the people do not look to the Churches for guidance. And the rejoinder of the average man or woman is, "Why should we?" There is nothing the Churches have to tell them that cannot be found elsewhere. Men look to scientists to guide them if it is a matter of sanitation, or health, etc. They look to politicians, to sociologists, for guidance in other directions. But what have we to look to the Churches for? No one claims, save Roman Catholics, that a Church has any avenues of information that are not open to all. They can only discover what any man or woman can discover, and if it is connected with religion, a very large number know that the Churches cannot be trusted to tell the truth. If I were a Christian reader of the *Sunday Chronicle*, I fancy I should be inclined to resent being so plainly labelled "Jackass."

Something to Remember

Freethought Pioneers blazed the trail; see to it that we turn the trail into a broad highway. It is the only means by which you can honour their memory; it is how they would wish to be honoured.

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.

FREETHINKER ENDOWMENT TRUST.—K. N. Kaula, 5s.

R. ATHERTON.—Thanks for verses.

W. P. B.—We quite share your appreciation of Dr. Carmichael's article. The point of view is suggestive and fresh.

P. BRADY.—We note your correction. Our only desire is to see that the N.S.S. platform is kept to the object for which it exists. There are, of course, wide divergences of opinion among members of the N.S.S. on all sorts of topics. As members we have to confine ourselves to the points of general agreement.

D. P. S.—We see no objection, and probably some good, if there were in every town someone who would take upon himself, or herself, the task of keeping headquarters in touch with anything that would be likely to be of interest to the Movement.

F. HORDAY.—We presume the reply to your letter is as much as can be expected in the present circumstances. But keep up the pressure. It does good.

C. HARPUR.—Pleased to know that you enjoyed the article on Toleration. At present the Roman Church is one on which reformers would do well to keep an eye.

G. E. QUIRKE.—Quite a good letter. You may rely upon the *Daily News* seeing to it that no straightforward criticism of Christian beliefs is permitted in its columns. We can hardly blame them. Christianity cannot stand the test of free public discussion, and its champions in the press know it as well as we do. We are gratified at having done something towards reducing Christianity to this condition.

H. J. HEWER.—Why not try and get a few friends together and form a Branch of the Society in your locality? There must be plenty of Freethinkers near you.

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

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

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

When the services of the National Secular Society in connexion with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Mr. F. Mann, giving as long notice as possible.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

From the *New Age* of June 14:—

The "debate" in the *Daily News* on the question "Where are the Dead?" is proceeding right merrily. There is plenty of room for every argument because the question is not susceptible of argument. The average person either wants to believe in survival or he is indifferent. The only tangible basis of any argument at all would be on the question of why some people want to survive and why others do not trouble about the matter. In any case the present debate is a mock debate. The *Daily News* has invited expert exponents of religion to answer dabblers in materialism. There is one man in England, above all others, who is qualified to define and argue the materialist position on equal terms with the divines, and that is Mr. Chapman Cohen, the Editor of the *Freethinker*. He has not been asked to contribute to the symposium.

We published recently an inquiry from Mr. Franklin Steiner, in regard to an institution called "Bedborough College," of which, it was said, Professor McCready Price was the head. Mr. George Bedborough writes us that although he has not yet established any college, he cannot imagine anyone more in need of one, providing it is sufficiently elementary, than the Professor Price referred to. If Mr. Bedborough ever establishes a school, he will welcome Price at half-price. There is some pleasure to the teacher who finds a perfectly vacant mind to store with knowledge. Here is Professor Price's latest utterances on Evolution: "Evolutionary geology is seen to be bankrupt as a theory to account for the facts of the rocks; and the older theory of a universal refuge, which has been laid aside for more than a century, is now seen to be by far the best explanation of all." And that is the culture, wisdom, and philosophy of George McCready Price, B.A., M.A., professor of English literature in Fernando Academy.

The wretched weather of the past week interfered somewhat with the success of Mr. Whitehead's open-air meetings at Swansea, but we are glad to learn that some very successful meetings were held, and that the opposition was less venomous than it has been on some previous occasions. From June 23 to 29, Mr. Whitehead will be lecturing in the Chester-le-Street district, visiting Newcastle-on-Tyne and South Shields. At the last-named place, a meeting has been arranged in the Miners' Hall, Ineary Street, near Westoe, on June 24, and Mr. Alderman John Wilson has promised to take the chair. We have no information as to the time of the meeting, but as it is for to-day (Sunday) we take it that it will be at 7 o'clock.

Mr. J. Clayton is pursuing his campaign in the Lancashire towns. During the past week he has been lecturing Great Harwood, Padiham, Nelson, and Burnley. He, also has been troubled by the weather, but reports fair audiences and a sympathetic hearing.

The Christians were both puzzled and annoyed by the resemblance of the Mithraic religion to their own. Not only did Mithras have his high pontiff, his priests vowed to celibacy and his consecrated virgins, but there is to be a second coming of Mithras, preceded by great plagues. The dead will rise from their tombs to meet him. The sacred bull will be slain again, and the just will drink his blood, which will give them eternal life. Evil will be finally destroyed by fire from heaven. Finally, the Church paid Mithras the great compliment of annexing his chief festival on December 25, the birthday of the "Invincible Sun," and turning it into the feast of the Nativity of Jesus Christ. So we owe our Christmas, or at least its date, to the religion of Persia.

Dean Inge.

The Machinery of Spiritualism.

IN previous articles I have given accounts of visions which are divisible into two great classes, those of angels, of God and of Paradise, confined pretty well to religious devotees; and those of ghosts of dead relatives of murderers, of Satan and his demons. The one is, as in the days of Moses, the appearance of the Lord to his specially anointed; those of the other class are evil spirits, which must be cast out according to theological precedent in the manner originated by Jesus and his disciples.¹ These visions have been the mainstay of every religion that ever originated on this old earth. Every Bible, be it Christian, Buddhist, Brahmin, teems with ecstatic visions. Now, I have a shrewd suspicion that these revered, long-bearded, becloaked fathers of the Church, these pneumaturgic priests,² these inspired pontiffs, knew a good deal more about the effects of dissociation of ideas than they were in public prepared to admit. Even if they did not know the real cause, they knew the practical method of inducing visions; and what is more, they took meticulous care to discover up the process of induced dissociation with a thick coating of cant, jargon and cryptic hocus-pocus. At any rate, whatever the precise extent of their knowledge, or their sincerity, certain it is that no means of artificially inducing disturbed or lowered association of ideas were neglected. Under various fancy names, and gaudily decorated, fasting, magic ceremonies, flagellation and sexual abstinence were common methods of lowering sensory perception. The Hebrews, the Egyptians, the Buddhists, all used these methods. The "contemplation" of the Catholics, with its confession, its prayers, its fasting, its scourging, its isolation, is the self-same thing. In every case mentality is brought down to the level of the infant: the ability to distinguish between the subjective and objective, between the real and the visionary, is studiously induced. It only requires a sufficient voltage of emotion to bring the visions into full and free play. Naturally they see, these religious fanatics, angels or views of Paradise. When anyone has been thinking industriously of angels and Heaven for weeks on end, it is not unnatural that any visions which do materialize should be of the same nature. Daniel, previous to a vision, fasted for "three whole weeks."³ Belchazzar, after a drunken orgy, saw a man's hand writing on the wall.⁴ Cornelius fasted for four days, and after prayer, saw a vision.⁵ The Scriptures teem with such instances.

At the time when witch-hunting was a popular diversion, witches when being tried, with the full knowledge of the result of their confessions, admitted their intercourse with the devil, their possession of familiar spirits, their powers of necromancy and thaumaturgy. The salves and ointments were plainly used to create excitability. Belladonna, hemlock and aconite went to their composition, and if these did not actually produce delirium, confusion of the cortical associations was a sure and certain

¹ Exorcism of evil spirits is practised to this day. Mrs. Tweedale in *Ghosts I have Seen*, cast out the spirit from a haunted bedroom. "I leapt to my feet, and raising my arm made the Sign of the Cross. I bid you begone, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." The ghost vanished.

² There are indications in the Old Testament that the prophets and priests of the day were magicians and mediums, as is the case in all savage races. Thus: "Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to enquire of God, thus he spake, Come, and let us go to the seer: for he that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer." (Sam. ix. 9.) And again: "The King said also unto Zadok the priest, Art not thou a seer?" (2 Sam. xv. 27.)

³ Daniel x. 3.

⁴ Daniel v. 5.

⁵ Acts x. 30.

thing. When we consider that witchcraft was largely a cult of phallic obscenity, with its strange sexual aberrations, there is no need to go further for an explanation of the ecstasy which, topping induced mental confusion, resulted in visions of devils and demons gaining objective certainty. Useless is it to assert that witchcraft is a relic of medieval superstition, that the instances given are isolated and fortuitous. Witchcraft was so real that its practitioners when caught were tried and executed;⁶ to-day it is so real that its priests and priestesses, under other names, are applied to for help by many of the leaders in social and academic circles.

Mesmer, a century and a half ago, unearthed the trance of the Buddhists and exploited it as a means of curing disease, and although the whole thing was discredited by the French medical faculty, mesmerism flourished for a time, later giving way to hypnotism. The error that Mesmer made, and there is reason to believe that he was sincere in this error, was in ascribing the trance to be due to what he termed animal magnetism. He mixed up, as thousands of others before him had done, and as thousands are doing to-day, what was a condition of stimulated dissociation with the mumbo-jumbo of a conjuring trick. He mistook the cause for the effect. Just as the rhabdomancer⁷ imagines that the twig he carries finds the hidden spring; just as the crystal-gazer is filled with the idea that the crystal is the essential thing; so did Mesmer stick, through thick and thin, to his ridiculous magnets. Hypnotism, which is mesmerism under a pseudonym and in a somewhat glorified form, is simply the result of the concentration of conscious thought on one single point, resulting in lowered responsiveness to all other stimuli. It may be defined as absorption of attention on one line of consciousness. Its inducement, like mesmerism, in reality needs neither magnets nor mystic passes. It is indeed self-inducible.

Crystal-gazing in the very rare cases where it is genuine, for the bulk of the professional crystallogists are impudent frauds, is nothing but self-hypnotism, induced by steady staring at a bright object, which may be a crystal or anything else. A polished brass door-knob, for instance, will do every bit as well. The things seen in the crystal or knob are simply the visual images recalled from the mental storehouse. The crystal-gazer is usually a lady of some personal charm. But a child would do it every bit

⁶ The following representative excerpts give adequate proof of the acceptance of witchcraft in Biblical times: "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." (Ex. xxii 18.) "A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death." (Lev. xx. 27.) From the early fourteen hundreds, witch persecution in Europe generally was in full swing, in England reaching its height in the seventeenth century. *The Encyclopædia Britannica* says: "The last English trial for witchcraft was in 1712, when Jane Wenham was convicted, but not executed. In Scotland, trials accompanied by torture were very frequent in the seventeenth century. . . . The last trial and execution took place in 1722. Among famous continental trials may be mentioned that of a woman named Voisin in 1680, who was burnt alive for poisoning, in connexion with the Marquise de Brinvilliers. In Spain a woman was burnt in 1781 at Seville by the Inquisition; the secular courts condemned a girl to decapitation in 1782; the Germany an execution took place in Posen in 1793. In South America and Mexico witch-burning seems to have lasted till well into the second half of the nineteenth century, the latest instance apparently being in 1888 in Peru."

⁷ Dowsing or rod divination, which is still practised in all seriousness in twentieth century England, originally meant a good deal more than water-finding. It was at one time widely in vogue as a means of discovering veins of gold, silver, lead and the ores of other metals. Jacob was a rhabdomancer, so was Moses, so was Aaron. There are indications that in those days the hazel or other rod, or staff, was supposed to operate through the power of gods or spirits.

as well, indeed, probably better: visual imagery being strongly developed in children. In fact the Egyptians use boys for onychomancy, catoptromancy⁸ and gastromancy, which are merely fancy names for hypnotism, just as hypnotism itself is a fancy name for disruption of ideas. The clairvoyance of spiritualism is precisely the same thing. It must, however, be remembered that these things are rarely genuine. The trance lends itself to trickery. Its genuineness, in the conditions relating to the holding of seances, is manifestly unsuspected. No woman bubbling over with grief, who wishes to talk with her dead son or daughter, or lover, or on remarkably rare occasions her husband, would think of suspecting the medium of sciolism. She would as soon think of promenading Regent Street in her birthday clothes.

Very nearly every hadji of spiritualism speaks of the necessity for a sympathetic audience as the first essential to the production of phenomena. Thus Sir William Barrett: "There can be no doubt that suspicion is fatal to success; sympathy, combined with critical faculty, is essential."⁹ It is, we are told, owing to the lack of this sympathetic attitude, that test seances usually arranged by irreverent sceptics, are failures.¹⁰

Vitally necessary to the cult of spiritualism as to the cult of religion generally is this sympathy. But not for the reason given or inferred. At this stage of our enquiry it must be abundantly plain that spiritualistic phenomena, where it is not a collection of conjuring tricks, is pure hallucination. The physical phenomena, such as raps, levitation, materialization, represent the one brand; the psychical phenomena of direct voice, trance speaking, spirit writing represent the other. Now what after all in the nomenclature of spiritualism is sympathy¹¹ but the manifestation of a bias in favour of the reality of psychicism, coupled with the expectation of evidential results? What after all does it infer but the subordination of the critical faculties? Sir William Barrett, in affirming the necessity of "sympathy combined with critical faculty" was talking the emptiest twaddle. The two things are antithetical. They are as much at variance as is patriotism and logical judgment. They are as divorced from each other as are the tawdry banalities of Sunday newspaper editorials from the coruscating sanity of James Branch Cabell. They are no more suited for existence in juxtaposition than is Gilbert Frankau's *Life and Erica* with Sinclair Lewis's *Martin Arrowsmith*. Sympathy *per se* is distorted association of ideas. It implies defective comparison. It stultifies certain founts of knowledge. It induces expectation: the most prolific breeding-ground of illusions and hallucinations.

GEORGE R. SCOTT.

(To be concluded.)

⁸ These ancient forms of rubbishy fortune telling still flourish. For proof of this turn over the advertising sheets of any occult journal or ladies' newspaper.

⁹ *On the Threshold of the Unseen*, p. 264.

¹⁰ In *The Vital Message*, p. 227, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, referring "to the clairvoyance of Mrs. B—," says, "She has, of course, her bad days, and the conditions are always worst when there is an inquisitorial rather than a religious atmosphere in the interview."

¹¹ The word sympathy, however the spiritualistic devotee may attempt to interpret it, can only imply a prepossession in favour of the realism of the phenomena. To say one welcomes criticism, and at the same time to demand sympathy at the hands of the critic, is to take up an impossible position.

Freethought Flashes.

To anyone who is not blinded by words, worshipping the unknown is about as satisfying as dining off an invisible steak.

It is not correct to say that all journalists write against their opinions. To write against opinions implies their existence, and many journalists have only a vocabulary.

It would almost seem as if the justice of nature, about which people have written and spoken so much, favours rascality if it be on a sufficiently large scale. The pursuit of small peculations and trivial dishonesties do seem to bring their punishment in the shape of a narrowed outlook and a distorted character. But if the dishonesties are on a sufficiently large scale, if instead of lying about one's neighbour one lies about another nation, if instead of stealing a sovereign from another man's pocket one robs a community of its land, if instead of murdering one's fellow citizen one sets on foot a series of events which means a war and the slaughter of thousands, then—provided the operation be successful—not only will one be hailed as a great man in the eyes of one's fellow countrymen, but even in one's own estimation there is no sense of the nature of what has been done.

To kill a particular superstition may be of very small value to either the community or the individual. The number of superstitions existing is so great that a substitute can easily be found, and the sum of superstition current remains unaffected. It is the rejection of superstition through sane methods of reasoning that is essential, since that is an expression of an intellectual discipline, which will have a healthy reaction on society as a whole.

What has been said of superstition is equally true of scientific knowledge. A complete knowledge of all the facts upon which science builds, were it possible for a single mind to contain them, might leave one almost as much inclined to superstition as ever. A knowledge of astronomy, or of biology, or of any of the other sciences is not peculiar to those who do not believe in Christianity or Spiritualism or some other form of superstition. Some of our most erudite men are to be found in the ranks of the believers. The great thing here, and the only thing of genuine cultural value, is an intellectual discipline which springs, not from an accumulation of a mere knowledge of facts, but from an intimacy with the processes upon which sound science rests. Man is never saved by what he knows, but only by the way in which he knows it.

It is not perhaps altogether an accident that the European peoples who have been the most predatory in the history of the world should have adopted the gospel of sacrifice and brotherly love. It raises the question of the extent to which mere talking about such virtues acts as an excuse for their practice.

The cardinal distinction between rival politicians is that one wishes to retain the evils that already exist, while the other wishes us to have a set of new ones.

"O Lord, thou knowest we are all miserable sinners," runs the burden of many a Christian's prayer. I do not wish to question the accuracy of the statement, but it does look like accusing the Lord of shortsightedness or forgetfulness to remind him of it. One would have thought that no one this side of paradise could have had any doubts on the matter.

How I Became an Atheist.

(Continued from page 396.)

WALKING along the Strand, my new-found friend stopped before a wine-shop, and pointing to a squat, black bottle of peculiar shape, remarked: "That contains a liqueur made by monks in France." I looked and saw a label bearing the letters D.O.M., with a Christian cross, and the word *Benedictine*. I said: "I suppose it is a temperance drink then?" "Come and try it," he replied, adding, "You're not a teetotaler are you?" "Certainly not," I said—for teetotalers were regarded as cranks at that time.

Seated inside we were soon served. We wondered what our parents would have thought if they could have seen us; but after we had one or two more samples out of the squat bottle, we did not care what they thought, and felt quite prepared to tell them so. The Genie came out of the bottle and entered into us, and swept all the old feuds, along with care and sorrow, to the past. If this was not the Elixir of Life, it was certainly the Elixir of Happiness; and I reflected that if the Protestants had invented an elixir like this, instead of so many dry sermons and tracts, we should have been very much happier all round. However, it would make no difference to most people now, as only millionaires can afford these things to-day. In the end, I saw my friend into the train, with his bag of money, and we parted swearing eternal friendship. I never saw him again, he went abroad and remained there.

That was my first contact with an alien believer. I must have been in London some time—about two years—before I came in contact with Freethought. The reason of this was that I went home every week-end and so missed the open-air lectures and debates in the London Parks. The first intimation of the Movement I received was when one of the apprentices placed a paper in my hands and said, "Have you seen this?" It was the Christmas Number of the *Freethinker*, for which Mr. Foote was prosecuted for blasphemy. Coming, as it did, to one who had never had a doubt about the Bible, or the truth of religion, the effect was staggering. There was a comic back view of the old Jehovah, and a set of pictures illustrating a comic Life of Christ! I marvelled at such a defiance of irresistible power, but could not help secretly smiling at the caricatures, although I knew that God, who could read all hearts, and was continually reading mine, would take note of it and call me to account at the judgment day. No doubt God would say: "Look here Mann, you know, I saw you smiling to yourself, at those abominable caricatures of me and my son. I won't have it. Depart into everlasting flames with the devil and his angels."

I certainly felt no anger, or indignation, at such profanity. In fact, I could not help feeling a certain amount of admiration for the audacity of men who dared to flout omnipotent power. This feeling gave place to one of perplexity. What was God doing about it? Did he not strike Uzzah dead for simply, and with good intention, trying to save the Ark from toppling over? Did he not send bears to devour children for laughing at one of his prophets? Later still, under the new dispensation, did he not strike Ananias and Sapphira dead for telling a lie to the chief Apostle? And yet, this same God, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, allowed himself to be openly ridiculed in the most outrageous manner, without a sign of protest! One would have expected at least a thunderbolt on the editor's office—even if he had not destroyed all London. From that moment the seed of doubt entered my mind. What if the things I had been taught to believe were not true?

Noticing that the paper was published at Stonecutter Street, I made my way there and found a small shop—the site is covered by a great warehouse now—with a window full of pamphlets and books, kept by Robert Forder, then Secretary of the National Secular Society. I obtained some pamphlets, among them Paine's *Age of Reason*. I had read about Paine, how he had lived a dissolute life, and his dreadful death-bed. This, I was told, was typical of the lives of all Atheists.

Upon reading *The Age of Reason*, I was surprised to

find this Atheist concluding his book by expressing the hope of enjoying happiness in an after life, and resigning himself to the hands of his creator. Strange sentiments, I thought, for an Atheist! However, I had read enough to see that the Bible was not all it had been cracked up to be. I now set to work in earnest, at the Public Libraries, testing my new-found knowledge by works of science and history. I soon came across Tyn-dall, and Huxley, and Clifford. These, with Buckle and Draper in history, opened my eyes. But it was not until I had read Buchner's *Force and Matter* that I reached a solid foundation. This was the work that blew, not only Christianity, but theology and religion, sky high. It is the fashion to say that Buchner is out of date, it is an easy way of side-stepping a work which its enemies cannot refute. Buchner's thesis, that matter was indestructible and indivisible, that force—or energy, as we now speak of it—is not something separate and distinct from matter, entering into and coming out of, like spirits in the possessed, but that they are one and indivisible. No force without matter, no matter without force, and this is the latest word of science. *Force and Matter* is the best, the clearest, the most scientific and the most powerful exposition of Atheism ever written. In my opinion, when Freethinkers spent their time and money in circulating the *Age of Reason*, they were backing the wrong horse. I have read somewhere, but have lost the reference (if any of my readers are acquainted with it, I should be glad to hear from them), that even while writing the *Age of Reason*, in Luxembourg Prison, in Paris, Paine was reproached by some of his fellow-prisoners among the Girondins, who were nearly all Atheist, with his reactionary and superstitious views on religion.

The *Age of Reason* is a Unitarian tract; and in fact, it has been circulated, without Paine's name, and a few alterations, as a Unitarian tract by the Unitarians themselves. How they must have nudged one another, and smiled to see the Atheists doing their work for them!

Did I shed any tears over my loss of faith? I did not. I felt as though I had escaped from a horrible prison. There was no infernal red hot hell, full of devils, waiting to receive my soul after Satan had entrapped it, neither was there any heaven where I should be condemned to everlasting hymn singing; an eternal Sunday school, which I was already fed up with. But besides this boundless feeling of relief, there arose within me a passionate feeling of resentment for the mental sufferings I had endured through the teachings of this poisonous faith; also of the innocent amusements I had been deprived of, and the misery of my Sundays. I also thought of the multitude of other children who were going through the same mill—this is a point our reverent agnostics pay no attention to, yet it is very real in all fundamentalist families.

My most vivid and enduring memory of that time is connected with the Hall of Science, in Old Street, City Road—the headquarters of the London Freethinkers at that time. Lectures were held there every Sunday. Charles Bradlaugh was nearing his end; I heard his last lecture. It could be seen that he was very ill, and indeed, he nearly collapsed before the end; but J. M. Robertson and G. W. Foote were in their prime, and no cause ever produced finer debaters. Both were men of very high natural ability, and would have won the highest honours in any profession they had cared to enter. The orthodox champions sometimes sent to oppose them were pitifully out-matched; so much so, that at last the Christian Evidence Society gave up sending representatives for set debates—they found they lost more than they gained.

I spent some of the happiest and most exciting hours of my life in that Hall, and it was a very real sorrow to me when it passed out of the hands of the party, after Bradlaugh's death. G. W. Foote was the idol of my admiration; his wit, humour, and eloquence, closely knit but lucid argument, backed up by quotations from scientific, historical, and theological works—often quoting from the very books, which he had brought with him—and above all, his punitive flashing denunciation of the cruelty and wickedness associated with religion, carried everything, like a torrent before them, and aroused boundless enthusiasm.

Opposite the platform, on the other side of the Hall, near the entrance, was the bookstall presided over by Miss E. M. Vance; a woman of striking appearance, full of energy and with promise of great ability. As Secretary of the N.S.S., Miss Vance has done an immense amount of work, behind the scenes, not apparent to the public like the work of the lecturer, or writer, but nevertheless of the utmost value. But for her unflinching encouragement and help, I should not be writing to-day.

W. MANN.

(To be concluded.)

"Humanist Sermons."

(OPEN COURT PUBLISHING COMPANY: Chicago and London.)

THE word humanism is not to be despised. It suggests at once a distinction separating it from godism. "Humanism" is an improvement on "humanitarianism." Here is a well-printed attractive book of sermons by eighteen modern preachers, with one or perhaps two doubtful exceptions, all unitarians. It is edited by Curtis W. Reese, Secretary of Western Unitarian Conference, Chicago. If we were to judge by the preface, the book as a whole aims at attracting the public to a religion which is not a religion, to the belief in a god who is dismissed as useless, and to a philosophy which repudiates reason.

Mr. Reese's introduction indicates that the "humanists" want to occupy a mid-way position between those who are properly called "believers," and those who describe themselves as Freethinkers. Mr. Reese objects to be called an Atheist, although he does not believe in "a personal transcendent God." He defines materialism as "the doctrine that the happenings of nature are to be explained in terms of the locomotion of material." Mr. Reese has evidently not troubled to find out what materialists believe, and I am writing to draw his attention to Mr. Chapman Cohen's *Materialism Restated*. As, however, this author repudiates reason ("Humanism finds neither absolute 'Reason,' nor reason as a faculty of the mind"!!!) it is no use appealing to a non-existent faculty.

Mr. John Haynes Holmes, an orator of no mean order, writes with less than his usual genial commonsense. Mr. Holmes is Minister of the Community Church, New York—a well-informed and capable teacher, broad, tolerant and with very advanced ideas socially and politically. His outline of the religion of the future is very similar to that of Ingersoll and Mr. Cohen. "There will be no gods, no churches, no Sundays, no Bibles, no prophets or saviours, no Messiah, Christ, or Son of God." But Mr. Holmes concludes on a less sturdy note: "There will be no religions as we have them to-day, but just religion. This means that there will be no sects and denominations, no Confucianism, Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, but they will be like the many mansions in God's House—just so many parts of the divine brotherhood of humankind." Rev. Charles H. Lyttle preaches self-sacrifice as "the practical equivalent of the olden worship." He says, in regard to a belief in the persistence of something or other after death, "blank negation is unwarranted." Negation, perhaps, but "blank" negation, oh dear no!

Rev. E. Stanton Hodgkin denounces the barbarous Jehovah, but Mr. Hodgkin is a humanist, and "to call him an Atheist is most unjust." After all "a vast majority of Americans are Theists," so Mr. Hodgkin will not commit himself. He quotes approvingly the lines:—

"Was Christ a man like us? Ah! let us try
If we then too, can be such men as he."

Here is Mr. Hodgkin's curious attitude towards life. We find as we grow, observe and suffer, that there are many unpleasant things in life. Earthquakes, floods, epidemics, typhoons and so on strike and appal us. The old religions taught us that all these things (as well as all the delightful side of Nature) were caused by an omnipotent deity. Our intelligence, experience, and

knowledge prove that this deity does not exist. Mr. Hodgkin exclaims, "The god of evolution is no more an affectionate and loving father than is the god of Joshua or of David." It bewilders me. The evils of existence are facts. Those facts remain facts. They cannot be explained away like we explain away the myths of theology. Ignoring the fact that "the god of evolution" is a meaningless phrase, nobody pretends that evolution is affectionate or loving." All that evolutionists say is that evolution is not a fiendish creator of evils who enjoys inflicting mankind with them, and who can and sometimes does spare those who flatter him, but wilfully and vindictively inflicts his personal vengeance on millions of innocent victims.

Evolution at any rate saves us from wasting time and money on false gods, and by directing us to true origins helps us toward prevention, cure or evasion of every remediable ill.

Mr. Hodgkin says some very wise words about self-dependent man. He thinks that man attains to good "in proportion as he ceases to search for or depend on a perfect being apart from himself." But if so:—

"God is the reality that gives all life and phenomena its meaning and value—is the reality that stretches up infinite heights above man. And whenever we comprehend a truth or obey a noble impulse we lay hold on this reality."

But this seems equivalent to saying that we only "lay hold on" God, by doing without God; at any rate until all the work is done.

Rev. E. Burdette Backus, of Los Angeles, contributes a wholly satisfactory sermon to this collection. His conclusion is that the first necessity of humanity is:—

"to maintain the scientific attitude, have an open mind, seeking truth, accepting the authority of evidence and facing facts unafraid. The second is that each man shall know himself to be a member of the great community of mankind, and shall feel that his every act must be in accord with the well-being of that larger life of which he is a part."

Rev. Wakefield Slaten is probably the most cultured minister of any church in America to-day. At West Side Unitarian Church, New York, he is always abreast with modern thought, and has the widest sympathies imaginable. In his sermon printed in this volume I fail to see anything that would not have been acceptable as a lecture in any Secular Hall. He pleads with his fellow Unitarians to give up their last theological resting place, "the comforting thought of the Fatherhood of God." He offers instead, "the inflexible impartiality of immutable natural law." Mr. Slaten stands head and shoulders above all his fellow parsons, and his future will be worth following.

Another "divine" of the same modern type is John H. Dietrich. Both Slaten and he should be on the Secularist platform. Dietrich's sermon in this book is however inferior to Slaten's, because he seems to think that words like "religion," and "salvation" and "faith" are still possessed of value for humanity. He defines "religion," however, as "the knowledge of man and our duties towards him," and "salvation can mean nothing else than obtaining the highest and best for man." "Humanism places our faith in man."

I have kept to the last my appreciation of Frank C. Doan, of Rochester, New York. His "sermon" is entitled "Just Being Human," and it is exactly that. He boldly cuts out all that is transcendental, mystical, other-worldly, occult and so on. His "most precious of all beliefs is belief in human nature." Mr. Frank Doan and I happen to have the same creed. I too am a humanist.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

As one advances in life one perceives that the rarest courage is that of thinking. Society thinks itself sufficiently bold if it supports established reputations.

Anatole France—"On Life and Letters."

Cultivate the art of simplicity, and do not believe you are necessarily profound because you are unintelligible.

Sir George Lunn.

Purpose of Priestly Propaganda.

POPES, prelates, priests, parsons, painfully, pitilessly persecuted progressive pioneers, political purposes, perverted, prohibited, persuance of practical perceptions by propagating pernicious primitive practices for the perpetuation of pomp and power, passing in procession and pandering for patronage, prescribing the policy of pitying the poor and parasitically presiding in palatial premises. Praising present prosperity and potentially planning to plunder posterity, pressing purient platitudes upon a placid populace, preying upon predatory peoples by professing pleasure in placating a plastic providence, and pretending to possess potency of preventing purgatorial probation providing payment was proffered. Prudently postulating peerless portents of perennial peace and prophesying perpetual punishment, primarily for the purpose of procuring private property. Petulantly protesting properly pagan poetic problems, preaching puzzling perplexities, paradoxical parables and paraphrasing prodigal propensities, putting a premium on peculiar principles, placing pre-eminence upon prostitution of personal preferences, producing precaution and prompting the positively puerile proposition of propitiation by prayer from pulpit and pew, persistently promulgating pious preoccupation of personified perfection for pecuniary profit paralysing public progress in proportion and pugnaciously pilfering possessions in the process.

H. PREECE.

Correspondence.

MR. H. G. WELLS AND THE CATHOLIC PRESS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—you say in your issue of June 10, that Catholic Papers refused Mr. Wells the right of reply to my articles, and that I made no protest against the refusal. The *Universe* to which Mr. Wells appealed offered him six columns in which to reply. I wrote strongly urging his right of reply.

H. BELLOC.

THE DYING AGNOSTIC.

SIR,—*Re* Rev. H. Sheppard and his "aggressive agnostic," one is curious to know why such a type of unbeliever should call for a parson. It is none too flattering to the parson that the unbeliever, while his physical and mental powers were healthy could do without the parson, but when his mental powers were dulled by disease he was prepared to listen to the parson. I am assuming, of course, that the tale is true. There is, I think, a possibility of the tale being true. Pious relatives may have called in Mr. Sheppard. The dying man had been much interested in religion; what, therefore, is more likely than, when he opened his eyes and saw the parson, that his wandering mind should have said just the one thing it did say? There is no significance to be attached to such a thing in such circumstances. I have little doubt that some ardent Freethinkers, after having read a heap of religious stuff during their life, might, when in the mentally weak state preceding death, babble some of the stuff stored away in their subconscious mind. When Mr. Sheppard produces proof of his tale being true, I think what I have said will explain the incident.

D. P. S.

UNWANTED CHILDREN

In a Civilized Community there should be no UNWANTED Children.

For an Illustrated Descriptive List (68 pages) of Birth Control Requisites and Books, send a 1½d. stamp to:—

J. R. HOLMES, East Hanney, Wantage, Berks.

(Established nearly Forty Years.)

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.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (The London Institution Theatre, South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11.0, W. Haslam Mills—"Some Changes in the Family and Private Life of England."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Mr. Fred Mann—"Jesus Christ."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Regent's Park, near the Fountain): 6.0, A lecture.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Common): 11.30, Mr. W. Sandford. (Brockwell Park): 6.0, Mr. L. Ebury. Wednesday—(Clapham Old Town): 8.0, Mr. F. P. Corrigan. Thursday—(Cooks Road, Kennington): 8.0, A Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Outside Municipal College, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7.0, Mr. Le Maine—A Lecture.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12 noon, Mr. James Hart.—A Lecture. 3.30 p.m., Messrs. Hyatt and Le Maine. 6.30 p.m., Messrs. Campbell-Everden and Maurice Maubrey. Freethought meetings every Wednesday and Friday at 7.30 p.m. Lectures—Messrs. Campbell-Everden, Hart, Darby, Le Maine and others.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Ravenscourt Park, Hammersmith): 3.0, Mr. Campbell-Everden—A Lecture.

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

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

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH N.S.S.—Mr. Geo. Whitehead will give addresses as follow: *Sunday*, June 24, in Miners' Hall, South Shields. Subject, "The Message of Bernard Shaw." Chair taken at 7 p.m., by Ald. J. Wilson (Mayor of South Shields). *Saturday* (8 p.m.); *Wednesday* and *Friday* (7 p.m.), at Chester-le-Street. *Monday, Tuesday* and *Thursday* (7.15 p.m.), at Birtley, Houghton-le-Spring and West Pelton respectively.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S.—Monday, at Islington Square—Mr. P. Sherwin; Tuesday, at Beaumont Street—Mr. J. V. Shortt; Thursday, at High Park Street—Mr. J. V. Shortt. All at 8 p.m.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE BRANCH N.S.S. (Town Moor, near North Road Entrance): 7.0, Mr. A. Atkinson—A Lecture.

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 Freethought 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.



A Famous Carpenter

NOT the doubtful Jesus of Nazareth. This one's name was Charlie, and he carried on in the clachan of Cardonald. Making doors was his speciality, and he was a careful craftsman. He used to try the fit of his frames before filling in the panels. By and by, he had made so many doors that no door of any shape whatsoever gave him any bother. He gave up trying the fit of doors before he finished them, and never a door of all of his mis-fitted. Charlie became famous.

Now, it is with us just as it was with Charlie of Cardonald. We are as careful as he was, and as jealous of our reputation. If we did not absolutely know that we can make clothes to fit you without seeing you, and without trying the garments on you, we would not advertise here and keep insisting upon you to respond. We can fit you without trying on, and distance makes no difference at all. It is not only that we have made so many garments since this business was founded. We have in addition a thoroughly tested system built up of the accumulated knowledge and the stored experience of expert cutters who do only that job. Cutters who can cut clothes to fit infallibly figures of every shape and size, normal and abnormal; and who do all this from the simple measurements on our forms, and the few other particulars we ask to have filled in. There is no reason for not responding.

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:

THEISM OR ATHEISM? By CHAPMAN COHEN. The Great Alternative. An Exhaustive Examination of the Evidences on behalf of Theism, with a Statement of the Case for Atheism.

Bound in full Cloth, Gilt Lettered, 3s. 6d., postage 2½d.

SOCIETY AND SUPERSTITION, By ROBERT ARCH. A Commonsense View of Religion and its Influence on Social Life. 4d., postage ½d.

RELIGION AND SEX. By CHAPMAN COHEN. Studies in the Pathology of Religious Development. 6s., postage 6d.

THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH. By Col. R. G. INGERSOLL. 1d., postage ¼d.

SOME PIONEER PRESS PUBLICATIONS:

WHAT IS RELIGION? By Col. R. G. INGERSOLL. Contains Col. Ingersoll's Confession of Faith. 1d., postage ¼d.

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

AN ESSAY ON SUICIDE. By DAVID HUME. With an Historical and Critical Introduction by G. W. Foote. 1d., postage ¼d.

MISTAKES OF MOSES. By Col. R. G. INGERSOLL. 2d., postage ½d.

THE FOURTH AGE. By W. REPTON. A Psychological Study of the Great Civil War, 1914—1918. 1s., postage 1d.

DETERMINISM OR FREE-WILL? By CHAPMAN COHEN. An Exposition of the Subject in the Light of the Doctrines of Evolution. Second Edition. Half-Cloth, 2s. 6d., postage 2½d.; Paper, 1s. 9d., postage 2d.

CHRISTIANITY AND CIVILIZATION. By Prof. J. W. Draper. A Chapter from *The History of the Intellectual Development of Europe*. 2d., postage ½d.

COMMUNISM AND CHRISTIANISM. By Rt. Rev. W. M. BROWN. Analysed and Contrasted from the Standpoint of Darwinism and Marxism. With Portraits. 1s., post free. (Paper.) Cloth 4s.

CHRISTIANITY AND CIVILIZATION. By Prof. J. W. DRAPER. A Chapter from *The History of the Intellectual Development of Europe*. 2d., postage ½d.

THE CASE AGAINST THEISM. By GEORGE WHITEHEAD. A Reasonable View of God. Cloth Bound, 2s. 6d., postage 2½d.

The Question of the Day— DO THE DEAD LIVE?

For a full and careful examination of the whole subject, read—

THE OTHER SIDE OF DEATH

By CHAPMAN COHEN

Cloth Bound 3/6. Postage 2d.

Does Man Survive Death?

Verbatim Report of a public debate between

Mr. HORACE LEAF

AND

CHAPMAN COHEN

Price 4d. Postage halfpenny.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGTON 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 *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, of 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 Free-thought Cause is recognized and acknowledged by all. It is the mouthpiece of militant Free-thought in this country, and places its columns, without charge, at the service of the movement.

The address of the *Freethinker* Endowment Trust is 61 FARRINGTON 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.

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.

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.

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.