

CLEMENCEAU THE ATHEIST.

The

FREETHINKER

FOUNDED · 1881

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

VOL. XLIX.—No. 48

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1, 1920

PRICE THREEPENCE

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page
<i>Clemenceau the Atheist.—The Editor</i>	753
<i>Dales for Dogmas.—Mimnermus</i>	755
<i>The Decline and Fall of Arts in Oceania.—T. F. Palmer</i>	756
<i>Attenuated Religion.—W. Mann</i>	757
<i>How Cyrus Came to Feel Oughted.—C. Clayton Dove</i>	758
<i>How to Help.—R. H. Rosetii</i>	759
<i>Priests and Parsons on Pressing Problems.—Arthur B. Moss</i>	763
<i>Luther Was Not a Puritan.—(Reverend Ray H. Abrams)</i>	764
<i>Death the Democral.—G. W. Foote</i>	765
<i>Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.</i>	

Views and Opinions.

Clemenceau the Atheist.

MR. JAMES DOUGLAS is almost angry—that is, as angry as so Christian a man can permit himself to be—with M. Clemenceau. It has happened thuswise. Clemenceau is an Atheist. He has always been an Atheist. He was also Prime Minister of France during the most eventful years of her recent history, and he played a very prominent part during the war. In fact Mr. Douglas says that France was led to victory by two men, Foch, “a great saint as well as a great soldier,” and Clemenceau the Atheist, who in the queer street corner jargon of Mr. Douglas “believes in nothing.” One may venture the supposition that Clemenceau does and did believe in something, so that probably all the *Express* oracle means is that Clemenceau does not believe in some of the things in which Foch believes, which is really only the other side of the statement that Foch does not believe in some of the things in which Clemenceau believes. Yet, to follow Mr. Douglas for a moment, the two men worked together, and as their mutual differences cancelled each other, one may assume that France was saved by the things in which they agreed, and not by the things in which they disagreed. Unity of aim and unity of work could only come along lines of agreement, although one cannot expect Mr. Douglas to see that his diatribe in the *Daily Express* of November 20, really disproves the value of the religious opinions of General Foch. Perhaps one ought to say that Mr. Douglas does not expect his readers to see the absurdity of his reasoning.

* * *

Shameless Consistency.

M. Clemenceau is a French Atheist. Philosophically Atheism is quite independent of colour or nationality, and if a man is an Atheist it would seem to make little difference whether his birthplace is France or Timbuctoo. But as a matter of fact it does, in this connexion, make a considerable difference whether a man is born on the English or the French

side of the channel. In England, holding the position he did, the odds are that M. Clemenceau would have acted as do so many of our politicians, and have kept his opinions about religion to himself; or would have called himself an Agnostic, and so left room for pages of talk about his profound reverence towards the universe, knowing quite well that this would have given the impression that he had not quite given up all religion; or if he were writing his autobiography he would have spent pages talking of the pain with which he had given up his early beliefs, and the “wistful” eye with which he regarded the childlike religious opinions of his Christian friends. He might even have accomplished the feat achieved by the late Lord Morley, and have written his life without showing a consciousness that anything in the shape of Atheism existed, or if so he had certainly never come into contact with it.

But this shameless old man of eighty-six does none of these things. He not merely parades his Atheism, he appears to be quite happy in it, and to think more of it as he grows older. At eighty-six he says quite openly that he believes in neither gods, nor devils, neither in a heaven nor a hell, a soul nor a future life. He does not believe the universe has ever had a beginning, or that it will ever have an end. He also says quite plainly, it is time that the world put on one side the whole of the Christian theology as pure myth, quite incompatible with our present knowledge of the world, and that man must build himself a new faith compatible with the facts, just as man has built up all the religions of the world only to discard them as time went on. M. Clemenceau says all this without either circumlocution or apology, but actually claims to have enjoyed life the better for having got rid of the gods and devils that still prey upon other folk. How differently we do things in this country! If a great many of our public men are without religion, they are at least not without the spiritual grace which leads them to keep that information to themselves.

* * *

Follow the Fashion.

It is this terrible departure from the canons of British journalism and British public life that has roused the ire of Mr. James Douglas. He warns M. Clemenceau that he will never be canonized as General Foch may be, he even doubts if he will be given a national funeral. I do not know; many a better man than M. Clemenceau has been made a saint, and one can never be quite sure what disaster may overtake one's memory. All his friends can do is to hope for the best. But beyond warning M. Clemenceau that he will never be turned into a saint, the great James Douglas, the champion of the lonely and defender of our morals against all salacious writing that does not exist in the Bible or written by some recognized Christian saint, puts across his

article the flaming indictment, "Clemenceau, Your Atheism is Old-fashioned." Personally, I am greatly indebted to Mr. Douglas for that line. It is reminiscent of the Bishop of London in its magnificent stupidity. I had imagined that the terms fashionable and old-fashioned could only be used of a custom or a dress, and that ideas were either true or false. Of course, I realize that to journalists there are fashions even in ideas, but this refers to the number of people who own them, rather than to their truthfulness or to their falsity; and those who are out for the largest circulation cannot afford to champion ideas that have not a large following, and which are, *ipso facto*, unfashionable. The terms make one wonder what degree of fashion would demand the support of James Douglas? If Clemenceau ever sees James Douglas's article, I can imagine a good humoured smile breaking over his face. He might even wonder what kind of an intelligence is it that makes fashion the test of truth, although if he knows English journalism and English journalists he will realize what lies behind the phrase. To a psychologist the choice of words is always illuminating.

* * *

Theology and Science.

But I must be just even to James Douglas, and justice compels me to point out that Mr. Douglas does make some remarks which he evidently regards as reasons for justifying his dislike to M. Clemenceau's opinions. Theology, he says,

is a science like astronomy. Just as astronomy grew out of astrology, so the new theology is growing out of the old theology. Astrology is dead, but the stars remain.

If M. Clemenceau does read this very old-fashioned stupidity then he will certainly smile, and may well conclude that the new theology has not got rid of the silliness of the old theology, and like a certain French wit he may comment that the more theology alters the more it remains the same. For astronomy did not grow out of astrology, even though thousands of theologians have said so during the past century. The essence of astrology is that individual human destiny is influenced by the heavenly bodies, and nothing whatever grew out of that but delusion. Truth cannot grow out of falsehood, although you may, in following a falsehood, stumble on the truth. Astrology involved the calculation of the position and movements of the planets and the apparent movements of the stars, but that was not the basis of astrology, and the astronomical residuum remained after the astrological falsity had been completely dissipated. Theology, however, never was a science; it never answered to the first stages of a science. It had to do with gods, with the world of supernatural beings, and as that world is shown to be pure illusion the subject matter of theology disappears, or remains, not as theology, but only as a branch of psychology. Really, Mr. Douglas is very childish—or for the benefit of his religious readers, and in the interests of the great god, Circulation, pretends to be.

* * *

Mice and Men.

One after another Mr. Douglas hands out the extremely old-fashioned arguments of old-fashioned theologians which were hoped to silence the Atheist. "How can a man living on a little planet like the earth be sure that there are no beings higher than he?" Delicious! As an example of religious asininity, unapproachable. Of course there may be on some other planets beings more developed than man; but one quite fails to see what that has to do with the god of theology. The question here is not that there

may exist forms of life which show a higher development than man, but whether there exists a being who has never developed at all, but who has always existed, and who does not come within the human category. M. Clemenceau, says James Douglas, "is a mouse that refuses to believe in anything but mice." If that be so, I feel quite sure that James Douglas's article will have undeceived him. He will almost certainly from now onward believe in the existence of a much larger animal, and he may recall that it was precisely that animal which was able to perceive a heavenly vision that the eyes of the prophet Balaam was unable to see. Thus may Holy writ receive justification in the pages of the *Daily Express*.

It is really inexcusable for that terrible old man Clemenceau to act as he has done. For ages the Christian Churches, with the thoughtfulness that has always characterized them when dealing with unbelievers, provided guides in the shape of death-bed stories as to the way in which Freethinkers ought to die. And we in this country have provided many illustrious examples of the way in which public men, who are really Atheists show their sense of obligation to the Churches. They do not, as does M. Clemenceau, just when they are nearing their end, publish a volume plainly declaring their Atheism, exulting in it, and advising Christians to throw overboard their religion as so much illusion. They either remain quiet, or they put in a chapter in their autobiography testifying to their appreciation of the Churches, with a regret that they cannot wholly agree with them, but as a compromise, leave room for a religious service to be read over their dead body. That is the way we do things here, and every Christian will agree that it is the better way. So we are left with the picture of this man at eighty-six, unrepentant in his Atheism, meeting Christians with the argument from experience and saying "All is well"; looking out on the world through eyes instinct with humour, courage, and an undelying kindness, and trusting that one day man will develop a creed more in accord with human intelligence and human dignity, M. Clemenceau is not leaving the world as Christians would have him leave it. No wonder Mr Douglas is annoyed.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Passing of "The Tiger."

SINCE writing the above "Views and Opinions," news comes of the death of M. Clemenceau. The chief cause for sorrow is that the end was not so peaceful as all would have wished. For some days he had suffered extreme pain, due to some internal complaint, and temporary aid could only be furnished by drugs. But his work was done, and almost his last act was to kiss the hands of his servant and his chauffeur as a final good-bye, and his last words "no tears." His instructions were that there was to be no ceremony at his grave and no national funeral. He also desired to be buried in a standing position, to stand upright in death as in life.

Representatives behaved with their usual want of decency on such occasions, and their lack of good taste may provide material for a Christian leg end. The facts are these. There was in attendance a nun, Sister Theoneste. She was present, not as a nun, but as a nurse, being what is called a nursing Sister. She told a priest, according to the *Sunday Express*, *vide* a priest, that Clemenceau said, "I am not going to prevent you from praying for me," and the priest adds, "There was no trace of sarcasm in this brief statement, only profound respect." But the Sister herself said that when she came to his bedside as he was dying, and told her beads, Clemenceau looked at her with a "sardonic grin in his half-opened eyes."

The profound respect appears to have been imaginary. The priest in question, Mgr. de Lavellete Montbrun, actually was only permitted to see M. Clemenceau after he had become unconscious, and then only through the half-open door. All the same I shall be surprised if the usual legend does not develop.

One wonders when Christians will develop a sufficient sense of decency to refrain from these attempts to force themselves upon dying men and women who do not want them, or refrain from saying prayers over a man, and abusing their position as a nurse? Probably that will be when they cease to be Christians.

Clemenceau died as he had lived, an Atheist. A representative of the *Sunday Chronicle*, who saw him a day or two before he died, writes in that paper for November 24, that Clemenceau said:—

I believe I am nearing the end this time, but I who am about to depart this life, do so with my principles unchanged. In my recent book I said that we are drawing nearer the day when God, who has so long been the absolute master of prostrate man, will crumble before the cross-examinations of erect man. Those are still my convictions.

These were actually Clemenceau's last words on religion. They should serve as an inspiration to some of our own invertebrate publicists. C.C.

Doles for Dogmas.

"The services of the clergy are imaginary, and their payment should be of the same description."

G. W. Foote.

"Instead of being made, make yourself."

Herbert Spencer.

THIS country is priest-ridden. Priests control education, and in the Upper Chamber of Parliament they hold the balance of power. In the House of Commons the clerical catspaws play the scudulous ape to the Bench of Bishops. So the game goes merrily along irrespective of what Government may be in office. Conservatives follow Liberals, and Socialists follow both, but Priestcraft, like Tennyson's book, goes on for ever.

Mr. and Mrs. Everyman are unconscious of this clerical tyranny. Because our home-grown priests do not wear petticoats in public, and because they appear to be breezy well-intentioned mentors, the ordinary citizen is deceived. France, for instance, appears to him a priest-ridden country because very large crucifixes are as common in that country as public-house signs are in England. Yet the fact remains that Britons who are said to rule the waves are under the thumbs of the higher clergy of this country.

Priests are walking warily, and speaking softly under the new Socialist Government. They are the same men although they appear to be wearing different clothes. They are still intent on feathering their own nests, whether it is under the Union Jack, the Red Flag, or the Jolly Roger. Recently, the question of State aid for Church of England schools in the reorganization necessary through the raising of the school age was discussed by the Church Assembly at Westminster. A resolution was passed declaring that Church of England schools were entitled to receive further assistance from public funds to fall into line with the new regulations. A committee is to be appointed to confer with the Government on the matter.

That is a reminder that important news may be tucked away in obscure columns of a newspaper. It is also a reminder that the Anglican Church still receives very large sums of money from the State, in order to impart its peculiar ideas on the rising gener-

ation. What these ideas are is well worth recalling, for they are in conflict with democratic ideals, and they are in flat contradiction with the best thought of the age in which we live.

For instance, unfortunate scholars in Church schools are taught that "Adam" was the father of the human race, and that he ate forbidden fruit, in consequence of which countless generations are condemned to eternal punishment. They are taught that the stories of Noah's Ark and Jonah and the Whale are sober history. They are also taught that the Church of England clergy, from the archbishop to the greenest curate, are the actual representatives of "Almighty God" on this earth, and that all other clergy are heretics doomed to eternal destruction. In addition, the scholars are taught that King George V is the head of the true and only Church of Christ, and all who disagree with this proposition are as wicked as the readers of the *Freethinker*, and have the same awful future in store for them. The children are also taught the true position of the Union Jack among the sacred emblems of the one true, original form of religion, and that people who sing "The Red Flag" will spend eternity in a place where there is no winter.

Priests are brazen-faced, but they should require all their assurance to try to force a Socialist Government to further endow their Church schools in which all this antiquated nonsense is taught. That they will do so is as sure as that a tiger will stalk his dinner; but the question is, what will the Socialist administrators do? If they are wise they will do nothing of the sort, but leave the priests to rely upon that celestial help which they are so fond of telling people is an infallible refuge in all times of trouble.

The raising of the school-age has been long overdue. Under the present system scholars leave school half-educated. It is not the teachers' fault, because all schools are grossly understaffed, and even educational geniuses could never teach huge classes beyond the sound of the teachers' voice. The present system requires definite and drastic overhauling, and before Superstition is given further public money the educational machine should be repaired.

Classes should be reduced to half; schools doubled in number; and all available teachers employed. During the transition period temporary school-houses should be erected. The present policy, so loved by local Councillors, of spending vast sums of money on building contracts is simply wasting money which should be used on education itself. Indeed, the last thing thought of in the present Educational System is the truly unfortunate scholar, who is robbed of his intellectual birthright in a clash of purely commercial interests. The Education Act of 1870 was never intended to bring fat contracts to the Building industry; to pay high salaries to Education officials; and to harrass the unfortunate teachers and still more unfortunate pupils. I write feelingly, for during a long business career I have had nearly a hundred office-boys under my charge, and not one of them could write a decent letter, and most could not spell correctly.

Priests boast that once they had sole charge of education. The fact is that they made such a mess of it that the Education Act of 1870 was absolutely and entirely necessary to rescue this country from a slough of intellectual despondency. Since that time it has been the aim of priests, in season and out of season, to keep control of national education. They have succeeded in getting State aid for sectarian schools, and also in keeping the Christian fetish-book and religious instruction in all schools. They still control the Universities and public schools, with the

solitary exception of London. Is it not high time to call a halt to further endowment of a Church which still teaches the divine right of royalty, and which insists that all outside its communion are outcasts of the worst description. Is it too much to ask a Socialist Administration to ponder the words of Thomas Huxley: "It is an absolute crime that you should sanction the instilling into the minds of children, statements which are not true, and which the instruction they receive a few years later will infallibly upset."

Grievous wrong is done to children by the inclusion in the curriculum of Church dogmas. More harm is done by theological threats and bribes, for these have reference, for the most part, not to conduct, but to belief in Jewish and Christian legends. The Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England lay no stress on ethics or the practice of a virtuous life. According to the Anglican priests, Atheism is the greatest of all sins, worse than murder or unnatural vice. How can such men be trusted in matters of the education of the rising generation when they profess to find the roots of our national virtues in Oriental superstition, which explains nothing and adds nothing to human knowledge, but leaves the world in the darkness of the Middle Ages.

MIMNERMUS.

The Decline and Fall of Arts in Oceania.

THE idea that progress is an essential feature of life is comparatively modern. The average citizen is so accustomed to the security afforded by civilized society, that he regards its continuity as inevitable. Many suppose that the entire system of contemporary production and distribution could be eliminated without any serious disadvantage to the community. Whatever we possess, we retain, they say, whatever happens here or in the outside world. Probably, the ordinary inhabitant in ancient Rome and in classic Greece, little suspected the impending overthrow of these stately civilizations. Yet their grandeur and glory have long since departed, and many proud and powerful States that succeeded them are little more than a memory or a ruin.

Progress then, is usually regarded as assured, despite the many warnings of the past. It is true that modern peoples possess the priceless benefits conferred by science, and therein lies our hope of a constantly advancing culture. But now that mass production has become imperative, if the requirements of the dense populations of the modern world are to be met, the fine handicrafts of old are either obsolete or obsolescent.

In a remarkable essay dealing with "The Disappearance of Useful Arts," the late Dr. W. H. R. Rivers, F.R.S., demonstrated that within historical times such invaluable contrivances as the canoe, the bow and arrow, and the potter's art have dwindled or died out in Oceania. The causes which account for these striking retrogradations are complex. Religion, magic, with several social and environmental influences, have all contributed to these unexpected results.

Naturally enough, the modern European would have assumed that in a far-flung island habitat, the navigator's art, so essential to social and economic intercourse among the natives of the innumerable isles scattered over the Pacific, should have been the last to be lost. Yet there is convincing evidence that the canoe has disappeared from islands in Oceania, where it was formerly in constant use.

Dr. Rivers instances the Torres Islands as proving the absence of canoes, which would be extremely useful to the natives, did they possess them. When the people wish to navigate the narrow channels which separate the several islands of their group, they employ rude catamarans constructed of bamboo. These crude contrivances are so unseaworthy that they serve very imperfectly as fishing-boats. Indeed, when capturing their favourite sea food, the natives stand on the reefs, and net their prey on land.

Surrounded by peoples who still use the canoe, there is little doubt that the Torres Islanders once possessed it. Positive evidence is furnished by Dr. Codrington, who long resided among the Melanesians. He tells us that the canoe-makers had died out, and the people resigned themselves to the inconveniences necessitated by their loss of seaworthy vessels.

In the adjacent Banks Islands another stage of degradation is met with. There the canoe is still utilized, but the vessel is a mere shadow of its earlier efficiency. In the traditions of the islanders evidences occur of their past acquaintance with the Torres Isles and the New Hebrides, as well as hints of former communications with more remote races. Now, however, their miserable canoes barely suffice for intercourse within the Banks Islands group itself. According to Dr. Codrington, the natives of one district in Santa Maria were for a time entirely destitute of the canoe, although they later recovered their lost craft.

Dr. Rivers contends that this degradation cannot be ascribed to the white man's intervention. "The canoe," he writes, "had already disappeared in the Torres Islands when Dr. Codrington was in Melanesia, and that was not long enough after the settlement of Europeans to allow the loss to be ascribed to this cause."

Mangareva, in the Gambier Islands, furnishes further evidence. When Beechey first landed in this island, the natives possessed powerful rafts capable of carrying a score of men, in addition to smaller craft of similar make. Now, Friederici has recorded one salient fact which clearly indicates that the Mangareva natives were once familiar with the canoe. These islanders still call their raft *kiatu*, a term very extensively employed throughout the Pacific for a canoe's outrigger. Unlike the Torres Islanders these savages had not completely lost the navigator's art, although their watercraft shows a very serious deterioration.

Among ourselves the potter's art is in some departments yielding to the use of other material products. Enamel-ware and metals, compete with, or replace many domestic utensils formerly made of earthen and china clay. But for sanitary purposes, and the higher and artistic forms of domestic service, pottery is indispensable and easily retains its position. With us, then, pottery may find substitutes, but its disappearance is almost unthinkable. But, strange as it appears, the potter's art in the far-away Pacific seems in some places to have vanished completely.

The distribution of the ceramic art in Oceania is remarkably sporadic. In Southern Melanesia it is said to be restricted to two areas, Santo and New Caledonia. Proceeding northwards, pottery is not again encountered until we reach the Shortland Islands, Buka and Bougainville, and then it remains absent, until it once more emerges in New Guinea. To the east it is found in Fiji, but it is entirely unknown throughout Polynesia. But its distribution in times past was much greater. Fragments of pottery abound in superficial deposits in Malikolo and Pentecost, in which islands it is no longer in use. In Malikolo a native myth has actually been invented to explain the presence of the broken earthenware. Moreover,

in two islands the pottery lies imbedded at considerable depths, and when studied should help to unravel the earlier history of the region. In Ambrym pottery has been recovered from an ancient grave. Now, restricted to a tiny territory, pottery was plainly in common use through a widespread area in the Melanesia of old.

Antique pottery has been discovered in the soil of New Guinea. Pottery is still in use where these remains have come to light. "But," remarks Dr. Rivers, "in south-eastern New Guinea, the ancient pottery is far superior to that now made, though similar to it in several respects. The modern pottery which most nearly approaches the old in character is that used in Murua (Woodlark Island) as a receptacle for the bones of the dead. If, as is probable, this modern pottery is the direct descendant of the old, we may note that it has survived in its completest form, not for a utilitarian purpose, but as part of the ritual of death." (*Psychology and Ethnology*, p. 194.)

The decadence and decay of that eminently useful instrument the bow and arrow in various regions in Oceania provide an interesting theme for investigation. In the Polynesian Islands, Tonga and Samoa, the bow and arrow was employed as a weapon in warfare. There seems no certainty of its use in Tahiti for military purposes, but it was popular in native archery, and has probably been in request in war time in past days. In other Polynesian Islands the bow is used in sport and in fishing, as well as in shooting the fowls of the air. Yet, in earlier periods it appears to have ranked as the leading implement in war.

With the decline of armed hostilities the bow has been retained for sports and games, and the capture of food animals throughout a large part of Melanesia. In several places in the large island of New Guinea the bow and arrow is either, unknown, or has deteriorated into a plaything which sometimes serves to bring down birds. In some instances the bow is imported from places where it still survives. This is true of what was German New Guinea, where evidences are available of its past importance. For the Monumbo who dwell on the coast near Vulcan Island no longer utilize the bow and arrow. "They have, however, a word for the bow in their language, and in their marriage ceremony the bride holds in her hand a symbolic bow and arrow, this ceremonial pointing unmistakably to the ancient importance of the weapon thus symbolized." In various other islands there is cogent evidence of the bow having fallen from a former high estate. It is sometimes preserved as a semi-sacred relic, and the native names for the wapon point to its earlier greatness.

Suitable timber for the making of canoes is everywhere abundant, and there is no lack of materials for forming bows and arrows, while the native tools are completely capable of fashioning canoes.

The disappearance of pottery presents a more complex problem. The absence of potter's clay in Polynesia explains the absence of pottery there. But lack of clay cannot be the cause of the disappearance of pottery in Melanesia. Buried pottery in Leper's Island was surrounded by clay of excellent quality for the potter's art. Again, the scarcity of game fails to account for the decadence of the bow, for this instrument survives on a more important scale in islands where few food quadrupeds exist.

The circumstance that canoe making was in some islands a strictly hereditary craft which descended from sire to son may have contributed to the decline in canoe building. It is said that in one island the industry died out with the old men who practised it.

The disappearance of arts once treasured by the people may be caused by changes in manner of life,

the deflection of trading centres, volcanic disturbances with the downfall of old cultures, and the incalculable influences of magic and religion. Dr. Rivers cautions us against the danger of regarding savage customs from a purely utilitarian standpoint. The arts and crafts of peoples of the lower culture portray a religious significance with us no longer present. In Melanesia most of the terms signifying priest are also used with reference to craftsmen. Each is surrounded with a spiritual halo. "In many parts of Oceania," writes Rivers, "an art practised by a special group of craftsmen is not a mere technical performance, but has a definitely religious character, and may be regarded as a long series of religious rites. It is not enough to be able to make a canoe, but you must also know the appropriate rites which will make it safe to use it for profane purposes without danger from ghostly and other supernatural agencies. To go in a canoe which has not been the subject of such rites is to put oneself into the midst of all kinds of hidden and mysterious dangers."

The same spirit survives, albeit in an attenuated form, even among our superior selves. Sailors are notoriously superstitious, and legion are the marvels associated with the sea. Relics of savagery survive in the baptismal ceremonial of the new vessel to ensure its safety on the ocean wave.

T. F. PALMER.

Attenuated Religion.

(Concluded from page 740.)

PROFESSOR JULIAN HUXLEY commences his book, *Religion Without Revelation*, by observing "There are many well-intentioned people to-day who will tell you that the conflict between science and religion is over. It is not so. What has been rather loosely called the conflict between science and religion is just reaching its acute phase. Up to the present the fighting has been an affair of outposts; the incidents of Galileo and Darwin were but skirmishes. The real conflict is to come: it concerns the very conception of Deity." (p. 7.) In which view of the situation he is in agreement with Dean Inge.

Nor does Prof. Huxley entertain the slightest hopes of bringing the conflict to a close, as so many of the "reconcilers" pretend to do; quite the contrary, for with a gloomy foreboding of being "for it," he observes:—

I am perfectly aware that I shall be attacked on account of this book, and, what is more, attacked from both sides. It has already been my somewhat humorous fate, apropos of a previous article of mine on a religious question, to be reprobated with equal violence by the *Church Times* and the *Freethinker*, and, of course, for diametrically opposite reasons. (Prof. J. Huxley: *Religion Without Revelation*, p. 8.)

With Christianity, and all other forms of religion, Prof. Huxley will have nothing whatever to do. Of Christianity, he remarks: "Do not let us make the mistake of confusing religion with the particular forms of Christianity with which we are familiar," and urges us to "get away from theology, and back to religion. My personal feeling is strong, that the next step to take is to try to see the problem of religion and religious feeling stripped of all trappings, theological, credal, or ecclesiastical." (p. 10.) Nor are we to be bribed into accepting religion by the promise of ensuing happiness, for he uses as a motto for a blank page, the dictum of Bernard Shaw: "The fact that a believer is happier than a sceptic is no more to the point than the fact that a drunken man is

happier than a sober one. The happiness of credulity is a cheap and dangerous quality."

We have seen that Prof. Haldane retains belief in God by applying it to the universe as a whole. He does not preside, or rule over the universe, He is the universe! But Prof. Huxley has no use for the term at all. He declares:—

A personal God, be he Jehovah, or Allah, or Apollo, or Amen-Ra or without name, but simply God, I know nothing of. What is more, I am not merely Agnostic on the subject. It seems to me quite clear that the idea of personality in God or in any supernatural being or beings has been put there by man, put into and round a perfectly real conception which we might continue to call God if the word had not acquired by long association the implication of a personal being; and therefore I disbelieve in a personal God in any sense in which that phrase is ordinarily used. (p. 30.)

In a footnote to the above quotation, he adds: "Under the term *personal* God I include all ideas of a so-called super-personal God, of the same spiritual and mental nature as a personality, but on a higher level, or indeed any supernatural existence or force." And further on, we are told: "the Heavens may 'proclaim the glory of God,' but it is not in the way that was once believed, as revealing a personal artificer who see that the mechanism does not get out of order; where Paley saw, in the adaptation of a bird's wing or a bee's cell to its function, evidence of a supernatural designer, the modern liberal cleric sees the blind working of natural selection, and stigmatises Paley's idea as Carpenter theology." (pp. 84-85.)

The Christian belief in Heaven and Hell, and a Last Judgment, he observes, may also "be disregarded as what it is, mythology from racial childhood, and left to die a natural death, if it did not require to be attacked as the too frequent cause of unfortunate practical effects, such as causing believers to pay money to priests for the supposed benefit of souls in the other world." Neither has he any belief in a future life of any description. He declares:—

As to the existence of another world or another life at all, there I am simply Agnostic: I do not know. I find extreme difficulties, in the light of physiological and psychological knowledge, in understanding how a soul could exist apart from a body; but difficulties are never disproof. It also seems clear enough that many ideas about a future life owe their origin to the most primitive kinds of speculation and superstition among barbaric or savage races, and have survived largely owing to man's enormous conservatism in regard to tampering with what has come to be regarded as sacred. Further, that many other such ideas are merely the expression of man's deep desire and longing for a continuation of life after death for himself and for those he loves. The desire is real enough, the longing deep enough, but, alas, desire and longing, as we all know in regard to earthly happiness, are not sufficient reasons for the existence of what is desired or longed for: and the existence of a future life can no more be proved by the arguments from human need or the incompleteness of this life, than can the most passionate love, or the most tragic incompleteness of a solitary existence ensure that a woman should marry the man of her choice, or indeed achieve marriage at all.

Finally, there is the so-called evidence from spiritualism. I have seen some of this, and read a good deal on the subject; there seems to be a good *prima facie* case for the existence of such "supernormal" phenomena as clairvoyance and telepathy, as well as plenty of undoubted automatic writing, hypnotic phenomena, etc., but these have nothing to do with spiritualism in the sense of communicating with the spirits of the departed. The evidence for Spiritualism

itself is for the most part so trivial that it is really necessary to take part in a few seances to be able to appreciate what childish and dubious phenomena are uncritically accepted as evidence by believers in Spiritualism. The truth seems to be that such people both wish and are ready to believe, and accordingly come to a decision on what is perhaps the most important and most difficult matter about which we could form a judgment, on evidence far slighter than what is necessary to send a case to a jury, much less to convict a man of a criminal offence. But when all this discounting has been done, there remains the fact that we do not know; and so I am Agnostic on this question.

After reading this devastating attack upon the received religious beliefs of the majority of religious believers, we can only wonder that Prof. Huxley should wish to retain the word religion at all; and indeed, he anticipates the question. He says: "I can hear many of my readers asking themselves what then is left me to believe in of anything which can possibly be called religious." The question, he says, is due to a misapprehension as to the nature of religion, which is taken for granted as essentially a belief in a god or gods. And he points out that Buddhism is a religion without a God. Religion, he says, is a way of life: "It is a way of life which follows necessarily from a man holding certain things in reverence, from his feeling and believing them to be sacred. And those things which are held sacred by religion primarily concern human destiny and the forces with which it comes into contact." Well, if Prof. Huxley likes to label his philosophy "Religion," of course he can please himself. For our part we reject it because it has been the cause of more persecution, cruelty, and misery than anything else. Away with it.

W. MANN.

How Cyrus came to feel Oughted.

AUNT TABITHA and her handmaiden Elizabeth reside in a charming old-world cottage with a lovely garden abutting on a Devonshire lane. They are agreeable survivors of the Victorian era. Aunt Tabitha, tall, pale, slender, and distinguished; Elizabeth, small, lythe, and active, with the blue eyes and rosy cheeks that Burne-Jones loved to paint. Cyrus is their pride and delight. He embodies in his person all the majesty and splendour of the gorgeous East. When not bent on rivalling the exploits of "the great King," to whom his remote ancestors owed their allegiance, he passes his nights on a velvet cushion in Aunt Tabitha's boudoir. Quite near, but discreetly concealed beneath the sofa, there is a certain wooden box half filled with fine sand. When disturbed by those lowly necessities from which even the mightiest monarchs are not exempt, Cyrus withdraws to that receptacle and there accomplishes what he has to perform. It was not ever thus, for in his tender immaturity, he perceived no distinction in the sacredness of places. To him at that time of life, the feeling of obligation, and the sense of duty were things unknown. It was Elizabeth who, at the command of Aunt Tabitha, imparted to him that sublime knowledge. She watched his conduct, and when he began to display signs forecasting the approach of certain actions, she bore him swiftly away to that sacred box, and made him stay there till his affairs were transacted. Later on she trusted him to behave as he had been taught, but when he failed to do so she brought this to his notice by applying his nose to the fact. Years have gone by since then, and to-day Cyrus has a fully developed, and very sensitive conscience. It was but last night, whilst Elizabeth was attending to Aunt Tabitha, who had cramp

at the stomach, that he filled the cottage with dismal cries. "Oh," exclaimed Elizabeth, "I've forgotten his box." . . . Did I not always tell you, remarked the Ghost of Dr. Julius von Kirchmann, that the feeling of oughtness is not a primitive, but a superinduced sentiment, being imposed upon subjects by the will of authorities.*

C. CLAYTON DOVE.

How to Help.

THE response to the "How to Help" note which recently appeared in these columns has encouraged me to ask the Editor to repeat the appeal. I am asking Freethinkers willing to co-operate in arranging some local propaganda, to forward names and addresses to me, together with any details as to the line their particular assistance could take.

As soon as sufficient names from any locality are received, we can arrange for an introductory meeting, and go ahead.

Providing a suitable hall is available, and half a dozen local Freethinkers are willing to make the necessarily local arrangements, Freethought lectures can be arranged.

The most happy Freethinkers are the enthusiastically active ones. The "Could's," but "Wont" miss all, the fun. Besides, active and enthusiastic Freethinkers never grow old. I repeatedly come across young fellows of seventy and over, keen and alert, full of past exploits, and rippling with enthusiasm for the future. So, please let us have names and addresses, especially from the backward areas.

Until a Branch can be formed, there are a number of ways of being active. Letters and replies to the press are exceedingly useful, papers read and questions asked at local Debating Societies, a tactful introduction of Freethought to friends and neighbours, or Ten Freethought leaflets in a packet may be had from Headquarters, offering an excellent opportunity for a little private propaganda. Supplies at the rate of 5s. per hundred packets will be forwarded to any address.

R. H. ROSETTI,
General Secretary.

FLEET STREET, THE CHURCHES AND WORLD PEACE.

What is the reason for the attitude of the London Daily Press meetings associated with the Churches? Not long ago a great World Peace Demonstration was held in London, with the Bishop of Chichester presiding. The speakers were representative men and women of national reputation. Their utterances were notable, and publicity would have given them their due influence. But the London Press ignored the meeting; and this, in spite of the fact that the publicity side of the arrangements was most carefully organized. Last week the Foreign Secretary, at a great Methodist Peace Meeting made a statement of world-wide significance. We doubt if any other British Foreign Secretary has ever given so noble a plea in the interests of Peace and Disarmament. But again Fleet Street disregarded it. Is there a ban on what the Churches have to say on this supreme issue? The *Manchester Guardian*, true to its traditions, published a good report of Mr. Henderson's speech. The *Times* said nothing at all about it. There has been, of late, a very fair and sometimes generous treatment of church news by the secular press. This makes the attitude towards the Churches and Peace all the more difficult to understand.

* *Die Grundbegriffe des Rechts und der Moral* (Heidelberg, 1882). One of the big newspapers recently gave a most amusing account of how the fathers and mothers in the monkey house at the Zoo train up their little ones till they do what parental authority demands. Spanking and bites on the ear are favourite measures of discipline.

Acid Drops.

Mr. Hannen Swaffer, in his book *Who's Who*, writes that "Dean Inge discovered Lord Birkenhead's secret—that there was more money in journalism than in his own job." The Dean would not command such a large audience for his common-sense if it were not for his name, and if the now dead and almost obscure Freethinkers had not made it easy and safe.

The authors of the above definition of "dogma" also say: "we make to-day for Christianity as an historical religion a claim to revealed truth which was no discovery of man, still less an invention of any human imagination." We think we catch the drift of this. Christianity as an historical religion was no discovery or invention; it just inevitably grew out of the gross ignorance and fear of men whom a God had wisely fashioned in his own image. Undoubtedly some kinds of "truth" do get revealed in that way.

An anonymous publisher in a pious weekly has been discussing the increased interest in books nowadays, and the desirability of getting more readers to prefer good books. He adds: "What one may call a good book another will describe as poor. This is one thing we cannot alter, and we can only judge a book by our own intellectual standards." From our observation of pious readers, we should say that most haven't an intellectual standard to judge a book by. With them, a book is either "good" or "bad"—that is, "wicked." Their standard of judgment bases itself on piously ignorant prejudices, the outcome of a narrow religious education. And it is this type of reader whom Mr. James Douglas knows so well, and caters for so very intelligently.

Dr. F. W. Norwood, of the City Temple, has been writing in the *Daily Express*, and we are quite in agreement with his statement that "I wish we could keep out of office every man who mistakes a class for a nation, or a nation for the whole family of nations." This comes well from one of the representatives of religion who, in their own deeds always give the impression that there cannot be any body of opinion that is indifferent to their own particular hobby-horse. It is ancient history that any question in the press is only a matter for discussion by Protestants, Catholics, Non-conformists; it is also taken for granted that a Mayor must attend Church, and that a War-Memorial ceremony cannot be performed without a parson. Dr. Norwood might begin by sweeping his own doorstep on the subject.

The Governor of Northern Ireland says: "Peace reigns in our midst, and the bad feelings of the past are being assuaged among all classes." What, has sectarian hatred between Protestants and Romanists entirely disappeared? We can hardly credit that. For religious hate is an evergreen that is always blossoming into strife.

Says Lord Dewar: "Play fair, be square, and you will find more sport in living and less fear of dying." No truly Christian man could, of course, accept this philosophy as adequate. He knows that if his death-bed is to be peaceful, he must do more than act decently to his fellows. He must believe what a priest or parson tells him. He must go to church regularly and support it with money. He must also believe in a God, a heaven and some sort of a kind of hell. Otherwise, he will die shrieking for the mercy of Jesus. He knows this is the fact because Christian tracts say so, and Christian writers never lie—God would punish them if they do.

The lengthening of efficient happy life up to a hundred, says Prof. Leonard Hill, is quite possible. Still, to the truly Christian person it is highly undesirable—the shorter life in this vale of human woe, the longer the enjoyment of everlasting bliss. Nevertheless, the majority of earnest Christians seem eager to postpone the bliss as long as possible.

France, next year, will send two experts to the United States with £160,000 to advertise their country as a desirable touring ground. One good point for the experts to stress is, we suggest, that French Sundays, unlike those of England, are not days of Sabbatarian boredom.

We like the innocent way in which some religious journals give each week the programme of Broadcast Religious Services. This is surely putting temptation in the path of lackadaisical Christians. Human nature being as it is, the programme must often induce the weak to decide to take their weekly dose of piety by the fireside. This must be bad for trade—the parson's.

The Rev Stanley Jones, of "Christ of the Indian Road" fame, intends to publish a book called *The Christ of Everybody's Road*. It is a good title. For Christ has been getting in everybody's road for nearly two thousand years. Squabbles, bloodshed, torture, imprisonment, obstruction to science and to every kind of progress—these are some of the results of Christ on everybody's road. Yes, it's a very apt title, when one looks at it in the historical way.

Five guineas is being offered by a Methodist weekly for the best suggestion on, "How shall we celebrate Methodist Union?" To be helpful, we suggest—By holding a Thanksgiving Sunday to the memory of the man who said: "If we don't hang together, we may hang separately!"

A weekly periodical with a pious editor prints the following:—

Spoiling Sunday. It is estimated that in recent years over a million workers have lost their opportunities of Sunday rest.

The caption to this item suggests the implication meant to be drawn—namely, that wickedly selfish pleasure-seekers are to be held responsible to deserve censure. This aside, we think the above item is misleading. What needs adding is that many thousands of Sunday-working employees get another day free instead of Sunday. Also, thousands have, as compensation, a yearly holiday on full pay, which they otherwise would not be entitled to. A large number of Sunday workers who are their own masters take a day off during the week. Such facts as these give to the Sabbatarian condemnation another aspect. Possibly, we admit, many Sunday workers receive no compensation in time, or holidays, or money. In this case, the obvious remedy is not to seek, by legislation, to suppress Sunday labour and Sunday recreation, but for the State to stipulate that no employee shall work more than six days in every seven. Sunday recreation now being an accepted fact with the vast majority of citizens, the fact should be faced by the Government, and every worker be guaranteed one free day in seven. The various industries and employers affected can be left to fix the day they prefer as a closing day or as the employee's free day. Though the present Government claims to be the special watch-dog of "labour," we are not sanguine that it will concern itself with the rational remedy we have outlined. Church and chapel voters must not be offended.

A contemporary sorrowfully says that: "The clergy no longer stand where they stood as fathers and shep-

herds. Time was when they were sought in every phase of life. To-day few think of them when the little and big crises come." For our part we are not disposed to view this state of affairs as regrettable. It is, on the contrary, a sign of progress. It indicates that people have become more self-reliant, are doing their own thinking, and solving their own problems, instead of weakly expecting someone to do so for them. When men are fools enough to believe that priests or parsons have been divinely appointed to guide and lead them, they deserve the mental subjection that is inevitably inflicted upon them. But, it appears, our contemporary is anxious for a nation of mental weaklings and priestly cats-paws to be "born again." But probably our friend's lament was inspired by the priest who figures on its staff.

The *Methodist Times* has, with profound regret, been adversely criticising the *Daily News*. The other Sunday was Temperance Sunday, the commencement of Temperance week, during which a Temperance Conference appealed "for personal abstinence" from alcoholic beverages. On the Saturday preceding, the front page of the *News* was occupied by a brewer's advertisement. And the *Methodist Times* is greatly depressed. "This is not," it says, "the first time we have been disappointed at its (the *News*) attitude to moral questions. But we did not anticipate that the contribution which the *Daily News* would make to Temperance Sunday would be a full front page of Drink propaganda." Our Methodist friend has missed the point. Quite obviously the *News* was putting "moral" temptation in the way of total abstainers, in order that they might more happily rejoice because they had resisted it! By the way, if temperance rightly means moderation in the use of anything, why do men and women pledged to total abstinence prate about "temperance"? Also, if "temperance" persons either have no desire for alcoholic drink or know they are unable to be temperate in the use of it, in what way are they morally superior to people who can use such drink temperately?

There are innocents who fancy that the Christian religion and the Churches ought to get rid of dogma. They might note the following statement from a theological work recently published. Dogma is "an authoritative statement of belief, based primarily on Scripture, owing something to tradition and formulated by the half of conceptions drawn from philosophy." The Christian religion would indeed be a queer thing, if it had no statements of beliefs. Still, there are always some idealists who crave for the impossible!

The slump on the York Stock Exchange has affected the fashionable folk at Palm Beach. Many have found their fortunes about wiped out. One result of this is that women are praying in the churches for a turn of the tide. By that we take it that the Lord is asked to interfere on the side of either the bears or the bulls in defence of the asses. But in this case the Lord is being asked to do something definite for once in a way. We shall see with what result.

A Leicester woman has been charged, at Leicester, with practising clairvoyance. She complains that she was dragged through the streets to the police station. What a pity that her power to look into the future did not extend to the movements of the police? But the spirits will probably not deign to attend to anything so common as the movements of an ordinary "copper."

The Rev. Austin Lee says that people will go back to church when they feel that the men in charge of them are to be respected as they respect the leaders of the medical and scientific world. Nonsense. People will go to church when they believe what is preached there. The average man does not respect the science, he only respects him as one who is trying to get at the truth, and who is not bound down to teach a particular thing whether he believes it or not.

Testimonial to Mr. Chapman Cohen.

OUR seventh list of acknowledgments is a good one in both length and size. If it can be kept up like this until closing time the total will be nearer the realization of our hopes. "Never say die!" "You never know your luck!" We shall "get there" if our wealthy friends come along and say, "It must and shall be so!"

SEVENTH LIST OF ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

Previously acknowledged, £1,000 3s. 7d.; John Roberts, £5; A. H. Steele, 2s. 6d.; D. S. Currie, 2s. 6d.; F. Watson, 10s.; J. R. Middleton, £5; O. Underwood, 10s.; J. E. Roose (N. Rhodesia), £1 1s.; "An Old Salt," 5s.; Sam Cohen, £1 1s.; James Aitken, 5s.; A. Brooks, 5s.; J. Forsyth, 10s.; A. D. McLaren, 10s.; A. Mitchell (Ontario), 5s.; W. H. Fletcher, £5; R. Dodd, £2; Bertha Siger, 10s.; C. Rudd, £10 10s.; Dr. W. L. English, £10; G. G., £1; J.S. per W. McK., 10s.; E. Royston Pike, 10s. 6d.; National Secular Society, £100; Secular Society, Ltd., £100; Arthur B. Moss (Second donation), 10s.; T. Griffiths, £2 2s.; Harold Elliot, 10s. 6d.; D. H. Kerr (N.S.W.), £50; Henry A. Lupton, £1 1s.; S. Olsen, 10s.; Thomas Chalmers, 5s.; C. H. Grönn (Victoria), £2 2s.; Total to November 25, 1929, £1,302 11s. 7d.

In the last issue I referred to the fixing of a date for the closing of this Fund. Conversation and correspondence with members of the Committee indicate the view that the end of the year would be a suitable time. This will give all our friends who may be slow of action, or distant in residence, plenty of time to make good, and there must be many hundreds who intend sending before the closing of the Fund, and probably thousands who do not send because their means will not permit their sending what they would wish. I hope that all such fears will be removed during the next week or two, and to hear from all of them. There will not be another opportunity of their publicly expressing what they think of Mr. Cohen's work. It is the desire of the Committee to make this testimonial as representative as possible.

There will be a formal presentation to Mr. Cohen on a date and at a place to be decided later and announced here.

It is apparently necessary to remove an erroneous impression from the minds of some people that Mr. Chapman Cohen derives monetary benefit from the Freethinker Endowment Trust. The income from the Endowment Trust is applied solely to meeting the deficiency on the running of the paper, but as I have pointed out before, the income does not on average yet cover the loss.

W. J. W. EASTERBROOK,

Hon. Secretary,

"Hillfield," Burraton,

Saltash, Cornwall.

(For further notes and extracts from letters see page 763.)

CHRISTIAN SOLUTION!

Our vicar (writes a correspondent to the *Manchester Guardian*) has a taste for advertising the subjects of his sermons and addresses in terse and arresting headlines, and this he does on a big board which has its foundation in the graveyard itself. This week "A Solution for Unemployment" is blazoned forth. The guard was punching my ticket to-day as we passed by. "Seen that?" he asked. "Ay, and look where ahey've put it—in the graveyard. That's the solution for unemployment all right," said another man who overheard the question.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

R. E. CATLING.—We expect we shall have to wait for the Bishop of Birmingham's Gifford Lectures until they appear in book form. We wonder when the Gifford Trustees will pay due regard to the founder of the Trust and invite someone to lecture who will not champion religious beliefs? Probably that will not happen until the trustees cease to be Christians. Will deal with Professor Whitehead when the opportunity presents itself.

H. COLLINS.—Naturally the generalization, if it is a sound one must hold good of all progressive movements. Will deal with the item next week.

D. G. COOMBES.—Your letter has been sent on to the proper address.

"GRUB STREET."—Letter held over till next week.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

To-day (December 1) Mr. Cohen will lecture at the Town Hall, Stratford, on "Morality Without God." The Town Hall can be reached by bus, tram or train from all over London. The two first stop outside the door, and Stratford Station, L. & N.E.Rly., is distant but five minutes walk. The Hall should be crowded, as this is Mr. Cohen's first lecture in London this season.

We received a report of the Liverpool debate from "Medicus," which should have appeared in this week's issue. Owing to a slight accident in the composing room, we are obliged to hold it over for our next issue.

The *Liverpool Weekly Post* for November 23, contains an article by "Scrutator," dealing with Mr. Cohen's opening speech in the debate at Liverpool on November 18. We will deal with the article next week. Meanwhile we desire to say this. If the Editor of the *Liverpool Weekly Post* really wishes his readers to hear both sides of the case, and to know why we can do without Christianity, Mr. Cohen will undertake to state the case in its columns week by week, leaving it for "Scrutator" to reply. It is time that the cowardly policy of permitting readers of newspapers to hear little but the case for Christianity was ended. This is the first time in his life that Mr. Cohen has ever issued anything in the nature of a challenge, and we shall see with what result.

Shakespeare and Other Literary Essays, by the late G. W. Foote, will be on sale on December 10. The old

Freethinkers who know the literary quality of Mr. Foote's writings will not be slow to secure the work, and the younger ones should make it a point to secure a souvenir of one of the finest writers who ever laboured for the liberation of mankind. A fuller notice will be published soon, and we suggest to all that as we are approaching Christmas and the New Year, and presents will be flying about, here is a very suitable book for presentation to both Freethinking and Christian friends. The latter would read more appreciatively a volume that is permeated with the highest aspects of Freethought than they would a direct attack upon religion. The volume is handsomely got up, it runs to about 200 pages, and is published at 3s. 6d., by post 3s. 9d. There is a brief introduction by Mr. Cohen.

It is early, but not too early to announce the date of the Annual Dinner. This will take place on Saturday, January 18, and as usual, at the Midland Grand Hotel, St. Pancras. The tickets will be 8s. each. We hope that those who can attend, both in London and the Provinces, will make a mark against the date. Two suggestions have been made to us in connexion with this event. The first is, to announce that those who are vegetarians may have a special course provided for them if they will give notice beforehand. The second, that as week-end tickets are available from everywhere a pleasant week-end party might be made up by Provincial visitors all staying at the same hotel. Arrangements for this could easily be made if those who are coming will acquaint the Secretary of the fact.

We are making another special effort to advance the circulation of the *Freethinker*, and at some expense are getting it displayed at a number of newsagents in the London district. We should like our friends in the provinces to help in this direction if they can possibly do so. We have also had printed an attractive slip advertising the paper, and those of our readers who can circulate these will receive a supply if they will be good enough to send their names and addresses. Other ways of bringing the paper to the notice of likely subscribers will occur to many; we shall be thankful for any help that can be given.

We are very pleased to find that Captain P. P. Eckersley, late of the B.B.C., has raised a strong protest against the B.B.C., lending itself to the propaganda of religion under the name of science, and urging that all points of view should be given a hearing. He says that the talks of Sir Oliver Lodge on a future life are mere soporifics, although taken by many to be science. We are glad to find the name of Captain Eckersley among those who protest against the present policy of the B.B.C., and if all the Freethinkers in this country followed suit, we might soon find the present policy of using the B.B.C. as an advertising agency for Christianity modified considerably.

When Christians talk about progress under their religion they very conveniently forget Abyssinia, one of the oldest of Christian States, and where there has been no Freethinking to obstruct the advance of Christianity. Nor will they thank Lady Simon for reminding them of the existence of Abyssinia in her just issued book on slavery. Lady Simon picks out this Christian State as offering the worst example of existing slavery. She says all the worst forms of slavery are found there, "from the little household slaves of Christian priests to the wretched, mutilated boys and girls who are sent across the sea and sold in the slave markets of Arabia; from the long lines of slaves carrying gifts from the hospitable rulers of Abyssinia to passing visitors, to the suffering gang yoked and chained together and driven by the crack of the whip through the country or to the coast ports for sale as human merchandise.

About a fifth of the entire population are slaves,

Slave-owning is part of the religion of the country, and the chief obstacle to its abolition comes from the Christian priests. They insist that slavery is one of the divine institutions of Jehovah. In this the priests are on strong ground, although if they will consult their English fellow priests they will learn that when Jehovah told the people how they were to buy slaves and how they were to treat them, he meant they were not to have slaves at all. Also, when Paul told slaves they must obey their masters, whether they were treated well or ill, what he meant was that slavery was abolished. Evidently Christian Socialism and the higher criticism has not yet reached Abyssinia. What would Abyssinia have been like without Christianity and the Bible?

The Liverpool Branch of the N.S.S. is doing good work in getting Freethought books into public libraries in their district. Sometimes they are presented to the libraries, from headquarters at the initiative of the Branch, sometimes the library purchases on the request being made. Liverpool has stocked the books recommended, Bootle and Birkenhead have declined, while other libraries have the matter under consideration. We suggest to Freethinkers in all these districts that they should make their wishes known to the effect that Freethinking works should have the same publicity given them as is given to religious writings. One of the greatest delusions of the people of this country suffer from is that they are not priest-ridden. We congratulate the Liverpool Branch on its activity.

The Leicester Secular Hall was again well filled for the last of Mr. Cohen's lectures on Materialism. Mr. Gimson occupied the chair and expressed his appreciation of the course, a sentiment that appeared to be heartily endorsed by those present. It is a compliment to the calibre of the Leicester public that four such audiences should have gathered to listen to lectures on a subject which however simple it may be made must always remain rather abstruse.

We are glad to learn that Mr. Rosetti had one of the best audiences he has yet had in Liverpool for his lecture on Sunday evening last. This is only what should be. Mr. Rosetti's matter is always good, and the taste for his lectures should grow with experience.

Miss Annie Keen, in *Woman and Marriage* (II. J. Drane, 1s. 6d. net) believes that the best solution of the ancient but complex problem of the relationship of the sexes lies in what is known as a trial marriage. The woman to be paid for motherhood and all children endowed by the State. A "life-long compact" could follow if the parties desire it. Miss Keen writes clearly, temperately and sincerely in the hope that her book may help to solve the obvious difficulties of modern marriage.

"There was absolutely nothing in the morning papers," he writes in 1873: "you can see for yourself what the telegraphic headings were: *By Telegraph* . . . A Father Killed by His Son; A Bloody Fight in Kentucky; An Eight-Year-Old Murderer; A Town in a State of General Riot; A Court House Fired and Three Negroes Therein Shot While Escaping; A Louisiana Massacre; Two to Three Hundred Men Roasted Alive; A Lively Skirmish in Indiana (and thirty other similar headings). The items under those headings all bear date yesterday, April 16 (refer to your own paper) . . . and I give you my word of honour that that string of commonplace stuff was everywhere there was in the telegraphic columns that a body could call news. Well, said I to myself, this is getting pretty dull; there don't appear to be anything goin' on any wher', has this progressive nation gone to sleep?"—*The Ordeal of Mark Twain*, by Van Wyck Brooks.

Testimonial to Mr. Chapman Cohen.

In our third list of Acknowledgments J. Lewis (Chicago) should have read Joseph Lewis (New York). We regret the error. Mr. Joseph Lewis has a most laudable desire, and says, "I want to be one to be recorded as contributing to this most worthy and deserving testimonial."

When the Fund had reached £999 13s. 7d. the post delivered a donation from a lady which gave it the "list over" the £1,000. We could not resist telling her so, and she replied, "Delighted to know that 'alone I tipped over' the first £1,000! May someone have a similar honour soon for the second!"

I hope the Editor will find space for a few more brief extractions—although, I regret to say, abbreviation frequently distorts the true spirit of the letter. "I ask forgiveness!"

Joshua Ratcliff says: "I consider Mr. Cohen one of the intellectual forces of the British Empire, making for a sane future."

T.H.E. says: "I remember once saying to Mr. Foote that the fact that there was no money to be made in Freethought advocacy had perhaps kept the best of causes out of the hands of adventurers, and given us generals and lieutenants of the right "stuff." He replied to the effect that although that may have been so, even some of the right stuff may have been deterred from working for the movement through not relishing the prospect of 'living on air.' There is something in this for the rank and file to ponder over."

John Roberts hopes "the Fund will be a little stand by for Mr. Cohen in what will prove in later years to be his 'happy old age.'"

F. Watson expresses his "esteem and admiration for a man who has proved himself beyond doubt to be one of the greatest emancipators of the human race."

J. B. Middleton recognizes "Mr. Chapman Cohen's strenuous and unselfish work for Freethought."

O. Underwood says: "I have for a long time been desirous of an opportunity to give something in return for all I have received in knowledge and enjoyment from his books, lectures and debates."

S. Cohen writes: "Mr. Chapman Cohen's intellectual guidance has helped to solve many of life's knotty problems, and given inspiration and joy to one's 'philosophical pessimism.'"

J. Forsyth sends "a slight token to Mr. Cohen's courageous attitude to modern problems."

A. D. McLaren says: "I am very glad that Freethinkers have taken this step, for in my opinion Mr. Chapman Cohen is doing more good than any other one man in England. May he be the fighting Freethinkers' standard-bearer for many a day yet!" [Again and altogether—"So say all of us"!]]

W. H. Fletcher, in sending for himself and wife, is reminiscent and says: "As one of the old members of the Derby Branch thirty years ago, I have some very happy memories of Chapman Cohen's many visits to the town; and the gatherings of the 'Saints' at MacGuinness's house after his lectures." [What a pity that Derby Branch is not living now.]]

R. Dodd writes: "Only those who have followed Mr. Cohen and given to his writings the serious and sustained attention they deserve, can fully appreciate the measure of his ability as a scientific thinker."

The Bookworm's Epitaph.

LAY a book upon my bosom,
When life's race is over:
I will bear it like a blossom,
Wear it as a lover;
Though I burn, or though I sing,
Be it heaven or hell,
Books can make the welkin ring,
Books can burn right well!

J. M. STUART-YOUNG.

Priests and Parsons on "Pressing Problems."

IN my periodical walks through the streets of South London, I take delight in reading the notices outside the various churches and chapels. From these notices and appeals on posters outside "places of worship," I can always detect signs of the gradual decay of the Christian faith, and the last despairing cry of the clergy and parsons to nominal Christians outside, to come and join their church lest they should have to close down on account of want of support. But the other day I saw outside a Wesleyan Methodist Church a poster, which I thought was very significant and amusing. It read: "If you are weak, the Church can help you." "If you are strong, you can help the Church." Is not this really delightful? In fact a splendid plum for both kinds of Christian. Nobody has ever doubted that the Church is a very good kind of place for weak-minded Christians. These are never given to thinking for themselves, and they can be so easily deceived by the sophistry of the parson; and consequently quite incredible stories are readily accepted by them as profound truths.

But strong-minded Christians!!! Ah! Where are they to be found? And what are they wanted for in the Church, except perhaps to supply financial assistance in the time of need? During my walks last week I saw a very attracting poster. It was an appeal by Dissenting parsons in the Borough of Deptford to attend their Churches—all the Wesleyan Methodist Chapels are now "Churches" for their parsons seem to despise the old description of "Chapel"—to hear them deal with what they describe as "Pressing Problems" of the day from the up-to-date-Christian standpoint. And what are these pressing problems? Are they problems that have just arisen, and that even Christians have never heard of before? Not so. They are problems that human beings have been discussing for hundreds of years in various ways, but to which Christians have never been able to offer anything like reasonable answers.

The first is entitled—"God, does he care?" Does he care about what? Some of the poor ratepayers in the Borough of Deptford could ask the priests and parsons of this large constituency a number of questions on this head. For instance, does the Christian God care how many poor persons, men, women and children are herded together in single rooms, in which ordinary decency and morality can scarcely be observed? Does He care how many people living under such conditions suffer from infectious diseases and disseminate them broadcast among their friends and neighbours? Does he care how many poor families in the densely crowded parts of this Borough are on the verge of starvation, and have to seek the help of the Guardians week by week, to save them from sheer desperation and death?

And if God does care what help does he give?

It is all very well for the clergy and parsons in the better parts of Deptford to try to supply an answer to such questions to the comfortably off persons in their part of the constituency; but they probably have never felt the pangs of hunger and have never seen their children pining away day by day for the want of proper nourishment?

As the poet exclaimed in his bitter anguish:—

"The cry went up for bread!
Oh, my Lord, its an awful doom
To be praying for bread in a Mother's womb."

And what can the clergy, the priests and the parsons do under the circumstances?

Oh, yes, they can pray!!! They can pray on Sunday, and on Monday they can prey on

the ignorance and credulity of their followers. It reminds me of an incident that occurred at one of our County Courts a short time ago. A defendant could not pay his debts; and he said to Judge Cleur: "I cannot pay your honour—I want your guidance." Whereupon Judge Cleur answered with characteristic sarcasm: "I cannot give you any guidance. You had better pray!!! And that, in effect, is all the priests and parsons can say in reply to the first question.

The second pressing problem is "War"—If we forget? on Armistice Day! Blinded soldiers and those that have lost legs or arms, and those that have had their blood poisoned by mustard gas, those that have been shattered in health by shell shock—they will never forget!!!

And all the friends and relatives of these poor soldiers will never forget—and neither will the thousands that were victims of air raids, those that are still alive! But will the Christian God remember? or will He have to be reminded by the priest and parsons of all the Christian nations of the earth, that took part in the war? After having given their well considered views on the above questions, the next matter to engage their attention will be the less exciting one of third question: "The Bible; is it true?" What? after having proclaimed from thousands of pulpits and Sunday schools for hundreds of years that the Bible is "God's Holy Word," and as one of the Prelates declared, the "Bible is pure unadulterated truth, truth without the admixture of error"—is it not monstrous for the clergy or dissenting parsons to re-open this question as a "pressing problem" if they did not feel, that at last, the most intelligent people in the country have found out how grievously they have been deceived by their "spiritual pastors and masters," and have resolved to trust them no longer? And then they come down to the tame question of Question Four. Is our social life Christian? Is that a pressing problem? If so, it could be answered quite definitely by any well informed Freethinker on the shortest possible notice in two words, "Certainly not."

The early Christians had no social life. They were expecting the end of the world almost hourly, and they had no time for social institutions. Day by day they were urged to "Repent ye therefore, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," and they had no time for even a concert or a dance, still less for a convivial meeting; the Christian life was one of constant gloom and melancholy.

And so we come to the last question of all for the "miserable sinners" of the important Borough of Deptford, a Borough that has had a great and glorious history—viz: Death: is it the end?

"Have the Churches any answer?" Fancy asking such a question of Christians after proclaiming the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead as a veritable truth for over a thousand years. Has some wicked Freethinker frightened them by telling them that he does not see how there could be the resurrection of any person whose body had been cremated, and whose ashes had been scattered to the four winds of heaven? Or has a great man of science like Sir Arthur Keith upset them by saying that the life of a man goes out of him just like the flicker of the flame of a candle, and that as far as he knew, that was the end. Suppose Christian priests and parsons came to the same conclusion, does any sensible person suppose they would have the courage to tell their credulous followers, the truth on this question—after so many years of deception? Certainly not. For years the clergy of the English Church have libelled and abused all who disagreed with them, Roman Catholics on the one hand; Dissenters on the other, and worst of all

unbelievers of every section—Unitarians, Rationalists, Secularists, Atheists, and others have fared quite as badly in their calumny and misrepresentation. But now they are all in the last ditch of controversial despair; and they are crying out for help. Their churches are almost empty—and they would welcome anybody—unbelievers as well as believers, if they would only just come inside and give them the semblance of support—but it is too late—the Churches are doomed and the priests and the parsons will soon find their occupation, like Othello's, irretrievably gone.

Was not Shelley truly prophetic when he sang:—

"Fear not the tyrants will rule for ever,
Or the Priests of the evil faith;
They stand on the brink of that raging river,
Whose waters they have tainted with death.
It is fed from the depth of a thousand dells,
Around them it foams and rages and swells;
And their swords and their sceptres I floating see
Like wrecks on the surge of eternity."

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

Luther Was Not a Puritan.

From "Plain Talk" (New York) August, 1929.

(Concluded from page 742.)

ABOUT six months after his own marriage Luther's dearest friend, George Spalatin, decided to taste of wedded bliss. To him Luther was particularly frank about the joys of wedlock.

I wish you grace and peace in the Lord, and also joy with your sweetest little wife, also in the Lord . . . I wish you great happiness and children with Christ's blessing. Believe me my mind exults in your marriage no less than yours did in mine . . . Greet your wife kindly from me. When you have your Catherine in bed, sweetly embracing and kissing her, think: Lo! this being, the best little creation of God, has been given me by Christ, to whom be glory and honour. I will guess the day on which you will receive this letter and that night I will love my wife in memory of you with same act, and thus return you like for like. My rib and I send greetings to you and your rib.

Despite this cordial regard and enthusiasm for the institution of marriage, on other occasions Luther displayed a rather detached interest in marital relationships. "The reproduction of mankind is a great marvel and mystery. Had God consulted me in this matter, I should have advised him to continue the generation of the species by fashioning them out of clay, in the way Adam was fashioned."

When people were married it was the work of the Lord, but when unhappiness crept in it was the work of the devil. And Luther had a conviction that most married people were decidedly unhappy. "'Tis a grand thing for a married pair to live in perfect union, but the devil rarely permits this. When they are apart they cannot endure the separation, and when they are together they cannot endure always seeing one another. Married people must assiduously pray against these assaults of the devil. I have seen marriages where at first husband and wife seemed as if they would eat one another up; in six months they have separated in mutual disgust. 'Tis the devil inspires this evanescent ardour, in order to divert the parties from prayer."

Happy and most fortunate is that wedded pair whose marriage provokes no objections or criticisms. Luther and his fair Katy became a target for the shooting gallery of the world. The news of their marriage soon became a cause of excitement all over Europe. Henry VIII and multitudes of others talked about it as if it were a crime. Even Luther's close friend Melancthon did not take very kindly

to the idea. Three years after the event the critics were still at it. A certain Joachim von der Heyden wrote to Catherine:—

Woe unto you, poor misled woman, not only that you have been led from light into darkness, from God's grace into His disfavour, from the holy monastic devotion into a damnable and shameless life, but also because you left the cloister in lay clothes, like a dancing girl, and went to the University of Wittenburg and cast your eyes on that old spitfire Luther, and lived with him, as they say, in flagrant immorality, and finally took him for your husband, by which breach of faith to your bridegroom Christ you became faithless and perjured . . . You had better think of eternal punishment, and speedily leave this devilish life and free yourself from that nasty, black monk, and betake yourself again to the Christian cloister, and there heavily bewail all your past sins as did Magdalene, and repent after her example, and lead a severe life and give back your perjured soul to the Lord.

There is no evidence that either Luther or his Katy ever considered yielding to the tremendous pressure brought to bear upon them to repent of their sins. There were ridicule, libel, warnings and vicious statements. But all to no avail.

Turning to another aspect of Luther's life, one finds that he was in some respects a man of the world. That he loved a "good time" goes without saying. He was particularly fond of wine and beer. During his monastic days the youth made a journey to Cologne. The wine that he drank in that city he said was the best that he had ever tasted. He never forgot it.

After their marriage his wife took charge of the brewing of the beer. On one occasion he refers to her as having brewed "fourteen tuns in which she has put 32 bushels of malt to suit my taste. She hopes it may be good; you will judge for yourself when you taste it." To Melanchthon he wrote at one time: "My wife Katy sends friendly greetings. She is brewing Wittenberg beer with which to regale you on your return. The Lord be with you!"

Whenever he was away from home his letters nearly always mentioned the quality of the liquor he was consuming. From Dessau Katy received a letter:—

There is nothing fit to drink here, for which I am sorry, as I like it and think what good wine and beer I have at home . . . It would be a good thing for you to send me the whole wine-cellar and a bottle of your own beer as often as you can. If you don't I shall not come back for the new beer.

We live well here [he wrote from Eisleben], and the Council sends me for every meal about a hog's-head of good Rhine wine. Sometimes I drink it with my friends. The Naumberg beer is also very good.

While at home the town council of Torgau used to send him a supply of beer, and the Elector John Frederick of Saxony also looked out for his wants. He had occasion to thank the latter:—

Early this morning I received your Grace's handsome present, viz., a half-cart of Suptitzer, the same of Gornberger, four pitchers of Jena wine, in addition to three score carp and a hundredweight of pike—beautiful fish.

Luther's enemies often accused him of being a wine-bibber and a glutton—and this with good reason. Though there seems to be no clearly recorded instance of his ever having been dead drunk, at times, no doubt, he came perilously near to that condition. In writing to the Chancellor of Mansfield he inquired:—

What harm does a little jollity do? The beer is good, the maids fair, the boys young. The students are so merry that I am sorry that my health prevents me being oftener with them.

That the Reformation had nothing in common with

modern Puritanism may also be inferred from an announcement of Luther's:—

Melanchthon has issued a new Dialectic . . . If you wish to hear it you must not long delay, for he will begin to lecture on it next week . . . one thing more, I have seen Melanchthon dancing with the provost's wife. It was a strange sight.

Reference has been made to the coarseness of the great man's language. He really seemed to enjoy it. With reference to conversation he once wrote to Prince Joachim, "It is true that joy in sin is the devil, but joy with good pious people in the fear of God and with moderation pleases him, even if an indecent word or two now and then slips in."

The anatomical descriptions of his private relations with his wife are so disgusting as to be revolting. These occur not just once in a while in the *Tischreden* but with frequency. Translation would be forbidden.

Space does not permit a further delineation of Luther's proclivities. In the great cause for which he became a champion—religious freedom—in practice he turned his back upon it. When he sided with the princes against his own people, the peasants, he showed his real nature. It was soon discovered that he never did believe in religious liberty or toleration for others.

When all is said and done, the halo around Luther's head may be deserved, but not for the reasons most people think it is. Orthodox Christians would never to-day accept Luther's idea of Scripture or his method of interpreting it, though as a matter of fact each person makes his own canon when he neglects the use and reading of certain books, and we all interpret the Bible to fit our notion of what it ought to say. The great reformer could not very well be upheld in the principle of telling a good strong lie for the church, though it is perhaps done once in a while even in our enlightened day. His frank estimate of marriage as a relief from biological repression is a little too realistic to suit the romantic and sentimental notion that marriages are made in heaven. That there is such a thing as sex appeal the church is not yet quite ready to admit. And when it comes to the Eighteenth Amendment, the Father of the Reformation would have held up his hands in horror at that reform.

(Reverend) RAY H. ABRAMS.

Death the Democrat.

EVERYONE has heard of the great Saladin, the Mohammedan ruler, whose humanity was such a striking contrast to the brutality of the Christian Crusaders. When the Crusaders captured Jerusalem, they turned it into a shambles; when Saladin recaptured it he did not shed a drop of gratuitous blood; on the contrary, he spent a large sum of his own money in redeeming captives, whose misery filled his heart with compassion. At his death this splendid "infidel" ordered charities to be distributed to the poor, without distinction of Jew, Christian, or Mohammedan. This was a sublime act in that age and in those circumstances. But I have always more admired—if that be possible—the poetical inspiration of another death-bed act of his. "Take this cloak," he said to his servant, "show it to the faithful, and tell them that the ruler of the East could take but one garment with him into the grave."

There is something in the lofty and stern monotheism of Islam more favourable to the sentiments of democracy than anything to be found in the Christian religion; and doubtless this was in part the inspiration of Saladin's death-bed message to the world; but another, and probably a larger, part of it was due to

his own superiority of nature. He had something of the poet in him. He saw through the shows and masks of things. He perceived their naked reality. He knew what life is, and what death is. We are all equal at birth, all senseless and helpless; and afterwards, beneath all the distinctions of society, we are less unequal than we appear; and when death comes the equality is once more pronounced. A husband standing beside his dead wife is just the same sad picture in a palace or a cottage. A mother weeping over her dead child reckes not whether the furniture of the room be mean or sumptuous. The accidents of life sink into nothingness when the essentials assert themselves. And then comes the final and eternal equality of the grave. All fare alike at that last supper—"not where he eats, but where he is eaten." Nay, a tall pauper inherits more earth at the finish than a shorter nobleman; and the little worm knows no distinction between king and peasant.

Death makes all odds even. Hats off, then, to Death the democrat! Death the leveller! compared with whom the most fanatical Socialist on earth is mild, and the wildest Anarchist an old-fashioned reactionary.

It must be this sentiment, however unconsciously it operates, that prompts the Frenchman to lift his hat and stand still when a funeral passes. The rougher Englishman is apt to think this theatrical, but it is nothing of the kind. France is the land of social equality. Economical and class distinctions obtain there as elsewhere, but the moral distinction between the various sections of society is comparatively slight. This is partly a legacy of the Revolution, and partly owing to the genius of the people. It is one of the best features of the French character. For my part, I think the better of my kind when I see the Frenchman's lifted hat and bent head. Let the coffin be poor or costly, death is there, and love and grief, which make us all akin.

Nothing I have read about Bismarck has touched me like the following story told by one who knew him well. Bismarck was a good family man, and kind to his poor neighbours. Away from the turmoil of politics, and the glare of high public life, he found his humanity. When his old wife died, the veteran statesman sat in his nightshirt, with naked feet, on her bedside, weeping like a child. That is a sad-sweet picture, but I like the other better. Here it is, in the very words of the narrator:—

"In the home circle he was perfectly charming, easy-going, and good-natured. He was passionately fond of children, and I have seen him over and over again have a game with the little ones of his gardener, who were very familiar with him, and would not hesitate to climb upon his knee. Once, when his gardener's little girl died, the great statesman went to condole with him. He was dreadfully upset, and, whilst holding the poor father's hand, burst into tears, for he was very fond of the child. He kissed the little corpse, and himself placed a bunch of roses in its hand."

This is true life. This is eternal. Those tears of sympathy with a poor brother man in his distress are better to think of than all the blood shed at Gravelotte and Sedan. Weaving the threads of subtle diplomacy, flashing the sword of conquest, changing frontiers and making empires, are great things in the eye of the world. But the finest thing Napoleon ever said was, "Respect the burden, madam," as he drew aside a proud lady who stood in the way of a loaded labourer; and the finest thing I have read about Bismarck is this story of his sharing the sorrow of a poor father over the corpse of his little child.

Standing out against all the bloody villainies of David is his grief over his favourite child. "O Absalom, my son, my son; would to God I had died for

thee, O Absalom, my son, my son." And through all the tumultuous glories of Rome, and the shouts of her legions, and the ring of their swords on hostile helmets, pierces the musical wail of Catullus over his dead brother—a note of immortal love and grief that will find an echo in human hearts for ever.

Walt Whitman was well inspired in singing a hymn to Death. It is the great democrat and the great leveller. And it is the great softener of the human heart, as it is the great renewer of humanity. Death removes, and birth supplies, and thus the human race is kept ductile and progressive. Death also demonstrates our common nature by proving our common mortality. How absurd are pompous inscriptions on tombstones! Great, was he? a whole hand higher than his fellows? Yet he lies here, and all his pride has dwindled to those fading lines on that crumbling stone. We turn away to memorials more in keeping with the scene; to simple words of grief and affection, of rest and peace. All sprang from Nature and had their little day of mingled pleasure and pain, and all return for their last long sleep to her bosom.

G. W. FOOTE.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

WAS JESUS CHRIST A BUDDHIST?

SIR,—Professor White in his *Warfare of Science with Religion*, states that Professor Roerick discovered a manuscript in Tibet, in which it is stated that "Issa" (Jesus) joined a caravan for India, studied Buddhism and returned in his twenty-ninth year.

JOHN STEPHENS.

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.

STRATFORD TOWN HALL.—Sunday, December 1, Mr. Chapman Cohen (President, National Secular Society, and Editor of the *Freethinker*), will lecture on "Morality Without God."—Doors open at 6.30, commence at 7.0.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, C. F. M. Joad, B.A.—"The Cause and Effects of the Decline of Religion."

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY.—Social and Dance, Thursday, December 5, 7.30 to 11.30, 101 Tottenham Court Road. Admission 1s.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): Free Sunday Lecture December 1, at 7.0, R. Dimsdale Stocker—"The Artist in Everyman."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (361 Brixton Road, near Gresham Road, S.W.): 7.30, "Religion in the Schools"—Mr. David Capper (President, Teachers' Labour League).

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (The Orange Tree, Ruston Road, N.W.1): 7.30, Lecture, Mr. F. A. Hornbrook, "The Religion of the Body."

OUTDOOR.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.30, Messrs. Charles Tuson and James Hart; 3.15, Messrs. E. Betts and C. E. Wood; 6.30, Messrs. A. H. Hyatt and B. A. Le Maine. Freethought meetings every Wednesday, at 7.30, Messrs. C. Tuson and J. Hart; every Friday, at 7.30, Mr. B. A. Le Maine. The *Freethinker* may be obtained during our meetings outside the Park Gates, Bayswater Road.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Common): 11.30, Mr. F. P. Corrigan; Liverpool Street, Camberwell Gate, Friday, 8.0, Mr. F. P. Corrigan.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Engineers' Hall, 120 Rusholme Road): Mr. Geo. Whitehead (London), Author of *Spiritualism Explained*, etc., will lecture at 3.0 p.m., on "The Evolution of Morality," and at 6.30, on "Man's Buried Self."

LECTURE NOTICES.—Cont.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): Rt. Hon. F. W. Jowett, P.C., M.P., will lecture at 6.30, on "Minority Parties and Unofficial M.P.'s in the British Parliament."

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S. (Top Room, Royal Buildings, 18 Colquitt Street, off Bold Street): 7.30, Mr. F. C. Moore, M.A. (Wallasey)—"Religion in Soviet Russia."

ON FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 29, in the Board Room, Transport Buildings, 41 Islington, Liverpool at 7.30 p.m. Mr. E. Egerton Stafford (Hon. President, Liverpool (Merseyside) Branch, N.S.S.), will lecture on "Atheism," before a meeting of the Merseyside Branch, Teacher's Labour League. Members of the N.S.S. are invited, and a special invitation is extended to any members who are teachers or ex-teachers.

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH N.S.S. (Club Room, Middle Chase): 7.0, Mr. A. Friend will lecture on "The Spectrum." Chair will be taken by Mr. F. Price.

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S. (No. 2 Room, A Door, City Hall, Albion Street): 6.30, Mr. F. Lonsdale will speak on "The Rights of Man."

THE BIRMINGHAM BRANCH of the N.S.S. will meet at Still's Cafe, Bristol Street, on Sunday, December 1, at 7.0, when Mr. Mellon will read a paper on "Evolution."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE BRANCH N.S.S. (Socialist Club, Arcade, Pilgrim Street): 3.0, Members Meeting.

Miscellaneous Advertisements.

A MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN (Freethinker) seeks post in a Freethinking Family. Could run a small house or flat, and do plain cooking.—Apply Box No. 99, 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.)

The Bible and Prohibition.

BIBLE AND BEER

By G. W. FOOTE.

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

Price - Twopence. Postage ½d.

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

CHRISTIANITY AND SLAVERY

With a Chapter on Christianity and the Labour Movement. Portrait and Illustration of the —slave-ship "Brooke."—

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

—O—

Price - ONE SHILLING. Postage 1d.

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

National Secular Society.

President:

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Secretary:

MR. R. H. ROSETTI, 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTS.

SECULARISM teaches that conduct should be based on reason and knowledge. It knows nothing of divine guidance or interference; it excludes supernatural hopes and fears; it regards happiness as man's proper aim, and utility as his moral guide.

Secularism affirms that Progress is only possible through Liberty, which is at once a right and a duty; and therefore seeks to remove every barrier to the fullest equal freedom of thought, action, and speech.

Secularism declares that theology is condemned by reason as superstitious, and by experience as mischievous, and assails it as the historic enemy of Progress.

Secularism accordingly seeks to dispel superstition; to spread education; to disestablish religion; to rationalize morality; to promote peace; to dignify labour; to extend material well-being; and to realize the self-government of the people.

The Funds of the National Secular Society are legally secured by Trust Deed. The trustees are the President, Treasurer and Secretary of the Society, with two others appointed by the Executive. There is thus the fullest possible guarantee for the proper expenditure of whatever funds the Society has at its disposal.

The following is a quite sufficient form for anyone who desires to benefit the Society by legacy:—

I hereby give and bequeath (Here insert particulars of legacy), free of all death duties, to the Trustees of the National Secular Society for all or any of the purposes of the Trust Deed of the said Society.

MEMBERSHIP.

Any person is eligible as a member on signing the following declaration:—

I desire to join the National Secular Society, and I pledge myself, if admitted as a member, to co-operate in promoting its objects.

Name.....

Address.....

Occupation.....

Dated this.....day of.....19.....

This declaration should be transmitted to the Secretary with a subscription.

P.S.—Beyond a minimum of Two Shillings per year, every member is left to fix his own subscription according to his means and interest in the cause.

A Book every Freethinker should have—

BUDDHA The Atheist

By "UPASAKA"

(Issued by the Secular Society, Ltd.)

Price ONE SHILLING. Postage 1d.

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

STRATFORD TOWN HALL

Sunday, December 1st, 1929

Mr. CHAPMAN COHEN

WILL LECTURE ON

"Morality Without God"

ADMISSION FREE. :: Collection.

Doors Open 6.30 p.m.

Questions and Discussion Cordially Invited.

Commence at 7 p.m.

"THE STORY OF RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY"

By JOSEPH McCABE.

IN the series of Little Blue Books comprising "The Story of Religious Controversy," Mr. McCabe has at last been able to realise his ideal of Freethought propaganda. Writing in the "Literary Guide" of January, 1924, he said: "The specific and essential aim of Rationalism is to destroy belief in doctrines which are untrue and now clog the advance of the race. Communicating culture may prepare the way for this, but the vital element is criticism. To avert the threatened reaction from England, we need as much direct criticism as we can give, purveyed as cheaply as we can get it out, courteous and persuasive, but explicit and deadly." Mr. McCabe himself says—"This is the biggest job I have ever done for Rationalism."

1007 The Revolt Against Religion.
1008 The Origin of Religion.
1030 The World's Great Religions.
1059 The Myth of Immortality.
1060 The Futility of Belief in God.
1061 The Human Origin of Morals.
1066 The Forgery of the Old Testament.
1076 Morals in Ancient Babylon.
1077 Religion and Morals in Ancient Egypt.
1078 Life and Morals in Greece and Rome.
1079 Phallic Elements in Religion.
1084 Did Jesus Ever Live?
1095 The Sources of Christian Morality.
1102 Pagan Christs Before Jesus.
1104 The Myth of the Resurrection.
1107 Legends of Saints and Martyrs.
1110 How Christianity "Triumphed."
1121 The Evolution of Christian Doctrine.
1122 The Degradation of Woman.
1127 Christianity and Slavery.
1128 The Church and the School.
1132 New Light on Witchcraft.
1130 The Dark Ages.
1134 The Horrors of the Inquisition.
1136 Mediæval Art and the Church.

1137 The Moorish Civilisation in Spain.
1140 The Renaissance: A European Awakening.
1141 The Reformation and Protestant Reaction.
1142 The Truth About Galileo and Mediæval Science.
1144 The Jesuits: Religious Rogues.
1145 Religion and the French Revolution.
1150 The Churches and Modern Progress.
1203 Seven Infidel U.S. Presidents.
1205 Thomas Paine's Revolt Against the Bible.
1211 The Conflict Between Science and Religion.
354 The Absurdities of Christian Science.
297 Do We Need Religion?
366 Religion's Failure to Combat Crime.
1218 Christianity and Philanthropy.
122 Debate on Spiritualism.
1224 Religion in the Great Poets.
1243 The Failure of Christian Missions.
1229 The Triumph of Materialism.
1237 The Beliefs of Scientists.
1215 Robert Ingersoll: Benevolent Agnostic.
365 Myths of Religious Statistics.
1248 The Lies of Religious Literature.
841 The Future of Religion.
439 My Twelve Years in a Monastery.
446 The Psychology of Religion.

Only 3d. each. Post free 3½d. Order by Number. Complete Set 12/6 post free.

Also Cloth Bound in One Volume £1 : 1 : 0 post free.

FROM—

641 pages—A Superb Gift for a Friend.

THE LITTLE BLUE BOOKS, 82 Eridge Rd., Thornton Heath, Surrey.

For C. O. D. Orders Use the Form below.

SEND NO MONEY.

For Complete Sets of the 50 Books and for copies of the Clothbound Edition you need not remit in advance unless you wish. You can pay the postman on delivery. Use the form at the right.

NOTE.—Postage is added to all C.O.D. Orders, so save the postage by remitting with Order. No C.O.D. Orders can be sent to foreign countries.

SIGN AND POST THIS FORM.

THE LITTLE BLUE BOOKS,
82, ERIDGE ROAD,
THORNTON HEATH, SURREY.

Send me JOSEPH McCABE'S
"Story of Religious Controversy"
in 1. Booklet Form.
or 2. The Clothbound Edition.
I will pay the postman on delivery.

Name

(BLOCK LETTERS, PLEASE)

Address.....