

WHAT IS THE USE OF PRAYER?

The

FREETHINKER

FOUNDED · 1881

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

VOL. XLVIII.—No. 47

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 1928

PRICE THREEPENCE

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page
<i>What is the Use of Prayer?—The Editor</i> - - -	737
<i>More Christian Evidences.—Mimnermus</i> - - -	739
<i>The Consolations of Christianity.—W. Mann</i> - - -	740
<i>Freethought Flashes</i> - - - - -	741
<i>Substitutes for Religion.—Arthur B. Moss</i> - - -	746
<i>"Priestcraft."—H. Cutner</i> - - - - -	747
<i>Kidding the Kidder.—T.S.</i> - - - - -	747

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

Views and Opinions.

What is the Use of Prayer?

THE *Daily Express* is commencing a series of articles on the question of "Prayer, Is it Answered?" The series was announced with the usual flourish, and with the customary notice that the subject would be treated from "varied points of view," by men and women who have "the courage to write on a subject . . . so challenging." We know that "varied points of view," and those of our readers who have in mind the elaborate piece of humbug foisted on the world by the *Daily News* in the "Where are the Dead?" symposium, will be able to estimate it at its proper value. The first announcement given by the *Express* contained a list of eight names, and one can guess beforehand what will be said. At any rate there is not one of the eight who will say right out that he does not believe in prayer. They may all fight shy of the orthodox conception of prayer, but most will find some use for it, and will so far back up the religious position. But no one is announced who is known to definitely and straightforwardly dismiss the belief in and the practice of prayer as pure superstition. That would be too much to expect in an English newspaper of to-day. Quite recently, Lord Beaverbrook was proclaiming, in his own paper, his belief in himself as a man of outstanding ability and tremendous courage, but there is one thing we can say beforehand he will not have the courage to do, and that is in any discussion on religion to give the Freethought side of the case a fair show. That might affect circulation, and so might offend the big drapers to whose opinion Lord Beaverbrook defers with so much appreciation. A little help to circulation will be gained by encouraging parsons to preach about the articles, and so advertise the paper among their congregations, while the parsons will have their reward in getting publicity through the columns of the *Express*. Thus do all things work together for an increase in circulation, the greater glory of God and of Lord Beaverbrook.

Me and God.

Every religion impresses upon its followers the value and the importance of prayer. That is only what one would expect. Those who really believe in God do so because they are convinced that he does something, that in some way or another he takes an interest in human welfare, and pays attention to the prayers that his worshippers offer to him. At the root of the practice of prayer, and the only possible justification for it, lies the conviction that God will help man in times of trouble, intervene in affairs so that the wind may be tempered to the shorn lamb, and make the lot of men less arduous than it would be otherwise. God helps, God comforts, God protects, that is the customary burden of the Christian's chant about God. The inference is that if God did not help, or protect, or comfort, the Christian would not bother much whether God existed or not. The Christian has, indeed, a very good eye on his profit and loss account. He is not greatly interested in the mere idea that there may exist some power that set the world going, but ever after left it to look after itself. He prizes God for what he does, and praises him for what he gives. His gratitude is a lively sense of favours to come. He demands a good dividend on his investments in religion, just as he demands a good return on his financial outlay. He carries precisely the same mentality into both fields. His greatest enthusiasm is for what God has done for *me*, the comfort he has brought *me*. If he hands on the good thing to others it is because he feels there will be something over after he has had all he can get. In the ethical sense the Christian is the most materialistic of believers. He may defer the payment of a dividend till the next world, but a good dividend he must have. He is in cordial agreement with St. Paul, that if there is no next world in which he may get rewarded or punished, then it doesn't matter what the devil a man does so long as he enjoys himself. For enduring what he calls "moral restraint" ("restraint" means not behaving like a blackguard) he demands compensation. And when one reflects on this one ceases to wonder at the number of professedly reformed blackguards that figure on evangelistic platforms.

* * *

Let Us Pray!

"Let us pray," cries the Christian, the Jew, the Mohammedan. "Let us pray," cries the follower of any and every God. As a non-believer in deity, I have no prima facie objection to the counsel. In certain circumstances I am inclined to endorse the advice. If prayer is any good to any one, let us all have a try. I do not want to be out of a good thing. Of course, any Christian will admit that all prayers are not answered. On the other hand, if a man takes to backing horses, all the horses he backs do not win. But he keeps on backing in the hope that one day he

will spot a winner. And he is all the time cheered by the published information that some one has netted a substantial sum of money. So the Christian who does not get an answer to a prayer to-day hopes that he may get one to-morrow. And as the advertising tipster informs his patrons of the glorious success he has had in the past, so the advertising spiritual tipster tells of the wonderful results that have followed the carrying out of his advice. Naturally, neither tipster tells you of his failures; both are cautious enough never to hint at the proportion of wins and losses. The shrewd old Greek, when showed the tablets of such as had returned from a voyage, after praying to the god for protection, asked, "Where are the tablets of those who have never returned?" No doubt the questioner was promptly sat on, although as the question was not asked in a Christian Church, he may have escaped. No proper theological system would tolerate questions of that character.

* * *

Wanted—A Test.

The only reason I have for not praying is that I cannot see what good will follow from it. I am told that the only way to find out is to test the matter by praying. But if I pray and do not get the expected answer, I am then informed that I must believe before I can hope to be answered. So that while I must pray in order to believe, I must also believe in order to pray with success. It is, to say the least of it, confusing. Even then I should have no objection to testing the power of prayer, if some really decisive test could be devised. The prayer should be so simple that God Almighty would not misunderstand, and so definite that none of us could mistake the answer when it came. The answer should be clear and precise. It ought not to be beyond the wit of man to supply the first condition; it certainly should not be beyond the power of God Almighty to supply the second.

At present the prayers that are offered are so vague, so mixed, the alleged replies are so ambiguous, that no one can be quite sure of anything connected with it. On behalf of God it might be urged that the form in which prayers are cast makes it difficult to see precisely what is required. When, for instance, prayers are offered for a good harvest, what is meant by it? If the Lord replies by giving us a bumper harvest, the farmers grumble because prices go down. If the harvest is only moderately good, prices rise and the consumers complain. And if it is very bad, his orthodox representatives on earth thank him for what he has done or not done, and the Lord may be forgiven thinking that everyone is satisfied. In fact, the only instance in which the Lord is helped in deciding what to do is given us in the Prayer Book. Here, when praying for rain, the Lord is advised to send "such moderate rain and showers, that we may receive the fruits of the earth to our comfort." The compilers of that prayer evidently had the Flood in their minds, and so reminded the Lord that while rain was required it was as well not to overdo it. And indeed, another prayer for rain in the same book explicitly calls to his attention the fact that he did drown the world once upon a time; so he is asked to keep the downpour within moderate dimensions. As the character in "Alf's Button" said to the Genie, "Don't be too blooming wholesale."

* * *

Mixing the Medicine.

Consider the difficulties there are in the way of forming a clear judgment on the matter. It is com-

mon to offer prayers for the recovery of the sick, and at the same time to call in a doctor. If King George were taken seriously ill to-morrow, all the court physicians would be in attendance, and all the parsons would be offering up prayers. If it was suggested that the doctors should leave the job to the parsons, the King would object. If it was suggested that the task should be left to the doctors, the parsons would object. So the medicines get mixed; and if the King died or got well no one would know who was responsible, the parsons or the doctors. How can one tell when the medicines are mixed in this manner? It is a matter of common experience that some people get better without the parson, and some get better without the doctor, and some get better in spite of both. On the other hand, some die in either set of circumstances. During the war, plenty of prayers were offered up for victory, but we went on sending out men and munitions, and blockading and intriguing just as though we had not prayed at all. And when the Allies were victorious, instead of draping Javeh's altar, and hailing him as the God who won the war, Lloyd George was spoken of as the man who won it; the men and officers were thanked as though their part had been really important, and as though "It's a long, long way to Tipperary" had been of greater help in keeping up the spirits of the men than "Oh God our help in Ages Past." It is true that we did thank God for victory, and for helping us kill so many Germans, but this only confused the issue. Either we should have left the job to God, or we should have left it to the army. By doing one thing or the other we should have had something like a test case.

* * *

Leaving it to God.

I do not deny for a moment that if there is an Almighty God, he ought to be able to win a war or cure a disease. But as things are fixed at present it is always open to evil disposed people to hint that God only cures when he has a doctor to help, and only wins a war when he has a superiority of guns and men on his side. The real question is, of course, can he do these things alone? If he requires the help of man to do them, then it would seem that God has as much cause to thank man as man has to thank God. If man is helpless without God, God is equally helpless without man. The effort is mutual and the thanks and praise should be equitably distributed. Thanksgiving services in church should be accompanied by thanksgiving services in heaven to man for the help that he has given Omnipotence. If God and man are partners in the work of betterment then there should be a fair distribution of both praise and profit. It reminds one of the reply of the old lady when the doctor complained of her giving her sick husband a patent medicine. "I told you," he complained, "not to give him anything of that kind." "Yes," replied the old lady, "but I said to him, you take what the doctor gives you in the morning, then take what I give you in the afternoon, and we will see which cures you first."

Of course, a Christian will remind us that the proper prayer is "Not my will, but Thy will be done." That is what the Chinese call a face-saver, but it does not help very much. To ask God to do something and then to add, "Of course, you will do as you like about the matter," reduces the whole process to an absurdity. God, we may presume, already knows what is best, and will do as he likes in any case. One suspects that in this matter we have the primitive coercive force of magic mixed up with the later religious petition. But it looks rather sly to first of all make a number of suggestions to the

Lord, and then say, "But please don't be guided by me, just use your own judgment in the matter." Christians should really make up their minds on the subject. If they think it necessary to call God's attention to the fact that more rain is required, or that less would be a good thing, or that we are at war and wish him to help us kill our enemies, or that a revival in trade would be much appreciated, then by all means do so. But to ask for these things and then finish off with, "Just do as you please about these suggestions, we shall think just the same about you, and will return thanks whatever happens," reduces the whole business to a screaming farce. In primitive times, and among primitive peoples, if the tribal gods did not play their part there was some danger of their being dethroned altogether. But primitive religion had a far greater amount of logic and moral courage about it than has the modern form.

I may return to the subject next week.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

More Christian Evidences.

"I see but one cross remaining on earth, and it is that of the unrepentant thief."—*W. S. Laudor.*

"Camels and Christians receive their burdens kneeling."—*Ambrose Bierce.*

ONCE upon a time the clergy defended their own religions, and bishops and lesser ecclesiastical luminaries coruscated in the pages of the monthly and quarterly reviews. Things are very different nowadays, and the clergy largely leave the matter to others, often ill-equipped for the adventure. Apart from professional journalists, who will write nonsense upon any subject at a moment's notice, some of the most interesting contributions come from politicians. Hence we find Joynson Hicks writing upon the proposed Anglican Prayer Book; Lloyd George, always full of extreme unction; whilst Arthur Henderson is as prolix and platitudinous in his excursions into theology as he is in his utterances upon politics.

"Uncle Arthur" deserves a little attention. His personality could neither have grown nor thriven outside the British Isles. It is one of the oddest of blends, for it includes a good deal of Paul Pry, a touch of Pecksniff, and an infinite amount of Sunday school teacher. A hard-boiled Wesleyan, he cannot keep his religion away from his politics, or his politics from his religion, and both are equally nebulous.

Yet he is an amateur in matters theological. Writing upon religion and politics in *T. P.'s Weekly*, he says:

"There will be, as long as the world lasts, people who will be ready to argue that Christianity has failed."

You see that Uncle Arthur imagines that the Christian religion is the only pebble on the beach, and he is not too proud to assume the mantle of Mother Shipton. The wicked people whom Uncle Arthur is aiming at in this prophecy are Freethinkers, but he will not admit the soft impeachment. This is how he does it:—

"I know there are cynics who assert that Christianity has failed. But how can it be said that Christianity has failed when it has never yet been properly tried?"

Mr. Samuel Pecksniff had the same way of doling out the soothing syrup. Listen:—

"Is it not a soothing reflection, my darlings, that if we drink too much tea we get the dropsy, and if we drink too many intoxicants we get drunk?"

"Don't say 'we get drunk,' " papa, said Charity.

According to Uncle Arthur, the Christian religion "has never been properly tried." Yet, in the same article, he speaks of the Wesleyan Body, with which he has been associated for so many years, as "one branch of the organized Church." It is a pity that Uncle Arthur could not be transported to the Ages of Faith, when his Nonconformity would have meant a chop at the Tower, or a stake at Smithfield. In that day, one fancies, Uncle Arthur's fruity voice would never have been heard at all, and the protests left to those wicked "cynics" who died rather than sacrifice their opinions.

The politicians are not allowed to exploit the religious field alone, for the journalists are still hard at work roping-in pious people in order to increase the huge circulations of their newspapers.

Some of their remarks are so diverting that they should not be allowed to repose in the cemeteries of departed periodicals. It is more fitting that they be disinterred to show how journalists assume pontifical airs with the knowledge of sixth-form schoolboys.

As the journalists write in haste, so their remarks betray them, especially in the leading articles in big type. In the *Evening News* (London), for example, a leader-writer suggested that the McPherson Mission was bound to fail, because English people for centuries had seen "the worship of God conducted against a background of intellectual beauty," which is a pretty good proof that he himself seldom troubles the pew-openers. For in State Churches the background is mostly a stained-glass window emblazoned with legendary nonsense; and in Roman Catholic Churches the "intellectual beauty" is enhanced by plaster-dolls and wax candles as big as the dolls. And when you come to think of it, there isn't much "intellectual beauty" in the trumpets, drums, and tambourines of the Church and Salvation Armies, and other howling dervishes of this Christian country.

According to the same pious journal, the "Mrs. McPherson stuff would no more go in Canada than it has gone at the Albert Hall." But if Revivalists do occasionally tell the truth, similar sob-stuff is popular not only in Canada, but also in Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. All this talk of an "intellectual background" to religion is make-believe, and the patter of a sorry profession. Christians are credulous folks the world over. The Syrian peasant watching the fraud of the Holy Fire at Jerusalem; the Italian workman spellbound before the swindle of St. Januarius' blood at Naples; or a British matron swallowing the statement of the Bishop of London that the more money he has the poorer he becomes, are all simple souls who wouldn't know any more about intellectual beauty than a canned crayfish.

Mrs. McPherson may be half-educated, and even bigoted, but at least she is honest. She says that she believes the Christian Bible from cover to cover. To her it is all true, from the yarn of Adam starting the "Eat more fruit" slogan, to the nightmare of the Apocalypse. It is all as true as the butcher's talk when he "sells his thumb."

Our State clergy, of whom there are 20,000 in this country, are not so unsophisticated. Their ideal is not Georgie Washington with his little chopper, but Mr. Facing-Both-Ways. A lemon-hearted critic might even go further and suggest that many of these priests are perjurers. They subscribe in the most solemn manner to the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion sanctioned by the King "by God's ordinance, according to our just title Defender of the Faith and supreme Governor of the Church within these our dominions." But in practice they openly defy these ordinances, which are declared to be "the true doctrine of the Church of England, agreeable to God's word." These articles include the belief that Christ

went to "hell"; that a spirit can be at the same time a father and a son, and also proceed from itself as a bogey, that Adam was everybody's papa, and that he ate fruit, in consequence of which countless generations are damned to everlasting torture. These articles also declare the Roman Catholic doctrines to be a vain invention; that the Protestant Bible only is the Word of God; and that the present tenant of Buckingham Palace is the head of the Church of Christ. (Oh! Uncle Arthur!)

To these articles of Faith, among others, every Church of England priest subscribes. And we know that great numbers of them do not believe in them, or observe them; that they are taking money on false pretences. Their main reasons for remaining in the State Church are "purple, palaces, patronage, profit, and power," as a former cheerful Canon of St. Paul's Cathedral puts it.

In plain English, the priesthood is a profession, much the same as the Law or Medicine. The right to appoint clergymen to benefices is sold for money in the open market, as if it were so much coal or a quack medicine. Listen! Parliament (not God) makes the religion, and the landlords (all saints) appoint its professors, or barter the appointment to the highest bidder. In the last analysis this Christian Church resembles a football club, but the football directors are far more honest.

There is no more "background of intellectual beauty" in all this than there is in the Stock Exchange, which can boast of a fresco depicting ancient, wily Phœnicians selling glass beads to our forefathers on the beach near Dover. The phenomenon is not unknown in our day, but business men "cut out the sentiment," leaving the sob-stuff to priests and politicians. Apparently, Uncle Arthur, the Labour Leader, and the Conservative journalist are economical in their desire for knowledge of matters intellectual. "Is your wife economical?" said a friend to a young married man. "Yes," replied the other, "I'm the first husband she's had up to now." A mild brand of Nonconformity, and a nodding acquaintance with the Christian hymnology, is not a fitting equipment for a man desirous of posing as a modern Saint George attacking the Dragon of Free-thought.

MINNERMUS.

The Consolations of Christianity.

ONE of the claims made on behalf of the Christian religion is that it brings consolation to the believer.

We have heard Christians declare, and have seen the asseveration in print, that if it were not for their belief in a heavenly Father, watching over and guiding them along the way of life, they would be quite unable to carry on. And they complain pathetically of the cruelty of the Freethinker who attacks their religion, comparing him to a man depriving a cripple of his crutches. In fact, there is, or was, a Christian tract in circulation, which no doubt many of our readers have seen, the text of which is inspired by this illustration of the cripple and his crutches.

What, however, the Freethinker endeavours to do, is not to deprive the cripple of his support, but to enable the victim of such weakness—mostly the result of wrong training and teaching—to realize that there is no necessity for the crutches, that they really hinder more than they help. The patient will then throw them away himself.

But there is another side to the consolations of the Christian religion. There are also the terrors of the Christian faith. There is not only God the heavenly Father, but there is God the stern Judge who, at the

Judgment Day, will sort the sheep—the small minority, from the goats—the great majority. The sheep will go to heaven, where they will hold a sort of eternal revival meeting, with hymns and harps. The goats will go to hell, where they will be tormented in fire for ever.

We do not hear so much about the terrors of religion now; although the Fundamentalists, the Salvation Army, and many Nonconformist sects, still tell their congregations of the terrible things their God is preparing for those who laugh at the Bible, and who do not believe in their unreasonable and monstrous creeds and dogmas. Punishment for all eternity, be it observed, which, if perpetrated by any earthly ruler upon the worst criminal for five minutes, would call down upon him the execration of civilized mankind.

This belief was much more in evidence fifty years ago; I was brought up in it, and the remembrance of that teaching is brought vividly to mind by the reading of a new biography of the poet Cowper. (*William Cowper*, by Hugh P'Anson Fausset. Jonathan Cape. 12s. 6d.). Mr. Fausset, as I surmised from reading his previous books on Tennyson and Tolstoy, is most competent for the task he has undertaken, and I can heartily recommend his book to *Freethinker* readers.

Cowper's life is an outstanding example of the terrible effects of a belief in genuine Christianity—as distinguished from the emasculated ghost of that religion which now masquerades under the name—upon a sensitive and refined mind. Myriads must have suffered equal mental agonies, but they have gone down to the silent grave unrecorded. As Mr. Fausset observes: "It is difficult in these comparatively emancipated days to realize the oppressive idea of God accepted by the religious in the eighteenth century. The God of the Old Testament is now regarded as a tribal Deity . . . But to Cowper's devout contemporaries He was still a very palpable potentate, with the arbitrary power to interfere in human lives, either to punish any lack of proper respect to His Person, or to preserve those who grovelled before Him from the risks which are now generally covered by insurance."¹ And this was the God in which Cowper had been taught to believe. Mr. Fausset continues: "When he conceived of God's vengeance against him as boundless, he thought of it as a life-sentence imposed by a magnified oriental despot and indefinitely prolonged. And this 'sense of God's wrath, and a deep despair of escaping it' now took possession of him. He no longer suffered simply from a sense of desertion by God. His amiable weakness and indecision, culminating in the agonized attempt at suicide, appeared to him a depravity which an outraged Deity would ruthlessly punish . . . In every book which he opened he found something that struck him to the heart. In the Bible itself, Christ, cursing the barren fig-tree, pointed the curse directly at him, and in every street he heard a mocking laugh." (p. 68). And when he turned to his cousin, Martin Madan, chaplain of the Lock Hospital, for sympathy and advice, he only received confirmation of "all the terrors of the religious melodrama in which he believed himself cast for the villain's part." Under the influence of this delirium of despair he penned the following terrible lines:—

Hatred and vengeance, my eternal portion,
Scarce can endure delay of execution,
Wait with impatient readiness to seize my
Soul in a moment.

¹ Fausset: *William Cowper*. p. 67.

Damned below Judas; more abhorred than he was,
Who for a few pence sold his holy Master!
Twice—betrayed me, the last delinquent,
Deems the profanest.

Man disavows, and Deity disowns me,
Hell might afford my miseries a shelter;
Therefore Hell keeps her ever-hungry mouths all
Bolted against me.

Later, Cowper fell under the influence of the Rev. John Newton, and went to live at Olney in Buckinghamshire, where Newton was curate-in-charge. It was here that Cowper and Newton composed the Olney Hymns, which afterwards became so popular. Newton, who had had a chequered career, and was a converted slave dealer and had been master of a slave ship, was the worst possible influence Cowper could have fallen under. He was one of the old thundering hell-fire preachers, breathing fire and brimstone. He himself states: "I believe my name is up about the country for preaching people mad . . . I suppose we have near a dozen, in different degrees disordered in their heads, and most of them I believe truly gracious people. This has been no small trial to me." But he comforts himself by the reflection that whatever they may suffer now, they are less to be pitied than the mad people of the world who scoff at the Gospel.

Miss Dorothy Stuart, in reviewing Mr. Fausset's book in *The Nation* (November 3), observes: "How pleasant it is to see Mr. Fausset squaring up to the catastrophic Newton, and 'letting him have it!' How pleasant might it not be to see him landing a straight left on the bearded jaw of John Calvin, who, more than any Hebrew seer or Augustan bigot, is ultimately responsible for the sufferings of Cowper and of unnamed hundreds like him." We admire the fluency with which Miss Stuart uses the technical terms of the boxing-ring, and must confess to sympathy with her indignation. But after all is said and done, Newton and Calvin did not invent hell, or the eternal punishment of the damned.

The more advanced Christians of to-day have discarded hell; Christianity, according to their teaching, is a religion of love. It propagated itself by love. It overcame the pagans by love, and so on. This is an altogether false reading of history. When Christianity was competing with the many oriental pagan cults which surged into the Roman empire towards the beginning of the Christian era, many of which were scarcely distinguishable from it in ritual and dogma, it was not through love that Christianity gained the victory. The early Christians taught the very same doctrine that General Booth founded the Salvation Army upon. They drew terrible pictures of eternal torture for those who did not accept their faith. They declared their Lord might appear at any moment, and it would be too late then to be saved. They created a panic in the ancient world. They conquered, not by love, but by fear. And when the fear of eternal punishment is taken out of Christianity, it languishes and ultimately fades away. The origin of Christianity, and all the great revivals of it, including the Puritans', and Wesley's, down to Moody and Sankey and the modern American revivals, plain and coloured, Christians have played upon the fears of their listeners. That is why revival meetings here are now an utter failure, because it is impossible to stampede people into a panic to-day with tales of hell-fire. And until they can be there will be no revival of Christianity.

W. MANN.

Blessed are the peacemakers.—*Jesus*.
I came not to send peace but a sword.—*Jesus*.

Freethought Flashes.

If you take away from some men their knowledge of God, you rob them of all the knowledge they have.

There is no indication of strength of character in merely avoiding temptation. At most, it is only a species of prudence. The real indication of strength of character is not to experience a temptation. In other words, the evil of a thing largely consists in our desire for it.

The philosophical significance of the principle of inertia is not generally recognized. Usually it is taken to mean the impotence of a thing to change its state or direction by itself. So far it is correct enough. But this is a principle which lies at the root of the scientific method. On a general scale it means that any complex of forces will persist in a calculable direction, or behave in a theoretically calculable manner, unless there exists some outside force capable of interfering with them. But if that outside interference is even theoretically possible, scientific calculation, prevision, becomes impossible. The fact that things are what they are to-day carries with it no guarantee that they will be the same to-morrow. The fact that conjunction of forces will emerge in a certain result to-day, is no argument that the same result will emerge to-morrow. Thus, if the principle of inertia be universally true, there is no room for any interference with the calculable play of natural forces. If there exists a God, some autonomous intelligent force capable of controlling or modifying the operation of natural forces, inertia is not a general principle and scientific calculation is impossible. There is no room for sound science and God in the same universe.

To say that God, if he exists, is stupid is blasphemy. To say that if he exists he is wise, is worship. The difference between worship and blasphemy is thus the difference between flattery and intelligent criticism.

The man who accepts a doctrine because it is comforting is not seeking for truth, he is on the look-out for a narcotic.

There are no "reasons" to-day for the belief in God, there are only excuses for not rejecting it.

The difference between the scientific and the theological mind is that where the one sees a product the other sees a purpose. And the difference in the result is that where the scientist seeks by varying the arrangement of the factors to secure a different product, the theologian goes down on his knees and seeks to influence the one who is credited with the purpose. The results of the two methods speak for themselves.

If there were no other reason for damning the Christian heaven, a very good one would be that there are no books there. For consider what spending eternity would mean without having a single book with which to pass away the time. Nothing to do but to listen to the idle chatter of empty-headed angels, or the doleful moan of community hymns. The visions of the saints have provided us with a prospect of musical instruments and flowing draperies, of flowers and fountains, of thrones and footstools. But none of them have ever caught a glimpse of a single book. A bookless heaven! Could anything be more dreary, or more unwelcome?

There seems to be only one perfect husband in the world—and the other woman has always got him.

Acid Drops.

Christian brotherhood is a rare and lovely thing. We imagine it has been responsible for more fights than anything else in the world's history. When people fight about other things they are apt to have a dim suspicion that they had better not. But when religion is on the carpet—particularly the Christian religion—the harder they fight the more convinced they are of their peaceful intentions. Thus, the Bishop of Gloucester suggested to his clergy that on Armistice Sunday they might hold a united service, and that Nonconformist ministers might be allowed to take part in the service. That proposal has shocked the *Church Times*, which says there is no suggestion that these Nonconformists should be asked whether they have been baptized. That is, we agree, a very serious omission. How can one associate in a religious service with another man who has not been properly baptized? The idea is unthinkable. What are all the questions about unemployment, the cessation of war, or the traffic problem, compared with this? We feel sure that I-will-stick-to-my-mother's-knee Joynson-Hicks will agree with us here.

Here is another serious aspect of the same subject. If, says the *Church Times*, Nonconformist ministers and ordained priests of the Church of England have the same authority, then the repeated claims of the Church have no justification. Hear! Hear! If Nonconformist preachers and Church of England parsons are both alike, we agree with the *Church Times* in demanding an answer to the question, "What is the difference between them?" Besides, it is deliberately misleading God Almighty. When God Almighty listens to a prayer from a Church of England establishment, he believes it to be official and authoritative. It has two such intellectual giants behind it as the Bishop of London and "Jix." But if part of the tale to which he listens is told by an unauthorized person, and without his knowledge or sanction, then he is being deliberately misled. It is on all-fours with an Ambassador sending misleading reports to his government. It is obtaining an audience with God Almighty under false pretences. And we seriously think that something ought to be done about it.

The *New Chronicle of Religious Education* claims that Methodism set the Church aflame, and also kindled a new passion for righteousness. It adds:—

Half the civic liberties, the social reforms, and the educational opportunities which we take for granted as part of our ordinary heritage are directly due to the Evangelical Revival of the eighteenth century. To that, every impartial historian, whether he himself holds the Christian faith or not, bears witness.

What, only "half"? This Christian modesty is really very embarrassing.

Writing of *And was Made Man*, a book for theological students, by Mr. Leonard Hodgson, a reviewer says it is "a clear and logical treatise of the rational framework of Christian theology." A "rational framework of Christian theology" is as improbable a thing as an ancient mermaid.

The remains of a hippopotamus have been found in the bed of the Vaal River, in South Africa. They are estimated to be 10,000 years old. Assuming the stories of Genesis to be historical fact, we wonder why God dumped a hippopotamus 4,000 years defunct on his nice new world. A copy of *God and Evolution* will be awarded to the first correct answer to this problem received from a Fundamentalist.

The march of modern knowledge, says Mr. E. S. Hayes, in *The New Chronicle* (late *Sunday School Chronicle*), has made it impossible of most Sunday School teachers and others to stand where their fathers stood in the matter of Biblical inspiration. They cannot feel that God intends them to shut their eyes to the

results of modern discoveries, or to reject the new knowledge being taught to their children in day-school, in order to pin their faith to the doctrine of the verbal inspiration and infallibility of the Bible. Not only, continues Mr. Hayes, is the average Christian's attitude to the Bible in a chaotic state, but elements in his religious faith are also involved in the modern march of knowledge. As the secrets of past civilizations and of man's long upward development are revealed by the scientific inquirer, grave misgivings arise in the realm of religious faith. "The old battle between reason and faith shifts to new ground." To put right the chaotic minds of the pious, Mr. Hayes suggests the reading of books stating the Modernist position—beautiful books in which imaginative clerics try their hand at squaring the circle, reconciling the irreconcilable, and whitewashing the repulsive.

In America, where everything is on such a vast scale that pepper-casters are the size of gasometers, the presidential election was reduced to the bookmaker's price of four to one in favour of Mr. Hoover. As a sample of the unifying effect of religion in the issue, it is to be noted that Mr. Hoover's champions stated that the Democrats had reduced the campaign from the sidewalks to the sewers of New York. The Ku Klux Klan described Mr. Smith as illiterate, his speeches as written by the Papal Legate, and said his election would be followed by the removal of the Pope from Rome to Washington. Amidst all these cries, one looked in vain for some gem from the Fundamentalists; perhaps Mr. Mencken's eagle eye will find it for our delight in the future.

Still looking abroad at geographical insanity we learn from Jerusalem that:—

Over 600 Moslem notables attended a meeting held here to protest against alleged Jewish violation of Moslem sacred sites.

There does not appear to be anything of real value in this item of news presuming that communication with Mars can be established.

The B.B.C. is getting very brave. It allows the following letter to appear in its official publication:—

Go on! Pat yourselves on the back. It is easier, I should say, to go through the eye of a needle than to get a letter criticizing the B.B.C. on your letter page, or any reasonable proposal suggested by a listener adopted by your organization.

The listener has, we suspect, been futilely trying to get the B.B.C. to publish a plain request for an alternative Sunday programme. In the eyes of the B.B.C.'s committee of parsons, both the request and the thing asked for are unreasonable, and must be turned down with a "Thus saith the Lord."

Another wireless listener says his canary always accompanies lustily the musicians and singers, but when jazz is played it is silent. So discriminating a bird no doubt closes its eyes and bows reverently when the Sunday service is on. We hope so, anyway. It would be awful to hear that the bird treats the service like jazz.

On the Turkish national flag, the Crescent is to be converted into a C, indicating the native word for republic. That's another nail in the coffin of a creed that has nearly as unenviable a record as the Christian faith.

The late Rev. Carr Glyn Aeworth, of Westerham, Kent, must have had a very queer notion of the size of a needle's eye. Before passing to a better (or worse) land, he accumulated £34,607 while serving the Vagrant of Nazareth. We are doubtful whether he found "welcome" on the heavenly door-mat.

The Nobel Prize for Medicine, worth £8,000, has been awarded to Professor Nicholle of the Pasteur Institute, Tunis, for the work he has done to save humanity from typhus. This will serve as a reminder of the fact that for the prevention and cure of God-created disease, man

must rely on himself. Prayer is a wonderful specific, according to the parsons, but it cannot get rid of typhus germs; nor can it persuade the God of Love to remove them from the world. The scratch lot of *Daily Express* contributors juggling with "Is there an answer to Prayer?" might make a note of this.

The Sunday evening parade, says a pious weekly, is a feature of most large towns. All sorts of young people throng the main streets and appear to find sufficient attraction in jostling each other, laughing, singing, and joking, or in less innocent and less noisy ways of using their leisure. "They go neither to the churches nor to the pictures, and these two possibilities, as a rule, exhaust the field of choice." Yes; thanks to Sabbatarian fanaticism. Our contemporary says that the one thing the young people do not want is to stay at home; they want to mix with other people. Our friend appears to favour the Sunday "rendezvous," which is run on Y.M.C.A. principles of providing cheap buns and drinks, games and antique magazines, plus a pious address and an invitation to join some church club or institute. What an unlovely game it is these bigots play. First they prevent the young people from enjoying the usual week-day amusements on Sunday, in the hope for enticing them into a church. Then when this manoeuvre fails, they—affecting great concern about the danger of the young people's not having anything to occupy their leisure—try to exploit the young people's boredom. What a contemptible gang these Sabbatarians are.

A reverend correspondence-column conductor has been asked by a pious lady whether 1 Tim. ii. 9, means that women shouldn't wear nice clothes. She appears anxious to know also what is a modest skirt. The good man replies that every Christian woman must settle for herself where immodesty begins. The length of skirt cannot rightly be settled, he says, either by police regulation or by Church edict, though both have been tried. If the good lady's conscience is uneasy, she should let herself be guided by an experienced Christian friend who is neither frivolous nor prudish. Well, if the sensitive lady thinks knees are indecent and legs immodest, she had better buy a pair of "Oxford bags." But if these be considered not quite right, she should let herself be guided by commonsense, and select a garment that is conducive to the greatest degree of health and comfort, and activity—never mind about old Timothy.

A clerical writer says Disestablishment of the State Church would be accompanied by a *measure* of Disendowment. When the Welsh Church was disestablished all Church property vested in the Ecclesiastical Commissioners passed into the hands of the State. The Church was permitted to keep all plate, furniture, etc., all the churches, houses of clergy and money allocated for their maintenance, and a few other sources of income. All this, then, implies that the Church of England is at present enjoying rents from property that rightly belongs to the State! The sooner the State takes from the Church property belonging to the State, the better for the national exchequer.

Here are a couple of indications of the expected revival of religion. They are taken from the Thirty-fourth Annual Report of the Student's Christian Movement. Number one, concerned with a Women's University College:—

There is no doubt that the general attitude of the majority of students in college is one of indifference towards religion, rather than of support or hostility.

Number two, of another college:—

A small section are actively hostile on intellectual grounds.

Number three:—

There is an unexpressed idea that people who associate themselves with any sort of religious organization in college are not quite normal.

The outlook is quite encouraging, particularly when one reflects upon the mental calibre of the average clergyman to-day, compared with that of a couple of generations ago.

The Bishop of Southwark is sanguine that some way out of the Prayer Book controversy may be found, because "English people were, happily, never logical." We congratulate the Bishop on his insight into the conditions of good, healthy, religious belief. The more illogical the better—for Christianity.

At the ceremony of crowning the Emperor of Japan, free seats are placed along the routes of the procession for old people over eighty. But the "heathen" does not beat us here in this Christian country. We also gave seats along the route. And anyone, irrespective of age, might have the use of them—on payment of from one to twenty guineas. When the Japanese become Christianized they will realize what an opportunity they are missing.

Sr Oliver Lodge thinks there is a soul of goodness in all things evil, and that the "purpose" that works through life would have it so. For instance, he points out that the War caused the Government to supply money freely for scientific experiments from which we have gained great knowledge. We do not dispute it. But a brilliant example of the "purpose" in which Sir Oliver believes, is that we could only get a batch of stupid government officials to see the utility of science by arranging for a war such as the last one. We would suggest that Sir Oliver reads over again Charles Lamb's essay on the origin of roast pig.

Says Hallie Carrington Brent:—

Though prejudice perhaps my mind befores,
I think I know no finer things than dogs.

Here is one who evidently will be unhappy in Heaven without a doggy pal. But a dog has no soul; so the poor dog-lover will perforce have to make the best of wings and a golden crown as substitutes. But stay a moment. The Spiritualistic Summerland offers more scope for human desires and cravings. So the best thing for the dog-lover to do is to die a Spiritualist.

A change is entering the ancient El Azhar University of Cairo, one of the most conservative centres of Islam. Formerly devoted to Koranic law and teaching, the University is now to permit the study of science and other modern subjects. The Rev. W. W. Cash, who has spent twenty-three years in Egypt, says that the change is due mainly to economic factors. El Azhar is a theological college more than university. The students, numbering 12,000, find they are pitifully paid, and that their training unfits them for other work. They desire, therefore, not only to learn the Koran, but to earn a living. To put it more bluntly, we daresay what is happening in Europe is occurring also in the East. A wave of indifference to religion is passing over the people. There is nowadays, probably a slump in the demand for gramophonic exponents of Islamic doctrines, and priests have a difficulty in conjuring cash from the people. So the wideawake students have thought it advisable to prepare for earning an honest living. By the trend of things, the same state of affairs may obtain in England in the not-too-distant future.

Canon E. S. Woods believes in the young people of to-day. They are very frivolous, but, says he, behind their unabashed goings-on is a sincerity and a lack of pretence which the Victorians never achieved. Beneath their irreverence, he adds, is often a deep spirit of inquiry; their flippancy is frequently a camouflage to hide a wistful and inarticulate desire to know whether there is anything worth having in religion. That the younger generation is fundamentally irreligious the Canon refuses to believe; he thinks they are repelled by "our controversies and our failures to make religion attractive." Yet they long for something to fill the moral and spiritual gap. The Canon says he would give them the real Christ, the young Prince of Glory, the Pioneer of Faith, Jesus the Hero, the splendid Leader and perfect Friend, the Lord of Beauty, the beloved Captain, for all who want to do battle for truth, loveliness and peace. "When the young men and maidens see that Christ is

like that, they follow him all right, and then find after all they have got religion." Now, if only the Canon and his colleagues could convince the young people that Jesus was the Emperor of Jazz, the wistful young things would trip away into the churches in millions.

The Toc H. Movement in connexion with the Church of England now has a Trust Deed defining how the total funds shall be used. The income from one-half of the funds is allocated for the maintenance of the Anglican padres. The income from one-quarter goes towards the support of Anglican ordinands proposing to work wholly or partly for Toc H. The remaining quarter may be used for maintaining a Collegiate House for the headquarters of Anglican padres, as a vacation house for Anglican ordinands, and as a "house of quiet" for Toc H. members "on pilgrimage, or gathered in retreat or in conference." By the sound of this, the encouragement of hazy religiosity and of semi-mystic ritual is a paying game for the servants of the Lord.

By the way, it must be very disconcerting to the padres that the majority of ex-service men give Toc H. the go-by. Toc H., we believe, was founded with the object of capturing the men who fought in the war. Optimists thought that the daily threat of death would arouse interest in religion. But that interest didn't materialize; but, seemingly, more scepticism did. And the majority of ex-service men cannot be enticed into Toc H. or the churches.

The Mayor of Greenwich opened the local public baths the other day by diving in. To set the citizens a wholesome example he will, we hope, also dive in every Sunday.

A reader of *Radio Times* begs for a little more gaiety in the Sunday programmes—or at least a little variety. He is tired of Ave Maria, Abide with me, and In a Monastery Garden. He adds:—

It is right and proper that certain hours should be devoted to religious services and readings, but could there not be a suspicion of dance music? After all, there is nothing wrong with Sunday dancing, though comedians *would* be out of place.

We fear our listening friend is only half a Christian. He fails to understand that Sunday is the Christian taboo day, and must be made as gloomy as possible for all persons not soaked in religion. While the Committee of parsons sits at Savoy Hill, he will have to stop hankering after week-day flesh-pots, and make the best of the "right and proper."

From a pious paper:—

A SORT OF FREEDOM.

Mussolini has been telling the Italian newspapers what to do. The first thing he told them was that the Italian Press is the freest in the world. It is even free to hear that, it seems.

Still, there can't be much wrong with that sort of freedom. God's one and only Papa at the Vatican has raised no protest against it. He and his merry men are probably working out ways and means of using it advantageously for the only true faith.

"If ever my heart becomes infected with the virus of scepticism," says the Rev. W. T. Kitching, of Wolverhampton, "I won't spread it or pass it on to others." Judging from both the look of Mr. Kitching, and the quality of his discourse, we feel quite safe in assuring him that he need be under no apprehension. Scepticism may be justifiable or not, but it certainly requires an amount of mental effort which nature appears to have effectively guarded Mr. Kitching against. It seems a terrible thing to say of anyone, but Mr. Kitching appears to be one of those unfortunate individuals who is foredoomed by nature to remain an orthodox believer to the end of the chapter. He will never either become a sceptic or carry scepticism to others. He has, we judge, been brought up on tracts, and thinks in sermonettes.

But he has, as many simple and uneducated men are apt to have, a certain unconscious humour. For example, he quite admires Henry Ward Beecher for saying that the Atheist was one who deliberately kicked a cripple's crutches away and gave him no substitute. Now we think that if we were in the preaching business, and had been blessed with the intelligence of a mule, we should be chary of using that illustration. For it is quite true that the Christian is like a cripple on crutches, with the distinction that the ailment is of an imaginary character. But the likeness of a Christian to a cripple is quite delicious, and wholly true. The Church tells him he is a cripple, insists that he must be a cripple, and the force of the suggestion has to all intents and purposes made him a cripple. Hysteria, as everyone knows, is one of the most difficult complaints to cure. But those who are induced to throw away the religious crutches, soon find how much better they can walk without them. The curious thing is, it is the ones who hang on to the crutches who will have it that the other man, who is striding along quite cheerfully, cannot walk. Yes, we are quite sure that Mr. Kitching will never be infected with the virus of scepticism. Mr. Kitching believes the world owes everything to Christianity. And "everything" includes, of course, Mr. Kitching.

The Aldershot clergy have united to offer a public protest against opening the Council tennis courts on Sunday. There is one delicious passage we take from the protest. Here it is:—

At the present day, a wide liberty is claimed by the individual in respect of Sunday recreation. Private Sunday games are common, and we do not criticize here such liberty. But we submit that the public organization of such forms of recreation comes under a different category.

The rule, the Christian rule, appears plain. Private games, which may be played within sight of the public, are permissible. But these ministers, who dare not condemn these games for fear of losing some of their customers, do not mind this, so long as they keep it to themselves. But if it is done openly and publicly, well, the fat is in the fire with a vengeance. So the usual Christian rule of practice comes into force. It does not matter what kind of a humbug you are, so long as you do not publicly make your disbelief or contempt of Christianity evident.

A Sydney paper has just reached us, which contains an item of news that serves as an apt comment on the subject of insanity and religion, with which we were dealing a fortnight ago. A woman, living at Rozelle, cut the throat of her little boy. She explained to the Coroner that she quite knew what was wanted, but, "God wanted him, and Jesus wanted him, and he is better with them than with us." Now if that woman had been dabbling in Spiritualism, or if she had been reading certain kinds of books, we should have had a coroner expiating on the harm done by such things. As it happens in connexion with Christianity, nothing is said. Of course, the truth is that a certain weakness of mind finds in religious teachings a very strong attraction. And we have the assurance of a late Bishop of Exeter that the weak-minded have a natural tendency towards religion.

The British Section of the World's Sunday School Association announced that its income for the current year is insufficient, and that £1,500 is needed before the close of 1928. No doubt the money will be forthcoming. There are still plenty of half-baked folk who believe that the proper way to train a child's character, and to prepare him for the battle of life, is by teaching him silly myths, blood-thirsty tales, crude superstitions, and the muddled ethics and other-worldly philosophy of Jesus Christ.

A torpedo that cannot be dodged is the latest device of the war mind. In future, a Christian priest blessing a ship of war will need to evoke very special magic from God, to ensure the safety of a vessel against which such a torpedo is aimed.

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.

J. HAYES.—We are obliged for what you are doing to break down the boycott. It is not easy, for the reason that Christians know that once our side of the case is given a fair hearing it will go very hard with them.

E. SMEDLEY.—The *Determinism or Free-Will?* sells steadily, and we do not see what we could add in another edition, except padding. Of course, a great deal has been said by others since that book was written, but nothing of any importance has been said that was not said before. We are afraid we cannot disentangle Mr. Joad's confusions on the question of Determinism in the course of a paragraph or two. If only some of these writers would set themselves down to discover what the Deterministic controversy is about, they would either write differently or not write at all. Either might be a good thing.

A. E. POWELL (Johannesburg).—Thanks for good wishes and appreciation of our work.

E. W. FLINT.—Sorry we cannot find room for your letter on Temperance. Distance from here prevents your letter reaching us in time for readers to remember the paragraph criticized. But while quite agreeing with all you say concerning the evil of drinking, it appears to us that one must allow for other factors operating for the diminution of drunkenness, beside that of conscious abstention.

R. DODDS.—Compelled to hold over your letter till next week.

CINE CERE.—Sorry the news we have is not of the best yet, although better than when we wrote you.

H. MARTIN.—The third volume of Mr. Cohen's *Essays in Freethinking* will be published in the course of a week or two—probably by the end of the month. Mr. Cohen has other things on view so soon as he has the time to write them.

J. BARTRAM.—The matter is in hand and will be concluded as soon as possible.

J. CAMPBELL and "EX-SERVICE MAN."—We entirely agree with you that a good use of Armistice Day would be to place in the public pillory all those who have been responsible since 1918 for sowing the seeds of ill-feeling between the nations, and we should like to add the names of those politicians and journalists who worked so hard to stir up the ill-feeling which led to the war itself. Those who have charge of the destinies of the nations should be held responsible when such a catastrophe as the European war arises. What we do is to stifle criticism and to praise them for their devotion.

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

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, 15/-; half year 7/6; three months, 3/9.

Sugar Plums.

The second of Mr. Cohen's lectures at Leicester brought another good audience, and there seems no reason why the remaining two should not be at least equally successful. Mr. Gimson again occupied the chair, and there were a number of questions at the end of the address. To-day (November 18) Mr. Cohen will lecture on "Freethought and Death." We should like every Freethinker who attends to do what he can to bring along a Christian friend.

Armistice Day has come and gone, and we think that the sooner this commemoration comes to an end the better. Long continued functions of this character tend to become formal at their best after a certain time has elapsed, and this is now drifting into an occasion for

"stunts" by newspapers, and opportunities for sensation-hunting parsons. Worse than all, the parade of militarism continues with it. So far as this nation is concerned it was our boast that it was fought out, not by a militarized people, but by a civilian army. Men were taken from the desks, from the counter, from the workshop, and were shown to be the equal of numbers of men who had gone through the military machine for years. Yet, when it was suggested that the soldiers might parade without arms the idea was indignantly rejected by the Secretary for War. If that suggestion had been adopted, the army, of course, would not have had sufficient of an advertisement. And these men whom we profess to mourn, died—professedly—to end war.

We venture to repeat what we have said concerning war memorials and commemorations in our last volume of *Essays in Freethinking* :—

At the risk of cutting across the sentimental feelings of many of our readers, I would seriously ask whether it is quite certain . . . that any of the war memorials we have erected are likely for long to drive home the lesson of the unnecessary and horrible character of war? The mothers, fathers, and other relatives of the dead may well feel the deepest sorrow . . . But what of the rest of the nation? What, above all, of the new generation that is springing up? All over the country they see thousands of war memorials, from the Cenotaph in Whitehall to the simple slab in the small village . . . They do not see memorials in such numbers for any civilian class of the population. Side by side with that they see the constant parading of the military, the glitter of the uniform, the praise lavished on the soldier, and experience the thrill of military music . . . What lesson will the rising generation derive from it all? Surely not the meanness, the filth, the brutality, the essential barbarity of war, but its nobility, its necessity, its grandeur . . . As it is, above the feeling of sorrow, will rise the pride in the soldier, the glory and glitter of the military display. In substance it becomes an exploitation of sorrow in the interests of the very militarism these men died to destroy . . . The people should be educated in the thought of the possibility of life without armies, or at least, life without the soldier occupying the premier position on the stage.

And the clergy! Well, if they really wish to do something to stop war, we suggest that next year one of them devotes that Sunday's sermon to one on "No More War." We are quite certain they will not do it. And we wonder what would have happened if some one had ventured to distribute along Whitehall, on the morning of the 11th, a handbill setting forth that these men to whose honour the Cenotaph was erected died to end war, and everyone attending the ceremony should promise to do all they could to end war. We expect anyone venturing on that job would have had his neck broken.

The N.S.S. Social, on Saturday evening last, was well attended, although there was a slight falling off in point of numbers from the last one held. But everyone appeared to enjoy themselves thoroughly, and the musical interludes were greatly enjoyed. The dancing was kept up till 11.30.

We are asked to announce that Mr. R. H. Rosetti will lecture on "Christianity and the Labour Movement," to the Paddington Branch of the Independent Labour Party on Friday evening, November 23. The meeting, which Mr. Rosetti will address at the request of the Executive of the National Secular Society, will be held in the Hall at 389 Harrow Road, London, W.1, and will commence at 7.45 p.m. We understand that the meeting is open to the general public, and hope to hear of a good attendance of Freethinkers' from different parts of London.

On Sunday (November 18) Mr. E. C. Saphin is to lecture to the Birmingham Branch on "Christianity: Sun Worship." The lecture, which will be illustrated by lantern slides, will be given in the Bristol Street School, at 7 p.m. Mr. Saphin's last lecture in Birmingham

was much enjoyed, and with the additional attraction of the lantern illustrations, we have no doubt there will be an excellent attendance at the meeting.

The Secretary of the Glasgow Branch reports a very satisfactory series of lectures by Mr. Whitehead in Glasgow and District. All the meetings were well attended, and these included a debate with Mr. J. Grant on, "Is the Belief in God Reasonable?" This was also well attended, and Freethinkers were highly pleased with Mr. Whitehead's presentation of the case. Mr. Whitehead has, we understand, another debate pending, to take place in Swansea, some time in December.

Substitutes for Religion.

SINCE Miss Maude Royden left this country to engage in a religious campaign in America, the weekly *Reynolds's "Pulpit"* has been occupied, so to speak, by the Rev. R. J. Campbell, D.D., the famous preacher, who has supplied short chatty articles for the delectation of the religiously inclined readers of that once very democratic journal. The most striking feature of these articles has been the clever manner in which Dr. Campbell has contrived to say as little as possible of any definite character about religion, and to interest his readers with anecdotes or personal experiences of a purely secular character, winding up with a few sentences to point what he considers an important religious moral. A week or two ago, however, he launched out into a very controversial subject, and headed his article with the striking title of "Can Scientists Change Religion?" and by Religion he clearly meant what is called the Christian Religion; for after stating that Professor Julian Huxley and Mr. J. B. S. Haldane had both written books in which they proposed to formulate substitutes for the old faith, he proceeded to ask his readers such a question as "would anybody deny that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is a better Gospel than that of Huxley and Haldane? Well, let us see. Julian Huxley has written a book called *Religion without Revelation*. I have not read the book yet, but I have no doubt from my knowledge of the views of Professor Huxley that he demonstrates that the Bible account of the origin of the Universe, and the alleged creation of man and the lower animals, is absolutely unscientific, and that the Bible narratives are made up very largely of the ignorant guesses on these subjects of our early ancestors. Professor Huxley would assuredly be able to demonstrate, with his knowledge of science, that the old story of the alleged Fall of Man in Genesis is manifestly absurd in view of what we know of man's evolution from lower forms of animal life, and especially of his relation to his nearest ancestors, the anthropoid apes. With this knowledge he would be able to show that man was not a fallen being, but a rising one—and that if man had not fallen in the Garden of Eden, there would be no reason for Jesus 4,000 years later to be miraculously born in order that as a climax to his career he might offer himself as an Atonement for the sins of Mankind. And thus by this means, Professor Huxley could destroy the whole scheme of the Christian Faith. Dr. Campbell admits that Julian Huxley cannot accept Christianity; and "that he regards its presuppositions as untenable in the light of what science has now revealed to us concerning the origin and structure of the world." But Dr. Campbell says that in his book called *Religion without Revelation*, Professor Huxley claims that we "can have a true religious experience without believing in a personal God or a life to come." Well, it all depends upon what Julian Huxley means by a true religious experience. If he means by that term

some system of faith or worship, I disagree with him; but if he merely means some sort of devotional exercise. I think it is quite possible. But if Professor Huxley actually asks his readers "to worship and co-operate with the sublime and mysterious power that has produced us," I think he is asking too much of people who wish to be guided by reason in all the affairs of daily life. Why should we pay homage to unknown "mysterious powers," which "have produced us and everything else, and is making towards betterment?" A study of the evolution of all kinds of animal life shows that these changes have been brought about by a cruel and bloody struggle in which the strong have survived and the weak gone to the wall. In this matter these "mysterious powers" are metaphorically "red in tooth and claw." Why worship them?

Dr. Campbell also speaks of the distinguished scientist, Mr. J. B. S. Haldane, as a clever worker and thinker in the world of science, who rejects what he calls "the traditional faith of Christendom" as inconsistent with what he and his compeers have discovered concerning the lowly and tragic past of the human race and its probable destiny; hence he too commends a religion that will better fit the facts." But Mr. Haldane wants a religion without any belief in Gods, or devils—and he does not bother himself about what happens to him when he is dead. Most people would say at once that such a system could not be properly described as a Religion. It might be a philosophy—but not a religion. At all events the religion or philosophy of Professor Julian Huxley and Mr. Haldane is infinitely superior to the Christian superstition and much more rational than any system founded on supernaturalism. There was a time, not many years ago, when Dr. Campbell not only disbelieved in the God of the Bible—Jahveh—but positively despised him; and likened him to either "a fool," or "an old woman," or both. But since he has returned to the orthodox Christian fold, I suppose he now believes in the Bible God as God the Father of the Christian Faith. I do not blame him for changing his mind. I only point out the inconsistency. Dr. Campbell now maintains that Christianity is superior to all these alleged substitutions for religion. Christianity, he contends, "is more comforting, and judged by its best fruits has shown itself able to lift human nature to greater heights." But he says "the utmost that could be argued on the other side is that if Christianity is based on what is untrue, that is if the love of God and the promise of eternal life are mere delusions—then it is better to try to content ourselves with the meagre consolations of the religion these brilliant men of science offer us." If Christianity is based on what is untrue? Of course Christianity is based on what is manifestly untrue—otherwise these men of science would not reject it. They know that the so-called love of God is a delusion—what do we know of God? Nothing. God is only a name by which we hide our ignorance of the phenomena of the Universe. What we know, is science. What we do not know, theologians call God. With regard to the promise of a future life, what evidence have we that once a man is dead, he is likely to re-appear in some other life as the same individual, any more than the anthropoid ape, or the dog, or even the rat, or any other animal that has breathed the breath of life? No! these ideas appear to the rational man as mere delusions. And the scientific man is right to rely upon what we know, and not to build upon mere conjecture. Our answer, therefore, to the question of Dr. Campbell is that science can and does change religion. See how it has changed the religion of the modernists in the Church. Let Dr. Campbell ask

the Bishop of Birmingham his opinion on the subject. Let him ask Dean Inge, or even the Bishop of Woolwich, and they will all answer in the affirmative. Nobody ever tries to supply a substitute for religion while the old one gives full satisfaction. The late Geo. Jacob Holyoake formulated a Rational Philosophy for this life. He called it "Secularism." And he said: "We too prefer a creed, but it must be creed as definite as science, and as flexible as progress—a creed that shall have its deepest roots in the human heart and count for its highest victory the well-being of the people." And upon such a creed the best and noblest among mankind, as well as the humblest and the lowliest, can build as upon an impregnable rock of wisdom and truth.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

"Priestcraft."

MR. C. R. BOYD FREEMAN, in his latest work* proves he is possessed of two admirable qualities in dealing with such a scourge as orthodox religion, namely, frankness and courage. He is not afraid of saying quite bluntly that Catholicism is a form of lunacy, for example. He does not indulge in the kind of balderdash we get sometimes even from Freethinkers about the beautiful and sublime service the Roman Catholic Church gives us, which—were we not quite convinced Rationalists—makes us feel so wonderfully holy. Mr. Freeman is waging war against Popery, and his is not the silk glove over the steel hand, but the iron gauntlet in all its grim and brutal strength. He has also humour. Here is a passage taken at random:—

It is curious to note how he (Mahomet) went to the very opposite of Catholicism. The Catholic had an allowance of one wife and four chief gods (*i.e.*, the Trinity and the Virgin Mary), the Mahomedan had one God and four chief wives. Where the Catholic had a superfluity already he wanted more, and got it in the way of Godlings (saints, etc., who took the place of the minor pagan deities) and knickknacks such as relics, cakes and idols. The Mahomedan had his superfluity in the matter of wives, but he could add to them as many more feminine oddments as he could take (from Catholics, etc.) and keep.

And so on. The reader (who is most strongly advised to beg, borrow or steal the book) will find in it a perfect armoury of facts against Christianity and Roman Catholicism. Mr. Freeman is a genius at marshalling the facts, not merely in a most entertaining and readable form, but in a way that is terribly and exasperatingly effective. He has no mercy on those who believe in transubstantiation, as witness:—

What the Catholics pride themselves most on is the possession of a real live God. The priests take a few bits of cake and some wine, say a few words over them, and behold (say they) the bread is the very body, the wine the very blood of God the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth!—and they proceed to eat and drink God.

Did somebody say Gosh! My dear sir, there is nothing original about God-making and God-eating. . . . For transubstantiation is just such as abortion of a conjuring trick. The priest says a few words over some bread and wine and then tells his dupes that the bread is the body or flesh of God and the wine His blood. No sort of examination can tell any difference. Throw the bread to a dog and it disappears in a normal manner. There is no objection either from the dog or the bread.

This suggestion of a practical experiment should surely appeal to Mr. Chesterton or Mr. Belloc or Sir Philip Gibbs, or other well known Catholics. If the bread, before being eaten by the dog, should, in a still small voice, declare its strong disapproval of being the victim of such a meal, most of us (including, I am sure, Mr. Freeman himself) would be converted on the spot. I cannot understand why the doughty Mr. Chesterton, always so ready valiantly to defend his creed in the pages of the *Universe* or in his latest detective story does not take on a paltry little challenge like this. Like his Christian brothers, the Christian Scientists, however, he prefers a haughty and dignified silence when his belief is put to a genuine practical test. Yet transubstantiation and other Catholic "mysteries," which Mr. Freeman calls "this awful slush, this diseased balderdash," is what "the decadent Anglo-Catholics are trying to foist on to England."

After dealing very fully with the Catholic conception of Hell and Purgatory and Heaven, Mr. Freeman has a most entertaining chapter on relics, and then passes on to discuss that well of pruriency—the Confessional. Without the actual works, preferably in translation, before one, it is almost impossible to discuss this question efficiently. Mr. Freeman does as well as he can, but he can only hint at its foulness. "In the confessional," the author quotes, "a priest may put to a girl (or to a married woman) questions of the most intimate, of the most filthy, and of the most abominable kind." Whether the holy man always does so is a different matter.

The chapters on the Roman Catholic persecutions, tortures and massacres are more than ever necessary to be kept in mind in these days of Catholic bluff and bounce. To read the *Universe* one would imagine that instead of inflicting these horrors, the Church had been subject to them. Mr. Freeman disposes of this kind of impudence very thoroughly.

Following are chapters on Roman Catholicism and the Bible, the Law, Education, Science, Divorce, and Patriotism, all of which are packed with trenchant and witty criticism, and which make as sorry a mess of God's Own Religion as I have read for many a long day.

Finally, Mr. Freeman must be congratulated on his patriotism. He loves England, and is proud of it. His description of Cromwell and his Ironsides makes stirring reading. In these days of "Internationalists," who mouth Thomas Paine's famous phrase, "The world is my country," in one breath and in the next prove conclusively how they hate their own, it is pleasant for a Freethought reviewer to read "The greatest thing in the world is England." Over the pages of this journal I salute the writer of that sentence.

H. CUTNER.

Kidding the Kidder.

NEARLY twenty-four hundred years ago Parmenides told the world that there was no such thing as motion, and when the Greeks gave him the merry ha! ha! his pupil, Zeno, got on his hind legs and said that the statement was not only true, but that he could prove it. He laid all kinds of bets that the swift-footed Achilles couldn't give his kiddies' tortoise one hundred yards and a beating. When he had covered all the money in sight he got all set to pull off the most sensational athletic stunt of all time; for he was the greatest showman in history.

The Stadium was packed a week in advance, and the Legion had to be called out to keep the crowd from rushing the gates.

Zeno was right there with his pop-gun at the ap-

* *Priestcraft*, by C. R. Boyd Freeman. The Pioneer Press. 1928. Price 6s. net.

pointed hour, and when he pulled the trigger, gave the tortoise a poke, and held the cabbage at a tantalizing distance in front of its head, you couldn't see Achilles' heels for dust: he was feeling fit and wanted to do the distance in about twelve seconds.

Now both Strabo and Herodotus are a trifle woofy about just what happened after the start; but everybody knows that Zeno waved his wand and threw a handful of dust in the air—and when the crowd had rubbed its eyes, there was Achilles away over the Acropolis hot-footing into space: and—would you believe it?—philosophers still rub their eyes whenever you mention Zeno to them! Zeno put his tongue in his cheek, cleaned up all the bets, and sent out for a patent on perpetual motion. To call it a day he served up a banquet of interchangeable attributes, metaphysical salad and idealistic sauce—and philosophers love the stuff ever since.

What the crowd didn't know was that by the time Achilles was over High Olympus, Zeus was just quaffing a special brew of mead, and the last delicious drop was dribbling down the hatch, when over the rim of the jug he caught a glimpse of Achilles; and the glow of ecstasy in his eyes turned to a flash of rage, as the jug went hurtling through the air, catching Achilles on the gink heel, so that he fell like a sack at the feet of Zeus.

"Son of Thetis!" Zeus roared, and Olympus shook with the nodding of his brow. "Who slipped you a pass to my exalted realm?" But Achilles was down and out, and it was long after the fatal "ten" was counted before he started picking daisies, and murmuring about chiming bells and twittering birds. About this time Mercury and the rest of the scouts from the Stadium blew in and spoilt the beans; and Zeus shook his ambrosial locks in comprehension. Then he said a mouthful! "Kid," he said, "you've been double-crossed! That guy handed it to you good and plenty! When you got off the mark Zeno pulled that hey! presto! stuff on you and hoodooed you for keeps. Your contract with him was for one hundred yards and a kick, the kick being for the tortoise—and, mentioning the tortoise, it makes me weep to think of that poor little innocent thing that never did any harm to anyone—he went and turned it into infinity, and sent you chasing it about.

At this moment the chief actuary, who had been working out the percentage of one hundred and ten yards in infinity on his stone tablets, gently pushed the result before Zeus; but Zeus brusquely brushed them away, grabbed his refilled jug, and hastily summoned the immortal council to decide on Zeno's fate.

T.S.

Correspondence.

THE "IMMORTAL SOUL."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—One hears so much about man's immortal soul that I am sure a really feasible explanation or account of this elusive spiritual organ would be welcomed by all Agnostics, Atheists, and possibly, Christians.

The modern conception of the soul is, I believe, a kind of invisible aura permeating the whole body and character of the man, the mind being an emanation from the soul acting through the medium of the materialistic brain.

Now if this is true and the mind is really an emanation from the immortal spirit, we should expect the mind to be immortal too; but unfortunately we have not one scrap of real evidence to prove that the mind survives the death of the brain. So if we are to be perfectly honest and candid, and cast aside all wild theories and suppositions, we naturally come to the conclusion that the mind or intellect of man is

merely the manifestation of the living brain, and *not* the soul. Should the brain become distorted by any unfortunate occurrence (injury or disease) then, assuming that the mind of man is governed by the brain, we should expect his intellectual powers to be impaired also—and that, of course, is exactly what we do find.

But, on the other hand, if the mind is only the outward expression of the soul acting through the brain, it should certainly never be either diseased or deceased, and moreover, upon the death of the brain an infinite mind should be able to think, and control the various organs of the body. I mean, the idea of the infinite being dependent upon the finite for existence is utterly absurd, we might as well say God depended upon man for his life. This, of course, is very true really, but Christians would never admit it.

Besides, this hypothesis of the brain being a dual organ is absolutely contrary to the modern scientific idea which gives us a perfectly reasonable explanation of the functioning of the brain, which we, collectively, call mind. Psychologists tell us that the mind is merely the result of numerous impressions recorded by the brain; but we know the brain has evolved from the minute specks of protein matter which were present in the spermatozoon and ovum. *From whence therefore does the mind derive its immortality?* The soul is frequently postulated as the essence of life; then, pray, before the fusion of the reproductive bodies, where is the soul?

Both the male and female eggs are alive and must consequently possess a soul which we will assume is immortal. Now, after the fusion of the sperm cell with the ovum, a great number of surplus spermatozoons fall away and perish. What then happens to their souls, and what is the purpose of God in creating thousands of spermatozoa to fertilize one ovum? Surely the Almighty has the power of directing his own creations so that one male body should be sufficient to bring about fertilization without this wanton wastage of energy and souls. Then after fertilization, has the resultant embryo two souls, or do the "spirits" follow the example of the nuclei and also fuse—giving us a double soul? Perhaps the soul has the power of dividing into countless living particles which distribute themselves throughout the spermatozoa; and maybe, on the fusion of the spermatozoon and the ovum, these particles leave their particular sperm cell and assemble in the resultant embryonic body.

Medical science has proved to us that certain medications have the power of neutralizing the fertilizing property of the male cell, so that when we practise birth control, are we frustrating God's plans or intentions? No doubt the loyal disciples of Christ will say that this is another example of their idiotic theory of "Freewill."

One can picture (by a great stretch of the imagination) the Father complacently creating spermatozoon after spermatozoon and soul after soul in blissful ignorance of the fact that they will be ruthlessly destroyed eventually by, shall we say Satan, using one of the divinely created chemical compounds. After gazing pensively at the destruction of his handiwork and the failure of his purpose, no doubt God would invite the Holy Ghost to try, and *He*, I am sure, would succeed. What an infinitely good and omnipotent Deity! Why, His intellectual powers are equalled by the intelligence of the people who believe that a virgin can give birth to a child, that the world can be stopped at the command of a man, that wine can be turned into water, that the deaf can hear, the blind see, and the dead take up their beds and walk.

LOUIS F. ROBERTS.

MODERN SEX AND ITS MODERN CODE.

SIR,—George Bernard Shaw has, with characteristic impatience with sham, denounced our specious cloaking of the whole sex problem as one of the "great suppressions" to our educational system. But the cowardly burking of the moral obligations to youth borne by even the most *douce* of adults cannot obscure the supreme part played in every life by sex. Accepting the term in the wide, Freudian sense—an acceptance no longer regarded as an

unseemly disproportion—we must face frankly the racial and ethical issues postulated by sex. Some will interpret this as an incitement to abandon all pretence of reticence where the subject is concerned; remove it from its recognized sanctities, rush off to Paris and, at the very least, procure copies of *Ulysses*, *The Well of Loneliness*, and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. That would be a foolish and irresponsible handling of the difficulty; although to read of some of the manifestations of sex in such a work as *Ulysses* might well be accounted more nauseating than fascinating. But it simply begs the question, as in the story of the school-boy who received such evasive answers from his father regarding the descent of his family for a few generations back, that he came to the conclusion there could have been no sexual relations in it since his great-grandfather's day at least. Extremism obscures the whole, vital question, for nowhere may liberty so easily degenerate into licence, nowhere is healthy adjustment so necessary.

The primal fallacy proceeding from viewing sex distortedly as a hideous taboo is the associated idea of sexual intercourse as inherently wicked; not even marriage may sublimate it, for that institution is itself a concession to uncontrollably vicious panderings of animal nature. What humbug it all is! What unmitigated pretence! But the pietists who would affect to ignore the promptings of primal nature capitulate at the first sign of argumentative forces; they may be dismissed: the elemental urge of mankind "may not be denied," and sweeps them aside.

Conceding marriage without a dialectic contest, the approach to this part of the subject still bristles with difficulties. The Church has given its blessing to the union of man and woman—but in nowise unreservedly. Marriage, indeed, connotes procreation only, as the Bishop of Durham in a recent pronouncement so clearly indicated. Marriage undertaken without the definite intention to produce new life is the crowning infamy—a horrified evangelist has even spoken of wicked *non-churchmen* as being "like childless marriages." A Bill before the Hungarian Parliament seeks to have the very children at school taught that "childlessness" is tantamount to treason to the country." Catholic chronicles for their own purposes launch "No Stopery!" campaigns. The Church they represent does not mince matters, but rules that "those persons who marry with insufficient means of supporting a family are sinning against God." (A piece of equivocation that indicts innumerable adherents in Ireland, when the economics of the situation are reckoned in many urban and most rural places there). Sex-gratification, it is thus held, has but one justification, and even as a means to that unique end it really plays an ignoble rôle through nature's unfortunate way of fulfilling herself. In view of nature's wasteful prodigality in the matter this sophistry is almost malicious. Were nature's lavish potentiality realizable, we would needs try to incorporate not only Mars, but Neptune, Saturn, Uranus and Jupiter. "Licensed prostitution" is all too frequent within marriage, but were conception alone altruistically desired, the recognized margin within which normal instinct might work would force the dreadful term to assume almost universal application. We think for a moment of the "unsensual" Napoleon spurning the coquettish but barren Josephine from his couch for an unknown but supposedly fertile Austrian princess who will enable him to realize his legitimate dynastic ambitions. No wonder the austere Hardy grows almost lewd for once over such beautiful devotion to the marital ideal:—

"She'll bring him a baby,
As quickly as maybe,
And that's what he wants her to do,
Hoo-hoo!
And that's what he wants her to do!"

Having sought to show that as sex is not baleful in itself, and that—whatever the plea to the contrary—the supposed indulgence in intercourse purely productive is an impossible proscription, it is possible to go further and assert that mere reproduction is not necessarily a desirable or laudable function. It is a primary social doctrine that in a civilized community there should be

no unwanted children, yet who will gainsay that every class of society—in especial those sections that inhabit our swarming slums—has not many such; probably, if such intimate truth could be known, they outnumber the "fruits" of conscious desire. Has not philosopher after philosopher, in fact, deplored the creation of human life—often with criminal irresponsibility—under instinctive necessity! Dostoevsky fearlessly expresses the probable circumstances through the marvellous speech of the lawyer Fetyukovitch in *The Brothers Karamazov*: "The youth involuntarily reflects: 'But did he love me when he begot me?' he asks, wondering more and more. 'Was it for my sake he begot me? He did not know me, not even my sex, at that moment, at the moment of passion, perhaps, inflamed by wine, and he only transmitted to me a propensity to drunkenness.'" So abhorrent is such casualness to Sir Thomas Browne that he writes in his *Religio Medici*: "I could be content that we might procreate like trees, without conjunction, or that there were any way to perpetuate the World without the trivial and vulgar way of union: it is the foolishlest act a wise man commits in all his life." Schopenhauer, as might be expected, is appalled by this generating arbitrariness into one of his most ruthless judgments: "If children were brought into the world by an act of pure reason alone, would the human race continue to exist? Would not a man rather have so much sympathy with the coming generation as to spare it the burden of existence?" And Hardy shows himself the direct heir of this destructive but perfectly reasonable doctrine in *Jude the Obscure*, where little Father Time, that youthful neo-Malthusian pitiable to tears and throbbing tenderness, typifies "the coming universal wish not to live." Elsewhere this most compassionate of novelists has subscribed to the Socratic ideal of utter nescience: "Not to have been born is best."

Doubtless, throughout this argument it will seem that the philosophic concept has alone been stressed; and yet for the majority of people—who are not philosophers, and who remain steeped in religious prejudice—it is the factor in the procreative process which weighs least of all. Far more important than the question posed by "pessimistic" minds as to the unconsidered moral responsibilities implicit in the sexual act, is that of the Malthusian mind in the sphere of practical economics. How decently to maintain a family is usually the unromantic crux of the matter; only rarely does it occur to oppugn the ethically-offensive antagonism between the facile functions of sex and their disproportionate, normal consequences. Yet, in view of this undeniable unbalance, pleasurable facility must not seek to defeat the misrelated effects of fecundity: nature decrees quite literally that the woman must "bear all." How shocking it is, therefore, to imagine that throughout the civilized world millions of married couples are seeking to modify the uneven workings of "nature's law"! But our own unmarried status—unaccompanied at least by medical qualifications—forbids us to discourse on the baleful use of contraceptives, specifically and collectively; and we must abide by our philosophical treatment. From this ground it is safe to insist at least that the whole matter is a personal one. As a recent writer on birth-control, quoted in these columns, said, people have the moral right to say whether they will have children or no. They need not have them simply in blind obedience to natural impulse. J.A.R.

Some people would like to know whence the poet, whose philosophy is in these days deemed as profound and trustworthy as his song is sweet and pure, gets his authority for speaking of "Nature's holy plan."

Thomas Hardy.

While a healthy body helps to make a healthy soul, the reverse is yet more true. Mind lifts up, purifies, sustains the body. Mental and moral activity keeps the body healthy, strong, and young, preserves from decay, and renews life.—James Freeman Clarke.

Funeral of Mr. S. Samuels.

THE cremation of Mr. S. Samuels, which was briefly reported in the *Freethinker* of last week, took place on Wednesday afternoon, November 7, at Golders Green Crematorium.

Amongst the many friends of the deceased who were present were the following: Mr. C. Cohen, President of the National Secular Society, Mr. H. B. Samuels, brother of the deceased, Miss E. M. Vance, Miss K. B. Kough, Mr. A. B. Moss, Mr. F. A. Davies, Mr. C. G. Quinton, Mr. H. R. Clifton, Mr. H. Silvester, Mr. F. Mann, Mr. H. Reeve, Mr. W. Bean, Mr. T. Judge, Mr. F. Shaller, Mr. G. Rolf, Mr. B. A. Le Maine, Mr. Owen Scott, Mr. and Mrs. W. Leate, Mr. R. B. Harrison, Mr. and Mrs. J. Hart, Mr. J. Meerloo, Mr. A. Cayford, Mr. G. Kreuzer, Mrs. Saville, Mr. Stone, Mr. Kells, Mr. Blazer, and others.

Letters expressing sympathy with relatives of the deceased, and regret at inability to attend, were received from Mr. J. Neate, Mr. W. J. W. Easterbrook, Mr. F. A. Hornibrook, and Mr. and Mrs. Brandes and family. The Secretaries of the London Branches wrote, each to officially express the regret of their Branch.

Mr. Cohen, who conducted the service, spoke of the many years ungrudging and unwearying service which Mr. Samuels had given to the "best of causes." Mr. Samuels had not worked in public. He had not the meed of praise and recognition which is the lot of the speaker or writer, but no one had striven more for the advancement of the Secularist Movement. It is upon the "private soldier," said Mr. Cohen, as well as upon the "General," that the success of a movement such as Secularism ultimately depends; and to-day they were bidding a last farewell to one who deserved the utmost praise they could give him for disinterested effort to leave the world at least a little better than he found it. That thought must console them in this hour of sorrow, and they should turn from death to life with an added sense of life's duties and responsibilities.

Mr. Cohen repeated the inspiring lines of Lucretius on Death, Life, and Courage: the assembly stood, and the coffin slowly passed from sight.—A.B.

Obituary.

MR. WILLIAM ROSS.

It is with regret that I have to report the death of Mr. William Ross, brother of the perhaps better known Mr. John T. Ross, of Formby, Liverpool.

Quiet and unassuming in his manner, he was nevertheless a keen and enthusiastic supporter of the Freethought Movement.

Mr. Ross was held in the highest esteem by those who knew him. His death, following an illness of some months, is a sad blow to his widow and relatives, to whom we offer our sincere sympathy. Mr. Ross was buried at Smithdown Road Cemetery, Liverpool. A Secular Service at the graveside being read by Mr. W. McKelvie of the Liverpool Branch.—A.J.

Society News.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH.

At the St. Pancras Reform Club, last Sunday, Mr. Gore Graham gave his lecture, "The Communist Party—the Workers' Party." His main contentions were that the Socialist and Labour Parties in England at the present moment, were thoroughly Capitalistic, or working hand in hand with the Capitalists, and that the only way to get the Paradise the workers in Russia were now enjoying, was to have a bloody civil war, under the complete direction of the Communist Party. A vigorous discussion followed, though one or two speakers took the lecturer rather too seriously. This Sunday (November 18) Mr. Rex Roberts will lecture on "The Ten Years Since the Armistice."

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

HAMPSTEAD ETHICAL INSTITUTE (The Studio Theatre, 59 Finchley Road, N.W.8): 11.15, Mr. R. O. Prowse—"Is the Good Artist Always a Bad Man?"

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W.): 7.30, Mr. Rex Roberts—"The Ten Years Since the Armistice."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (30 Brixton Road, S.W., near Oval Station): 7.15, Mr. L. Ebury—"Freethought and Politics."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): Free Sunday Lectures. 7 p.m. Mrs. Seaton Tiedeman—"The Need for Mr. Snell's Bill for Courts of Domestic Relations."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (The London Institution Theatre, South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11.0, S. K. Ratcliffe—"England Changing Hands."

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY ("The Orange Tree" Hotel, Euston Road, N.W.1): 7.30, Mr. Howell Smith, B.A.—"Bahaism, the Youngest of World Religions."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Eclipse Restaurant, 4 Mill Street, Conduit Street, W.1): 7.30, Mr. Fred Mann—"Prayer, and the *Daily Express*."

OUTDOOR.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Shorrolds Road, North End Road, Walham Green): Every Saturday at 8 p.m. Speakers—Messrs. Campbell-Everden, Bryant, Mathie and others.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12 noon, Mr. James Hart; 3.30, Mr. B. A. Le Maine. Freethought meetings every Wednesday and Friday at 7.30. Various lecturers. The *Freethinker* is on sale outside Hyde Park during our meetings.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Ravenscourt Park, Hammersmith): 3.0, Mr. W. P. Campbell-Everden.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BELFAST (Proposed) Branch N.S.S. (48 York Street): 3.0, Mr. A. McKimm—"Immortality."

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Bristol Street Council Schools): 7.0, Mr. Saphin—"Christianity: Sun Worship." Illustrated with lantern slides. Questions and discussion.

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH N.S.S.—7.15, Mr. F. Cook—A Lecture.

HOUGHTON (Proposed Branch N.S.S.)—Tuesday, November 20, at 7.30 p.m. Mr. Jno. Welsh—A Lecture.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. Chapman Cohen—"Freethought and a Future Life." Admission free. Collection. Questions and Discussion.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY, Branch of the N.S.S. (No. 2 Room, City Hall): 6.30, Mr. J. K. Oliphant—"Has Life a Purpose?" Admission by silver collection. Questions and discussion.

OUTDOOR.

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

TEA.—A 10/- P.O. will bring you 4lbs. of delicious Tea, usually sold at 3/- to 3/4. Our Teas find their way as far afield as Edinburgh in the North, and Torquay in the South. 40 years' experience in the Tea trade. "Vat ve vant is orders."—JOSEPH BRYCE, 27 Elswick Road, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

WRITER with comprehensive and sound knowledge of regular contributions to monthly journal. Must be able to express himself convincingly, clearly and fluently. Box C.P.5, *Freethinker*, 61 Farringdon Street, E.C.4.



Unsuitable Gods

“Nor let a god come in, unless the difficulty be worthy of such an intervention.”

—Horace.

MANY years ago, the printer made us say “unsuitable gods” instead of “unsuitable goods returned.” Accidentally, we thus expressed a brilliant truth, for if we really could return your unsuitable gods to the limbo of oblivion, where they properly belong, we are sure you would have been an ardent supporter of ours long ago.

How many unsuitable satorial gods you worship we can only guess at, but one, we think, is the belief that only “big business” has merit to back its advertising. Try us and see. Another, we surmise, is the idea that first-class tailors are found nowhere except in London, Manchester, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and other big centres. Try us and see. In short, you may unhesitatingly take it that any notion which hinders your testing us is an unsuitable god. Smash it; then try us and see. Read again carefully page 735 of last week’s *Freethinker*.

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

MAZEEN

- SUPER HAIR CREAM . . . 1/6 per bottle
- SOLIDIFIED BRILLIANTINE . . . 1/- per tin
- TOOTH BRUSHES . . . 1/- each

POST FREE FROM :

THE MAZEEN TOILET Co., 82 Hart Street, Manchester.

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.

EARN MONEY AT HOME

You can earn money at home in whole or spare time writing Show Cards for us. No canvassing, we train you by post by our new simple method and furnish the Outfit free. We supply both men and women with steady work at home, no matter where you live, and pay you cash for all work completed each week, under our legal guarantee. Full particulars and booklet free. Write at once or call.—SHOW CARD SERVICE, HITCHIN.

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.)

Some Pioneer Press Publications—

- THE COMING OF THE SUPERMAN. By GEORGE WHITEHEAD. 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.
- HISTORY OF THE CONFLICT BETWEEN RELIGION AND SCIENCE. By Prof. J. W. DRAPER. 395 pages. 2s., postage 4½d.
- THE OTHER SIDE OF DEATH. By CHAPMAN COHEN. A Critical Examination of the Belief in a Future Life, with a Study of Spiritualism from the Standpoint of the New Psychology. Paper Covers, 2s., postage 1½d.; Cloth Bound, 3s. 6d., postage 2d.
- THE CASE AGAINST THEISM. By GEORGE WHITEHEAD. A Reasonable View of God. Cloth Bound, 2s. 6d., postage 2½d.
- THE MARTYRDOM OF HYPATHIA. By M. M. MANGASARIAN. 1d., postage ½d.
- THE LIFE-WORSHIP OF RICHARD JEFFERIES. By A. F. THORN. Portrait. 3d., postage 1d.

Can be obtained from:

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

A book every Freethinker should have—

BUDDHA THE ATHEIST

BY

“UPASAKA”

(Issued by the Secular Society, Ltd.)

IN this book Buddhism is expounded plainly, freely, accurately, and without circumlocution or apology. It is written by a Buddhist who has studied the subject at first hand for thirty years, not merely from the writings of others, but from Buddhists in Buddhist countries. It will be accepted by English-reading Buddhists as a necessary corrective of the misrepresentations of their religion so widely current.

Price One Shilling

Postage 1d.

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

THE “Freethinker” Endowment Trust

A Great Scheme for a Great Purpose

THE *Freethinker* Endowment Trust was registered on the 25th of August, 1925, its object being to raise a sum of not less than £8,000, which, by investment, would yield sufficient to cover the estimated annual loss incurred in the maintenance of the *Freethinker*. The Trust is controlled and administered by five Trustees, of which number the Editor of the *Freethinker* is one in virtue of his office. By the terms of the Trust Deed the Trustees are prohibited from deriving anything from the Trust in the shape of profit, emoluments, or payment, and in the event of the *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 reasonable short time.

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

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

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

GODS, DEVILS, AND MEN

(Issued by the Secular Society, Ltd.)

By George Whitehead

Contains Chapters on: The Primitive Theory of Lunacy and Disease—Religion and Madness—Religion and Crime—The Suggestibility of the Mind—Religious Epidemics—The Pathology of Religious Leaders—Jesus.

Price Ninepence. Postage 1d.

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

220 pages of Wit and Wisdom

BIBLE ROMANCES

By G. W. Foote

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

Price 2/6 Postage 3d.

Well printed and well bound.

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