

The  
**FREETHINKER**

FOUNDED · 1881

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

Vol. XLIX.—No. 41.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13, 1929

PRICE THREEPENCE

**GEORGE BERNARD SHAW**  
AND  
**THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.**

In the *Sunday Express* for September 8, there appeared a letter from Mr. George Bernard Shaw, which contained the following passage bearing upon the National Secular Society:—

When its most famous President, Charles Bradlaugh, died, it was casting about for an alternative successor to G. W. Foote, with whom some of its leading members had quarrelled. I was invited to address it on the subject of Progress in Freethought. I complied; and my lecture threw the society into convulsions . . . I was not offered the vacant presidency.

Taking this in its plain meaning, I commented (*Freethinker*, September 15), as follows:—

Mr. Shaw's memory must have misled him. (1) There was never any doubt as to who would succeed Mr. Bradlaugh, and Mr. Bradlaugh nominated Mr. Foote himself. (2) As Mr. Shaw was not a member of the N.S.S., he was not eligible for the Presidency. If it was ever suggested to him it must have been by some slicer outsider, or by someone who was "pulling his leg," and that with a man of Mr. Shaw's build is really not so very difficult. (3) Outside the statement of Mr. Shaw, there is no evidence of any "convulsion" overtaking the Society as a consequence of his lecture. Perhaps he means that it ought to have gone into convulsions. (4) I can assure Mr. Shaw, and others, that it was not, and is not, the policy of the N.S.S. seeking outsiders for the Presidency, or even as members, no matter what kind of a name they may have, or how ever great their position. Men and women who join the N.S.S. come to it; they are not begged to join, however great their position, or however famous their names may be. The democracy of the N.S.S. quite excludes that particular species of tuft-hunting.

On that Mr. Shaw sends me the following letter which I regret I was unable to publish last week:—

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,  
I do not think my memory misled me essentially when I wrote to the *Sunday Express* about Foote's succession to Bradlaugh in the Presidency of the N.S.S. It is quite true that Foote was the only possible successor, and that Bradlaugh recognized this. But it does not follow that everybody in the N.S.S. was as well able to grasp and face an inevitable situation as Bradlaugh, or that Bradlaugh faced it joyfully. Foote was not, like some of the Popes, unanimously supported as a nonentity from whom nothing was to be feared. He was very far from being a nonentity. He owed his position to his indispensability and his superior personal force, as Bradlaugh did. But presidents, like other monarchs, are seldom enthusiastic admirers of their inevitable successors; and when Bradlaugh handed to Foote the gavel which is the N.S.S. symbol of supremacy, he expressed a hope that his successor might prove worthy of it in a tone which did not dis-

guise the fact that he felt anything but sanguine about it. As Foote unquestionably did prove worthy of it, there is no harm in recalling that now.

But Bradlaugh's feeling was represented in the ranks too. In a few cases Foote was objected to because he was in financial difficulties at the time. But the main reason was that Bradlaugh was so extraordinary a man that no mortal successor could have satisfied his devoted followers; and Foote, though an able and distinguished man, was only a man and not a demigod. Those who, like myself, remember Bradlaugh, will understand what I mean.

He was a hero, a giant who dwarfed everything around him, a terrific personality. When the Socialist League put me forward (though I was not a member of it) to debate Socialism with him on the strength of a brush I had with him at the Hall of Science, I could not refuse the nomination without cowardice in the face of the enemy; but I was greatly relieved when he imposed the condition, which I could not accept, that I should be bound by all the manifestos of the Social-Democratic Federation (of which also I was not a member). The truth is, I was afraid of his enormous personal force, to which, at my age, I could make no pretension. But I took on Foote for the Eight Hours debate without the least misgiving; for though I knew he could hold his own even at the disadvantage of being off his own special ground and on mine, and of having, as I believed, an untenable cause, yet we were men and friends, and at worst I should not look like an immature daddy-long-legs struggling with a tornado. I am sorry now that I did not concede every demand of Bradlaugh's to have had the experience of debating with him; but the fact that I was glad to escape the encounter, whereas I should have been greatly disappointed if anything had prevented my encounter with Foote, shows how much more formidable was the dramatic effect produced by the older man, and how impossible it was for Bradlaugh's admirers, and even for Bradlaugh himself, to admit that Foote could fill his place worthily.

Consequently some members of the N.S.S. demurred. It was not clear to them that Foote was the only pebble on the beach. I knew what was going on from my friend George Standing, whose authority will not be disputed by any of the Old Guard. There were apparent alternatives. I was known in Old Street as an uncompromising Freethinker, and a very promising platform speaker and debater. I was, as you point out, not a member of the N.S.S.; but that could be remedied in five minutes by making me one with my consent. I think I may say now, at seventy-three, and in the light of my subsequent career, that I should not have been half a bad catch for the N.S.S. Then there was Mr. J. M. Robertson, who could claim long, devoted, and highly distinguished services to the Society and its cause. He also has since given his proofs. Will anyone venture to question his entire and eminent eligibility? Some years earlier Mrs. Besant, or, failing her, Edward Aveling, would



have carried all before them. But Mrs. Besant had left the Society and become a Theosophist; and Aveling, though still an incorruptible Diehard Atheist, had proved so extremely corruptible on every other point that no respectable Society could admit him to any official position. Indeed it was Aveling's innumerable delinquencies in money matters that made Standring and others so nervous about Foote's financial difficulties, though they were of quite a different kind.

That was the situation when I was invited to lecture at Old Street on Progress in Freethought. Standring was not, as you imagine, pulling my leg. He knew quite well what he was about; and so did I. But like Mr. Robertson, I had other fish to fry, as Bradlaugh himself eventually also had. When I told the Old Street congregation that the Trinity was a perfectly reasonable proposition and not an arithmetical impossibility; that anyone who denied the Immaculate Conception was in effect affirming the abominable doctrine of original sin; and that any Freethinker who could not understand this could be gathered into the Roman Catholic Church in a week by any ordinary, capable, and tactful Jesuit, my chances of becoming President of the N.S.S. (had I desired it) vanished for ever. I do not insist on the word convulsions as descriptive of the effect I produced: I am well aware that the more fossilized Secularists received my utterances in contemptuous calm as the quibbles of a hopeless fool. But the cleverer ones were not quite so Olympianly self-controlled. Mr. Robertson, a Scotch mystic and rhapsodist beneath all his surface Rationalism and mastery of the Old Street phraseology, was really less possible than I. Leading the N.S.S. was no more his job than it was mine. It was Foote's: that was what made Foote inevitable and successful. He alone had the singleness of interest, the determination to be at the head or nowhere, the combination of ability with absence of alternatives which made the position worth his while.

Pardon the length of this contribution to the history of the movement. I make it because there is in your note a curious confusion between the famous playwright of to-day and the infamous young Freethinking adventurer of those days. The notion that George Standring and his friends, in giving me a "try out," were left hunting, would amuse him considerably if he were alive to laugh at it. I hope I have succeeded in readjusting your perspective, and refreshing the few first-hand memories that still remain of what an amazing chief the N.S.S. had in the days when Bradlaugh was its President.

Yours truly,

G BERNARD SHAW.

The chief objection I have to Mr. Shaw's explanation is that it does not explain. Most of what he says has no vital bearing upon the issue, except so far as it may serve to explain what I regard as an error on the part of Mr. Shaw. It is, for instance, beside the point to say that there was not complete unanimity in the N.S.S. over the election of Foote to the Presidency. There were certainly some who would have preferred another person. But the same thing might have been said with truth of the election of Bradlaugh to the Presidency. Still, with Bradlaugh, as with Foote, the overwhelming majority of the members of the Society saw that there could be no other man for the post. My statement that there was never any doubt as to who would succeed when it was known that Bradlaugh contemplated resignation was therefore quite accurate. It was proven by Bradlaugh himself nominating Foote for the Presidency. I cannot say anything about the tone of Mr. Bradlaugh's voice when he handed the historic hammer to Foote. That can never be more than an impression, in all probability the impression was formed by someone who did not want Foote as

President, and in any case Mr. Shaw not being a member, and therefore, not being present, must be repeating a statement at second hand. I will come later to what Bradlaugh actually said, only remarking now that Bradlaugh was not exactly the kind of man to nominate a President of whom he had doubts.

Mr. Shaw's first and second paragraphs are inconsequential to the question at issue, which is whether the Society after the death of Mr. Bradlaugh was looking round for an alternative to G. W. Foote, and so considered Mr. Shaw. Quite truly Mr. Shaw describes Bradlaugh as so extraordinary a man that "no mortal successor would have satisfied his (Bradlaugh's) followers," and, consequently, no other man would have been quite welcome. In that respect the Society was paying the penalty of having had a super-man for its leader. But you cannot have a succession of super-men. If super-men were common they would sink into the ranks of the ordinary.

Neither is it to the point to tell me that there were other possible persons—possible in the sense of men who had worked for Freethought, were known, and respected. Of course there were; but there were no possible men in the sense of their being anyone who stood the slightest chance of being elected.

And if there were, Mr. Shaw was not one of them. He was not a member of the Society, he had never been closely associated with its work, he had no place in the Society as either a speaker on its platform or a writer in its journals, and if it was Mr. Standring who informed him that he might be elected President if his lecture gave satisfaction, Standring must have been pulling his leg with a vengeance. Had Mr. Shaw been familiar with the policy of the N.S.S. he would not have been so easily taken in.

Mr. Shaw himself provides a clear proof of the absurdity of the statement made by him and criticized by me. The N.S.S., he writes in the *Express* article, "was resolutely anti-Socialist; and I was (and am) an extreme Socialist. It was heroically Materialist and Rationalist; I was an artist-philosopher and the utter negation of both." Well, I do not think that the Society, in 1889, was quite so resolutely anti-Socialist as Mr. Shaw thinks, but if it was, a strongly Materialistic and anti-Socialist Society going out of its way to invite a strong Socialist and strong anti-Materialist to be its President, one who was not a member, and who was comparatively unknown, may be a good subject for a burlesque, it might even pass as wit for such as joke with difficulty, but it is not the way of men and women on serious business bent.

Apparently with a view to lending strength to his statement that the Society cast its eye upon him as a possible President, Mr. Shaw says that events have shown that he would not have been a bad catch "in the light of my subsequent career." "In the light of my subsequent career." May I remind Mr. Shaw that when things are different they are seldom the same, and if the past had not been what it was, the present would not be what it is. In 1889 Mr. Shaw would have been no great catch for the Society, for he was then a very little known man. In 1929 his name is world-wide and he would be a catch for any Society that desired a President for the advertising value of his name. If Mr. Shaw, or Charlie Chaplin, joined the N.S.S. next week, there would doubtless be crowds of sheep-like individuals who would follow suit. What their value would be is quite another question.

But, alas! when things are different they are never the same; and if Mr. Shaw had thrown in his lot with the N.S.S. in 1889, lecturing constantly on its platform, writing regularly in its journals, and taking rank as the leader of the fighting Freethinkers of Great Britain, he would most certainly not be the G.B.S. of 1929. The religious boycott is very vigi-



lant and very strong. There are numbers of men who have desired and found fame in politics, or letters, or a place in Society, who keep, and have kept, their opinions on religion to themselves, or expressed them within the safety line that had been created by the more fearless Freethinkers. They realized that in this country a man cannot become popular with the general public and carry on a straightforward attack on the established superstition. If Mr. Shaw had in 1889 achieved the practical impossibility of becoming President of the N.S.S. most emphatically he would not have been the world-famed G.B.S. that we know to-day. He would not have been less able, or less worthy; but he would not have had the papers of the world open to him, and publishers would not have been competing for his books. His name would have been kept in the background, if its use in the press had not been strictly forbidden. That was the case with Charles Bradlaugh in spite of his being such a "terrific personality" that he over-awed even George Bernard Shaw. On the political side there was occasion when Bradlaugh's name and work could not be ignored, but it was minimized as far as could be, and his Freethinking work ignored or referred to as that of an ignorant demagogue. The man who gives himself to Freethought must place little value upon either personal profit or popular success.

I do not say that some individual did not whisper to Mr. Shaw that he would like to see him President of the N.S.S. But Mr. Shaw's language implied that it was the *Society* which, casting round for a leader, invited him to lecture at the Hall of Science, with a view to his becoming its President. Seeing that the Hall of Science lectures were managed by a Committee, that Foote had been President for at least a year when Bradlaugh died, and therefore Foote was the dominating influence at the Hall of Science, it is tolerably plain that no official or semi-official invitation could have been issued. What some individual may have whispered to Mr. Shaw is quite another question, and one with which I am not in the least concerned. On that head I am quite willing to take Mr. Shaw's word, with the private opinion that he appears to have been very easily taken in.

Mr. Shaw withdraws the word "convulsions" as to the effect produced by his Hall of Science lecture, and I have no desire to press it. But the essential point is "Was the N.S.S., after Bradlaugh's death, casting round for a President in place of its existing President, G. W. Foote, and did the Society invite Mr. Shaw to deliver a lecture with a view to his being offered a post that was not vacant?" Everything else, whether there were some who would have preferred another than Foote, whether there were other conceivable candidates, whether Mr. Shaw would have been a "catch" or otherwise, all these things are quite beside the point. They are interesting enough reading, but they serve only to distract attention. Several times in my life I have been invited by the acting minister of a Christian Church to give an address in his pulpit, and have done so. But if some mischievous, or leg-pulling deacon had taken me on one side and whispered that he did not like the minister and that if my address pleased I might have the pastorate, I hope my sense of humour would have prevented the suggestion being taken seriously.

Mr. Shaw says he has written in the hopes of re-adjusting my perspective with regard to the history of the Society. I am indebted to him, for at least his good intention; but as a kindness conferred invites a kindness in return, I must reciprocate, even though the kindness may be a little cruel.

(1) Bradlaugh resigned his Presidency at a special meeting of the Society, to which none but members of the Society were admitted, on February 16, 1890.

(2) There was no vacant Presidency, save for the time it took to elect G. W. Foote, which was done at the same meeting.

(3) Mr. Bradlaugh nominated Mr. Foote, who was duly elected, and in handing him the hammer said, "I give it you joyfully, and trust that you will hand it on to your successor," and at the end of the meeting, after expressing the hope that he would live long enough to thank Foote for what he had done, added, "I believe you will do the best that man can do." The language is strange in one who was not very hopeful about the men he was nominating.

(4) Foote was re-elected "with acclamation" at the Annual Conference at Manchester the same year, at which Conference both Mr. J. M. Robertson and Mrs. Annie Besant were present.

(5) Bradlaugh died on January 30, 1891, Foote having been President since February 16 of the previous year. The Society was certainly not "casting about" for a President during that period.

(6) Mr. George Bernard Shaw lectured at the Hall of Science on February 22, 1891, his subject being "Freethinking Old and New." There was a discussion after the lecture at which Mr. John M. Robertson and others twitted Mr. Shaw and the Fabians with being silent as to their views on religion and the population question. The impression produced was that of "being sermonized on Freethought by a Socialist outsider." But I can trace no excitement and no interest in Mr. Shaw's views about the Trinity or the Immaculate Conception.

(7) Mr. Foote had then been President for a full year. He was in command, and those who knew Foote will scarcely believe that the Society of which he was President was looking round for someone to replace him, which could not have been done without his knowledge.

(8) Mr. Shaw was not a member of the N.S.S., and therefore was not eligible for the Presidency. He was then a comparatively unknown man, known as being a Freethinker, it is true, as were scores of others, but also known as being mainly interested in Socialism, and therefore could have been of no perceptible use to the Society. The notion that a man could have been made a member of the Society one five minutes and elected President the next, is too grotesque to warrant serious consideration.

(9) On one point Mr. Shaw has misunderstood me. When I said that the N.S.S. did not indulge in tuft-hunting, I had in my mind no reference to Mr. Shaw. He has himself pointed out that to call running after him in 1889 tuft-hunting, is ridiculous, and in that I agree with him. I used the expression because the N.S.S. does not run after the help or the patronage of men merely because they happen to own a title or have some sort of social or financial standing, and was, therefore, not likely to do so in the case of men who are both poor and little known. The sense of equality in the N.S.S. is a very real thing, and I hope it will continue to be so.

(10) If Mr. Shaw, whenever he has occasion in the future to refer to his association with the National Secular Society, says that one, or two, of its members, probably because he, or they, did not care for the existing President, expressed a desire to see him President, or that they would like to see him elected to the post, there will be no need to question the statement.

(11) As a student of psychology I am always interested in the history of a delusion.

CHAPMAN COHEN,

President, National Secular Society.



## Theology Without Tears.

"Thou comest in such a questionable shape that I will speak with thee."—*Shakespeare: Hamlet.*

"There is nothing on earth divine beside humanity."  
Landor.

It looks as if our old friends, the lecturers of the Christian Evidence Society will soon join the ranks of the two millions of unemployed citizens. For so many of the clergy are taking up the subject of Christian apologetics. Curates, rectors, vicars, canons, deans, even bishops are rushing into print and are ablaze with passion in defence of the faith once delivered to the saints. Candour compels me to add that the clergy make poor advocates, despite the editorial assistance of bold headlines and leaded type. The bishops are easily the worst of the whole bunch. One does not expect too much from a pale-faced young curate fresh from the apron-strings of Alma Mater, but a right-reverend Father-in-God should be able to defend his bread-and-margarine with something of the zeal that a cat has when she defends her kittens. That the exact opposite is the case is one of life's little ironies. One clear brave thought, however, emerges from the whole sad business. Either the real Christian Evidence lecturers have been scurvily underpaid for very many years, or else the Bench of Bishops has been getting money far too easily.

Here, for example, the Rt. Rev. J. H. B. Masterman, Bishop of Plymouth, has been writing in a London daily paper on "We Must Believe in Miracles." It is a terrible piece of apologetics, and if I attended the bishop's church I should feel inclined to stop my subscriptions and resign my family pew to more simple folk. For, in the first paragraph of this defence of the supernatural, the bishop says that the Gospel stories "are really the only miracles that matter." He continues:—

The real value of the Old Testament is not effected by the admission that many of the miraculous stories recorded in it belong to the folk-lore of primitive tradition.

What on earth is a poor, unfortunate believer to do when he hears his beloved bishop throw over the earlier part of the Christian Bible in this unceremonious fashion? Folk-lore, forsooth! Adam and Eve, Noah's Ark, the Tower of Babel, Jonah and the Whale, and scores of other stories just folk-lore! "All my little chickens and their dam at one fell swoop," as Macduff says in Shakespeare's play. Nor is this all, for the bishop sweeps on as remorselessly as a motor-car out of control:—

We cannot rule out the possibility that particular miracles (in the Gospels) may be capable of a natural explanation.

It used to be said that the supreme wickedness of the awful Freethinker consisted in his robbing simple people of their faith. That is exactly what the Bishop of Plymouth is doing. And religious people bereft of their faith, so we were told, used to commit suicide when they were kind-hearted; whilst the other sort looked round for someone to murder. It is really too awful, for weedkiller can be purchased as easily as lemon-squash, and toy-pistols, capable of blowing a person into another world, are on sale at cheap bazaars.

Another would-be champion of the Christian faith is the Rev. J. T. Hardwick, vicar of Partington, who thinks that, not only are miracles stumbling-blocks to the plain citizen, but that the Christian Religion itself needs repolishing and re-upholstering. A "thorough overhaul" of religious words is necessary. He added:—

This would be one way of bringing about the des-

cent of religion into the sphere of experience and reality from the realm of make-believe and miracles.

According to Brother Hardwick, the language of theology is different to the live language used by men and women to-day. That has been remarked upon by generations of Freethinkers, and what the reverend gentleman regards as a bright, new, original idea is found to be a commonplace of Freethought criticism. As an instance, our vicar says:—

No term stands in such need of examination as the word "spirit." The mind of the average man is in a complete fog over the matter. The only tangible meaning he can put into the word is whisky, petrol, and ghosts.

The average man, who leaves school at fourteen, and whose literary horizon is bounded by the sporting editions of the daily papers, and, perhaps, by the crudite works of Edgar Wallace, is very likely to be fogged by theology. Scholars who devote their lives to the subject do not find such studies easy work. To begin with, the Christian Religion is two thousand years old. It has its roots in old-world Paganism, which extends back into the twilight of historical research. Even so, Christianity is Oriental in origin, and its Scripture is but a translation of translations. The authorized English version of the Christian Bible is centuries old, and the Book of Common Prayer is old enough to be quite out of touch with modern ideas. The dedication of this Bible, and the lick-spittle prayers for Royalty in the Prayer Book should be bound together and entitled: "The Flunkey's Handbook."

Adversity makes strange bedfellows, and it is not surprising to find Dean Inge "doing his bit" on behalf of the faith he professes. The dean is in an entirely different category to the other apologists. He is one of the very few scholars that the State Church possesses, and his excursions into print are not only readable but are enjoyable. A priest, he "wears his rue with a difference." Curiously, the dean flatly contradicts the bishop, and the matter makes more joyous reading than the solemn pages of the respectable *Punch*, which is the alleged comic paper of a nation that is said to "take its pleasures sadly."

In his articles on "Miracles," the Bishop of Plymouth in one of the purplest of purple passages, almost becomes lyrical. Referring to Christ he says:—

For nineteen centuries He (Christ) has been the source and sustainer of all that is best and noblest in human life.

Dean Inge, as becomes a scholar, and a ripe, good one, is neither hysterical nor lazy. Here is what he says:—

The morality of Northern Europe is neither Greek nor Jewish but Gothic.

Pursuing the argument the dean has the following telling passage, which loses nothing by being couched in Biblical terms:—

The English gentleman whose conduct is dictated by a code of honour is not like any other sort of gentleman, and still more unlike David, the man after God's own heart, whose behaviour to Saul, Abner, Goliath, Michel, Shimel, Uriah, and others, stamps him as little better than a cad.

George Foote put the matter more tersely when he wrote: "If David were the man after God's own heart it only proves what a black heart this deity had." That a Christian priest should write in a similar strain to the famous Freethinker is truly remarkable. For the figure of David is too closely allied with the legendary figure of the Gospel Christ to be thrown thus rudely to the rubbish-heap without disastrous results to Orthodoxy. It is not only a desperate policy in the particular instance, but a pre-



cedent which will exert, in the long run, anything but a happy effect on the Christian position. Not long ago the House of Convocation of Canterbury, in revising the Book of Common Prayer, decided to abandon Psalm 58, and to eliminate some of the worst features of some of the other sacred lyrics attributed to King David. This was done on the ground that these portions of "God's Word" were "un-Christian-like in character," which is an evasive and soft-soapy way of saying that they are out of harmony with modern humanistic ideas.

Observe the priests have themselves started to pull "God's Word" to pieces, and have begun with the Psalms. King David has to share the fate of the Kaiser and other monarchs in exile. For David is now seen to be a barbarian, and the champions of the Christian Bible are obliged to throw the old Oriental savage overboard in order to absolve their deity from the vices and crimes of his favourite. Let there be no mistake about this. Freethought is slowly forcing the Christian Churches into a dangerous position, and the clergy are actually in retreat.

Still, I, for one, shall be sorry to find our old friends, the real Christian Evidence lecturers, out of work. They advertised Freethought, and familiarized audiences with rationalistic argument. Unlike the cowards in the pulpits, they faced the music of opposition. They were not such bad fellows. Hang it all! The first one that I meet will tempt me to say: "Have a cigar, sweetheart!"

MIMNERMUS.

### Paganism in Northumbria.

MANY parts of the uplands of Northumberland—"oot-byce" is the term used by the sheep farmers in describing the more remote of them, just as "in-byce" is applied to the hills and moors nearer home—are as they were hundreds and maybe thousands of years ago. Wild and desolate, fit only for black-faced sheep and grouse, they make little appeal save to those who have inherited some of the old Border traditions of freedom and, perhaps rapine, which held sway in the long ago on the moors of the north country. It lingered long after the peoples of England and Scotland had been flogged into respectability, lasting here and there until well on in the lifetime of men now living, when the natives of certain hamlets, under the shadow of the Cheviots, had a reputation for violence and thieving worthy of the more strenuous raiding days. But the force of law and order has prevailed where at one time the King's writ did not, and whatever of their forbears the men of the Border now have, it does not show in their relations with each other as it once did. In other respects, however, the past is writ large over the Borderland; the men who made mysterious circular markings on rocks, and the almost equally mysterious ogham writings; the builders of Black Dykes and Catrails, of megalithic monuments; the altar inscriptions to pagan gods of the Roman army and the runic characters of former days, are all in evidence and sometimes intrude into the present with disconcerting effect. Christianity, then young and parasitic and full of vigour, was feeding on its predecessors, so to speak, both physically and mentally, and showing little of its present-day reluctance to acknowledge its debt to what had gone before.

One little item of proof of this connexion was discovered some years ago at Elsdon, a village in Redesdale. There is an old church there called after the hermit of the Farnes, St. Cuthbert; there being one of that name at most of the spots where the saint's body rested during its wanderings to escape the ravaging hands of the Danes—the church folk had occasion to

repair the tower, and in doing so broke through into a chamber which contained the skulls of three horses. There was a considerable amount of speculation about the manner of their coming and the author of a recent novel, *The Keeper of the Rede*, has explained how they came from the pele of a Border reiver of the fifteenth century. They were the skulls of his favourite raiding mounts, and when he found that the bleached bones above his hearth-stone reminded him too much of happier and more strenuous days he bribed the Church to take the relics into its possession. That is the pleasant fancy of the author whose more typical characters are, by the way, scornfully defiant of the Church. Garconside, outlaw and reiver, pursues a traitor into the sanctuary at Hexham and slays him in the presence of the Prior: sneering at the priestly denunciation. His god was "his ain sel," and his saviour the "braid sword" that put finis to the betrayer of Border folk. Another old reiver, dying from wounds received when avenging the loss of the last of his sons, waves aside the proffered consolation of the priest: that sort of thing was fit only "for white-washed strumpets and white-livered southern popinjays," and the old ruffian goes to his death muttering of the vengeance he had taken on his enemy—It was finally and generally dismissed as the freak of some irreverent mason. But, consider. St. Cuthbert's is of the thirteenth century, when more than a thousand years of Christianity had deepened the strain of credulity in a people already well endowed in the way. The onset of knowledge had made little impression on the mass of emotional chaos which rioted in and about mankind, and we know that the Church of Christ was then incorporating in its own being the odds and ends of every superstition. During the first twelve centuries of British history there was enough of the debris of religions to set up a score of Churches, provided the taste of the builders were catholic enough, although there is no great disparity between the Christ and the sacred horse of the East. Both were concerned with the same thing, and the latter certainly was ready to their hands. What more likely than that the skulls were packed away in the Church tower by Christians who believed in making sure of the favour of the gods, much as a converted West African negro is sometimes found to have tucked away next his heart a ju-ju charm to co-operate with the Christian Christ in averting evil influences. A double-barrelled attitude to "spiritual" things has always been in favour among Christians.

The early inhabitants of Britain were familiar with the horse as an object of worship. On British coins of pre-Roman days the horse is a prominent figure. It is seen, a fearsome beast, galloping across space with a man underneath, an obvious symbol of the sun careering across the heavens. And sometimes the figure of the animal sculptured on the Wiltshire down is pictured on British coins. All of which is the very stuff of religion and full of significance. Tradition asserts that the cult of the horse came by way of traders from the East, the home of many superstitions, and if the British could take a saviour god from the Orient, the acceptance of a horse from the same source would not be beyond his power and inclination. He accepted Eostre, the goddess of Spring, and held festival on her feast day. The pagan Yule survives as the birthday of the Christian deity, and the autumn festival of paganism has been taken over to the credit of the Christian saints. In a village in Redesdale, Belsay—the name probably derived from Baal, the Phœnician god whose altars are found in the neighbourhood, the villagers up to quite recent times lit Baal fires at midsummer, and drove the cattle through the smoke to protect them.



from disease. What is now a mere following of old-time custom, was in the early Christian period a matter of deep import, and its survival is one of the many proofs that the fabric of religion is a hotch-potch of superstitious matter.

If people will worship, the horse seems as good an object as a meek and emaciated Christ. The qualities of strength and endurance, of fiery vigour and fleetness stands well in comparison with the meekness of a non-resisting Jew, and should appeal strongly to an independent people. But "worship" does not connote appreciation of noble qualities; there is an element of fear, of selfishness, which is the dominant factor in the practice. However idealistic the genesis of it maybe, from the moment it is conceived the downward course is begun. The utter surrender of what someone called the god-like faculty of reason—although nothing can be more certain that when reason comes in the gods go hence—follows on the enthronement of the adoring side of mankind and a way opened for all manner of mental belittlement. As a matter of fact the same thing happens whether you worship a horse or a Christ whether you be an Early Briton, or a twentieth century Archbishop.

That suggests to me the spurious information concerning our ancestors imparted to children in the schools. According to the book, the Briton was a half-naked individual who had a pronounced fancy for blue decorative effects, but nothing could be further from the truth. Comparatively speaking, the Briton was fairly well up in the philosophy of the time. Cæsar says they were versed in the wisdom of the East and had visitors from the Continent for instruction in the rites of Druidism. Pliny says they cultivated philosophy to such an extent that it was thought the East was indebted to them for wisdom. They also were credited with a knowledge of astronomy, measuring time, as Cæsar testifies, by nights, and not by days, the days being reckoned as parts of the preceding nights, which is a fairly independent trait for naked primitives. And an old German writer says that of old it was an established belief that Britain was the abode of souls. But while that is indicative of the possession of virtues, it was also brimming with superstitions, and it passed them on with the vitality superstition always possesses. And Christianity invariably degraded the legacy. The idea of the horse as a symbol of the life-giving sun is not in itself mentally degrading. In its state as first conceived, the opposite may have been true, but with the growth of a priesthood, those hangers-on at the fane, corruption appears, and the butchering of a horse to sanctify a sacred building with its blood, for that is the probable explanation of the presence of the skulls in the Church, is just one more example of the grossness engendered by the religious feeling.

H. B. DODDS.

### Subsidising Religion.

A STINGING attack on religious bodies and schools which obtained exemption from rates was launched by the Mayor of Strathfield, Ald. Firth, in Council last night.

It was reported that a little less than £50,000 worth of property was untaxed and council lost every year about £900 in direct rates.

"This is a very serious matter," said the Mayor. "I hope we will press for the exemption to be dropped. People should pay for their religion. Why should the people of Strathfield have to pay £900 a year for these places?"

Ald. Frith said the biggest properties on the list were the Christian Brothers' Training College, worth £14,400, and the Anglican Church, valued at £5,400. Neither of these places paid anything in rates.—From the SIDNEY EVENING NEWS.

### Acid Drops.

In this column for September 29, we commented on the fear expressed by *The Schoolmaster* as to the effects of a system of education in the State Schools that should be wholly secular. We also said that it was easy to detect the note of vested interest when this fear was expressed by the clergy, and that teachers feared to say what so many of them thought about religion in the schools because they feared it would injure their prospects of promotion. Finally, we asked the *Schoolmaster* to explain in what direction education would suffer if it were wholly secular, seeing that save for the time set apart for religious instruction, all subjects were already wholly secular in every school receiving the government grant.

In its issue for October 3, the *Schoolmaster* replies to our criticism, or attempts to do so. For example, it tells us that we are quite mistaken as to the motives which induce teachers to stand for religious education. But in the first place, the *Schoolmaster* has no right to speak for all the teachers, and in the second place, we did not say why *some* teachers stood for religious education; on that point we are quite willing to grant these teachers all they ask in the way of sincere conviction. Our criticism was directed against those teachers who believe in a system of secular education, but who do not say so for fear of injuring their prospects in the profession. If the *Schoolmaster* is not acquainted with the large numbers of such cases its knowledge of teachers must be very scanty and very casual. We know, not merely believe, there are very large numbers of such teachers. At the next Annual Conference we would suggest that the editor of the *Schoolmaster* gets into intimate conversation with as many teachers as possible; he may then discover that he has no reasonable warranty for implying that teachers as a body desire religious instruction in the school.

The *Schoolmaster* says that far from making promotion more difficult "the so-called Secular Solution would remove difficulties and anomalies with regard to promotion." That, however, is not meeting what we said. What we said was that teachers were afraid to say they believed in a policy of secular education because it would arouse religious opposition and so prevent promotion. Of course, with religion out of the schools, things would be different, and difficulties and anomalies removed. But who is to bell the cat? If teachers would only make a stand, we believe religion in the schools would not last very much longer. The job is to find the pioneer teachers who will pay the price for the liberty of others. It is religion in the schools that creates many difficulties. With religion out of the schools the teacher would be no longer afraid to offend Canon this or the Rev. that.

Finally, I asked the *Schoolmaster* to say exactly what subjects cannot be taught efficiently without religion. Here is the reply—it would be too much to call it an answer—"The harm, in the opinion of teachers, would lie in the loss of their unique privilege of helping to train the spiritual nature of the child and to have some idea of God, the child's maker." Of all the fatuous replies we have come across, this is an easy first. First of all we are told that there exists grave fears "of the effects of a wholly secular system of education." Well, in all humility we ask what subjects are there that cannot be taught without religion, and particularly inquired whether it was implied that even character could not be adequately developed without religion. And the *Schoolmaster*, an organ of educative opinion, replies that without religion in the schools the teachers cannot train the spiritual nature of the child or teach it about God, the child's maker! Wonderful! We ask what cannot be properly taught without religion, and are informed that the answer is, religion. To that two things should be said. So far as the State is concerned the schools do not exist to teach religion. The State merely permits it—provided the different sects can cease quarrelling long enough to decide on a few religious beliefs on which they agree. Second, a child who is



taught religion in the school, has, so far, a fairly effective block put to its ever understanding religion and God. Which is the real reason why the parsons want it there.

Finally, the *Schoolmaster* says that as the Freethinker does not believe in God and "the spiritual life," "teachers and that journal have no common ground on which to meet." We regret to find the *Schoolmaster* so terribly ill-informed as to the opinions of teachers. The editor would be apparently very much surprised to find the number of readers of the *Freethinker* who are teachers, also to find the number who are with the *Freethinker* in its attitude towards religion. The *Schoolmaster* had better wake up. We are living in 1929, not in 1829.

In lecturing on "Psychology in the Sunday School," Dr. Crichton Miller appears to have been rather indiscreet. Religion, he said, has got to have a meaning in the children's lives. They must have an attitude to suffering, death, and so forth. The conflict between religion and science arises from failure to attain an adequate philosophy. Religious teaching still tends to be water-tight, to contract and wither rather than to expand, and gets further and further away from objective science, while less and less it offers an interpretation of life.

As regards "suggestibility," the Doctor said it has always been traded upon, from the medicine-man of the most primitive tribe or the fundamentalist of Tennessee to the Pope of Rome. It is a fault of adults to force ideas on children. It is an abuse of authority to do so in religious matters. Trading on suggestibility is worth no more than superstition.

Dr. Miller also said that fear of ostracism from the herd contributed largely towards religious behaviour of children. Of "imitativeness," he said that it is to be ready to fashion one's conduct on that of an authoritative person: it does not fit into any co-ordinated outlook on life. It is easy to abuse and easy to trade upon. Fear of death, added Dr. Miller, is the inevitable outcome of man's conceptual ability. He can imagine extinction, and therefore he craves immortality. Christianity, he added, has traded upon this craving in a conditional way. But this is not justified nor desirable. We said Dr. Miller was rather indiscreet. It certainly was not tactful to show up and condemn accepted ecclesiastical methods, employed through the ages, to manufacture clients for the Churches.

The Rev. H. C. Carter, who conducts a correspondence column in a religious weekly, has been asked: "What is the Bible answer to the question, Are our dead sleeping, or in a conscious state?" The reverend gent declares there is no "Bible answer" to this question. Still, he knows quite a lot about what happens after death:—

When we die we pass beyond the realm where our reckonings of time of "then," and "now," obtain. We pass into the eternal "now" in which God dwells. That transcendence of the category of time our minds are at present incapable of comprehending. We must inevitably think of the dead as "going before" us. But we must have confidence that, in some way past our understanding, that does not mean that they are waiting in painful suspense until we and all God's people join them in his family of heaven. That, I take it, is what is expressed in the doctrine of the general resurrection. We think we gather the reverend gent.'s meaning—the good or "saved" are put in cold storage, and the bad or "unsaved" in hot!

The Rev. Davidson Brown blurts out the truth concerning some professional evangelists, though he refuses to commit these as a class. There is no doubt, he says, that the professional evangelist is under suspicion:—

There is certainly much dissatisfaction at some of the methods of calculating and publishing results. The discrepancy that often exists between the actual facts and the flamboyant reports in the Press, does more credit to the imagination than to the veracity of the

writers. And it is high time that some stand should be made against the exorbitant fees charged by some of these wandering evangelists. To sit and listen, as we sometime have to do, to one of these gentry, speaking in dulcet tones and oozing prosperity as he speaks, urging his ministerial brethren to greater self-sacrifices, is an exercise in Christian patience.

Bits of truth keep on leaking out. Even our parsons seem to be getting infected with the paganly frank spirit of the age. In course of time we shall no doubt be able to compile, from parsonic sources, complete confirmation of most of the criticism of evangelists and evangelism that has been printed in our columns. By the way, what a debt the Churches owe to the *Freethinker* for hints on how their teachings, worship, methods, and also Christian ideals and character, can be purified!

It has been left for "All Quiet on the Western Front" to be denounced by the Rev. Joseph Shepherd at Islington Chapel. Popular preachers, gravelled for matter, catch at topical items in the same way that drowning men clutch at straws. It has been—short skirts, bobbed hair, lip-stick, Sunday motoring—all has drifted into the pulpit for subjects, and the use of such subjects plainly indicates that the preacher has no business of his own to mind. In the war, there were language and actions of almost unspeakable horror and bestiality when the Christian nations were engaged in the jolly and madness of extermination. If a cool record of facts to-day is disgusting to read, the Rev. Joseph Shepherd, by adding two and two together, ought to know what physical torture was undergone in a fight supported by him and his Christian colleagues. And in the meantime, the Rev. Joseph Shepherd can either close down on the subject of the brotherhood of man, or hand it over to the safer keeping of soldiers.

Sir Farquhar Buzzard, Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford, has been blowing the gaff about the unpopularity of doctors, but with his views we are not concerned in this paper. It is claimed that all the material facts about a common cold are known. Now this humility on the part of medical practitioners shows up rather badly against the colossal knowledge of religious medicine-men who can tell us *ad infinitum*, where the soul goes when the human being dies. Perhaps it may be explained, that the doctors pretensions can be verified by results.

It is perhaps too much to hope for reliable data in newspapers concerning foreign affairs. The trouble in Jerusalem between the Jews and the Arabs may be, for various reasons, cast in a religious mould. A religious quarrel involving the Jews would be of especial interest to Roman Catholic policy. An item of information comes to light to the effect that Arab Nationals are suffering from injustices in the law courts. Sir John Chancellor, the High Commissioner, will have the best wishes of all good men in remedying such injustices, now that the sensation-mongers of the press have other eye-blinding garbage.

Sir Charles Trevelyan says: "In the humblest home a man may call the master spirits of the world his friends, if he has books." For the benefit of a certain kind of chapel habitue we add the following. The master spirits of the world cannot be discovered in books such as the Holy Bible, essays by popular preachers, and novels of the type produced by the Rev. Joseph Hocking.

According to a scholastic weekly, most of the credit for the "solemn and dignified religious ceremonies" in London which commemorated Catholic Emancipation is due to the Roman Catholic school children. Poor kids! Drilled, dressed up, and paraded to help a Roman Catholic advertising stunt. Father, forgive them, for they knew not what they did! One can understand why Catholic priests favour mass production in regard to procreation. Quantity is more useful than quality to the Holy Romancing Church.

There is an old saying—not always justified by fact—that you can't keep a good man down. It is equally diffi-



cult to always keep the truth down, or to prevent a lie being found out. It will be remembered that Professor Huxley, who had ceased to believe in the Bible and God, invented the ambiguous and irrelevant term Agnostic to protect himself in one direction, and elaborated an excuse for keeping the Bible in the schools to guard himself in the other. Christians of the more advanced—and artful—type were not slow to avail themselves of the excuse about the Bible. They became greatly concerned about keeping literature. Which only meant they didn't care a brass farthing on what ground the Bible was kept in the school, so long as it was kept there.

We are, therefore, glad to see the bubble of the Bible as literature being pricked by the Rev. Dr. F. C. Burkitt, Professor of Divinity, of Cambridge. He says it is important to remember that those who accepted the Bible in a religious sense did so "because it was believed to be essentially true," and he hits the nail on the head thus:—

I venture to think that the plea for continuing to teach the Bible to coming generations, on the ground that it is splendid literature is beside the mark. Either there is a real sense in which we can say that the Bible is true, and helps us to get at truth in a way that nothing else can, or it will drop out of use. I do not think that the literary parts of the Bible will keep it alive if it be not uniquely useful in some other way.

These remarks were made in connexion with the meetings of the Modern Churchmen's Conference at Cambridge, and they are worth remembering. Nine-tenths of the gush about the literary value of the Bible, when made by non-Christians is an expression of fear of Christian bigotry, and when made by Christians just so much humbug. But if Christians—even of the broad type—get blurting out the truth in this way, some of the Churches will have to turn themselves into cinema shows.

*Everyman* has been publishing some letters from its readers on the topic of religion for the young. In its issue for October 3, there appears one from "K. T. Catford," who writes as an Agnostic, but as one who ought never to have left a Methodist Chapel, and ought to join the Salvation Army at once. He says:—

At the age of nineteen I began to doubt the creation story; at twenty I lost my faith in the divinity of Jesus Christ; at twenty-three I could no longer affirm the existence of God, and now at twenty-five I find myself a convinced Agnostic faced with a lifetime of uncertainty, and all the mental agony involved therein.

We wondered how many there might be of this type, and how many there might be in this horrible condition. So we set to work with a youngster of our acquaintance, aged nine.

By dint of much careful questioning we managed to extract the following—the precise language is ours:—

At four I began to doubt whether angels watched round my bed at night. At five I began to have serious doubts of Santa Claus, at six my doubts extended to fairies, at seven I could no longer say with certainty that my daddy could get fine weather by asking for it, and now I am faced with uncertainty, and would give all my marbles and my whole stock of plasticine to get my early beliefs restored.

I could only express my sorrow to the kiddie, and very much regret that K.T.'s beliefs should ever have been disturbed. I am surprised he ever got on as he has got.

On the occasion of the ceremony of the union of the principal Scottish Churches, the King sent a message of his love for the Church of Scotland, and his determination to uphold the cause of Presbyterianism in Scotland. This was quite constitutional and proper. In Scotland the King, as a constitutional monarch upholds Presbyterianism. In England he upholds Episcopalianism. In India he leaves all religions severely alone. This side of the border the King is an Episcopalian. The other side of the border he is legally a Presbyterian. This is all quite right and proper, the King is only carrying out loyally his contract with the people. But does it not show what an elaborate piece of humbug religion is in the modern State? And all the time the King, for all one knows may not believe in the Church of Eng-

land or the Church of Scotland. Where a man's expressed opinions are settled for him, no one can be certain of what his real ones are.

Sir John Reith is reported as saying to a pious gathering:—

It was one of the principles of the B.B.C. that religion should have its place in the programmes. There was more outcry at the start about religion than about almost anything else. But it was particularly gratifying to know that in regard to religion the B.B.C. had now the overwhelming support of listeners. Almost no part of the programmes had received more general commendation or was more generally acceptable to the people. Yet, and this was the point, the people would never have asked for it if the B.B.C. had not given it to them first. Sir John urged that people who desire and appreciate religious and educational elements in the programmes should let it be known by voice and pen. Three-fourths of wireless listeners, we can safely say, never trouble the churches nor buy a religious journal. Yet we are asked to believe that the religious portion of B.B.C. programmes is the most generally acceptable of all the items. If this be true, surely there's no need for Sir John Keith to run about urging pious people to join the B.B.C. they want broadcast religion? You note that Sir John does not ask the general public to say whether or not they desire religion in the programmes. He urges the pious to write saying they want it.

Mr. W. Paton, of the International Missionary Council, says that one of the great changes in modern society is the world-wide increasing zeal for education. This can be seen here, on the Continent, and in America. But—

Along with that there goes this very important fact, that the place of religion in education is at least in some countries in the gravest possible jeopardy. America, for example, has made up its mind that it prefers to organize the national education on a secular basis, and in the Far East America's example is stronger than ours.

This, thinks Mr. Paton, is a fact demanding the Churches' immediate attention. We have no doubt it will get that attention. A threat to their trade interests never fails to bring priests and parsons into concord, however much they may be squabbling over fundamental religious beliefs.

Apropos of the reunion of the Scottish Churches, a religious journal says:—

It is a splendid augury for the future that the first great task to which the unified Church will set itself is that of winning the living allegiance to Christ of the million men and women in Scotland who have now no Church connexion at all, and of strengthening Christian education in all its aspects.

As a counter-blast to pious effort, Scots who have finished with the Churches should make a concerted effort to free their land from stupid kirk-imposed restrictions on human liberty, especially such as operate on the Sabbath.

Dr. Jane Walker declares that the modern girl is well and sensibly dressed, and that the present short skirt is graceful, beautiful, and useful. We shudder to think what St. Paul and the Early Christian Fathers would have said about the girl and the skirt!

As Lord Sankey has resigned the Chairmanship of the Council on Broadcast Adult Education, Dr. Temple, Archbishop of York, has consented to take this office. One may be certain that, while in this position, the Archbishop will be unlikely to forget the duty he owes to his religion. This is, to see that nothing antagonistic to religion is broadcast, and the everything helpful to it will get a hearing.

A Lord Mayor said recently that "thorough learning is the beginning of a sound education; it is not the whole of it." He might have added that one proof of a sound education is the possession of some capacity for independent thinking. There would have been no harm in adding that, when the parson insists on religion being taught in the schools, he is not concerned about promoting that capacity. On the contrary, he is well aware that anything encouraging this capacity, makes acceptance of his professional dope less likely.



## National Secular Society

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

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

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

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

### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

FREETHINKER ENDOWMENT TRUST.—W. McKee, 108.

F. SHARP.—Capital! See "Sugar Plums."

E. C. ASHWORTH.—We agree with you that the public are to blame for the apathy shown to the way the priests "noble" the schools. We do what we can to stir up those who ought to be active but we cannot compel them to act.

J. ALMOND.—Pleased you like what we had to say on marriage and divorce. The whole question would be settled with ease but for religion. When so-called reformers have the courage to make a direct attack on religion they will move more rapidly than they do at present.

W. COLLINS.—We are doing what we can at this end. If friends throughout the country would lend a hand, much more could be done.

S. WILSON.—We never said that the *Freethinker* was the oldest Freethought paper in the world, but that it was the oldest Freethought paper in Europe. The oldest in the world is the *New York Truthseeker*. That has passed its jubilee. We achieve ours in 1931.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

We received, the other day, a letter containing a postal order for tickets for the debate between Mr. Cohen and Mr. Shaw Desmond. The letter was accidentally destroyed, before the address had been taken. If the sender will be good enough to send us his name and address the tickets shall be forwarded at once.

Mr. Cohen commences his winter lectures with a visit to Manchester, on October 20. He will lecture twice in the Chorlton Town Hall, and we hope that Manchester friends will do their best to bring their Christian acquaintances to the meeting. The following Sunday (October 27), Mr. Cohen will speak in the Picton Hall, Liverpool. During the four Sundays in November, he will deliver a course of four lectures on "The New Materialism," in the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester. His first lecture in London this season will be at the Stratford Town Hall, on December 1.

"No More War" reports a curious justification of its broadcasting military tattoos. It says that Broadcasting must necessarily reflect all aspects of national life, even in the case of opinions with which the B.B.C. may disagree. It says "We have to keep our fingers upon the pulse of public life here at Savoy Hill, and we must not exclude important aspects of it simply because they are controversial." Excellent!! But bearing in mind the amount of time given to religion, we wonder when the B.B.C. will discover that there are others beside Christians in the country, and invite a full-blown antagonist to Christianity to put his views before the public? Perhaps that will happen when Freethinkers become still more persistent than they have been of recent years. We fancy that the agitation which we initiated some years ago has had some effect. If it is sustained it may drive the B.B.C. into something like fair play to all opinion. We live in revolutionary times, and none can tell what may happen.

We are glad to hear that Mr. Rosetti had two very good meetings at Failsforth on Sunday last, and that his lectures were greatly appreciated by those present. There were many friends from Manchester. Selections were given by the Society's band and choir, and the collections augured well for the season's work, which is just commencing. To-day (October 14) Mr. Rosetti will lecture in the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester. His subject is "Where are the Gods." The lecture will commence at 6.30.

With reference to our notes in another column dealing with the *Schoolmaster* and the statement that teachers stood for religious instruction and feared the effects of secular education. We suggest that the editor should look over his own columns occasionally, for in the same issue in which he replies to us is an announcement of an amendment in favour of Secular Education moved at a conference of teachers. The amendment was lost, but we understand the number against was not very great. For one reason or another a very large number of teachers would welcome the disappearance of religion from the schools. The teacher who cannot do his work without religion ought to give up his job. He is in the wrong place.

The real history of mankind is that of the slow advance of resolved deed following laboriously just thought: and all the greatest men live in their purpose and effect more than it is possible for them to live in reality.—John Ruskin.



## An Infidel Pope.

MANY tales have been woven round the myth of the Wandering Jew. What the origin of the legend was is unknown. Briefly, it is to the effect that a Jew named Kartophilos was the door-keeper of the Judgment Hall, and, as Jesus passed out, struck him saying, "Go, Jesus, go on faster," to which Christ replied, "I go, but thou shalt tarry till I come again."

Assuming the incident for the purposes of their story, *My First Two Thousand Years, the Autobiography of the Wandering Jew*, George Sylvester Viereck and Paul Eldridge have woven a most entrancing romance; but one, be it said, not intended for babes and sucklings. It can, however, be thoroughly recommended to Freethinkers, and, for this reason, I venture to give them a taste of it.

It is a matter of speculation, and of doubt, whether Popes, Cardinals, and other sophisticated members of the Roman hierarchy, really believe the dogmas of their church, since they should know, better than anyone, how they came to be invented. Thus the views of Pope Alexander VI (Rodrigo Borgia), who bribed his way to the Papacy, are of interest, as supposed to have been related to the Wandering Jew. Following is an abridgment of the conversation.

The Wandering Jew assumes the character of "Count de Cartaphile," bearing with him no less a relic than the Holy Grail, a "fake," of course, but nevertheless a magnificent specimen of oriental workmanship.

His Holiness was sitting at a long table whose massive legs were carved in the shape of young bulls, the coat of arms of the Borgias. A large copy of the Decameron, illuminated and encrusted, occupied the centre of the table.

The Pope asked: "Are you indeed the great grandson of Count de Cartaphile?"

"I am, Your Holiness—this is the very armour he wore when he delivered the Holy Tomb from the hands of the Infidels."

The Pope nodded. But something about his lips told me that he was sceptical. I liked him for it, foreseeing an interesting mental skirmish such as I had not enjoyed for a century.

"I have brought with me the Holy Grail, the cup out of which our Saviour drank at the Last Supper. My ancestor kept it hidden in a secret vault, which no one could unlock save he who lived a life that was truly Christ-like. Seven years, Holy Father, I spent in prayer and fasting. One morning the vault miraculously opened by itself. The glory of it made me swoon. When I regained consciousness, the Holy Cup, filled to the brim with red wine, was in my hand. I drank it, and my body which had been emaciated from starvation, suddenly felt lithe and powerful as a youth's."

Alexander continued to smile enigmatically. "It is well to live a Christian life, and the rewards are many and great. May I see the Holy Grail, Count?"

The cup was a fine piece of Eastern workmanship—jade, studded with emeralds. The Pope fondled it in his plump hands . . .

"It is indeed beautiful, Count . . ."

He placed the Holy Grail upon the Decameron.

"Your Holiness, the Holy Grail is not only beautiful. It possesses miraculous power. Anyone drinking a drop of wine out of it, or merely touching it with his lips, regains youth and strength."

The Pope raised the cup to his lips.

"Provided," I continued, "his life be as pure and undefiled as a child's."

"Of course," he smiled, replacing the cup upon the table. . . .

The Pope asked the Wandering Jew who he is. "I am the true descendent of Count de Cartaphile who saved the tomb."

"That is a fairy tale, and I am inclined to think that you are aware of it."

His perspicacity pleased and astonished me . . .

"Count, it is better to make the people believe than to believe oneself . . . Who are you?" Alexander reiterated.

"I am Count de Cartaphile, Your Holiness."

He shook his head. "I know the genealogy of the Holy Roman Empire. There never was a Count de Cartaphile except, of course, in the legends of the Church . . . A man who fasts for seven years and prays incessantly as—Count de Cartaphile—would not offer the Holy Grail to Alexander the Sixth. He would declaim hoarsely against a Pope who neither fasts nor prays. He would not understand at all the difference between a religious faith and a gigantic government."

"Is not faith the supreme tenet of the Church?"

He struck the table with his fist. "No!"

"No!" he repeated. "The Roman Empire prospered without a special religion. Greece flourished on scepticism. What is needed is a strong hand and a cool head. Life is not an affair of prayer and fasting, Count. If we followed the example of the Saints we would be barefooted, ragged and ignorant."

"It is not a question of this world, Your Holiness, but of the next. What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul?"

"Tut, tut! The soul? What is the soul? . . . The soul is an illusion engendered by man's fear of death. The sane man squeezes out of the earth all the pleasures it is capable of offering. *Carpe diem!*" . . .

The Pope continued:

"The cup is too exquisite for the coarse lips of the multitude, but the Church needs money. We shall remember your deed and weave a beautiful legend about the myth of your ancestor. Posterity could do no more—even for Jesus."

"But Jesus was not a myth, Your Holiness!"

"You believe in the historical existence of Jesus?" the Pope asked with unconcealed amazement.

"Of course, Holy Father."

He laughed. "Have you never heard of the Hindu god Krishna? Is not Krishna—Christ?"

"But Jesus, Holy Father, actually existed. He was crucified and . . ."

"And resurrected too?"

I gazed open-mouthed at the Vicar of Christ, refusing to be entrapped.

"His birth and his existence," the Pope calmly continued, "are as true as his death and resurrection. The cross itself is a priapic symbol worshipped hundreds of years before Jesus. What warrant have we of Christ's life? The gospels, written centuries after his supposed death, are a compilation of preposterous nonsense that even a child, allowed to think freely, could puncture and ridicule with ease. The Roman writers of the period, addicted to gossip and exaggeration as they were, and ready to pounce upon any picturesque incident, never allude to Jesus. Josephus, the most meticulous of historians, ignores him entirely. Whatever mention of him is found in the later editions of his books, is a clumsy and all too evident interpolation."

"Your Holiness, can a legend subsist without a basis of fact?"

"Imagination is a great architect. The flimsiest material suffices for a magnificent structure. How can a philosopher accept the multitudinous contradictions of the Holy Book? How can he accept an absurdity as colossal as the Trinity?"



He laughed. "There is a tribe in the jungle of Africa, with a triune divinity. The father is a man, the mother a camel, the son a parrot. Their religion is as rational as ours . . ."

"Is a legend enough to uphold the Church?"

"The Church is an organization, Count—a vast Empire, composed largely of children. The average man is always a child. For his good, we invent fables and legends and promises, ridiculous and vain. Thus the favourite few may cultivate in peace and ease the fine arts and philosophies . . ."

The Pope continued:

"Jesus would have fared much better if infidels had presided over the Council of Nicea. What a mess they made of it, Count! The bigoted Bishops disputed and wrangled and fought, and in their blind passion, they never realized that they included two contradictory genealogies of Jesus in the gospels! They should have edited either Luke's or Matthew's. Besides, the attempt to trace the descent of Jesus to David, through Joseph, makes the immaculate conception preposterous. Jesus is either the Son of God, or the descendant of David. How can he be both at the same time? . . . You are surprised, Count, that the Vicar of Christ does not believe in Him? Why shouldn't a Pope rise superior to his profession?"

(Why not, indeed? We are inclined to think that a good many priests, other than Popes, have so risen, in the sense of being well aware that the story of Christ is a tissue of "preposterous nonsense.")

"Holy Father, is this the reward for . . .?" The Count pointed to the Holy Grail.

"For that we shall make you a beautiful legend. Cardinals shall read Masses for your soul . . . for ninety-nine years. No one may live who has listened to all I have told you."

How the Wandering Jew escapes, and the narrative of his further adventures, I leave my readers to find out for themselves, with the assurance that they will find it well worth while.

E. J. LAMEL.

## Dad Explains.

DAD, what is a common belief in religions? Teacher says that he didn't care much what one believed so long as one did believe. All religions have a common basis, he said.

Hm. All the most wide-spread religions, the Christian religion, the Mohammedan or the Jewish, which can be distinguished by their rituals and teachings, have at the bottom one common basis. This is the belief in a god, in a soul and in another world beyond this. Yet the god in the case of the Christian is something unique and in treble form, in the case of the Mohammedan he is Allah who sits in the seventh heaven, for the Jews he is Jehovah, who once fought against their ancestor, Jacob. But all these religions have one common basis—not the one your teacher meant, which they speak of as god. They mean a special supernatural power. This power rules all the world.

This power is not a part of nature but something beyond nature. On the other hand some religious people believe that he is to be found in everything and everywhere at the same time. God is a spirit they believe. He is everywhere although he cannot appear in any particular place and can't wander about. Still some apologetic believers say he can because all that is contrary to the laws that govern nature as you are learning in your science class. Matter takes up space: even the smallest amount of matter takes up a certain amount. The material world can be perceived. We can hear sounds, see ob-

jects, smell, touch and feel objects and distinguish tastes. Yet there exists something, "God," and not only exists but rules over all that exists. Also this god created everything on earth and as the jewel of all, made man. The believers assert that everything comes from god, beautiful weather or rain, good and bad harvests, floods and earthquakes, war and revolutions, counter-revolutions—in a word everything which exists in nature and human society. The orthodox Christians pray every day for God to keep them from hunger, earthquakes and floods, for good weather, for peace and so on.

But how do their prayers reach him, Dad?

Ha, now! Don't set me conundrums. You'd better ask your teacher. Jesus says in the New Testament, that without God's knowledge not a hair of man's head shall fall out. (Upward glance of young inquirer towards pa's bald pate.) The Koran, which is the Mohammedan's holy book says that God rules both earth and heaven. He is the point in which everything is concentrated (xxiv. 42). Religions teach, you see, that man has two separate parts to his body—a body and a soul. The soul rules the body in the same way as god rules the world. It is the soul which thinks, apprehends and wishes. It is the governor of the body, and is responsible for the body's actions even when these are bad.

But why should God want to make bad things happen, Dad?

Now don't confuse me. Let me finish one thing at a time. After death the soul leaves the body and takes up its lodgings in another world. When it gets there it has to undergo an examination into its past life and actions: it is then sent to heaven or hell. In hell there is undying fire, and one can hear bewailing and gnashing of teeth. So at least teach the Christian, Mohammedan and Jewish religions.

Now, over the other side of the world live people when Christians especially believe are very godless, but actually these people have many religions suited to themselves. Of these, Buddhism is one of the most widespread. Now it is often said that Buddhism is a religion without god, and that Buddhism does not recognize the supernatural.

Is that right, Dad? Teacher says they pray to idols.

Hm. So do Christians and Mohammedans and others. Buddhism, however, does not deny god's existence but teaches that this life on this earth goes on in its own way without interference from God. You have to earn your future joys in Buddhism. Buddha, however, is credited with all the wonderful miracles that have been credited to Jesus or Mohammed, and amongst the ordinary people supernatural powers are believed to take a hand in affairs.

Could Buddha do miracles like Jesus, Dad?

Yes. He was believed to be a holy man. For instance, let us take the legend of his birth. He was born of a virgin mother. His mother stood under a tree at the hour of his birth and felt no pain. The child was forbidden by sages to bathe in the Kuro. Rain, first warm, then cold, gave him his first bath. The child began to walk immediately and spoke like a learned man. Such were his first few hours of life.

Buddhism recognizes the existence of the soul although its teaching about this is vague and confused. The soul does not die with man's body, but according to its owner's merits it flies to a new home: into some animal's body or into a new-born baby. The worse it has behaved in the past, the more lowly the animal it enters. There you see religion conflicts with science again. What is a lowly animal?) The more primitive people who believe in Buddhism however, have mixed it with their former beliefs, just as the early pagans did in Europe, and now believe that demons



and gods take a hand in all things, and that man must try to please them by prayer and gifts.

But we do that, Dad, here in England!"

Yes, of course. So you see then that all religions including Buddhism believe in some supernatural power on which man can rely for help, or which explains the origin of the universe.

A loud blowing on the horn of a motor-cycle outside called the boy away for a joy-ride.

L. CORINNA.

## Dolet.

(Continued from page 636.)

THIS citadel of orthodoxy is associated in history with three notable heretics, Bruno, Vanini, and Voltaire. Mr. Christie does not seem to be aware that Giordano Bruno reached Toulouse in the middle of the year 1577, after his flight from Geneva and the tender mercies of Calvin's disciples, and was there elected Public Lecturer to the University, an office which he filled with great success until 1579, when he sought a wider sphere in Paris. During these two years there must have been a lull of intolerance, or Bruno's scepticism in such a city would have certainly cost him his life.

Vanini was burnt alive at Toulouse, on the Place St. Etienne, February 19, 1619. Mr. Christie assigns a different date, 1618, and a different spot, the Place de Salins. And he does not allude to one atrocious circumstance of Vanini's martyrdom. Before being burnt alive the sentence of the Court was that his tongue should be cut out, and as he was obstinate at the stake, his tongue had to be plucked out with pincers!

At Toulouse, in 1762, Jean Calas was condemned to be broken on the wheel. It was this ecclesiastical murder which proved the grand humanity of Voltaire, and gave him an opportunity of standing forth before the whole civilized world as the dauntless champion of justice. Voltaire's vindication of Calas was one of the finest achievements of modern history. It taxed all his wonderful powers, his generosity, his logic, his persuasiveness, his matchless finesse, and his preternatural energy.

The populace of Toulouse in Dolet's age were "what the spiritual pastors had made them." The Reformation was ridiculed in the most sacred part of the Cathedral, where a carved figure of a pig was placed, with the inscription, *Calvin porc prechant*,—pig Calvin preaching. "If," says Mr. Christie, "rain was desired, the statues of the saints were removed from their places and carried in procession through the city. If a flood was threatened, prayers were addressed to the river itself, and a cross was placed beneath its waves." The church bells never ceased ringing, the people were surrounded with crucifixes, holy pictures, and relics, and, as an orthodox modern historian says, "the whole life of an inhabitant of Toulouse was a perpetual confession of the Catholic faith."

Soon after his arrival, Dolet witnessed his first *auto-da-fé*. He saw Jean de Cartruce burnt at the stake in June, 1532. The greater Rabelais was composing the first book of his *Pantagruel* at this time, and he gives the martyr a niche in his immortal pages. He also satirizes the pious city wherein the deed was wrought: "From thence *Pantagruel* came to Toulouse, where he learned to dance very well and to play with the two-handed sword, as the fashion of the scholars of the said university is. But he stayed not long there when he saw that they stuck

not to burn their regents alive like red herrings, saying, Now God forbid that I should die this death, for I am by nature dry enough already, without being heated any further."

Dolet viewed the state of Toulouse with great indignation, which he lost no time in expressing. On the 9th of October, 1533, he was unanimously chosen "imperator" by the French students. His first oration is said to "possess little that is worthy of our attention." But his second oration was more important. He alluded to Jean de Cartruce, and branded his execution as a murder; he declared that the city was "given over to superstition worthy only of the Turks"; and he boldly questioned its right to "impose its notions of Christianity on all men." His enemies used these passages against him, and early in January, 1534, he found himself in prison. His imprisonment was not of long duration, but it was the beginning of all his misfortunes. During the remaining thirteen years of his life he was five times imprisoned, and nearly half his days were spent in confinement. Well does M. Boulmier remark that Dolet's harangue laid the first faggot of the terrible pile on which, thirteen years later, he was to be consumed.

Late in May or early in June, 1534, Dolet hastily left Toulouse to avoid a second arrest. He was suffering from a fever, probably brought on by mental anxiety, and he retired to a friend's house in the country, partly to conceal himself, and partly to recruit his health while he shaped his future plans. Towards the end of July he set out for Lyons, where he arrived on the first of August, worn out in body and mind. "When I reached Lyons," he afterwards wrote to De Boyssonne, "I had no hope of restoration to health, and even despaired of my life."

Lyons was then, perhaps, the most liberal city in France. It afforded far more intellectual freedom than Paris, and many persecuted scholars and thinkers sought shelter within its walls. Rabelais, Marot, Servetus, Des Periers, all passed several years of their lives at Lyons between 1530 and 1540, whilst Erasmus, Estienne, Pole, Sadolet, Calvin, and Beza were frequent visitors. Here, it is said, was founded the first of those Academies for which France became afterwards so famous. "But," says Mr. Christie, "it was not only by the presence of men of letters and science that Lyons was distinguished in the sixteenth century, but also by the extraordinary activity of its press, which rivalled that of Paris itself. Lyons was the second town in France where the art of printing was exercised, but it achieved a greater distinction than Paris, inasmuch as from its presses issued the first books printed in France in the French tongue." It was at Lyons that Gargantua and Pantagruel first saw the light, and that Marot first printed his *Enfer* as a complete edition of his works. On his restoration to health Dolet formed an acquaintance with several of the leading men of letters in this city, amongst whom was Rabelais himself. His acquaintance with the greatest Frenchman then living soon ripened into intimacy and close friendship.

Dolet now worked hard at his Commentaries on the Latin Tongue, and early in October, 1534, he went to Paris to obtain the royal licence for the publication of his work. Before the middle of 1535 he had returned and published a Dialogue against Erasmus, who had attacked the Ciceronians. Melancthon paid it the highest compliment by saying that "it ought to be answered, if not by Erasmus, at least by some one." It had a wide circulation, and it decisively introduced his name to the world of letters.



The literary aspirations of Dolet and of all his brethren were at this time, however, in danger of being baffled. King Francis was dreadfully worried by the seraphic doctors of the Sorbonne, who urged him to make amends for his vicious life by persecuting heretics and suppressing literature. On the 7th June, 1533, the Sorbonne presented to the King at Lyons, "a memorial against heretical books, in which it was formally urged that if the King wished to preserve the Catholic faith, which was already shaken at its base and attacked on all parts, he must abolish once and for ever by a severe edict the art of printing, which every day gave birth to dangerous books." For a time these black gentry were feiled by Bude and Jean du Bellay, but in 1535 they succeeded, and the King on the 13th January, issued letters patent prohibiting and forbidding under pain of death, any persons from henceforth printing any book or books in France, and at the same time ordering all bookseller's shops to be closed under the same penalty. But the opposition to this infamous edict was so great that it had to be withdrawn, and on the 24th February, the King "directed the Parliament to choose twenty-four well qualified and prudent persons, out of whom the King should select twelve, to whom alone permission was to be given to print in Paris, editions of needful and approved books, but forbidding even the twelve to print any new composition under pain of death." The Parliament, however, again remonstrated, and the new letters patent became inoperative.

The circumstance which induced the King to yield to the solicitations of the Sorbonne was in itself trivial. In October, 1534, some placards were affixed to the walls of Paris, violently attacking the mass and the clergy. The Catholics were strongly incensed, and the result was a more severe persecution of heretics than Paris had ever before witnessed. From the 10th of November, 1534, to the 5th of May, 1535, twenty-two persons were burnt for heresy in the Place Maubert, and the King and the Court are said to have witnessed the most horrid of these spectacles, where six heretics were burnt together, and the strappado was first used. This delightful instrument was invented by the priests. Mr. Christie describes it as "a kind of see-saw, with a heretic at one end suspended above a fire. He was allowed to descend and burn for a short time, and was then drawn out again, and so on from time to time. By this means the burning lasted much longer, the torment was much more exquisite to the heretic, and the spectacle much more grateful to the pious spectators."

The doctor who invented the guillotine perished under its swift blade himself; and if these sweet priests who invented the strappado had themselves been slowly roasted to death, who would say that their doom was too severe?

Dolet soon had the first volume of his Commentaries ready for the press. In transcribing and correcting it he was assisted by Jean Bonaventure Desperiers, whom Mr. Christie justly calls "one of the greatest names in the French literature of the sixteenth century." His *Cymbalum Mundi*, published in 1537-8, gave great offence to the Sorbonne. Its witty dialogues ostensibly satirized the Pagan deities, but it was easily to be seen that the myths of the Christian religion were also glanced at. The Sorbonne condemned the book as blasphemous, and the Parliament imprisoned Jean Morin, the printer, and burned all his copies that could be found. The *auto-da-fé* was so successful that only one copy is known to have survived. The *Cymbalum Mundi* is included in the admirable edition of Desperiers, which we owe to the indefatigable bibliophile Jacob.

On the 21st of March, 1536, Dolet obtained permission to publish his *Commentaries*. The first volume was issued in May. "It is," says Mr. Christie, "certainly one of the most important contributions to Latin scholarship which the sixteenth century produced." The second volume followed two years and a half later. In the dissertations, Dolet "seems to show that he had a presentiment and foreshadowing of his terrible fate. In one place he prays that his life may never depend on the sentence of a judge; in another he confesses that he has no desire to die before his time, yet that he accompanies his devotion to letters with a constant meditation on and recollection of death."

While Dolet was labouring at these and other literary tasks, he appears to have spent his leisure not unjoyously. Mr. Christie writes:—

"He was by no means an anchorite or an ascetic. No man more thoroughly enjoyed the society of literary men, nor was he averse in moderation to the pleasures of the table. He was poor, not because he saw any merit in poverty, but because he loved learning better than wealth. He despised all the ascetic virtues even while to a certain extent he followed some of them. Poverty, chastity, humility, obedience, indolent solitude, self-inflicted pain, were in themselves no virtues to him, any more than they were to Aristotle, Plato, or Cicero, any more than they were to Luther, or Erasmus, to Bembo or Rabelais. But there was one thing he more especially enjoyed, and which shows him to us in an unexpected light. He was devotedly fond of music. 'Music and harmony,' he tells us 'are my sole enjoyments. What is there more suited either for exciting or soothing the mind, what more fitted for allaying or extinguishing, or even rousing indignation? What is there more efficacious for refreshing the jaded spirits of men of letters? I care nothing for the pleasures of the table, or wine, of gambling, of love—at least I use them all in great moderation. But not so as regards music, which alone of all pleasures takes me captive, retains me, and dissolves me in ecstasy.'"

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

## The Old Skipper.

### AN APPRECIATION.

I WISH it were possible to put into a few words my admiration of one who is known to many Freethinkers as "The Old Skipper." But I trust that the little here said will help to mark my appreciation of one who has never sought public praise, but who has never failed to make whatever contribution his means and his energies permitted to the Freethought Cause.

Living in a religious atmosphere he has never hidden his opinions, to use his own expression, he has "nailed his colours to the mast," and like the grim old seadog he is, has defied any theological boarders to take them down. Never does he pass the *Freethinker* office without looking in, hearty and cheerful, despite his eighty years, and as full of enthusiasm as may be for the cause he loves. To know him is to love him, and the warm human touch about all he says, makes one feel the better for meeting him. Like many, he knows what it is to be ostracized by his relations, but still he keeps his brave old head up and his faith in the Cause undiminished.

The "Skipper," I regret to say, is now sick, but his mental faculties remain clear and strong. His one trouble is that his eyesight no longer permits him to read his *Freethinker* with ease, and that, he says, does him more good than any medicine.

To me he stands as a strong brave character, upholding what he believes to be right and true, content with the reward that a consciousness of complete mental uprightness alone can give. Such men help to raise one's estimate of human nature.

F.V.S.



## Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

## AN HONOURABLE APOLOGY.

SIR,—Honour where honour is due. The point of this observation will be seen in the sub-joined exchange of letters,

BAYARD SIMMONS.

(1) "To the Editor of the *Daily Herald*. Sir,—The *Daily Herald* has made a bad slip, which puts it on the level of ordinary capitalist papers, who exploit religious sentiment for circulation purposes. It reports to-day the sentence on a scamp who had defrauded poor people, and it heads the report 'Atheist sent to Prison.' Should Mr. Hatry and associates be convicted on the serious charge they have to face—affecting many poor persons—will the *Herald* run a heading 'Christians sent to Prison'?—*Bayard Simmons*."

(2) "To Mr. Bayard Simmons. Dear Sir,—I quite agree it was a bad slip, and I have taken steps to see that it does not recur. My apologies.—*W. H. Stevenson*, Associate Editor."

## THE SERAJEDO MURDER.

SIR,—With reference to the inquiry of "Curious," as to particulars of the assassination of the Archduke, he will find detailed information in a pamphlet entitled "The Pope and the War," published, if I remember rightly, by The Protestant Truth Society, St. Paul's Churchyard.

JOSEPH BRYCE.

## THE KREUTZER SONATA.

SIR,—I wish to thank "A.M." for his kindly appreciation of my articles, and I shall endeavour to deserve it.

"A.M." says that he agrees with me, except when I fail "to worship Thomas Paine." I do not believe that any man, however good, or great, is worthy of worship; and no really great man would demand, or wish to be worshipped. For Paine the man I have the greatest admiration, but I object to his *Age of Reason*—which is a Unitarian work, advocating belief in a Supreme Being—being circulated by Atheists. When I first began to turn toward Freethought, it was this work that delayed my advance, for a considerable time, on the road to Atheism.

WALTER MANN.

## Society News.

## GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY.

THE new lecture season was successfully set going on Sunday last by a Bradlaugh Sunday. Short addresses were delivered by the President, Mr. W. H. MacEwan, Mr. Weir and Mr. Hale, dealing with different phases of Mr. Bradlaugh's work and some of the outstanding events of his career. The attendance was good considering the vile weather, and we are looking out for an improvement on both for Sunday, October 13, when Mr. Weir is to speak on "Eugenics."—E.H.

THE week spent by Mr. G. Whitehead in the Darlington area yielded a series of six sympathetic meetings, the very opposite in character to those addressed here last year. Instead of the noisy hostility of the previous occasion, each lecture was applauded, and the questions lacked the sting of former times. All the meetings passed off without any excitement. The weather was rainy on three of the evenings, and this would have stopped the proceedings in most places, but the shelter provided by the roof of the market enabled the business to go on without disturbance. There is scope for propaganda in Darlington.

We have to thank Mr. J. T. Brighton, Mr. Robson and others for their enthusiastic assistance.

## Rationalist Press Association (Glasgow District)

Sunday, October 20th, at 3 p.m.

Professor C. J. PATTEN, M.A., M.D., Sc.D.,  
Dept. of Anatomy, Sheffield University.

Subject: "The Evolution of The Moral Sense."  
(with Lantern Illustrations.)

Violinist ... SENOR MANUEL LUNA.

Questions and Discussions.

Silver Collection.

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Lecture notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.5, by the FIRST POST ON TUESDAY, or they will not be inserted.

## LONDON.

## INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Lit.—"The Moral Standard in Literature."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7.0, Mr. S. K. Ratcliffe—"The Re-making of England."

## OUTDOOR.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Common): 11.30, Mr. L. Ebury; Friday, Liverpool Street, Camberwell Gate, S.O, Mr. L. Ebury.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Shortlands Road, North End Road): Saturday, 8.0 p.m.; Effie Road, opposite Walham Green Station, Sunday 8.0. Mr. George Whitehead will visit Fulham from October 15 to October 20 inclusive, 7.30 every evening, opposite Walham Green Church.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.30, Mr. James Hart; 3.30, Messrs. F. Betts and B. A. Le Maine; 6.30, Messrs. A. H. Hyatt and B. A. Le Maine. Freethought meetings every Wednesday at 7.30, Messrs. C. Tuson and J. Hart; every Friday at 7.30, Mr. B. A. Le Maine. The *Freethinker* may be obtained during our meetings outside the Park Gates, Bayswater Road.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Ravenscourt Park, Hammersmith): 3.30, Mr. Charles Tuson.

## COUNTRY.

## INDOOR.

ACCRINGTON BRANCH N.S.S.—Sunday, October 13, a Debate will take place at King's Hall, commencing at 7.30—"That Science and Religion are Antagonistic." Affir: Mr. J. Clayton, N.S.S. Neg.: Rev. W. Priestly.

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S. (No. 2 Room, A. Door, City Hall, Albion Street): Sunday, October 13, at 6.30, Mr. D. Weir will speak upon "Eugenics."

LEICESTER BRANCH N.S.S.—Mr. R. H. Rosetti will lecture in the Leicester Secular Hall at 6.30.—"Where are the Gods?"

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S.—A meeting will be held in Bristol Street Council School on Sunday, October 13, at 6.45, to consider future meetings. Will members please rally.

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S. (Top Room, Royal Buildings, 18 Colquitt Street, off Bold Street): Sunday, October 13, at 7.30, Mr. F. Edwin Monks (Secretary, New Manchester Branch N.S.S.)—"The Lesson of the Dowry Case."

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH—Lectures and discussions every Sunday Evening, at 7 p.m., in Club Room, Middle Chase, Chester-le-Street. Friends and enquirers welcome.

## OUTDOOR

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S. (Beaumont Street): Monday, October 14, at 7.30, Mr. J. V. Shortt—A Lecture. Edge Hill Lamp, Tuesday, at 8.0, Mr. P. Sherwin—A Lecture. During the week commencing Monday, October 21, Mr. George Whitehead will be lecturing each evening. Details of places and times will be given next week.

## Miscellaneous Advertisements.

FREETHINKERS—Croydon and District—Those interested in forming a Social Circle in this area please apply to W. Thompson, 68, Grange Road, Purley Oaks.

## 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.)



## Bargains in Books!

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

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

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

Published 1918 at 21/-. PRICE 6/6.  
Postage 9d. (home); 1/2 (abroad).

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

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

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

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

**THE ETHIC OF FREETHOUGHT.** By KARL PEARSON, F.R.S.

Published at 12/6. PRICE 4/6. Postage 6d.

**A CANDID EXAMINATION OF THEISM.** By "PHYSICUS" (G. J. Romanes).

PRICE 3/6. Postage 4½d.

**KAPIR SOCIALISM AND THE DAWN OF INDIVIDUALISM.** By DUDLEY KIDD.

Published at 10/6. PRICE 3/-. Postage 6d.

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

### SPECIAL OFFER.

## Essays in Freethinking

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Three Complete Volumes of "Essays in Freethinking" will be sent post free for

7s. 6d.

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

## CHEST DISEASES

"Umckaloabo acts as regards Tuberculosis as a real specific."

Dr. Secheyay in the "Swiss Medical Review."

"It appears to me to have a specific destructive influence on the Tubercle Bacilli in the same way that Quinine has upon Malaria."

(Dr. Grun in the King's Bench Division.)

If you are suffering from any disease of the chest or lungs—spasmodic or cariac asthma excluded—ask your doctor about Umckaloabo, or send a post card for particulars of it to Chas. H. Stevens, 204-206, Worple Road, Wimbledon, London, S.W.20, who post same to you **Free of Charge.**

Readers, especially T.Bs., will see in the above few lines more wonderful news than is to be found in many volumes on the same subject.

## The Secular Society, Ltd.

Company Limited by Guarantee.

Registered Office: 62 Farringdon St., London, E.C.4.

Secretary: MR. R. H. ROSETTI.

THIS Society was formed in 1898 to afford legal security to

the acquisition and application of funds for Secular purposes.

The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of inquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularization of the State, etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

Members pay an entrance fee of ten shillings, and a subsequent yearly subscription of five shillings.

The liability of members is limited to £1, in case the Society should ever be wound up.

All who join the Society participate in the control of its business and the trusteeship of its resources. It is expressly provided in the Articles of Association that no member, as such, shall derive any sort of profit from the Society, either by way of dividend, bonus, or interest.

The Society's affairs are managed by an elected Board of Directors, one-third of whom retire (by ballot), each year, but are eligible for re-election.

Friends desiring to benefit the Society are invited to make donations, or to insert a bequest in the Society's favour in their wills. The now historic decision of the House of Lords in *re Bowman and Others v. the Secular Society, Limited*, in 1927, a verbatim report of which may be obtained from its publishers, the Pioneer Press, or from the Secretary, makes it quite impossible to set aside such bequests.

*A Form of Bequest.*—The following is a sufficient form of bequest for insertion in the wills of testators:—

I give and bequeath to the Secular Society, Limited, the sum of £—free from Legacy Duty, and I direct that a receipt signed by two members of the Board of the said Society and the Secretary thereof shall be a good discharge to my Executors for the said Legacy.

It is advisable, but not necessary, that the Secretary should be formally notified of such bequests, as wills sometimes get lost or mislaid. A form of membership, with full particulars, will be sent on application to the Secretary, Mr. R. H. ROSETTI, 62 FARRINGTON STREET, LONDON, E.C.4.

### The Bible and Prohibition.

## BIBLE AND BEER

By G. W. FOOTE.

A careful examination of the Relations of the Bible and Christian leaders to the Drink Question.

Price - Twopence.

Postage ½d.

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

## Christianity & Civilization

A Chapter from "The History of the Intellectual Development of Europe."

By Prof. J. W. DRAPER.

Price - TWOPENCE.

Postage ½d.

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



# " DOES MAN SURVIVE DEATH? "

DEBATE BETWEEN

**CHAPMAN COHEN** and **SHAW DESMOND**

Editor of the "FREETHINKER"

The well-known Novelist

AT

**CAXTON HALL, WESTMINSTER**

On Friday, October 25th :: 7.30 p.m.

**Chairman - - - Dr. BERNARD HOLLANDER.**

PRICES OF ADMISSION:

Reserved Seats—Stalls, 2s. 6d.; Balcony, 1s. 6d.; Unreserved Seats, 1s.  
A limited number of Platform Seats, at 5s.

Tickets may be obtained at the offices of the "FREETHINKER," 61 Farringdon Street, E.C.4, the NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C.4, and the RATIONALIST PRESS ASSOCIATION, 4 Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, E.C.4. An early application for tickets is advisable.

## FOUR LECTURES on FREETHOUGHT and LIFE

By Chapman Cohen.

(Issued by the Secular Society, Ltd.)

Four Lectures delivered in the Secular Hall, Leicester, on November 4th, 11th, 18th and 25th, 1928.

Contains lectures on: The Meaning and Value of Freethought; Freethought and God; Freethought and Death; Freethought and Morals.

Price - One Shilling. Postage 1½d.

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

## Materialism Re-stated

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

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

Cloth Bound, price 2/6. Postage 2½d.

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.)

Price ONE SHILLING. Postage 1d.

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

## History of the Conflict Between Religion and Science

By PROF. J. W. DRAPER.

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

Cloth Bound. 396 Pages.

PRICE 2/- POSTAGE 4½d.

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

## The Other Side of Death

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

Paper Covers - - - TWO SHILLINGS  
Postage 1½d.

Cloth Bound THREE SHILLINGS & SIXPENCE  
Postage 2d.

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