

# THE TRIUMPH OF SECULARISM.

# THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED · 1881

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

VOL. XLIX.—No. 45

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 1920

PRICE THREEPENCE

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## Views and Opinions.

### The Triumph of Secularism.

THE BISHOP OF SOUTHWARK, on October 28 dedicated a renovated altar in Southwark Cathedral. It may have been because the altar was a renovated article, that the Bishop's thoughts went in the direction of renovating the Christian religion. But the two things are not quite on a level. It is quite easy to renovate an altar. That has been done often; but it is quite another matter to renovate a religion. To do that one requires to restore the environment suitable to its revival, and that is not very easy. At most it can only be done nowadays in patches. A Church Congress may do it with a moderate degree of success; a revivalistic meeting, controlled by a religious fakir of the Gipsy Smith or Billy Sunday kind does it still more successfully. In such circumstances the outside world is shut off, the world of science and of everyday life is ignored, and for a time the participants are living again in the mental atmosphere of the Stone Age. But even this reversion to an earlier type is only momentary. So soon as the poor devils are released they become once more subject to the more civilizing influences of contemporary life, and religion loses its grip on them. They become dechristianized in spite of themselves. The Bishop may go on renovating his altars so long as he can get the money to do so; but what he sadly needs is the power to renovate the beliefs to the perpetuation of which the altars were dedicated.

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### Letting Out the Truth.

In justice to the Bishop it must be said that he is alive to the situation. With dwindling church congregations, the throwing overboard of one doctrine after another, and the increasing lack of interest shown by the general public in matters religious, the situation is, to a Bishop, serious enough. Nor does he seem in much doubt as to the enemy that has to be faced. He has said:—

Of all the dangers which confronted the Church to-day Secularism is by far the greatest. It is not a

movement which can easily be defined in clear-cut terms, but its fundamental principle is that life could be improved and developed by material means alone. Its outlook is limited to this life alone. It is not necessarily aggressive in its attitude towards religion, but it ignored, when it did not scorn, the claim that it was possible to receive help and guidance from the unseen world. Secularism is to-day a greater menace to religion than was the spread of victorious Mohammedanism to medieval Christianity and ultimately it might prove that Christianity had stood better the shock of one hatred and persecution, than the gradual and enervating influence of a cultured Secularism.

Thus had begins, but worse remains behind. Consider the following:—

Let them compare for instance Sunday observance and Church-going to-day with half or even a quarter of a century ago. Before the War it was a day of worship and rest, but since the War, Sunday had become practically indistinguishable from the Sunday of the Continent. The crowded cinemas, the heavy traffic by rail and by road as holiday-makers sought the country and the sea, and the music and games in the parks, had changed the character of the English Sunday, and with it had gone a most significant decline in church attendance.

Another secularization of the time was to be found in contemporate thought and tendencies usually reflected in fiction and poetry. If they compared the attitude of the Victorian present-day writers the contrast was most striking. The earlier writers regarded religion as one of the great factors in life; most of them assumed the truth of Christianity, it was always in the background, if not the central theme of their works. To-day it would be hard to find a novelist of the first rank who treated Christianity seriously. The most widely read novelists, Mr. Aldous Huxley, Mr. Galsworthy, Mr. Lawrence, Mr. Arnold Bennett, and Mr. Michael Arlen, usually either ignored it, or reserved for it their most scornful epigrams. Among living poets, with the exception of three or four, how hard was it to think of any who found place in their verse for Christianity, save either as a myth around which they could weave some poetic fancy, or as an outworn creed at whose decease they could rejoice.

The decline in Church attendance, the tone of modern literature, and the revolt from traditional morality proved the spread of secularism. It would be easy to show that commerce, politics, society, and art existed to-day without any direct reference to the Christian religion.

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### The Question of Unity.

The situation is quite plain to those who open their eyes, and the outlook for religion is even worse than the Bishop depicts it. The only remedy suggested by him is greater unity among Christians. That is, indeed, a counsel of perfection. The only time during which there has been unity among any large body of Chrstians has been only when a par-

ticular church has been strong enough to forcibly suppress dissent. There is unity of aim in science, there may even be unity of teaching in science, and in spite of much debatable ground, the body of agreed material in the scientific world becomes ever larger. But how can there be unity in religion? What kind of an agreement can there be among religionists as to the nature of God, the nature of a future life, the exact benefits of prayer, and a score of other religious beliefs and doctrines? Every time a body of Christians gather together and begin to discuss what they really mean by their beliefs there is disunion. All the heresies in the Church has arisen in this way. So long as the Church—any church—could prevent discussion, so long as Christians were agreed as to what they believed, because they never really knew what it was they meant. But once they attempted to find this out a split was the inevitable result. I do not think that even now the Bishop of Southwark really means that Christians ought to get together and find out what they mean. He is not inviting them to do that. What he is saying is that unless Christians can offer a united and apparently sound front to the enemy Secularism, there will soon be few left for Secularism to fight. And there is considerable truth in this, although not quite so much as the Bishop pretends to believe. The amount of irrationalism abroad is enough to keep the Churches going for some considerable time yet.

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#### Causes and Consequences.

Discussing the causes of the growth of Secularism, the Bishop quite properly said that a deeper and more fundamental reason for that and for the decline of religion "lay in the fact that intellectual doubt was gradually permeating every class . . . Even more unsettling to faith had been the discoveries which related to man's place in the universe." Quite so; the lack of Church-going, the prevalence of the Secular ideal, followed from these things, they did not precede it. And how will the Bishop deal with that situation? He cannot remove all that man has come to know about himself and the world in which he lives. One cannot even conceive a burial of knowledge such as occurred in the ancient world, and which so prepared the way for the triumph of the Christian Church. The Churches by combination, by some increase in their powers, a not unlikely happening in the present state of the world, may obstruct more effectively than it is able to do at present, but that can only delay the end, it cannot avert it altogether. They may, by a constant "reinterpretation" of Christian teaching, fool the people awhile longer, and so induce them to believe that the new creed is really the old one; but that is a device which deceives only the less intelligent; and that gives rise to another danger. It leaves religion as a refuge for the least intelligent members of Society, while the tone of art, politics, literature, and science becomes steadily less and less religious. Literally religion promises to become a refuge for the weak, the poor, the helpless, with the glaring fact that mental poverty, weakness and helplessness is the condition of their adherence.

A little over a century ago Secularism entered the lists against a Church, one of the greatest, one of the wealthiest, and one of the most powerful churches the world has ever seen. The Christian Church has stood supreme for centuries. It had shaped the law to its service, it had complete control of education, it made advancement in life conditional upon acceptance of its supremacy. Those fighting it were, with rare exceptions, men and women, poor and without social influence. It fought the Church step by step, contesting doctrine after doctrine, and

allowing no privation, no persecution to silence their advocacy. Step by step religion was driven back. Little by little the more thoughtful realized that the shaping of human welfare was a task for human energy and human intelligence, that the gods were sheer irrelevencies and a future life useless as well as absurd. No body of men have ever scored a greater and more tremendous victory than these fighting Freethinkers of the nineteenth century. They have made it possible for the timid to speak, they have forced the Church to tacitly admit, and sometimes openly to proclaim the soundness of the principles for which they contended. I agree with the Bishop, that the Church could withstand hatred and persecution. It can withstand them still. What the Church cannot withstand is a trained intelligence which takes their teaching, dissects it and lays its real nature before the world. Christianity to-day is to all genuinely educated men and women a convicted lie. Those with courage say it without disguise. The more timid say it in a roundabout manner. But they say it all the same.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

### Puffery and Propaganda.

"Rough work, Iconoclasm, but the only way to get at truth."—O. W. Holmes.

"We shall never enfranchise the world without touching people's superstitions."—George Foote.

"Speedy end to superstition, a gentle one if you can contrive it, but an end."—Carlyle.

THE whirligig of time brings strange revenges. All that the despised Freethinkers declared years and years ago, the ordinary citizen is beginning to perceive to-day. Pacifism, limitation of the family, humanism in industry, once hateful ideas, are now seen to be matters of real moment. But nowhere has the reversal of positions been so rapid or so absolute as in religious affairs. The Freethinkers ran a great risk. They were odious, unpopular, and were supposed to exhibit all the worst features of narrow and fanatical doctrinaires. Thomas Paine is now a classic; Shelley is a fixed star in the literary firmament; Bradlaugh has graven his name deep on history's page; and Robertson is one of the foremost literary figures in the public mind of Europe.

"It is roses, roses all the way."

Yet there are thorns with the roses. One expects that Christians, who profess to love their enemies, should treat these great names with studied and calculated insolence, but one does not expect that they should be wounded in the house of their friends. For instance, in Bax's *Reminiscences of a Victorian*, there are some matters which call for remark. The author, himself a Freethinker, writing, be it remembered, of the heroic age of Freethought, actually declares that the work of the earlier Secularists was "crude and coarse." As if any serious reform was ever instituted, or terrible abuse swept away, without wounding the susceptibilities of some ignorant or bigoted persons. It is far better to let every soldier of progress do what he can. It is idle to quarrel with another man for being different. The bolder are apt to despise the less bold as wanting in courage, but that is usually a mistake. The less bold are still more apt to sneer at the bolder as vulgar and foolhardy, which is usually a greater mistake. When criticism has done its worst Richard Carlyle remains as brave as any hero in the purple pages of Plutarch; Charles Southwell launched the first definite Freethought periodical; and George Jacob Holyoake held aloft the banner of Liberty for sixty years.

The later aspects of popular Freethought is referred to in a passage which makes more welcome reading:—

It was not till the early eighties and the persecution of George Foote for blasphemy, that the better educated middle classes began to have sense and justice enough to see the movement from below for freedom of thought, commonly known as Secularism, for what it was, namely, the plucky effort of the small middle and working classes to emancipate themselves, up to their lights, from the thralldom of an encumbering and galling superstition, fatal to all advance in knowledge and to all independent intellectual effort.

This testimonial is very different from Bax's caustic criticism of the earlier Freethinkers. It reminds us of the clergyman who, when invited to say grace before dinner, always began with "Bountiful Jehovah" if he saw champagne on the table, but bestowed a modest "We thank Thee O Lord," in the presence of claret.

It is high time that the true story of the early struggles of the Freethought Movement was committed to paper by a sympathetic hand. It is a romance of brave men and women fighting at fearful odds, and ultimately triumphing. Not only would it make brave reading, but it might serve to remind the present generation of the indispensability of reformers, who, more even than poets, are "the unacknowledged legislators of mankind."

Freethinkers have ever been the most potent forces of progress. No other men have been more libelled, insulted, and persecuted. Hissed at by superior people, stoned by the vulgar, they found that intellectual honesty was not a paying proposition. Yet good and true men had to undergo this martyrdom. Charles Bradlaugh prematurely aged by his long fight for liberty, saw honours showered on men not fit to black his boots. Francesco Ferrer, fronting the rifles of the soldiers, had to find his reward in his own conscience. George Foote had to listen to the voice of the Roman Catholic judge telling him that he had devoted his great talents to the service of the devil. Yet in their hours of apparent failure these men had actually triumphed. They were martyrs who missed the palm but not the pains of martyrdom; heroes without the laurels; and conquerors without the jubilation of victory. The Christian Church in its centuries of power sentenced the Freethinkers to prison and even death. To-day it is the persecuting Church which is standing at the bar of Humanity, a consummation only brought about by the steady devotion to truth of the pioneers of intellectual liberty. These pioneers gave to Freedom sacrifice and service. Can we not give them, at least, sympathy?

MIMNERMUS.

### 'Tis Not Because!

'Tis not because your voice is kind,  
And sweetness fills your face;  
'Tis not because Love made you blind  
To others' lack of grace—  
But in your heart you keep for me  
A little shrine of love;  
And there I find, in sympathy,  
Life's richest treasure-trove!

'Tis not because your pure white soul  
Is imaged from your eyes;  
'Tis not because you make me whole  
By tender sacrifice—  
But while you play the angel's part  
To all the world, I see  
That throne of grace, your woman's heart,  
Is consecrate to me—  
To me, and only me!

J. M. STUART-YOUNG.

## The Finding of the Holy Grail?

If we were asked to name the most extraordinary book published during the year, we should, without hesitation, award the palm to *The Makers of Civilization in Race and History*. By L. A. Waddell. Luzac & Co., 28s.). It runs to 646 pages, with 35 plates, on special paper, 168 illustrations in the text, five maps, and weighs three pounds. It reminds one of a German monograph.

In this ponderous work, the author sets out to turn all the accepted historical ideas, and teachings; upside down, and inside out. He also challenges the results arrived at by the Assyriologists, Egyptologist, Etymologists, Ethnologists, Anthropologists, Archaeologists, and all the writers upon ancient history and the origins of civilization!

Mr. Waddell is the author of several other works, among which are *The Phœnician Origin of Britons, Scots and Anglo-Saxons*. And *Ind-Sumerian Seals Deciphered*, which deal with the same subject, and may be stated, in the author's own words, as follows:—

In my recent work on British Origins, I proved by a mass of new historical evidence that the "Sumerians"—those foremost civilized and civilizing ancient people whose monuments and high art of five thousand years ago are the wonder of the modern world—were the long lost Early Aryans; that the Phœnicians were not Semites as has been hitherto supposed, but Aryans and the chief colonizing branch of the Sumerians; and that the people who colonized and civilized the Mediterranean, North-Western Europe and Britain and who were the ancestors of the Britons, were likewise Aryan and belonged predominantly to the phœnician branch of that race.<sup>1</sup>

So that when our teachers at school told us that the Romans found Britain inhabited by naked savages, and left them civilized; they were, according to Mr. Waddell, altogether wrong. That the ancient sailors and traders of the East, known to us under the name of the Phœnicians, were really the Sumerians we have been hearing so much about lately through the excavations at Ur, conducted by Mr. Woolley; and that the Sumerians themselves, instead of being Semites of the Semites, turn out to be Aryans and the progenitors of the blond Scandinavian, or Nordic races, and the ancestors of the Ancient Britons!

The revelations concerning the historical characters of ancient history are no less astonishing. Thus we learn that King Menes, the founder of the First Dynasty of Egypt was the son of Sargon, King of Babylon, and was also identical with King Minos of Crete! We are told:—

Menes, moreover, is demonstrated to be identical with King Minos, the traditional founder of civilization in Crete. And the other ancient civilizations of Asia Minor, Elam, Persia, the Indus Valley, and Mediterranean are shown likewise to be of Sumerian or Aryan origin—the remaining ancient civilization also, namely that of China . . . discloses the hitherto unknown identity and Aryan royal ancestry of the father of Sargon-the-Great; and the pre-history of Sargon himself and his son Menes. Thus it is found that Menes, whose origin and antecedents have been wholly unknown, early revolted against his father and seized Egypt and established there the first local dynasty, detaching it from his father's empire, when he was still crown-prince and governor of the Indus Valley colony of his father's empire.<sup>2</sup>

There is a great diversity of opinion among Egyptologists as to the date of King Menes reign. Petrie placing it 5510 B.C., while the "German School"

<sup>1</sup> Waddell: *Ind-Sumerian Seals Deciphered*. p. v.

<sup>2</sup> Waddell: *The Makers of Civilization*. pp. xvi-xvii.

following Meyer, place it at 3315 B.C. Breasted following the latter with 3400 B.C. Each side give strong reasons for their opinions. But the fact is, there is not sufficient evidence, at present to definitely and indisputably settle the matter. But as the *Cambridge Ancient History* (Vol. i. p. 172) referring to the date 3000 B.C. observes: "it is surely impossible to assign such a late date to the first Dynasty." To Mr. Waddell, however, nothing is impossible, and he calmly places it "about 2704 B.C."<sup>3</sup>

These discoveries are astonishing enough, but they pale into insignificance before the revelations made by Mr. Waddell with regard to the first Dynasty of Sumeria.

The first King of the Dynasty, we are told, was *Dar, Dur* or *Tur*. He was also the god *Indra* of the Indo-Aryans, *Indara* of the Hittites. *Thor*, of the mighty hammer, of the Scandanavian epics; King Arthur of England of the legend of the Holy Grail; St. George, the patron saint of England, and also St. Andrew! He was also the source from which was derived: "Jupiter or Jove, borrowed by the Hebrews as *Yahve* or *Jehovah*." (p. 92.) We may possibly have missed a few other kings and gods, in this wilderness of over 600 pages, but no matter we have plenty; and in any case, our readers can console themselves with the knowledge that our old friends: "Cain, Enoch, Noah and Japhet [figure] as early Aryan or Sumerian historical Kings of fixed dates and contemporary monuments." (p. 151.) And now for the discovery of the famous "Holy Grail."

We learn that the first Sumerian, or Aryan, King, a sun-worshipper, named:—

Thor, Ar-Thur, Dur, In-Dur, Indra, Sagg, or Sig, Zeus, Prometheus, Bil or Bel, St. George of Cappadocia, Odinn, Ad or "Adam," . . . captured the famous magic Stone-Bowl fetish of the Semitic Chaldean Serpent-Worshippers of "The Garden of Eden" at Carchemish on the Upper Euphrates, who opposed his great uplifting Reformation of Mankind, which famous trophy bowl still exists, with its contemporary historical and genealogical inscription of his great-grandson as "Udu's Bowl," now disclosed as the original "Holy Grail" of the original King Arthur." (p. 469.)

It will be observed, incidentally, that I had, as I suspected, left out a few divinities from my list, Zeus, Prometheus, Bel, Odin, and Adam, to wit. For our part we cannot see why Sindbad the Sailor, and Aladdin, with his wonderful lamp, as a substitute for the Holy Grail, was not included.

We are told that this vessel was unearthed in a fragmentary condition: "from deep down below the foundations of the central tower of the oldest sun-temple in Mesopotamia at Nippur, on the old channel of the Euphrates south-west of Babylon, where it had been deposited by this fourth king and great-grandson of King Dur, Thor, or Ar—Thur about 3245 B.C., at a spot which has been personally inspected by me. And this fragment is now in my possession." (p. 89.)

But, I fancy I hear the bewildered reader asking: "Wasn't the 'Holy Grail' supposed to be the cup used by Christ and his disciples at the Last Supper? How then did it come to be buried under this temple several thousands of years previously? Did Christ perform a miracle and have it transferred from Mesopotamia, for the occasion, and then restored it back again?" My friends I do not know, there is evidently a great mystery here, to which the author gives no clue. But the imagination that was equal to producing the above story, surely would not fail in providing a satisfactory—to himself—answer to such a trifling objection.

W. MANN.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p. 33.

## Dolet.

(Continued from page 685.)

IN his Piedmont retreat, Dolet prepared a series of poems on his imprisonment, called *Le Second Enfer*—The Second Hell. To publish this, and to embrace once more his wife and son, he made his way back to Lyons. There he had the *Second Enfer* printed with two dialogues, *Axiochus*, then falsely attributed to Plato. This very volume cost him his life. Three words in one of the dialogues soon after constituted one of the capital charges against him. Mr. Christie says that some of the verses are of considerable merit and are written in "a pathetic and elevated tone, full of lofty and noble sentiments." One epistle to the King is very outspoken. He calls on Francis to turn against those enemies of virtue who sought to annihilate before his face all good men and lovers of learning. It is of this epistle that M. Aime Martin, the great historian writes:—

"These verses as verses are far from admirable; but what elevation, what courage there is in the sentiments they proclaim! Thus to attack face to face the enemies of humanity, to throw light into the hearts of kings, to teach them that which no one dares to say to them, but which they have so much interest in knowing—namely, that they should make their glory repose on the happiness and intelligence of their people, to do that to-day, would be to deserve well of mankind, to do that in those days of superstition was to devote oneself to death."

Dolet sets out with his volume for the royal camp, intending to present it to the King. But at Troyes he was arrested and conveyed to Paris, where he was tried for heresy in the *Chambre Ardente*, before Pierre Lizet, the First President.

As this man sentenced Dolet to death we pause to describe his character. He was a zealous hunter of heretics, and had sent many to the stake. He busied himself in the prosecution of poor young Morin, who printed *Desperiers' Cymbalum Mundi*, and hastened the death of Louis Berquin. He kept a bookseller in his pay, one André, to discover and betray the sellers and buyers of heretical books. Although he prided himself on his learning, his Latin was so barbarous that one of his sentences caused the King to abolish the use of that tongue on the judicial bench. He was frightfully addicted to wine and women; his red nose and bald head were standing marks for the shafts of satire; and at length he became so rotten that his nose actually dropped off! Yet this vilest, meanest of mankind doomed to death one of the best men then living in the world. Thus does superstition elevate vice to the seat of power and prostrate virtue at its feet.

Theologians have often damned men on a very nice point, but there never was a finer one than that on which Dolet was lost. In the "*Axiochus*" he had, it was alleged, wrongly translated Plato, whom he had made to say "after death, *tu ne serais plus rien du tout*—you will be nothing at all." The *rien du tout* was declared to be a damnable addition to the text. "You will not exist" would do, but, "you will not exist at all" was a vile heresy. Dolet was damned on these three words. They formed "the sole ground of the charge of blasphemy."

Sentence was not pronounced until the 2nd of August, 1546. In the meanwhile occurred that horrible massacre of the Vaudois, when murder, rape, and flames were let loose against a whole district; when women were outraged in churches, and then murdered, and others smoked to death in caves; when hundreds of men whose lives were spared were sent to the galleys, and children were sold as slaves.

Pope Paul the Third was delighted, the party of persecution triumphed, and King Francis finally joined them. There could now be no hope for Dolet. His doom was sealed. From his prison he penned a nobly pathetic cantique, full of resignation to his fate and courage to meet it. On the 2nd of August he was condemned to be hung and then burnt with his books in the Place Maubert, and his property was confiscated to the King. Even the widow and orphan were to share the punishment! It was also ordered that he should be put to torture before his execution and questioned about his companions; and "if the said Dolet shall cause any scandal or utter any blasphemy, his tongue shall be cut out, and he shall be burnt alive." This infernal sentence was carried out on the morrow, when Holy Church gave him as a birthday gift the ever-lustrous martyr's crown.

He was hung first, and then (for they were not very particular) probably whilst he still breathed, the faggots were lighted, and the author and his books were consumed in the flames. It is said that instead of a prayer he uttered a pun in Latin—"Non dolet ipse Dolet, sed pia turba dolet—Dolet himself does not grieve, but the pious crowd grieves." But the confessor who attended him to the stake told Montius that he had acknowledged his errors. "I do not believe a word of it," wrote the great Erasmus, "it is the usual story which these people invent after the death of their victims."

Thus perished Etienne Dolet, the Freethought martyr. France may well be proud of such a son, and Humanity must ever hold him dear. He is beyond the reach of admiration and love, but for our own sakes both should be given. Could we stand beside his grave, which bigotry has denied, our eyes might well mingle smiles and tears; tears of sorrow for the bitter fate of a valiant soldier of progress, and smiles of joy that such men have made the world fairer by their lives and holier by their deaths.

Dolet's character has already been largely described in the course of this biographical sketch. But a few more touches may be added. His disposition was somewhat proud and turbulent, liable to make enemies, and not apt to conciliate them. Yet his quarrels did not seem to have been personal, and we must make great allowance for his vehement language. The age was not remarkable for urbanity in discussion, and even a century later we see by Milton's invective against Salmaciuss that literary manners had not much improved. Longfellow has humourously hit off his temper in a well known passage:—

*Seraphic Doctor*—The Lord have mercy on your position,  
You wretched, wrangling, culler of herbs!

*Cherubic Doctor*—May he send your soul to eternal perdition,  
For your treatise on the irregular verbs!

Dolet must not be made responsible for the common failing of his time. If he had, as Mr. Christie alleges, "serious faults of temper and temperament, he nevertheless "excited the affection, the admiration, and the respect, and obtained at least for a time the friendship of every man of learning and virtue with whom he came into personal contact." He never penned an unkind word of any man who had once been his friend, and we have to learn the story of his quarrels with intimates from other sources than his own writings. Mr. Christie confesses that the exalted estimate of Dolet's character, with which he began his researches, has been lowered in their progress; and he frankly states his opinion that the great printer had faults of head, and perhaps some of heart, which contributed to his misfortunes. But who is perfect? It is surely enough that "with all

these drawbacks he remains a man possessed of many most admirable qualities, of high talent, an intense desire after knowledge for himself, and an equally intense desire of communicating it to others, an intense sympathy with every kind of intellectual progress, and an intense hatred of ignorance, bigotry, superstition and priestcraft."

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

## Maori Witchery.

FREETHINKERS are sometimes accused of being dull people, whose only delight is to read the Bible and find fault with it.

Religious people, however, forget that the bright, fearless outlook upon life shown by Freethinkers is not maintained by a reading of solemn matter only; the Freethinker can enjoy thrillers and humour, and the odd sidelines of human nature just as much as anyone else.

I, for instance, delight in reading books dealing with other nations—the more out of the way the better, and it is not surprising, therefore, that I picked up a copy of Brown's *Maori Witchery* published by Dent's at 6s., with hope of entertainment and thrills.

I was not disappointed.

Towards the end of last century Mr. Browne was a Government surveyor who was engaged in opening up the country for the Main Trunk Railway. This was sorely against Mr. Browne's conscience, for he knew that Queen Victoria had promised the Maoris that their land should be theirs for ever without any interference. The tribes were hostile, and although Mr. Browne was known as a friend of the Maoris he had many narrow escapes from death.

I do not know Mr. Browne, but I can admire him, for although he was captured by the Maoris and fattened up to be eaten by them, he can write in his preface that, according to their lights they were quite justified in their anger.

The reader shares the author's admiration of the natives, for despite their fondness for discussing love affairs they have many praiseworthy characteristics.

The Freethinker will find many things to interest him in the thirty-one chapters of the book.

The villain of the book is Tohiora, the witch doctor, whom Mr. Browne describes in words which might be applied to a more powerful Witchdoctor of the northern hemisphere: "The methods employed by the witch-doctor were secret and mysterious, and so struck terror into the hearts of a race brimful of superstition. According to the Maori idea the tohunga is in direct communication with the gods, and therefore all powerful."

When the chief's son was to be married the procession turned back because a lizard crossed the path and the affair was postponed. We can smile, but what about our own superstitions? How many women would consent to be married on a Friday, the thirteenth of the month, and to be dressed in green? And we are supposed to be civilized!

At the same wedding there was first a feast, then the chief asked permission for the hand of the lady. The father began to make a speech, but his wife pulled him down and did all the talking. The future bridegroom was then asked if he had any other wives, if he had any children, was he the son of the chief, did he want the girl for his wife, and would he be true to her. After this all the relatives were consulted, and then when everything was formerly arranged, the witch-doctor stepped forward and said that he had consulted the gods who were propitious.

The Maoris put the priest last, and there is little doubt that he waited until he saw the wishes of the tribe before he announced the god's judgment.

The dignified chief, who shows throughout the book as a grand character, opposes the coming of the railway. His wife says: "The white men are an evil race; they cannot speak the truth. Even your missionaries are liars, and every chance they get they steal our land."

The chief adds, "And yet they tell me the God they follow is a God of Truth and Love."

"Anyhow, "croaked Moka," if there had been no missionaries there would have been no briar bushes, for wherever a missionary settled a briar bush sprang up."

This is rather a different tale from that told by the missionary societies who regaled us, and still amuse us, by telling us how the heathen seeks for the Christian God and sends messages across the ocean pleading for more workers.

Mr. Browne married a native girl—a girl who flits through the story like a graceful smiling fairy. But she was hated by the witch doctor, who told her she was going to die, and who hypnotized her, and ill-treated her until she passed away to Te Reinga. Te Reinga means in English The Leap, and is the name given by the Maoris to the northernmost cape of New Zealand. Here they believe the spirits of the dead go on their exit from the body, and plunge into the sea to enjoy everlasting bliss in whatever form they prefer.

I have picked out a few extracts likely to interest Freethinkers . . . even if these are ignored the book still remains one to read and re-read and re-read still again.

NECHELLS.

### "Ecrasez L'Infame!"

If the centenary celebrations of Roman Catholic emancipation do no more than draw attention to the growing danger of this sinister power, and to the fact that the final conflict of reason will be with the Romish Church, they will have accomplished something useful. The priests of this Church appear to be jubilant, and confident of the future; and the time may come when England will regret her liberality.

Father Dudley, as cited in the *Freethinker* of September 22, is undoubtedly right when he says that Protestantism is dying and the Church of England is becoming a farce. The only power capable of dealing effectively with the deadly menace of the Romish superstition is what he calls "modernism," that is, the rationalism which expresses itself logically as secularism. The time is undoubtedly approaching when in England, as in other countries, people must be either Freethinkers or Catholic slaves.

Father Dudley described Dean Inge and Bishop Barnes as "very ignorant men." The proper retort to Father Dudley would be to accuse him, not merely of ignorance, but of charlatanism, as being representative of the greatest fraud and imposture that has ever cursed the world. But this, no other priest or parson could do without implicating himself! Only the Freethinker can do it, and, in so doing, beat down his opponent by the weight of his superior knowledge and his honesty. It is only the Secularist that the Catholic Church fears. And fearing, it will resort to all means, even the most infamous, to "down" the Freethinker. For this reason, the final conflict between Freethought and Catholicism will be one of extermination, with no quarter on either side.

There are some things that cannot be tolerated, and the foul upas of Roman Catholicism is one of them. It poisons every source of knowledge with which it comes into contact. It has grown up out of a fiction, the myth of Christ. It is rooted in ignorance and superstition, and is nourished by a putrid mass of lies. It has forged its credentials, and has falsified history in order to support its fraudulent claims. It is the deadly enemy of science and of modern civilization, and would, if it could regain its power, drag the world down again into the barbarism that it created in the so-called Age of Faith. It would again persecute, torture and burn, with the same savage vindictiveness.

Let there be no mistake about it. The Encyclical Letter of Pope Pius IX, held by the Catholic Church as authoritative, lays down the following Articles:—

77. It is necessary even in the present day that the Catholic religion shall be held as the only religion of the State, to the exclusion of all other forms of worship.

78. Whence it has been unwisely provided by law, in some countries called Catholic, that persons coming to

reside therein shall enjoy the free exercise of their religion.

79. The civil liberty of every mode of worship, and full power given to all of openly and publicly manifesting their opinions and their ideas, conduce more easily to corrupt the morals and minds of the people, and to the propagation of the pest of indifferentism.

80. The Roman Pontiff cannot and ought not to reconcile himself to, or agree with, Progress, Liberalism, and modern Civilization.

These are the issues. The Romish Church definitely repudiates toleration in respect of others. Therefore, Roman Catholics have no right to claim toleration, and it is both unwise and unsafe to accord it to them, knowing what their Church, and they themselves, will do if ever they get the opportunity.

*Ecrasez l'infame!* must be the war-cry of every Freethinker.

E. J. LAMEL.

### Acid Drops.

The Mayor of Rochdale has been having a week's evangelizing of the town, using the slogan of "Rochdale for Christ." The whole proceeding is a piece of consummate impertinence and a gross abuse of his office. As Mayor of Bolton, he is not there as representing the churches and chapels, but as representing the people of Bolton. Suppose the Mayor had been a Freethinker, and he had used his position to start a Freethinking campaign under the cry of "Bolton for Freethought," we wonder what the churches and chapels would have said to that? But where religion is concerned all sense of justice and even decency is thrown to the winds. It looks as though no really earnest Christian is fit to hold public office. He is only to be trusted in that direction when his religion sits lightly on him. It is to be noted that the religious papers have spoken of this prostitution of a public office in high praise.

Last June, the Town Council of Ramsgate opened the public grounds for games on Sundays. Since then the local Sabbatarians have taken a Referendum of the municipal voters of Ramsgate, concerning the matter. The result of the vote is as follows: The total number of persons on the register to whom voting-cards were sent was 15,746. Of these 3,429 voted against Sunday games, and 2,966 in favour, giving a majority of 463 against. The result does not warrant the Council closing the grounds to Sunday games. All it means is that 3,429 pious people do not, themselves, want to play games. But 2,966 people do; and as ratepayers, they are entitled to be given facilities for enjoying the use of the public grounds in the way they wish. Nor should 3,429 pious people—a mere third of the citizens—be allowed to prevent that enjoyment. What is obvious is that the larger number of citizens who did not vote are not averse to Sunday games, and have no desire to hinder persons who want to play from playing games on Sunday in the public grounds.

The *Times* affirms that the mass of English Church people are opposed to Disestablishment. A more important point is whether it is right for any one sect of the Christian religion to be under State patronage, and whether the great mass of the English people, who stand aloof from all sects, desire such patronage.

To waste ten shillings, says the Dean of St. Pauls, is to waste a whole day's work by somebody. The godly might bear this in mind when next they are implored to support foreign missions or proselytizing among Jews.

A sermonizer has been expatiating on a saying of Jesus: "He that endureth to the end shall be saved." This is a cheering thought for our older Freethought advocates to take to bed o' nights.

Eye-drill has been suggested for improving the sight. Now, if mental sight were the matter in question, we would recommend reading the *Freethinker* regularly. It is a first-class remedy for removing defects induced by religious education.

At a recent meeting of the Wesleyan Missionary Society there was "anxiety concerning finance." The reverend secretary said there must be either a ten per cent increase on the income of 1927 or else retrenchment. The budget for 1930 is £554,000, which the Committee "deliberately, unanimously, and prayerfully" sanctioned. The Committee has a steadfast belief that the good Lord will not permit Wesleyan mugs to grow wiser during the coming year. We prayerfully hope God won't allow that belief to be undermined.

Fear of God has often been used to frighten the impious. The Rev. Dr. Lofthouse has, however, found another use for it—to scare the pious. Speaking about Methodist Union, he said that the "call" to union was a challenge which was also a warning, and a warning which, when it came from divine lips was in the nature of a threat; if Methodists failed in their duty what hope was there? Really, it doesn't seem right and proper to attempt to scare Wesleyans, Primitives, and Uniteds into one another's arms with a threat of divine retribution!

The Rev. Raymond Taunton (Primitive Methodist) declares that "the Church of to-day or to-morrow must be the home of liberty. There are risks in allowing individual liberty, but there are greater risks in not allowing it." We presume he refers to liberty of thought as regards Christian dogmas—that's all. There's no likelihood of any Church of to-day, or tomorrow, or the day after that, becoming a home of liberty of thought in the greater sense of the phrase. No Church can, or will be able to, work a miracle of that kind.

A shining light of Nonconformity says he has no objection to fun and sport and socials in connexion with a church, provided they can be justified as in some way contributing to the good of Christ's Church on earth. Our godly friend needn't have troubled to mention that proviso of his. Seeing that, in these days, the majority of members cannot be kept within the fold by the attraction of religion alone, secular amusements and pleasures have become necessities with the chapels. That being the fact, the leaders of the chapels will never be hard put to find justification for such secular pleasures. As the old puritan worthies might have said—it's another victory for Satan!

A woman novelist recommends the study of history. We can recommend the study of the Bible as history to persons who wish to write fiction. They would have no better tutor than God, who inspired the Bible, and who is thus the world's leading writer of fiction.

Mr. James Douglas has been shedding inky tears about the "loneliness" of the English people. According to him, the churches and chapels used, in his youth, to provide brotherhood and the cure for loneliness. But they don't now. No doubt hundreds of parsons will deny this. So perhaps Mr. Douglas' disinterested concern for lonely people is merely a journalistic stunt for helping the churches and chapels to attract clients.

The *Methodist Times* has been making sarcastic remarks about the "recordings of the *Methodist Recorder*. The *Recorder*, it appears, gave a lengthy account of certain semi-jubilee celebrations connected with a London church. The addresses and reminiscences of old friends

of the church, the services of the choir, the large congregation at the Sunday service, and the comfort and inspiration of the messages were all recorded as marking an occasion "long to be remembered." There was, says *Methodist Times*, also in the *Recorder* an account of a lecture delivered by a popular London missionary, who "held us all entranced for over an hour." The whole report was most enheartening, but alas! it dealt with meetings that had not yet been held; they were to take place at the following week-end! The *Methodist Times* adds:—

These records were entirely imaginary. Prophecy is notoriously a dangerous gift, and we offer the respectful opinion that our venerable contemporary should make a more sparing use of it. But there is a more serious side to this matter. It involves the reliability of religious journalism.

The *Methodist Times* needn't get excited. That "reliability" it mentions is also imaginary. In these days, none but the very pious are stupid enough to take in as "gospel" the glowing reports concerning missions and religious addresses. Lying to the glory of God is a very common practice in religious journalism. Parsons and religious journalists have a species of ethics quite distinct from that which obtains in affairs outside religion. What a noble inspiration is religion!

Addressing the Magistrates' Association, Col. Borden Turner, Inspector of Prisons, described the methods employed, and the community system in force at Wakefield Prison. Enlightened prison governors, he said, seek to humanize the life of the prisoner, because they regard him as a social failure, and look upon detention not simply as a deterrent form of punishment, but as an opportunity for remoulding character and redirecting useful energies into normal social activity. Seemingly, the ancient notion of giving prisoners a fore-taste of hell is at long last losing favour. Sociological and psychological discovery is proving the Christian view and methods to be wrong, stupid, and inhumane. Nevertheless, there will not be lacking parsons who will declare that modern prison-reform has been effected through the influence of the Christian religion of Love!

Writing about "Sex Teaching," the Rev. Dr. A. Herbert Gray thinks that, since parents neglect to impart wholesome instruction in sex matters, Sunday school teachers should do so. As regards "the perils of silence" in this matter, he says:—

Sunday school teachers have not in the past attempted this work. That is partly because we are only now escaping from a deplorable Victorian tradition which enjoined silence about this whole subject, and which left the young to find out the truth for themselves, though they often found it only by repeating the same mistakes that their elders had made before them. Behind this tradition, no doubt, there was an unconfessed sense that there is something essentially shameful in sex, and that therefore it ought not to be spoken about. Nothing less than such a deplorable misconception could explain this conspiracy of silence which has worked most cruelly in millions of cases. Now however, that tradition is being rapidly discredited. Most people responsible for the young are feeling that the task of sex education must be faced.

It is as well to mention that the "deplorable Victorian tradition," the feeling that there is "something essentially shameful in sex," the "deplorable misconception," and the "conspiracy of silence"—all these things owe their origin to the Christian religion. One has only to read the Bible and the raving of the Christian Fathers to realize that. We will add that it is the pioneer work of Freethinkers that has broken down the "conspiracy of silence," and has helped Christians to take saner, or more wholesome, views concerning sex. We should say that Sunday school teachers are the last persons to be entrusted with the right kind of "sex education."

The Archbishop of York, at a meeting of the Council for Broadcast Education, confessed that he was con-

verted to the belief that broadcasting could be used as an instrument of education some two years ago. Was it about this time that some clever clerics suggested to him that pressure brought to bear on the B.B.C. would persuade the Corporation to supply larger doses of "religious education"?

Speaking about the work undertaken by the Council for Broadcast education, the Archbishop said:—

The Council should to the utmost cater for the discussion of what was provided—and that in the most critical spirit possible—because it was only in discussion that people began to get their own mental teeth into the subject, and began the process of digestion in which the whole value of any educational process resided.

This be very excellent advice. But we have little hope of its being taken where religion and religious topics are concerned. If we are mistaken in this, the N.S.S. will be pleased to supply lecturers who will undertake to bring to the discussion of religion "the most critical spirit possible." By the way, religion is, at present, the only controversial subject broadcast concerning which a criticism is denied to listeners. Is religion, then, so weak a thing that it cannot stand for thorough criticism? Many listeners are asking that question.

Mrs Claude Beddington is asking the following question in the *Daily Mail*: there is no truth in the rumour that the Bishop of London will reply:—

Why a perfectly nice person, who has been brought up by a Godfearing father and a saintly, Christian mother and who would never dream of stealing so much as a sixpenny piece, will (1) swindle his best friend over a horse—swindle without turning a hair? And why the same individual will (2) lie and scheme so as to smuggle contraband goods past the Customs—without a qualm of conscience?

In this Christian country, an ejection order for rent was served on a charwoman whose weekly income was 8s. earned by scrubbing floors. Her age was sixty-three. In spite of the slogan of "every man for himself and God for us all," a sum of £338 17s. 10d. was publicly subscribed. Here, then, was a case for intervention by the Lord, but it is encouraging to know that the public took no risks in waiting, thus leaving the charwoman with her rent paid, and the freedom to scrub unlimited floors.

Regarded in the cold light of fact and reason, the writing of the Rev. Prebendary Gough, in the "Saturday Pulpit" (*Daily News*) looks somewhat pathetic. We have every sympathy for a genuine trier, but how far will the following statements take anyone?—

1. "God is always ready to hear His child."
2. "Great is the dignity of man as being thus able to co-operate with God."

From an examination of such pearls of wisdom, it would appear that it would not matter in what order, grammatical or otherwise, the words were written down, the result is meaningless.

The report on the Archbishop's Commission on Religious Education is interesting reading, and it makes the best of a bad job. One clause in the recommendations is as follows:—

By all available means the Church should assist in the training of teachers for religious instruction.

At one of the older universities the Commission learnt that:—

The decline in the attendance at chapel has been progressive for many years. It has continued in spite of successive chaplains of exceptional ability, and that fact exhibits its significance the more clearly. Organized religion has less and less hold on the undergraduates, and

what is left of it is more and more diverted into other channels than the college chapel, which has many active competitors.

And the sum total of it all is, that if individuals cannot be caught young, and their brains addled with Christian metaphysics, the supply of members for churches and chapels cannot be maintained. That is a free compliment, and make a present of it to all and sundry that are afraid to put their theology before the mature mind.

Canon Lacey has raised a storm in the Church which, to enlightened peoples, resembles the fizzing of a three-halfpenny Seidlitz powder. Once again we reiterate—the question to the thinker is not what Christians believe, but how they came to believe it, and the study of anthropology, primitive religion, and history with open eyes, will give the explanation. This may explain, in a degree, why the more advanced Christians have shifted the battle ground to the survival of personality, the doctrine of emergence, vitalism, and other fancy names, which only means that Christianity must fit its environment or perish.

America, in some respects, is not so far behind the times, as its bellowing revivalists would have us believe. An announcement in the *Daily News* tells us that a new religion of humanism has been started. In it, there are to be no parsons, and no sermons. We cannot for the moment find any mention of the collection box, and as it is now too late to expect the famous rock to land on the Pilgrim Fathers, we must, to mix metaphors, rejoice to see the tables turned. The substance of the new religion is elementary Freethought, and Mr. Walter Lippmann, who has joined the movement, will have our good wishes, and also an assurance, that we see no reason for fearing the world being suffocated with commonsense.

The Rev. Dr. Parkes S. Cadman is an American sky-pilot who moves in about the same intellectual level as Dr. Norwood, or the writers of those Wayside Pulpit banalities or the newspaper "Thought for Sunday" fellow. In a cutting from a Pittsburgh paper just to hand, we see that some one has been asking him how he accounts for the fact that earnest prayers for the benefit of others are not answered. To this Dr. Cadman replies that we live in a universe of cause and effect, and we must not expect an alteration merely because we pray. But in case his readers should give up praying, he adds in a kind of footnote, that "the above reason does not exclude the possibility of Divine intervention." Verily, the fools in the pews have in the pulpits the parsons they deserve.

## Immortality.

TALK turned this evening on the end of man,  
And if there is survival after death:  
So I perforce then heatedly began  
To quarrel with the old established faith . . .  
"Where are the dead? . . . Their bodies rot, we know.  
This Christian Heaven can't be in the sky . . .  
To what far star then do the spirits go?"  
So they in turn rebuked me heatedly . . .  
"O Look around, see all the woe and pain  
That clouds the days of this our earthly life."  
One answered "Christ the Lord will come again  
And bring an age of gold to end our strife . . .  
God will have mercy on His people yet:  
He will adjust the' innumerable scores . . ."  
"But sir," I cried, "You do, it seems, forget  
He had no mercy on the brontosaurus . . .  
Shall we not vanish also from the earth  
Leaving white bones to show what once was man  
To some new creature of a greater birth  
That follows us as we the saurian?"

JOHN H. HEWITT.

## Testimonial to Mr. Chapman Cohen.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS—FOURTH LIST.

Corrected total from last issue £776 2s. 6d.

T. Rainbow, 2s.; F. Wightmore, 5s.; H. Porter, 10s. 6d.; E. Pinder, £1; Mr. & Mrs. W. H. Finney, £1 1s.; Erle D. Side, £5 5s.; W. S. Clogg, 5s.; J. Gallery, 10s.; A. E. Graham, 10s.; E. Truelove, 10s. 6d.; E. J. Iamel, 10s.; H. Boll, £2; Mr. & Mrs. J. Shipp, £1; R. W. Blakeley, £1 1s.; E. Osmond, 2s. 6d.; Wm. Horrocks, £1; Mr. & Mrs. Blaney, 10s.; F.R., £1; Thomas Dunbar, 2s. 6d.; F. S. Haughton, 5s.; R.M.V., £1 10s.; Owen Scott, 2s. 6d.; W. Ashe, £1 1s.; John Ross, 10s.; Mrs. J. Wright, 2s. 6d.; Henry Spence B.Sc., £5; A. D. Corrick, £2; W. A., £1; J. Hopkins (2nd Don.), £1; Mr. & Mrs. L. R. Venton, £2 2s.—Total to November 4, 1929, £808 os. 6d.

**Correction.**—The absence of the Editor from London over the week-end may be responsible for the following errors in last week's list, in citations from letters Mr. E. Adams, should read Mrs. E. Adams. Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner & Son, should be Mr. & Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner. E. D. Skidd should be E. D. Side. M.J.M.'s subscription of 10s. was wrongly acknowledged as £10. The total has been revised to date.

**Committee:**—Messrs C. Bush (Weston), H. Jessop (Leeds), F. E. Monks (Manchester), J. Neate, C. G. Quinlan (London), and T. Robertson (Glasgow).

**Hon. Sec.:**—Mr. W. J. W. Easterbrook, "Hillfield," Burraton, Saltash, Cornwall, to whom all communications and donations should be sent. Cheques and Money Orders should be crossed National Provincial Bank. Acknowledgments of all subscriptions will be made in the *Freethinker*.

For other matters connected with this Fund see p. 715.

### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

**T. HUMPHREYS (Toronto).**—You are quite correct. An explanation of a thing consists in so stating the conditions that, given these conditions the particular phenomena follows. To give the law of that phenomenon is to frame a formula which will describe its behaviour. It is a simple point, but overlooked by about nine writers on science out of ten, particularly when that terrible thing "Materialism" looms before them. Then they forget their science altogether.

**H.C.**—Thanks for letters. They are interesting as specimens of the undeveloped intelligence with which the Churches and Chapels of this country are so well stocked.

**J. H. THOMPSON (Pittsburg).**—We are gratified by your high opinion of the *Freethinker*.

**S. BRADLEY** writes that he considers recent issues of the *Freethinker* worth their weight in gold. We are delighted to hear it, and take the opportunity of suggesting that those who agree with Mr. Bradley would help materially if they took an extra copy for a year and passed it on to some likely subscriber.

**N. KERSLAKE.**—A knowledge of science is one thing, and may be acquired with industry and moderate ability. An understanding of the philosophy of science is another thing, and of far greater importance.

**J. A. DAVIES.**—A capital letter. It does good to keep up the protest even though no result is immediately seen.

**T. EDMUNDS** writes "please give us some articles like those dealing with Professor Eddington." When the opportunity calls for it; but one may have too much of anything, and there are all sorts of people who read the *Freethinker*.

**E. D. SIDE.**—Sorry. See correction.

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

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

### Sugar Plums.

There was a good meeting at Leicester on Sunday last to listen to the first of four lectures by Mr. Chapman Cohen on "Materialism." Mr. Sydney Gimson occupied the chair. To-day (November 10) Mr. Cohen's subject is "Materialism and Modern Science."

On Monday, November 18, Mr. Chapman Cohen will debate in the Picton Hall, Liverpool, with the Rev. D. Pughe, the subject of "Can we do Without Christianity?" The prices of admission are 2s. 6d., 1s. 6d., 1s., and 6d. The Picton Hall is a large one, but it promises to be filled on this occasion. Tickets may be obtained from Mr. E. Farricker, 7 Stratheone Road, Wavertree, Liverpool, or from Mr. S. R. A. Ready, 28 Bank Road, Bootle.

We hope to have *Shakespeare and Other Literary Essays*, by G. W. Foote, ready for sale in about another week. The volume contains some of G. W. Foote's most striking literary essays, and is accompanied by a portrait of the author, with a preface by Mr. Chapman Cohen. It is a volume which every reader of this paper should have in his or her possession if only as a memento of one of the most brilliant pens that was ever wielded in the cause of Freethought in this country. The price of the book is 3s. 6d. We invite an early and a brisk demand. The work is issued by the Secular Society Limited.

The Moncreu Conway Memorial Lecture, this year, was delivered by Mr. Laurence Houseman, and is now published in book form by Messrs. Watts & Co., at the price of 1s. The lecture has drawn forth a comment from the *Church Times*, and a deserved rebuke from Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner. The *Church Times* remarks that it is doubtful if Moncreu Conway would have applauded this particular lecture, and as Conway had a very strong dislike to compromise in the world of thought, we can imagine him turning a rather contemptuous eye on this particular address. For Mr. Houseman is obviously ignorant of Freethought—save in the broad sense of something that stands for liberal opinion, and therefore sees no reason why Freethought and Religion should not amalgamate. Probably he has in his mind something that is not religion amalgamating with something that is not Freethought. The offspring of the marriage would be something too curious to think about.

Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner rightly protested against Mr. Houseman's statement that the "Rationalist Movement" lacks men and women who are willing to suffer and die for it. Mr. Houseman might urge in self-defence that he was dealing with the more recent Rationalist Movement and not with the historic Freethought Movement of the nineteenth century, but Mrs. Bonner rightly takes his statement as including the larger Freethought Movement. And no man who is not ignorant of the Freethinkers of the nineteenth century, from Paine onward, would charge them with a lack of courage, or a readiness to undergo privation for their opinions. Whatever

may be brought against the great Freethinkers from Carlile to G. W. Foote, that charge will not stand.

But on the whole we were glad to see Mr. Houseman's foolish observation, and Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner's protest. It illustrates what we have so often protested against, namely the manner in which the names of the militant Freethinkers of the last century have been hidden, not merely by Christians but by non-Christians. The consequence is that when a man like Mr. Houseman comes to talk about Freethought he is in almost complete ignorance of the history of the movement. He finds a certain type of Freethinker bowing down at the shrine of men like Professor Huxley, or Professor Ray Lenkester, quite admirable men in their way, but the critic naturally asks what forlorn cause did these men ever champion, or what privations did they suffer? He sees that their Freethought brought them no great privation, because they were working well within the safety lines beyond which the real battle was being fought. We do not say that Mr. Housman has never heard of men like Carlile, or Hetherington, or Francis Place, or Bradlaugh, or G. W. Foote, but we feel quite confident that he does not know just what they did, and that it was due to them that the names of such non-Christians as he does know said what they did. As an instance of what we mean we may take Professor Huxley ventilating the falsity of biblical stories in the pages of well known magazines, long after all he said had been commonplaces with Freethought speakers for many years. We are all pleased when well known men come forward in support of Freethinking opinions, but it should never be forgotten that they are the supporters, not the creators of these views. The spade work has usually been done by men and women whose very names are anathema to the respectable world of to-day.

The Plymouth Branch N.S.S. have again arranged for a series of lectures during the Autumn and Winter at the Co-operative Hall, Courtenay Street. The dates are November 10, December 8, January 12, February 9, and March 9—afternoon and evening—3 and 7. Friends are asked to kindly make notes of these dates, and to do their best to help secure good meetings. Mr. George Whitehead will open the course on November 10 (to-day) and his subjects will be: "The Evolution of Morality," and "Some Important Lessons from History." Later lecturers will be Messrs. Corrigan, Saphin, Chapman Cohen and Rosetti—in the order stated.

Will Freethinkers in the Bradford District, willing to co-operate in forming a local Branch of the N.S.S. communicate with Mr. T. W. Green, 28 Dalby Avenue, Bradford.

What the *Derby Express* calls an "impassioned outbreak" occurred at a meeting of the Derby Board of Guardians on the question of appointing two parsons to arrange the service for the opening of the new hospital. It all happened because Alderman Porter remarked that it was strange to call on representatives of the deity when curing the sick was the work of God. Why not let the Mayor open the building in the usual way? One of the guardians objected because he said other people had conscientious opinions beside Alderman Porter, and they objected to that kind of expression. Christians are funny creatures. Nothing must be said with which they don't agree because it hurts their feelings. But they must be given every attitude to say what they like of other people's opinions because it is their duty to do so. Which makes us remark that Christians are funny creatures.

We are glad to note the many tributes in America that have been accorded Professor Dewey on reaching his seventieth birthday. He is referred to as America's outstanding figure in the field of philosophy. It should be added also, that Professor Dewey is a Freethinker. The recent edition of his *Experience and Nature* is a noteworthy performance, particularly after the loads of mystical rubbish that pass muster for philosophy with so

many, and the verbal hogswash of a "vital urge" and the like.

Upsala College, New Jersey, N.Y. (U.S.A.) has received a shock. Each one of the students there recently received a copy of Paine's *Age of Reason*, sent them by the Freethought organization of which Mr. Joseph Lewis is the President. The head of the college (a theological one) the Rev. G. Erickson, advised the students to make no attacks on the book. There seems a good deal of shrewdness about that advice. To criticize the book might lead some of the students to see the truth of its contents. Silence is clearly the best policy. Naturally the college authorities do not like this. But if it was some theological society sending round religious tracts it would be taken as a matter of course. Mr. Joseph Lewis is the President of the Freethinker's organization and we congratulate him on his activity.

## Religion in the Schools.

THE following is an outline of a speech delivered by Mr. D. Capper at a Conference of Class Teachers recently held in Derby. The Federation of Class Teachers is the organization of the assistant teacher members of the National Union of Teachers.

Mr. D. Capper, delegate of Gillingham (Kent), moved an amendment to the platform's resolution which opposed the attempts being made by the religious organizations to modify to their own advantage the existing position in regard to religious instruction in the schools. His amendment was:—

"To add the following words:—

"Conference further declares that the final solution of the problem can be reached only by the complete removal of all forms of religious instruction from the curricula of schools supported from public funds, and pledges the Federation to work for this end.

"Conference therefore instructs the Federal Council to inaugurate a national campaign among teachers, particularly in the N.U.T., with a view to the adoption by the teachers as a whole of the policy of the 'secular solution.'"

In support of his amendment Mr. Capper said:—

The resolution submitted by the Federal Council states only half of the case. It merely re-echoes the published policy of the N.U.T. True, we must resist all attempts of the religious organizations to make further inroads on the schools and the rights of the teachers. But something more is needed; something must be done in the immediate future if the elementary rights of the profession are to be adequately safeguarded. I am therefore submitting this perfectly clear and definite amendment in the hope that this Conference, unlike the Easter Conference, of the N.U.T., at which I proposed a similar amendment, will decide to face up to this—one of the most important problems now confronting the profession.

The seriousness of the question is acknowledged by all. Week by week the *Schoolmaster*, official organ of the N.U.T., is quoting instances of interference by religious bodies in the schools. All over the country such instances are occurring. On May 16, 1929, only one month after the N.U.T. Conference had portentously warned the Churches not to meddle with the *status quo*, the *Schoolmaster* stated:—

"It becomes daily more apparent to what extent the position of the Council Schools is being threatened, and the early consideration of the whole question by the Executive and its Religious Instruction Committee may confidently be anticipated."

Again, the N.U.T. Executive has on several occasions been forced to discuss the question. At the June Executive meeting, one Executive member, Dan Edwards of South Wales, openly advocated the secular solution. This is the first occasion (as far as is known) that the matter has been thus raised on the N.U.T. Executive.

It is important to realize that the question we are discussing here to-day is merely a national manifestation of an international problem. All over the world the armies of the Church are advancing against the school and the

teacher. In the Fascist countries the dictatorship marches hand in hand with the Church and clericalism has been rooted into the schools. In Belgium the private (Catholic) Training Colleges for Teachers are seriously menacing the State (secular) Training Colleges. In Germany and other countries agreements and "concordats" with the Pope are the order of the day. Even in "traditionally secular" France recent legislation has permitted the re-entry of certain expelled religious bodies and the Roman Catholic Church is making great progress in the schools. Everywhere the Churches, allied with blackest political reaction, are undermining the rights of the teachers and the education of the workers' children.

In England the attitude of the Churches is adequately typified by the speech of the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Liverpool, on May 4 last, when he said:—

"The Catholic Church was safeguarding all the principles of social sanity. Were they being adequately safeguarded in the Council Schools? In the latter there were no religious tests for teachers, no safeguards for the children. The teachers were very often Communists, Bolsheviks, Agnostics, Indifferentists, or anything they liked. It was useless to say that their influence ended with the lesson. Personality was bound to have effect, and he hoped the people would open their eyes before it was too late."

Here we have the basic reason for the attempts of organized religion to extend its powers over schools and teachers. Religion has ever been one of the pillars of the capitalist state. It has ever inculcated from above a standard of ethics, which, acting as a powerful social discipline, tends to maintain the "lower classes" in a state of permanent and degrading passivity. Religion perpetuates past beliefs and superstitions, and is enforced on the minds of the children long before these are able to question things out for themselves. Religion employs teachers as the tools for carrying out this work. It is a formidable bar to progress. It is the enemy of education, of teachers and the workers generally. Only the workers, by changing the existing social system, will be able to throw off the incubus of religion from themselves and their children. The teachers must join in the working class struggle to achieve this end. Already many teachers do not care the proverbial two pence for the religious instruction they are obliged, directly or indirectly, to give in the schools.

The *status quo*, as exemplified in the Cowper Temple and other clauses, is breaking down. In any event the *status quo*, in spite of claims to the contrary, has allowed only a mockery of freedom. It has merely permitted a minority of teachers and parents, by "contracting out" of religious instruction, to appear as public rebels against a universally accepted system. It has, directly and indirectly, penalized teachers and children; to secure promotion, teachers must bow their necks to the yoke, while many Freethinking parents are unwilling to withdraw their children from religious instruction lessons for fear of making them appear peculiar, or making them oppose the teacher. The Churches, in fact, are effectively supervising the whole of the educational system, only very exceptionally allowing control to slip out of their grasp.

Moreover, at the present moment, about one third of the elementary school teachers in England and Wales (roughly 60,000) are employed in Church Schools. These are definitely subject to religious tests on appointment. One third of the profession is therefore chosen on a vicious anti-educational principle, while the conditions of their employment and conditions of promotion present a tremendous obstacle to the unification of the schools and the profession. Some leaders of the N.U.T. have declared for the abolition of religious tests for teachers. To them I repeat the question I asked at the N.U.T. Conference, a question which has remained unanswered: "How do they reconcile such professions of faith with their toleration of the anachronism represented by the religious tests applied to teachers in the Church Schools? Are they sincere in the statements they make when standing for election to the N.U.T. Executive?" To this I might add a further question: "What is the Religious Instruction Committee of the N.U.T. doing at the present crisis?"

For the rapid progress of reorganization in the schools, together with the decision of the government to raise the school leaving age to fifteen years in April, 1930, have enormously intensified the problem. The Church Schools are often the smallest and worst equipped, particularly in the rural areas. Hardly anywhere in the country can they possibly cater for the new schemes. The Churches can see no way out of their difficulties except through some measure of unification of their schools with the Council. As a condition of their agreement to such unification they are demanding agreed religious syllabuses (as between Church, teachers and Local Authority), together with legislation making religious instruction compulsory (for it is still legally voluntary in the Council Schools). In other words, the existing system of "dual control" (by Church and Local Authority) in the Church Schools is to be replaced by a tremendous extension of clerical power over all schools, Church and Council. It should be perfectly clear to all teachers that if religion continues to be taught in any state-supported schools, it can only be at the expense of the teachers and the children.

For several years now the religious denominations have been steadily and often secretly working to achieve their aims. Independently of the Church of England and the Nonconformist bodies, the Roman Catholic Church, here as in other countries, has been waging a militant and successful campaign. We must remember that while the number of Church of England and other "Protestant" schools has largely decreased of recent years, that of the Roman Catholic schools has increased and is continuing to increase. The various Churches, either in desperation or, as in the case of the Roman Catholics, inspired by success, are in fact waging open war on the *status quo*, while the teachers, bound by the decisions of their organizations, have their hands tied behind their backs.

On being put to the vote, and after discussion, which was curtailed by lack of time, the amendment was defeated by about four to one.

### Testimonial to Mr. Chapman Cohen.

(For the original statement concerning the Origin of this Testimonial, see Freethinker for October 20.)

With the permission of the Editor, I give the following extracts from the letters received:—

H. Porter writes: "I first heard Mr. Cohen speak in Victoria Park nearly forty years ago . . . and I think he is to-day the greatest asset the militant Freethought Movement possesses. My N.S.S. certificate is dated January 9, 1888."

[Yes! friend, it is militant Freethought we need.]

G. Davey says: "Superfluous compliments aside my opinion is that every Freethinker and Rationalist in Britain is in Mr. Cohen's debt."

B. A. Le Maine writes: "I would like to congratulate you."

E. H. Hassell says: "I know of no man more worthy of recognition in the Freethought Movement and am very pleased that you and your committee have given me this opportunity."

Thomas Dunbar writes: "The writer has a picture of G. W. Foote before him as he works at this moment—my friend and brother of forty odd years. I regard Mr. Cohen as a worthy follower of all the other Saints gone before . . ."

E. Truelove says: "It is good of you and your Committee to think the time is ripe for giving a testimonial to Mr. Cohen . . . There are few men who could champion a Cause so successfully . . . Like his brave predecessors, he gives his best by tongue and pen with very little reward for his labour. Always a good fighter . . . he knows no defeat."

W. S. Clogg writes: "A sma wee giftie for dear old Chapman—with love and respect for a good fellow."

E. Pinder says: "If I were to write all the praise I feel there would be no time left for my work."

D. W. Telford says: "To many of the givers of small amounts Mr. Cohen has imparted a guidance that is immeasurably superior to the many and conflicting codes of morality dished out to them in their earlier days by wily professional prigs; and their acknowledged dependable behaviour to-day is in itself a lasting testimonial to his work on their behalf. Long may he live!"

H. Good "Hopes Mr. Cohen will be able to carry on his work for Freethought for a long time to come."

S. H. Laycock says: "I hope your efforts will meet with a good response. To a Freethinker there could be no worthier cause to which appreciation could be shown."

W. Thompson writing for himself and wife says: "May we also help to swell the chorus of appreciation by adding how continually helpful to us has been Mr. Cohen's written and spoken word in helping to clarify our thought."

[And so say all of us!]

John Robinson says: "Please accept the enclosed from an old (eighty-one) Freethinker, and a reader of the *Freethinker* since its inception."

[May you long continue John!]

The list is shorter and smaller this week, but it will be longer and larger later on when our wealthy friends come along.

For other matters connected with this Fund see p. 713.

W. J. W. EASTERBROOK.

### As Others See Us.

THE editor of the New York *Truthseeker*, Mr. Eugene Macdonald, continues his interesting "Fifty Years of Freethought," in his paper, and so far as Freethought in the United States is concerned is not leaving much untouched. From the issue dated October 12, we take the following for the benefit of *Freethinker* readers:—

Joseph McCabe, the English Rationalist who had done "twelve years in a monastery," and wrote a book so entitled, was a guest in America in this year (1917). Then and for some time thereafter I had difficulty in adjusting Mr. McCabe's personality to his huge and heavy literary product. Somebody, probably Ed. Henn, came in the next day after Mr. McCabe's call upon the editor and asked how the distinguished man sized up when seen; and I answered offhand that he was a 135-pound Irishman below the medium height. Mr. McCabe belongs to the order of Little Giants, being less than middle-sized but mighty.

His presence in the office, sitting there in the visitor's chair, and his being from England where Freethinkers were first so called, made this seem to me the time for an expression of my high esteem for our British co-labourers—whom I proceeded to name individually, with my reasons for liking their work. Beginning with Charles Bradlaugh and not omitting his gifted daughter Hypatia, and passing to Charles Watts, who was also favoured with offspring that did him credit, I spoke of George William Foote in the accents of admiration; also our correspondents Sir Hiram Maxim and William Heaford, and remarked upon the good fortune of the "saints" over there that the editor of the *Freethinker*, Mr. Foote, had so brilliant a successor in the person of Chapman Cohen. Now Englishmen previously met and so addressed had been wont to respond with a hearty "Aye!" to the proposal of these names. Mr. McCabe, however, restrained himself; possibly through modesty, since they were his fellow countrymen, and praise of them might redound embarrassingly to himself. Anyhow, when I had sung my pæans he doused their glow with a dilution of the qualities of the men I had hymned that made my admiration for them seem most egregiously misplaced. From what he said in reply I gathered

that from George Jacob Holyoake to Mr. McCabe, as promoters of the best of causes, there had been an interregnum of both intellectuality and personality. It was in personality that he pronounced Mr. Cohen deficient.

One wonders why the name of George Holyoake was mentioned. Perhaps it is because even the greatest of us may occasionally suffer from a feeling of loneliness.

### An Excellent Handbook.

MR. GEORGE WHITEHEAD'S restless literary activities were bound one day to deal with such an important sociological subject as Birth Control.\* Since the day when Parson Malthus successfully challenged Godwin on the real cause of poverty, misery and war, the population question has had to be taken into consideration by economists and historians, but, unfortunately, the mass of people are more interested in the practical side of birth control than in the far more difficult understanding of Malthusianism. It cannot be too often pointed out that the doctrine for which Malthus stood was that population *tends* to increase faster than the means of subsistence. His *remedy* for the misery caused by this pressure of population was *late* marriage, and—though he must have known all about it—he was opposed to artificial contraception. Early marriage and birth control were advocated mostly by the Freethought followers of Malthus—Francis Place, Richard Carlile, Charles Knowlton, George Drysdale, Charles Bradlaugh and other men and women who have left their mark on history, but birth control is not synonymous with Malthusianism.

Mr. Whitehead has given us a splendid summary of the subject from many angles. His chapter on Malthus is excellently written, as indeed are the whole of the eleven contained in his book. He deals with agriculture, emigration and war, and his remarks should be studied by those who still are opposed to Malthus.

The author combats the many objections advanced against Neo-Malthusianism by Henry George, Spencer, Darwin and others, and devotes a chapter to Socialism and Birth Control, which will certainly not appeal to those who believe that Socialism is the only "ism" which will bring perpetual human happiness. Mr. Whitehead points out that very few Socialists have ever read Malthus—or Marx for that matter—and that Malthus is often credited with sentiments with which he had no sympathy whatever, and which only exist in the minds of his opponents.

Overpopulation, housing, motherhood and religious objections are all carefully dealt with, and one chapter is devoted to a description of the various methods of contraception.

Mr. Whitehead is not afraid of differing from competent authorities, but quotes recognized writers whenever there is occasion to—his work thus containing valuable figures and data. It should prove of immense service to those who have not, as yet, quite realized what Birth Control and its implications mean.

H. CUTNER.

When an old woman begins to doat, and grow chargeable to a Parish, she is generally turned into a Witch, and fills the whole country with extravagant fancies, imaginary distempers, and terrifying dreams. In the meantime the poor wretch that is the innocent occasion of so many evils begins to be frightened at herself, and sometimes confesses secret commence and familiarities that her imagination forms in a delirious old age. This frequently cuts off charity from the greatest objects of compassion, and inspires people with a malevolence towards these poor decrepit parts of our species, in whom human nature is defaced by infirmity and dotage.—"Witches" Addison.

\**Birth Control: Why and How*, by George Whitehead. John Bale, Sons & Danielson, 1929. 6s. net.

## The Legs of A Man.

REALLY I sometimes think our parson will be glad when his Sunday labours are over. It is the day when he works his most strenuous shift. Other days he can fool round and attend to his garden, his poultry, and his parishioners—if they need him—but on Sundays he has hardly time to get his food properly.

At 7 a.m. he is at it. I grant there are not many of his flock up so early. But he must be there to attend the spiritual ministrations of the elect "bell-wethers." As I don't happen to belong to this circle of choice spirits I am unable to vouch for the amount of fatigue imposed upon him. But even then it must be considerable. Far too much, indeed, for an empty stomach.

After breakfast, he is at it again. Now he comes fresher to his toils. The elect return for more edification, and the respectable members in the parish put in an appearance. Dinners are cooked at home by the unregenerate. The Marthas have to console themselves with an evening's outing.

Our parson, no sooner washes down his dinner with the remnant of ecclesiastical port, than he is called upon to attend to the requirements of the lambs in the fold. The lambs, as soon as they can toddle are led, lamb-like to Sunday school. This gives an opportunity to elderly spinisters, bakers, and tallow-merchants, to air their Biblical knowledge. Fortified by wisdom drawn from "skeleton-lessons," they endeavour to impart their second-hand knowledge into the unwilling lambs of the fold.

Then the youngsters have time for a little courting. They may even make assignations for the evening. But our poor parson has no time for this. He must hurry with his tea, in order that he may equip himself for another strenuous spell at night. Some might say they could do all this with their eyes shut, for the prayers are all printed, and he must have the Litany off by rote. But they forget the sermon. Ah, it is the sermon, where you get an indication of the mental wrestling the man of God undergoes. Here it is, where we get a glimpse of the almost superhuman effort, the really conscientious minister gives to its production. I am not overstating facts when I say our vicar preached for quite fifteen minutes this morning.

All this, I am well aware, has little to do with the legs of a man. People might think it a queer title. But I beg of them to restrain jocularity. It is, indeed, no laughing matter. For, practically, whenever I attend church, these nether limbs are brought forcibly to my notice.

Indeed, I am beginning to take the matter to myself personally. My wife, in her more candid moments, sometimes reminds me I am not an Apollo. I agree. In fact never to my knowledge have I ever hinted that my physical attractions were anything out of the common. If I do possess any comeliness of form or feature, I allow other people to boast about it on my behalf. They have an easy job.

Yet what am I to think. Last year when I attended our Harvest Festival, the lesson was taken from the 147th Psalm (It was a blessing it wasn't the 110th, or I might have lost a meal). We also chanted the 150th, which is only a little one, but, short as it is, it is full of noise, sounding the trumpet, and clashing the cymbals, and timbrels, calling on everybody that has any breath left to "Praise the Lord."

Well that was alright. The parson needed all his breath to intone properly, but the rest of us did our best, with the aid of the organ. It was a performance that Wagner might have envied.

"But what has all this to do with the legs of a man," you ask. Wait a minute. In Psalm 147, verse 10, occur these words: "He delighteth not in the strength of the horse; he taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man." There you have it. That text has been flung at me more times than I care to remember. I do not care so much as to whether the Lord is utterly indifferent to equine excellence, or that he has no particular concern in the beast that wins the Cesarewitch, but I am profoundly affected by his total disregard of man's pedal extremities. Good Heavens! what harm can

man's legs have done him? Why should he go out of his way to belittle our much-needed limbs? I cannot understand it. And besides, as I said, I fear a personal slight is intended. Twice during the last two years, this hint has been flung at me by a full-voiced choir—and I resent it.

ALAN TYNDAL.

## Reviews.

In writing *The Pioneers of Johnson's Court* (Watts & Co., 2s. 6d.) Mr. F. J. Gould had a subject after his own heart. Loyally and enthusiastically he records the work (with extracts) of those who have been connected with the Rationalist Press Association since its inception over thirty years ago; and the excellent biographical notes and portraits of many names in the Rationalist Movement, familiar all over the world as well as in our own circles, will prove intensely interesting to those who only know them from their books. A list of the donors of legacies to the R.P.A. is given with the amounts, totaling £37,637 19s. 2d.—a wonderful sum. It is a pity, perhaps, that a complete separate list of all the works issued by the R.P.A. was also not given—though they are, of course, mentioned in the body of the book.

Mr. Joseph Lewis, President of the Freethinkers' Association, New York, has just issued a study, *Voltaire the Incomparable Infidel*. The book is handsomely got up, and Mr. Lewis writes with ease and vigour. The book has a frontispiece of the Houdon statuette, which is in our opinion one of the best representations of the great liberator. The work is published at six shillings.

Mr. Charles T. Gorham in *A Note Book for Christians* (Watts & Co., 1s.) has produced an excellent propagandist work which should be carried about by all Freethinkers engaged in the "best of all causes." It consists of extracts from the writings of professional and professed Christians, and the remarkable feature which distinguishes these extracts is that they appear at first glance to have been lifted from the fighting pages of the *Freethinker*. All the quotations (which are fully documented and given without comment) are arranged under appropriate headings such as "Miracles," "Gospels," "Prayer," etc., and the remarkable way in which the modern clergy have thrown over historical Christianity can be seen at a glance. Mr. Gorham has never produced a more useful book.

## Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

TRUTH WILL OUT.

SIR,—Mr. George James, of Valetta, Mumbles, Swansea, sent me the enclosed cutting from the *Daily Herald* for October 19. And I feel sure that your readers would be highly gratified by such a spontaneous avowal, so I forward it for insertion.

Canon A. Lacey, of Worcester, is reported as saying:—

It was impossible for him to speak of the Bible as one book, he declared. It was not true to the facts of the case. He could not bring himself to speak of the Bible as the Word of God.

There was nothing in the Old Testament or the New to suggest that they were to be called the Word of God.

What he could find, he said, was a vast collection of literature which he loved and which he read as literature. He found in the Bible a broken record of men blindly seeking after God—he could find nothing else.

What a welcome reassuring event it is amid this universal deluge of reaction now sweeping over Christendom. It will give new courage to the militant champions of reason and sanity. It will help to keep the Ark afloat.

I have myself for years denounced the fateful dishonesty of foisting upon a portion of mankind, age after age, such a heterogenous medley of falsities, legend, myth, and magic as *one book!* The device by which it was done was to give the vast collection of disparates, *one name*—the Bible, which in turn was propped up by

a falsehood still more daring—viz., that of calling it the "Word of God." This reduced it to the level of a stone fetish. Such literary fraud would never be tolerated except in the interest of religion.

But my denunciation was a mere voice in the wilderness compared with that of Canon Lacey, of Worcester. I greatly admire his courageous honesty and I feel towards him a kind of hero worship for his brave avowal.

KERIDON.

### Society News.

#### LIVERPOOL, (MERSEYSIDE) BRANCH.

It is with pleasure that I am able to report that the above Branch has had a very successful outdoor season; the open air meetings commenced on Thursday, May 9, and were carried on until October 25, at least one lecture being given each week. Owing to shortage of lecturers, only two sites have been used, except during Mr. Whitehead's two visits, when we were able to cover a wider area.

The sale of literature has been exceedingly good, and we can only hope that its result will be an increased interest in Freethought activities.

The warmest thanks of the Branch are due to Messrs. J. V. Shortt, A. Jackson and P. Sherwin, who have carried on this outdoor work during the whole of the season. Messrs. Shortt and Sherwin as lecturers, and Mr. Jackson as chairman. In addition it is desired to convey to Mr. Jackson the Branch thanks for his labours as chairman at nearly every one of Mr. Whitehead's meetings.—S.R.A.R.

#### WEST LONDON BRANCH.

On Sunday last we wound up our outdoor meetings at Ravenscourt Park for the year. Mr. Charles Tuson is to be congratulated on his splendid work performed in that locality. Our Hyde Park meetings will be carried on throughout the winter, as we have done in the past. To-day Mr. A. H. Hyatt held his audience deeply interested with one of his usual solar lectures, which always create a lively discussion. Messrs. J. Hart and E. Betts have also contributed to very successful meetings. We shall be announcing very shortly particulars of our indoor meetings and lectures.—B.A.LeM.

### Obituary.

#### MR. ALFRED RALSTON.

On Saturday, November 2, the remains of Alfred Ralston were cremated at Sheffield.

A sufferer for some years he recently underwent an operation for abscess on the liver, and was making satisfactory progress, when undetected appendicitis resulted in death at the age of sixty-two.

He was a member of the Parent Society, and a sterling Freethinker. Freethought was his hobby, and in its interest he worked unceasingly.

A considerable number of relatives and friends were present at the Crematorium, where a Secular service was read by R. H. Rosetti.

He who does a good deed is instantly ennobled. He who does a mean deed is by the action itself contracted

Emerson.

Atheism leaves a man to sense.—Bacon.

### Rationalist Press Association (Glasgow District)

Central Halls, Grand Hall, 25 Bath Street,  
Sunday, November 17th, at 3 p.m.

Professor F. A. E. CREW, M.A.D.Sc., Ph.D.  
(Edinburgh University) and Director of the Animal Breeding Research Dept.

Subject: "The Biology of Death."

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 LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): Free Sunday Lecture at 7.0, by Mr. Arthur Kitson—"Economic Freedom."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (361 Brixton Road, near Gresham Road, S.W.): 7.30, Mr. J. H. Van Biene—"Einstein's Theories; What I Don't Know About Them."

HAMPSTEAD ETHICAL INSTITUTE (The Studio Theatre, 59 Finchley Road, N.W.8, near Marlborough Road Station): 11.15, Mr. G. F. Holland—"The Failure of the Kinema." Evening at 6.15, Mr. R. Dimsdale Stocker—"The Good of Human Forgiveness."

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (The Orange Tree, Euston Road, N.W.1): 7.30—Debate: "Is the Bible The Main Basis of European Morals?" Affir.: Mr. Victor Fisher; Neg.: Mr. C. E. Ratcliffe.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Lit.—"War and Religion."

OUTDOOR.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.30, Messrs. Charles Tuson and James Hart; 3.30, Messrs. E. 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 meeting outside the Park Gates, Bayswater Road.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Common): 11.30, Mr. J. Hart; Liverpool Street, Camberwell Gate, Friday, 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Hall, Courtenay Street): Afternoon at 3, Mr. G. Whitehead—"The Evolution of Morality." Evening at 7, Mr. G. Whitehead—"Some Important Lessons from History."

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S. (Top Room, Royal Buildings, 18 Colquitt Street, off Bold Street): 7.30, Mr. J. Farrand (Southport)—"Determinism and Freewill."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): Mr. Chapman Cohen (Editor of the Freethinker and President of the National Secular Society) will lecture at 6.30 on "Materialism and Modern Science."

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH N.S.S. (Club Room, Middle Chase): 7.0, Mr. E. Cook will lecture on "Cause and Effect." Chairman—Mr. T. Birtley.

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S. (No. 2 Room, A Door, City Hall, Albion Street): 6.30, Mr. Stevenson will speak on "The Meaning of Words."

### Miscellaneous Advertisements.

WORKS CHEMIST seeks post, any capacity. 14 years experience in organic processes, plant management and labour control. Can any Freethinker offer introduction to appointment?—Replies to Box No. 86, 'Freethinker,' 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

### 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/- PRICK 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/- PRICK 6/6.

Postage 9d. (home); 1/2 (abroad).

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